GAZETTEER OF INDIA
ASSAM STATE

GAROPARA DISTRICT GAZETTEER

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GAZETTEER OF INDIA
ASSAM STATE

GOALPARA DISTRICT

T. N. A. C No. 10850/45/79

ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEERS

GOALPARA DISTRICT

D. P. BAROOAH A.C.S.
Editor-in-Chief

EDITOR—GAZETTEERS
14 ஆக 1979
EGMORE, MADRAS

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
GAUHATI : ASSAM
1979

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FOREWORD

Out of the eight Revised District Gazetteers to be published in Assam after the publication of the District Gazetteers of Assam by B. C. Allen in 1905, I have the pleasure to put a note of forewords to the District Gazetteer of Goalpara, the sixth book in the series, published by the Education Department of Government of Assam. It is needless to repeat the importance of this valued document which, I hope, will serve the great need of the research scholars and planners of this State. The District Gazetteer as such is deemed to be a treatise on socio-economic life of an area and is sure to be very useful to the students of History and Economics in particular. I hope, the learned public for which it is meant, will not fail to make use of it and appreciate its value.

Gauhati
28-3-79

Shri Lakshya Dhar Choudhury
Minister, Education, Assam.

PREFACE

Goalpara is the most westerly district of Assam occupying the entrance of this State from the other parts of India lying to the west. The first book published about Goalpara in its relations to Assam was 'An Account of Assam' compiled by Francise Hamilton during the period from 1808 to 1814 when he conducted a wide survey of Eastern India with a view to collecting materials and writing about the condition of the people living therein. Goalpara was then a part of the eastern-most British territory in India which did not include Assam. The first account of Goalpara as a district of Assam was incorporated into the 'Statistical Account of Assam' written by W. W. Hunter in 1879. Thereafter in 1905, B. C. Allen compiled and wrote the District Gazetteer for Goalpara and this was the first comprehensive Gazetteer of the district in its correct form. After the independence, when the Government of India took up the work of Revision of District Gazetteers for all the districts and States of India, along with the other District Compilation Offices the office of the Compiler for Goalpara District Gazetteer also started functioning with its headquarters at Dhuburi from 1959. Shri Gauri Sankar Roy was the first District Compiler at Dhuburi. He was succeeded by Shri Prabhat Chandra Bayan during whose tenure this district office of Dhuburi was dissolved in 1969. Preparation of preliminary drafts was completed at Dhuburi office and the drafts were brought to the State headquarters,—the office of the Editor for Revision of District Gazetteers in 1969. From 1969 to 1976 the drafts were lying unattended as the office was busy in compilation of Nowgong and Darrang District Gazetteers and printing of Lakhimpur District Gazetteer. In 1975, Shri D. P. Barooah, the then Editor-in-Chief, District Gazetteers of Assam, took up editing of Goalpara District Gazetteer as an emergency work and completed final drafting of this District Gazetteer in record time. The drafts of Goalpara District Gazetteer was sent to the Central Gaze-

tteer Unit for approval on 23rd September, 1976. This district being a border district having Bangladesh on its adjacent west, required scrutiny by the departments of Defence, External Affairs and Survey of India. In the meantime, Shri D. P. Barooah was transferred and I took over as Editor-in-Chief, District Gazetteers, on 6th July, 1977.

On 16-12-77, the drafts on Goalpara District Gazetteer was approved by the Central Gazetteer Unit of Government of India, New Delhi, on receipt of clearance from all the 3 departments mentioned above and on 1-7-78 this District Gazetteer was sent to press for printing after selection of the press by the Government of Assam. It may be mentioned here that in spelling the proper names of places we have followed the directive of the Survey of India.

In preparing and editing the final drafts of Goalpara District Gazetteer the four experienced compilers Shri Sachindra Nath Neog, Shri Rameshwar Dass, Shri Mohan Chandra Bhuyan, and Shri Padma Kanta Barua, helped Shri D. P. Barooah, the Editor-in-Chief. So, the credit of compilation and writing of Goalpara District Gazetteer goes to them without saying.

My thanks are due to the compilers Shri Mohan Chandra Bhuyan, Shri Rajdeep Talukdar, Shri Padma Kanta Barua, Shri Rameshwar Dass, Srimoti Binata Das, Srimoti Bharati Hazarika, and Shri Jogesh Datta, Stenographer, Shri Gagan Talukdar, U.D.A., and Srimoti Nalini Dalal, Translator, who compared and read proofs of this Gazetteer and also helped me in preparing the press copy.

We tried our best to make this District Gazetteer complete with all available up-to-date data but due to procedural defects in collection of statistics from different concerning departments and offices, in certain matters we failed to accomplish the task. For this lapse, we apologise before the readers. I must express my gratitude to all the departments, Government, Semi-government and non-government, especially Sri H. K. Baruah A.C.S. Deputy Secretary, Education, Assam, for their unfailing co-operation and assistance without which this Gazetteer would not have been published.

Dr. P. N. Chopra and his learned colleagues in the office of the Central Gazetteer Unit, Government of India, New Delhi, guided us ably with their expert and sympathetic assistance, careful scrutiny and suggestions for which we are very grateful.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Rajkumar Shri Prakitish Chandra Barua, the internationally renowned elephant hunter who helped me in completing the elephant hunting procedures for incorporation into this District Gazetteer.

I conclude with apology for the small errors in printing which crept into the text inspite of our utmost care and expect that this book will be a good help to the learned scholars and planners of our country.

Gauhati
31st March, 1979.

S. B. Roy Choudhury
Editor-in-Chief,
District Gazetteers in Assam, Gauhati.

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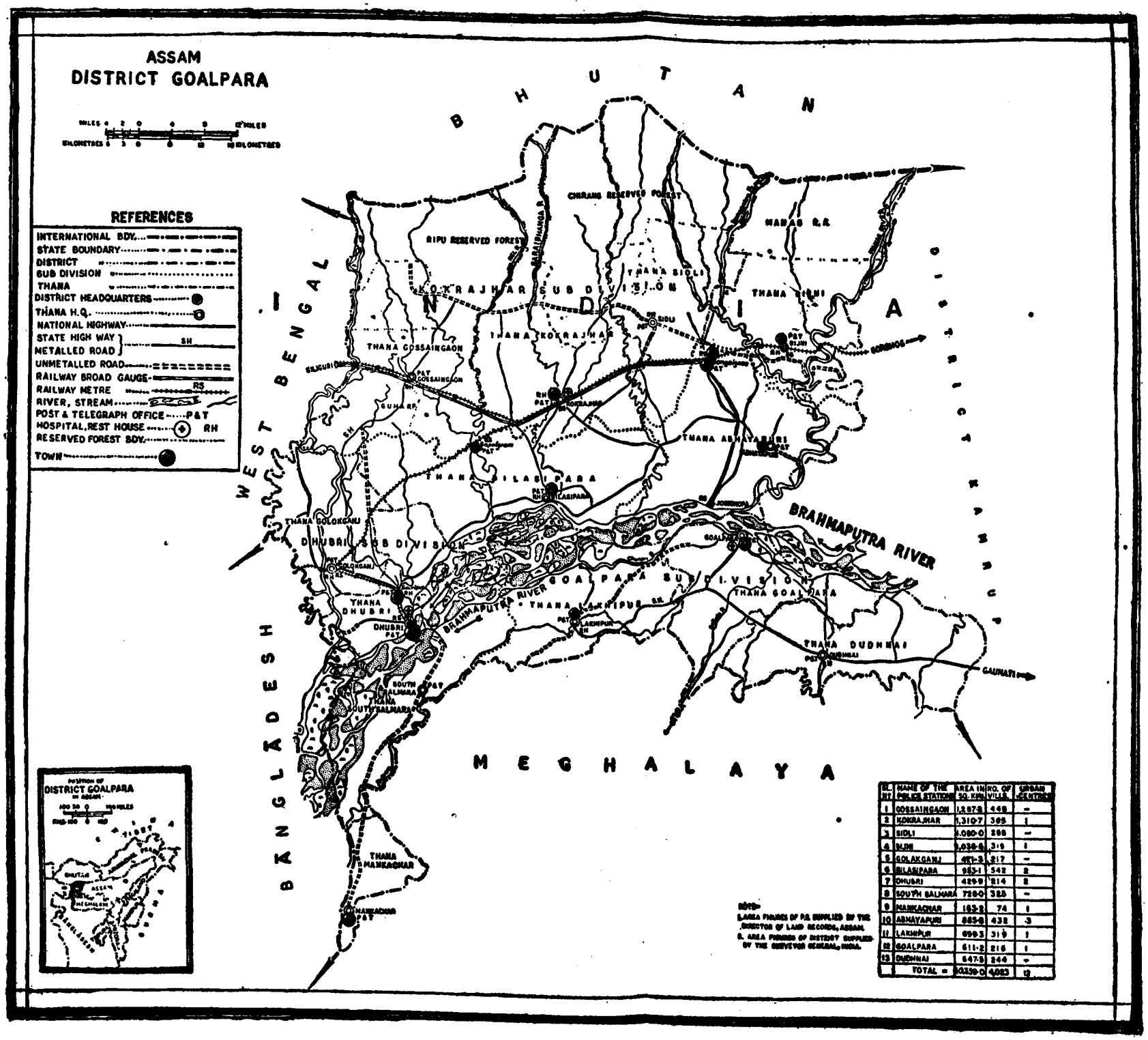
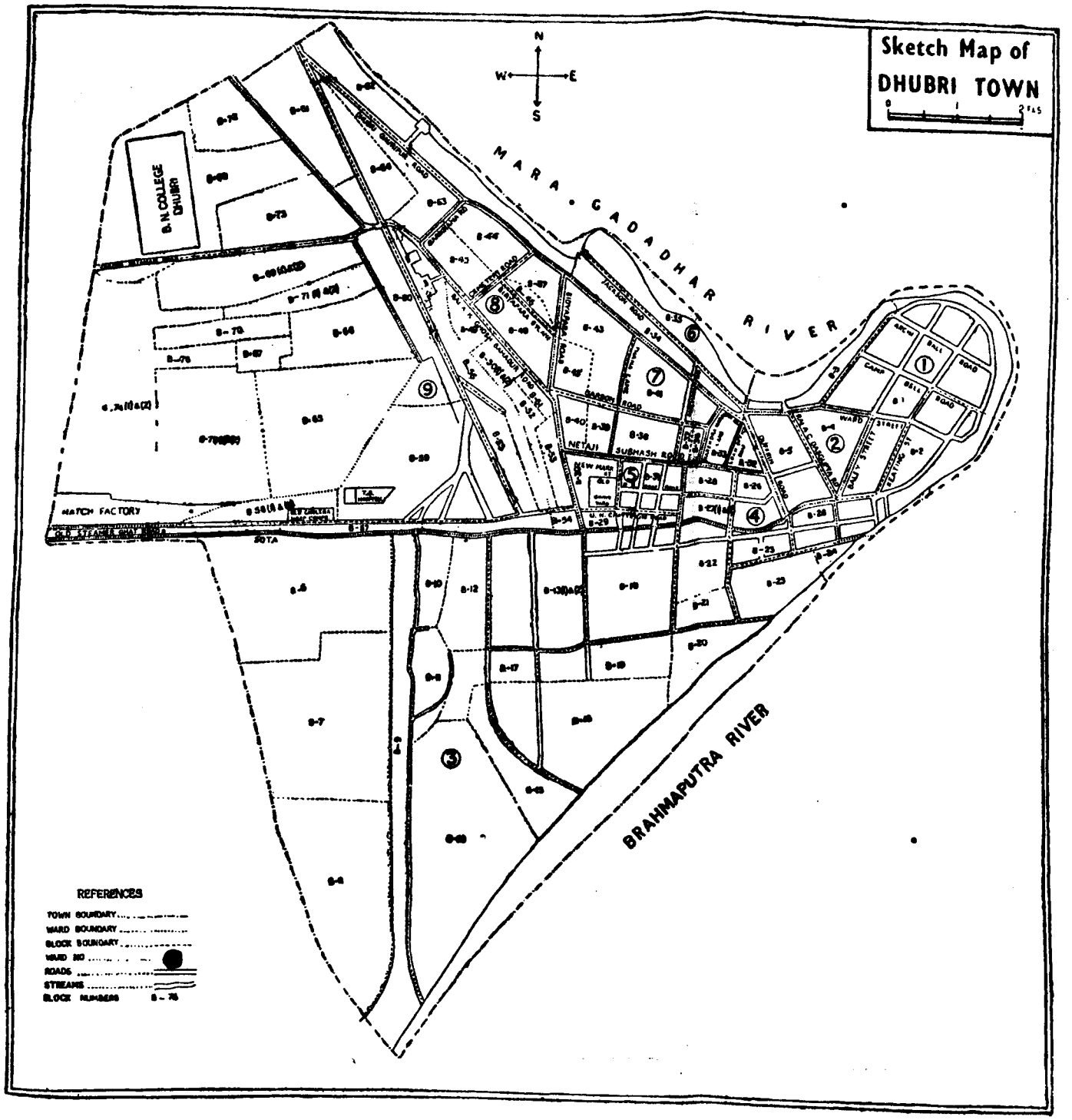
9. Match Factory, Dhuburi.
10. Gowripur Rajbari.

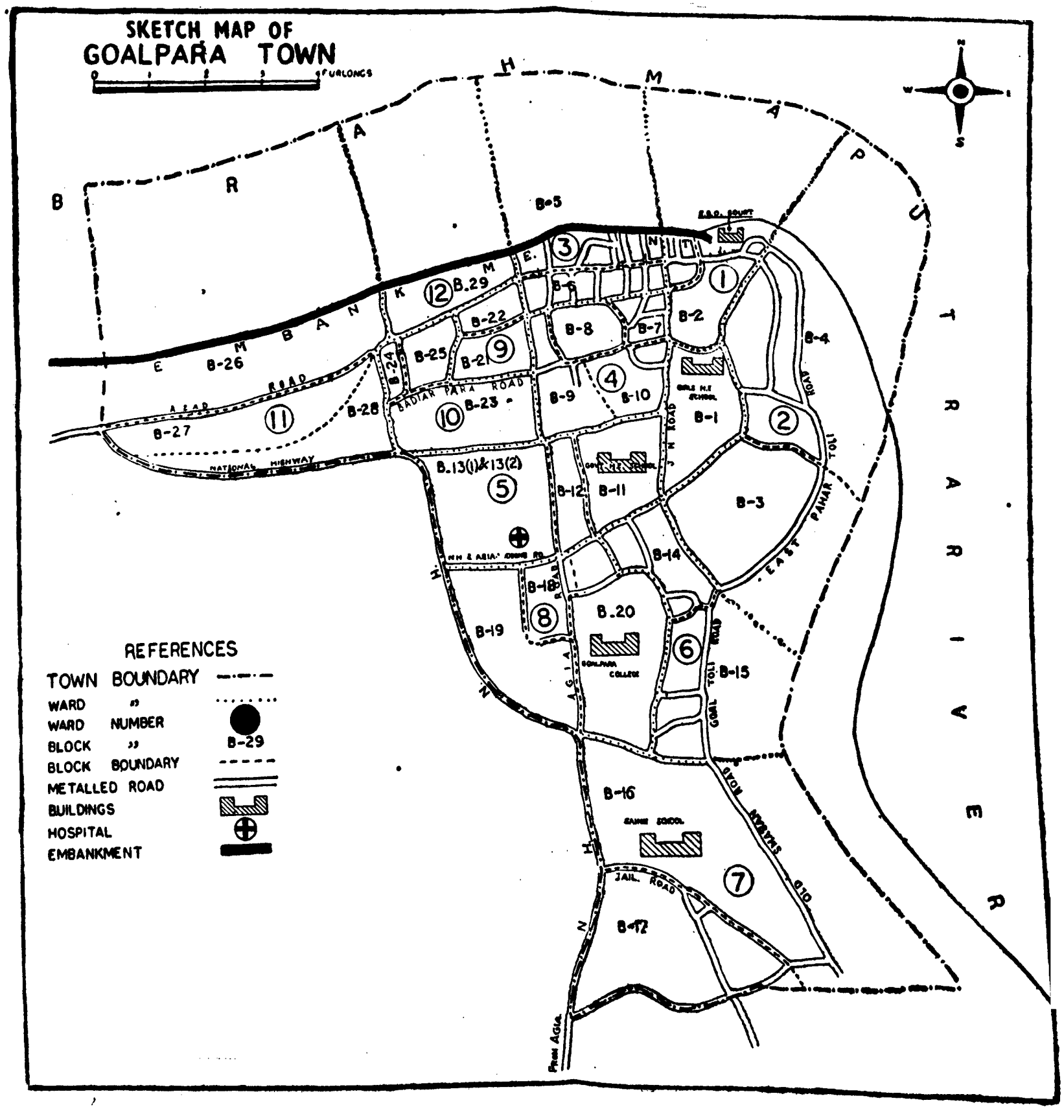
We acknowledge with thanks the kind co-operations extended by The Directorate of Census, Assam and the Curator, Museum, Assam, Gauhati.



SL. NO.	NAME OF THE POLICE STATION	AREA IN SQ. KM.	NO. OF VILLS.	URBAN CENTRES
1	GOSSAINGAON	1,287·8	448	–
2	KOKRAJHAR	1,310·7	385	1
3	SIDLI	1,080·0	288	–
4	BIJNI	1,038·8	319	1
5	GOLAKGANJ	491·3	217	–
6	BILASIPARA	953·1	542	2
7	DHUBRI	429·9	214	8
8	SOUTH SALMARA	728·0	385	–
9	MANKACHAR	183·8	74	1
10	ABHAYAPURI	885·0	432	3
11	LAKHIPUR	899·3	319	1
12	GOALPARA	611·2	216	1
13	DUDHNAI	647·3	244	–
	TOTAL =	10359·0	4083	19

NOTE:-
1. AREA FIGURES OF P.S. SUPPLIED BY THE DIRECTOR OF LAND RECORDS, ASSAM.
2. AREA FIGURES OF DISTRICT SUPPLIED BY THE SURVEYOR GENERAL, INDIA.


Sketch Map of
DHUBRI TOWN
N
W
E
S
MARA GADADHAR RIVER
BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER
B. N. COLLEGE DHUBRI
MATCH FACTORY
NETAJI SUBHASH ROAD
REFERENCES
TOWN BOUNDARY
WARD BOUNDARY
BLOCK BOUNDARY
WARD NO
ROADS
STREAMS
BLOCK NUMBERS


SKETCH MAP OF
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BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER
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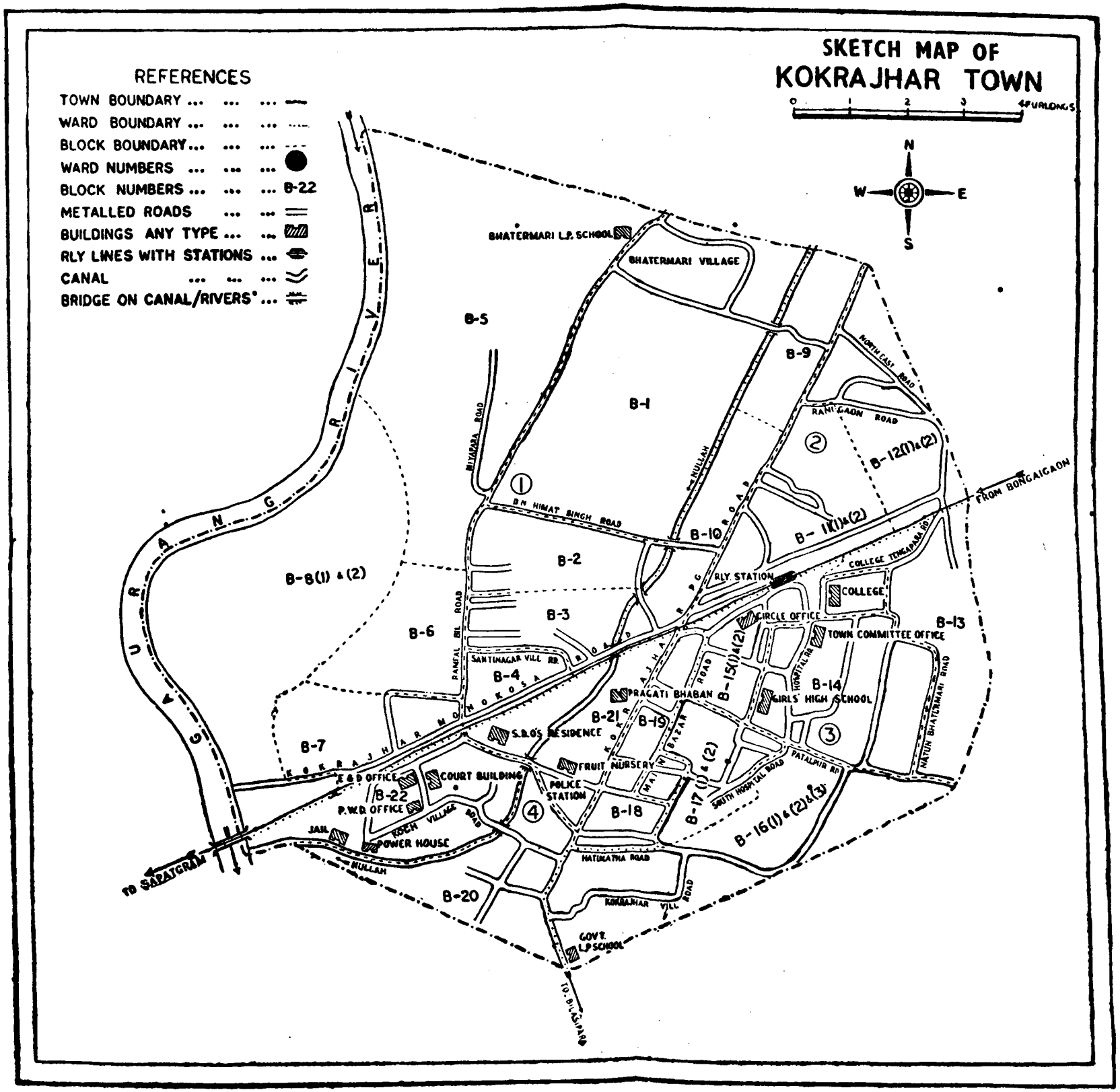
EAST PAMAR TOLL ROAD
GOAL TOLL ROAD
OLD SIMANA ROAD
JAIL ROAD
AGIA ROAD
FROM AGIA
GIRLS H.E. SCHOOL
GOALPARA COLLEGE
GAME SCHOOL
REFERENCES
TOWN BOUNDARY
WARD "
WARD NUMBER
BLOCK "
BLOCK BOUNDARY
METALLED ROAD
BUILDINGS
HOSPITAL
EMBANKMENT


SKETCH MAP OF
KOKRAJHAR TOWN
0 1 2 3 4 FURLONGS
N
W
E
S
REFERENCES
TOWN BOUNDARY ... ...
WARD BOUNDARY ... ...
BLOCK BOUNDARY... ... ...
WARD NUMBERS ... ...
BLOCK NUMBERS B-22
METALLED ROADS ... ...
BUILDINGS ANY TYPE ... ...
RLY LINES WITH STATIONS ...
CANAL ... ...
BRIDGE ON CANAL/RIVERS ...
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POLICE STATION
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RANFAL BIL ROAD
SANTINAGAR VILL RD
MOKOSA ROAD
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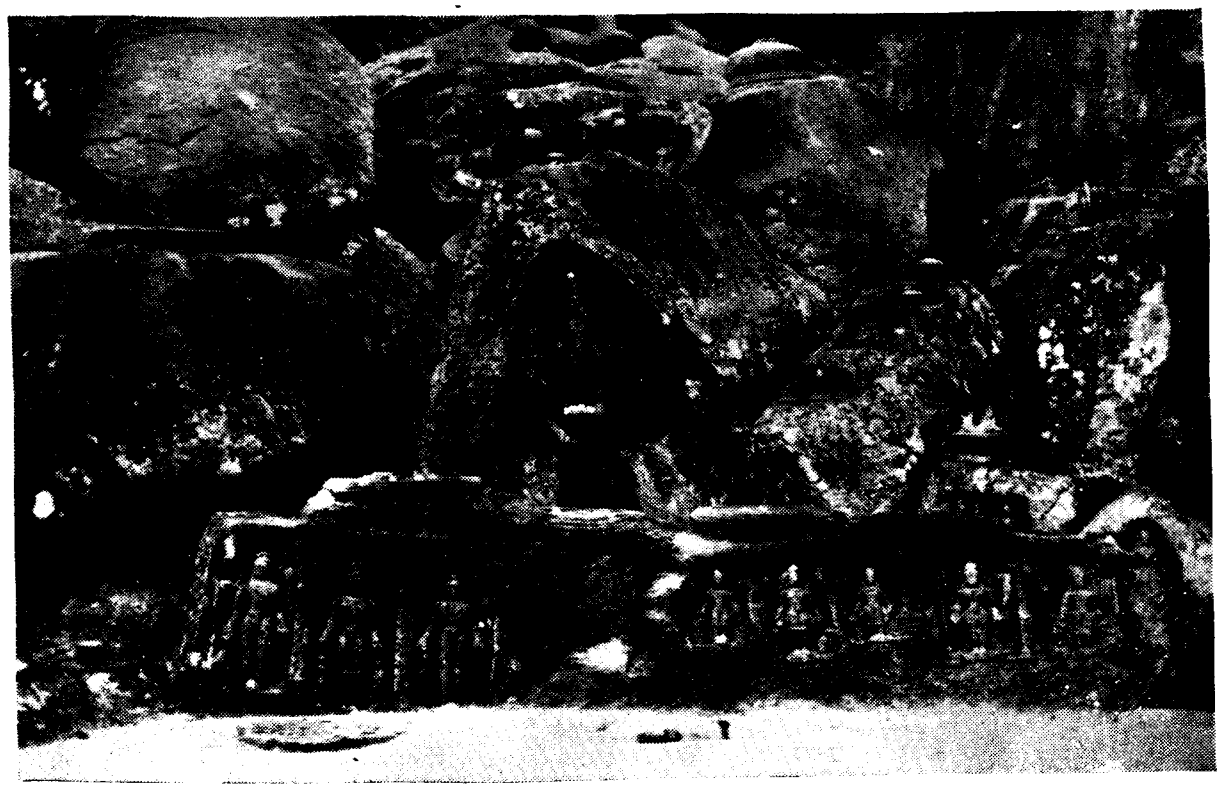
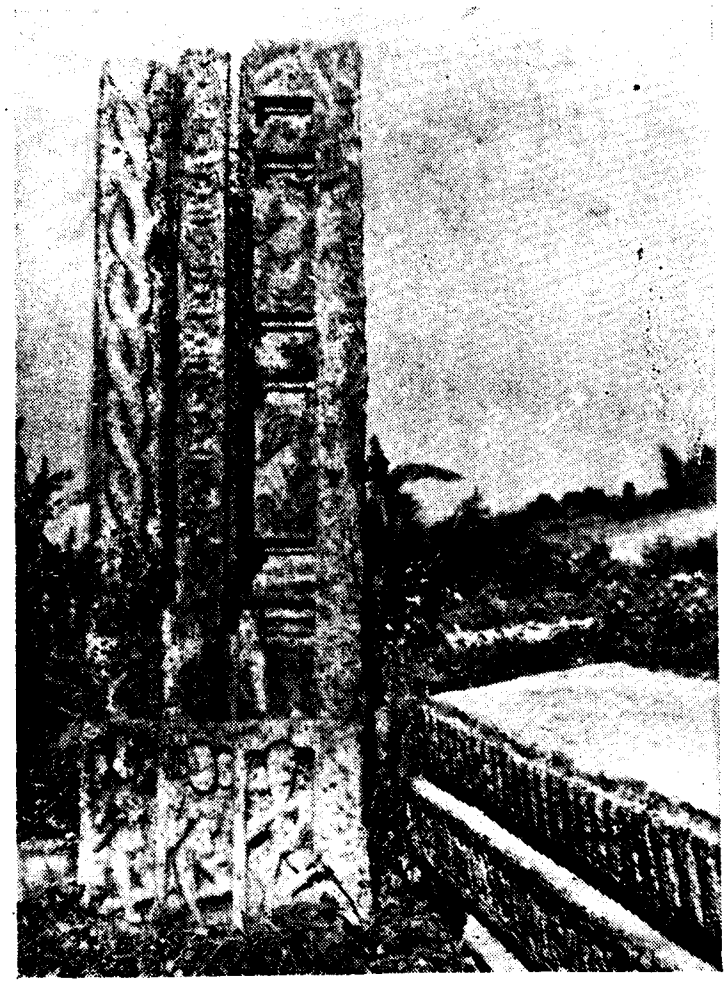
HOSPITAL RD
PATALPUR RD
NATUN BHATERMARI ROAD
SOUTH HOSPITAL ROAD
HATIKATHA ROAD
KOKRAJHAR VILL ROAD
KOCH VILLAGE ROAD
COLLEGE TENGAPARA RD

The solitary instance of monolithic stupa discovered in Surya Pahar area.
It is believed to have belonged to 8th century A. D.



General view of the sculptural remains at Surya Pahar near Marnoi, Goalpara. These have been determined to be a 8th century A.D. work.



Ganesh Mandir ruins, Abhayapuri. 10th to 11th century A. D.

Idgah, Panbari. Goalpara. 15th to 16th century A.D. construction.

The Match Factory of Dhuburi.

Gouripur Rajbari.... 19th. Century A. D.

the past, the whole of the area now forming the district of Goalpara was a seperate polity under its own rulers. Its history has to be considered in connection with those of the various states of which from time to time it formed a part. It was originally included in the ancient kingdom of Kamarupa mentioned in the *Mahabharata*. The history of this kingdom dating presumably from about the twelfth century B.C., is by and large a matter of doubtful and fragmentary tradition. It is said that Goalpara was first conquered by the Pal kings of Bengal, but there are practically no records of their occupation. According to *Mahapurushia* tradition Goalpara subsequently formed a part of Kamata kingdom. In the fifteenth century the district fell within the dominions of the Khen princes whose capital Kamatapur was over-run by the Muslims in 1498 A.D. A few years later it passed into the hands of the Koch kings who had their capital in Koch Bihar. About 1580 A.D. the Koch kingdom was bifurcated and the region east of the Sankosh river including Goalpara, Kamrup and, Darrang was surrendered to Raghu Rai, nephew of Naranarayan. The territory lying to the west of the river was reserved for Naranarayan's son. Disputes, however, soon arose between the two families and the rival camps sought aid from the Muhammedans and the Ahoms. Goalpara was conquered by the Muhammedans who had been called by Naranarayan's son to his help. For some years, war dragged on with varying results between the Muslims and the Ahoms who were invoked on the other side. Peace was concluded in 1637 and the Barnadi which now separates Kamrup from Darrang was fixed as the boundary between Muslim and Ahom territory. The Ahoms advanced again in 1658, occupied Goalpara and held it for three years. They were, however, compelled to retreat by Mir Jumla. From then onwards Goalpara formed part of the Muslim dominion till it was, with the rest of Bengal, ceded to the British in 1765 A.D.

The district underwent several changes in jurisdiction under the British. Initially the area covered by the jurisdiction of the three *thanas* of Goalpara, Dhubri and Karaibari formed part of the permanently settled district of Rangpur in Bengal. [2] By Regulation X of 1822 the above area was separated from Rangpur and along with Garo Hills formed the district of North-east Rangpur and was administered by David Scott, Civil Commissioner.[3] When Assam ceded to the British in 1826, Goalpara was annexed to the Assam Valley Division and its administration was placed in the hands of the Commissioner and the Judicial Commissioner of Assam. [4] Goalpara was separated from the Province of Assam and placed under the Commissioner of Koch Bihar division in all matters by the provisions of a Government Notification dated December 3, 1866. Prior to this at the close of the Bhutan War of 1864 the Bhutan *Duars* were annexed by the

2. *The Assam land Revenue Manual, Vol. I*, 8th edition, Govt. of Assam, Shillong, 1968, Introduction pp. xli-xlii.
3. *Census of India*, 1961, *Assam District Census Handbook*, Goalpara, Shillong, 1965, p.vii.
4. W.W. Hunter; *A Statistical Account of Assam*, New Delhi, 1975 (reprint) p. 11.

British and were divided into the Eastern and Western *Duars*. The portion of the country lying between the Manas and Sankosh rivers was formed into the Eastern *Duars* district and was administered by a Deputy Commissioner with headquarters at Datma. In December, 1866, however, the Eastern *Duars* were added to Goalpara.[5]

Due to administrative convenience experienced, the Civil and Criminal jurisdiction of Goalpara was re-transferred to the Judicial Commissioner of Assam by a Notification dated August 10, 1868; but executive control remained with the Commissioner of Koch Bihar. In 1869 the Garo Hills were formed into a separate district by Act. XXII of 1869 which repealed Regulation X of 1822. Goalpara was finally incorporated in the new province when Assam was created into a separate administration in 1874. The headquarters of the district initially located at Goalpara were transferred to Dhuburi in 1879.

During the post-Independence period there has been only one major change in the administrative set up of the district but its effects were confined within its boundaries. A new sub-division known as Kokrajhar Sub-division was created on February 9, 1957 by carving out of Dhuburi Sub-division the areas under Gossaigaon, Kokrajhar, Bijni, and Sidli Police Stations.

(iv) **Sub-divisons and Thanas** : Just before the formation of the Kokrajhar Sub-division in February 1957 the district had 2 Sub-divisions namely Dhuburi and Goalpara with 9 *thanas* under the former and 4 under the latter. According to the 1971 Census there were 3 Sub-divisions in the district which between them had 13 *thanas*. Kokrajhar was the largest Sub-division with an area of 4,716.5 square kilometres and Dhuburi Sub-division was the smallest with 2,745.5 square kilometres. The area of Goalpara Sub-division according to the 1971 Census was 2,843 square kilometres.

The following table shows the area and population of each *thana* in the district.[6]

Name of the Police Station	Area (in Sq. Kms)	Total Population
1. Gossaingaon	1,287.2	1,88,531
2. Kokrajhar	1,310.7	1,96,617
3. Sidli	1,080.0	1,49,622
4. Bijni	1,038.6	1,75,296

5. *Ibid*, p. 107.
6. *Census of India*, 1971, *General Population Table, Series-3, Assam, Part-II-A*, Delhi, 1972, p. 28.

Name of the Police Station	Area (in Sq. Kms)	Total Population
5. Golakganj	471.3	1,70,480
6. Bilasipara	953.1	2,32,791
7. Dhuburi	429.9	1,82,798
8. South Salmara	728.0	1,85,599
9. Mankachar	163.2	79,371
10. Abhayapuri	885.8	2,34,402
11. Lakhipur	699.3	1,73,804
12. Goalpara	611.2	1,31,353
13. Dudhnai	647.5	1,24,433
Total ..	10,359.0	22,25,103

Revenue Circles : At present there are 17 revenue circles in the district. Out of these the *mauzadari* system under which revenue is collected through commissioned agents known as *mauzadars* is prevalent only in Dhuburi and Golakganj circles. In the other 15 circles of the district revenue is collected through Tahsildars i.e. Officers in-charge of these revenue circles.

The following table shows the revenue circles of the district as they stood in 1957.

Sl. No.	Name of the Revenue Circle.	Name of Mauza
1	2	3
1.	Mankachar	No mauzadari system. Revenue collected through Tahsildar i.e. Circle Officer.
2.	South Salmara	
3.	Dhuburi	Debitola, Gauripur, Alamganj, Dhuburi, Patamari, Dharmasala, Dhuburikhas Mahal.

Sl. No.	Name of the Revenue Circle.	Name of Mauza
1	2	3
4.	Golakganj	Golakganj, Tokrerpara Balajan, Dimakuri, Dhepdhepi, Basbari, Goalnoni, Mohamayahat, Simolbari, Kaskhana, Satrashal, Agamani.
5.	Bilasipara	No mauzadari system. Revenue is collected through Tahsildars. i.e. Circle Officer.
6.	Chapor	
7.	Boitamari	
8.	Srijangram	
9.	Balijana	
10.	Matia	
11.	Dudhnai	
12.	Lakhipur	
13.	Bijni	
14.	Sidli	
15.	Kokrajhar	
16.	Gossaingaon	
17.	Abhayapuri	

(*b*) *TOPOGRAPHY* :

(i) **Natural divisions, elevation, configuration etc.** : The larger portion of the district is a level plain, through the southern part of which flows the Brahmaputra. A few off-shoots of the Assam range protrude towards the river and appear even on its north bank in certain places falling under the Bijni and Sidli *thanas*. The land near the Brahmaputra is subject to floods and is covered by dense grass and reeds. Away from the river the level of the land rises and swamps give way to rice fields. The home-steads of the cultivators are surrounded by dense grass, areca palms, plantains and bamboos. The northern portion of the district, a later accretion known as the Eastern Duars, is a sparsely populated area and is mostly covered by tall grass and dense forests. Rice and other crops are raised on fields that are irrigated from the hill streams. Like the northern portion, the western part of the district is also absolutely flat. On the

east however many low ranges jut out from the Garo Hills and reach the Brahmaputra near Goalpara town.

(ii) **Hills** : Although most of the district is a level plain and mountains are conspicuous by their absence, a few ranges of hills run irregularly on both banks of the Brahmaputra and divide the country into may drainage sections. We have already referred to the low ranges projecting from the Garo Hills which extend up to the Brahmaputra near Goalpara town. Here there are isolated hills rising above the alluvium, with heights varying from 122 to 212 metres above mean sea level and are seen from Dabil on the east to Dandpal about 25 kms. south of Goalpara. These hills are the Tukureswari, Phoponga, the Jajong-Khadoram, the Ajaghar, the Deoli Hills and the Dandpal hill. There are other small ranges to the north of Agia viz., the Rokha, the Matia, the Rendu, the Andharmua and the Pancharatna. To the further west of Pancharatna lies a low hill named Paglatak over-looking the Brahmaputra near Goalpara town, and on the south-east of the town lies the Raikushi hill with Satali hill beyond.

On the north of the Brahmaputra these hills appear again and here they are much higher. In Abhayapuri Police Station opposite Pancharatna is the Jogighopa, littered with caves where hermits are believed to have dwelt in olden days, and about 3 kms. east is the Lengtia hill. Two kilometres east of Jogighopa lies Mahadeo hill and to its north rises the Malai hill. Beyond Abhayapuri there are several ranges like the Phagkati, Narikola, Sonakhuli, Chitonsila, Bamani Pani and the Lathuri hill. On the north of Jogighopa there are hills like the Chakrasila, the Dhumeswar, the Boukumari Chura, the Nandagiri, and the Rajasula hill.

Towards the West of Jogighopa there are some isolated hills like the Chander Dinga range, the Sonamukh and the Tokrabandha. The Mahamaya hill in Bagribari and a hillock at Gauripur are the western-most representative of hills in the district amidst the Brahmaputra alluvium.[7]

(c) *RIVER SYSTEM AND WATER RESOURCES* :

The Brahmaputra : As in other plains districts of Assam, the Brahmaputra is the principal river of Goalpara district and flows either through or along the boundary of the district for about 136 kms. The whole drainage of the district ultimately finds its way to it. The Brahmaputra river has another name - Lauhitya, which is evidently a Sanskritized form of the 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 the river takes this colour during the rainy season when it cuts through the red soil in the adjoining embankments. Mythology connects the

7. *Census of India*, 1961. *Assam District Census Handbook, Goalpara*. Shillong 1965, Introduction p. II.

origin of the river with the sins of Parshuram. It was in the upper reaches of this river, it is said, at *Parshuram-kunda* or *Brahmakunda*, that the great saint washed off his bloody stains of matricide and regained his sainthood. The river, crimson with his mother's blood, came to be known as the *Lauhitya*.

The other and better known name Brahmaputra, means 'son of Brahma' and the name is quite within the orbit of Sanskrit nomenclature.[8] It is so named because the Hindus consider it to have originated from Brahmakunda the sacred pool. 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 Dibang, and joining into one fat stream. The prefix *nam* in the Ahom language, like *di* in the Bodo language means "water" or "river". The source of the Tsangpo, the name by which the Brahmaputra is known at its source through Tibet, 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 Manasarowar Lake. Rising in these glaciers, this mighty river Brahmaputra, which has a total length of about 2,897 kms. and a drainage area of about 9,35,504 square kilometres flows for about half its length in a trough, north of the Himalayas running parallel to the main Himālayan range. Then it swings north-east, runs through many gorges in a series of cascades and rapids, make a hairpin bend and turns south and south-west. After receiving the waters of the Dibang and the Lohit, the united stream from this point assumes the name Brahmaputra which flows down the Assam Valley in a vast sheet of water dotted with numerous islands, the chief among them being Majuli and Umananda. The Brahmaputra enters the district on the south bank a few kilometres below Nagarbera in Kamrup district and on the north bank at the mouth of the Manas opposite, Goalpara town. Its initial course is from east to west but then it turns to the south-west and finally to the south. Oscillating rapidly from side to side of the sandy strath through which it makes its way, the mighty river cuts away a great bank in some place and throws up a *char* in another. Such *char* may exist temporarily till swept away by the next floods or may grow into a large island covered with grass and reeds. Its principal tributaries in the district on the north bank are the Manas, the Champawati and the Saralbhanga known as Gaurang in its lower reaches, the Sankosh, the Gadadhar and the Raidakon Dudhkumar which, falls into the Brahmaputra below Dhuburi. On the south bank its main tributaries are the Jinjiram, the Kaladarie, the Dudhnai, the Krishnai, and the Jinari or Balbola.

Cross Section : No regular records have been kept of the cross sections of the Brahmaputra at various important places throughout its course, so that any change which might have occurred cannot be scientifically discussed or

8. Bishnu Rabha has suggested that the word is just a Sanskritization of a Bodo expression, *Bhullumbuttar*.

analysed. A few cross sections and gauge readings were recorded at certain important stations during the earlier part of this century, but these 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 in the dry season its channels vary from 150 metres to a few hundred metres 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 1,066 metres flowing between more or less permanent banks with the greatest depths varying from about 15 to 18 metres during the dry season to 40 to 46 metres during the rainy season. At these points discharge calculations have been made when the river was being surveyed for the purpose of spanning it with a bridge,. Available old records show the gauge readings and the widths of some of the more important stations as follows :—

Gauge	Dry Season		Flood Season	
	Width Depth Average.	Average	Width Depth Average'	Average.
Tezpur ..	3,300 ft. (1,005.84 metres)	34 ft. (10.36 metres)	7,700 ft. (2,346.96 metres)	51. ft. (14.54 metres)
Gauhati ..	3,000 ft. (914.40 metres)	23 ft. (7.01 metres)	3,400 ft. (1036.32 metres)	48 ft. (14.63 metres)
Goalpara ..	1,650 ft. (502.92 metres)	62 ft. (18.90 metres)	..	..
Dhuburi ..	4,000 ft. (1,219.20 metres)	28 ft. (8.53 metres)	..	..

Shoals : Shoals are continually being formed causing serious impediments to navigation. In old records we find mention of some 84 shoals which were in existence between Dibrugarh and Gauhati and 43 shoals between Gauhati and Goalunda. The Navigable channels through these shoals were clearly marked by bamboo poles placed by the Inland Water Transport operators. Apart from a record of the depth on these shoals each season, no comprehensive data have been 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 floods which are so frequent in the Brahmaputra cause tremendous changes in the river course, and raise the river beds by depositing the tetritus carried from the upper reaches. This is a common feature of floods in big rivers flowing across the alluvial soil of north-east India and is a frequented regular event since the great earthquake of 1950.

The fluctuations in river level 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 speeds across the plains and valleys of North East India. From this period onwards, the Brahmaputra river level records 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 is experienced. As a general rule this first big rise is of short duration and does little harm to the land or early cultivation. In fact it improves navigation facilities in the river and enables river *ghats* to be moved into their high level sites adjacent to *Bazars*, road and rail terminals.

By early June the South West monsoon reaches the Assam Valley and the continuous heavy rains raise the river level rapidly and the Brahmaputra remains in spate, registering a series of high flood levels until October. These floods overtop the main banks and inundate large expanses of land, causing severe damage to railways and roads.

From October onwards till December the levels of the Brahmaputra 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 the early pumps are again experienced.

The miseries caused by the high floods of the Brahmaputra and its northern tributaries beggar description. Villages situated on the river banks are submerged, paddy fields are turned into vast sheets of water, standing crops are destroyed, cattle are swept away and hundreds of cultivators, fishermen and other people living in these areas are rendered homeless. All important lines of communication are snapped and life hinges on the relief provided by the government and public. When the floods subside, pestilence may create havoc among men and cattle alike unless prompt preventive measures are undertaken. As recently as in 1974 five successive waves of floods hit Assam and Goalpara was one of the worst affected districts. It was estimated that crop area affected by floods in the district was of the order of a lakh hectares and about 9 lakhs of its inhabitants suffered as a result. So menacing were the floods that nearly 15 thousand houses were damaged and these sufferers along with erosion affected people of Dhuburi Sub-division had to be provided for in relief camps at huge cost.

Navigability : The Brahmaputra remains navigable throughout the year. From time immemorial it has been the artery of communication connecting the northern and southern parts of the State with each other and with the outside world. Country boats were the chief means of transport till 1848 when steamers between Calcutta and Gauhati, traversing Goalpara district along the Brahmaputra, were introduced by the British Government. Such services continued till 1950 when the great earthquake impaired the navigable channel of the Brahma-

putra especially in Upper Assam and compelled exclusion of this region from steamer services. The trans-East-Pakistan route to Calcutta however continued till September 1965 when the Indo-Pakistan War forced its abandonment. It is only recently that river services between Assam and Calcutta via Bangladesh have been revived. The Directorate of Inland Water Transport runs ferry services across the Brahmaputra connecting Dhuburi with Fakiragram and Goalpara and Pancharatna with Jogighopa.

Other Rivers : The Brahmaputra flowing from east to west, then south-west and finally south wardswithin Goalpara district, is met in this stretch of its sea-ward journey by several tributaries, running, generally speaking, from north to south on its right bank and from south to north on its left bank. We proceed to give below brief descriptions of the principal rivers of the district except the Brahmaputra which has been already described.

The Manas : Probably the largest of the rivers to join the Brahmaputra in Goalpara district, the Manas originates in the Bhutan Hills and tumbles down rapidly along the steep north-south incline of the hills before entering the plains whose average slope is 1 in 3000.[9] The river enters Goalpara at a place called Baghdwar and is most unstable and meandering in nature and changes its course very frequently. It carries heavy silt and detritus from the hilly region in its upper reaches before falling into the Brahmaputra about 52 kilometres from its origin. Its principal tributaries on its right bank are the Makra, Dalani, Sonai, Ai, Pomajan, Gaburkura, Bhandura and Koija and on the left bank the Chaulkhoa. The Ai also emanating from the Bhutan ranges first flows rapidly south and then south-east till it falls into the Manas south-east of Bijni town. Its principal tributaries are the Buri-Ai and Kanamakra, both joining it on the left bank.

The Champamati : West of the Manas, the Brahmaputra is joined by the Champamati and the Saralbhanga. The Champamati after being fed in its upper reaches in the foot hills of the Bhutan range by streamlets like the Leupani and Dholpani, and after meeting its principal tributary the Bhur, takes her name as Champamati below the North Trunk Road. Till the North Trunk Road it flows through thick and long grassy areas and dense forests of Chirang Reserve, but thereafter the density of forests decreases. The Champamati has a total course of about 201 kilometres before joining the mighty Brahmaputra.

The Saralbhanga : Known as the Gaurang in its lower reaches, it emerges from the foot hills of the Bhutan range at a high elevation. It passes through steep hilly region in Ripu Reserved Forest and enters the plains below Haltugaon range. Above Kokrajhar, rivers Saumukha and Dekadamra meet Gaurang

9. *Master Plan for Flood Control. Assam. Vol.* 1.Govt. of Assam, Shillong 1950, p. 123.

near Patgaon and it is joined by the Tarrang (known as Balgan in its upper reaches) near Kokrajhar. The turbulent and meandering Gaurang falls into the Brahmaputra below Bilasipara.[10]

The Sankosh : Known as the Gangia in its upper reaches, it originates from the foot hills of Bhutan and flows through the evergreen hilly region of Ripu Reserved Forest and enters the plains near Chautara. It meets its tributary the Hel below Serfanguri, and the Longa near Datma. Above Sapatgram Railway Station, the Gangia is met by a part-flow of the Jakati river and thereafter is known asthe Sankosh which falls into the Brahmaputra near Bagribari.[11]

The Gadadhar : Originating in the Bhutan Hills through Eastern Duars it enters the district of Goalpara and again flows through the Kachugaon and Guma Reserved Forests and is mostly fed by several local streams such as the Bamnai of this area. From the origin it flows through almost plain country and meets the Brahmaputra immediately to the east of Dhuburi town. Normally the Gadadhar does not spill its banks as its sections are large enough to accommodate its high flood discharge. But when the Brahmaputra is in high spate the Gadadhar backs up and spills copiously on its banks. Together with the direct spills of the Brahmaputra near a place called Askikandi the combined spills turn the neighbouring area into a vast sheet of water.[12]

The Dudhkumar : The greater Sankosh divides into two branches at Makaigaon. The western arm retains the name of the original river and after flowing through Jalpaiguri and Koch Bihar districts of West Bengal, joins the eastern branch known as the Gangadhar near Patamari. The united stream, known as the Dudhkumar, falls into the Brahmaputra below Dhuburi. The total length of the river which mostly flows through jungle land is about 320 kilometres. In its upper reaches from Jamduar to Barabadna the Gangadhar runs down a steep slope but from then onwards to its confluence it has a shallow braided channel with a coarse sandy bed.

The maximum and minimum discharges as also the silt contents of the rivers described above are given in the Appendix.

Among the important rivers of the district, on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, which carry the drainage of the Garo Hills to the mighty river, mention may be made of the Karnai, Phulnai, Kalpani, Dudhnai with its tributary the Krishnai, and the Jinari. The Jinjiram rises in the Urpad *bil* and flows parallel to the Brahmaputra till joins it a little to the south of Mahendraganj, after a course of 193 kilometres.

Lakes and Tanks : There are a large number of *bils* in the district, the bigger ones almost approaching the dimensions of small lakes. The largest of the *bils*

10. Ibid, P. 139.
11. Ibid, P. 144.
12. Ibid, P. 149.

lie to the south-west of Abhayapuri Police Station near Bhairab hills and are known as the Dalani and the Tamranga *bils*. During the rainy season these *bils* spread to such an extent that they merge into each other and form a vast picturesque sheet of water. The sight of a vast continuous sheet of water by the side of precipitious hills nearly 492 metres at the peak presents a grand spectacle. About 13 kilometres to the west lies the Dhir *bil* while about 5 kilometres away at the foot of Bakurakumar or Bakurakumari hill lies the Diple *bil*. The largest *bil* on the south bank of the Brahmaputra is the Urpad *bil* lying a few kilometres south-west of Goalpara town. It almost attains the dimensions of a lake and is the source of the Jinjiram, a tributary of the Brahmaputra. There are various marshes in different parts of the district principal among which are the Jaligaur, Kumaria, Bakdul, Dighaldubi, Kishia, Padmapara, Kadamtala, and the Hasila. In the post Independence period the increased demand for fish has led to the development of many *bils* and marshes for pisciculture.

(iii) **Underground Water Resources** : The district forms parts of the vast Brahmaputra basin and the sub-basin of river Manas and is physiographically characterised by two different land forms viz. Inselbergs and Alluvial plains. The inselbergs are isolated hills or ridges of Precambrian gneissic-complex which stand out prominently amidst the blanket of alluvia. The general altitudes of the plains vary from 29.56 m. to 96.23 m. and the inselbergs attain a maximum height of 213.00 m. The mighty Brahmaputra flowing from east to west, the Manas river flowing southerly and joining the Brahmaputra and the other tributaries like Ai, form the chief drainage course in the district.

The northern and southern parts of the district are separated by the Brahmaputra and are different geomorphologically. The northern part of the district represents four geomorphological surfaces viz. Kukulong, Sorbhog, Hauli, and Barpeta. The first three of the above mentioned surfaces are at present undergoing erosion and weathering and as a result, present a landscape representing the flood plains of the drainage system. The Kukulong surface forms the highest terrace of the quarternary landscape characterised by high relief dissection and drainage density. The Kukulong surface corresponds to the Bhaber belt of Ganga basin comprising boulders, cobbles, pebbles and granite gneisses along with clay, silts, sands and gravels. Most of the terrain in this district is scantily populated and thickly forested.

The southern part of the district presents a landscape more or less of the flood plain type with sediments comprising fine to coarse sands, and gravels together with silts and clays.

The groundwater conditions in Goalpara district, thus can be described under 3 district hydrogeological units viz.,

(a) The Terrace Piedmont Plains.

(b) The Terrace Flood Plains of the Younger Alluvia.

(c) The Gapar Formations and Younger Alluvia in the inselberg zone.

The Terrace Piedmont Plains : In the terrace piedmont plains, ground water occurs under water table condition. During the pre-monsoon season, the water levels in wells in the southern fringe of the area are rather shallow varying from 2-3 m. below land surface whereas in the area further north, the depth to water levels are as high as 17 m. below ground level. The seasonal fluctuations of water levels in wells range between 1 and 2 m. in the southern fringe area. The studies so far made revealed that the Piedmont Zone is highly permeable due to the loose coarse plastic materials in the sub-surface aquifers. The movement of ground water, in general, is southerly.

The gradient of water table is 1 in 360 in the western part and is 1 in 280 in the eastern part. The rate of infiltration of the clayey soil cover is rather poor (0.9 mm/min). With a result, considerable delay is involved in the recharge of the aquifers by direct infiltration of precipitation. But the immediate lower zone consisting of loose gravels and sands has a high rate of infiltration as much as 101.4 mm/min. The recharge to the Piedmont Zone mostly occurs during the monsoon due to the innumerable ephemeral hill streams which lose water on entering the sandy gravels. The quantum of recharge is also significant through out the year from the trunk channels of the Manas and Ai which are highly influent before they debouch into the plains. Much information in regard to the hydraulic characteristics of the sub-surface aquifers in the Piedmont Zone is lacking as no hydrogeological exploration has been carried out in the area. The quantity of ground water from the Piedmont Zone is generally good and potable.

The Terrace Flood Plains of the Younger Alluvia : Ground water occurs both under water table conditions and semi-confined conditions. Perched water table conditions have also been noticed at places in the Manas basin. Depths to water level in wells vary between 2 and 4 m. below land surface. In Brahmaputra level, the same is within 5 m. of land surface. In the higher grounds of Sorbhog surface the water level rests within 2.0m. of land surface. The average fluctuation in water levels has been observed to be 2.52 m.

Direct recharge by infiltration of the rainfall is much slower in the flood plain area in comparision to the piedmont plain because of the clayey top soils. The rate of infiltration in the flood plain is 4mm/min. with occasionally going up to 34 mm/min. near the alluvial fans. The zone of depression has very poor infiltration rate as low as 0.4 mm/min.

Exploration in Goalpara district has been carried out on a very limited scale by the Irrigation (Agriculture) and Geology and Mining Departments of the State Government in Agomoni-Gauripur area in Gangadhar sub-basin, Bijni and Sonakhuli area in Manas basin and isolated areas in South Salmara. These shallow bamboo tubewells in Agomoni area range in depth from 19.50 m. to

30.8 m. tapping medium to coarse sands and gravels with yields varying from 38 to 47m³/hr. In Golokganj-Gauripur area, these shallow bamboo tubewells have range in depth between 17m. and 29m. tapping coarse sands and yields varying from 22.5 to 45 m³/hr.

In the eastern part in Bijni-Bilasipara area, Manikpur block, a number of shallow bamboo tubewells have been constructed ranging in depth from 10-26 m. tapping 16 to 20 m. of fine to coarse sands and with yields ranging from 38 to 52m³/hr. Deep tubewells are drilled upto depths of 65 to 66 m. at Chautara and Bhauraguri. The tubewell at Chautara tapping 56.40m of saturated coarse sand with gravel and pebbles has an yield of 77.5 m³/hr. for a drawdown of 3.96 m. and the well at Bhauraguri has an yield of 85.8 m³/hr. for a drawdown 10 m.

In the southern part of the Goalpara district adjoining Meghalaya, a few shallow tubewells have been constructed in Mankachar and South Salmara area. The tubewells are 30 to 33 m. deep with fine to coarse sands and are reported to yield 22.5 to 27 m³/hr.

The ground water from Younger Alluvial aquifers is good and potable but for the excessive iron content.

Gapar Formations and Younger Alluvia in the inselberg Zone : The inselberg zone is generally confined to the eastern part of the district covering large areas both in the northern and southern parts of Goalpara district. As mentioned earlier, the inselbergs are isolated hills or ridges of pre-Cambrian Gneissic Complex which stand out prominently amidst the blanket of alluvia. The inter-hill valley plains consisting of a thick pile of sediments called Gapar formations (Older Alluvium) comprising gravels, sands and clays capped by a impervious lateritic clay. In the western and southern sector of the inselberg zone, the lateritic cap of the Gapar Formation has been disected and the Younger Alluvium has been deposited in their niches, thus establishing a continuity of the water table in the two saturated formations. Around the eastern and northern margins of the inselbergs zone, the Younger Alluvium appears to have been deposited after effective removal of lateritic clay cap.

The Gapar Formations consist of three major patches viz., (a) The North Salmara-Jogighopa patch, (b) The Champamati-Dhir *bil* patch, and (c) The Salkocha-Dhir *bil* patch. In these three patches, g ound water occurs under water table conditions during the pre-monsoon period and may turn out to be under semi-confined conditions at places during the monsoon periods depending upon the thickness of the lateritic clay. During the post-monsoon periods, ground water from the Gapar aquifers seeps through streams and *bils*. The shallow water table aquifers varying in thickness from 4 to 7 m. are found to occur within 15 m. below land surface. The depths to water levels in wells situated in this zone generally are upto 5 m. below surface. Seasonal fluctuation of water level is generally to the tune of 4 m. in the Gapar Formations and 3 m. in the Younger Alluvium.

The slope of water table in the inselberg zone is due south, generally following the orientation of the gaps in between the hills. The average gradient of the water table in the Champamati sub-basin is about 1 in 1100. The rate of infiltration of the top lateritic clay of Gapar Formations is very poor (0.35mm/min). Therefore recharge to the Gapar aquifers takes place generally through the Younger Alluvial strips which have direct connection with the Gapar aquifers below. Deep tubewells drilled in the inselberg zones upto depths varying from 83.34 to 165.23 m. below surface, tapping a cumulative thickness of granular zones varying from 25.86 to 59.38 m. are reported to have yields ranging between 23.3 and 169.0 m³/hr. for drawdowns varying from 2.72 to 1—m. The quality of ground water in the inselberg zone is fresh and potable.

A study of the ground water conditions in the Goalpara district reveals that the district is endowed with a large potential of ground water resources and that there is vast scope for the development of ground water by both shallow and deep tubewells for irrigational purposes.[13]

(*d*) *GEOLOGY* :

(i) **Geological Antiquity** : The Brahmaputra Valley of Assam has evolved during the last two million years by alluviation of the foreland depression or the foredeep in between the comparatively young mountain chain of the Himalayas on the north and block mountain of the Shillong Plateau to the south. The origin and development of the Brahmaputra valley is linked with the phases of uplift glaciation and erosion of the Himalayas, basement tectonics affecting the Shillong massif. The valley is sinking *paripassu* with sedimentation.

The numerous low hills called Archaean inselbergs found scattered near Dhuburi, Goalpara, Jogighopa, Bilasipara, Abhayapuri, and other parts of the district are in fact the outlying portions of the Shillong plateau and represent the oldest rocks.[14]

(ii) **Geological Formation** : The district has been systematically mapped by the Geological Survey of India during the last decade. It has been found that inliers of Archaean metamorphic complex with intrusive granite and pegmatite occur in various parts of the district as isolated hillocks surrounded by extensive alluvium. The geological formations in the district can be classified as below :

13. Compiled from *Report of the Director, Geological Survey of India ; Assam-Meghalaya Circle*, Shillong, dated 27-5-76.
14. Compiled from *Report of the Director, Central Ground Water Board, North Eastern Region*, Gauhati, dated 1-10-75.

AGE		FORMATION
Recent to pleistocene	Quaternary deposits	Newer alluvium Older alluvium Piedmont sediments
Jurassic	Unconformity	Dolerite Pegmatite and quartz veins porphyritic granites Gneissic complex. Graniteid orthogneisses, mica hornblende gneisses and migmatites.
Archaean Metamorphic Complex.	Unconformity	Pyroxinites, pyroxene granulites, Amphibolites and hornblende gneisses, Mica Schist, Muscovite Schist, Ferrugenous quartzities, quartz magnetite Schists, magnetite quartzites.

Magnetite : Magnetite Quartzites occur as sporadic thin bands from 1 to 2 m. wide and are generally associated with amphibolities. The rock contains 20 to 30% magnetite as thin bands and also dispersed in the rock body. Outcrops of these are seen in the Dibil Thakur hill, Silchakia hill etc. In Chanderdinga hill a magnetite quartzite band containing 40 to 50% iron content is exposed on the north-western side of the hill measuring an area of about 0.44 Sq. kms.

Mica Schists : Mica schists occur as thin bands in the gneisses. They consist of quartz and muscovite with subordinate biotite.

Amphibolites : These rocks are observed in the hills around Damodarpur, Dibil Thakur etc. They are greenish grey to dark green, medium to coarse grained and occur in the shape of thin bands and lenses about 5 to 7m. wide.

Hornblende Granulites : These are fine to medium grained, greyish green to greenish in colour sometime containg pyrite. Granulites occur as thin bands 4-7 m. wide in the gneisses of the Bakuwamari hills, Chakrasila hill, Silchakia hill etc.

Pyroxinites : These are medium to coarse grained and greenish to dark green in colour and occur as thin sporadic bands. Conformable with the gneisses of Silchakia hill, Rajasil hill etc. They contain prisms of diopside with subordinate orthoclase, actinolite and tremolite.

Pyroxine-Hornblende Granulites : These are fine to medium grained, greyish green in colour and occur as thin bands and lenses of upto 5 m. in width in the associated gneisses. These are observed in the hillocks of Haldipahar etc.

Gneissic Complex : Most of the hill features in the district consist of the gneissic complex composed of mica-hornblende gneisses and a lit par lit assemblage of mixed gneisses and migmatics. Occasionally, narrow bands of quartz-sillimanite gneisses are observed, indication of high grade metamorphism of pelitic sediments.

The regional trend of the Archaean formations and the foliations of the gneisses varies from NE-SW to NNE-SSW with steep dips towards NW and NNW.

Pegmatite and Quartz Veins : Pegmatite and quartz Veins occur traversing the gneisses, amphibolites add other rocks, both across and along the foliation. These are observed at many places, are of small dimension and are not of any economic importance. In the Chakrasila hill, a coarse grained pinkish monomineralic vein about 1.5 m. wide consists entirely of lepidolite mica.

Dolerites : Fine to medium grained dolerite is exposed in an isolated hillock about 3 kms. north-east of Bilasipara. It has been described as of probable jurrassic age.

Quarternary Deposits, (Piedmont Deposit) : These occur in the northern part of the district as mounds and are exposed in numerous river sections near the foot hills. These piedmont facies terrace deposits consist of water-worn unsorted boulders and pebbles of granites, gneisses and quartzites embedded in gravel and sandy matrix. The thickness of the beds ranges from a few metres to 26 metres.

Older Alluvium : The older alluvium also known as 'High level Alluvium', occurs in the district as a broad platform with 20-30 m. scarp faces. It consists of reddish to brownish sandy clay with coarse sand and irregularly distributed lenses of unsorted pebbles. Large tracts of land in the northern part and a small area in the southern part are covered by older alluvium.

Newer Alluvium : Most of the area in the district is covered by the recent alluvium which is being deposited by the present day rivers and streams in their flood periods. It generally occurs at lower levels flanking the older alluvial deposits. The sediments are light grey to light brown in colour, less compact and consist of pebbles, gravels, sands, silts and clays. However, the finer clastics have a preponderance over the coarser fractions and the granular deposits are mainly confined to the stream channels. [15]

(iii) **Mineral Wealth** : A few mineral occurrences have been reported from various parts of the district during the course of Geological mapping. However, most of them appear to be of little economic importance and in respect of some, their potentiality remains to be fully assessed.

15. Ibid.

Building material : The various rocks viz., gneisses, granites, amphibolits etc., of the Archaean complex can be used as building stones and road metal. Building material is also available from the piedmont deposits and river beds near the foot hills.

Sand : Cement mortal sand of good quality is found in all the river channels. Sands of river Champamati are being used extensively for this purpose.

Clay : Alluvial clay occurs as extensive deposits in the area in the older and newer alluvial and is suitable for manufacture of bricks and tiles. The clay is generally greyish in colour and quite plastic in nature.

Feldspar : Pegmatite veins containing feldspar occur in biotite gneiss near Pancharatna (26°12′N : 90°35′E), Bageswari hill and around North Salmara in Goalpara district and veins upto 40 m. thick have been reported.

Garnet and Epidote : Garnetiferous quartzites and calc granulites contain Garnet and Epidote crystals on the NW of Kumari hills. Transparent varieties of Epidote can be used as semi-precious stones while the Garnet can be used as abrasive.

Lithium Mica-Lepidolite : An unusual lepidolite rock comprising almost entirely of aggregates of lepidolite mica occurs in association with pegmatite veins in biotite gneisses and pyroxenites occurring on the northern top of Dhir *bil* (26°16′ : 90°23′) in the district and one specimen on analysis was found to contain 3-8 % Li_2O and larger blocks and boulders of lepidolite rock lie scattered in 120 m. long and 30 m. wide zone following more or less the foliation trend of gneiss. About 260 tonnes of such rock will be available from the surface boulder.

Sulphide Minerals : Occurrences of sulphides have been reported near Pancharatna, Deoli, Agia and Khardong areas.

Pancharatna area : Sulphide mineralisation in the area occurs in the north-eastern part of the Pancharatna hill (26°11′42″N : 90°33′12″E). Mineralisation is dominantly associated with two micacious Quartz Schist bands varying in thickness from 2 to 3 m. Those bands have been traced for about 700 m. along the strike of N.W. The mineralisation is in the forms of sulphides and oxides. The ore minerals are mostly pyrities, pyrrhotite, chalcopyrite, Galena malacite and azurite. A few chip samples drawn from the exposed mineralised bands have indicated 700 ppm Cu. and 1500 ppm Zn.

Deoli Hills : At Deoli Hills 6 kms. west of Agia (90°30′40″E : 26°34′5″E), Sulphide mineralisation was found in the form of lenticles, stringers and dissemination in association with amphibolites. Analytical results indicate Cu, Zn of Ni and the total metal content is 700 ppm.

Agia area : On the north-east of Agia (90°34′ 25″ E : 26°4′50″N) a thin band of hornblende biotite Schist (about 4 M) contains pyrite, chalcopyrite and pyrrhotite. Soil samples collected from this area indicate copper and zinc values upto 300 ppm.

Khardong area : At Khardong area (90°37′E:25°57′20″N) sulphide mineralisation is associated with ferrugenous granite. Gossan Samples indicated Cu and Zn up to 300 ppm.

Beryl : Crystals of Beryl and Tourmaline occur together mainly near Kharmauza (90°33′40″E:26°26′11″N) and Darka (90°29′30″E:26°30′00″N) in pegmatite veins. Tourmaline grains of upto 17 cm. in length and crystals of Beryl ranging from 2 cm. long and about 4 cm. in diameter are found. In the second occurrence proportion of Beryl is quite high as much as 25% in partially weathered small grains in one square metre area.

Iron Ore : Insitu exposures of iron ore occur as widely distributed small massess throughout the area associated with banded ferrugenous quartzites. Some of the important localities are ferrugenous as described below.

Banded hematite : Megnetite quartzite occurs along the Chandar Dinga hill in Kokrajhar Sub-division (26°23′50″ N : 90°16′30″ E) of Goalpara district and includes hematite with some magnetite and goethite, associated with amphibolites and micaceous phyllites. Total estimated reserve is about 12 m. tonnes including float ore of about 1 million tonnes. The insitu iron ore extends over an area of 2000m. strike length wise with a width of 70 ft. and the reserves are calculated upto a depth of 100 ft. Average iron content of the ore is 49.58%. This iron ore is amenable to beneficiation.

A band of magnetite-quartzite is found on the Mala Hill on the western bank of the Manas river southof Abhayapuri. The bank is on an average 200 m. long, 150 m. wide and the reserves are upto a thickness of 20 m. above the ground level. The estimated reserves are about 2.2 million tonnes. Iron content is generally below 50%.

Three bands of magnetite quartzities with variable proportion of magnetite have been traced out in the area around Chakrasila range. But most of the occurrences are of small lenticular masses. Prominent localities are Bandarmuri, Bibli thakur and Silchakla. The strike length of the first two bands is 1200 m. and 500 m. respectively and width 3 m. and 10 m. respectively while the third is of little importance. Total reserve of iron ore upto a depth of 30 m. from the surface is about 0.64 million tonnes in this area. The ores are of low grade and a preliminary chemical analysis shows an ore content between 30% to 40% by weight.

Two other prominent areas are Lengapara (90°28′50″ E : 26°3′55″ N) and Kumari hill (90°32′44″ E : 25°11′25″ N) where iron ore bands have been

located. At Lengapara the banded hematite magnetite quartzite rock occurs in association with biotite gneisses and amphibolites and intruded by quartz veins. There are two bands in this hill trending ENE-WSW. Band no. 1 is in the central part with a strike length of 1800 m. and thickness of 10 m. The inferred reserves have been estimated at 5.20 m. tonnes upto a depth of 100 m. The inferred reserves of second band with a strike length of 700 m. and 10 m. thickness and upto a depth of 100 m. are about 2.05 m. tonnes. The total reserve therefore, of Lengapara is approximately 7.5 m. tonnes. There are three bands of banded magnetite quartzites in the Kumari area and the largest band has strike length of 700 m. and a thickness of 8 m. The total inferred reserves are 64 m tonnes upto a depth of 8 m.

Thus the total inferred reserves worked out to be about 9 m. tonnes. The ore is of low grade with an iron content varying from 23.80 to 51.23% by weight in the Khordang area, (90°37′ 25″ E : 25°57′30″ N) the band is about 250 m. in length, 10 m. in thickness and the reserves upto a depth of 50 m. are inferred at 0.4 m. tonnes approximately. [16]

(iv) **Earthquakes** : The frequent occurrence of earthquakes in Assam is related to the geology of the region. Earthquakes occur in those regions where the crust is markedly unstable such as in mountain belts of geologically recent origin. One such region is formed by the Himalayan mountains and the Naga and the Lushai Hills around the northern, the north-eastern and the eastern border of the stable peninsular wedge of the Assam plat eau. Though equilibrium has largely been attained, the organic forces which resulted in the rises of the mountains are still in progress. Adjustment taking place intermittently find expression as earthquakes.

Like the rest of Assam, the Goalpara district has always been subject to earthquakes as it lies in the zones of seismic disturbances. The great earthquake which occurred on June 12, 1897, had its epicentre in the Shillong plateau. It had a magnitude of 8.5 Richter and was probably one of the greatest earthquakes ever recorded. This shock was felt over an area of 1,750,000 sq. miles i.e. about 45,32,000 sq. kilometres and destruction of stone buildings was almost universal in an area of 30,000 sq. miles, i.e. about 78,000 sq. kms. including Shillong, Goalpara, Gauhati, Nowgong and Sylhet. Calcutta was also seriously affected. "About 1600 lives lost. Land slips and earth fissures very abundant over the whole of the epicentral area".[17] Most of the masonry buildings in the district were destroyed but the *cutcha* structures escaped with comperatively little damage. In Goalpara subdivision the Subdivisional Officer's bungalow, the

16. Ibid.
17. *A note on the Seismicity of Assam Region*, by the Director General of Observatories, New Delhi-3, p.13.

Circuit House, the Treasury, the School and the Post and Telegraph offices were all wrecked ; the bazar sank, and the people were forced to perch themselves on raised bamboo platforms as the whole of the town was submerged under water. All masonry structures in Dhuburi Subdivision were seriously damaged. The foreshore was broken up by enormous fissures, wells cracked and were filled up with sand and sand and water sprouted from the earth. Fortunately, however, the loss of human lives amounted to only five.[18]

The earthquake of the 15th, August, 1950 had its epicentre at 28.5° N., 96.7°E. and had a magnitude of 8.6′ Richter. The estimated area of North Eastern Assam over which extensive and heavy damage occurred was 1,900 sq. miles or about 4,900 sq. kms. Estimated area in Assam which suffered minor damages was 39, 000 sq. miles or about 1,01,000 sq. kms. Estimated area in India, Burma and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) over which the shock was felt was 6,50,000 sq. miles or about 16,83,500 sq. kms. The shock was followed by a train of after-shocks some of which reached destructive magnitude near epicentre. The following is the list of important after-shocks.[19]

	Date	Epicentre		Magnitude (Richter)
		Lat.	Long.	
1.	1950, August, 16	2°86 N.	95°7 E.	7.0
2.	1950, August, 16	2°66 N.	95°1 E.	7.0
3.	1950, September,13	2°78 N.	95°5 E.	7.0

Fortunately, however, Goalpara district was spared by and large from the ravages of the quake. It escaped with light damage ; only some slight cracks appeared in the *pucca* buildings of Dhuburi area. A table showing the date, epicentre and magnitude of some earthquakes which have been felt in the district is given below.[20]

18. B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetteers, Vol. III, Goalpara*, Calcutta, 1905,p.9.
19. *A Note on the Seismicity of Assam Region* by the Director General of Observatories, New Delhi-3, p,15.
20. Ibid, Appendix, p. 1-18.

	Date	Epicentre		Magnitude (Richter)
		Lat. (°N)	Long (°E)	
1.	10-1-1869	Near Cachar		7½
2.	12-6-1897	Shillong plateau		8.7
3.	31-8-1906	27°	97°	7
4.	12-12-1908	26½°	97°	7¼
5.	14-11-1915	Near Nowgong		5
6.	5-12-1915	-do-		5
7.	8-7-1918	24.5°	91°	7.6
8.	9-9-1923	25¼°	91°	7.1
9.	3.7.1930	25.8°	90.2°	5.6
10.	4-7-1930	-do-		-do-
11.	27-1-1931	25.4°	96.8°	7.6
12.	30-1-1931	-do-		5.6
13.	14-8-1932	25.8°	95.7°	7.0
14.	15-1-1934	26.6°	86.8°	8½
15.	16-8-1938	23.5°	94¼°	7.2
16.	21-1-1941	27.2°	92.0°	6¾
17.	23-10-1943	26.8°	94.0°	7.2
18.	12-9-1946	23.9°	96.2°	7½
19.	29-7-1947	28.8°	93.7°	7¾
20.	15-8-1950	28.5°	96.7°	8.6
21.	17-8-1952	30.5°	91.5°	7.5
22.	21-3-1954	24.2°	95.1°	7¼
23.	1-7-1957	24.4°	93.8°	7¼
24.	12-7-1964	24.9°	95.3°	6.7
25.	13-7-1964	23.7°	94.7°	6.5
26.	17-10-1969	23.1°	94.7°	6.0

(*e*) *FLORA* :

(i) **Botanical divisions and nature of vegetation** : The vegetation of Goalpara district mainly consists of tropical deciduous and tropical semi-evergreen interspersed with grass lands.

Tropical moist and dry deciduous forest : Most of the areas fall under this type. The vegetation consists mainly of *sal* (*shorea robusta*). The other dominant trees are *kydia calycina*, *udal* (*sterculia villosa*), *sida* (*lagerstroemia parviflora*), *alstonia scholaris*, *adina cordifolia aksi* (*dillennia pentagyna*), *bombax ceiba*, *paroli* or *serpang* (*stereospermum chelonoides*), *bahera* (*terminalia bellrica*), *terminalia chebula*, *kumbs* (*careva arborea*), *vitex peduncularis*, and *albizia procera*,

The common herbs and shrubs are *ageratun conyzoides*, *coffea bengalensis*, *lupatorium odoratum*, *celerodendrum infortunatum*, and species of *curcuma*, *carex*. *crinum* etc.

In *sal* (*shorea robusta*) forests, the floor is subjected to grazing, and if the fire and grazing are stopped, soon the undergrowth turns into evergreen patches. Clumps of *dendrocalamus hamiltonii* are also visible. Some common climbers which sometimes damage the seedlings are *mucona pruriens*. *acacia pennata*. *bauhina* sp. *entada* sp. etc. In most areas *sal* (*shorea robusta*) constituted 80-100 per cent of the vegetation and this may be due to biotic factors.

Tropical semi-evergreen forests : There are some large patches of semi-evergreen forests, generally near the Bhutan border. The common trees are, *cinnamomum cecicodaphne*, *phoebe goalparensis*, *schima wallichii*, *garcinia* sp, *ficus cunea*, *michelia oblonga*, *elaeocarpus wallichii*, *grewia* sp, *miliusa velutine*, *casearia kurzii*, *cordia myxa*, *butea superba*, *crataeya religiosa* etc. The common shrubs and herbs are *Leea crispa*, *Leea* spp, *Phlogacanthus thyrsiflorus*, *Morinda augustifolia*, *Pavetta indica Glochidion* sp., *Alpinia* sp., *Calamus* sp., *Crinum* sp., *Glycosmis arborea*. *Croton caudatus* etc. Besides these, there are number of climbers and lianas such as, *Uvaria hamiltonii*, *Clematis gouriana*, *Acacia pennata*, *Bauhinia vahlii*, *Entada scandens*, *Vitis* sp., etc.

Grasslands : Along the banks of the Brahmaputra there are extensive patches of grasslands and the common grasses are *anluda mutica*, *imperata cylindrica*. *saccharum procerum*, *themeda villosa* etc. The grasslands are subjected to fire in the summer season. A few tree species are seen in the grasslands. The common ones are *phyllanthus emblicakumbi* (*careya arborea*), *ziziphus mauritiana*, *bombax ceiba etc.* [21]

The botanical species of the district, depending largely on the amount of rainfall received, may also be studied by classifying the district in the following manner :—

(a) The tract having moderately heavy rainfall.
(b) The tract having moderate rainfall.
(c) The tract having somewhat less rainfall.

(a) The foot hill of the Bhutan ranges bounded by parallel 7 in the south, Bhur river in the east and Saralbhanga in the west may be categorised as the tract having moderately heavy rainfall. The belt contains a very rich amount of botanical species. Main families met with are :—

21. Compiled from the Report of the Deputy Director, Botanical Survey of India, Eastern Circle, Shillong, dated 9.10.75.

Lauraceae, Meliaceae, Datiscaceae, Burseraceae, Sterculiaceae, Euphorbiaceae, Magnoliaceae, Combretaceae, Sennericeaceae, Dilleniaceae, Myrtaceae, Guttiferae Ancardiaceae, Piperaceae, Araleaceae, Elacecarpaceae, Apocynaceae etc. The main important species of the families are :

Lauraceae Phoebe goalparensis (Bonsum), phoebe cooperiana (Mekahi), Cinnamemum Ceeicedaphne (Gonsoroi).

Meliaceae : Amoora rohituka Spectabilis, (Amari), A. wallichii (Lali), Dysexylum binnectiferum (Bandardima) Chikrassia tabularis (Bogipoma) Ailanthus grandis.

Datiscaceae	: Tetremales undiflora (Bhelu or Moina)
Burseraceae	: Canarium resiniferum (Dhuma)
Sterculiaceae	: Mansonia dipikae. Sterculia alata. Pterespermum acerifolium (Hatipoila).
Euphorbiaceae	: Bischeffia javaniea (Uriam), Sapium baceatum (Seleng)
Apocynaceae	: Rawlfia serpentina (Sarpagandhashrub).
Fagaceae	: Castonepsis indica (Hingori), Castonepsis Hystrix.
Annonaceae	: Polyalthia semiarum.
Magneliaceae	: Michelia champaka (Titasopa), Michelia montana (Pansopa).
Combretaceae	: Terminalia myriocarpa (Hollock), Terminalia bellarica (Bohera or Bhomra).
Sennericeacae	: Duabanga snenerítioides (Khokan).
Dilleniaceae	: Dillenia indicum, Dillenea pentagyna Dillenea acabrelia.
Myrtaceae	: Eugenia jambolana.
Guttiferae	: Mesua ferrea, Garinia pedumeculata.
Piperaceae	: Piper longum.
Araleaceae	: Shrubs and climbers.
Elacocarpaceae	: Elacocarpus ganitrus (Rudraksha).

Besides, there are families like Ficaceae of the tree climbing habits and shrubs and herbs of the families polygenaceae, Rubiaceae, Rutaceae, Acanthaceae, Cernaceae, Urticaceae and Menispermaceae.

Besides, ferns and canes are also available in this moderately heavy rainfall belt and also various species of orchids.

The sal forests right from the north bank of the Brahmaputra to the parallel 7 in the north, Ai river in the east and Saralbhanga in the west may be categorised as thetract having moderate rainfall. The predominant botanical families met with are : Dipterocarpaceae, Combretaceae, Lythraceae, Dille iaaceae, Anonaceae, Rubiaceae, Malvaceae, Leguminoaceae, Verbenaceae,

Boraginaceae, Euphorbiaceae, Myrtaceae, Elacocarpaceae, Sabiacea Sterculeaceae, Bignoniaceae, Rutaceae, Renunculaceae, Ternatreemiaceae, Bignoniaceae, Menispermaceae, Araleaceae, Aarnacdiacea, Rhamn aceae, Meliaceae, Burseraceae, Flacourtiaceae, Tiliaceae, Asclepediaceae, Apocynaceae, Graminae. Compesitae, Sapindaceae (Aesculus) Bixaceae, Lauraceae, Magnoliaceae, Labiatae, Graminae, Compesitae, Urticaoeae and ferns and varieties of orchids.

The commercially important species of the above mentioned familites are :

Dipterocarpaceae	: Shorea robusta (*Sal*).
Meliaceae	: Cedrela tuna (*poma*)
Dilleniaceae	: Dillenia pentagyna (*Bajiou*)
	Dillenia indicum (*Outenga*)
Lythraceae	: Legerstroonia parviflora (*Sida*)
	L. floreginae (*Azar*).
Ternstroemiaceae	: Sachima Wallichli (*Ghugra*)
Combretaceae	: Terminalia belerica (*Bhomra*)
Verbenaceae	: Gmelina arberea (*Gomari*)
Leguminosae	: Albizzia procera (*Siris*) A. lebbek (*Koroi*), Albizzia odoritissima (*Hiharu*).
Euphorbiaceae	: Bischoffia Javanica (*Uriam*).
Myrtaceae	: Eugenia jambolana (*Jam*) Eugennia Operculata.
Rubiaceae	: Anthocephallus Cadamba (*Kadam*). Hymenodyction excelsum (*Panikadam*).
Sterculiaceae	: Sterculia villosa.
Bignoniaceae	: Stereospermum cheloniodes.
Malvaceae	: Bomhax malabarica (*Simul*)

(c) The vast stretch of grassy savannah from the Bhur river to Kanamakra, about 4 or 5 kilometres down the southern boundary of the Manas Reserved Forest, may be categorised as the tract having somewhat less rainfall. The chief families met with are :

Gramineae (in the savannah riparian riverine areas), leguminosae, Verbenaceae ; Malvaceae, Lythraceae, Ranunculaceae, Convolvulaceae, Asclepiadiaceae, Polygonaceae, Apocynaceae, Dilleniaceae, Euphorbiaceae, Labiatae, Rutaceae, Araliaceae.

The important species of these families are :

Leguminosae : Acacia catechu (*Khoir*)
Dalbuia sissoo : (*Sissu*)
Albizzia lebbek (*Koroi*)
Albizzia odoritissima (*Hiharu*)
Verbeneceae : Gmelina arborea (*Gomari*),

Euphorbiaceae : Briedelia retusa (*Kuhir*)
Malvaceae : Bomhax malabarica (*Simul*)
Lythraceae : Lagerstroemia parviflora (*Sida*)
Dilleniaceae : Dillenia pentagyna (*Aksy*), D. Scabrella (*Bainoj*).

In the riparian belts of Ai Teklai, Kanamakra ; Aeacia catechu (*Khoir*), Dalbergia sissoo (sissu and Saccharum, species in the floor are mainly met with along with Capparis species, Amarantus species and Ranunculus species. Murraya exatica is also not uncommon in these areas.

The nature of vegetation in the above named belts may be described as a mixture of trees, shrubs, climbers and creepers. The plants of various habits are met within the same abode without any discrimination.

Orchids in Sal forests and medicinal plants are found in this belt.

(ii) **Forests** : The forests of the district have been classified into Reserved Forests constituted under the provision of the Assam Forest Regulation VII, 1891 and Unclassed State Forests which are mostly waste lands at the disposal of the Government and are usually devoid of anything in the shape of tree growth where villagers are allowed to cultivate. On June 30, 1904, Reserved Forests in Goalpara district covered an area of approximately 2,04,000 hectares and Unclassed State Forests extended over about 1,45,000 hectares. Prior to the First Five Year Plan their respective areas were nearly 1,01,000 and 1,000 hectares respectively. At the end of the Second Fiver Year Plan the area under Reserved Forests remained the same but the area under Unclassed State Forests increased to about 27,000 hectares as a result of an area of about 26,000 hectares of private forests being added in 1957 due to the abolition of the Zamindari system. From about 1,90,000 hectares of Reserved Forests and about 1,51,000 hectares of Unclassed State Forests in the district in 1962-63, the area under Reserved Forests increased to about 2,03,000 hectares in 1965-66 and that under Unclassed State Forests decreased to about 1,29,000 hectares in 1965-66 and further increased and decreased respectively to about 2,42,000 hectares and 36,000 hectares in 1972-73. The division-wise break-up of Reserved Forests during 1972-73 was Haltugaon-1,01,172 hectares, Kachugaon- 81,973 hectares, Dhuburi - 38,812 hectares and Goalpara—20,056 hectares. At present the area under Reserved Forests in Haltugaon Division has remained the same as in 1972-73, that in Kachugaon Division is 81,906 hectares, Dhuburi Division has 33,792 hectares and Goalpara Division 22,177.89 hectares under Reserved Forests. Three more Reserved Forests viz., Manas (Part) covering 41,900 hectares, Panbari covering 1,630 hectares and Kuklung covering 1,456 hectares are also within the district but are controlled by North Kamrup Forest Division with headquarters at Rangiya in

Kamrup district. The other Reserved Forests of the district with their areas are shown below. ;-[22]

Name of Division	Name of Reserved Forest	Area (in Hectares)
1	2	3
Haltugaon	1. Chirang	59,240.123
	2. Bengtol	6,006.672
	3. Birinchiguri	46.215
	4. Sissoobari	515.12
	5. Teklai	112.503
	6. Manas Reserve (Part)	34,948.230
	7. Katribari	33.123
	8. Satbhendi	270.003
	Total	1,01,171.881
Goalpara	1. Uportala jhar	44.70
	2. Rokhapara	195.50
	3. Gendabari	528.74
	4. Sagunbashi	238.40
	5. Geradulee	77.66
	6. Jangrajaincha	1539.21
	7. Salpara	247.00
	8. Deosila	408.90
	9. Kurheamari	80.16
	10. Dhanubhanga	46.50
	11. Kanyakuchi	485.00
	12. Ambuk	370.00
	13. Kahibari	181.30
	14. Dakuakata	189.87
	15. Budlung	287.44
	16. Baghmara	92.30
	17. Kheropara	309.00
	18. Ghagra Hill	409.00
	19. Checkuary	538.80
	20. Kachadal	176.12
	21. Athiabari	1,660.32
	22. Chitalmari	336.80

22. Conservator of Forests, Assam, Gauhati.

Name of Division	Name of Reserved Forest	Area (in Hectares)
1	2	3
	23. Dhamar ..	160.59
	24. Kumarkhali ..	885.02
	25, Bamundanga ..	228.51
	26. Sakia basha ..	168.01
	27. Darka ..	181.37
	28. Dhepakhang ..	277.00
	29. Bordal ..	86.00
	30. Nakkati ..	2,881.29
	31. Bamungaon ..	1,059.61
	32. Kakijana ..	1,700.00
	33. Pancharatna Hills ..	976.50
	34. Matia ..	766.80
	35. Phoponga. ..	277.00
	36. Nakati ..	212.00
	37. Kothakuthi ..	25.10
	38. Rakhal Thakur	93.00
	39. Nalanga Hill ..	838.46
	40. Ganbina ..	117.00
	41. Dipkai ..	193.00
	42. Bandarmatha ..	118.21
	43. Nalbari ..	166.00
	44. Mogo ..	372.90
	45. Athibari ..	21.05
	46. Rendu ..	245.00
	47. Doshikata ..	1,685.05
	Total	22,177.89
Dhuburi ..	1. Guma ..	6,941.18
	2. Rupsi ..	123.28
	3. Lalkura ..	156.21
	4. Monglajhora ..	4,618.48
	5. Bamunijhora ..	347.23
	6. Atharokotha ..	966.39
	7. Silkikhata ..	174.50
	8. Dudumari ..	291.55
	9. Mahamaya ..	9,896.79

Name of Division	Name of Reservod Forest	Area (in Hectares)
1	2	3
	10. Belukupa ..	1,719.27
	11. Parawea ..	302.50
	12. Sakati ..	22.58
	13. Tilapara ..	117.16
	14. Katrigacha ..	705.38
	15. Nadanggiri Hill ..	1,018.08
	16. Digdari ..	65.04
	17. Chakrasila ..	4,549.05
	18. Sarpamari ..	168.47
	19. Dudhnath Hill ..	155.94
	20. Baksanara	136.55
	21. Arrearjhar ..	269.06
	22. Srigram ..	830.25
	23. Tipkai ..	216.38
	Total	33,792.33
Kachugaon ..	1. Ripu Reserved Forest ..	60,462.00
	2. Kachugaon Reserved Forest ..	21,444.00
	Total	81,906.00

It is further proposed to convert 67 forests measuring 22,600 hectares under Goalpara Division and 17 forests covering 22,585 hectares under Dhuburi Division into Reserved Forests. As stated elsewhere there were forty eight Forest Villages in the district according to the 1971 Census, most of which were situated in Kokrajhar Civil Sub-division.

Broad effects of Government Forest Policy : Since 1891, the Assam Forest Regulation VII of 1891 has been enforced in Assam. Forests are classified, as per rules into four types : (1) Reserved, (2) Protected, (3) Village, (4) Unclassed State Forests. Reserved Forests have been constituted under provisions of the Act under which the following acts are mainly prohibited—(1) trespassing, or permitting cattle to trespass, or allowing cattle to pasture ; (2) causing any damage to forest Reserves by unauthorised extraction of timber, (3) clearing of forest land without permission, (4) setting, kindling, or leaving any fire in the forest (5) felling, cutting, girdling, marking, looping · tapping or causing injuries by fire or otherwise to any tree, (6) quarrying of stones, or removal of forest

produce, (7) unauthorised clearing or breaking up of land for any purpose and (8) poisoning water or in contravention to Government rules hunting, shooting, fishing, setting of trap or snare. The first object of the management of forest is to conserve forest for the maintenance of climatic balance and to provide protection from erosion. It will be noticed from the figures quoted in the preceding pages that Unclassed State Forests in the district dwindled in 1972-73 to only about 2/ per cent of their area in 1965-66. The deforested areas have been settled for cultivation with landless people but such unplanned denundation has deprived most of these forests of the power to resist erosion by swirling flood waters.

The avowed forest policy of the Government is to attain a more regular and superior type of forests than the existing ones. In this respect sufficient progress has been made during the course of past 50 years. On the basis of scientifically prepared working plans superior species are naturally regenerated and plantation is carried on very systematically.

Endeavours have also been made, to enunciate a planned forest policy for providing the Saw mills with timber and to meet the local requirements of timber, firewood, bamboo and cane. Exporting timber to other parts of the country is also under consideration.

The first object of the Government, is to maintain climatic balance by conserving 33% of forest area in the district in conformity with the universally accepted principle. Prevention of soil-erosion, preservation of the capital value of forests, improvement of the growing stock by enforcing sound silvicultural methods, replenishment of the stock by applying recent techniques of natural regeneration of valuable species in poorly stocked areas and grassy lands are other aims of the policy. The annual yield is to be removed in a planned way on silvicultural principles so that the growing stock in reserve forest areas is not depleted and the annual yield is sustained. Attempts are also to be made to utilize the less valuable species in different industrial enterprises so that optimum benefit is derived by society from forests.

(*f*) *FAUNA* :

Wild animals mostly represented by elephants, rhinoceros, bisons, buffaloes, tigers, leopards, bears, wild pigs and deer infested the district in such large numbers that the British offered rewards for their destruction during the nineteenth century. So substantial was the amount spent on rewards that in the middle of that century "more money was paid in one year for killing wild animals than was realized from the land revenue".[23] For the three years ending in 1870, in the course of which an average of 116 human lives were lost yearly to

23. W. W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Assam*, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1975 (Reprint), P. 13.

wild animals and snake bites, rewards disbursed averaged £130-13s.-0d. annually and the rates had subsequently to be increased to encourage more destruction of wild animals.[24] This policy, while having the desired effect of reducing depredations caused by wild animals, as evidenced by the fact that in 1903 only 44 human lives were lost to wild animals including 32 fatal cases of snake bite, greatly depleted wild life stock of the district. At the beginning of the present century, B.C. Allen remarks, "Wild animals used at one time to be numerous, but they are rapidly decreasing in numbers."[25] A more tolerant attitude has been adopted by Government towards animal life since Independence and through various legislations and executive measures. Unnecessary destruction of wild life has been prohibited, though even now, it sometimes becomes necessary to permit killing of animals especially rogue elephants to prevent loss of life and property.

The present denizens of the forests of the district include such animals of mammalia group as elephants, inhabiting both banks of the Brahmaputra especially near the hills, whose population has to be kept under control by annual elephant catching, described elsewhere in the Chapter. Elephants which kill persons or cause depredation to crops are declared rogue and are permitted to be shot by hunters authorised by the Deputy Commissioner of the district. Another pachyderm, the one-horned rhinoceros is not as plentiful as in the districts of Upper Assam and is now almost exclusively confined to north of the Brahmaputra having become extinct on its south bank in the district. The herds of buffaloes are limited in number, spotted deer (*cervus axis*) are rare and *barasingha* or swamp deer (*cervus duvauceli*) are few. The other kinds of deer more plentifully found in the district include the hog deer (*cervus porcinus*), the rib-faced or barking deer (*cervus muntjac*) and the sambar (*cervus unicolor*). Bisons (*bas gaurus*) thrive in the district and are generally found near the hills and in the neighbourhood of tree forests. Tigers, leopards and bears are found in almost every part of the district while wild pigs are generally seen in the Eastern Duars. Smaller animals of the district include hares, foxes, civet cats, wild cats, mongoose, jackals, monkeys etc.

Birds : Various kinds of colourful land birds, water birds and marsh birds are seen in this district throughout the year. The beauty and marvel of these winged creatures are consistent with the beautiful surroundings of the country side. Birds include wild geese and duck, snipe, florican (*sypheotis bengalensis*) black and marsh patridge, jungle fowl (*gallus ferrugineus*) and marsh pheasants. Peafowls are seen in the north of the district where in the Eastern Duars are also found pelicans, teal, common and button quail, snipe, golden

24. Ibid. P. 27.
25. B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetteers, Vol. III, Goalpara*. 1905, Calcutta, P. 13.

plover, various kinds of cranes, paddy birds etc. Among various birds which are associated in our daily life and which live in the neighbourhood of human habitation are common house crows or *Kawri* (*carvus splendens*), Jungle crows or *Dhora Kawri* (*carvus macrorhyvictros*), House sparrows or *Ghonchirika* (*passer domesticus*), common *mynas* or *Salika charai* (*acridotheres tristris*), Pied mainas or *Kankurika* or *Konamuchari* (sturnopaster coutra), Drangos or *Phesu charai* (*dicrurus macrocercus*), Wag tails or *Balimahi* (*motacilla cinerea*) and various other species of birds. Birds of prey and scavengers are commonly met both in forested areas and in the neighbourhood of villages and towns. There are vultures or *Sogun* (*pseudogyps bengalinsis*), King vultures or *Raja Sagun* (*sarcogyps calvus*) Brahminy kite or *Senchiloni* (*haliastar indus*), common parish kite or *chiloni* (*milvus migrans*), Tawny Eagle or *Kuruha* (*aquila repax*), Crested serpent eagle or *Moukhap* (*hoematornis cheela*) and so on. Water birds of various kinds of both indigenous and migratory habits are seen in the *bils* along the Brahmaputra and elsewhere in the district. Storks or *Bortokolas* (*leploptilos javanicus*) and cattle egrets or *Bogoli* (*babulcusibis*) are seen in plenty fishing in the open *jheels* or *bils*.

Reptiles : Tortoises of various kinds are found in the *bils* and rivers of the district. They are mostly aquatic in their habit but come to the sandy shore to lay eggs. Crocodiles are occasionally come across in the Brahmaputra river bed but are plentiful in the rivers of the Eastern Duars. Among the lizard Geckos are found in branches of trees and sometimes in houses also, chamelions, wall lizards, monitor lizards (*varanus indicus*), Green lizards etc. are found almost in every part of the district. Amont the snakes the most common are king cobras (*naja naja*), king snakes (*coronclia getulus*), Adders and water snakes. Pythons are found in the forested areas and are the biggest of all snakes found in this district.

Amphibians : Among the amphibians, frogs and toads that are equally at home in both land and water are found in every part of this district. Frogs are rather reptilian in form when they are in adult stage but they evidence their affinity with fishes by first passing through a gill breathing larval stage. Eggs are usually laid in water holes of stagnant nature and the larvae are seen swimming in such water in large numbers. Toads are more accustomed to living in land than in water. They give off secretions noxious to foes and sometimes of a highly toxic nature. The common frog (*Rana temporatia*) is found throughout the rainy season specially when the countryside is inundated with rain water. Todas are seen under cover of stones and houses whereas tree frogs which are arboreal in nature are come across on the branches of trees near water holes.

Fishes : Fishes of various kinds are found in the *bils* and rivers of the district. The bigger fishes generally found in *bils* are *Rou*, *Borali*, *Cheetal*. *Bahu*, *Kolia jora*, *Sole* and varieties of smaller sized fishes. These *bils* are generally sold on auction to the highest bidder for a term of three years. A list of important fish found in the district is given in Chapter IV.

As information regarding invertebrates which include different kinds of insects, spiders, scorpions, crabs etc. of both aquatic and terrestrial habits found in the district is scanty, their description has been omitted. Moreover, although figures regarding fatality caused by wild animals and snakes are not readily available for recent years it is common knowledge that such cases have decreased to such an extent that compared to conditions obtaining at the beginning of the current century they may be termed as negligible. Snake bites cause the majority of death attributed to wild beasts and reptiles at present.

Elephant catching : Right to elephant catching is sold by auction every year. The successful lessees of the *Mahals* are to pay monopoly fees in addition to the usual rates of royalty which come to Rs. 500, Rs. 425 and Rs. 350 for each capture of tusker, female and *makhna* respectively. The lessee is allowed to hunt only for a period allotted to him. There are two processes for catching wild elephants, one is *Mela Shikar* and the other is *Kheda Shikar*, both of which are in vogue though the method of *Mela Shikar* is more popular in this district. In *Mela Shikar*, *mahouts* mounted on well trained elephants pursue the herd which generally takes to flight. The task is arduous ad enxciting in character. The great animals go crashing through the thickest jungles and over rough and treacherous ground at a terrific pace and the hunters are liable to be torn by the thorny cane or to be swept down from their seats by the boughs of an overhanging tree. After a time, younger animals begin to flag and lag behind and it is then the opportunity of the pursuer comes. Two hunters single out a likely beast, drive their elephants on either side and deftly throw a noose over its neck. The two ends are tightened to the *Kunkis*, as the hunting elephants are called and they close in on either side, the captured animal is unable to escape or to do much injury to his captors who are generally larger than thier victim. The wild elephant is then brought back to the camp where it is tied up for a time and gradually tamed.

The principle of the *Kheda* operation is a simple one. In the very thick jungle, near a path used regularly by a herd of wild elephants, a trap of stockade is erected. It consists of a large circle of very strong, high fencing made of tree trunks firmly embeded in the ground and securely roped together. On the outside, to strengthen this fence, a bulwark of earth is thrown up on it to about the height of an elephant, and at intervals, there are buttresses of wood. The entrance is a very strong gate, also made of tree-trunks and large branches. Outside the gateway, 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 the elephants do not notice them till it is too late.

When all is ready and a herd of wild elephants is reported to be approaching 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 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 trouble and danger.

Once the elephants are secure in the stockade, there is the difficult task of bringing them out and taking them to the stockade-camp, where they are gathered in the shade until such time as they can be taken to 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 prowess when struggling to break its bounds ; and also so that the elephant is at a slight stretch all the time and therefore, tires much more quickly.

Games laws 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 prohibited except under special licences issued by the Conservator of Forests to approved sportsmen 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 Regulation (VII) of 1891, no rhinoceros shall be killed in the Unclassed State Forests except with the previous sanction of the State Government. Under the Rhinoceros Preservation Act, 1954, killing, capturing or injuring of this animal has been totally prohibited. There are also provisions for the protection of fish. Under Section 25(g) and 72 of Assam Forest Regulation (VII) of 1891, the killing of fish by the use of explosives or poison, the netting of fish except under special licence issued by the Divisional Forest Officer, the taking of eggs and trapping of birds are prohibited.

Hunting, shooting or fishing within a Reserved Forest is prohibited except under licence 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 for the purpose of limiting the number of particular species of game that may be killed or hunted, or for the purpose of protecting any species absolutely. 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 shall be permitted to kill more than (1) two buffaloes, (2) two bisons, (3) four sambhurs, (4) two deer and (5) one spotted deer in a year.

There are also certain laws in regard to shooting implements. Use of rifles of bore less than 300 for shooting big game is prohibited. Cartridges loaded with shot larger than No. 4 are not to be carried in reserved forests.

Wild life week is observed in the district during the 1st week of October every year with great enthusiasm. The aims and objects of this are to create public consciousness regarding the necessity of preserving and protecting wild life which is fast diminishing with mounting increase of population and extensive reclamation of forest areas for settlement and other purposes.

(g) *CLIMATE AND RAINFALL ;*

The climate of this district has features that are intermediate between those of the North Bengal plains and the Assam Valley. While the former has a distinct hot season with the day temperatures in April and May higher than in the rest of the year, in the Assam Valley, the southwest monsoon season is the hottest part of the year. In Goalpara district, the day temperatures in April and May are nearly the same as in the monsoon months. The year may be divided into four seasons. The cold season is from December to February. The next three months may be termed the season of thunder-storms. The southwest monsoon season is from June to September. October and November constitute the post-monsoon season.

Rainfall : Records of rainfall are available for 9 stations for periods ranging from 35 to 50 years. The statement 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 2801.3 mm. The rainfall increases from the south to north. The annual rainfall varies from 2055.5 mm. at Mankachar in the southwestern border of the district to 4123.1 mm. at Kachugaon in the northwestern corner. But in the Marnai region in the southeastern part of the district, the rainfall is heavier than that in the southern portion of the district in general. During the period March to May, rainfall mostly as thundershowers, amounts to about 23% of the annual total. The southwest monsoon arrives over the district, towards the end of May and continues till early October. The rainfall in the four months, June to September, constitutes 69% of the annual rainfall. June is the month with

the heaviest rainfall. There is some rain in October also. The variation in the rainfall from year to year is not large. In the fifty years period, 1901 to 1950, the highest annual rainfall which occurred in 1902, was 139% of the normal. 1939 was the year with the lowest rainfall, when it amounted to 81% of the normal. Although in the district considered as a whole, there was no year in the fifty year period when the rainfall was less than 80% of the normal, at some stations, such low rainfall has occurred even in two or three consecutive years. It will be seen from table 2 that the rainfall in the district was between 2400 and 3400 mm. in 39 years out of 50.

On an average, there are 101 rainy days (i.e. days with rainfall of 2.5 mm. or more) in a year. This number varies from 82 at Mankachar to 112 at Kachugaon.

The heaviest rainfall recorded in 24 hours at any station in the district was 486.4 mm. at Bijni on July 9, 1895.

Temperature : There are two meteorological observatories in the district, one at Dhuburi and the other at Goalpara. While the records at Dhuburi are available for a long period of years, those at Goalpara are available only for seven years. The data of temperature and other meteorological elements at these two stations may be taken as representative of the conditions in the district in general. From about the end of February, temperatures begin to increase. In April, the mean daily maximum temperature at Dhuburi is 31.6°C while at Goalpara it is 32.8°C. Although the temperature during the period March to May is seldom excessive, weather is rather unpleasant on account of the excessive dampness in the air. Even in the southwest monsoon period, the day temperatures continue to be nearly the same as in April or May, while the night temperatures are higher than those in April and May. So, the weather in the monsoon season also is sometimes trying particularly when not raining. Temperatures decrease progressively after the end of the southwest monsoon season. From about the latter half of November, the drop in temperatures is more rapid and by January, the coldest month of the year, the mean daily maximum temperature is 22.9°C at Dhuburi and 24.8°C at Goalpara. The corresponding mean daily minimum temperatures are 11.8°C and 10.6°C respectively at the two places. In the wake of western disturbances spells of colder wheather occur in the district when minimum temperatures may go below 6 or 7°C.

The highest maximum temperature recorded in the district was 41.4°C at Dhuburi and Goalpara on May 2, 1960. The lowest minimum temperature was 2.8°C at Dhuburi on February 9, 1905 and 6.1°C at Goalpara on January 19, 1960.

Humidity : The air is highly humid throughout the year. During the

months January to April, the relative humidities are comparatively less, specially in the afternoons, when they are between 50 and 65 per cent.

Cloudiness : Skies are heavily clouded or overcast in the monsoon season. During the rest of the year, lightly or moderately clouded skies are common. In the cold season, skies are sometimes obscured in the mornings due to lifted fog which clears with the advance of the day.

Winds : Winds are generally light. Northwesterly or easterly winds are the most common all the year round. But in the afternoons southerly or southwesterly winds also blow on some days in the monsoon season. Southwesterly or westerly winds in the afternoons are also common in the period January to April.

Special weather phenomena : Some of the cyclonic storms and depressions from the Bay of Bengal in the monsoon and post-monsoon seasons which move towards North Bengal affect the district and its neighbourhood causing heavy rains and high winds. Thunderstorms, sometimes violent and similar to the Northwesterns of Bengal occur in the period March to May. Fog occurs in the winter months on a few days.

Tables 3, 4 and 5 give the normals of temperature and humidity, mean wind speed and frequency of special weather phenomena respectively for Dhuburi based on data for a long period of years while averages of the above parameters based on short period data are indicated in tables 3(a), 4(a) and 5(a) respectively for Goalpara.[26]

26. Compiled from Report of the Deputy Director General of Observatories, Poona-5, dated 17-10-75.

TABLE I.

NORMALS AND EXTREMES OF RAINFALL.*

Station		No. of years of data		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Annual	Highest annual rainfall as % of normal & year**	Lowest annual rainfall as % of normal & year**	Heaviest rainfall in 24 hours.
Dhuburi	..	50	a	8·4	21.3	38.3	162.1	423.4	642.4	430.0	338.8	363.2	146.8	10.9	1.3	2586.9	141	69	368.3 1909 Jun. 11
			b	0.7	1.7	2.6	9.0	15.8	18.1	16.0	14.6	12.7	5.4	0.8	0.1	97.5	(1948)	(1933)	
Bilasipara	..	44	a	8·9	21.1	48.3	185.4	433.3	636.8	446.3	319.0	350.0	152.4	12.7	3.8	2618.0	147	73	300.2 1906 Sep. 30
			b	0.7	1.7	3.0	9.2	15.7	18.0	15.6	13.2	12.4	5.4	0.7	0.3	95.9	(1921)	(1939)	
Marnai	..	50	a	7.9	22.1	39.4	172.7	431.8	780.8	694.9	541.8	527.6	173.2	13.2	4.1	3409.5	155	69	322.6 1896 Sep. 17
			b	0.6	1.9	2.8	9.1	16.3	19.3	18.5	16.7	15.8	6.1	0.8	0.3	108.2	(1902)	(1942)	
Kachugaon	..	50	a	10.7	26.2	56.9	226.1	496.1	957.1	829.3	681.0	634.7	183.4	16.3	5.3	4123.1	158	67	866.0 1903 Jun. 28
			b	0.8	1.9	3.3	9.6	16.9	19.5	19.1	17.2	15.9	5.9	1·2	0.4	111.7	(1921)	(1908)	
Bijni	..	50	a	12.5	25.1	70.9	228.3	479.3	714.5	582.2	463.8	429.3	147.8	17.3	4.8	3175.8	161	67	486.4 1895 Jul. 9
			b	0.9	2.2	3.8	10.9	17.0	19.2	16.9	15.8	14.6	6·1	1.4	0.6	109.4	(1902)	(1930)	
Mankachar	..	38	a	8.4	13.7	25.7	126.5	331.7	466.9	340.4	265.7	296.9	160.8	17.0	1.8	2055.5	145	68	366.0 1941 Jun. 18
	..		b	0.7	1.3	1.9	6.4	12.0	15.9	13.7	12.6	11.3	5.4	0.8	0.3	82.3			
Goalpara	..	50	a	8.4	20·3	50.5	199.4	397.0	578.4	407.9	336.5	290.1	137.7	12.5	2.8	2441.5	156	68	357.4 1958 May 12
			b	0.7	1.6	3.1	9.4	15.7	17.2	15.7	14.1	11.7	4.8	0.9	0.3	95.2	(1948)	(1922)	
Damra	..	50	a	8.6	19.1	50.5	201.7	403.6	502.4	413.5	323.1	280.4	135.1	17.0	2.5	2357.5	161	71	354.3 1946 Jul. 8
			b	0.7	1.6	2.8	9.5	16.8	18.7	18.8	17.0	13.8	5.8	1.1	0.3	106.9	(1928)	(1944)	
Lakhipur	..	44	a	7.6	20.8	41.9	181.6	398.5	582.9	416.3	335.0	301.0	145.8	10.9	1.5	2443.8	137	75	237.2 1954 May 25
			b	0.6	1.7	2.7	9.2	16.0	19.0	17.9	16.3	13.5	5.5	0.9	0.2	103.5	(1948)	(1939)	
Goalpara (District)	..		a	9.0	21.1	46.9	187.1	421.6	651.4	506.8	400.5	385.9	153.7	14.2	3.1	2801.3	139	81	
	..		b	0.7	1.7	2.9	9.1	15.8	18.3	16.9	15.3	13.5	5.6	1.0	0.3	101.1	(1902)	(1939)	

(a) Normal rainfall in mm. (b) Average number of rainy days (days with rain of 2.5mm. or more).

*Based on all available data up to 1970 **Years given in brackets.

TABLE-2

FREQUENCY OF ANNUAL RAINFALL IN THE DISTRICT.

(Data 1901-1950).

Range in mm.	No. of years	Range in mm.	No. of years.
2201-2400	7	3201-3400	3
2401-2600	4	3401-3600	2
2601-2800	11	3601-3800	0
2801-3000	15	3801-4000	2
3001-3200	6		

TABLE-3

Normals of Temperature and Relative Humidity

DHUBURI

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	22.9	11.8	29.4	1953 Jan, 23	6.1	1905 Jan, 25	85	61
February	25.3	14.2	32.2	1901 Feb, 19	2.8	1905 Feb, 9	76	53
March	30.1	18.1	38.3	1909 Mar, 27	10.0	1906 Mar, 1	67	45
April	31.6	21.5	41.1	1939 Apr, 21	12.2	1905 Apr, 4	72	57
May	29.9	23.0	41.4	1960 May, 2	15.9	1957 May,18	82	77
June	29.8	24.6	36.9	1960 Jun, 3	13.9	1953 Jun, 8	87	86
July	29.6	25.8	37.8	1930 Jul, 3	22.2	1951 Jul, 13	85	85
August	30.7	26.0	35.6	1942 Aug, 2	21.7	1967 Aug, 28	86	85
September	30.7	24.7	35.0	1906 Sep, 27	21.7	1960 Sep, 1	85	85
October	29.1	23.0	33.9	1956 Oct, 3	17.2	1902 Oct, 29	83	79
November	26.3	17.8	31.1	1905 Nov, 1	11.7	1903 Nov, 30	80	73
December	23.7	14.3	27.8	1944 Dec, 4	7.8	1922 Dec, 27	83	70
Annual	28.3	20.4					81	71

*Hours I.S.T.

TABLE-3 (a)

Averages of Temperature and Relative Humidity

GOALPARA

Month	Mean Daily maximum Temperature	Mean Daily Minimum Temperature	Highest Maximum ever recorded			Lowest Minimum ever recorded			Relative Humidity 0830	Relative Humidity 1730*
	°C	°C	°C	Date		°C	Date		%	%
January	24.8	10.6	29.0	1959	Jan, 27	6.1	1960	Jan, 19	86	66
February	27.7	12.2	32.4	1960	Feb, 13	7.2	1956	Feb, 19	76	57
March	31.3	16.1	37.6	1958	Mar, 29	10.2	1957	Mar, 1	69	50
April	32.8	20.4	39.9	1958	Apr, 26	14.6	1957	Apr, 10	75	56
May	31.6	20.6	41.4	1960	May, 2	16.7	1955	May, 1	81	73
June	31.1	24.0	36.7	1957	June, 28	16.7	1955	June, 1	87	81
July	32.2	25.0	35.9	1960	Jul, 3	21.2	1960	Jul, 9	85	80
August	32.4	25.2	40.5	1959	Aug, 20	21.3	1960	Aug, 1	86	80
September	32.6	24.6	36.7	1959	Sep, 4	18.3	1955	Sep, 5	84	78
October	31.3	22.0	36.1	1956	Oct, 2	16.1	1954	Oct, 30	82	77
November	29.3	16.4	32.6	1958	Nov, 1	11.7	1960	Nov, 29	79	71
December	26.1	12.4	31.1	1955	Dec, 6	7.2	1955	Dec, 26	84	69
Annual	30.3	19.3							81	70

*Hours I.S.T.

TABLE-4

Mean Wind Speed in Km/hr.

DHUBURI

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Annual
5.0	5.6	7.4	10.0	9.0	6.9	6.0	5.6	5.3	5.1	6.1	5.5	6.5

TABLE-4 (a)

Mean Wind Speed in Km/hr.

GOALPARA

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Annual
1.8	2.5	3.1	4.3	4.2	2.7	3.6	2.8	2.5	2.4	1.9	1.3	2.8

TABLE-5

Special Weather Phenomena

DHUBURI

Mean No. of days with	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Annual
Thunder	0.0	0.1	0.7	3	2	0.4	0.7	0.8	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.0	8
Hail	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Dust-Storm	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.;0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7
Squall	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
Fog	10	1.5	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.6	2	7	22

TABLE–5(a)

Special Weather Phenomena

GOALPARA *

Mean No. of days with	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Annual
Thunder	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.6	1.6	2.	0.0	0.0	3
Hail	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Dust-Storm	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
Squall	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Fog	5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	3	9

*Occasions more than 2 are given in whole numbers.

APPENDIX–A.

MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM DISCHARGES IN CUSECS OF SOME RIVERS OF GOALPARA DISTRICT FOR A FEW YEARS.

Sl. No.	Name of the River		1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
1.	MANAS (At Mathanguri)	Maximum discharge ..	2,44,990	1,34,920	2,60,691	2,70,295	2,39,508
		Date ..	25-7-55	21-6-56	4-8-57	25-8-58	25-7-59
		Minimum discharge ..	8,751	10,526	7,847	9,522	11,703
		Date ..	5-3-55	31-12-56	16-3-57	23-1-58	2-3-59
2.	AI ..	Maximum discharge ..	18,696	35,967	69,353	96,649	32,622
		Date ..	25-10-55	25-8-56	18-9-57	15-8-58	26-6-59
		Minimum discharge ..	1,610	466	768	1,063	729
		Date ..	27-12-55	1-3-56	11-4-57	17-4-58	23-3-59
3.	CHAMPAMATI	Maximum discharge ..	5,360	10,853	1,877	17,270	22,250
		Date ..	26-7-55	19-5-56	28-7-57	26-8-58	26-6-59
		Minimum discharge ..	153	118	87	97	574
		Date ..	12-10-55	13-2-56	26-12-57	7-1-58	10-4-59
4.	GAURANG	Maximum discharge ..	27,500	21,463	9,651	19,659	3,522
		Date ..	26-7-55	22-6-56	11-8-57	26-8-58	10-6-59
		Minimum discharge ..	160	110	427	727	400
		Date ..	31-12-55	23-3-56	3-5-57	25-4-58	8-4-59
5.	DUDHNAI	Maximum discharge ..	7,823	5,144	4,969	4,046	1,032
		Date ..	26-7-55	22-6-56	7-8-57	17-9-58	3-10-59
		Minimum discharge ..	252	44	29	27	32
		Date ..	10-11-55	12-2-56	25-4-57	30-3-58	23-3-59

APPENDIX - B

STATEMENT SHOWING THE SILT CONTENT OF SOME RIVERS OF GOALPARA DISTRICT.

1	1956		1957		1958		1959	
	Progress Total	% of silt content.	Progress Total	% of silt content	Progress Total	% of silt content	Progress Total	% of silt content
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Manas river :								
Kind								
Coarse : :	581.2844	0.0001	2315.3417	0.00002	1934.836	0.001	1403.390	0.0002
Medium : :	1231.3836	0.0001	2437.5487	0.0001	4287.193	0.001	4663.158	0.0002
Fine : :	3712.1753	0.0004	16999.6635	0.0003	8982.392	0.0002	10256.408	0.0004
Ai river :								
Coarse : :	21.308	0.0013	1080.9933	0.0207	1738.176	0.0037	11.028	0.206
Medium : :	3210.822	0.0042	2339.3216	0.0360	4805.517	0.0098	2123.379	0.157
Fine : :	1207.424	0.0010	5077.1802	0.0103	11325.254	0.0066	3519.394	0.121
Champamati river :								
Coarse : :	0.6987	0.0002	3.1344	0.0001	88.550	0.0023	97.816	0.007
Medium : :	3.9755	0.0002	14.8290	0.0021	290.516	0.0013	231.470	0.011
Fine : :	18.9345	0.0007	80.0506	0.0009	537.514	0.0033	299.672	0.076
Gaurang river :								
Coarse : :	50.2692	0.0010	31.7581	0.0005	140.860	0.0006	54.694	0.008
Medium : :	216.3404	0.0028	177.3839	0.0018	449.826	0.0004	216.967	0.008
Fine : :	377.8081	0.0028	316.8010	0.0014	693.916	0.0008	341.101	0.001
Sankosh river :								
Coarse : :	1745.3611	0.0011	128.44756	0.0012	1646.751	0.0001	178.342	0.0002
Medium : :	2294.6147	0.0004	3136.3	0.0001	2384.988	0.0002	1061.315	0.0001
Fine : :	2061.0010	0.0007	3371.1622	0.0002	2946.197	0.0002	1806.874	0.0007
Dudhnai river								
Coarse : :	2.8167	0.0001	0.3219	0.0001	2.693	0.0001	1.732	0.009
Medium : :	7.4401	0.0001	2.5330	0.0001	7.744	0.001	10.83	0.001
Fine : :	26.2748	0.0004	13.5938	0.0001	26.746	0.006	35.206	0.0023

CHAPTER II

HISTORY

(*a*) *PREHISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY ;*

The antiquity of human civilization in Assam has been established beyond doubt by the discovery of stone celts used by the Neolithic people in various parts of it. These finds among others include two shouldered stone implements, one from Darrang and the other from Cachar and six specimens of grooved hammer stones from Bishwanath of Darrang which are the rarest of the numerous Neolithic stone implements recorded from Eastern Asia.[1] P. C. Choudhury observes that these specimens were locally made.[2] These stone implements are very similar to the stone adzes found in Burma and Chota Nagpur. Grooved hammer stones found at Bishwanath of Darrang district are very common in North America. These neoliths as well as linguistic and morphological evidences prove that the neolithic people of the Austric stock are the most ancient inhabitants of Assam and not the Dravidians as was once supposed to be. They are now said to be represented by the Monkhmer Khasis and Syntengs of Assam, who were driven to the hills by the Dravidian invaders. The Dravidians were a cultured people belonging to the chalcolithic age and were found more civilised than themselves by the Aryans when they came. However, in Assam the Dravidians had to bear the Mongolian thrust pouring through the north-east. "At first the Mongolians seem to have carried everything before them, but, in course of time, the newcomers, who were themselves probably a neolithic people, were vanquished by the Dravidians who used copper and bronze weapons and who ultimately recovered their supremacy as the ruling race."[3]

The Monogolians belonged to the Tibeto-Burman family of the Indo-Chinese group and are now represented by the Kacharis, Koches, Rabhas, Meches, Mikirs, Lalungs, Garos, Nagas, Kukis, and Chutias. During the time of the *Mahabharata* War and earlier, the tribes speaking the Bodo (Boro) languages were called *Chinas*, *Kiratas* and *Mlechhas*. The overthrow of Ghataka, the *Kirata* king of Pragjyotisha by Naraka, a prince of Dravidian stock is a pointer to the above fact.

Naraka is said to have settled Aryans in Pragjyotisha which then included a major part of Assam and North Bengal bounded by the Karatoya river on the west. We have evidences of even earlier settlement of Aryans in Assam from the

1. K. L. Baruah—*Early History of Kamarupa, Gauhati*, 1966, p. 12.
2. P. C. Choudhury,—*The History of Civilisation of the People of Assam, to the Twelfth Century, A. D., Gauhati*, 1959. pp. 56-57.
3. K. L. Barua—*Early History of Kamarupa, Gauhati*, 1966, p. 13.

Ramayana in which it is stated that Pragjyotisha was founded by Amurtaraja, a son of the great king Kusa "who was apparently an Aryan king of Madhyadesa"[4] It is confirmed by scholars who have carried out extensive research on the pre-history of Assam that the principal races migrating to Assam in the twilight of civilisation are the Austro-Asiatics, the Dravidians, the Mongoloids of the Tibeto-Burman family of the Indo-Chinese group and the Aryans.

The Goalpara District had never been a separate political entity under its own king, and its history has to be considered in connection with that of various kingdoms, of which from time to time, it formed a part. In the prehistoric times, the Goalpara district formed a part of the kingdom of Pragjyotisha or Kamarupa which extended southwards as far as the Bay of Bengal and its western boundary was the Karatoya river. The references in the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* indicate that Pragjyotisha included the whole of North Bengal. In the *Kalika purana* which is a work of 10th century A.D., it is said that the temple of Kamakhya near Gauhati was in the centre of Kamarupa and in the *Vishnupurana*, it is added that the country extended around this temple in all directions for 100 *yojanas* or about 720 kms. According to *Yogini Tantra* (Circa 1600 A.D.), the country lying to the east of the Karatoya river is called Kamarupa, which is said to extend from the Karatoya river on the west to the Dikhu on the east, and from the mountain of Kanjagiri on the north, to the confluence of the Brahmaputra and Lakhya rivers on the south ; that is to say, it included roughly the Brahmaputra valley, Bhutan, Rangpur, Koch Bihar, the north-east of Mymensingh and possibly, the Garo Hills.

According to the same work, the country was divided into four portions, viz, Kampith from the Karatoya to the Sankosh ; Ratnapith from the Sankosh to the Rupahi which included the present district of Goalpara ; Suvarnapith from the Rupahi to the Bhareli, and Saumarpith from the Bhareli to the Dikrang. In fact, the ancient history of Goalpara district is the history of Kamarupa.

According to tradition, the earliest mentioned king of Kamarupa (or Assam) belonged to non-Aryan tribes such as *Danavas* and *Asuras*. Tradition assigns Mahirang Danab as the earliest king who was succeeded by Hatak-Asur, Sambar Asur and Ratna Asur. After them, there was a chief named Ghatak, the ruler of the *Kiratas*, who are said to have been a powerful race, much addicted to meat and strong drinks.[5]

Ghatakasura was defeated and slain by Narakasura, who is the hero of various stories in the *Puranas* and *Tantras*. Naraka, who was a prince of Videha, was born of the earth by *Vishnu* in his *Baraha* incarnation and was brought up by king Janaka in his court alongwith the royal princes till he was 16 years old.

4. Quoted from Pargiter's *Ancient Countries in Eastern India* by K. L. Barua in *Early History of Kamarupa*, Gauhati 1966, p. 14.
5. E. A. Gait, *A History of Assam*, *Calcutta*, 1967, p. 12.

Naraka was warned by his mother impersonating herself as a nurse named Katyayani about some conspiracy hatched by king Janaka to take his life. Both mother and son then left Videha and came by water to Pragjyotisha accompanied by Vishnu. Naraka established his capital at Pragjyotishpur, the modern Gauhati and seems to have been a powerful and prosperous, though some-what headstrong prince. Many interesting events took place in the reign of Naraka. His capital was defended by *panjis* or sharp stakes stuck in the ground and by numerous outworks erected by the Asura Muru. After slaying Naraka and thousands of *daityas*, Shri Krishna recovered the golden earrings of Aditi, which Narak had stolen, and sent the 16,000 girls imprisoned in his harem, together with his 14,000 elephants and his horses to his own home in Dvaraka or Gujarat and installed on the throne Bhagadatta, the eldest son of Naraka's four sons, who is mentioned in the *Mahabharata* as fighting on the side of the Kauravas at the great battle of Kurukshetra. Bhagadatta was succeeded by his son Vajradatta. Naraka's descendants continued to rule for nineteen generations,the last kings of this line being Subahu and Suparua. Subahu became an ascetic and went to the Himalayas and was succeeded by his son Suparua who was afterwards killed by his ministers, and we thus seem justified in assuming that fully a thousand years before Christ, Goalpara formed a part of a powerful kingdom ruled by a line of non-Aryan kings.[6]

Practically, nothing is known as to the successors of Vajradatta, but a copper plate inscription of Bhaskarvarman who ruled over Kamarupa in the early part of the seventh century A.D. states that a period of three thousand years elapsed between the death of Vajradatta and the accession of Pushyavarman, the ancestor of Bhaskarvarman, eleventh in ascent from him.[7]

(b) *DYNASTIC RULERS OF EARLY TIMES (UPTO THE TWELFTH CENTURY A.D.)*

This district which once formed a part of ancient Kamarupa was ruled by three dynasties viz. the Varmans,the Salastambhas, and the Palas. Bhandarkar has classified the rulers of Kamarupa as follows : (1) the Pushyavarman family of Pragjyotisha , (2) the Bhaumas of Haruppesvara , (3) the early Salastambha family of Haruppesvara, (4) the later Salastambha family of Pragjyotisha, and (5) the Bhauma Palas of Durjaya. P.C. Choudhury, however, disputes this classification and has shown that there were only three main lines, all tracing their origin from a common ancestry and using the same ephithet *Pragjyotishadhipati*.[8]

6. *Ibid*, pp. 12-14.
7. K. L. Baruah : *Early History of Kamarupa, Gauhati*, 1966, p. 24.
8. P. C. Choudhury : *The History of Civilisation of the People of Assam, to the Twelfth Century A. D.* Gauhati, 1959, p. 141.

The *Bhaumas* trace their origin from Naraka, the legendary king of Pragjyotisha, later known as Kamarupa. The Nidhanpur Grant, and the second of the three clay seals of Nalanda give the genealogy of the line of Pushyavarman, who was the first important ruler of this dynasty. According to some scholars, Pushyavarman flourished in the middle of the fourth century A.D. while others like Bhattasali place Pushyavarman in the early part of the same century.[9] P.C. Choudhury, places Pushyavarman's accession in about 355 A.D.[10] During the reign of Pushyavarman, Kamarupa emerged, after a long period of obscurity, as an important kingdom of the ancient Indian polity. Pushyavarman is believed to be a contemporary of Samudragupta, but was not his vassal king. This view is supported by the fact that Pushyavarman assumed the title *Maharajadhiraj*, alluding to his independent status. Doobi grant states that Pushyavarman, born in the line of Naraka, was equal to *Siva* in honour and fame, equal to Indra in sacrifices and an annihilator of enemies. According to R. C. Majumdar, the title *Maharajadhiraj* assumed by Pushyavarman has got no significance at all. "The effective hold of the Guptas on this kingdom is indicated by the currency of the Gupta era in this kingdom for nearly five hundred years".[11] But M. Collins points out that, in *Raghu Vansa*, where Raghu is the prototype of Samudra Gupta, Kamarupa was stated to be outside the limit of Raghu's empire.[12] This contention is also supported by the Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudra Gupta which describes the king of Kamarupa as a *Pratyanta Nripati* of the great Gupta Emperor Samudra Gupta.[13]

Kings of Varman line : The dynasty founded by Pushyavarman ruled over Kamarupa for about three hundred years. The kingdom of Kamarupa flourished during the rule of Samudravarman, Balavarman, Kalyanavarman, Ganapativarman, Mahendravarman and Narayanvarman who descended lineally from Pushyavarman. The second clay seal of Nalanda refers to Mahendravarman as the performer of two horse sacrifices. However, it is not clear from the seal whether the epithet 'performer of two horse sacrifices' is meant for Mahendra varman or his successor Narayanvarman.[14] Narayanvarman was succeeded by his son Mahabhutivarman, who is also known as Bhutivarman (510-555 A.D.). The Badganga inscription states that this king performed an *Aswamedha* sacrifice. According to Nidhanpur Grant which was discovered in Sylhet which is now a part of Bangladesh, Bhutivarman had a number of feudatory kings. He is believed to have conquered Pundravardhana in about 550 A.D. After Bhutivarman, his son, Chandramukhavarman ascended the throne of Kamarupa. He was succeeded by Sthitavarman, then by Susthitavarman who according to Apshad inscription, was defeated by Mahasenagupta, the later Gupta monarch. Susthitavarman had two sons, namely Supratisthitavarman and Bhaskarvarman. The former ruled only for a few years.

9, P. N. Bhattacharya : *Kamarupa Sasanavali*, Introduction, p. 14.

10. P .C. Choudhury : *The History of Civilisation of the People of Assam to the Twelfth Century A. D.* Gauhati, 1959, p. 147.

11. R. C. Majumdar : *The Classical Age, Vol-III. The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bombay, 1970, p. 90.

12. M. Collins : *Geographical Data of Raghu Vansa and Dasakumar Charita*, p. 22

13. John Faithful Fleet : *Corpus Inscriptionum indicatum, Vol*-III, *Gupta Inscription*, Calcutta—1888.

14. R.C. Majumdar : *The Classical Age, Vol*-III. *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bombay, 1970,-91.

Bhaskarvarman (594-650 A.D.) who was the greatest monarch of the *Bhauma* family revived the sunken fortunes of his family and carved a niche in the temple of fame for himself among the most remarkable rulers of ancient India. Bhaskarvarman was well—educated in *Sastras*. According to Doobi Grant, Bhaskarvarman "acquired through eloquence and poetic genius, mastery of all styles, possessing sweet wordings with clear and superb ornamentation.[15] The great king who was endowed with all the kingly qualities, exhibited devotion to duty, and unfailing love for his people. Hiuen-Tsiang, the Chinese pilgrim, who visited Kamarupa during the reign of Bhaskarvarman, recorded that the king was fond of learning and men of high talents came to his dominion from distant places aspiring after office.

Bhaskarvarman's alliance with Harsa, that has been recorded in the *Harsacharita* by Bana, is a landmark in the history of Kamarupa. Both the monarchs found a common enemy in the king of Gauda. It is evident from the Nidhanpur Grant and from the account of Hiuen-Tsiang that Bhaskarvarman was in possession of Gauda, i.e. eastern part of Bengal and with it Karnasuvarna. According to R. C. Majumdar, Bhaskarvarman made himself the master of Eastern India, pitched his victorious camp in the capital of his late rival Sasanka and thus increased power and prestige of the kingdom of Kamarupa to an extent never dreamt before.[16]

In 643 A.D. Bhaskarvarman invited Hiuen-Tsiang to his capital. The latter came from Nalanda to Kamarupa in the same year and stayed for about a month. The king of Kamarupa showed him utmost respect and desired that the Chinese pilgrim should extend his stay in the capital. Harsa, who was greatly attracted by his discourses with the pilgrim, invited both Hiuen-Tsiang and Bhaskarvarman to the great Buddhist assemblies at Kanauj and Prayag. Harsa marched to Kanauj along the south bank of the Ganga and Bhaskarvarman who was the most important of the visiting kings proceeded by the opposite bank. In both the functions held at Kanauj and Prayag, Kumar Bhaskarvarman was received by Harsavardhana with due honour.

15. P. C. Choudhury : *The History of Civilisation of the People of Assam to the Twelfth Century A.D., Gauhati*, 1959, p. 182.

16. Ibid, p. 188.

The travel account of Hiuen-Tsiang affords a momentary glimpse of the conditions of the people of Kamarupa. The extent of the country was about 10,000 *li* (nearly 2,720 kms.) in circuit. It was then a flourishing country much advanced in civilisation. The people were simple, honest, upright and studious. Although the king himself was a devout Saivite he was not opposed to the spread of Buddhism.[17]

Kings of Salastambha family : According to Bargaon Copper-plate Grant, after the descendants of Naraka had ruled Kamarupa for several generations, Salastambha,a *Mlechadhinatha* ascended the throne of Kamarupa and established a new line. His reign is believed to have commenced from the death of Kumar Bhaskarvarman. Like the kings of the *Bhauma* dynasty, the kings of this line also claimed descent from Naraka. Bhandarkar calls them the *Bhaumas* of Haruppesvara.[18] The Nowgong grant of Balavarman states that this grant was issued from the "ancestral camp" (of Haruppesvara). This old city must have extended over a wide area, including the Bamuni hills on the east to Dah Parbatia on the west, during the reign of Vanamala (835-865 A.D.). King Harjjara Varman (815-835 A.D.) constructed magnificient temples and stately buildings in this city which was built by him.

Salastambha was a powerful king as can be surmised from the Bargaon Copper-plate Grant where he has been described as "a tiger-like king". He was succeeded by Vijaya, Palaka, Kumara, Vajradeva, Harsadeva, and Balavarman II. Other important rulers of this line were Harjjaravarman, Vanamala Varmadeva, Jayamala, Balavarman III, and Tyagasimha. The reign of the first four successors of Salastambha line was uneventful. The accession of Harsa (725-750 A.D.) on the throne of Kamarupa marked an era of prosperity and territorial expansion. He was a powerful king and gave his daughter *Rajyamati* in marriage to the Nepal king. The Pasupati epigraph of Nepal records that Harsa conquered *Gauda, Odra, Kalinga, Kosala* and other lands. Harjjaravarman assumed the grand epithet *Maharajadhiraja Paramesvara Paramabhattaraka* in keeping with his unrivalled prowess. He had a number of feudatory kings under him. His son Vanamala enjoyed an unusually long reign. He is known for the skill he displayed in the arts of peace as well as in war. The Tezpur grant of Vanamala suggests that one Pralambha or Salambha ruled Kamarupa after him and as per Parbatia grant of Vanamala, he was succeeded by his brother Arathas whose son was the famous Harjjaravarman of Hayunthal grant and Tezpur Rock epigraph.[19]

The Pala Dynasty : The kingdom of Kamarupa passed into the hands of Brahmapala, the founder of the Pala family after the death of the last king of Salastambha dynasty towards the end of the tenth century. The Bargaon grant of

17. E. A. Gait : *A History of Assam, Calcutta*, 1967, p. 28-29.
18. B. K. Barua : *A Cultural History of Assam, Gauhati* 1969, p. 33.
19. *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, 1917, pp. 508-14.

Ratnapala records that when Tyagasimha the last king of Salastambha family departed from this world, his subjects elected Brahmapala as their monarch on account of his descent from the *Bhauma* i.e., Bhaskarvarma's family. His son Ratnapala fortified his capital Durjaya. P.C. Choudhury, has observed that Sri Durjaya, meaning impregnable, stands for Pragjyotishpura.

The line of Pala kings ruled for about one hundred and fifty years, the last king Jayapala having expired in 1138 A.D. The immediate successors of Ratnapala, were Purandarpala, Indrapala, Gopala, Harsapala, Dharmapala, and Jayapala. The epigraphs of Kamarupa of this period record the glories of these rulers. The invasion of Kamarupa by the Chalukya king, Vikramaditya VI (1076-1126 A. D.) possibly occurred during the reign of Harsapala. Although some parts of the territory of Kamarupa were lost during the reign of Gopala and Harsapala, their successor Dharmapala restored the lost parts of the kingdom pushing its boundaries to the west of the Karatoya.

(c) *MEDIEVAL PERIOD* :

There is no regular chronological account of Kamarupa kings after the reign of Dharmapala. E.A. Gait opines on the basis of the Silimpur inscription that Jayapala was the successor of Dharmapala and that he was the last king of of the line, who was overthrown by Ramapala of Gauda. Ramapala installed Tingyadeva as a vassal king on the throne of Kamarupa. This is known from Vaidyadeva's Kamauli grant which further reveals that Vaidyadeva, the minister of Kumarapala of Gauda having been sent against the rebellious Tingyadeva, defeated and succeeded him as a vassal king. Later on, he threw off his vassalage and assumed the title of *Maharajadhiraja Parameswara Paramabhattaraka*. His reign probably ended in the middle of the twelfth century A.D. According to P. C. Choudhury, Vijayasena of Bengal invaded Kamarupa during the reign of Vaidyadeva sometime between 1142-45 A.D. but could not conquer permanently even in part,[20] During the following hundred years there is a missing link.

In giving an account of the period, P.C. Choudhury concludes that it was Rayarideva, "who after the overthrow and the death of Vaidyadeva, founded another line ; his successor Vallabhadeva was perhaps involved in a war with Laksmanasena towards the close of the 12th century A.D. Visvasundaradeva, alias Prithu, and Sandhya were most probably rulers of different lines but they did their duty in repulsing successive Muslim invasions."[21] Prithu, who

20. P. C. Choudhury, *The History of Civilisation of the People of Assam to the Twelfth Century A. D.* 1959, p. 271.
21. Ibid, p. 277

is identified also as Jalpeswara mentioned in the *Yoginitantra*, was an important king of Kamarupa. He is attributed with the glory of defeating two Muslim invasions of Bakhtiyar (1205-6 A.D.) and Sultan Ghiasuddin (1226 A.D.) and was ultimately overthrown by Nasiruddin, son of Iltumish in 1228 A.D.

The next important king of Kamarupa was Sandhya (1250-1270 A.D.) who is mentioned in the *Guru Charita* of Ramcharan Thakur. "It was this king who defeated Sultan Mughis-ud-din and destroyed his army. Soon after, he removed the capital to Kamatapur in the neighbourhood of which his predecessor Prithu had already erected extensive fortifications."[22] He was compelled to shift his capital from Gauhati further west to Kamatapur in Koch Bihar owing to the extension of the Kachari power upto the eastern boundary of the present Kamrup district, and also by the fact that Gauhati was then easily accessible to the raiding Muslim invaders from the direction of Sonargaon. This event took place in about 1260 A.D. and since then old Kamarupa became known as the Kamata kingdom which included the present Goalpara and Kamrup districts and parts of Northern Bengal and Mymensing.

Thus Sandhya became the first king in Kamatapur and was followed by Sindhu, Rup, Singhadhaj, Pratapdhaj, Dharmanarayan, Durlabhnarayan and Indranarayan.[23] The last mentioned king, reigned upto 1365 A.D. In giving this chronological account K.L. Baruah states that the line of Sandhya ended with his great grandson, Singhadhaj who was killed by his minister Pratapdhaj who captured the throne of Kamata. His nephew Dharmanarayan usurped the throne of Kamata and soon afterwards removed the capital to Ghoraghat near Dimila in Rangpur. This led the Bhuyan chiefs in the northern and eastern parts of the kingdom to raise their heads and Durlabhnarayan, son of the former king Pratapdhaj utilised the opportunity to seize a part of the northern territories and establish his capital at Garia. Consequently, both the cousins were involved in prolonged hostilities after conclusion of which the kingdom was divided and the position of Durlabhnarayan as the Kamata king was secured. That Durlabhnarayan was the Kamata king is confirmed by the writings of two contemporary poets viz., Hem Saraswati and Kaviratna Saraswati. "The kingdom of Durlabhnarayan therefore, included the present Assam districts of Kamrup, and Goalpara, the State of Koch Bihar and the Bengal district of Jalpaiguri. It is probable that after the division of territories Durlabhnarayan became Kameswara and Dharmanarayan styled himself as Gaudeswara."[24] Thus K. L. Baruah supports the popular tradition that it was Dharmanarayan, the Gaudeswara who presented the Brahmans and Kayasthas to Durlabhnarayan as against the account in the *Gurucharita* of Ramcharan Thakur.

22. K. L. Baruah : *Eary Historly of Kamarupa, Gauhati*, 1966 *p.* 130.
23. Ibid, p. 165.
24. Ibid, p. 164.

The reign of Durlabhnarayan (1330 A.D. 1350 A.D.) was of considerable importance in as much as imminent Kamarupi poets viz., Hem Saraswati, Kaviratna Saraswati and Haribar Bipra flourished at this time and settlement of Brahmans and Kayasthas took place. He was succeeded by his son, Indranarayan (1350-1365 A.D.) after whom there followed a period of uncertainity till the rise of the Khen dynasty founded by Niladhvaj in about 1440 A.D.

Scholars, however, have endeavoured to bridge the gap by picking up Arimatta from numerous conflicting traditions. According to one tradition mentioned by Gait, he was the son of one Tamradhaj. K. L. Baruah states that this Tamradhaj was the son of Dharmanarayan alias Dharmapala whose capital was at Ghoraghat and therefore, a nephew of Indranarayan. We have already shown that Dharmanarayan and Durlabhnarayan were cousins. It is also stated in the *Kamarupar Buranji* that Arimatta was a descendant of Dharmapala. It might have been that Arimatta, grandson of Dharmanarayan aspired for and usurped the throne of Kamata in 1365 A.D. either by deposing or killing Indranarayan, his uncle. Then he had to fight with Phengua, a nephew of Durlabhendra alias Indranarayan and killed him. He advanced eastward, subjugated petty Bhuyan chiefs and killed Ram Chandra, a local chief ruling somewhere in Darrang. The name of Arimatta is so popular in Assam that various places such as Baidar *Garh* near Betna in Kamrup, Pratap *Garh* in Darrang, Ratnapur in Majuli are connected with him. It is probable that Arimatta was a powerful king and ruled over a vast kingdom consisting of the Brahmaputra Valley and northern Bengal upto the Karatoya river as his western boundary. He was succeeded by Sukaranka, Sutaranka, and Mriganka, whose names are more or less unkonwn in the Assam Valley. After the death of Mriganka without leaving an issue, the Bhuyans commenced a new dynasty viz., the Khyan or Khen dynasty from 1440 A.D. This is also evident from the *Hara Gauri Sambad* which states that after the death of Mriganka petty Bhuyan chiefs ruled over small principalities in Kamarupa and afterwards the Koches and Ahoms rose to power.[25]

It remains to deal with some other important events that took place in the eastern part of the country during this period. The most important was the advent and rise of the Ahoms who under their leader Sukapha crossed the Patkai hills and founded a kingdom in the eastern part of the country in the beginning of the thirteenth century. The impact of the rising Ahom power was not felt in Kamrup and Goalpara till the downfall of the Koch kingdom in the beginning of the seventeenth century though occassionally they were involved in war. "It is said that, Ahoms first tried their strength not against their immediate neighbours, the Chutiyas and Kacharis, but against the Raja of Kamata who being weary of prolonged war sued for peace and entered into a treaty by giving his daughter, Rajani in marriage to the Ahom king, Sukhangpha (1293-1332

25. Ibid, pp. 170-171, 173.

A.D.)[26] K. L. Baruah says that this Kamata king was perhaps Pratapdhaj and his son Durlabhnarayan subsequently marched into the Ahom kingdom as far as Saring. The Ahom king Sudangpha (1397-1407 A.D.) despatched one expedition against the Kamata Raja who gave asylum to one Tai Sulai, but the Kamata Raja averted the war by giving his daughter Bhajani in marriage to the Ahom king. This Kamata king was no doubt a secceessor of Indranarayan[27] and was probably Sutaranka. The submission of the Kamata Raja was to secure Ahom help against the invading Muslims.

Bara Bhuyans : We have already referred to the rise of the Bhuyans during the period under review and therefore, before dealing with the Khyan line founded by Niladhaj, a Bhuyan chief, it would be appropriate to discuss the origin of these people. The word Bhuyan does not refer to a caste, it means the "lord of the land." A big land-lord exercised sufficient powers and eventually became a chief or ruler. This is corroborated by the fact that the Bhuyan title was and is still borne by people of different castes and even by some Muslims. Scholars seem to hold unanimous opinion that the Bhuyans were local chiefs or governors under the Kamarupa-Kamata kings and under weak kings they raised their heads and ruled their principalities independently. According to *Hara Gauri Sambad*, after the death of Mriganka, a successor of Arimatta, different Bhuyans ruled over the country. Gait states that though each chief was independent within his domain they combined their forces against a common enemy.

However, we came occasionally across the word *Bara* Bhuyans. Gait has opined that the use of the numeral *Bara* before the Bhuyans has no connection with the number twelve and that this popular number is conventionally used to acknowledge the dignitaries ranking next to a *Raja*.

There are varying accounts of the origin of the *Bara* Bhuyans. The *Guru Charita* of Ramcharan Thakur and *Sankar Charitra* give the same account of the *Bara* Bhuyans of Kayastha origin. These accounts relate to the Kamata kingdom of the fourteenth century. According to these accounts, the *Bara* Bhuyans of Kayastha origin are the descendants of Chandibar, who was *Siromani Bhuyan* meaning the leader of the seven Kayastha families presented along with seven Brahman families by Gaudeswar Dharmanarayan to the Kamata king Durlabhnarayan who settled them with lands and slaves on the frontier as wardens of the marches. Subsequently, the Bhuyans migrated to Nowgong via Kamrup and Darrang and Sri Sankardeva was born at Bardowa in the Siromani Bhuyan family.

According to another account, the eastern Bhuyans including those of Nowgong claim descent from Santanu and Samanta, two great grandsons of

26. E. A. Gait--*A History of Assam*, Calcutta, 1967, p. 81.
27. K. L. Baruah : *Early History of Kamarupa*, Gauhati, 1966, pp. 166-67.

Samudra, the prime minister of Arimatta whose capital was at Ratnapur in the Majuli area. It is said that Samudra usurped the throne from Arimatta's son Ratnasingha and was succeeded by his son Monohar whose daughter Lakshmi gained the love of the Sun God, by whom she had two sons, Santanu and Samanta. The elder became a *Vaishnava* and the younger, a *Sakta* and their lines came to be known as *Bar Bara Bhuyans* and *Saru Bara Bhuyans* respectively. Santanu and his sons migrated to Nowgong. Rajdhar, one of his descendants settled at Bardowa and his son, Kusumbar was the father of the great religious reformer, Sri Sankardeva. According to K. L. Baruah, "this genealogy of Sri Sankardeva is no doubt incorrect and that given in the *Guru Charitra* is the correct one but it is clear that the Bhuyans cannot be restricted to the descendants of the families of Kayasthas and Brahmans settled by Durlabhnarayan."[28] He asserted that Bhuyans were in Kamarupa even earlier than the settlement of Chandibar and others by Durlabhnarayan and for support of his contention he refers to the Raut Kuchi grant of Purusottam Das, one of the Bhuyans dating 1251 Saka corresponding to 1329 A.D., by which lands were given to a Brahman in Raut Kuchi near Nalbari. It is stated in this grant that the donor's grand father Basudeva was the right hand man of rank in the army of the Kamarupa king, and his father Jayadeva became a sovereign king defeating other rival chiefs. It is also stated that the donor Purusottama himself subjugated several other Bhuyans and obtained recognition as a vassal king rather than as feudal baron.[29] From this, it also appears that after the shifting of the capital to Kamatapur, the kings lost full control on the eastern part of the kingdom, where several Bhuyan chiefs ruled independently in their own principalities whenever weak princes ascended the throne. However, Goalpara seems to be under the rule of the Kamata kings till the downfall of the Khyan kings stated to belong to some Bhuyan family.

The Khyan or Khen dynasty : The Khyan or Khen dynasty was founded by Niladhaj in 1440 A.D. after overthrowing the last degenerate descendant of the Pala dynasty.[30] It has, however, already been pointed out that Niladhaj, a Bhuyan chief, captured the throne of Kamata after the death of Mriganka, a descendant of Dharmanarayan. Gait says that the origin of the Khen dynasty is not clear though the few still retaining the tribal names claim to be Kayasthas. It is said that the founder of the dynasty was a cowherd of a Brahman whose timely prediction and help enabled him to capture the throne. After ascending the throne he embraced Hinduism and assumed the name Niladhaj and made his old master his chief minister. He had his capital at Kamatapur on the left bank of the Dharla river, the circumference of which according to Buchanan

28. K. L. Baruah : *Early History of Kamarupa*, Gauhati, 1966 p. 186.
29. Ibid, p. 166.
30. E. A. Gait : *A History of Assam*, Calcutta, 1967, p. 4

Hamilton was about thirty kilometres. He imported many Brahmans from Mithila.

He was succeeded by his son, Chakradhaj who was in turn followed by his son, Nilambar, the last king of the line, who was defeated by Hussain Shah of Gaud. Nilambar attained great power. He extended his kingdom eastward to the Barnadi and westward to the Karatoya river. He also wrested part of Northern Bengal from the Muhammadan ruler but was not involved in conflict with the Ahoms. He constructed a road from Kamatapur to Ghoraghat and a fort at the latter place. At last, Nilambar lost his kingdom to Hussain Shah in 1498. A.D. and the rule of Kamata kings came to an end.

The fall of Nilambar is attributed by tradition to one Sachi Patra, a Brahman councillor of Nilambar, who caused the Muslim invasion. The story goes that the king caused the young son of Sachi Patra to be killed on suspicion of intrigue with his queen and served his flesh to his father at a banquet. After Sachi Patra had finished the dish, the horrible nature of it was disclosed to him. Then he obtained permission of the king to leave the kingdom ostensibly for pilgrimage to the Ganga for washing off the sin of eating human flesh but with the real object of avenging his son's murder. He went straight to Hussain Shah and persuaded him to invade Kamata by disclosing its intrinsic weakness. Hussain Shah invaded Kamatapur with a large army but failed to seize it for a long time as the city was strongly fortified. At last it was taken over by stratagem in 1498 A.D. "It is said that he announced to the king his intention to return to his own country, but begged that before doing so his wife might be permitted to pay a visit to Nilambar's queen. By means of this subterfuge some armed men were introduced into the city in litters and with their aid it was captured. Nilambar was taken prisoner, and it was intended to carry him to Gaud, but on the way he made his escape and was never heard of again."[31] But according to K. L. Baruah, Nilambar escaped and fled towards the hill.[32] After the fall of Kamatapur, Hussain Shah reduced the country as far east as the Barnadi and left his son, Danial as Governor at Hazo with a garrison. Afterwards, taking the chance of heavy rains, the Bhuyan chiefs combined against the common foe and destroyed Danial's garrison and began to rule independently till Biswa Singha subdued them in this part of the country during the first quarter of the fifteenth century.

The Koch Kings : According to Gait, "the true Koches were a Mongoloid race, very closely allied to the Meches and Garos and we find that in Jalpaiguri, Koch Bihar and Goalpara, the persons known as Rajbanshi are either pure Koches, who though dark, have a distinctly Mongoloid physiognomy, or else a

31. Ibid, p. 45.
32. K. L. Baruah : *Early History of Kamarupa, Gauhati*, 1966, p. 174.

mixed breed in which the Mongoloid element usually preponderates". After conversion to Hinduism the Koches became a great race caste.

Biswa Singha, the founder of the Koches had a humble origin, as his father Haria Mandal was the headman of twelve Koch families of Chikangram village in the Khuntaghat Pargana of Goalpara district. Haria Mandal married two sisters, Hira and Jira by whom he had two sons, Bisu from Hirá and Sisu from Jira. According to tradition, Bisu was begotten on Hira by Siva in the disguise of her husband, Haria Mandal. At the time of the destruction of Danial's garrison, Bisu grew up into a strong and brave young man. He took the opportunity of anarchy and collected a band of strong followers and with their aid subdued the neighbouring Bhuyans or chiefs of Uguri and Luki and all other Bhuyans one after another who were ruling independently at the time in the area upto the Barnadi and thus rose to power and declared himself as king of Kamata in about 1515 A.D. Among the defeated, mention may be made of the Bhuyans of Phulguri and Bijni in Goalpara, Charu Bhuyan, Prataprai of Pandu and Narayan Bhuyan in North Kamrup. Subsequently, he pushed the boundary of his kingdom westward upto the Karatoya river and removed his capital from Chikangram to Koch Bihar where he built a fine city. He was converted to Hinduism and assumed the Hindu name Biswa Singha and his brother became Siba Singha.

After conversion to Hinduism, the Brahmans ascribed Kshatriya origin to his tribesmen whose ancestors were Kshatriyas who had thrown away the sacred thread while fleeing to the jungles of Assam before the wrath of Parasuram, and also established his divine origin by discovering the legend that he was the son of Siva, begotten on the wife of Hariya Mandal.

Biswa Singha had a well organised government. He made his brother Sib Singha *Yubaraj* and appointed twelve ministers from the twelve chief families of the Meches. He took census of the people and divided them under various officers viz., *Thakurias* over 20 men, *Saikias* over 100, *Hazaris* over 1,000, *Umras* over 3,000 and *Nawabs* over 60,000. He rebuilt Kamakhya temple and imported several Brahmans from Varanasi, Kanauj and other centres of learning.

According to Ahom chronicles Biswa Singha paid a friendly visit to the Ahom king, Suhungmung in 1537 A.D. and exchanged presents. He was not involved in wars between the Ahoms and the Muhammadans though the combatants passed through his kingdom. He had several wives by whom he had eighteen children including Malla Deb, Sukladhaj, Nar Singha and Gosain Kamal.[33] He died in 1540 A.D. and was succeeded by his son, Malla Deb assuming the name Naranarayan. However, on the death of Biswa Singha,

33. E. A. Gait : *A History of Assam, Calcutta*. 1967, p p.49-50

Nar Singha proclaimed himself the king as Malla Deb and Sukladhaj were away at Varanasi for study. Hearing the news they hastened home and captured the throne. After ascending the throne, Malla Deb assumed the name of Naranarayan and appointed his brother Sukladhaj better known as Chilarai to be the Commander-in-Chief. Soon after it, Naranarayan decided to set out on a conquering tour and the first attack was directed against the Ahoms in 1546 A.D. This expedition under Sukladhaj ascended the north bank of the Brahamaputra as far as the Dikrai river where a battle took place and the Koches fighting with bows and arrows came out victorious. Then followed two other engagements at Kaliabar and Sala in which also the Ahoms were defeated with great loss. But in the last engagement on the bank of the Pichala river, Suklenmung, the Ahom king routed the Koch army inflicting a disastrous defeat. In course of these operations, an embanked road was constructed by the Koches from their capital to Narayanpur a distance of about 560 kilometres under the supervision of the king's brother, Gosai Kamal. The remains of it are still seen and are known to this day as the Gosain Kamal Ali.

After some years in 1562 A.D, the next expedition to Ahom kingdom took place. A force sent up the Brahmaputra reached Dikhaumukh where an engagement took place in which the Ahoms were worsted. In the next engagement at the same place Chilarai himself took the field with a large force and inflicted overwhelming defeat on the Ahoms. The Ahom king fled to Namrup and the Koch army captured Gargaon, the Ahom capital and the Koches gained suzerainty over the Ahoms.

Naranarayan not only defeated his main rival, the Ahoms, but also subjugated the other neighbouring kings and chiefs. The Kachari king was easily defeated and made a tributary. The *Rajas* of Jaintia and Tippera kingdoms were killed by Chilarai himself who installed their sons as tributary in their respective kingdoms. The Manipur *Raja* was demanded of his submission and he did so. The Chiefs of Khairam and Dimarua voluntarily submitted. Thus the reign of Naranarayan represents the zenith of Koch power.

But Naranarayan met with misfortune at the hands of the Muhammadan ruler of Gaud—Sulaiman Kararani. According to *Riyaz-us-Salatin*, Sulaiman Kararani set out to conquer the Koch kingdom in 1568. A.D. and after conquering the outlying areas besieged the Koch capital. But he had to abandon the siege due to insurrection in Orissa. According to local *Buranjis*, Chilarai was taken prisoner to Gaud and was kept in captivity but soon he managed his release by obtaining the favour of the *Padshah's* wife. Some years afterwards in about 1576 A.D, Naranaryan helped Akbar, the Emperor of Delhi in conquering Gaud and obtained a part of it. However, Naranarayan acknowledged the suzerainty of Akbar, the great Mughal Emperor of Delhi.

Naranarayan had to pass unhappy days during the latter part of his life after Chilarai's death from small pox in 1577 A.D. Chilarai left a son, Raghudev who rebelled against the king. In 1581 Naranarayan divided the kingdom between himself and Raghudev, retaining the portion west of Sankosh for himself, and the portion east of it, known as Koch Hazo was given to Raghudeb. He died in 1584 A.D. and was succeeded by his son, Lakshminarayan. Since then Goalpara came under Raghudev and his successors.

Raghudev : Naranarayan had no son till late in life and therefore, Raghudev was regarded as heir-apparent to the throne. Raghudev apprehended the loss of the throne at the birth of a son named Lakshminarayan to the king and the death of his father, Chilarai, made him lose all hope of succeeding to the throne. So, he left the capital with his family and adherents, and established a new capital at Barnagar on the Manas river in the present Kamrup district and erected a fort which he called Ghilajaypur. [34] This led to the division of the kingdom already referred to. Thus, Raghudev began to rule as a tributary king in the eastern Koch kingdom which included the present Mangaldai subdivision of Darrang and the districts of Kamarup and Goalpara and the eastern part of Mymensingh which was lost to Isa Khan, the Bhuyan of Khizrpur. He was also involved in a quarrel with his uncle but it was settled amicably. He declared independence when Lakshminarayan succeeded to the throne at the death of his father Naranarayan and minted coins in his name. His son, Parikshit rebelled against him but it was curbed down with force and Parikshit who was caught and imprisoned, fled to Lakshminarayan. Raghudev died in about 1603 A.D. and Parikshit being sent for by the chief ministers hastened to the capital and ascended the throne.

Parikshit Narayan : Like his father, Parikshit also did not acknowledge the supremacy of Lakshminarayan as a result of which both the cousins were involved in war in which the latter was worsted. In order to subdue the refractory Parikshit, Lakshminarayan declared himself a vassal of the Mughal Emperor and personally approached the Nawab of Dacca to intervene. The Nawab availed the opportunity and despatched an army under Mukarrum against Parikshit. In a naval engagement near Salguna, Parikshit's fleet of 300 boats was destroyed. Thence Shaikh Kamal commanded the expedition by land to Hatsilah in the Karaibari Pargana where they made their encampments fortified with bamboo palisades. Then the Mughals laid siege on Dhuburi where Parikshit erected a fort which was held by a garrison of 500 horse and 10,000 foot. It was only after a month's siege that the fort fell to the enemy. Parikshit then sued for peace but the terms of the Governor of Bengal amounting to submission was not acceptable to him.

34. Ibid, p. 57.

Parikshit then turned for assistance to the Ahom Raja Pratap Sinha who was married to his daughter, Mangal Dahi but Pratap Sinha's terms being unacceptable Parikshit determined to fight alone. Then he made a sudden attack on the Muhammadans stationed at Dhuburi but had to retreat accross the Sankosh to Barnagar on the Manas and was followed by the enemy. Lakshminarayan also joined in the pursuit and Parikshit's fleet was defeated. Then he fled to Pandu and surrendered himself, his elephants and all his possessions. He was taken to Delhi as a prisoner. Emperor Jahangir restored him to his kingdom on his undertaking to pay a sum of four lakhs of rupees. Parikshit died at Allahabad on his way home and soon his kingdom as far as the Barnadi was annexed to the Mughal Empire in about 1614 A.D. It was administered through a governor who was at first stationed at Khelah and then at Hajo.

Bali Narayan : On the defeat of Parikshit, his brother Balinarayan alias Dharmanarayan or Baldeo had fled to the Ahom king Pratap Sinha who gave him shelter. This and other causes led the two powers into war. The Governor of Bengal sent an expedition under Abu Bakar to invade the Ahom kingdom. The invading force advanced upto Kaliabar in Nowgong by the Kalang river. The Ahoms met the enemy at the mouth of the Bhareli and annihilated them including their commander Abu Bakar. The country upto the Barnadi was cleared of the Muhammadans and Balinarayan was installed as tributary *Raja* of Darrang. He established his capital on the south bank of the Brahmaputra which formed part of Darrang. [35]

In the long hostilities that followed between the Ahoms assisted by Balinarayan and other local chiefs and the Muhammadans, the Ahoms ultimately got the upperhand and took over almost all the strongholds of the Muhammadans in Kamrup including Hajo. "The remaining Mussalman garrisons in Kamrup were attacked and captured in turn, and, in a great part of the Goalpara district also, the Muhammadan yoke was thrown off. Chandra Narayan, a son of the Koch king Parikshit and the founder of the Bijni family, with the aid of a detachment of Ahom troops sent to him by Pratap Sinha established himself in Hatsila in Karaibari, on the south bank of the Brahmaputra. Many of the *Zamindars* on the north bank made their submission to the Ahoms." [36]

Balinarayan also erected a fort at Jogighopa on the eastern frontier of the Goalpara district. But a fresh army under the command of Mir Zainuddin was sent to Assam by the *Nawab* of Dacca. With the assistance of Prannarayan of Koch Bihar, Zainuddin advanced against Chandra Narayan who fled away before the attack and all other *Zamindars* on the south bank of the Brahmaputra submitted. Then he arrived at Dhuburi where he arrested Sattrajit who was

35. Ibid, p. 111.
36. Ibid, p. 117

their *Thanadar* of Pandu and Gauhati for his duplicacy and suspected treachery. At the end of several engagements that followed, the Ahoms were defeated. Chandra Narayan was killed and Balinarayan fled across the Manas after the fall of his fort at Jogighopa to the Muhammadans who restored their hold on Goalpara. Then the Muhammadans crossed the Manas and earned successive victory in the battles that followed. The Ahom forts at Barpeta, Pandu, Saraighat, Kajalimukh and at other places were captured, and their ally Balinarayan fled to Singri Parbat in Darrang. He was hotly pursued and was killed there in 1637 A.D. In 1638 A.D. the Muhammadans attacked Upper Assam but had to retreat to Gauhati. The Ahoms reoccupied Kajali and peace was concluded fixing the Barnadi on the north and the *Asurar Ali* on the south of the Brahmaputra as boundary between the Ahoms and the Muhammadans.

Since then Goalpara was under Muhammadan rule for 20 years and was administered through a Governor. In 1658 A.D., Prannarayan, *Raja* of Koch Bihar, took the opportunity of the confusion caused by the wars of succession following the illness and deposition of Shah Jahan to shake off the Mughal's vassalage. He attacked Goalpara and occupied it. The Mughal Governor retreated to Gauhati. As the Ahoms were advancing to Gauhati, he fled by boat to Dacca. The Ahoms continued their advance to Goalpara and drove back Prannarayan across the Sankosh. Thus Goalpara was seized by the Ahoms who retained it under their control for three years till 1661 A.D. when Mir Jumla, Governor of Bengal, invaded Assam.

Mir Jumla's invasion : In 1661 A.D., Mir Jumla proceeded with a large army towards Koch Bihar which he occupied, but failed to capture its king Prannarayan who escaped to Bhutan. Then, on the 4th January, 1662, A.D. he set forth on his invasion of Assam. After a delayed journey he arrived opposite to the Ahom fort at Jogighopa which was easily captured and the Ahom garrison there retreated to Saraighat and Pandu. The invading force advanced in two divisions and Mir Jumla himself commanded the division advancing along the north bank of the Brahmaputra while his naval fleet proceeded by the river. After the fall of Jogighopa, the Ahom king, Jayadhvaj hastily despatched a large reinforcement to Saraighat and Pandu, butthe Muhammadans occupied these forts before their arrival. Then Gauhati was captured without engagement on the 4th February, 1662 A.D. The whole force advancing along the north bank crossed to the south to join the other division. The army then encamped near the Ahom fort at Simlagarh which was strongly fortified and after a feeble resistance by the Ahoms, captured it. Mir Jumla advanced to Gargaon. Meanwhile his naval fleet won victory near Kaliabor. Hearing the news of defeat and of advance of the enemy, Jayadhvaj fled first to Charaideo and then to Taraist and finally to Namrup. All overtures for peace by the Ahoms were rejected. Mir Jumla occupied Gargaon on the 17th March, 1662 A.D. But at last, this invin-

cible army had to submit to the fury of Assam's nature. The rains then set in torrents causing heavy floods which disrupted all supplies and let loose rampant diseases which wiped out a large part of the army. The Mughals were also exposed to night attacks by the Ahoms. Early in the cold weather, Mir Jumla was compelled to conclude a treaty after which he returned to Dacca by the Brahmaputra. but on his way home, he died on the 30th March, 1663 A.D. [37]

On the basis of the treaty, the Muhammadans restored their hold over Goalpara and Kamrup. Rashid Khan who was installed by Mir Jumla as the *Faujdar* of Gauhati, was responsible for administration of these tracts. He was succeeded by Saiad Firuj Khan in 1667 A.D. and soon hostilities renewed with the Ahoms on the refusal of the Ahom king, Chakradhvaj to pay the balance of the indemnity still outstanding. Determined to shake off Mughal vassalage, Chakradhvaj sent a well equipped army under the command of Lachit Bar Phukan to wrest Gauhati from the Muhammadans. After winning several engagements Lachit captured Gauhati and Pandu in 1667 A.D. The Muhammadans who sustained heavy loss retreated to the Manas river where they were completely routed. Gauhati was chosen as the headquarters of the Bar Phukan, and Pandu and Saraighat were strongly fortified. But the advance guard of the Muhammadans remained at Rangamati where a *Raja* named Indra Daman was apparently in command. Hearing the news of the loss of Gauhati, Aurangazeb sent a large army under the command of the famous general, Ram Sing who arrived at Rangamati in February, 1669 A.D. After varying success for each other in the several engagements that followed, Ram Singh's army was defeated in the famous battle of Saraighat. The Garos and the *Raja* of Rani assisted the Ahoms in the operations and in March 1671 A.D., Ram Singh retreated to Rangamati. Hadira, opposite Goalpara, then became the Ahom frontier outpost. [38]

The last war between the Ahoms and the Muhammadans occurred in 1682 A.D. during the reign of Gadadhar Sinha who waged war and recaptured Gauhati which was treacherously surrendered to the Muhammadans by the Bar Phukan in 1679 A.D. Henceforward, the Manas river was fixed as the boundary between the two powers and "Goalpara continued under Muhammadan rule till 1765 A.D. when, with the rest of Bengal it passed into the possession of the East India Company." [39]

(d) *BRITISH PERIOD* :

At the time of cession, Goalpara formed the easternmost part of the Muhammadan province of Bengal bounded by the Manas river on the east. This

37. Ibid, pp. 131-143.
38, Ibid, pp. 159-161.
39. B. C. Allen : *Assam District Gazetteers, Vol.* III. *Goalpara*, Calcutta, 1905, p. 24.

territory, which once formed a part of the eastern Koch kingdom of Parikshit, was added to Rangpur to form the Rangpur district of the Bengal province of the East India Company. The present Goalpara town, from which the district derives its name and Jogighopa on the opposite bank of it were two frontier trade outposts from which trade was carried with Assam. There was left at Jogighopa, a military outpost but no civil officials were detailed there to look into administrative affairs which rested on the officials at Rangpur, who very seldom visited it. It is said that there were European colonies at these two places and that they carried on monopoly export trade of Bengal with Assam. But according to Gait, in 1792, Mr. Raush, a salt merchant at Goalpara, was the only European living there since 1768. He had monopoly export trade with Assam. He is also said to have recruited mercenaries in Bengal for the Burha Gohain of the Ahoms against the Moamarias. The monopoly in the export trade was checked after Captain Welsh's Assam expedition in 1792.

Meanwhile this eastern tract of the Rangpur district was constituted into three *thanas* of Goalpara, Dhuburi and Karaibari which were being held by a few big *Zamindars*. The Karaibari *thana* (now defunct) which stretched southwards from Dhuburi included a hilly tract of the Garo Hills inhabited by the Garos. The Garos are a section of the Bodo race, who were probably driven southwards to the hills by the Koch kings. Like most of their neighbouring tribes they lived in a state of constant internecine warfare and harried the plains to raid and took back many captives. They also resorted to the markets in the border estates of the *Zamindars* who exacted levies on the hill produce. These mountaineers were a source of constant trouble during the early part of the British rule. In 1775, the *Zamindars* of Karaibari and Mechpara invaded the Garo Hills to avenge some raids of unusual severity on their respective estates. These *Zamindars* particularly Mahendra Narayan of Karaibari were successful in subjugating a large portion of the hills which they incorporated into their respective estates. Many Garos living beyond this area were also made tributaries. The border chiefs had to curb the Garo incursions and were allowed in return by the British to hold their estates at a very light revenue. Very often, these border chiefs or *Zamindars* or *Choudhuris* as they were known, resorted to oppressions and exactions which provoked the Garos to commit frequent raids in the plains. These raids generally proceeded from the tributary Garos as well as the independent Garos beyond them.

With a view to promoting law and order, peace and civilisation among the tribes, the tract covered by the *thanas* of Goalpara, Dhuburi and Karaibari together with the Garo Hills frontier was exempted from operation of general laws and was separated by Act X of 1822 to form a new district named North East Rangpur (afterwards Goalpara district) under the charge of a Special Civil Commissioner. David Scott was the first official to hold the charge. He was

specially empowered to extend British administration to the interior of the Garo Hills and in this, he was successful to a great extent, but Garo raids still continued. In 1825, the office of the Deputy Commissioner, then designated as Principal Assistant Commissioner was first established at Goalpara.

Until this time collection of revenue was done by a contractor annually appointed, who made his own arrangements. It may be mentioned that during Mughal times, the *Fauzdar* at Rangamati used to collect revenue in kind assisted by the *Zamindars* and the contractor so appointed retained the same system. In 1788, cash payment was introduced and shortly afterwards, the area under the three *thanas* was covered by the Permanent Settlement of Bengal.

After expulsion of the Burmese from the Assam valley and its annexation to the British territory in 1826, David Scott, the Special Civil Commissioner of North East Rangpur was appointed as the Commissioner of the new province. Scott's old charge of North East Rangpur was incorporated into the new province as a seperate district under the name Goalpara. Since then, it was administered on the same system as the rest of Assam till 1866 with its headquarters at Goalpara. During this period, several expeditions were sent up the Garo Hills against their frequent raids which ceased from the said year when a British officer was posted in the hills. Thus, peace was established in the southern frontiers of the district. In the same year, the Eastern *Duars*, a thinly peopled extensive tract along the base of the Himalayas, which had been under the rule of Deb Raja of Bhutan, was annexed on conclusion of Bhutan wars (1864-66) and were formed into a district. These *Duars* were added to the Goalpara district from the 1st January, 1867, in which year, the entire district was transferred to the newly formed Bengal Commissionership of Koch Bihar. In the following year, the district was placed for judicial purposes under the Judicial Commissioner of Assam. In 1869, the Garo Hills were separated to form a new district by Act XXII of that year, which repealed the Act of 1822. In the same year, the Eastern *Duars* were deregulationised. When Assam was raised into a Chief Commissionership in 1874, Goalpara, and the Eastern *Duars* and Garo Hills were retransferred to it. [40]

In 1879, the headquarters of the Goalpara district were transfered from Goalpara to Dhuburi for administrative convenience and Goalpara was reduced to subdivisional headquarters. In October 1905, Assam was amalgamated with Eastern Bengal to form a new province known as Eastern Bengal and Assam under a Lieutenant Governor. This caused great resentment and protest by the people of Assam including Goalpara. Assam was again separated and became

40. *Report on the Administration of Assam*, 1921-22, p. 39, and also *Assam District Gazetteers, Vol. III, Goalpara*, Calcutta, 1905, pp. 25-29 and also E. A. Gait : *A History of Assam*, 1967, p. 369.

a province under a Chief Commissioner from 1st April, 1912. Finally, Assam was raised to a Governor's province in 1921.

To state in brief, Goalpara district after separation of Garo Hills to form a new district in 1869, had two distinct portions viz., (i) the permanently settled parts comprising the three *thanas* of Goalpara, Dhuburi and Karaibari and (ii) the temporarily settled part called the Eastern *Duars* to the north of the former part. Since then the district had been functioning with two civil subdivisions viz., the Dhuburi subdivision and Goalpara subdivision till Independence in 1947, subject however, to some changes in area and boundary from time to time and its history during the period was uneventful.

Eastern Duars : To complete the history of the district something more is to be stated about the five Eastern *Duars* viz., Guma, Ripu, Chirang, Sidlli and Bijni lying at the foot of the Himalayas. The history of the Eastern *Duars* differs in some respects from that of the other part of the district. Bhutanese possession of this tract and also of Bhutan itself does not date back to more than two centuries prior to annexation of the Eastern *Duars*. According to the *Darrang Raj Vansavali* dated 1806 A.D., Nara Singha, son of Biswa Singha, became king of Bhutan after expulsion by his brother Naranarayan. According to the Report of Ashley Eden, Bhutan belonged to a tribe, who were probably natives of Koch Bihar, and were called 'Tiphu' by the Bhutias. They were driven to the plains by some Tibetan soldiers who occupied Bhutan. Thus, the Bhutias were the descendants of the Tibetans. It was only at the beginning of the seventeenth century when there was political chaos caused by the breakdown of the Koch kingdom and wars between the Muhammadans and the Ahoms, that the Bhutias brought this tract of Eastern *Duars* under their control. The Bhutia *Zamindars* resorted to oppressions and exactions upon the inhabitants of this tract and the Bhutias used to raid the villages in the plains as well. Such raids continued even after the British came into possession of Assam. The British Government negotiated for peace with the Bhutanese Government but their emissary, Ashley Eden was insulted. All this led to the Bhutan war of 1864-66, on conclusion of which the British Government annexed the Eastern *Duars* north of Goalpara and all other *Duars* to the British territory. The British agreed to make a yearly payment of Rs. 25,000 which was subsequently raised to Rs. 50,000 as quit rent for the *Duars*. [41]

(e) Freedom Movement in Goalpara :

The district of Goalpara went under foreign yoke much earlier than the rest of Assam. The last ruling princes of the soil viz., the Koches, lost their independence at the beginning of the seventeenth century to the Mughals who

41. B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetteers. Vol.* III, *Goalpara*, Calcutta, 1905, pp. 25-27.

ceded Goalpara to the East India Company in 1765 A.D. The East India Company allowed the chiefs or *Zamindars* to enjoy their estates at a light revenue. Their estates were subsequently covered by the Permanent Settlement of Bengal. This fact dampened the spirit of independence which remained sluggish in the people of the district at the time when it was burning in the rest of Assam and therefore, Goalpara had but little contribution during the first phase of independence movement.

With the spread of western education during the last part of the nineteenth century, a new awakening surcharged the patriots of the land. Following the birth of the Indian National Congress in Bombay in 1885, the Assam Association was formed in 1903 to closely pursue the political developments in Assam. The Association adopted at its special session held at Gauhati on the 11th October, 1920, the resolution on Non-Co-operation Movement for achievement of *Swaraj* adopted at the Nagpur session of the All India Congress. The Association merged with the Assam Provincial Congress. The leaders of the province plunged headlong into the struggle for liberation of India under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Meanwhile, the Non-Co-operation Movement was associated with the Khilafat Movement.

During this time, the Goalpara Congress was organised and a combined office for the Congress and the Khilafat was opened at Goalpara in a private building. Along with the visit of Mahatma Gandhi to Assam in June, 1921, the Congress movement gained momentum and it was pushed into the nooks and corners of the district as elsewhere in Assam. Tarun Ram Phukan, Nabin Chandra Bardoloi and other leaders of Assam including Chandra Nath Sarmah, a student leader of Tezpur visited the district to gear up the movement. The people responded vigorously to the clarion call of Mahatma Gandhi for *Swaraj* and the leaders of this district courted arrest and were thrown into the prison bars.

The indiscriminate arrest of the leaders somewhat lulled the Congress movement. But the underground movement became rather more active and gained revolutionary zeal which inspired the youths to organise *Tarun Sangha* in Goalpara. In this, the youths were assisted by the revolutionary group of Bengal. Leaders and volunteers from the Goalpara district attended the All India Congress Session of 1926 held at Pandu.

Next came the Civil Disobedience Movement, of 1930-32 involving defiance of repressive laws and ordinances and boycott of British goods. The Assam Congress started movement for defiance of the Cunninghum circular. Students played a prominent role in this movement. Hundreds of students left their institutions managed by the Government (so far only Govt. institutions existed) and joined the movement. This nationalist movement resulted in the establishment of parallel educational institutions by the public. The boycott

movement resulted in piling up and burning foreign goods, and in use of *khadi*. Mahatma Gandhi revisited Assam in April, 1934 in connection with removal of untouchability movement. His visit strengthened the national movement in Assam.

In 1939, when World War II broke out, Gandhiji gave a call for individual *Satyagraha* for protesting against British Government's decision for involving India in the war for British cause. Congress leaders and volunteers in the Goalpara district also observed individual *Satyagraha* and courted arrest. During the war, *Santi Sena Bahinis* were organised all over the district to train the people in discipline and self-protection against imminent dangers.

The final phase of Freedom Struggle was marked by the historic *Quit India Movement* and the August Revolution of 1942. This historic *quit India* proposal as prepared by Mahatma Gandhi was accepted on 9th August at the Bombay session of the All India Congress. With the motto of *Do or Die* the movement swept over the country. After the leaders including Mahatma Gandhi had been arrested and imprisoned, the movement took a violent turn. Destruction of Government property and sabotage became rampant everywhere and in this respect the Goalpara district was no exception. Processions and sabotage acitivities were carried out in this district in defiance of Sec. 144 Cr. P.C. However, no incident culminating in firing and death occurred in Goalpara though many suffered from bayonet wounds and lathi charge which rendered several invalid for life and one Nidhani Ram Koch of Dudhnai succumbed to such injuries.

(f) Archaeology :

It has been shown that the present territory of the Goalpara district never formed an independent kingdom under its own ruler. Though it formed a part of several powerful kingdoms, it was generally situated as an outlying frontier tract far from the capital of the ruling monarch. This explains the scantiness of archaeological remains of interest within the district. Only a few ancient remains have so far been explored. But the possibility of discovering much more of such remains by further excavation and research cannot be ruled out. A few finds so far discovered have been enumerated below :

In the Dhuburi subdivision, there is a temple dedicated to *Dudhnath* at Bilasipara, which is similar to that at Jogighopa in Goalpara subdivision. The former contains an image of *Siva* and the latter of *Siva* and *Parvati* carved on stone. The antiquity of these remains is not yet ascertained. At *Aisakhati (Kali) than* there are two *Kundas* (wells), the antiquity of which is also unknown. In Mahamaya *Pith* there is a stone image of *Durga* ; its date of establishment is also unknown. A big slab of stone lying by the river bank near the conflu-

ence of the Gadadhar river with the Brahmaputra is associated with the mythological episode of Beula and Lakhindar and is said to have been used for washing by Netai *Dhubuni*, the washerwoman of Lord *Siva*, Near Salkocha, there is the Chandardinga hill associated with Chand *Sadagar*, an opulent merchant and the father of Lakhindar. As described in the episode, Chand's seven *dingas* (vessels of merchandise) were caused to be drowned and destroyed at this place by *Manasa*, the serpent goddess in the waters of the Brahmaputra, which subsequently raised its bed with the spoils to form this hill. Among the remains of the medieval period, the Rangamatir *Masjid*, a well known brick-built mosque with historical background dating back to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries A.D. is older in point of time than other remains in the Dhuburi subdivision. It was built by Hussain Shah, *Nawab* of Gaud, and is situated by the side of the road leading to Goalpara. The Mir Jumla *Masjid*, another brick-built mosque situated on the hill-top by the side of the Kola river dates back to the seventeenth century and was built by Mir Jumla. Pach Piarar *Durgah*, a tomb is also ascribed to the same period. Other remains found on the hill here are a masonry enclosure in which a tiger is said to have been confined and an *idgah* or place of prayer with a deep well. The hill is now covered with deep jungle but once Rangamati was the headquarters of the Mughal *Fauzdar*. The *Gurudwara* hillock at Dhuburi is said to have been constructed in 1665 A.D. by the Mughal army under the order of the Sikh Guru Tez Bahadur. At Chikangram, the ruins of the first capital of the founder Koch king Biswa Singha can be seen. Ruins of ramparts and forts of this king can be seen at Biswa Killa. The ruins of the fort of Parikshit (1602-1615 A.D.) can still be seen on the Matia hillock about three kilometres north-west of Rupshi and of his palace at Bashbari on the east bank of the Gadadhar river, about twenty kilometres from Dhuburi. At Gauripur, some historical relics viz., cannons of Raghudev, Lakshminarayan, Shershah and of others are in possession of the Gauripur *Raj* family. At Materjhar there is an old *math* built during the reign of Raghudev.

In the Goalpara suddivision, a number of *Siva* temples have been built in the site of ruins of old *Siva* temples the dates of construction of which are unknown except the ruins of *Siva* temple at Paglatek near Pancharatna which is identified as belonging to the ninth century A.D. Three stone images of Lord Buddha have recently been discovered near Pancharatna hill site. Near Krishnai, about twenty kilometres southeast of Goalpara town *Siva lingas* exist. The Tukreswari temple here which was newly constrcuted with C.I. Sheet roof in 1905 after the old one was wrecked by the earthquake of 1897, is associated with *Sati*, *Siva's* wife, a portion of whose body is said to have fallen here. On the Bhairab hill, there is the Bhairab *than* where images of *Siva-Parvati*, *Radha-Krishna* and of some others can be found. These represent good specimens of early sculptures. Ruins of *Siva* temple also exist in the Bhumeswar hill. There is also one Nandeswar temple. In the *Shengkal-Mahakal* (*Siva*) temple, there are two

spears which represent *Siva*. Images of *Narasinha*, (*Vishnu*) *Ganesha*, and *Bagheswari* (a gooddess on a tiger) and ruins of temples dedicated to these deities are found in some places. At Jogighopa, there are small caves in the rocky cliffs overhanging the Brahmaputra. These caves have been sanctified by their association with various ascetics who lived there from time to time. The Dudhnath temple has already been referred to. Near North Salmara, there are extensive remains of earthwork about two kilometres in circumference, which are known as Ram Raja's *garh* and to the south of the Police Station, there is the Mahadev hill where eleven images of Lord *Siva* in different poses are extent in the cave. There is also a tunnel which leads to a solitary place. In and around the Sri Surjya hill situated near Marnai, about fourteen kilometres east of Goalpara town there are old ruins lying scattered in profusion. These include besides others, images of gods and goddesses numbering one less than a lakh and a number of *Siva lingas* and caves engraved on stones. One of the images represent *Surjya* and another a twelve handed male. Two other images are said to be of Jain Tirthankaras probably belonging to the eighth century A.D. There are also eight images of lord Buddha carved in a row on a simple slab of stone in Nalanda and Ajanta style. These Buddha images are similar to the finds at Pancharatna. The ruins provide ample scope for excavation and research into the antiquity of the district.

CHAPTER III.

PEOPLE

(a) *POPULATION* :

(i) **Total Population—thanawise** : According to the Census of 1971, Goalpara district had a population of 22,25,103 consisting of 11,54,449 males and 10,70,654 females and accounted for nearly fifteen per cent of the total population of Assam, including the present Union Territory of Mizoram which had a population of 3,32,390 souls. Among the districts of the State, Goalpara with a density of population of 215 persons per square kilometre trailed behind Nowgong with density of 302, Kamrup with 289 and Cachar with 246 persons per square kilometre.

The district consists of three sub-divisions viz., Dhuburi with a population of 8,51,045, Kokrajhar with 7,10,066 souls and Goalpara with 6,63,992. Kokrajhar, the largest sub-division covers roughly half the area of the district but supports less than one third of the district's population. In other words, more than two-thirds of the people of the district were concentrated in roughly half its area. As a result, Dhuburi sub-division with a density of 310 persons per square kilometre was more than twice as thickly populated as Kokrajhar sub-division whose density was 151 only and Goalpara sub-division with a density of 233 was midway between the two. It must be remembered, however, that a large portion of Kokrajhar sub-division has vast areas of reserved forests which extend along the northern boundary of the district where the population is very sparse. The *thana*-wise population of the thirteen *thanas* of the district is shown below as per the Census of 1971.

Sl. No.	Police Station	Area in sq. km.	Male	Female	Total	Density per sq.km.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Gossaigaon ..	1,287.2	98,387	90,144	188,531	146
2.	Kokrajhar ..	1,310.7	102,582	94,035	196,617	150
3.	Sidli ..	1,080.0	78,529	71,093	149,622	139
4.	Bijni ..	1,038.6	90,172	85,124	175,296	169
5.	Golakganj ..	471.3	87,608	82,878	170,486	362
6.	Bilasipara ..	953·1	120'435	112,356	232,791	244
7.	Dhuburi ..	429.9	96,747	86,051	182,798	425
8.	South Salmara ..	728.0	95,731	89,868	185,599	255
9.	Mankachar ..	163.2	40,431	38,940	79,371	486
10.	Lakhipur ..	699.3	89,252	84,552	173,804	249
11.	Abhayapuri ..	885.8	122,293	112,109	234,402	265
12.	Goalpara ..	611.2	68,394	62,959	131,353	215
13.	Dudhnai ..	647.5	63,888	60,545	124,433	192
	Total of Goalpara district ..	10,359.0	1,154,499	1,070,654	2,225,103	

Among the police stations of the district, Kokrajhar was the largest in area, Mankachar the smallest, --Bilasipara supported the largest population, Mankachar the least. The density of population was the greatest in Mankachar followed by Dhuburi and Golakganj Police Stations.

Density of population : The density of population of Goalpara district stood in 1971 at 215 persons per square kilometre which is higher than the State's density of 150 but lower than the density for the Assam Plains Division, which was 221 persons per square kilometre. From fifth place in the 1961 Census the district's position moved up to fourth place in the 1971 Census in respect of density of population among the districts of the State. The density of population in Goalpara district was 388 persons per square mile i.e. about 150 persons per square kilometre in the 1961 Census showing that during the next decade its population increased by about 65 persons per square kilometre.

The density of population of the district since the turn of the century is as follows. [1]

Year	Density per square mile.
1901	117
1911	151
1921	192
1931	222
1941	255
1951	278
1961	388
1971	557 (215 per square kilometre)

In 1901, Goalpara district had a population of 4,62,555 or slightly more than one-fifth of its population in the 1971 Census, and its density was 117 persons per square mile. The total increase in population during the previous twenty years amounted to only three per cent and this complete absence of natural growth was largely attributed to the ravages of *Kala azar*. Even apart from it, this was observed , "There seems to be something in the district unfavourable to a rapid expansion of the population."[2] The custom of infant marriage which was widely practised in the district, and the unhealthiness of the areas at the foot of the Bhutan and Garo Hills, were also alluded to as factors not conducive to the rapid growth of population.

The average density of the district increased by 34 persons to the square mile in the Census of 1911. In that Census, Brahmaputra Valley showed a growth rate of 18.7 per cent and the largest increase was in one district i.e Goalpara where it amounted to thirty per cent and the district went above

1. *Census of India*, 1961, *Assam*, *District Census Handbook*, *Goalpara*, Govt. of Assam Shillong 1965;
2. B. C, Allen, *Assam District Gazetteers*, *Vol. III*, *Goalpara*, Calcutta, 1905, p. 33

Sibsagar in respect of density since 1901 .The extension of the railway through the north of the district, and the "extra-ordinary incourse of settlers to the *char* lands from the Bengal districts of Mymensingh, Pabna, Bogra and Rangpur" mainly contributed to such growth. The western *thanas* of the district skirting the Brahmaputra were the most affected. The population of South Salmara increased by 70.15 per cent, that of Lakhipur by 61.81 per cent and Bilasipara by 38.65 per cent. The growth in Dhuburi subdivision amounted to 33.97 per cent compared to 19.97 per cent in Goalpara. The population of the northern part of the district known as the Eastern *Duars* increased by 32.91 per cent mainly due to the opening of the railway line and some Nepalis settled there for the purpose of grazing as well as cultivating. Growth in natural population during the decade was estimated at 15.6 per cent. [3]

The Census of 1921 revealed that the density of Assam on the extreme east of British India equalled the density of the North-West Frontier Province, the common density being 130 persons per square mile. The density of Goalpara district during the decade increased to 192, the three-fifths of its actual growth of population being attributed to immigration. The newcomers were chiefly Muslim cultivators from Mymensingh and other neighbouring districts who came up the Brahmaputra and took up much of the *char* and wasteland along its banks. Meches and Santals from Jalpaiguri who also migrated to the district opened up the Eastern *Duars* and were instrumental for increasing its density from 58 to 97. Population of Chirang *mauza* in the Eastern *Duars* increased twelve times during the decade, the population of the Santal Colony of the Lutheran Mission and the Ripu *Mauza* increased by 75 and 82 per cent respectively. The density was the highest in the south-west (Mankachar *thana* 567) followed by Dhuburi and Golokganj *thanas* (390 and 392) adjoining Bengal. During the decade Goalpara subdivision gained more in proportion than Dhuburi subdivision with the result that their densities became almost equal. The greatest increase in Goalpara subdivision was recorded by Lakhipur *thana* (87.7 per cent). The increase in natural population during the decade was 13 per cent.[4]

The Census of 1931 showed that during the previous decade the increase in population of the district was very modest, being only 15.8 per cent. Goalpara subdivision continued to increase faster than Dhuburi subdivision, their percentage increases being 24.1 and 12.6 respectively. Diminution of the rate of growth was attributed to the fact that most of the suitable wasteland in the district had already been occupied by the Eastern Bengal immigrants who entered the district between 1901 and 1921 and who, more, over had now found larger scope for their activities in Kamrup and Nowgong districts. The south-west part of the district adjoining Bengal continued to be the densest, the densities being

3. *Census of India*, 1911, *Volume* III, *Assam*, *Part*-1, *Report*, Shillong, 1912, pp. 17-20
4. *Census of India*, 1921, *Volume* III, *Assam*, *Part*-1, *Report*, Shillong, 1923, pp. 9-11.

Mankachar *thana* 624, Dhuburi *thana* 483 and Golakganj *thana* 445. As was only to be expected, the newly created *thanas* of Gossaigaon, Kokrajhar and Bijni, consisting of vast areas of reserved forests of the Eastern *Duars*, had low densities of 143, 157 and 20 respectively. [5]

At the next Census of 1941, the density of the district increased from 222 in 1931 to 255. For the first time in forty years the rate of increase of Goalpara subdivision (13.86) was slightly lower than that of Dhuburi (15.24), their densities being 271 and 248 respectively. The region comprising the *thanas* of Dhuburi, Mankachar and Golakganj in the south-west of the district and adjoining Bengal continued to be the densest. There was some immigration from outside during the decade and the immigrants formed settlements along the Manas river. Such immigration led to an increase of 48.3 per cent and 27.3 per cent in the population of Bijni and North Salmara respectively. [6]

During the next decade ending in 1951, Goalpara district registered the lowest rate of growth of any plains or autonomous district in Assam. Its actual growth of population recorded at 93,839 persons was by far the smallest increase among the districts of Assam Plains Division and was the smallest increase registered by the district in the previous 50 years. The density of the district increased from 255 in the last Census to 278 in 1951. As in the previous forty years, with the only exception of the decade 1931-41, Goalpara subdivision returned a higher percentage rate of increase viz ; 10.01 than that registered by Dhuburi subdivision (8.9). The densities of these two subdivisions stood at 299 and 271 respectively. It was observed that about one half of the area of the district supported nearly one-fourth of its total population while the remaining half supported three-fourths of its total population. The density continued to be highest in the south-west of the district adjoining Bengal (Dhuburi 708, Mankachar 699 and Golakganj 488). These three *thanas* covering only about one-tenth of the area of the district supported as much as 20% of the population. Immigration, one of the potent factors in multiplying the population of the district in the past, virtually stopped during the decade and was one of the causes for its slow growth-rate. The main cause, however, was unprecedented communal disturbances on a vast scale during the early part of 1950 when about 1,50,000 Muslims left the district. Other factors contributing to the retardation of growth included erosion by the Brahmaputra compelling some people to leave the district in search of lands elsewhere and emigration of tribals from Goalpara to Kamrup and Nowgong districts for economic reasons. [7]

The Census of 1961 broke the tradition of the percentage decade variation revealed by every census being lesser than the previous one which had led to the

5. *Census of India*, 1931, *Volume* III, *Assam*, *Part*-1 *Report*, Shillong, 1932, pp. 14-15.
6. *Census of India*, 1951, *Volum* X11, *Assam*, *Manipur and Tripura*, *Part* 1-*A*, *Report*, Shillong, 1954, pp. 42-43.
7. Ibid., pp. 41-43.

remark that population of the district was increasing at a decreasing rate. An unprecedented growth of 4,35,768 persons, which exceeded the total growth registered during the first three decades of the century, boosted up the percentage decade variations to 39.32 from 9.25 of the previous decade. Such variations were 14·83, 15·76, 26.92 and 29.97 during the decades ending 1941, 1921 and 1911 respectively. This phenomenal increase of population was "mainly due to the settlement of a large number of refugees coming from East Pakistan and to immigration". Other causes for the growth were stated to be better health facilities rendered by Government, influx of people from other States of India and high birth rate among the poor and uneducated. The density of population of the district rose to 388 persons per square mile, the subdivision-wise break-up of densities being Goalpara 427, Dhuburi 575 and newly created Kokrajhar subdivision 257. The familiar pattern of maximum concentration at the south-west corner of the district and the thin population of the northern part falling under the erstwhile Eastern *Duars* which emerged during the previous censuses, persisted during the decade. Thus the densities of Mankachar, Dhuburi and Golakganj Police Stations on the south-west of the district were 885, 872 and 677 per square mile respectively whereas Kokrajhar, Gossaigaon and Bijni had corresponding figures of 262, 248 and 300 respectively. [8]

The Census of 1971 revealed that the increase of population (6,81,211) of the district during the previous decade exceeded its population in 1911 (6,01,198). Such unprecedented growth increased the density of the district by 169 persons per square mile and the percentage decade variation of 44.12 was not only far above the corresponding State figure of 34.71 but was also the highest among the districts of Assam. The population continued to be concentrated in the south-west part of the district where the Mankachar, Dhuburi and Golakganj *thanas* comprising only about 10% of the area of the district supported nearly one-fifth of its population. The Gossaigaon, Kokrajhar, Sidli and Bijni *thanas* which occupied about 45 per cent of the district area supported only about 32 per cent of its population. Other details regarding the 1971 Census including the densities of the various *thanas* have already been mentioned.

District	Year	Persons	Decade variation	Percentage decade variation	Male	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Goalpara district.	1901	462,555			242,957	219,598
	1911	601,198	+138,643	+29.97	318,776	282,422
	1921	763,052	+161,854	+26.92	406,906	356,146
	1931	883,288	+120,236	+15.76	470,557	412,731
	1941	1,014,285	+130,997	+14.83	539,437	474,848
	1951	1,108,124	+ 93,839	+ 9.25	588,999	519,125
	1961	1,543,892	+435,768	+39,32	812,723	731,169
	1971	2,225,103	+681,211	+44.12	1,154,449	1,070,654

8. *Census of India*, 1961, *Assam, District Census Handobok Goalpara Shillong* 1965, pp. 1X-X1.

The above table shows the growth of populaton of the district during the last seventy years. [9]

(ii) Immigration and Emigration : It has already been pointed out in the foregoing pages that immigration is the main factor contributing to the growth of population of the district during the last hundred years or so. Its impact was increasingly felt in the district since the beginning of the present century, while emigration from the district was quite negligible.

Migration within the district takes place in the form of migration from rural to urban areas and from one rural area to another. The following table shows the movement of people within the district as per the Census of 1961.[10]

Migration of the people within the Goalpara district.

Sl. No.	Duration of Residence		Male		Female
1	2		3		4
1.	Less than 1 year	(a)	5,870	(a)	7,147
		(b)	493	(b)	176
2.	1 to 5 years	(a)	29,548	(a)	46,063
		(b)	1,285	(b)	842
3.	6 to 10 years	(a)	16,666	(a)	32,074
		(b)	465	(b)	658
4.	11 to 15 years	(a)	13,513	(a)	26,338
		(b)	292	(b)	470
5.	16 years and over	(a)	43,420	(a)	71,913
		(b)	572	(b)	801
6.	Period not stated	(a)	3,048	(a)	2,974
		(b)	572	(b)	347
7.	Total migrants	(a)	1,11,756	(a)	1,86,509
		(b)	3,579	(b)	3,294

From the above table it appears that in the district of Goalpara, females outnumbered males in all cases of movement from rural to rural areas within the district. This movement of female population is largely attributed to marriage system because it is customary for the brides to move to the homes of their husbands after marriage. The movement of the people from one village to another is generally caused by agricultural activities such as search for better fields, *pam* cultivation etc. Movement for duration of less than one year is occasioned by marriages and *sradha* ceremonies in the neighbouring villages or the migration of seasonal agricultural labourers. Another aspect of such movement for duration of one to 10 years is job migration to places where new industries or development projects have been opened up or movement of agriculturists to places where new areas have been opened up for cultivation. However, in case of migration from rural areas to urban areas males exceed the females. Due to shortage of accommodation and other factors, it is the male who moves first to live in towns or cities.

9. *Census of India* 1971, *Assam, General population Tables*, Delhi, 1972, P. 76

10. *Census of India*, 1961, *Vol.* III, *Assam part-1 A, General Report*, Delhi, 1964, p. 128.

Migration from rural areas of other districts of the State into either rural or urban areas of Goalpara district is not so important in comparison to Darrang and Lakhimpur districts. Only 19,632 and 2,752 persons from the rural areas of other districts of Assam migrated to rural and urban areas respectively of Goalpara district in 1961.

The figure of the inter-district migration within the State of Assam reveals that among the plains districts of Assam, Goalpara occupied the sixth place only next to Cachar in respect of inter-district immigration and fourth position in respect of inter-district emigration during the decade 1951-61. The following table shows the percentage of inter-district migration, both immigration to and emigration from Goalpara district since 1921. [11]

Year	Density per sq. mile.	% of inter-district immigration to population of district.	% of inter-district emigration to population of district.	% of net migration to population of district. (Immigration+Emigration.
1	2	3	4	5
1921 ..	192	0.77	1.15	—0.38
1951 ..	278	0.74	2.61	—1.86
1961 ..	388	1.65	3.61	—1.96

The above table not only reveals some interesting features of inter-district migration within the State but clearly indicates that the district of Goalpara served as a gateway for influx of outside population into the State of Assam. The density of population of the Goalpara district in 1961 "far exceeds the density in 1951, and that for all the three decades, 1921, 1951, and 1961 there is always a movement of population from this district to other districts of Assam. If there is such a sizeable out-migration of people from this district to other districts of Assam in all the above three decades, how can there be such a heavy density of population within the district itself in view of the fact that the density far exceeds the natural increase. Historically, the Goalpara district, is the main gateway for the influx of population from East Bengal (now Bangladesh) into Assam and the above figures seem to suggest that 1961 is no exception to the previous decades despite the fact that East Bengal (Bangladesh) has become a foreign country. It may also be seen that in 1961 as much as 1.65 per cent of its population came into Goalpara from other districts of Assam. This confirms the assumption that during the 1950 disturbances, many Muslims of the district went to other districts of Assam and came back to this district after 1951. Moreover, Goalpara has practically no more available waste land and so the only attraction for other people to go there possibly is to return to their homes there. On the other hand, from column 4 it is also seen that as much as 3.61 percent of its population moved out of this district to other districts of Assam thereby giving a net migration of

11. I bid, p. 130.

1.96 per cent. These figures all the more confirm that this district is a sort of temporary halting place for some people who have come here from outside Assam and that these people again moved into the Upper Assam region after a temporary stay here. These heavy immigration and emigration together with the heavy density of population in this district completely prove that a big number of people must have come into this district from other parts of the sub-continent and that many of the figures of birth place as given in the Individual Slip are mostly incorrect, if not completely false."[12] The following table shows migration from other States from 1921 to 1961 in the district of Goalpara.

Percentage of all immigrants from outside Assam to the total population of the district.

Year	Male	Female
1921	29.89	23.74
1931	27.81	22.72
1951	17.55	13.79
1961	14.32	11.55

The above table reveals a downward trend of immigration though population of the district has increased considerably during the last decades. This may be due to the sealing up of border of India and East Pakistan (Bangladesh) and introduction of passport and visa system. It has already been pointed out that figures of immigration in 1951 and more especially during 1961 are not at all reliable because immigrants did not give their true birth place and inspite of the most spectacular increase of population in 1961 in the district, the figures of migration appear to be one of the lowest in terms of percentages.

The flow of immigrants to Goalpara district from Mymensingh, Pabna, Bogra and Rangpur districts of East Bengal (Balgladesh) began during the decade 1901-11 and settled on *char* lands of Goalpara. During the decade, population of the district increased by 30 per cent whereas its increase in earlier decades was 2 per cent in 1891-1901 and 1.4 per cent in 1881-91. *Thanas* of the western part of the district were most effected, the percentage rate of increase being 70.1 in South Salmara, 61.8 in Lakhipur and, 88.6 in Bilasipara. The number of immigrants in Goalpara rose from 49,059 to 1,18,233, an increase of 140 per cent forming 19.7% of the actual population of the district wheareas the growth of natural population was only 15.6%. However, most of these immigrants settled in the Goalpara district, only a few went outside the district. However, this first batch of immigrants who settled in Goalpara district and censused in 1911 was practically an advance guard. By 1921, larger batches of immigrants came and their movement extended far up the Assam valley and colonies of immigrants formed an appreciable elements of the population in all the plains districts of Assam. An idea of the extent of migration can be had from the figures of those born in Bengal but censused in Goalpara district. Their number stood at 77,000 in 1911, 1,51,000 in 1921, and 1,70,000 in 1931, and a great majority of

12. Ibid, p. 130-31.

whom i.e. 34,000, 78,000 and 80,000 respectively alone came from the Mymensingh district. These figures were exclusive of children of the settlers born to them after their arrival in Assam and censused as Assam born.

The tables for 1941 Census were not prepared due to War and as such figures for that year are not available. In 1951, those who were born in Pakistan but censused in Goalpara stood at 1,36,000 (78,000 males and 58,000 females) of whom 45,000 (25,000 males and 20,000 females) were refugees and 91,000 (53,000 males and 38,000 females) were non-refugees.

The adevnt of such immense numbers of East Bengal (Bangladesh) immigrants whose language, manners and customs differ widely from those of the indigenous people, has affected the economic, political and social structure of the district. They have opened up vast tracts of cultivable waste lands for cultivation but on many occasions with utter disregard to rules relating to reservation of land for various public purposes. Their hunger for land was so great that they even encroached the lands belonging to local people from where they could be evicted with great difficulty. Initially, these immigrants had their way but afterwards when the availability of the land became scarce, their land hunger brought them into conflict with the tribals and other indigenous people of Assam. Assam Government attempted various devices to reduce the occasions of such conflicts and the Line System which was first suggested in 1916 was adopted in 1920. But many conflicts arose between Muslim immigrants and tribals over land, cattle grazing rights and practices. During 1944-46, many of the Santal and Bodo families of Goalpara migrated to Darrang and Upper Assam owing to the increasing pressure on land. Assam Government, to resolve the growing discontent among the tribals, in 1948, constituted Tribal Belts in different regions of the State to protect the interest of the tribal people of Assam and ultimately in 1950, Indian Parliament enacted the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act, 1950 (Act X of 1950). This provided for the removal of any immigrant person from Assam (except the displaced persons) whose stay was detrimental to the interest of the general public of India or any of the Scheduled tribes of Assam.[13]

As discussed above, the immigration from East Pakistan (Bangladesh) has been predominant into the district while such immigrants from other countries except Nepal is very negligible. The number of persons born in Nepal but censused in the district in 1961 stood at 3,602 of whom 2,176 were males and 1,426 females. Most of these Nepalis are graziers and live in *Chaporis* on the bank of the Brahmaputra and keep large herds of buffaloes and cows on the *chars* continuously formed by the river. The table below shows the population of the Goalpara district according to place of birth as censused in 1961 and gives an idea of immigration into the district.[14]

13. *Census of India* 1951, *Vol. X11, Assam, Manipur & Tripura, Part 1-A Report*, Shillong, 1954, pp. 71-80
14. *Census of Iudia* 1961, *Vol.* 111, *Assam, Part* II-1, Cultural and Migration Tables, Delhi, 1965.

Country/State where born	Rural/Urban/ Unclassifiable	Total			Rural			Urban		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Total Population ..		1,543,892	812,723	731,169	1,441,749	753,508	688,241	102,143	59,215	42,928
A. Born in India ..	R.	1,331,419	695,750	635,669	1,310,891	681,350	629,541	20,528	14,400	6,128
	U.	62,012	34,650	27,362	4,465	2,950	1,515	57,547	31,700	28,847
	Unclassifiable	297	124	173	210	67	143	87	57	30
1. Within the State of Enumeration	R.	1,284,710	664,003	620,707	1,275,085	658,406	616,679	9,625	5,597	4,028
	U.	58,137	32,294	25,843	3,077	2,064	1,013	55,060	30,230	24,830
	Unclassifiable	209	70	139	176	49	127	33	21	12
(a) Born in place of enumeration	R.	957,179	538,277	418,902	957,179	538,277	418,902	..	..	..
	U.	50,754	28,224	22,526	..	..	..	50,754	28,228	22,526
(b) Born elsewhere in the district of enumeration	R.	305,147	115,344	189,803	298,274	111,765	186,509	6,873	3,579	3,294
	U.	4,341	2,334	2,007	2,033	1,435	598	2,308	899	1,409
	Unclassifiable	153	50	103	133	40	93	20	10	10
(c) Born in other districts of the State ..	R.	22,384	10,382	12,002	19,632	8,364	11,268	2,752	2,018	734
	U.	3,042	1,732	1,310	1,044	629	415	1,998	1,103	985
	Unclassifiable	56	20	36	43	9	34	13	11	2
II. States in India beyond the State of enumeration	R.	46,709	31,747	14,962	35,806	22,944	12,862	10,903	8,803	2,100
	U.	3,875	2,356	1,519	1,388	886	502	2,487	1,470	1,017
	Unclassifiable	88	54	34	34	18	16	54	36	18
(a) Andhra Pradesh	R.	340	329	11	335	325	10	5	4	1
	U.	1	1	..	..	..	..	1	1	..

Country/State where born	Rural/Urban/ Unclassifiable	Total			Rural			Urban		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
(b) Bihar ..	R.	26,403	19,769	6,634	19,015	13,594	5,421	7,388	6,175	1,213
	U.	843	543	300	373	275	98	470	268	202
	Unclassifiable	49	29	20	20	11	9	29	18	11
(c) Gujrat ..	R.	49	42	7	22	21	1	27	21	6
	U.	13	9	4	5	5	..	8	4	4
(d) Jammu & Kashmir	U.	2	2	..	..	..	..	2	2	..
(e) Kerala ..	R.	18	17	1	15	14	1	3	3	..
	U.	11	10	1	7	7	..	4	3	1
	Unclassifiable	2	1	1	2	1	1	..	..	..
(f) Madhya Pradesh	R.	182	105	77	147	82	65	35	23	12
	U.	23	12	11	10	4	6	13	8	5
	Unclassifiable	2	2	..	..	..	..	2	2	..
(g) Madras ..	R.	274	210	64	152	99	53	122	111	11
	U.	38	30	8	12	7	5	26	23	3
(h) Maharashtra ..	R.	13	8	5	9	7	2	4	1	3
	U.	2	1	1	..	..	..	2	1	1
(i) Mysore ..	R.	14	11	3	10	7	3	4	4	..
	U.	4	3	1	1	1	..	3	2	1
(j) Orissa	R.	616	401	215	565	354	211	51	47	4
	U.	33	22	11	22	18	4	11	4	7
	Unclassifiable	2	1	1	2	1	1	..	..	..

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
(k) Punjab ..	R.	368	248	120	281	183	98	87	65	22
	U.	97	61	36	64	33	31	33	28	5
	Unclassifiable	1	1	..	..	..	..	1	1	..
(l) Rajasthan ..	R.	1,764	1,268	496	461	308	153	1,303	960	343
	U.	1,005	667	338	76	51	25	929	616	313
	Unclassifiable	12	8	4	2	1	1	10	7	3
(m) Uttar Pradesh ..	R.	3,046	2,326	720	1,706	1,252	454	1,340	1,074	266
	U.	244	162	82	97	68	29	147	94	33
	Unclassifiable	8	6	2	1	1	..	7	5	2
(n) West Bengal ..	R.	13,439	6,903	6,536	12,954	6,628	6,326	485	275	210
	U.	1,457	771	686	695	402	293	762	369	393
	Unclassifiable	12	6	6	7	3	4	5	3	2
(o) Andaman and Nicobar Islands	R.	2	5	..	..	..	..	2	2	..
	U.	13	13	..	..	..	..	13	13	..
(p) Delhi ..	R.	5	1	4	5	1	4	..	..	..
	U.	11	7	4	5	5	..	6	2	4
(q) Himachal Pradesh	R.	4	3	1	3	2	1	1	1	..
	U	1	..	1	..	..	..	1	..	1
(r) Manipur ..	R.	27	19	8	14	8	6	13	11	2
	U.	26	19	7	8	6	2	18	13	5
(s) Tripura ..	R.	100	52	48	79	36	43	21	16	5
	U.	35	14	21	11	4	7	24	10	14

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
(t) Pondicherry ..	U	5	..	5	..	..	..	5		5
(u) Nagaland ..	R.	37	26	11	25	16	9	12	10	2
	U.	11	9	2	2	..	2	9	9	..
(v) SIKKIM ..	U.	8	7	1	8	7	1	..	..	..
B. Born in countries in Asia beyond India (including U.S.S.R.)		150,149	82,189	67,260	126,171	69,134	57,037	23,978	13,055	10,923
Afghanistan ..		6	6	..	..	..	..	6	6	..
Burma ..		88	66	22	67	51	16	21	15	6
China ..		1	1	..	..	..	..	1	1	..
Nepal ..		3,602	2,176	1,426	3,256	1,919	1,337	346	257	89
Pakistan ..		145,950	79,726	66,224	122,351	66,954	55,397	23,599	12,772	10,827
Elsewhere ..		502	214	288	497	210	287	5	4	1
C. Countries in Europe (excluding U.S.S.R.)		11	8	3	8	5	3	3	3	..
U. K. (including North Irland)		1	1	..	1	1	..	..	..	..
Elsewhere ..		10	7	3	7	4	3	3	3	3
E. Countries in Occania		4	4	2	4	2	2	..	..	..
Australia ..		4	2	2	4	2	2	..	..	..

(ii) Distrbution between Rural and Urban Areas : At the turn of the century, the district of Goalpara had 1,461 villages. "These villages," as described by B.C. Allen, "are not, however, well defined units, clusters of huts which stand out clearly in the centre of the fields tilled by their inhabitants. Rice, the staple crop, is grown in wide plains, dotted over with clumps of bamboos and fruit trees in which are buried the houses of the cultivators. It is groves and not villages that the traveller sees when riding through the more densely populated portions of the district, and not a house can usually be discerned till he has penetrated this jungle of plantains, betelnut trees, and bamboos. There is generally no dearth of building sites, there are no communal lands, and there is nothing to keep the population together. Except in the Eastern Duars, it is difficult to tell where one village ends and another begins, or to which of the larger clumps of trees should be assigned the smaller clumps which are freely dotted about amongst the rice fields. The result is that the statistics of villages are of little practical importance. Taking them, however, for what they are worth, it appears that villages as a rule run small, and in 1901, nearly half the total population were living in hamlets with less than 500 inhabitants."[15]

During the last seven decades, especially after Independence, a wind of change has swept all over the country. Growth of population in the district led to the opening up of the vast tracts of dense jungle along the south bank of the Brahmaputra for settlement. Health of the country-side has improved with the clearing of jungles, converting the wilderness into prosperous villages. Roads and rails have penetrated deep into the villages and modern vehicles move, where bullock carts reigned supreme. Villages, which were not well-defined units before, have gradually become more homogenous units having schools, colleges, hospitals, dispensaries, post offices and other basic amenities of life. Electrification of villages under the Rural Electrification Scheme, when completed will bring revolutionary change in the whole country-side. However, Assamese villages are still islands of bamboos, betlenut groves and hidden homesteads in a sea of paddy fields. The following table shows the growth of villages in the Goalpara district from 1901 to 1971 decadewise.

Year	No. of inhabited villages	No. of uninhabited villages
1	2	3
1901 ..	1,461	N.A.
1911 ..	2,135	N.A.
1921 ..	2,550	N.A.
1931 ..	3,188	N.A.
1941 ..	3,765	158
1951 ..	3,990	232
1961 ..	3,708	204
1971 ..	3,819	

15. B. C, Allen, *Assam District Gazetteers, Vo I. III Goalpara*, Calcutta, 1905, pp. 31-32.

In 1901, the district had 1,461 villages only, which increased to 3,819 villages in 1971 giving a net increase of 2,358 villages. The numbers of inhabited villages increased by 2,247 only in 1961 over the year 1901. The total number of villages including 232 uninhabited villages was 3,940 in 1961, when the total rural population of the district stood at 1,441,749 persons or 93·38 per cent of the district's total population. Though the total rural population increased to 2,052,809 persons in 1971 yet the percentage slightly diminished to 92·26 per cent. The villages of Goalpara district had been classified under five village groups on the basis of population in 1961 Census report. In the first group with less than 200 inhabitants, there were 1,182 villages having a total population of 1,31,154 persons, which accounted for 9.09 per cent of the total rural population. The next group having population between 200 and 499 persons had 1596, villages with population of 5,26,111 persons which formed about 36.53 per cent of the total rural population. The third group, which lies between 500 and 999 persons comprised 740 villages with 5,16,669 persons, constituted 35.14 per cent of the total population. There were 170 villages which were placed under the fourth group varying from 1000 to 1999 persons. The total rural population under this group was 2,24,138 persons and formed 15.54 per cent of the total rural population. The last group, between 2,000 and 43,999 persons, had only 20 villages with 53,677 persons which formed 3.70 percent of the total rural population. No village in Goalpara had population above 4,999 persons in 1961. The small village group having population less than 500 formed 45.62 per cent. This group together with the largest group, having population above 2,000 but below 5,000 had formed 49.32 per cent while the middle group of villages having population above 500 formed 50.68 per cent.

But in 1971 Census report, the total inhabited villages of the district were 3,819 which were classified under six groups, 858 villages were brought under first group having population less than 200. The population of these villages were 93, 666 persons which formed 4.56 per cent of total rural population. In the next group having between 200 and 499 inhabitants there were 1,399 villages inhabited by 4,74,799 persons which formed 23.13 per cent of the total rural population. The third group having 500 to 999 persons had 1,085 villages with a population of 7,52,592 persons accounting for 36.66 per cent of total rural population. There were 411 villages having population of 5,42,703 persons or 26.44 per cent of total rural population under the next group of villages having 1000 to 1999 inhabitants. The fifth group of villages, the range of which was between 2,000 and 4,999 persons comprised 63 villages with a population of 1,64,249 persons, who formed 8.24 per cent of total rural population. There were only 3 villages in the district which fell under the sixth having between 5,000 and 9,999 persons and the total population of these three villages was 19,800 persons who formed only 0.97 per cent of the total rural population.

Growth of Towns : In 1901, there were only two towns namely Dhuburi and Goalpara with population of 3,737 and 6,287 persons respectively. Gauripur with a population of 4,311 persons was declared as town in 1921. This led to a total urban population of 17,230 persons in 1921. The total urban population of Goalpara increased to 40,629 in 1951, which showed the percentage increase of235.8 per cent, although urbanisation in the district made little progress during this period. But during the next decade, six new places namely Bilasipara, Kokrajhar, Mankachar, Bongaigaon, Sapatgram and Abhayapuri were shown as towns in the Census of 1961.

Thus in 1961, there were altogether nine towns with a urban population of 1,02,143 persons. The number of towns increased to eleven by 1971 adding two new towns viz., Bijni and Lakhipur with population of 7,999 and 5,3,22. The urban population rose to 1,72,294 persons in 1971, giving a net increase of 70,151 over that of 1961. The decennial growth rates of urban population of the district for 1901-11, 1911-21, 1921-31, 1931-41, 1941-51, 1951-61 and 1961-71, were 17.43, 46.36, 24.44, 22.53, 54.62, 151.40, and 68.68 per cent respectively. The following table shows the decennial growth rates of the towns in Goalpara district since 1901.

Name of the town	Year	Status of the town	Area in Sq. kms.	Persons	Decade variation.	Percentage Decade variation	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Dhuburi Urban Agglomeration. ..	1901			3,737			2,670	1,067
	1911			5,808	+2,071	+55.42	3,910	1,898
	1921			6,707	+ 899	+15.48	4,310	2,397
	1931			9,435	+ 2,728	+40.67	6,107	3,328
	1941			12,699	+ 3,264	+34.59	7,847	4,852
	1951			22,787	+10,088	+79.44	13,859	8,928
	1961		5.18	28,355	+ 5,568	+24.43	17,829	10,526
	1971		8.56	45,589	+17,234	+60.78	25,678	19,911
(a) Dhuburi ..	1901	M		3,737	..	..	2,670	1,067
	1911	M		5,808	+ 2,071	+55.42	3,910	1,898
	1921	M		6,707	+ 899	+15.48	4,310	2,397
	1931	M		9,435	+ 2,728	+40.67	6,107	3,328
	1941	M		12,699	+ 3,264	+34.59	7,847	4,852
	1951	M		22,787	+10,088	+79.44	13,859	8,928
	1961	M	5.18	28,355	+ 5,568	+24.43	17,829	10,526
	1971	M	6.47	36,503	+ 8,148	+28.74	20,802	15,701
(i) Bidyapara outgrowth ..	1901		2.09	9,086	..	..	4,876	4,210
4. Goalpara ..	1901	M		6,287	..	..	4,198	4,089
	1911	M		5,964	— 323	— 5.14	3,802	2,162
	1921	M		6,212	+ 248	+ 4.16	3,760	2.452
	1931	M		6,415	+ 203	+ 3.27	3,869	2,546
	1941	M		7,793	+ 1,378	+21.48	4,518	3,275

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	1951	M		10,192	+ 2,399	+30.78	5,744	4,448
	1961	M	5.18	13,692	+ 3,500	+34.34	7,772	5,920
	1971	M	5.96	16,703	+ 3,011	+21.99	9,270	7,433
5. Gauripur ..	1921	U		4,311	..	..	2,530	1,781
	1931	T.C.		5,592	+ 1,281	+29.71	3,165	2,427
	1941	T.C.		5,783	+ 191	+ 3.42	3,313	2,470
	1951	T.C.		7,650	+ 1,867	+32.28	4,107	3,543
	1961	T.C.	2.85	9,791	+ 2,141	+27.99	5,240	4,551
	1971	T.C.	2.85	12,850	+ 3,059	+31.24	6,867	5,983
6. Bilasipara ..	1961	T.C.	3.88	10,025	..	..	5,349	4,676
	1971	T.C.	3.88	12,553	+ 2,528	+25.22	6,715	5,838
7. Mankachar ..	1961	—	3.88	9,255	..	..	4,820	4,435
	1971	—	3.88	12,349	+ 3,094	+33 43	6,494	5.855
8. Sapatgram ..	1961	T.C.	2.59	7,546	..	..	4,102	3,444
	1971	T.C.	2.59	9,879	+ 2,333	+30.92	5,363	4,516
9. Bijni ..	1971	—	2.95	7,999	..	..	4,342	3,657
10. Abhayapuri ..	1961	T.C.	4.71	5,277	..	..	2,928	2,299
	1971	T.C.	4.71	7,030	+ 1,803	+34.49	3,868	3,162
11. Lakhipur	1971	..	3.22	5,332	..	..	2,956	2,376
12. Kokrajhar ..	1961	T.C.	6.29	9,489	..	..	5,702	3,787
	1971	M	6.29	17,060	+ 7,571	+79.79	9,764	7,296

Towns in the Census of 1971 were classified in six groups but there was no town in the district which could be categorised under the first and second group of towns. Only two towns Dhuburi and Bongaigaon with its agglomeration population of 45,589 and 24,950 respectively came under third group of towns ranging from 20,000 to 49,999. In this group of towns Dhuburi ranked first in the State and Bongaigaon occupied eighth position. The towns of Kokrajhar, Goalpara, Gauripur, Bilasipara and Mankachar with their urban population of 17,060 ; 12,703 ; 12,850 ; 12,553 and 12,349 respectively fell under fourth group of towns within the population range of 10,000 and 19,999. All the remaining towns viz Sapatgram, Bijni, Abhayapuri and Lakhipur with their respective population of 9,879 ; 7,999, 7,030 and 5,332 were categorised in the fifth group of towns, population range of which varied from 5,000 to 9,999. There was no town in the district which could be grouped under the sixth group of towns of less than 5,000 persons.

From the above analysis, it is evident that there has been slight drift of population towards towns especially in recent decades though still urban population constitute a very insiginificant part (only 8.87) of the total population of the district.

Displaced persons : The influx of Hindu refugees from Pakistan constituted the biggest migration stream into Assam during the 1941-51 decade. Following the Noakhali riots in October, 1946 and the Partition of India, there was steady and continuous influx of Hindu refugees into Assam. In 1951, 44,967 refugees were sheltered in Goalpara. In 1955-56 another batch of displaced persons numbering 23,611 families were registered in the district. Thus the total number of refugees increased to 85,986 in 1955-56. Out of 23,611 families, 2,827 families were sheltered in urban areas (2,544 families in Dhuburi subdivision and 283 families in Goalpara sub-division) of the district. The urban areawise distribution of refugees was 1,384 families in Dhuburi, 390 in Gauripur, 770 in Sapatgram, and 283 in Goalpara towns. The rest numbering 20,784 families were distributed in the rural areas of the district. A table is given below which shows the distribution of these families.

Name of Sub-division	Places where rehabilitated	No. of families
1	2	3
Dhuburi Sub-division.	Dhuburi	711
	Bilasipara	1,931
	Golakganj	2,948
	Gossaingaon	1,315
	Kokrajhar	2,318
	Mankachar	395
	South Salmara	542
	Total	10,160

Name of Sub-division	Places where rehabilated	No. of families
1	2	3
Goalpara Sub-division.	Goalpara	494
	Dudhnai	747
	Lakhipur	668
	North Salmara	4,239
	Sidli and Bijni	4,476
	Total	10,624
	Grand Total	20,784 families.

(*b*) *LANGUAGES AND DIALECTS :*

According to the Census of 1961, the people of Goalpara spoke sixty languages and dialects as their mother tongue. Assamese was the predominant language in the district and 10,21,145 persons or 66·14 per cent of the district's total population spoke it as their mother tongue. The Assamese speaking population increased by 48.63 per cent over 1951 when their number in the district was 6,87,027 persons who formed 62·00 per cent of the total population. The next important language was Bengali which was spoken by 1,84,902 persons or 11.98 per cent of the total population. This revealed a decrease of Bengali speaking people by 4.38 per cent over 17.45 per cent as recorded in 1951. Such decrease could be attributed to the fact that some Muslims who returned their mother tongue as Bengali in 1951 might have returned their mother tongue as Assamese in 1961. Third comes the Bodo speakers who constituted 10% of the total population. Their number also increased from 1,04,290 in 1951 to 1,54,359 in 1961. The Hindi speaking people were 44,646 persons and constituted 2.89 per cent only. People speaking Santhali as their mother language, accounted for 44,107 persons forming 2.36 per cent of the total population. There were 33,405 persons who used Garo as their mother tongue and this section constituted only 2.16 per cent of the population. The rest of the people spoke either a language or a dialect as their mother tongue but the number of such groups of speakers was very insignificant in comparison with other linguistic groups in the district as each of such groups was even below 2 per cent. Many other indigenous people due to their long association with Assamese speaking people in various walks of life adopting Assamese language and culture were returned as Assamese speakers. The Hindi speakers were 28,601 and 44,648 persons and constituted 2.58 and 2.89 per cent in 1951 and 1961 respectively. It recorded a significant growth rate of 56.10 per cent during the period of 1951-61. People speaking other principal languages such as Boro, Santhali, Garo, Rabha Nepali, Kurukh also increased considerably during the same period. During the decade Bodo speakers increased by 48.01 per cent. The people speaking Rabha had increased by more than double over 1951 when their number was

10,165. They claimed 1.53 per cent of the total population in 1961 having growth rate of 131.83 per cent. The table given below shows the numerical strength of the persons of different linguistic groups in the district.[16]

Language	No. of persons speaking as mother tongue		Percentage to total population		Percentage increase or decrease in 1961 over 1951.
	1951	1961	1951	1961	
1	2	3	4	5	6
Assamese	687,027	1,021,145	62.00	66.14	+ 48.63
Bengali	193,366	184,902	17.45	11.98	+ 4.38
Bodo/Boro	104,290	154,359	9.41	10.00	+ 48.01
Hindi	28,601	44,646	2.58	2.89	+ 56.10
Santhali	40,039	44,107	3.61	2.86	+ 10.16
Garo	23,748	33,405	2.14	2.16	+ 40.66
Rabha	10,165	23,566	0.92	1.53	+131.83
Nepali	9,926	12,487	0.90	0.81	+ 25.80
Kurukh/Oran	4,691	5,821	0.42	0.38	+ 24.09

This shows that in 1961, many of the indigenous tribal people like Bodos, Garos and Rabhas and outside tribal people like Santralis and Nepalis who returned Assamese or Bengali as mother tongue in 1941 and 1951, identified their original mother tongues.

Bilingualism : Although there are numerous linguistic groups in the district, bilingualism has blunted the edge of their differences and has brought about emotional integration of the people. The spirit of tolerance and urge to live a life of love, friendship and cooperation has forged unity among different linguistic groups. Hindi and English are taught in the Secondary Schools having Assamese, Bengali or Bodo as mediums of instruction. Hindi is understood in every nook and corner of the district and a large section of people can express themselves in broken Hindi. According to the Census of 1961 out of 10,21,145 people speaking Assamese as mother tongue, 71,621 were shown as bilingual speaking either Bengali, English or Hindi as subsidiary language. Bengali could be spoken by 56,740, English by 10,145 and Hindi by 4736. Among 1,84,902 people, whose mother tongue was Bengali, 69,285 could speak Assamese, 4,848 English and 2,256 Hindi. Out of 1,54,359 persons, whose mother tongue was Bodo, 84,159 could speak Assamese, 1016 Bengali and 103 English. Among the Hindi speakers of 44,646, Assamese could be spoken by 24,174, Bengali by 1,565 and English by 551. There were 33,405 Garo speakers and about 50% of them (15,818) could speak Assamese and only a fraction of them could speak English (893) and Hindi (485). Nepali speakers totalled 12,487 of whom 4,625 could speak Assamese, 920 Hindi and 297 Bengali. Thus it is seen that among speakers of languages and dialects other than Assamese, most of them understand and speak Assamese as a subsidiary language. Next to Assamese, other subsidiary languages spoken in the district are Bengali, Hindi, and English.

16. *Census of India*, 1961. *Vol. III, Assam, Part* 1-*A*, General Report, Delhi, 1964, p. 211

According to the Census of 1961, Assamese was the mother tongue of 37,730 tribal people in the district. Of these tribal Assamese speakers, 8382 could speak a subsidiary language or dialect, of whom Bengali was spoken as a subsidiary language by the highest number of 7,068 persons. Among the other tribal people, speaking Bodo or Boro, Deori, Kachari, Miri, and Rabha as mother tongue, Assamese was the most popular language spoken by a great majority of the people as subsidiary language.

A brief account of the principal languages of the district is given below. The scope of this analysis being limited, a discussion on many languages and dialects, particularly those spoken by the immigrants, can not be included here. Many of these languages display wide variations of pronunciation and terminology. For instance, the immigrants from East Bengal (Bangadesh) speak Bengali which is akin to that spoken in East Bengal, but the intonation of the Bengali of the old stock comes closer to Assamese than what is regarded as chaste Bengali.

Assamese : The origin of Assamese which is the principal language of this district goes back to antiquity. P. C. Choudhury has observed that epigraphs, though written in Sanskrit, prove that as early as the 7th century A.D. and later, some of the Assamese formations are found even in their present forms and used in the same sense.[17] 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.[18] B. Kakati has shown that both Assamese and Bengali "started on parallel lines with peculiar dialectical predispositions and often developed sharply contradictory idiosyncracies."[19] He has further illustrated how the Austric, Kolerian, Malayan, Bodo, and other elements have enriched Assamese vocabulary.

The present Assamese script is not an outcome of natural evolution but is the product of certain historical factors. The earliest specimen of Assamese

17. P. C. Choudhury : *The History of the Civillisation of the People of Assam to the Twelfth Century A. D.* Gauhati, 1966, p. 391.
18. Grierson : *Linguistic Survey of India* Vol. 1. pt. 1, p. 126 ; S. K. Chatterji : *Origin and Development of Bengali Language* pp. 139-40.
19. B. Kakati : *Assamese-Its Formation and Development*, Gauhati, 1941, p. 73.

script is provided by the copper plates and various inscriptions of Assam discovered in the different parts of Assam, East Bengal (Bangladesh) and Sylhet. S. N. Sarmah observed that the ancient Assamese script was the corrupt form of the East India script of the Gupta period.[20] The Assamese script has several letters such as 'ৰ' (Ra) and 'ৱ' (Wa) which are absent in Bengali script.

G.A. Grierson classified the Assamese language spoken in Kamrup and Goalpara as 'western Assamese' owing to its variance in pronunciation from the Assamese spoken in the eastern districts of Assam.[21]

Though the local dialect of Goalpara has been classified as a branch of Bengal by G. A. Grierson in his report of 1903, he also made a remark that from the grammatical point of view the dialect of Chittagong—though is universally accepted as Bengali, is a dialect widely distinct from Bengali. The same logic shows that from grammar and phonetical point of view, the dialect prevalent amongst the non-tribal local people of Goalpara, which is termed as 'Rajbangshi' by Grierson and 'Deshi' by the local non-tribal people of Goalpara - is more Assamese than Bengali. It may be mentioned here that during the reign of Bhaskarvarman, Kamrup, Goalpara, Darrang and entire area of East Bengal (Bangladesh) including Sylhet were within the kingdom of *Kamarupadhipati* and it continued to be so with periodic breaks till the advent of the Mughals ; and it was in Koch Bihar where the great Vaishnavite Saint Srimanta Sankardeva of Assam wrote most of his works. Some copper and stone inscriptions found in the eastern part of Bengal, showing use of 'ৰ' (ra) which is the singular peculiarity of Assamese script, prove without doubt that in the ancient past, Assamese was the language used in the eastern part of Bengal too and 'Rajbangshi' language prevalent in the eastern part of Bengal and also in the district of Goalpara - (mainly in its western part) is nothing but a branch of Assamese language. G. A. Grierson also remarks that the "Rajbangshi dialect is not confined to the Bengal Province but extends to the Goalpara district of Assam in which it gradually merges into Assamese."[22]

Some of the pastoral ballads, such as *Bihu-geet* which are so 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 earliest forms of Assamese written literature. The Ahoms 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 is still regarded to be a golden

20. Dr. S. N. Sarma : *Asamiya Sahityar Itibritya*, p. 8.
21. G. A. Grierson : *Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. V., Part-I*, 1903, Reprint 1963, p. 394.
22. Ibid, p. 163.

chapter of Assamese literature ; these *Buranjis* are believed to be the precursor of the modern Assamese prose writings. Bhattadeva (1558-1638) whose superb prose writings constitute some of the priceless gems of Assamese literature is regarded as one of the earliest prose writers among all the regional languages of 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 Vaishanavite 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 propagating religious doctrines and tenets. They possessed wonderful gift of translation and their writings were couched in terms which rendered tough dialecticism 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 western literature. In 1836, Bengali was made the court language and medium of instruction in Assam, following the manoeuvres repugnant to the basic needs of the indigenous people. The myth of efficacy of this arrangement was exploded by several schools 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."[23] 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 Asssamese 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 all other sister languages of India, both in respect of its depth and expansiveness.

Several tribes in Goalpara district have dialects of their own. Some of the scholars have regarded their dialects as languages.

23. A. J. Mills : *Report on the Province of Assam*, Calcutta, 1854.

Boro : There are large number of people belonging to Boro-Borokachari community in the district, as revealed in 1961 Census. As. 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 Dhuburi in the west to Sadiya in the east. In 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* scripts 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 textbooks and religious matters in the medium of Roman scripts ; other Boros, forming a clear majority write in the modified Assamese scripts. A section of the Boro Sahitya Sabha has accepted the modified Assamese script for use in their text-books and literature, while another section is in favour of Dev Nagri script. Since 1963, the Boro language has been introduced as the medium of instruction in the Boro predominant primary schools of Kokrajhar sub-division 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".[24]

Grierson has also 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, see and observe carefully' is indicated by a single word in Kachari. Of all the languages of the group, it is most phonetically developed, and here and there shows signs of the commencement of that true inflexion which is strong to most agglutinative languages.."[25]

(*c*) *RELIGION* :

The religious life of the district is predominated by Hindus and Muslims who constituted 53.92 and 42.25 per cent in 1971 against 50.95 and 43.32 per cent in 1961. Other religious communities such as Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains etc., together formed a very low per cent of the district population. The proportion of the Hindu declined in the Census of 1921, 1931, 1941, and 1961 whereas Muslim population is maintaining a rising trend since the beginning of this century except in Censuses of 1951 and 1971. On the other hand, twenty seven per cent of the people professing other religions including tribal faith in 1901 have been almost entirely lost sight of in 1971. This is due to the fact that in some earlier Censuses a part of Hindu population was shown as Animist primarily because of a wrong notion of their religious belief and faiths. The following table shows the distribution of population by religious community per 10,000 of the total population of the district.

Religious Community	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Hindus	4,404	5,568	4,841	4,369	3,019	5,154	5,095	5,391
Muslims	2,776	3,519	4,418	4,389	4,623	4,294	4,332	4,222
Christians	75	87	135	210	3	280	334	358
Sikhs	N	N	N	N	1	N	2	3
Buddhists	7	16	12	7	4	N	7	2
Jains	10	12	8	7	4	7	13	17
Others	2,728	789	856	1,018	2,346	265	217	N

The table in the next page shows the strength of different religious communities in the district in absolute numbers.

24. P. C. Bhattacharya : *A few elements of the Indo-Mongoloid Boro Culture in the Journal of the Assam Research Society*, Vol. xvi, 1964.
25. Grierson : *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. I Pt. I, pp. 62-63.

Religious community	1901 ×		1951		1961 *		P.C. Variation during 1951-61	1971 +		P.C. decadal growth rate 1961-71
	Persons	Percentage to total population	Persons	Percentage to total population	Persons	Percentage to total population		Persons	Percentage to total population	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Hindus	2,03 696	..	571,080	51.54	786.597	50.95	37.74	11,99,739	53.92	+ 52.52
Muslims	1,28,388	..	457,825	42.94	668 748	43.32	40,54	9,40,090	42.25	+ 40.57
Christians	3,495	..	31,009	2.80	51,594	3.34	66.38	7,98,76	3.59	+ 54.82
Sikhs	..	..	33	..	310	0.02	838.39	875	0.04	+182.26
Buddhists	..	..	45	..	1,135	0.007	2422.04	581	0.02	— 48.81
Jains	..	..	722	0.07	2,077	0.13	187.67	3,942	0.18	+ 89.70
Tribal religious	1,25,618	..	29,396	2.6	26,982	1.75	— 8.21	..	..	..
Others	855	..	17	..	6,449	0.68		..	..	—100.00

* Source from Statistical Handbook of Assam 1965, pp.15-12.
× Old district Gazetteer, Goalpara, Table IV. p.6.
+ Census of India, 1971 Series-1 India papers of 1972 religion, pp.36-37 and p.95.

The Hindus : Numerically the Hindus constitute the major religious community in the district, their percentage in 1971 being 53.92 of the total population of the district. From 2,03,696 in 1901, population of Hindus increased to 5,71,080 ; 7,86,597 ; 11,99,739 in 1951, 1961 and 1971 respectively. Their percentages to the total population in the same years were 44, 51.54, 50.96 and 53.92. Though there has been an overall increase of Hindus in the district since 1901 to 1971, yet there has been set-backs in the proportion of Hindus to the total population in the years 1921, 1931, 1941, and 1961 as is evident from the table showing the strength of different religious communities per 10,000 in the district. This is mainly attributed to the large exodus of Muslims from the neighbouring districts of Bengal during this period. The Hindus are divided into three principal sects viz., Saktism, Saivism, and Vaishnavism.

Saktism : Nearly six per cent of the Hindus returned as such in 1901 and described themselves as followers of *Sakti* or worshippers of the reproductive power as manifested in the female.

Assam is believed to have been at one time the home of *Tantricism*. The *Kamakhya* temple at Gauhati, the *Kachaikhaiti* temple at Sadiya and other *Sakti* temples at Dergaon, North Lakhimpur, and other places bear proof of *Tantric* influences in ancient Kamarupa. *Tantric* rituals in their debased forms are known to have been practised in Assam in the centuries preceding the *Vaishnava* revival. That *Saktism* was widespread in this district, is evidenced by the existence of many *Sakti* temples such as Kamakhya at Mankachar, Mahamaya temple, which was the temple of Durga in dense forest about two miles and a half to the north-west of Bagribari in Goalpara district. The worship of *Durga* had gained ground in Assam due to patronage of the latter Ahom Kings who were inducted to *Saktist* cult. Now it is observed throughout Assam as the biggest festival of the year inspite of the fact that the followers of the *Mahapurushia* sect are opposed to idolatry.

Saivism : *Saivism* is the counterpart of *Saktism* and is concerned with the worship of the procreative energy as manifested in the male. In 1901, 6,693 persons in Goalpara district professed this special form of Hinduism, but it is doubtful whether the distinction between the worshipper of *Siva* and *Sakti* are very meticulously followed in this Census. There are *Siva* temples in the district. Festivals connected with *Siva* like *Sivaratri* etc., are observed with great eclat not only by *Saivaites* but also by the people of other sects.

Vaishnavism : Ninety per cent of the people who specified their sect in 1901 declared their adherence to *Vaishnavism* which relates to the worship of *Vishnu*. 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 *Vaishnava* family. *Vaishnavism*, however, occupied a subordinate position in subsequent centuries. Decay and degeneration in the religious field led to the revival of the *Vaishnavite* faith in the fifteenth century. The leader of the *Vaishnava* renaissance in Assam was Sankardeva (1449-1568), who was ably assisted by several disciples, chief among whom was Madhavdeva (1489-1596).

Sankardeva 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*.

Sankardeva nominated Madhavdeva (1489-1596) as his successor to hold charge of the order. Madhavdeva 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 Vamsigopal, 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 as it then was. 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 a school characterised by catholicity and democratic out-look 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, Anirudha founded *Moamaria* sect and a *Satra* on the bank of *Morara Bil* of North Lakhimpur. The followers of this sect rose in revolt as one man against royal oppression (1769) and succeeded in subverting Ahom power for some time. 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 Sankardeva, has brought itself into fulfilment in many ways, and marked out a definite place for Assam, in the cultural map of India. A list of temples and *Dhams* is given below.

Temples

Name	Pargana in which situated	Name	Pargana in which situated
Dhuburi Subdivision :		**Goalpara Subdivision :**	
Alakjhari ..	Ghurlla.	Madhab ..	Khuntaghat.
Mahamaya ..	Bagribari	Mangal Chandi ..	-do-
		Narsingbari ..	Goalpara town
Goalpara subdivision :		Radhakrishna ..	Habraghat
Bagheswari ..	Khuntaghat.	Ram Chandra ..	Khuntaghat
Buri Thakurani ..	-do-	Sita Thakurani ..	-do-
Chaturbhuj* ..	-do-	Syam Rai ..	-do-
Dugdhanath ..	-do-	Syam Sundar ..	Goalpara town
Gopinath* ..	-do-	Tukreswari ..	Habraghat
Kala Chand Thakur ..	-do-	Mahadeb ..	Habraghat
Kali Mangal Chandi	-do-		
Madan Mohan ..	-do-		

*There are two temples of the same name in the same pargana.

Dhams

Name	Pargana in which situated	Name	Pargana in which situated
Dhuburi Subdivision :		**Goalpara Subdivision :**	
Married Kayastha Gosain		**Married Kayastha Gosain**	
Chhatrasal	Ghurlla	Baguan ..	Mechpara
Goalpara subdivision :		Balipur ..	Khuntaghat.
Married Brahmin Gosain		Bishtupur ..	-do-
Kathalmuri ..	Habraghat.	Dalgoma ..	Habraghat.
Ganak Gosain			
Srijangram ..	Khuntaghat.		

Muslims : In 1971, the Muslim community had 9,40,090 persons in Goalpara district forming 42.25 per cent of the total population against 6,68,748 persons forming 43.32 per cent of the total population in the district in 1961. During the decade the community showed the growth rate of 40.69 per cent against a general growth rate of 44.12 per cent in the district. It is interesting to note that the Muslims who had only 1,28,388 members and constituted about 28% of the total population in 1901 swelled during the last seventy years to 8,40,090 in 1971. As stated earlier, this large increase in Muslim population is

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attributed to heavy influx of East Bengal (Bangladesh) Muslims, which started with the beginning of the present century. Decadal increase of Muslim population in the district is well reflected in the table given earlier showing the distribution of different religious communities in the district per 10,000 since 1901. Nearly all the Muslims in Goalpara district are of the *Sunni* sect.

Christians : Goalpara had only 3,495 Christians in 1901. However, their number grows in subsequent years due to conversion of the local tribal people through the efforts of Christian Missionaries. Christian population in 1951 increased to 31,009 and constituted 2.80 per cent of the total population. This further increased to 51,594 and to 79,876 in 1961 and 1971 and formed 3.34% and 3.59% of the total population respectively. The decadal increase was 66.38 and 54.82 per cent respectively.

Other minor religious communities : In 1971, only 5,398 persons forming 0.14 per cent of the total population of the district belonged to other religious communities such as Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists each claiming 3,942 , 875 and 581 persons or 0.18, 0.04 and 0.01 per cent respectively of the total population of the district. Sikhs and Jains showed a growth rate of 182.26% and 89.70% but Buddhists population declined by 48.81 per cent.

Castes, Classes and Tribes : Casteism is a special feature of the Hindu social system. But in the modern context of civilisation it has lost all of its former significance and as a rule, all caste distinctions are now on the wane and a casteless Hindu society is now in the offing. A restrospect to the caste system reveals that the population of the Goalpara district at the end of the last century was composed of numerous castes--about 94 in number as W.W. Hunter met with at that time - most of which had either a very few members or were at the verge of extinction. At the beginning of the current century as described by B. C. Allen, the Rajbangsis alone formed over one-fourth and they together with some of their kinsmen claimed more than half of total population of the district. It may also be noted that most of the people returned at the Census of 1901 as professing tribal faith, have already accepted the Hindu religion. Thus, the Kacharis, Meches, Rabhas and the like accepting Hinduism have added to the caste hierarchy of the Hindu society. A brief note on different castes who are by any means strongly represented in Goalpara follows :

(i) Brahmins, the priestly caste is mostly composed of immigrants from upper India and some Kamrupi Brahmins. They are mostly engaged in various pursuits of life including agriculture, service, trade and commerce and only a small section is engaged as priests.

(ii) The Ganaks or *Graha Bipras* who are so called by their profession of astrology and fortunetelling do not have much influence in the society as the priests, and have only a few members in the district.

(iii) Kayasthas form a very small numerical section in the population of the district. The local Kayastha families of Goalpara claim their origin from Kanauj and Gaud migrating during the reign of Durlavnarayan of Kamatapur. During the time of Srimanta Sankardeva - the great Vainsava saint poet of Assam, the Kayasthas developed good relation with Naranarayan and his successor kings of Koch Bihar, and got *Zamindaris* and *Jotdaris* under the descendants of Sukladwaj or Chilarai, who married Bhubaneswari or Kamalapriya - the daughter of Ramrai alias Jagatananda, the Siromani Bhuyan and the first cousin of Srimanta Sankardev.

The Kayasthas observe some of the sacramental rites such as *Annaprashanam* and *Sudakaranam* and consider these to be their mendatory *Jat Karmas*. They also used to observe *upanayana* and wore sacred thread like the Brahmins, though this rite is no longer in vogue amongst them as an independent rite and is merged with *Sudakarana* in which only the birth hairs are removed - but no sacred thread is worn.

The Kayasthas do not plough the land by themselves and earn their livelihood mostly by intellectual pursuits. Some of them are traditionally associated with preaching of Vaishnavism through their *Satras* or *Dhams* - and have large number of disciples.

(iv) The Kalitas are also not very much strongly represented in the district. Their claim as remnants of an Aryan colony or as descendants of Kshatriyas is of course not undisputed. They sometimes, call themselves Kayasthas. Their main occupation is agriculture besides engagement in service, trade, commerce and other pursuits.

(v) As already said, the Rajbangshis or Koches are most strongly represented in the Goalpara district. They are a respectable race caste of Assam. Their tribe rose to power in the fifteenth century when their leader Biswa Singha, an inhabitant of Chikangram village in the Khuntaghat Pargana of Goalpara declared himself a king and during the time of his son Naranarayan their fame and fortune reached the zenith. The new converts from the tribes are generally admitted to the rank of the Koches. The main occupation of these people is agriculture, service, trade and commerce and other pursuits have also attracted a number of talented and educated people of this caste.

(vi) Other strongly represented castes in the Goalpara district are the Jugis and the Katanis, their traditional occupation being the rearing of silk worms and spinning and weaving the thread. But this occupation, having lost its former importance and as such becoming uneconomic, was abandoned long before and they took to agriculture as their livelihood.

(vii) The fishermen known as Nadiyals (derived from *nadi* - river) have a suffcient number in the district. They are also engaged in various occupations including services, agriculture, trade and commerce.

(viii) Various other professional castes viz., Sonaris (goldsmith), Baniya (traders), Tantis (weavers), Dhobas (washermen), Napits (barbers), Kamars (blacksmiths), Kumars (potters), and a number of other castes like Sutradhars or Sutars (carpenters), Goalas etc. are extant in the Goalpara district. However, most of these people have now shifted to agriculture as their main occupation.

In rooting out the evils of the caste system dividing the population into water-tight compartments and professing hatred and discrimination between man and man, our democratic secular Constitution and measures adopted thereunder by the popular Government have been greatly helpful. A new social awakening was infused in the mental outlook of the people beforehand by the Removal of Untouchability Movement propagated by Mahatma Gandhi during the thirties of the current century. The ideals of a casteless society marked by mutual tolerance, *Ahimsa*, equality and unity are now on the path of achievement. Our Constitution being such ideal-oriented, incorporated provisions for economic classification of the population for accelarated growth and development of backward regions, castes, classes and tribes as enshrined in the 'Sixth Schedule'. The following table shows the number of each of the scheduled castes and tribes of the Goalpara district as per 1961 and 1971 Censuses.

	1961			1971		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Scheduled Castes ..	41,147	36,979	78,126	61,931	68,075	1,20,006
Scheduled Tribes ..	1,16,644	1,09,841	2,26,485	1,56,257	1,52,030	3,08,287

Among the Scheduled Tribes, the Kacharis along with their kinsmen, the Rabhas and Meches predominate. The origin of the Kacharis will be found in the Gazetteers of Darrang and Nowgong. B. C. Allen expressed doubts as to connection of the Kacharis living on the north bank of the Brahmaputra with the king of Dimapur. The Kacharis of North Cachar call themselves Dimasas while those on the north bank style themselves as Boro though both speak languages of Bodo origin. The Kacharis of Goalpara seem more probably connected with the Rabhas and Lalungs than with the Kacharis of North Cachar. They are scattered in the whole district and more concentrated in the Kokrajhar subdivision. Their main occupation is agriculture while educated ones are engaged in service, trade, commerce and other pursuits.

The Rabhas are a section of the Bodo race. But due to affinity of language with the Garos they appear to be an offshoot of the Garos. The majority of them are found in the southern part of the district bordering Garo Hills and some in Kamrup and Darrang. The Meches are also known as *Bara* mispronounced Bodo meaning 'man' and are believed to be identical with the Kacharis. The bulk of them live on the grassy uplands at the foot of the Himalayas. Agriculture is the main occupation of these two tribes while educated ones are engaged in other pursuits.*

(*d*) *SOCIAL LIFE* :

(i) Family System : Among the Hindus, the property is generally held by the head of the family, who manages it as its custodian. After the death of the father, the sons and daughters inherit the property. In the matter of inheritance and succession *Dayabhaga* system holds good in this district. The joint family system was common in the past. There are cases even now where it is found that several brothers live jointly and have a common kitchen. But now-a-days, it is found that families tend to break up into smaller units under new socio-economic influences and the joint family system is loosing its hold. Joint family system is not prevalent among some of the tribes of the district.

(ii) Marital Status : The table below indicates the age and marital status of the people of Goalpara district, as revealed by the 1961 Census :

Age Group	Total population		Never married		Married	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
All ages ..	8,12,723	7,31,169	4,79,349	3,61,183	3,04,434	3,12,090
0-9 ..	2,72,062	2,74,823	2,72,061	2,74,823	..	..
10-14 ..	84,168	71,272	83,620	64,748	522	6,486
15-19 ..	62,747	62,440	57,252	14,352	5,384	47,773
20-24 ..	57,384	66,206	33,311	3,893	23,761	61,489
25-29 ..	70,012	63,447	20,117	1,678	49 065	60 358
30-34 ..	58,943	46,208	7,408	679	50,542	43,358
35-39 ..	53,910	34,627	2,847	235	49,750	31,554
40-44 ..	40,671	28,592	1,404	232	37,968	23,479
45-49 ..	33,126	20,605	428	106	30,998	15,249

* Details about the castes and tribes may be found in the Old District Gazetteer of Goalpara, 1905, pp. 39-52.

It will be observed from the above that infant marriage among girls which had accounted for 4.8 per cent of the population of girls of the age group 0-10 years at the beginning of the century had become conspicuous by its absence in the age-group 0-9 years. However, early marriage among girls in the age group 10-15 years, which was as high as 62·4 per cent in 1901 decreased considerably in the age-group 10-14 years and the corresponding percentage fell to about 9. 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 49% of the married males fell within the age-group of 25-39 and about 68% of the married females fell within the age-group 15-34 years.

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 : Among the Assamese Hindus, marriage by negotiation is common. The horoscopes of both the bride and the bridegroom are consulted before the marriage. This is known as *rahi-jora chowa*. The nuptial festivities begin at five, three or two days before the day fixed for wedding. On the commencing day, a party from the bride-groom's house leaves for the bride's house with clothes, ornaments, food-stuff and a sacramental jar of water. The bride is presented with the bridal dress and ornaments. This ceremony is called *joran-diya* or *tekeli-diya* or *telar bhar*. It is, in fact, a function with which auspicious ceremony of marriage begins through acceptance of the bride by the family and friends of the bridegroom offering ornaments, dress, cosmetics, fish, and fruits to the bride. 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*. On the dawn of the marriage day the ceremony of *daiyana* is performed.

On the marriage day, the *sradha* ceremony is performed before noon in the houses of the bride and bridegroom and guests are treated to light refreshment. At an auspicious moment in the evening the bridgrooom goes in procession to the bride's house. 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 the ceremony of *ag-chaul-diya* is 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. Throughout Assam, the ceremony of marriage is performed almost in the same way with some local variance of *stri-achar* i.e. some customs peculiar to the women of the locality. Being a border district, some such customs of Goalpara Hindus resemble the customs of Bengal. Garos, who are the main important tribes of Goalpara generally do not allow marriage outside their tribe. Within their subclans they have prejudices against endogamy and will not countenance it. Although, there are clans which do not inter-marry, run-away marriages are prevalent and the parties are not excommunicated. Among the Hindus, the caste distinction is not as rigid as it was a few decades ago ; though in negotiated marriages, marriages between the same *gotra* is scrupulously avoided. The inter-caste or sub-caste marriages are also not very frequent among them.

Widow re-marriage : Although permitted by law, remarriage of widow is not looked upon with favour by the high caste Hindus. But it is not usually discouraged by some sections of people. Even among the high caste Hindus, widow remarriage is gaining ground with the change in the conservative outlook of society and spread of education.

Economic dependence of women : According to the Census of 1971, out of total female population of 10,70,654, only 16,444 were workers. Many of these workers were engaged in agriculture - 2,885 as cultivators and 4,558 as agricultural labourers. 1,680 females were engaged in livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting etc. while 2,265 were workers in manufacturing, processing etc. Other pursuits viz., construction, trade and commerce and transport, storage and communication provided employment to 80 ; 740 and 119 respectively while other services had 4,074 female workers. It appears, therefore, that only about 1.5 per cent of the total female population were returned as workers in the said Census who had some source of economic earning. But by and large women are still economically dependent upon their men-folk.

Drinking : Total prohibition of opium, *ganja* and *bhang* for oral use has been in force in the district. Prohibition of liquor which was already in force in Kamrup district has also been extended to Goalpara district with effect from 1-4-60.

Before the introduction of total prohibition in Goalpara drinking was very common among tea garden labourers, some industrial labourers and the tribal people. Religious taboos scarcely deterred many non-tribals from drinking which they took in a moderate scale. However, the caste Hindus,

Buddhists, Jains and Muslims generally speaking loathed drinking of alcohol. It is quite likely that the imitation of the western ways of life as brought in by the Europeans during British rule induced a section of people other than labourers to take to drinks. The tea industry which is one of the gifts of the British rule, brought in among many others drinking which kept the labour class in a state of penury for decades.

The labourers, tribal people and others used to drink country liquor which they procured from either licensed liquor shops or distilled in their indigenous ways. It has already been pointed out that the tribal people are fond of rice-beer prepared by themselves. However, the habit of drinking among these people is gradually being reduced by total prohibition.

(iii) Home life : In the past the homestead of a rural family generally consisted of two or more houses with betel-nuts, plantains and vegetable gardens, in front of and at the back of the houses. The whole premises being often surrounded by a fence of split bamboo presented a very picturesque scene. They built their houses almost in the centre of the compound with provision for a front yard (*chotal*) which the females always kept neat and clean. The front house was called the *choraghar* (reception house), the middle one as the *moralghar* (living house), and the third and fourth as the *barghar* (bed rooms), *randhanighar* (cookshed and dinning hall) and besides they had *gohalighar* (cowshed), *bhoralghar* (grannary) and also in most cases a *gosainghar* (prayer house). They built the houses with bamboo, *ekra* and thatch. Wooden posts were also used when found handy in the locality. However, after independence many rural people have evinced keen interest in improving their housing conditions. Those who can afford it have constructed their houses on modern lines using C. I. Sheet and cement. The old houses are now being gradually replaced by *pucca* houses.

Changes have also taken place in furniture. Previously furniture of the ordinary cultivator consisted of a few boxes, wicker-work stools and baskets, brass and bell metal utensils, glass bottles and earthen pots and pans. Quilts made out of old cloth, mats and sometimes small bamboo *machangs* (raised platforms) served the purpose of beds. The well-to-do had in their houses beds, tables and chairs which have gained popularity among all sections of the people now-a-days. Even decorative furniture including costly sofa-sets are in growing use among the affluent. Traditional utensils have also gradually been replaced by china-clay, aluminium and stainless steel utensils.

Male dress includes *dhoti*, *chadar*, shirts, *kamij*, trousers and coats. Female dress consists of *riha*. *mekhela*. *chadar*. *sari* and blouse and ornaments include necklace, earrings, bracelets etc. Mech and Rabha women's traditional dresses consist of smocks which is called *dakhna* drawn tightly across their busts and reaching half-way down the calves.

Rice is the main staple food of all people. Vegetables, *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.

(IV) Festivities :

Hindu festivals : Colourful festivals observed in the district enliven the lives of the people. The Hindus, who constitute the bulk of the total population of the district, observe many festivals, ritualistic and others, of local nature. The biggest festival of the year is the *Durga Puja* ; the towns, tea gardens, even thickly populated villages become agog with the *puja* festivities from the *Mahalaya* day. Brisk preparations are made for days in all the community *puja* centres to invoke the Mother Goddess. The image of goddess *Durga* is installed ceremoniously on the *puja* pandal on the day as fixed in the almanac and the festival continues for four days. On all these nights threatrical performances or cultural shows are held in the community *puja* centres. On the last day of the festival, the idol is mounted upon some vehicle and thereafter, ceremoniously immersed in some river or running water. The *puja* and the immersion ceremony attract large number of people from distant places. No other festival observed in the district can equal the *Durga Puja* in pomp and grandeur.

Another religious festival celebrated widely in the district is the *Sivaratri* which is observed with much eclat in the *Siva* temples at Jogighopa (Dudhnath temple), Goalpara (Mahadev Pahar), Bilasipara (Dudhnath temple), Banita, Marnai, Dolgoma, Bongaigaon, Boitamari and Lakhipur. Fast is observed and hemp is offered to Lord *Siva*. On this occasion *ghota*, a preparation of milk, puddled rice, banana, sugar and *ghee* mixed with a few grains of *bhang* (hemp), is also served to devotees, at some places. Thus an atmosphere of gay abandon prevails during this festival. Another religious festival of considerable importance in Goalpara district is the *Doljatra* held in honour of Lord *Krishna* in February or March. The image of *Krishna* rested in an *ashana* is moved out of the shrine and is mounted on a *doul* which is an elevated earthen pedestal. A *pandal* is constructed for the occasion. After performing necessary rituals, *kirtan* is held followed by theatrical performances. The following day the image rested in the *ashana* is carried in a procession with throngs of people, men and women, young and old, throwing red powder (*phaku*) at one another. This is in memory of *Krishna's* amorous exploits with the milk-maids of Vrindavan. *Doljatra*, styled *Fagua* is an occasion of boisterous merry-making among Hindus. Another important festival is the *Janmastami* observed throughout the district in August or September in honour of the birth of Lord *Krishna*. *Kalipuja* coincides with *Dewali*. Houses are illuminated in the evening by small earthen lamps (*chakis*) burning mustard oil. In the towns, houses and buildings are often illuminated with coloured electric

bulbs. It is a joyous occasion marked by crackers and fireworks. A certain amount of gambling is often indulged in by young people. *Rashjatra*, a festival held in November in the memory of Lord *Krishna's* amorous gestures with the milk-maids of Brindaban is gaining popularity in the district. The festivities continue for two days and are attended by a large number of people. Another important festival held in the district in April is *Ashokastami* when ritual baths are taken by pilgrims in the Brahmaputra at Dhuburi, Jogighopa, Pancharatna etc. *Basanti Puja* is held for three days in March in various parts of the district. Various other *pujas* and festivals observed in the district include *Biswakarma puja. Lakshmi puja. Kartik puja. Jagadhatri puja* and *Saraswati puja* which is mainly confined among students.

Special festivals of the Assamese are the three *Bihus* and *tithis* or death anniversaries of the *Mahapurushas* viz. Sri Sri Sankardeva, Madhavdeva, Damodardeva, Harideva and Gopaldeva. The Assamese people observe three *Bihus* in a year *Rongali Bihu, Bhogali Bihu and Kati or Kongali Bihu.* These festivals are traced to the remote past and are associated with the cycles of cultivation. The *Kati or the Kongali Bihu* is celebrated on the last day of *Ahin* (October) and is not an occasion of very much importance. Hymns are sung out-doors in honour of God near *Tulasi* plant and in place of their usual meal of rice and curry, people take curds, molasses, plantains and *chira*. The *Magh Bihu* or the *Bhogali Bihu* begins on the last day of the month of *Puh* (January 13th or 14th). A few days ahead of the festival, a *Meji* which is a tall heap of rice straw piled around a central pole, is constructed. On the *Uruka* night, preceding the *Bihu*, the villagers feast in a grasshut constructed for this purpose. At the dawn of the *Bihu* day, the villagers bathe and warm their chilled bodies at these bonfires. The *Magh-Bihu* is to some extent a youth's and children's festival and most of the merriment is confined to the youth and smaller boys who sing and dance. Buffalo fights are organised in the rice fields, but these contests are rather tame affairs and the animals very seldom injure one another. The *Rongali Bihu*, also called the *Bohag Bihu* begins on the last day of *Chaitra* and the first day of *Bohag* which is the Assamese New Years' Day. It is a spring festival, where dance and music are predominant. 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 *Bihu* is now observed as a national festival and it serves to promote unity among different creeds and communities. The *Bihugeets* constitute a prolific variety of songs in Assamese literature. The central theme of these songs is love in its different moods. Social visits are an integral part of the *Bihus*. In the *Rongali Bihu*, the cattle are bathed in the river. After the bath, garlands made of brinjal and bottle gourd pieces are placed on their neck and a pastoral song is sung which in essence seeks to propitiate them to multiply year

by year. The death anniversary of Sri Sri Sankardeva is celebrated in August-September and that of Sri Sri Madhavdeva three days before the *Janmastami*. All work is laid aside on these two days and the people devote their time to the singing of hymns and eating *prasads*. The *Tithi* of Sri Damodarvdea is also similarly observed by the *Bamuniya* sect of the *Vaishnavites*.

Musical instruments used in connection with the festivals are the *tal* (cymbal) and *nagara*, a two-piece musical instrument, one big and one small, earthen and domeshaped, *daba, dhol.* (drum), *khol* or *mridanga, pepa* of buffalo horn, *bin, tokari, dotara, khanjari, gong* flute, *chiphung* flute etc.

Exquisite folk-songs and ballads such as *biya nam* (marriage songs), *tokari geets* (songs of mendicants), *ai nam* (sung in praise of goddess *Durga* to prevent small-pox), *Shivar geet, Dinga geet, Bihu geet etc,*. reverberate on different occasions. The Goalpara *Loka geet* (folk song) is very popular throughout the State.

Muslim festivals : Among the Muslim festivals mention must be made of the *Id-uz-Zuha, Muharram, Fatiha-i-duazdaham* and *Id-ul-fitre*. The *Muharram* is observed to commemorate the tragic episode of Imam Hussain, the grandson of the Prophet who was slain on the banks of the Karbala. Although this is a *Shia* festival, the *Sunnis*, of whom there are large numbers in the district, observe it. *Taziyas* are brought out in procession which are marked by the display of mock fights. On the occasions of the *Id-uz-Zuha* and *Id-ul-fitre* or *Bakrid*, the Muslims don their new white attires and go to the local *Idgahs* to hold prayer services. *Id-uz-Zuha* is also an occasion of alms giving. *Fatiha-i-duazdaham* and *Shab-e-barat* are two other festivals widely observed by the Muslims. It is interesting to note that *Jikir*, a kind of folk song, coughed in Assamese language is popular among the Muslims. The main object of these folk-songs is to convey His word to all the believers. Several scholars are of opinion that *Jikir* shows the influence of the *Nam kirtan* of the Hindus on the local Muslims.

Kachari festivals : The religious festivals of the Kacharis of the district are different from those observed by the Hindus. The impact of the Hindu proselytisation is noticeable among them. Some of the Hindu gods and goddesses such as goddess *Lakshmi* or *Kali*, are worshipped by the Kacharis. They believe in *Bathau* or *Siju* who is looked upon as the tutelary 'deity of the house'. This is commonly represented by a species of cactus, sometimes called *Siju-Gohain* which is generally found in the courtyard of the well-to-do Kachari families. The *Siju* worship involves the slaughter of goats, chickens etc. and at times eggs are also offered to the deity. The Kacharis believe in the supernatural power and at times make some offerings to ward off the evil spirits. The *Deori* is supposed to have the power of finding out the god who has caused the particular disease and of ascertaining the type of offering required to drive

away the evil spirit. The incantation of the priest is also believed to have the powers to heal the ailments caused by the offended deity. *Kherai puja, Habajanai, Natpuja, Bugrumba* and *Maigainai* are some of their traditional festivals. The *Deodhani* dance is a common feature of the *Kherai puja.* Large number of people gather about the end of November or beginning of December and again in April. Among the spirits which are believed by the Kacharis mention must be made of *Mainau* (the deity who provides food and drink), *Khober* (the deity of the paddy fields), *Hasung-Madai* (the god of the travellers), besides a host of others, such as *Dolah Gabang, Snarumaroi, Bura Gohain, Hgrani Madai* (gods of woods) and *Daini Madai* (god of waters). These are only a few festivals in which these spirits are propitiated.

National festivals : As Assam is an agricultural State like the rest of India its people observe agricultural festivals like *Bihus* as National festivals of the Assamese people.

The other festivals like the Republic Day and the Independence Day are also observed uniformly as National festivals of the people.

(iv) Communal life : Pilgrim Centres : There are only a few temples, shrines and *dhams* in Goalpara district but no ne of these is of much importance. Notable among these are the shrines at Jogighopa, Tukreswari Madhav, Bagheswari and Nandeswar and the *dhams* at Bishnupur and Satrasal which find subsequent mention elsewhere. The Dudhnath temple at Jogighopa sacred to *Shiva* is visited by pilgrims on different festive occasions particularly during *Shivaratri* and *Ashokastami.* The famous Tukreswari temple situated on top of a hill is dedicated to goddess *Durga* and is also associated by local tradition with *Sati.* The architecture and engineering skill of this temple are admirable. Pilgrims from all parts of India specially *Sanyasis* or religious mendicants are drawn here for pilgrimage. This Tukreswari hill is infested by monkeys which provide an added attraction. In the Bagheswari *than* situated to the east of Bongaigaon town there is a sword, symbol of might, on a throne offered by Bijni Raja. A *Yagna* is held here on the occasion of *Ambubashi* and is attended by a large number of pilgrims. A big fair is held on the occasion of *Dol Jatra* at the Nandeswar *Devalaya* situated on the south bank of the Brahmaputra at Nandeswar *Pahar.* It is sacred to *Nandeswar Mahadev.* Among various dances performed in this fair, *deodhai nritya* is famous. A list of important temples, *dhams* etc. has already been furnished.

Communal dances and songs : *Rongali Bihu* is the festival where groups of people dance and sing the *bihugeet.* As the girls dance, the boys play on flute and beat drums, and blow the *pepa.* made of buffalo-horn and *toka,* an indigenous musical gadget made by splitting in the middle, about two feet

long whole bamboo. The *Satriya* dances are of classical type, introduced by the *Vaishnava* leaders. The *Satriya* dance is a galaxy of dances, such as *Sutradhari Nritya, Chali Nach, Dasavatar Nritya, Kaliyaddaman Nritya.* etc. Mention has already been made of *Oja pali* dance. The tribal people of the district perform a variety of dances. The Kacharis have *Kherai* dance, *Bugrumba* dance and *Maigainai* dance, besides the *Bihu* dance. The tea garden labourers have their traditional *Jhumur* dance. The exquisite and colourful tribal dances are reminiscent of their glorious traditions.

Public Games and Recreation Clubs : Only a few indigenous games played by the young are mentioned here. *Dhopkhela,* a game quite popular among children is played with a ball shaped *Dhop* made of cloth. It is played by two teams. *Ghila khel* is another popular children's game played with *ghila*-tree seeds which are flat and round with a six inch diameter. *Vanta* is played generally by cowherd boys in the open field. *Lucka-bhaku* or *Lucka-churi* (hide and seek), *Dhara-gudu, Bouchi-gudu, Kheda-gudu,* or *Haugudu* are also played by the young children. *Dhara-gudu* resembles *Kabadi.* These games are played between two parties and the success of a party depends upon the physical strength, presence of mind and stamina of the players. There are various indigenous indoor games such as *Cowri khel, Dhal khel, Cheng khel,* and *Khalu guti khel* (a game played with fifty pebbles or seeds of certain trees), which are played on boards like checkers. Swimming, hunting, climbing, high jump, long jump, pole jump, tug-of-war, wrestling etc. are some other sports and pastimes. Till a few decades back, large tracts of the district were covered with jungle and plenty of deer and birds were found close to human habitation. These provided excellent opportunity for hunting. Professional wrestling is very rare in the district. However, on the occasions of *Rongali Bihu* and *Dol jatra,* wrestling among the strong and healthy boys brings about a bundle of fun to the villagers.

Most of the indigenous games have now been replaced by western games and sports. Football competitions are arranged in the towns and in semi-urban centres. Cricket is a popular winter game but is played mostly in the important towns. Tennis and hockey are also confined to such towns. Volley-ball and badminton are played even in rural areas. Indoor games like carroms, cards, chess and table tennis are played in the clubs of the district.

The number of recreation clubs is growing up both in the towns and villages. These clubs not only arrange annual sports but also provide library facilities and observe different festivals. Government also encourages the growth of such clubs by providing them with grants-in-aid and other facilities.

CHAPTER IV

AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION

Agriculture is the chief occupation of the people of the district. According to the 1971 Census, out of the total working population of 5,98,886 in Goalpara district, 4,67,464 were engaged in agriculture, 3,90,875 as cultivators and 76,589 as agricultural labourers. This shows that more than three-fourths of the working population were engaged in agriculture.

(a) *LAND RECLAMATION AND UTILISATION* :

In 1968-69, the total geographical area of the district according to professional survey was 10,31,539 hectares, of which 1,18,330 hectares were put to non-agricultural uses and 2,49,402 hectares were barren and unculturable land.[1] The table below shows the land utilisation statistics in the district for the year 1968-69.[2]

Land utilisation statistics of Goalpara district.

(Area in hectares)

Total geographical area :	
(a) Professional Survey area	10,31,539
(b) Village paper (reporting area)	10,30,905
Forest	2,50,085
Land not available for cultivation :	
(a) Land put to non-agricultural uses.	1,18,330
(b) Barren and unculturable land.	2,49,402
Total ..	3,67,732
Other uncultivated land excluding fallow land :	
(a) Permanent pastures and other grazing land ..	33,620
(b) Land under miscellaneous tree, crops and groves not included in net area ..	11,634
(c) Cultivable waste	16,216
Total ..	61,470

1. *Statistical Handbook, Assam*, 1973, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Gauhati, 1973, pp. 20-21.
2. Ibid, pp. 20-24.

Fallow land :	
(a) Fallow land other than current fallow	12,182
(b) Current fallow	4,176
Total ..	16,358
Net area sown	3,35,260
Total cropped area	4,55,198
Area sown more than once	1,19,938

As per the above table, the total area of fallow land constitutes approximately 1.5 per cent of the total cadastral area. Fallow land includes practically all unsettled lands, vast portions of which are either hilly or low-lying and are unfit for cultivation. The total cropped area of the district is about 44 per cent of the total cadastral area. About 12 per cent of the cadastral area are occupied by homesteads, roads, factories, rivers, ponds, towns, villages and so on. The other uncultivated lands excluding current fallows but including culturable waste, permanent pastures etc. constitute approximately one-twentieth of the total cadastral area. Total area of land used for miscellaneous trees, crops and groves or for works other than cultivation is only 11,634 hectares, while 2,49,402 hectares constitute barren and unculturable land.

Gully erosion : Gully erosion has become a serious problem in the northern part of the district. This has been described by the Director of Soil Conservation Department of the Government of Assam, as follows, "the imperceptibly sloping tract adjoining the Bhutan and Arunachal foot hills is inherently susceptible to soil erosion because of the peculiarities of soil and some biotic factors. The soil here consists of recently transported materials mostly coarse sand and pebbles and boulders. It is shallow and highly porous and very easily erodable. Till recently this tract was under forest and grass cover providing fire wood, inferior timbers and thatching grass to the concentrated population few miles south. But the land has now been brought under cultivation without taking any antierosion measures. The craze is to grow winter paddy for which water is brought from the rivers through crudely aligned channels (locally called *dongs*) having no regulatory head works. Removal of protective cover, unsuitability of the soil for irrigation and the faulty irrigation channels have all combined to erode away and form gullies over alarmingly increasing areas every year. Many of these *dongs* have turned into rivers because of lack of proper regulatory headworks. Rough estimates indicate that approximately 20,000 acres or more have already been affected by gully erosion in the North Bank".[3] Check dams, diversion channels and contour bunding techniques are being employed for

3. P. Goswami, Director, Soil Conservation Department, Assam : *Soil Erosion in North-East India* ; (article published in the Souvenir of the 40th Research Session—1970 of the Central Board of Irrigation and Power.)

controlling gully erosion. Afforestation of stream banks is taken up where land is available. The following are the projects taken up by the Soil Conservation Department in Goalpara district to control gully erosion.

Sl. No.	Name of gully Control Project.	Commeding area.	Year of construction
1	2	3	4.
1.	Shimbargaon G. C. Project	800 acres	1968-69
2.	Solmari G. C. Project	900 acres	1968-69
3.	Guabari G. C. Project	400 acres	1968-69
4.	Anthibara G. C. Project	700 acres	1969-70
5.	Solmari G. C. Project	600 acres	1969-70
6.	Solmari (Eng) dong head Control Project. ..	1170 acres	1969-70
7.	Ghilajhar G. C. Project	800 acres	1969-70
8.	Sukhanipara G. C. Project	300 acres	1969-70
9.	Ghoramora (Molandubi) Project. ..	1500 acres	1970-71
10.	Kunthaibari G. C. Project	500 acres	1970-71
11.	Bongalduba G. C. Project	600 acres	-do-
12.	Dimakumari G. C. Project	800 acres	-do-
13.	Patkata G. C. Project	700 acres	-do-
14.	Saumukha G. C. Project	100 acres	-do-
15.	Chekadani G. C. Project !	100 acres	-do-
16.	Aolaguri G. C. Project	60 acres	-do-
17.	Deisandi G. C. Project	30 acres	-do-
18.	Pagladhar G. C. Project	40 acres	-do-
19.	Kajalgaon G. C. Project	500 acres	-do-
20.	Kakragaon G. C. Project	100 acres	-do-
21.	Bagargaon G. C. Project	650 acres	-do-
22.	Nalbari G. C. Project	400 acres	-do-
23.	Dabubil Dong head Control Project. ..	500 acres	-do-
24.	Kuski G. C. Project	50 acres	1971-73
25.	Raumari G. C. Project	150 acres	-do-
26.	Angthihara Dong head work	500 acres	1973-74
27.	Charaikhusara G. C. Project	60 acres	-do-
28.	Bhamara Dong head control Project. ..	50 acres	-do-
29.	Laska G. C. Project	50 acres	-do-
30.	Khargaon G. C. Project	20 acres	1974-75

(i) **Cultivable Waste** : Prior to 1963 the term 'cultivable waste land' was erroneously and loosely used by people and even by some government agencies, to include practically all unsettled lands, the vast areas of which were known to be either hills or low-lying areas or lands which produced only rocks or sediments. Thus the statistical data on cultivable waste in the district of Goalpara in the earlier censuses of 1911, 1921, 1931, 1941, 1951 and 1961 were determined erroneously as indicated below.[4]

Cultivable waste land (in acres)

Year		Year	
1911	1,372,337	1941	908,188
1921	9,62,359	1951	577,736
1931	8,66,280	1961	N.A.

To ascertain the actual extent, location and possibility of utlisation of waste lands in all the plains districts of Assam, Government appointed a Committee consisting of technical persons. The results of the Survey made by the Technical Committee during 1963-65 in respect of the areas not suitable for cultivation in the district of Goalpara are shown in the table at page 118.[5]

The table indicates that about 1,31,380 bighas of land were not suitable for reclamation in the district. The area reclamable by manual labour in different parts of the district was only 37,616 bighas and by mechanised process only 6,076 bighas. 71,524 bighas of land were available for immediate settlement. The survey also revealed that an area of 37, 408 bighas of cultivable waste land was under encroachment in different parts of the district. Even the pastures and grazing lands have been gradually occupied by encroachers. With the beginning of the first Five Year Plan, Government have initiated various schemes to bring cultivable waste land under the plough.

(b) *IRRIGATION* :

(i) **Irrigation facilities** : Goalpara receives heavy rainfall during the south-west monsoons. The months May, June and July are the wettests period of the year and these months account for more than 60 per cent of the total annual rainfall. The farmers and tea gardens depend largely on rain water. Exposed to vagaries of the weather, agriculture suffers loss in years of excessive rains due to floods and fails in years of draught. In times of draught people are compelled to irrigate their fields by digging canals from various streams.

4. *Census of India* 1961, *Assam, District Census Handbook, Goalpara*, Shillong, 1965, p. 435.
5. *The Assam Land Revenue Manual, Volume I, Eighth Edition*, Shillong, 1968, p, 468.

(area in bighas & Circle-wise)

Name of Circles	No. of blocks of 15 bighas and above	Total area of land	Area not Suitable for reclamation	Area available after reclamation by manual labour	Area available after reclamation by machanised process	Area available for immediate settlement	Area under encroachment.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Dhuburi Sub-Division.							
1. Dhuburi.	88	2,525	40	457	—	1,919	110
2. Golakganj.	135	4,059	478	17	312	2,451	801
3. South Salmara.	475	6,752	—	—	—	60,121	7,389
4. Mankachar.	46	10,569	8,996	1,317	—	—	256
Goalpara Sub-division.							
5. Goalpara.	118	3,976	1,504	1,386	531	352	153
6. Lakhipur.	61	8,151	5,463	92	—	107	2,495
7. Dudhnai.	342	20,419	6,654	12,242	—	308	1,215
8. Matia.	379	25,045	13,021	1,728	3,226	2,830	4,240
9. Baithamari	113	9,502	6,066	759	—	101	2,576
10. Srijangram.	68	2,594	1,172	812	—	101	509
Kokrajhar Sub-division.							
11. Kokrajhar.	265	10,754	4,672	2,839	114	979	2,130
12. Gossaigaon.	56	1,926	833	82	—	509	502
13. Bilasipara.	114	6,829	4,589	1,474	—	117	659
14. Sidli.	369	17,562	9,097	4,589	—	346	3,530
15. Bijni.	429	28,590	8,026	8,309	1,702	1,290	8,763
16. Chapar.	319	64,003	60,769	1,013	141	—	2,080
Total for Goalpara district.	3,377	2,84,034	31,380	37,616	6,076	71,524	37,438

Irrigation is very common especially in the northern and eastern parts of the district. Indigenous methods of irrigation consists of raising water from near-by streams by putting cross-bunds across them and leading water through *dongs* (channels) to fields. Many of these channels extend over several kilometres and some have now attained the dimension of streams. They are, however, liable to be frequently damaged during floods mostly by out-flanking and-over-topping of water. Another disadvantage is that the system fails when the parent stream dries up. Ponds are also constructed by damming dead courses of rivers. Rain water and seepage water are stored in them and led to the fields by canals. Such *dongs* and ponds are constructed by beneficiary villagers who zealously guard them and prevent their use by others. *Sali* cultivation is mainly irrigated by such system as their sources dry up during winter months.

The following table showing irrigation facilities in the district during 1931-61 indicates the preponderance of private irrigation works.[6] It was with the introduction of the Grow More Food compaign that emphasis was laid by Government on irrigation works and during the plan period Government activities in this direction increased manifold.

Sources

	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971
(1) Canals ..					
(a) Government Canal ..	..	..	4895	13,182	47015
(b) Private Canal	155,365	164,740	163,138	163,227	
(2) Tanks ..	..	..	..	63	139
(3) Tube Wells ..	..	..	..	..	31
(4) Other wells ..	..	..	..	163	29
(5) Other sources ..	..	..	..	16,575	577

Some of the important irrigation schemes are mentioned below.

The Pakhajani Irrigation Scheme : This scheme, located north of Bijni in Kokrajhar Sub-division and initiated in the pre-plan period, was completed in 1954-55 at an estimated cost of Rs. 5.19 lakhs. An earthen dam was constructed across the river Pakhajani to store water for feeding a public dong to irrigate about 800 hectares of land. The water was diverted through a lowlying drainage channel which joins the Pakhajani Canal. There were no headworks to regulate water in the canal and this difficulty was sought to be removed in the phase II of the scheme approved in 1965-1966. Public objections regarding the location of the headworks, have hampered the work and necessitated the survey and investigation for an alternative site for headworks and canal system.

Kujia Irrigation Scheme is also a pre-plan scheme taken up in 1947-48. An earthen dam was constructed across Owjani, a tributary of the river Kujia at Enkhorabari, about 8 kms north of Chapaguri. It was expected to command

6. *Census of India*, 1961. *Assam, District Census Handbook, Goalpara*, Shillong, 1965, p. 437.

about 800 hectares. But there was no outlet for disposal of surplus water. In 1961, when there was inundation due to heavy floods upstream of the dam, it was cut open by the public. The scheme is defunct since then. The area formerly commanded by this scheme has been included in the Champamati Irrigation Scheme.

Laska Irrigation Scheme : The scheme was originally taken up in the First Plan period under the name "Bhogdola Bund and Dong" to irrigate a gross area of 1,400 hectares on the left bank of the Laska which is a sub-tributary of the Longa river. The scheme had no permanent headworks and it was constructed during the Second Five Year Plan under phase I of the Laska Irrigation scheme. The Second phase of the scheme extended the Canal system to the right bank of the river and was completed in 1972-73 to irrigate 1,956 hectares of land. The total expenditure of the scheme including Bhogdola Irrigation Scheme and two phases of the Laska Irrigation scheme was Rs. 8.40 lakhs. As it failed to supply adequate water to its command area it is proposed to pump out water from the Longa river to Laska headwork site at an estimated cost of Rs. 3.13 lakhs.

Alternative Irrigation Scheme : The Kokrajhar Balagaon Irrigation Scheme fed a public dong named Lunchung Dong and irrigated about 270 hectares north of the Balagaon and Kokrajhar Dong which irrigated 400 hectares south of Balagaon. As water supply was inadequate, a dispute arose in sharing the water for the two dongs. An alternative arrangement was made in 1952, by constructing a headwork at Amguri village and water from Gaurang river was fed to the Kokrajhar Dong. Subsequently this alternative scheme was renovated and improved to cover more areas, in 1954-55 and 1962-63. So far an area of 1,960 hectares has been irrigated by this scheme at an estimated cost of Rs. 3.20 lakhs.

Sapkata Irrigation Scheme : The gross commanded area of the scheme is 3,632 hectares. Prior to 1961-62, when the scheme was initiated, there was a rural *dong* from Sapkata river for irrigating the present commanded area. For want of regulatory arrangements, it was not functioning properly and the present scheme was taken up and completed in two phases during 1975-76 at an estimated cost of Rs. 17.53 lakhs. The length of the canals constructed in two phases was 5 kms. and 10 kms.

Bhandarani Irrigation Scheme was initiated in 1960-61 and completed in 1967-68 at an estimated cost of 4.41 lakhs. It commands a gross area of 1,920 hectares. The main canal is 6 kms. long and leads water of Bhandarani river to Nayachara, Bagulamari, Toknamari etc., villages of Kokrajhar Subdivision. The headwork is located at Nigamkhola, Garobasti.

Haltugaon Subhaijhar Irrigation Scheme : The *dong* known as Kalu-dong constructed by the people of Haltugaon and Subhaijhar for bringing water of the Saumukha river to their fields widened into a river and became ineffective as a source of irrigation. The present scheme was taken up in two phases commencing from 1956-57. The first phase completed in 1962-63, provided headworks and 3.46 kms of canal. During the second phase started in 1969-70, it is proposed to construct one additional head regulator and canal of 4.40 kms. in length. When completed, these two phases will command a gross area of 1,080 hectares and will cost Rs. 6.86 lakhs.

Tamatingdinga Irrigation Scheme : The scheme compirses a headwork on the river Haraphuta at Malaguri and a main canal of 13.8 kms and a branch canal 8.2 kms. long. It was started in 1955-56 and completed in 1962-63 at an estimated cost of Rs. 7.97 lakhs. This scheme failed to give desired result mainly because water fell below the designed point level. To rectify this, remodelling of the scheme is proposed at a cost of Rs. 13.92 lakhs. This has already been started in Feb.'75.

Bhorasara Irrigation Scheme : This scheme on the Bhorasora river has been taken up in two phases and started in the later part of the Second Five Year Plan. The first phase comprising headworks and canals on the right bank of the river was completed in 1962-63 at an estimated cost of Rs. 5.11 lakhs with a gross command area of 1,750 hectares. The second phase for constructing canals on the left bank is still in progress and when completed will command an area of 1,690 hectares at the revised estimated cost of Rs. 13.8 lakhs.

Ghorabhandha Irrigation Scheme : The scheme was investigated in the early sixties to irrigate 2,000 hectares of land in Sidli Revenue Circle. The first phase comprising the headworks and afflux bund was completed in 1966-67, at an estimated cost of Rs. 7.04 lakhs. The canal system proposed in the second phase has not been implemented so far, due to objections regarding the proposed alignment of the canal. The second phase will involve a cost of Rs. 15.75 lakhs.

Borsongaon Mulagona Irrigation Scheme : It was started in 1957-58 and has its headwork near Kajalgaon in Kokrajhar Sub-division. But it has not been possible to complete the canal system as a portion of the area over which it was proposed to dig the canal, was taken over for establishment of Railway workshop. A diversion canal is under consideration.

Bhur Irrigation Scheme : As the Mora Bhur *dong* constructed by villagers had deteriorated and lost command, it was proposed to stabilise the system by providing one headwork on the *dong* at Bhutiapara and to supply water to its original command area and additional area lower down. It was, however, found that water in the Mora Bhur *dong* was inadequate for the purpose and it was deci-

ded to erect a headwork on the Bhur river at Ichlakhata village. It is estimated to cost Rs. 20.15 lakhs and has a command area of 1,920 hectares.

Gaurang Lift Irrigation Scheme : The scheme was taken in 1972 for irrigating a gross area of 1,720 hectares on the right bank of the Gaurang river. Water is proposed to be pumped from the river by electric pumps installed in a barge about half a km. below the P.W.D. bridge at Funtakibari. It will have main canal and branch canal. The scheme when completed will cost an amount of Rs. 24.39 lakhs.

Longa Irrigation Scheme : This scheme is proposed to provide irrigation facilities to its surrounding areas by providing headworks on Longa river at Ramphal *bil*. It will have canals, with a command area of 6,208 hectares on the right bank of the river. There is also a provision for constructing a head regulator on the left bank of the Longa for bringing an additional area of 2,800 hectares under its command.

Dumardaha Lift Irrigation Scheme : This scheme proposes to provide irrigation facilities in a portion of Dhuburi Sub-division by lifting water from Gadadhar river by electric pumps. The proposed Rupsi canal will be 2.34 kms, in length and the Sahebganj canal 5.53 kms., and will command 1,680 hectares.

Pokalagi Lift Irrigation Scheme : Under the scheme, it is proposed to irrigate a gross area of 1,600 hectares in Kokrajhar Sub-division by lifting water from the river Bholakadoba through a main canal of 5.76 kms. in length and a branch canal covering 3.3 kms.

Jajlaigaon Rajadabri Lift Irrigation Scheme : Under this, it is proposed to extend irrigational benefits to an area of 2,340 hectares by lifting water from Garupela river at Gardanpur by electric pump. 135 cusecs of water will be distributed to fields by a 7.8 kms. long main canal and two branch canals of lengths 5 Kms. and 2.76 Kms. Its estimated cost is Rs. 48.19 lakhs.

Popragaon Lift Irrigation Scheme : To provide irrigation facilities to the agricultural land on the western bank of the Ai river, it is proposed to lift water from the Roumari river near Tengabari bazar by pumps. The major work of the scheme has already been completed and is expected to benefit 240 hectares.

The Department has also undertaken some irrigation works to provide water for the rabi crops. Mention may be made of Srijangram Shallow Tube-well in Goalpara Sub-division for irrigating about 5 hectares of paddy fields, Abadi Kalpani Lift Irrigation Schemes in Manikpur Block, Garuphella and Modati Lift Irrigation Schemes in Gossaigaon Block, Ramphal-bil Lift Irrigation Scheme in Datma Block. In Dhuburi Sub-division, Tipka, Udmari, Kalbhandari, Bisowba Lift Irrigation Schemes and Deep Tube Irrigation Schemes in Bokanda deserve mention.

Further, Department of Irrigation proposes to take the following new irrigation schemes in the district.

Sl. No.	Name of Scheme	Estimated cost.	Area benefited approximately	Type of Scheme
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Bahalpur Farming Corporation Irrigation Scheme. ..	—	160 hectares	Life Irrigation.
2.	Silputa Agricultural Farming Corporation Irrigation Scheme. ..	—	150 hectares	Shallow Tube-well
3.	Jagrapar Irrigation Scheme. ..	—	560 ,,	Lift Irrigation.
4.	Kalbhandari Irrigation Scheme. ..	—	60 ,,	Flow Irrigation.
5.	Shisti Irrigation Scheme. ..	—	120 ,,	Flow Irrigation.
6.	Kalabari Irrigation Scheme. ..	—	42 ,,	Shallow Tubewell

Formerly, there were various agencies for implementing irrigation measures, but at present, it is mainly the concern of the recently created Irrigation Department. This Department has four Divisions in the district viz., Goalpara Irrigation Investigation Division, Kokrajhar Irrigation Investigation Division, Gauripur Irrigation Investigation Division and Kokrajhar Irrigation Investigation Division.

(ii) **Protective-bunds** : The riverine areas of the district are almost annually exposed to high floods not only of the Brahmaputra but also of its tributaries like the Manas, Ai, Champamati, Saralbhanga, Sankosh, Dudhnai, Krishnai, Jinari, and the Jinjiram. Embankments have been constructed on an extensive scale only from the late fifties. In 1957, the Government of Assam set up a Committee to review the Embankment and Drainage Projects of Assam. The Committee recommended drawing up of a detailed and comprehensive Master Plan for flood control in the State and making provisions for sufficient number of controlled openings wherever embankments are constructed. Although the embankments provide protection to habitation and farm land, they also affect the fertility of the land. Generally speaking, in riverine areas, where the depth of soil cover over the substratum of sand, is thin and the soil is light being composed of fine river silt, the annual inundation of flood water has been the major fertilising and regenerating agent from year to year. Naturally, therefore, when the river spill is prevented from inundating cultivated land with silt laden water by the embankment, not only the flood irrigation is denied to the crop, but the natural fertility of the land also goes down. This adverse effect

of embankments is corrected by systematic construction of large number of sluices or controlled openings. These embankments have benefited large areas not only by providing protection against flood, but also making some areas fit for double cropping and reclamation. Previously, *Ahu* paddy, which is harvested in June-August, was an uncertain crop in the riverine areas. In case of early flood, *Bao* and jute seedlings were also damaged. The Brahmaputra embankment has rendered these crops reasonably safe in areas which were subjected to floods. In the tributary basin also reasonable protection has been afforded against normal floods.

The following list indicates the embankment schemes executed in the district.

LIST OF FLOOD PROTECTION WORKS IN GOALPARA DISTRICT.

Sl. No.	Nature of Scheme	Year of commencement	Year of completion	Area benefited in acres.
1	2	3	4	5
	Embankement			
	Brahmaputra river			
1.	Construction of flood embankment from Kharmouza to Balikuchi Ph. 1.	1954-55	1956-57	15,000
2.	Construction of flood embankment from Balikuchi to Fakirganj. Ph. II.	1954-55	1958-59	15,000
3.	Construction of Brahmaputra dyke on left bank from Goalpara to Pancharatna.	1955-56	1956-57	5,000
4.	Construction of Brahmaputra dyke from Fakirganj to South Salmara.	1957-58	1958-59	10,000
5.	Construction of Retirement bund from Barkakali Balikuchi to Fakirganj embankment, 1957-58.	1957-58	1959-60	Benefited area covered by Sl. 2.
6.	Construction of Retirement at 6th mile of Kharmouza to Balikuchi flood embankment near Balarbhita.	1962-63	1962-63	Benefited area covered by Sl. 1.

1	2	3	4	5
7.	Raising and strengthening Brahmaputra dyke from Kharmouza to Fakirganj.	1964-65	1965-66	Benefited area covered by Sl. 1 & 2.
8.	Construction of Retirement of Brahmaputra dyke from Balikuchi to Fakirganj at 30th to 32nd mile.	1964-66	1966-67	Benefited area covered by Sl.2.
9.	Construction of Retirement of Brahmaputra dyke from Balikuchi to Fakirganj at 19th to 21st mile.	1965-66	1966-67	Benefited area covered by Sl.1.
10.	Contruction of Retirement of Brahmaputra dyke from Kharmouza to Fakirganj at 12th to 14th mile.	1965-66	1967-68	Benefited area covered by Sl.1.
11.	Restoration of old existing Balikuchi to Fakirganj embankment from 26th to 30th mile.	1967-68	1968-69	Benefited area covered bySl.2.
12.	Construction of Retirement of Brahmaputra dyke from Kharmouza to Fakirganj at 7th kms. to 9th kms.	1967-68	1968-69	Benefited area covered by Sl.1.
13.	Construction of Retirement of Brahmaputra dyke left Bank from Kharmouza to Fakirganj Behind Chunmari Bazar.	1967-68	1969-70	Benefited area covered by Sl.1.
	Drainage Improvement			
	Dudhnoi river.			
14.	Diversion of Dudhnai river to follow its old course.	1952-53	1953-54	300
	Jinari river :			
15.	Flood Protection from river Jinari and Zinziram.	1955-56	1955-56	3,000
	Damas river :			
16.	Construction of Damas Embankment under Goalpara C.D. Block.	1960-61	1961-62	400

1	2	3	4	5
	Protection work-Brahmaputra river. ..			
17.	Temporary Protection of Goalpara Town.	1954-55	1959-60	Southern part of Goalpara Town.
18.	Protection of Goalpara town from erosion of river Brahmaputra.	1965-66	1967-68	Goalpara town.
29.	Construction of 2nd Retirement behind Chunari bazar area to Brahmaputra dyke left bank from Kharmouza to Fakirganj.	1970-71	..	Benefited area covered by Sl.1.
20.	Construction of Retirement at Thusiparasnear Matipota village of Kharmuza to Fakirganj Brahmaputra dyke at ph. 47 kms. of Brahmaputra dyke to 3 kms. of 30-32 mile retirement.	1970-71	1971-72	Benefited area covered by Sl.2.
21.	Construction of flood embankment along right bank of Kalu river for prevention of flood in Mankachar area.	1968-69		5,760
22.	Construction of Retirement of Brahmaputra dyke from Kharmouza to Fakirganj from 500 metre of Thusipara Retirement to 52 Kms. of 30th to 32 mile Retirement for the year 1971-72.	1971-72	1972-73	Benefited area covered by Sl.2.
23.	Extension of Fakirganj south Salmara road *cum* Embankment to close the Pagla Channel under Goalpara E & D Division.			8800
24.	Construction of Brahmaputra dyke along North Bank from Dhuburi to Patmari Ph. 1 to 11.	1956-57	Completed	25,000 7,580
	Tributaries :			
25.	Construction of embankment along left bank of Gongadhar river from Golakganj to Bisandoi.	1962-63	Completed	7,800

1	2	3	4	5
26.	Embankment on right bank of A. river Dankhanagar to Proparagaon.	1960-62	Completed	1500
27.	Embankment on right bank of A from Rajaghuli to Barghala.	1960-62	Completed	6000
28.	Embankment on right bank of Ai river from Barghala to Lengtisinga.	1963-64	1963-64	2500
29.	(a) Contsruction of an embankment both bank of Champamati river from N.T. Road to N.H. Way.	..	1964-65	1000
30.	(b) Partial diversion of Champamati river from Tarani to its old course.	..		5
31.	(a) Embankment along right bank of Saralbhanga river from Patgaon to upwards.	1969-70	..	5760
32.	(b) Extension of Saralbhanga Embankment from Lalbhita upwards.	..	..	600
	Drainage Scheme :			
33.	Construction of Dong (Drainage) from Uttajani Dam to Proparagaon.	1960-61	..	1500
34.	Kharikhabari Drainage project second plan.	..	..	6000
35.	Panchania Drainage Scheme.	1962-63	..	200
36.	Ochita-Otar Janchamari drainage scheme.	1965-66	..	4480
37.	Construction of Ai Embankment from Rajiaghuli to N.H. Way.	1975-76	Completed	Rs. 1595165.00
38.	Protection of Dhuburi town from the Erosion of river Brahmaputra	1972-73	Completed	Rs. 1,78,41200.00
39.	Bijni town Protection works.	1974-75	Completed	Rs. 1,95000.00

1	2	3	4	5
40.	Protection of Golokganj town.	1975-76 Rs. 24,42,100.00		
41.	Protection of Chapar town.	1974-75 Rs. 1,92,000.00		

(c) *AGRICULTURE INCLUDING HORTICULTURE* :

(i) **Soil** : As in other districts of Brahmaputra valley, the soil of Goalpara district is also of alluvial origin. The soils vary from sands to loams. It consists of sand and clay in varying proportions ranging from poor sand near the Brahmaputra to stiff clay which is unfit for cultivation. In the *Duars* the soil is for the most part light gravel. The statement below gives an analysis of the soil of this district.[7]

Analysis of the soil :

Texture/type of soil	Acidity/PH value.	Availability Nitrogen (N)%	Availability of Phosphate Acid P205%	Availability of Potash K_2O(%)
Sand to loam ..	PH 5.4 (water Extract) 4.3 (KNO_3 Extract	Low-0.147	Low or just sufficient 0.015	Low or just sufficient 0.002.

Content of P_2O5 is fairly high but of K20 is just sufficient. Nitrogen content of specially the surface soil is quite high.[8]

7. *Agricultural Guide Book*, 1975-76, Department of Agriculture, Assam, Gauhati, 1976, p. 99.
8. *Farmers of India*, Vol. III, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Dethi, 1964, p. 15.

Number of operational holdings reporting irrigation & area irrigated by size class of operational holdings.*

Sl. No.	Size class (in hectares)	Total holding		Wholly irrigated		Wholly un-irrigated		Partly irrigated		
		No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area	Irrigated Area
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
01	Below -0.5	94,191	25,066.97	4,479	1,192.77	89,331	21,762.51	381	120.94	68.54
02	0.5-1.0	66,833	48,412.81	4,436	3,160.07	60,855	41,476.20	1,542	1,090.07	670.35
03	1.0- 2.0	65,561	93,400.18	5,017	6,957.07	56,520	76,334.31	4,024	5,662.75	3,745.41
04	2.0- 3.0	28,794	70,177.91	1,832	4,282.51	23,950	55,889.27	3,012	6,998.72	4,588.88
05	3.0- 4.0	14,419	49,606.44	757	2,517.87	11,733	38,788.10	1,929	6,305.76	4,146.27
06	4.0- 5.0	7,692	34,164.67	374	1,584.04	6,187	26,489.23	1,131	4,752.59	3,053.86
07	5.0-10.0	10,442	68,853.60	382	2,377.68	8,353	52,980.09	1,707	10,912.30	6,941.73
08	10.0-20.0	1,480	18,814.59	44	527.89	1,180	14,567.10	256	3,040.46	1,763.58
09	20.0-30.0	87	2,006.79	2	47.24	74	1,634.38	11	245.25	132.04
10	30.0-40.0	10	336.84	1	32.70	9	215.71	..	..	..
11	40.0-50.0	6	263.74	..	..	6	258.54	..	..	..
12	50.0- & above	20	4,914.09	..	..	20	4,080.28	..	..	..
	Total :	2,89,535	4,16,018.63	17,324	22,679.84	2,58,218	3,34,475.72	13,993	39,128.84	25,110.66

* *World Agricultural Census* 1970-71; *Assam*, Gauhati—p.149.

(ii) **Crops** : The staple food crop of this district is rice which was grown over 3,52,100 hectares in 1972-73. Other important crops are mustard, pulse and wheat. Jute is largely grown for export. Sugarcane is not much in favour and area under tea is insignificant compared to districts in Upper Assam. There are a few uneconomic and old tea gardens which practically render no significant help to the economic development of the district. A little cotton is grown on the hill areas on the south bank of the Brahmaputra in Goalpara subdivision. Cotton exported from the district is mainly grown in Garo Hills of Meghalaya.

Rice : Rice grown in the district can be classified under three main heads viz., *roa*, *ahu* or *bitri* and *bao*.

Roadhan (transplanted paddy) : With the onset of the monsoon the seed-beds (*bichan*) for *roa* paddy are prepared by ploughing and harrowing the land five or six times. The seeds which are selected from the largest ears of the previous year's crop, are sown broadcast over the beds in May and June. The seed-beds are manured with cowdung and compost. Use of fertilizers is gaining ground. The proper area borne by the seed-beds and the area to be transplanted vary according to fertility of soil, time of transplanting and such other factors. The seed rate is generally 300-350 gms. of seed per 9 sq. metres of the puddle land. Selected seeds from pervious year's crop 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, the field is prepared for transplantation of the seedlings. Ploughing starts as soon as the soil becomes soft after the reception of the spring rain and the process is repeated till the land is reduced to a rich puddle of mud. After the third ploughing, land is harrowed and small embankments 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 on village paths. Transplantation starts from the later part of June and continues till the second week of September. To avoid damage by flood, transplantation is done late 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 distance of 0.2x-0.3x metres or more. The number of seedlings per hole and distance from plant to plant vary with the fertility of land, its water supply 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 nature 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 0.2 metres below the hand. Each of these handfuls (*muthis*) are tied up with a piece of straw, and strewn over the field as the cutting process goes on. Six to eight *muthis* make an *ati*, and five or six *ati*, a *bojha*. A *bojha* is then affixed to either end of a sharp pointed bamboo called *bankua* and the load which is called a *bhar*, and carried across the shoulder, is taken to the homestead by the men. The straw is also taken for storage and is used as fodder.

The finer variety of *Roa* is commonly called *Lahi* which ripens earlier. *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 *chira* and cakes called *Pitha*.

Ahu or *bitri* : This type of paddy is generally sown broadcast under two different conditions. When sown on marshy land, the jungle over it is cleared and burnt in May. Before ploughing which begins in early February, the fresh jungle grown in the interval is also cut down and burnt. After ploughing, harrowing and breaking up of clods by a mallet, the land is again ploughed and harrowed ; the seed is sown, and ploughing and harrowing follow to ensure that grain is mixed with the soil. Harrowing and weeding again follow when the plants are about 15 cms. high. The crop is harvested in the middle of July. The crop is liable to be destroyed completely if the flood water does not subside within a week or so.

It is also sometimes grown in conjunction with *Bao* so that if the (*ahu*) crop is destroyed *Bao* which is longer stemmed and sturdier may survive. It is also sown on high lands near the village. Land is manured with cowdung. *Ahu* is also sometimes cultivated as transplanted, more or less in the same way as *Roa*. It is generally grown on irrigated land. It ripens earlier and thus gives quicker return.

Bao-dhan : It is sown broadcast in mid-March generally in flooded areas. It ripens in December and is harvested in the same manner as *Roa*. Some kinds of *Bao* increase in length as water level rises and some stalks attain huge dimensions. Thus *Lewa Bao* sometimes grows more than seven metres long, *Mera Bao* more than 4.5 metres and *Kekoa* and *Salmati* sometimes attain heights of 5.4 metres. In case of sudden floods, if the plant remains under water for some time, it is destroyed ; but when water rises gradually the fast growing plant keeps the ears of grain safely above water.

The harvested paddy is brought home and cattle are used for threshing it. It is then passed through a sieve and placed in a flat bamboo tray called *kula*. The tray is then jerked into the air and paddy slowly drops to the ground and chaff is thus separated. Paddy is stored in granaries called *gola*.

The following table shows area, average yield and production of rice in the district of Goalpara for some years during the period 1955-56 to 1971-73.

Statement showing the Area, Average yield and Production of Rice in the district of Goalpara since 1955-56 to 1972-73, (Area in hectares, Average yield in kg. per hectare, Production in Tonnes).

Year	Total Rice			Winter Rice			Autumn Rice			Spring Rice		
	Area	Average yield	Production.	Area	Average yield	Production.	Area	Average yield	Production.	Area	Average yield	Production.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1955-56	2,18,127	971	2,08,022	1,53,781	994	1,50,044	63,435	907	56,754	911	1,345	1,224
1960-61	2,38,021	926	2,16,808	1,56,371	1,036	1,59,260	80,091	713	56,237	1,559	841	1,311
1965-66	2,94,955	913	2,65,433	1,65,921	915	1,49,540	1,22,357	912	1,09,904	6,677	897	5,989
1970-71	3,34,881	815	2,74,340	2,20,523	877	1,71,231	1,12,438	747	96,674	5,500	1,170	6,435
1971-72	3,43,000	776	2,66,380	2,02,400	920	1,86,187	1,35,000	532	71,866	5,600	1,487	8,327
1972-73	3,52,100	884	3,11,318	2,02,300	994	1,98,050	1,41,000	710	98,748	8,800	1,650	14,520

Sources : (1) *The Agricultural Guide Book*, 1968-69 *and* 1975-76, published by the Department of Agriculture, Govt. of Assam, pp. 64-70 and 87-90 respectively.
(2) *World Agricultural Census*, 1970-71, Assam. p. 60.

Wheat : Although rice continues to be the staple food of the people of the district, wheat is also gaining popularity and is increasingly supplementing rice in diet. Wheat is mostly cultivated as a *rabi* crop during the winter season in loamy soils with good irrigation facilities. The recommended varieties are *Sonalika* and *Kalyan sona*. In Goalpara district wheat covered an area of 10,000 hectares in 1970-71 and yielded 5,000 metric tonnes. Area under the crops increased to 13,000 hectares next year with a yield of 15,678 metric tonnes, giving an average yield of 1,206 kgs. per hectare.

Rape & Mustard : Mustard is often grown along with *Ahu* on riparian flats. The jungle is cut down in February and March, and in case there is no time to prepare the land for summer rice, is allowed to rot upon the ground. The remains are burnt in October, stumps removed, and the land is ploughed several times. Sowing is done about the end of October and the plant is ready to be pulled from the field about mid-January. It is left for a few days to dry, tied in bundles and taken home for threshing by cattle. Mustard is also raised on land used for jute cultivation. When this is done it benefits from manure and fertilisers which are liberally bestowed on jute. The eastern portion of the district under Bijni Police Station grows considerable guantities of mustard. During 1971-72, 25,000 hectares under rape and mustard produced 11,650 metric tonnes giving a yield of 466 kgs per hectare, and in 1972-73 average yield of rape and mustard seed per hectare was found to be 321 kgs. in this district while total production in metric tonnes was 8025—area covered being the same as in the preceding year.

Pulses : Pulses are grown on riparian flats or on higher land which has been cropped with summer rice. Among chief varieties grown in Goalpara district are *Mati kalai* (*phaseolus mungo* variety *radiatus*), a large dark coloured variety taking about three or four months time to ripen ; *Thaguri kalai*, smaller and lighter coloured *mug* (*phaseolus mungo linn*) ; masur (*lens esculenta*) and *matar* (*pisum arvense*) which are sown in October or November and take about six months to ripen ; and *Arhar* (*cajanus indicus*) which is sown in April and May, and takes about ten months to ripen. During 1971-72, an area of 16,590 hectares was used for growing pulses of all varieties in Goalpara district and the total yield was 6,763 metric tonnes. Gram is also cultivated in small patches and covered an area of 280 hectares producing 130 metric tonnes during the same year. As per Report on the Crop Estimation Surveys on Principal Food and Non-food Crops in Assam 1972-73, average yield of *Mati Kalai* in Goalpara was found to be 615 kgs. per hectre—total production in tonnes being 6,980 from 11,350 hectres of crop area.

Plantain : An important garden crop of the district is the plantain (*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 *Manohar, Chenichampa, Malbhog, Athia, Purakal* and *Jahaji. Purakal* is used as vegetable. *Chenichampa* is the high yielding variety and hardier ; *Malbhog* is medium yielder and has very pleasant flavour ; *Athia* is considered cool and wholesome. *Jahaji, Malbhog* and *Monohar* are by far the best in quality of fruit. These, 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 *Athia* 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 0.45 metres wide and 0.45 metres deep and are manured with cowdung and ash. Young plants take from 18 months to 2 years to flower. The hanging terminated, bud of the fruit bunch is removed.

The whole plant from leaf to root is used for different purposes such as the terminating bud (*Kaldil*) used as vegetable, the leaves and sheath used as substitute for dishes ; from the sheath tumblers (*khol*) are made for serving food. The plant in general is used for decorating gates etc., in various ceremonies. The *Kalakhar* is 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 ash is used as *Kalakhar. Kalakhar* is used for preparation of *Kharanipani* etc.

Arecanut (*areca catechu*) 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 embeded. 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 their stem and the leaf and nut, which are invariably eaten together are thus grown side by side.

Mangoes, jackfruits, lemons and coconuts are also common. Among vegetables grown in the district, mention may be made of spinach (*basella alba*) various kinds of arums (*kachu*), yams (*dioscorea*) and gourds, the common mallow *lafa* (*malva verticillate*) and radish *mula* (*raphonus sativus*) the sorrel *chuka sag* (*rumex vesticarius*) and the brinjal (solanum melongena) as also potatoes, onions, garlic, chillies, ginger and turmeric.

Sugarcane : Sugarcane (*saccharum officinarum*) is generally grown on high land which is well manured with cow-dung and at present with fertilisers. For propagation, carefully preserved tops of the best canes produced in the last harvest, are used. Hoeing is done till the land is reduced to a fine tilth and the tops are then planted in trenches between April and June. It is usual to fence the patch with split bamboo and a stout hedge of *Arahar dal* (*cajamus indicus*) is generally grown. Inspite of such precautionary measures the farmer has to watch against jackals and other animals. While the crop is growing, continual hoeing and weeding are necessary and about August the leaves are tied up round each cluster of canes. The earth from the ridges is heaped about the roots and this process is continued till relative positions of the ridge and trench are reversed. Finally, the canes stand upon ridges with the trenches in between.

In Goalpara district four principal varieties of sugarcane are grown. The *Mugi* or white grows about two metres high and the canes are of a soft juicy texture. The shorter, harder and thinner canes of a deep red or even purple colour belong to the *rangi* variety. The *khagrai* is tall, hard and very thin and produces molasses of good quality. Tall and more juicy but yielding less molasses are the red and white varieties of Bombay. In 1971-72, 1,800 hectares of land were under sugarcane in Goalpara district. In 1972-73 average per hectare yield of sugarcane in terms of cane was 31,529, while an area of 1,200 hectares covered by sugarcane cultivation produced 37,835 tonnes of sugarcane yielding 3,889 tonnes of molasses.

Preparation of Gur : An indigenous form of mill was generally used for the extraction of the juice from sugarcane in the past. 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 recent times ; but both the types are of the same model. The crushing machines contain three iron rollers one with very sharp teeth and 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 sugarcane is placed between the rollers and crushed or it is forced through. The juice tickles from the trough into a vessel kept below.

The juice is then transferred to a big iron cauldron kept on the furnace. When 50-60 litres of juice are collected, boiling is started. The refuse that accumulates on the surface of the juice when boiling, it strained out by a small bamboo sieve (*Jakki*) fixed with a long bamboo handle. Another similar seive is constantly used for controlling the boiling juice. When the juice is reduced to the proper state it is transferred to a small boat (*Gholani*), scooped out of log and stired for some time to cool it. The finished *gur* is stored in earthen

pots or tins. In 1971-72, 4796 metric tonnes of *gur* were produced in Goalpara district from sugarcane grown in that year.

Jute : This is the most important fibre grown in the district. The land is well ploughed as many as even 10 times if the soil is stiff. When not grown on land enriched by silt deposited during floods, manure is largely used. After cutting the plants in August and September, their leaves are stripped. They are then tied in bundles and immersed in pools of water and left to rot for 15-20 days. Handfuls of stems are taken up, broken near the lower end, and beaten to and from in the water. The beating continues till the inner parts drop out. The fibres are then dried and are ready for the market. Jute was grown over an area of 38,400 hectares in 1971-72 in the district and yielded 2,81,173 bales of 180 kgs.each. Its yield during that year was 1,318 kgs, per hectare. In the district of Goalpara there are three Jute Package Blocks at Gauripur, Golokganj, and Agomoni covering 3,000,1600 and 480 hectraes respectively. As per Report on the Crop Estimation Surveys on principal food and non-food crops in Assam 1972-73, average yield of jute per hectare in the district was found to be 1368 kgs this being the 3rd highest per hectare yield in the State of Assam.

Tobacco : Another important garden crop in the district is 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 shade or else pressed into hollow bamboos (*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*. In 1971-72, 1,220 hectares of land on which tobacco was grown in the district, produced 1,012 metric tonnes. Appendix B shows the area, average yield, and production of the principal crops in the district since 1955-56 to 1971-72.

Tea : Tea is a crop of no importance in Goalpara. Among districts where tea is grown on a commercial scale in Assam, Goalpara has the least area under tea and the least production. In 1971, there were only 10 gardens in the district having 2,616 hectares under tea. The total production during that year was 24,280 quintals. Full account of the tea industry in Assam will be found in the District Gazetteers of Sibsagar, Lakhimpur, and Darrang.

(iii) **Progress of Scientific Agriculture** : Agricultural implements : The plough (*nangal*) made of mango or *sal* tree or from some other hard wood

is the age-old implement and 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 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 7.5 cms. to 10 cms. Not more than an area of about 0.08 hectare can be ploughed in one day with the wooden plough and a good pair of bullocks. Ploughs drawn by buffaloes are slightly bigger.

The harrow (*moi*), which is generally used to crush the clods after ploughing the land is about 2.4 metres in length. Two men stand on it as it is drawn across the field by a pair of bullocks. Two pieces of bamboos are clogged together in the shape of a ladder. Bullocks are tied with yoke and 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 (*nangal*) 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. Clods are broken by a mallet (*kushi bari*) which is also made at home. The hoe (*kodal*) occupies a very important place among the indigenous agricultural implements. Hoes (*kodals*) are used to trim the embankments (*alis*) which help to retain the water. It is also used in upturning the soil of fields on which plough cannot easily move, and to culture that part of the field inaccessible to the plough. It is a multi-purpose implement used for many agricultural operations, such as forming ridges, *bunds*, water courses and channels, preparing small seed beds and removing stumps of crops, digging out root crops etc. Sickles with which paddy is reaped, have also to be purchased. In *ahu* cultivation, a large wooden rake (*bedha*) with teeth nearly 0.3 metre in length is dragged over the crop by a bullock when the plants are about 15 cms. high. The *hachini* a kind of trowel with a long handle, is used for weeding *Ahu* paddy. A large wooden mortar (*ural*) and pastle (*gain*) are generally used to husk the paddy.

The bullock cart is 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.

In some areas, tractors have been used to reclaim waste lands. However, this does not find favour with the ordinary cultivator for several reasons such as heavy capital investment, paucity of large blocks of land etc. Among the improved agricultural implements used in the district the following are important

ones — (1) iron plough, (2) improved harrows and cultivators, (3) improved seed drills, (4) improved threshers, (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.

During the Livestock Census of 1956, agricultural implements were also censused and it was found that agricultural machineries and implements in Goalpara district in that year were as follows.[9]

Items		Number of each item
1. Plough ..	(a) Wooden ..	1,36,577
	(b) Iron ..	1,127
2. Carts ..	..	18,301
3. Sugarcane Crushers ..	(a) worked by power ..	130
..	(b) worked by bullocks. ..	197
4. Oil engines with pumps for irrigation purposes. ..	..	43
5. Electric pumps for irrigation purpose. ..	..	3
6. Tractors ..	(a) Government ..	N.A.
	(b) Private ..	11

In order to supply all pre-requisites of agricultural implements at reasonable rates, the Assam Agro-Industries Development Corporation Ltd., was incorporated on 27th January, 1967, with an authorised share capital of Rs. 2. crores. Its paid-up share capital of Rs. 2 crores is equally shared by the Central Government and the Government of Assam. The main object of the Corporation is to assist progressive farmers in modernizing their cultivation and to organize an efficient distribution of all agricultural inputs like farm machinery and implements, pesticides, plant protection equipments, fertilizers and agro-chemicals etc. and to set up workshops for manufacturing farms, machinery and equipments and to run service shops for repairing implements. It also aims at setting up agro-based and ancillary industries. It procures agricultural inputs from the manufacturers or their accredited agents by inviting tenders or quotations from time to time and sells them to the cultivators on cash payment or on hirepurchase system after charging a nominal commission.

In Goalpara district, the Corporation is headed by the Branch Manager with headquarters at Dhuburi. He is assisted by two Assistant Branch Managers.

9. *Statistical Abstract of Assam*, 1960-61, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong, 1962. p. 86.

posted at Kokrajhar and Goalpara. The Corporation has established three custom service centres at Bilasipara, Bongaigaon and Goalpara at a cost of Rs. 2.5 lakhs each for letting out tractors, power-tillers, pumps etc. These centres also provide repairing services to the needy cultivators. The Corporation has also set up a Central Workshop at Khanapara, Gauhati (in Kamrup district) where repairing of agricultural machineries and training of technical personnel are taken up. The following statement shows direct sale and sale on hire-purchase of agricultural machineries achieved by the Corporation in Goalpara district.[10]

Year	Direct sale			Sale on hire-purchase system		
	Tractor	Power Tiller	Pump	Tractor	Power Tiller	Pump
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1968-69 ..	..	..	24	..	..	30
1969-70 ..	2	5	5	..	..	12
1970-71 ..	..	..	5	..	1	3
1971-72 ..	..	..	4	..	..	3
1972-73 ..	..	..	2	..	..	3
1973-74 ..	..	..	2	..	..	17
1974-75 ..	..	..	2	..	..	..

The former Agricultural Engineering Section of the Department of Agriculture along with the former Irrigation Wing of the since defunct Flood Control and Irrigation Department have been combined to form a new Irrigation Department. Besides execution of Irrigation Projects, this Department also hires out departmental tractors and power-pumps to cultivators through the Sub-Divisional Agricultural Engineers posted at Goalpara and Kokrajhar. There are Regional Workshops of the Department at Gauhati, Jorhat, and Silchar for undertaking repairs of all types of agricultural machinery. Besides, there are four Branch workshops in the State including one at Goalpara for undertaking simple repairs and two minor repair centres at Gauripur and Kokrajhar in Goalpara district. The following table shows the present strength of departmental tractors, power-pumps etc., in Goalpara district.[11]

10. Assam Agro-Industries Development Corporation Limited, Goalpara.
11. *Agricultural Guide Book*, 1975-76, Department of Agriculture, Govt. of Assam, Gauhati, 1976, pp. 165-66.

Officer	Headquarter	Tractors		Power Pumps	
		Bulldozer	Tractor.	Diesel	Electric.
1	2	3	4	5	6
1. S.D.O. Irrigation Deptt.	Goalpara	1	12	15	x
2. -do-	Kokrajhar	x	6	19	x
	Total	1	18	34	x

Agricultural diseases and pests : Sometimes, especially when blights occur, worms and insects destroy the young plants and seedlings causing substantial damage to the crops. Hunter mentioned that in 1863, swarms of locusts infested the district but fortunately their ravages were not substantial.[12] The most destructive insect which sometimes causes serious damage is the *gandhi* (*Loptocorisa acuta*). This small bug harms rice plants by feeding on their stems and sucking all the sap from young grains. High wind and rain causes it to retreat to the jungles. During July and August, particularly when there is a spell of hot dry weather, an attack by *gandhi* is most likely. Lighting fires of vegetable refuse towards the wind gives good results. A better method is to collect the insects by smearing a winnowing fan with some glutinous substance and brushing it over the ears of the grain, when many of the bugs would be found adhering to the fan. Use of light traps to protect the crops from adult insects was not uncommon. Occasionally, the barks of some trees and herbs were scattered in the field. The pungent smell of these barks repelled insects. The outer skins of various fruits such as *citrus grandis* were scattered over the pest-infested areas and allowed to rot. The offensive smell emitted kept away insects. Sometimes, dry shoots of bamboo trees and dry twigs of jungle plants were kept standing on the fields at short distances so that carnivorous birds may perch on these and eat the destructive insects. Sometimes, ashes were scattered over plants to prevent insects from harming winter crops. Crop failure was also attributed sometimes to the ominous glances of some persons. Old images mostly made of straw decorated with torn cloths and painted with lime were kept in the fields as an antidote to the ominous looks. Some of these traditional methods are still in vogue. Mention may be made of a worm called *utroonga* which also damages young plants. It may also be mentioned here that some animals like pigs, elephants, and monkeys damage crops in areas south of the Brahmaputra and field rats and birds, especially one called *Raim* also cause injury to crops.

12. W.W. Hunter : *A Statistical Account of Assam*, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1975 (Reprint). pp. 70-71.

Storage diseases and insect pests of paddy, potatoes, and pulses are equally menacing and rough estimates show that they destroy 10 to 25 per cent of these products in storage. The diseases and insect pests which cause damage during 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 storage houses and godowns, and treating the grains and seeds to be stored with chemicals like carbon terachloride, ethylene dichloride, hydrocyanic acid gas etc.

Caterpillars are serious pests of paddy noticed in the district. Stem borer is also equally harmful to the crop. These pests generally appear in localised areas. Unless immediately controlled, these may cause extensive damage to crops. Spraying Endrin 20 EC or Diazinon at the rate of 10 c.c. in 4.5 litres of water at the rate of 40 to 50 gallons per acre three times can prevent the swarming caterpillar, rice-bug, stem borer and rice hispa from damaging the crop. Spraying of Bordeaux Mixture or any copper fungicide is a good control measure against early and late blight that effect potatoes. Common agricultural diseases prevalent in the district and recommended scientific measures prescribed for their control are given in the appendix.

Activities of Agriculture Department and other agencies to secure the use of scientific methods of cultivation : "Agriculture cannot wait" has been the motto of the Agriculture Department during the plan periods. In the First Five Year Plan emphasis was given on those schemes which had limited objective of increasing food production only. The approach of the Department during the Second Five Year Plan was to attain a balanced development of food and cash crops. Priority was given to the multiplication and distribution of improved seeds, distribution of fertilizers, creation of irrigation facilities etc. During the Third Five Year Plan, attempts were made to put the agriculture of the district on a better scientific plan. The objectives of the Fourth Five Year Plan were to increase production of foodgrains at an average annual rate of 5 per cent in the State, to arrest the decline in production of jute by increasing the average yield rather than the area and to increase the production of wheat, oilseeds, pulses, fruits, and other plantation crops. In the Fifth Five Year Plan the scope for extension of the cultivable area being limited, emphasis has been on intensive cultivation. This is sought to be achieved through double-cropping by popularising *rabi* crops, improved agronomic practices, selective mechanisation, and by vigorous promotional and extension work for the spread of improved practices.

With these objectives in view, the Govt. has set upon itself the task of building up an infrastructure, capable of ushering in the green revolution in the State including the district of Goalpara. A brief analysis will reveal

the measure of success achieved by the Agriculture Department and allied agencies in bringing out an era of prosperity and self-sufficiency.

Irrigation : We have already described the important irrigation schemes implemented by the Irrigation Department in the district. Emphasis has been laid on providing perennial source of irrigation by constructing permanent types of head-works, and canals. The following table shows the progress made in irrigation in the district during the Plan periods.

Sl. No.	Plan period	Number of Schemes		Gross commandated hectares (Approximately)	Actual net area in hectares upto 1973-74	Estimated costs in Lakhs (Rupees)
		Minor	Medium			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Pre-Plan ..	2	..	1,600	120	5.47
2.	First plan ..	4	..	6,960	3,900	15.62
3.	Second plan ..	3	..	4,280	1,724	11.69
4.	Third Plan ..	5	..	5,920	796	27.05
5.	Ad-hoc plan ..	3	..	5,244	1,175	33.38
6.	Fourth plan ..	5	1	8,548	2,080	74.99

Further, the Irrigation Department and the Assam Agro—Industries Development Corporation are promoting irrigation measures by providing power pumps etc., to the cultivators as mentioned earlier. Rural electrification will also go a long way in energizing wells and tube-wells for irrigation purposes.

Soil testing services have been made available to the farmers for quick soil tests in order to recommend fertilizers on crop-wise basis. At present there are three Soil Testing Laboratories in Assam, one each at Silchar, Jorhat, and Gauhati. The annual capacity of testing is 430,000 samples in each laboratory.

Distribution of improved agricultural implements : The role played by the Agriculture Department and the Assam Agro-Industries Development Corporation in providing agricultural implements and machineries to needy farmers have been described already.

13. B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetteer, Cachar, Vol. III.* Calcutta, 1905. p. 76.

Distribution of Fertilisers : The farmers of Goalpara "are more careful and scientific cultivators than the inhabitants of Upper Assam."[13] Manure is used for mustard and jute and especially in the south western part of the district, cattle are kept in the fields so that these may be enriched by their droppings. It is, therefore, not surprising that farmers of the district are getting increasingly used to fertilisers since the launching of the First Plan. The Agricultural Department and the Assam Agro-Industries Development Corporation are the main agencies for supplying fertilisers.

The following statement shows the supply of fertilisers by the Assam Agro-Industries Development Corporation.

(In Metric Tonnes)

Years	Fertilizer (in tonnes)	Pesticides (in tonnes)	Small implements (value in Rs.)
1968-69	2,63,180.16	68,030.00	10,681.20
1969-70	1,72,808.48	78,117.63	7,213.26
1970-71	3,41,092.82	78,169.10	27,362.49
1971-72	3,86,613.29	59,701.01	18,336.61
1972-73	2,26,642.92	31,792.22	15,974.00
1973-74	2,82,317.38	18,460.77	66.50
1974-75	4,02,362.80	92,964.94	11,099.00

The amount of fertiliser used is stated to have gone up in recent years. However, the high cost of fertilisers, lack of its storage facilities, and distribution in the interior areas are some of the difficulties still to be overcome.

The Agriculture Department also aims at popularising local manurial resources like composts, green manures, and cowdungs and ensures supply of phosphatic and mixed fertilisers to the cultivators. The following statement shows the consumption of fertilizers in Goalpara district during the years 1967-68 and 1968-69.[14]

14. *Agricultural Gnide Book*, 1971-72, Department of Agriculture,. Govt. of Assam, Gauhati, 1973, p. 107.

(In tonnes)

	Ammonium sulphate	Urea	Superphosphate	Muriate of Potash	Bonemeal
1967-68	1,219	39	851	570	N.A.
1968-69	2,144	195	1,789	11	660

The cultivators usually preserve a portion of their previous years' best crop for seeds.

Distribution of Improved Seeds : The Assam Seeds Corporation Limited was registered in 1966-67 with authorised share capital of Rupees one crore. Its object is to ensure the supply of quality seeds to growers. Besides, seeds procured from reliable private sources, the Corporation has its own seed Farms and fruit nurseries which formerly belonged to the Agriculture Department but were transferred to the Corporation on 1st April 1967. The eight Seed Farms now functioning in the district are shown in page 145.

The Corporation has three horticultural nurseries in the district, one at Dudhnai in Goalpara Sub-division, and two in Kokrajhar Sub-division located at Kasikatra (about 18 hectares) and at Kokrajhar (about 1.2 hectares).

Among paddy seeds introduced in the district, *Monohar Sali, Prosadbhog, Dumai, Ratna, Pusa* 2.12, *Daria* etc. are becoming popular. Among other improved seeds mention may be made of *I.R.* 8, *Jaya, Koimurali* etc. These improved seeds supplement the seeds preserved by the farmers from the previous years' best crops. The table in page 146 shows the various types of improved seeds supplied to the cultivators by the Corporation through the Agriculture Department.

The seeds mentioned in the table except wheat and potato, were produced in the farms of the Corporation. Wheat was procured from the National Seeds Corporation and the Tarai Development Corporation, and Potatoes from reliable registered suppliers within the State and outside.

Field Management Committee : In order to enthuse each and every cultivator to develop along progressive and scientific lines, Field Management Committees have been formed all over the State since 1959-60. These Committees are formed from among the actual tillers. All activities of the Agriculture Depart-

Table—A

Statement Showing the Area, Location and Production of Seeds Farms of Goalpara District During the Year 1973-74.

Name of the Farm.	Location. (Sub-div.)	Area in (Hect.)	Various types of Seeds produced in quintal.					Average yield in quintal.			
			HYV paddy	Local Ahu	Sali	Mustard	Wheat	Jute	Paddy	Mustard	Wheat	Jute
Krishnai ..	Goalpara	58.8	47.00	31.05	137·00	1.48	..	7.95	5.54	1.48	0.80	..
Golakganj ..	Dhuburi	40	19.21	2.85	112.70	10.50	10.12	..	5.39	3.50	..	2.53
Boitamari ..	Goalpara	11.2	12.40	7.70	11.20	..	..	..	3.13	..	..	..
Balagaon ..	Kokrajhar.	10.8	44.20	15.65	53.20	..	..	4.70	4.56	..	2.35	..
Dangarkuti ..	-do-	10.8	..	11.00	12.00	..	..	..	4.60	..	..	..
Kasikatra ..	-do-	15.2	11.40	28.77	64.70	6.00	..	..	4.00	2.00	..	..
Balamguri ..	-do-	8	18.40	27.00	21.45	2.35	..	9.80	4.03	0.80	2.20	..

N.B. : The following Seed Farms were abolished temporarily but Srijangram was again taken over in 1975, for production purpose.

1. Khamarguri.
2. Balijana..
3. Srijangram.
4. Dudhnai.
5. Raniganj.

ment are channelised through these Committees. The members of these Committees receive training in Development Blocks where they attend seminars on various aspects of agriculture.

Pilot Project for Development of Small Farmers, Marginal Farmers and Agricultural labourers : Under the project, special attention is paid to the problems of under-privileged farmers viz., small farmers and marginal farmers and of agricultural labourers who have so far been unable to take advantage of green revolution. After identifying areas where people of such categories are concentrated, their problems are tackled in a concerted way by evolving proper strategies for their all round development. It is hoped that ultimately these areas would serve as pace-setters of development for other areas. Among 4 projects undertaken in the State one is at Goalpara. At the district level, the Deputy Commissioner, Dhuburi, is the Chairman of the District Agency and the State Level Co-ordination Committee has the Agricultural Production Commissioner as its Chairman.

The individual income of small farmers is sought to be augmented by assisting them in multiple cropping and supplementing their income by live-stock project. Specialised farming like vegetable, quick growing fruits and high value crops are sought to be introduced to the marginal farmers whose income will also be supplemented by live-stock project. Agricultural labours will be dealt in the same manner as marginal farmers but in addition they will be provided with off-season employment through rural work programme. Credit in all cases will be routed through Co-operative and Commercial Banks. The project has been introduced on a phased basis in 5 Blocks of the district The main programmes to be taken up in the project area will comprise irrigation, custom service, storage, supply of inputs, livestock project, credit, strengthening of credit institutions, risk subsidy, marketing, consolidation of holdings, assistance to rural artisans and rural workers.

Farming Corporations : During 1973-74, a zonal scheme for setting up Agricultural Farming Corporation in each Sub-division of the State was introduced by the State Govt. Its main objective was to ensure management of land and its proper use by the tillers of the soil by setting actual landless agricultural farmers in Government land and in surplus land available as a result of enforcement of the Land Ceiling Act. Upto 1974-75, nine Agricultural Farming Corporations were registered in the State of which two were in the district of Goalpara at Sidhabari Bakaitari in Goalpara Sub-division and Silpota in Kokrajhar Sub-division with total approximate areas of 411 hectares and 149 hectares respectively. The anticipated membership will be about 300 and 133 respectively. The State Government will have 5 per cent share of the Corporation and 49

formed 1

Table—B

igures for types of seeds supplied to cultivators by the Assam Seeds Corporation Limited through the Agriculture Department for the years 1973-74 to 1975-76 (in quintals).

Years	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76
I.R.8 ..	171.00	107.40	118.00
Joya ..	195.00	201.00	85.00
Pusha 2.12. ..	10.50	56.00	223.00
Ratna ..	..	7.00	20.00
M. Sali ..	245.00	257.52	70.00
P. Bhog. ..	10.00	..	..
Dumai ..	..	..	..
Other seeds ..	20.00	8.00	..
Koimurali ..	..	..	10.00
Rangadoria ..	10.00	2.80	8.10
Wheat (c) ..	319.00	1,065.00	1,944.00
Wheat (G.I.) ..	1,855.00	10,566.92	..
Peas. ..	..	411.45	..
Lentil ..	0.60	362.40	..
Mustard ..	5.50	152.90	..
Potato (upto-date) ..	289.07	..	196.00
Potato ..	..	..	2.50

Quantity of Jute (F) seeds to be available with A.S.C. Ltd. for multiplication in the Farms.

Years	1973-74	1974-75
Jute		
JRC 221 ..	41.00	20.00 ..
JRC 321 ..	10.00	5.43 ..
JRC 632 ..	17.35	31.00 ..
Jute (F)		
JRC 212 ..	6.75 qtls.	..
JRC 321 ..	2.00 ,,	.. ..
JRC 7447 ..	1.10 ,,	.. ..
D- 154 ..	0.10 ,,	.. ..
JRC 632 ..	1.00 ,,	..
JRO 7835 ..	1.00 ,,	.. ..
	11.95 qtls.	

per cent share will be contributed by the members. Farmers will not get any *patta* for the land allotted to them for cultivation but they will be provided with all the agricultural inputs by the Corporation.

Cash Crops : In addition to the soil conservation schemes already described earlier, the Soil Conservation Department has also undertaken the Cash Crop Plantation Scheme and three Plantation Centres have been established on experimental basis at Gossainpara, Chapar Salkocha and Shimbargaon in the district. Achievement made so far in the district is as follows :—

Name of the Crop.	Name of the Centre	Area	Year of creation.
1	2	3	4
Coffee Plantation ..	1. Shimbargaon ..	1 hectare	1971-72
	2. Gossainpara ..	3 ,,	1973-74
Rubber plantation ..	1. Gossainpara ..	4 ,,	1973-74
	2. Salkocha ..	4 ,,	1973-74

Efforts are being made by the Agriculture Department to bring all the Development Blocks under the Intensive Agricultural Area Programme. Presently, there are 10 I.A.A. Package Blocks in the district at Lakhipur, Balijana, Shrijangram, and Dudhnai in Goalpara Sub-division ; Chapar, Bilasipara, and South-Salmara in Dhuburi Sub-division and Kokrajhar, Dotma and Sidli in Kokrajhar Sub-division. Development of cash crops is also receiving equal attention and for this purpose there are three I.A.A. jute package Blocks in the district.

Agriculture Extension Officers and Gram Sevaks are engaged in giving proper guidance to the farmers in respect of improved methods of cultivation and control and eradication of agricultural pests and diseases. Demonstrations by the trained officers on various aspects of agriculture have encouraged the farmers in adopting such technique.

Before concluding the activities of the Agriculture Department and other allied agencies, mention may be made of the Agriculture University that has been set up at Jorhat. Assam has entered a new era of agricultural education with the coming up of this University. More emphasis has been laid on agricultural research than even before. Although the University is not within the district, yet it has derived immense benefits from it.

(d) *ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND FISHERIES* :

Livestock : The livestock population of the district increased considerably during the period 1945-1966. Whereas in 1945 the livestock population of Goalpara district was 8,06,207, it rose to 14,15,249 in 1966 showing an increase of about 75 per cent. Cattle constituted about 73% of the livestock population in 1966. Of the cattle population of 10,38,335 ; 4,16,605 were males, 3,24,630 were females and 2,97,100 were young stock below three years. Of the females only 1,44,932 yielded milk on 15th April' 66. The cattle of the district are of non-descript breed and have been called "miserable little creatures" in the former Gazetteer of the district. The buffaloes on the contrary are "fine upstanding animals" which in common parlance are classified as either *Kachhar* or *Bangar*. Of 85,630 buffaloes in the district, 40,399 were males and 29,402 were females and 15,829 young stock in 1966. Only 8,742 were milch animals on 15th April' 66. The *Kachhar* yields more milk and is consequently costlier. In the Eastern Duars, Nepalese cattle are occasionally found and are of fine breed being as large as buffaloes. The average milk yield per cow and buffalo has been estimated at only 250 litres and 450 litres respectively per lactation. The total yield of milk does not even meet one tenth of the minimum requirement of 16 ounces per head per day for a balanced diet.

Goats numbered 2,24,736 in 1966 and came next to cattle. They also do not belong to any particular breed and yield little milk. Other livestock of the district in 1966 were 45,866 pigs, 15,060 sheep, 370 donkeys, and 140 mules.

Poultry : Poultry of the district was censused at 10,16,000 in 1951 and increased to 14,88,733 in 1966 of which 12,11,543 were fowls, 2,52,021 were ducks and 25,169 others. Rearing of hens and ducks for the table and eggs is becoming more popular. Prejudice against rearing of hens amongst Hindus is gradually dying out. Table-I shows the livestock population of the district during 1945-72 and Table-II which are based on the Livestock Census of 1945, 1951, 1956, 1961, 1966 and 1972.

(ii) **Area under Fodder crops** : People generally graze their animals on the rice fields after crops have been harvested, and in swamps and marshes. 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. The herds are carefully watched and grazed on fallow lands when the cultivable fields are covered with paddy. The stray cattle which cause damage to standing crops are lodged in the public cattle pounds by the aggrieved party and the owners of those cattle are obliged to pay certain amount as fine to secure the release of confined cattle. In the night when cattle are kept in sheds they are fed on paddy straw stocked in the courtyard.

Table No.—1

Statement Showing the variation in the number of Main Livestock during 1945-1961 in the District of Goalpara.

Sl. No.	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 1966 over 1951	Population in 1972	Percentage variation in 1972
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.	Cattle ..	658,062	761,000	+15.64	656,358	—13.75	1,023,132	+ 55.87	34.44	935,279	—42.00
2.	Buffalo ..	66,035	71,000	+ 7.52	88,897	+25.21	100,823	+13.41	+42.00	69,904	—31.12
3.	Sheep ..	4,653	7,100	+52.59	8,642	+21.72	8,874	+ 2.68	+ 24.94	15,139	+70.6
4.	Goat ..	75,572	143,000	+89.22	79,283	—44.56	308,453	+289.05	+115.70	180.782	—58.61
5.	Horses and Ponies	1,885	1,905	+1.10	2,330	+22.31	1,621	—30.43	— 14.91	972	40.05
6.	Poultry ..		1,016,000	..	7,88,041	—22.44	1,134,286	+43.93	+11.64	1,244,862	—21.5

N.B. : Poultry Census was taken for the first time in 1951, and therefore figures are not available for 1945 Census.
(+) Sign for increase.
(—) Sign for decrease.
Source : *Directorate of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department.*

Table-II

Statement showing the number of Livestock and Poultry in the District of Goalpara as per 1966 and 1972 Census.

Year		Cattle				Buffaloes				Horses and Ponies.			
		Male	Female	Young stock (below 3 yrs)	Total	Male	Female	Young stock (below 3 yrs)	Total	Male	Female	Young stock (below 3 yrs)	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1966	Rural	4,15,337	3,20,187	2,93,455	10,29,179	40,307	29,365	15,796	85,468	1,058	1,018	2,511	4,583
	Urban	1,068	4,443	3,645	9,156	92	37	33	162	13	9	3	25
	Total	4,16,605	3,24,630	2,97,100	10,38,335	40399	29,402	15,829	85,630	1,071	1,027	2,514	4,608
1972	Rural	3,82,558	2,84,811	2,54,066	9,21,435	38,651	19,305	11,496	69,652	356	309	310	965
	Urban	1,168	6,612	6,064	13,844	109	74	69	252	4	..	3	7

Year		Goat	Sheep	Mules	Donkeys	Pigs	Total Livestock	Poultry			
								Fouls	Ducks	Others	Total
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
1966	Rural ..	2,22,949	14,953	140	869	45,636	14,03,781	12,03,516	2,50,655	25,084	14,79,255
	Urban..	1,787	107	nil.	1	230	11,468	8,027	1,366	85	9,478
Total		2,24,736	15,060	140	870	45,866	14,15,249	12,11,543	2,52,021	25,169	14,88,733
1972	Rural ..	1,77,876	14,830	N.A.	N.A.	45,611		9,34,053	2,28,672	59,189	12,21,916
	Urban..	2,906	304	N.A.	N.A.	926		16,772	5,071	1,103	22,946

Besides, there are village grazing reserves where the villagers can graze their animals. In the district of Goalpara, grazing reserves cover an approximate area of 1,215 hectares. Following is the list of village grazing reserves in the district of Goalpara.

List of Grazing Reserves

Approximate area in hectares.

1. Dhuburi Sub-Division — Nil.
2. **Kokrajhar Sub-divisions.**

(i)	Gaurangfari	V.G.R.	81
(ii)	Dangagaon (Sidli Circle)		91
(iii)	Bijni circle Phul kumari	V.G.R.	78
(iv)	Nosarpat		77
(v)	Bhulkipar		90
(vi)	Daranga No. 2	V.G.R.	155
(vii)	No. 1 geranari		106
(ix)	Moktaigaon No. 2 .. .. .. (Gossaigaon Circle)	V.G.R.	84

Goalpara Sub-division :

(1)	Kalapani (Lakhipur circle)	V.G.R.	107
(2)	Mumaspara (Srijangram circle)	V.G.R.	94
(3)	Lalmati (Matia circle)	V.G.R.	81
(4)	Baladmari Part I	V.G.R.	77
(5)	Gosaibari	V.G.R.	94
			1,215 hectares.

For all round development of livestock, emphasis has been given on the cultivation of fodder crops to provide them with nutritious diet. The Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary has established demonstration farms for fodder cultivation attached to each veterinary dispensary in the district. Roots and seeds of improved grasses are freely distributed to the farmers from these farms. Till now about 13 hectares of land have been brought under fodder crops like Napier, Guinea grass. e c.

(iii) **Measures to improve quality of breeds and to secure greater output :** The first Live-Stock Census in Assam was done in 1945, the second being in 1951. Accor ding to the Livestock Census of 1966 there were only 10798 male cattle and 114 he-buffaloes which were used for breeding. In order to improve the breed of the indigenous cattle various measures have been adopted by the

Veterinary Department. It procured and distributed Hariyana bulls and R.I.R. bulls in the Panchayats on loan basis. The Department also distributed on return basis 6,20 and 20 heifers in 1970-71, 1971-72, and 1972-73 respectively. Key Village Centres, Artificial Insemination Centres and Sub-centres and Semen Collection Centres have been opened in several parts of the district to improve the quality of breed. Presently, there are five Key Village Centres and under them seven Artificial Insemination Centres are working in the district. There are also 25 First Aid Centres in the district, and attempts are being made to increase their number. To ensure greater output through better breeding, the breeders as well as farmers are encouraged through exhibitions, meetings, and demonstrations, to adopt scientific breeding, feeding, and management practices.

One sheep and goat breeding farm was established in 1964 at Panbari about 20 kms from Dhuburi. It covers an area of about 60 hectares. Improved breeds of goat like Beetal and Bar-Basi and Nellore and Bhutani sheep are maintained in the farm. The object of the farm is to produce and supply improved breeds of goat and sheep to the development blocks. The achievement of the farm in recent years is shown below.

Year	Units distributed
1970-71 ..	4 (1 : 2)
1971-72 ..	5 (1 : 2)
	18 Bucks
1972-73 ..	57 Bucks
1973-74 ..	13 (1 : 2)
	19 Bucks.

There is a poultry farm at Goalpara town established during 1965-66 Production of improved varieties of birds and their supply to rearers for cross-breeding are its twin objectives. Birds distributed during the period 1970-71 amounted to 1,100 and 351 birds were distributed during 1972-73. To popularize poultry farming A.N.P. Blocks have been established at Golokganj, Kokrajhar, Baitamari, Dudhnai and Chapar, each of which have 80 poultry units consisting of 20 birds each and ten village poultry units with one hundred birds each. Under the Crash Programme initiated in 1972-73 with headquarters at Kokrajhar, loans are given to interested breeders for improvement of poultry. Although there is no large pig farm in the district, small individual pig farms have derived benefits from bank loans arranged by the Small Farmers Development Agency.

In view of the fact that various species of livestock are of poor stock, the task of bringing about the improvement of breed appears to be stupendous. In the Fourth Five Year Plan, emphasis is laid on the expansion of the existing livestock farm, key-village scheme and distribution of improved breedings' stock on a larger scale.

(iv) **Animal Diseases and Veterinary Hospitals** : The cattle diseases common in the district are anthrax, haemorrhagic - septicaemia, black quarter, foot and mouth diseases, rinderpest, and parasitic diseases. Contagious and infectious diseases are also prevalent in the district. To protect animals from contagious diseases preventive measures are taken by the Department. Other common diseases, are treated in the hospitals and dispensaries and in rural First Aid Centres. Cases are also treated by the field staff of the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department in course of their local tours. In 1972-73, there were three Veterinary hospitals located at Dhuburi, Goalpara and Kokrajhar and 39 dispensaries in the district, of which 13 were in Dhuburi Sub-division, 9 in Kokrajhar and 17 in Goalpara Sub-division in addition to the 25 First Aid Centres already alluded to. There is also a District Diagnostic Laboratory established in 1972-73. The following statement shows the number of cases treated, animals castrated and animals and birds vaccinated during 1971-75 in the district.

Statement showing Nos. of animals treated, Animals Castrated, Vaccinated etc., in the district of Goalpara.

Year		Cases treated.	Animals castrated.	Animals and birds vaccinated.	Total
1		2	3	4	5
1951-52	..	13,850	2,990	8,500	25,340
1954-55	..	16,790	3,962	14,345	35,097
1960-61	..	24,380	3,995	18,590	46,965
1964-65	..	26,608	3,897	50,750	81,255
1969-70	..	38,475	3,798	80,972	1,23,245
1970-71	..	41,590	4,125	89,750	1,35,465
1971-72	..	43,387	3,998	95,325	1,42,710
1972-73	..	44,598	4,070	1,03,251	1,51,919
1973-74	..	44,695	4,089	1,16,963	1,65,747
1974-75	..	44,784	4,102	1,21,147	1,70,033

(v) **Fisheries** : Although in the past, fishing for commercial purposes was confined to only certain sections of the people, no social stigma is now attached to such activity. Pisciculture is becoming popular among all sections of the people irrespective of caste or creed. As in the past, the bulk of the fish sold at present in the markets of the district, comes from the larger fisheries. The right to fishing in such fisheries is put up to auction by the Government and is settled with the highest bidder for a period of three years. The auction sale of lucrative fisheries is often keenly contested. Only fresh fish is sold in the markets of the district. Fish is often salted or dried, but is not generally exported in this state. Use of ice for preserving fish is not popular although this process is practicised in case of exports to Koch Bihar and other places. The varieties most esteemed for the table are the *hilsa*, the *rou*, the *chital*, the *bacha*, the *magur*, the *ari*, the *sol*, the *katla* and the *ghariya*.

The development of fisheries in the district was undertaken only after Independence to meet the increasing demand for fish. Initially the Fishery Officer, Dhuburi, headed the district organization. The main objective of the Fishery Department is to increase fish production by demonstrating scientific methods of pisciculture with a view to popularising them. The activities of the department having increased, its staff position in the district was augmented and at present the Superintendent of Fisheries heads an expanded district organization. He is assisted by one Fishery Officer in each Sub-division and among others by Fishery Demonstrators who guide pisciculturists in rural areas.

Among the major schemes undertaken by the Department in the district so far, mention may be made of such schemes as Seed Collection and Distribution, Survey of Natural Fisheries and Reclamation thereof, Renovation of Old and Ancient Tanks, Fish Farming, and Loan and Subsidy, all of which are designed to increase production of fish in the district. During the entire Second Five Year Plan period, the Department collected only 2,61,318 fish seeds of which a major portion was purchased from Calcutta. Of these 11,948 were sold to private parties and the remaining were stocked. By 1966-67, the local collection of seeds increased to such an extent that their import from Calcutta was stopped. As many as 4,48,92,640 eggs and spawns were collected of which 309,23,327 survived and 9,23,327 were stocked in departmental tanks ; 140,00,000 were supplied to Blocks and 160,00,000 were sold to private parties. Dhuburi and Jogighopa are the natural collection centres of Indian major carps. Padumpukhuri tank with an area of about 13 hectares has been renovated for the development of pisciculture. Fishery projects have also been taken up in all the Development Blocks of the district. The district offers enough potentialities for the development of fisheries.

Department of Fisheries has so far established 4 Fish Seed Farms in the district. These are Boalia Seed Farm covering 2.1 hectares at Agomani in Dhuburi Subdivision, Municipal Board Tank

at Kokrajhar covering 0.6 hectares in Kokrajhar Sub-division, and Matilang and Khamarguri in Goalpara Sub-division. Financial subsidies for the development of pisciculture were given to fishing co-operative societies. Such subsidies amounting to Rs. 30,260/- were given to 13 Co-operative Societies in 1972-73 ; Rs. 14,500/- to 9 Co-operative Societies in 1973-74 and Rs. 20,000/- to 12 Co-operative Societies in 1974-75. Financial assistance was also given to the private parties to the tune of Rs.11,750/-in 1972-73, Rs 5,560 in 1973-74 and about Rs. 6,000/- in 1974-75. Some of the important registered river and *bil* fisheries are listed in the Appendix.

Besides there are about 80 unregistered *bils* in Goalpara Sub-division, 74 in Dhuburi and 4 in Kokrajhar subdivision. Some of these *bils* are less than one hectare in extent while others are more than 25 hectares.

Fishing implements : Although various measures have been adopted to increase the fish-wealth of the district and the very outlook of society towards pisciculture has changed from disapprobation to keen enthusiasm, the methods for catching fish remains much the same as at the beginning of the present century. The implements used then are still in vogue and we therefore, reproduce the vivid description of such implements from the old Gazetteer of Goalpara.[15]

"The principal nets in use are (1) the *uthar*, a large net which is spread on the surface of the water from a boat. The sides are weighted and sink together, and any fish that were swimming in the area covered, are caught in the pockets round the weighted edges, (2) the *jata jal*, a triangular net the two sides of which are fastened to two bamboos joined at the apex. A little below their junction the bamboos are fastened to two stout posts on which they work on a pivot. The base of the net is allowed to sink into the water and pressure is then applied to the vertex which raises the net and its contents. (3) the *bihiri* and *langi* nets, which are hung from crossed bamboos and are lowered from above into the water. (4) the *tenapaji*, an ordinary drag net, (5) the *ber paji*, one end of which is fastened to a bamboo post in the water and the other end brought round in a circle, which is gradually contracted till all the fish within are caught ; and (6) the *langi* a net which has two of its corners tied a little above the water to two stout posts. The front of the net is then lowered into the fishery and drawn up again, much as a drawbridge is raised and lowered. The *polo* resembles a gigantic wine glass with a short stem made of wicker work. It is generally used by women who walk through shallow water and keep pressing the rim of the glass 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 *polo*. The *Jaka* is a species of wicker work shovel which like the *polo*, is generally used by women. They press the broad end of the shovel on the ground before them, and trample

15. B. C. Allen : *Assam District Gazetteers, Vol. III, Goalpara*, Calcutta, 1905, pp. 90-91.

up the mud so as to drive the small fry into it. Conical bamboo traps which are called *dingaru, thupa, sepa, gui, bhari, darki, khaidon* and *katia* are worked on the principle of the lobster pot, and are placed in small streams of running water near the rice fields."

(e) *FORESTRY* :

Forestry occupies a significant place in the economy of the district. A considerable section of the people of the district depends upon forests for fire-wood for domestic consumption and for timber and bamboo, *ikra*, thatch etc., for building purposes. Of the species of trees found in the forests, only about 35 to 40 are generally used for construction and industrial purposes in saw mills, plywood and match factories, furniture making business, railway sleeper and carriage construction, boat making, *Khoir* industry, manufacture of packing boxes and for telegraph, telephone and electric poles. The district has abundant raw materials for the paper pulp, rayon pulp, and paper board industries. About fifty species of bamboo are found in the district which can be used for various purposes. Recent establishment of the paper mill at Jogighopa in Goalpara Subdivision will go a long way in utilising the bamboo resources of the district. *Khoir* industry has also great potential. Timber of inferior species like *Bohera, Hatipoila*, and *Hirgori* are also being pressed into service due to growing demand for timber. *Simul* is very much in demand in match industries. Herbs notably *Rawalfia Serpetina* (*sarpa gandha*) have found markets outside the State. As the district has not much advanced in foerest-based industries, most of its products are exported. Boulders, gravels, and sands also fetch considerable revenue. Elephant catching is also another source of forest revenue. Royalty is imposed on each catch of elephants at the rate of Rs. 500/- per tusker, Rs. 250/- per femele, and Rs. 350/- per *makhana*. Monopoly fee is also levied on each captured elephant.

The following statement shows the outturn of timber and fuel during 1969-70 to 1972-73 in each Forest Division of Goalpara district.[16]

Outturn of Timber & Fuel Produce In Goalpara District

(in cubic metres)

Forest Division	1969-70		1970-71		1971-72		1972-73	
	Timber	Fuel	Timber	Fuel	Timber	Fuel	Timber	Fuel
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Goalpara ..	16,149	2,589	13,850	722	21,676	2,570	22,334	2,393
2. Dhuburi ..	16,932	29,918	23,742	4,220	21,423	4,190	16,849	912
3. Kachugaon ..	18,355	6,734	15,494	7,360	N.A.	N.A.	15,227	8,262
4. Haltugaon ..	34,998	16,001	11,0541	995	53,537	7,023	70,697	4,682

16. *Statistical Handbook*, 1973, Department of Economics & Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Gauhati, 1974, pp. 60-62.

There are forty eight Forest villages in the district according to 1971 Census, the majority of them being in Kokrajhar Civil Subdivision. The people of these villages depend entirely upon forests for their livelihood. Each adult forest villager is alloted about 10 *bighas* of *rupit* land for cultivation at a nominal rate of revenue by the Forest Department. They are also allowed to occupy upto five *bighas* of homestead land free from land revenue. In return for these concessional benefits, each adult forest villager renders five days free labour to the Forest Department per annum. But they are also bound to give 20 days paid labour to the department every year.

Measures to secure Scientific exploitation and development etc. :

According to the Assam Forest Regulation Act, 1891, free access to forest produce and destruction of forests are prohibited. The Forest Department sells the forest produce like wood, gravels and sands, cane and thatch *mahals*, etc., only on tenders annually from registered contractors and the revenue so derived goes to the Government. Thus, the contractors cannot exploit the forest produce in any manner they like and they have to follow the terms and conditions as prescribed by the department. The department also grants permits to individuals and institutions to extract timber and collect sand, gravel, cane, thatch, *ikra*, etc. from the reserved forests on payment of royalty. The department maintains a regular forest staff to check unauthorised exploitation of forest produce.

During the first and second Five Year Plan periods, the Department adopted the following measures for the development of forests ; (a) afforestation, improvement and extension of forestry, (b) development of communications in the forest areas, (c) development of forest industries and (d) survey and demarcation. Further, for exploitation and development of forests on scientific lines, the forest personnel need proper education and training such as those imparted at Forest School, Jalukbari, and Research Institutes at Dehradun and Coimbatore.

(f) *FAMINES AND FLOODS* :

Since British days, the district of Goalpara has not experienced famine although conditions of scarcity are not unknown. The famine of 1866-67 did not affect the district though there was an alarming rise in prices of food stuff.[17] In recent years scarce conditions were noticed in some parts of the district during 1974-75.

As in other plains district of Assam, floods are almost an annual feature in Goalpara district. The principal cause of floods is the rising of the Brahmaputra assisted by contributions of its tributaries like the Manas, Ai, Champamati, Saralbhanga, Sankosh, and the Dudhnoi and heavy rainfall over low lying tracts. In fact the incidence of flood and erosion is rooted in the typical physiographical feature and meteorological conditions obtaining in this part of the country. The river Brahmaputra dissects the valley and receives water from the tributaries, many of which have considerable hill catchments. Meteorologically, the State experienced copious rainfall ranging from 190 cm. to 700 cm. annually ; more than 80 per cent of the precipitation being concentrated in four months from June to September. The heavy water and silt discharges occuring in the hilly region during the peak monsoon period find their way through numerous streams and rivulets resulting in excessive spilling on the banks of the rivers and their tributaries and consequent water logging in extensive areas in the plain region. Moreover, large-scale inundation of forests in the hill areas gives further momentum to the peak discharges and contributes towards aggravation of the flood situation.

17. W. W. Hunter : *A Statistical Account of Assam*, Vol. II. New Delhi, 1975 (Re-print), p. 71.

Floods in the district as in the rest of Assam have assumed increased dimension and greater intensity since 1950 when the great earthquake caused extensive land slides in the north-eastern mountains and thereby silted up river channels in the plains. Another significant factor for heavier loss caused by floods in recent years is the extension of habitation and cultivation to vulnerable low lying areas. The devastation caused in Goalpara district by the floods of 1954 in which thousands of villages were inundated, crop fields spoiled and low lying areas of towns submerged was beyond imagination. Again in 1962, vast areas of Mankachar, South Salmara, Bilasipara and parts of Dhuburi town were seriously affected by floods. In Dhuburi Subdivision alone, about 2048 sq. kms. inhabited by 60,000 families with a population of 3 lakhs in 700 villages were flood-affected. Five human lives were lost and 150 heads of cattle valued at Rs. 60,000 fell victim. About 2 thousand houses valued at Rs. 50,000 were reported to have been lost. Crop over about 3 lakh acres were affected and value of *ahu*, *bao*, *jute*, and *roa* seedlings lost amounted to several crores. Erosion of one hundred acres of land resulted in two thousand families of 30 villages being affected. The value of property lost due to erosion alone was Rs. 3 lakhs. Government sanctioned Rs. 3 lakhs as gratuitous relief and an additional amount of Rs. 3 lakhs was sanctioned for seed loans for Dhuburi Sub-division. During the same year, areas under Lakhipur and Goalpara Police Stations were mainly affected in Goalpara Sub-division. About 380 Sq. Kms. comprising 37,693 families with a population of 1,88,466 persons in 472 villages were affected. Five human lives were lost as also 19 heads of cattle, 1,138 houses were damaged or destroyed by floods and the value of the loss was estimated at Rs. 94 thousand. The

total crop area affected was 50,580 acres. The areas under different crops damaged and their values were, *ahu* 31,300 acres valued at Rs. 24,91,250 ; *bao* 6,000 acres valued Rs. 42,000 ; seedlings 200 acres valued Rs. 2,000 ; jute 13,080 acres valued Rs. 13,08,000. Besides 4,500 *bighas* of land in 44 villages were affected by erosion. The total families affected by erosion was 1,200 and value of properties damaged was about Rs. 3,17,000. For this Sub-division, Government sanctioned Rs. 10,000 as gratuitous relief and Rupees one lakh as seed loan. Kokrajhar Sub-division was the least affected by the floods of 1962. About 9 Sq. kms. inhabited by 1,400 families with 7,000 population were affected in Bijni and Basugaon areas. 2,223 acres of crop area were affected in this Sub-division and value of crops destroyed was about Rs. 79,000. Erosion affected 15 acres of land and 6 families. Damages due to erosion were about Rs. 2,400. Government sanctioned Rs. 1,000 as gratuitous relief, Rs. 25,000 as test relief and Rs. 25 thousand as seed loan in Kokrajhar Sub-division.

In 1974, Assam experienced a very devastating flood. Five successive waves of floods in a single year brought untold misery over an extensive area. Although flood affected all the plains districts of Assam, its impact was more severe in the districts of Goalpara and Kamrup. The total crop area affected by the flood in each of the Goalpara and Kamrup districts was of the order of a lakh hectares and the number of people affected was 9 lakhs and 7 lakhs respectively. The number of houses damaged was nearly 15 thousand in Goalpara district and 26 thousand in Kamrup district. A large number of erosion affected people in Dhuburi Sub-division had to be sheltered in relief camps at huge cost. The total area affected in Goalpara district was 5,000 Sq. kms. and one human life was lost. According to State Government estimates, an amount of Rs. 20,89 crores was required for relief measure and for repair and for restoration of damages caused by 1974 floods in the State. An amount of Rs. 2.86 crores was given in the shape of gratuitous relief, rehabilitation grant, seed grant, test relief etc. upto March 31, 1975.

Relief Operations : Prompt relief measures afforded by the Government now-a-days, mitigate the hardships of flood affected people. Such measures include evacuation of people and cattle to safer sites and providing for their food and shelter till flood subsides. At times, the flood level rises very rapidly and the swirling currents made it extremely risky to move from one place to another. Very often the villages appear to be isolated islands and can be reached only by boats. In some *char* areas the roofs of houses are swept away and only the tree tops remain visible above the water. Unless evacuation is done in a planned manner, the loss of human life under such circumstances may be very high. Apart from

evacuations of people and cattle, whenever necessary, the immediate relief is made available to the flood affected people in the gratuitous relief. Relief parties visit the villages and distribute foodgrains, 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 food-grains etc., meant for distribution.

Additional measures include, (1) rehabilitation of the erosion affected people, (2) execution of test relief schemes so that the people of the flood affected areas secure some amount of purchasing power, (3) opening of fair price shops to provide rice and wheat to the victims at Government subsidised rates, (4) inoculation of human beings as well as cattle to prevent outbreak of epidemic, (5) disinfecting the flood affected areas, (6) distribution of seeds or seedlings by the Agriculture Department to the farmers of the flood affected areas where crops have been damaged, (7) issue of agricultural loans and rehabilitation loans to the flood affected people, (8) issue of grants for repairing school buildings or other public buildings, roads, and bridges damaged by the flood, (9) remission of land revenue in the worst affected areas, (10) issue of educational loans or grants to help the students of the flood affected areas. These measures are, by nature, short term ones. Long term measures include permanent flood control measures, such as construction of dykes, dams, culverts, sluice gates etc. and regulating the river courses. Thus a concerted affort is made by the district and subdivisional authorities in conjunction with several departments to mitigate the miseries of the flood affected people. Most of the principal departments of the Government get involved in some way or the other, in combating floods and their after-math. At times Sub-divisional or District Flood Relief Committees are formed comprising both official and non-official members to devise means for providing adequate relief.

Flood warning system : In order to enable the district authorities to take timely steps a system has been evolved to transmit flood warning measages. So far as heavy floods of the Brahmaputra are concerned, the flood warning messages were relayed previously through the office of the Flood Control Department from Shigatse, Chusurh and Tsela Dzang stations in Tibet 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 Sub-divisional Officers of the Brahmaputra valley. On receipt of this flood warning the Deputy Commissioners and Sub-divisional Officers take precautionary measures to meet the situation.

APPENDIX. A.

Important crops pests and diseases and their control :

Crops	Pests and diseases	Control Measures
1	2	3
Rice ..	Brown Spot ..	Treat the seeds with Agrosan G. No @ 3gm. 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 the field to cake the sil and treat with any Copper Oxychloride Fungicide viz. Fytolan, Blitox, Copessan etc.
	Bunt and False Smut, Ufra:	Uproot and destroy the affected plants. 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%.

1	2	3
	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% BHC 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 of 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 Kg. 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.
	Mealy Bug and White Fly..	Spray Basudin 20 @ 1 Kg. in 660 litres of water/hectare.
	Leaf Hopper ..	Spray 0.25% B.H.C or dust 10% B.H.C.

1	2	3
	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%SC Dithane Z-78.
	Leaf Spot	Manure the crop, adopt improved cultural practices and irrigate when necessary and spray 0.5% Copper Eunglcide 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.
Cotton	Anthracnose	Treat the seeds with Agrosan G.N. or Ceresan or Yellow Cuprocide. Spray Bordeaux Mixture.
	Wilt	Grow resistant variety.
	Leaf Hopper	Spray 0.16% D.D.T.
	Red-Bug and Leaf Roller	Spray 0.25% Parathion.
	Spotted Roil Worm	Spray 0.03% Endrin or 0.25% Parathion.
Chillies	Damping off	Drench the soil and spray with 1% Bordeaux Mixture or Captan 406.
	Pepper Fruit-Rot	Spray 1% Bordeaux Mixture or Perenox or Dithane z-78.
	Powdery Mildew	Dust fine Sulphur.
	Leaf Caterpillar	Dust 10% B.H.C.
	Thrips and Stem Borer	Dust 10% B.H.C. or 0.025% Parathion.
Ginger	Fly Maggots	Dust 1% Aldrin or 10% B.H.C.
	Shoot Borer	Spray 0.05% B.H.C.

1	2	3
	Soft Rot/Rhizome-Rot	Treat the seeds with 0.1% Ceresan etc. Drench the soil with Cheshunt Compound.
Pepper	Wilt	Spray Cheshunt Compound or or 0.05% Ceresan solution.
	Pollu Beetle	Spray 0.125% D.D.T.
	Shoot Borer and Thrips	Spray 0.25% D.D.T.
	Scales	Spray 0.25% Parathion.
Turmeric	Leaf Spot	Spray 1% Bordeaux Mixture.
	Shoot Borer	Spray 0.05% B.H.C.
Cardamom	Damping off	Drench the soil with 1% B.M. or Cheshunt Compound.
	Rhizome-Rot.	Remove affected plants. Apply Ammonium Sulphate and Superphosphate @ 2 oz. per clump.
	Hairy Caterpillar	Spray 0.25% B.H.C.
	Rhizome Weevil	Dust 2% Aldrin.
	Shoot Borer	Spray 0.3% D.D.T. or 0.04% Endrin.
	Thrips	Dust 1.5% Dieldrin or 10% B.H.C. @ 2 Kgs. per acre.
Coconut	Leaf Spot	Spray 4 : 4 : 50 Bordeaux Mixture or Fytolan or Perenox. Fertilize the plants and improve irrigation.
	Bud-Rot	Spray 4 : 4 : 50 B. M. and apply Bordeaux Paste.
	Nut-Fall (Mahali)	Spray 4: 4: 50 B.M. Manure the plants and improve drainage.
	Rhinoceros Beetle	Clean the crown, spread sand and 5% B.H.C. mixture to the crowns and spray 0.1% B.H.C. on the crowns and breeding places. Hook out the beetles from the crown.

1	2	3
	Red Palm Weevil ..	Inject 1% Pyrocone E @ 1,000-1,500 C.C. per palm. Spray Endrex 20 E.C. (1 : 500).
	Black-headed Caterpiller..	Spray Guesarol-550 (1: 200) or Hexadrine (1: 800).
Arecanut ..	Bud-Rot ..	Drench 1% B.M. or 0.1% Ceresan wet.
	Fruit-Rot ..	Drench 1% B.M.
	Kaleroga or Mahali ..	Cultivate and manure properly.
	Band Disease. ..	Apply Copper Sulphate and Lime mixture @ 225+225 gms. for bearing palms and 122+122 gms. for non-bearing palms.
	Anaberoga ..	Improve drinage and isolate affected palms by trenches.
	Stem Bleeding ..	Improve drinage and apply B.M.
	Collar-Rot ..	Drench the soil with wettable Ceresan at 100 gms. in 100 litres of water.
	Shedding of female flowers and tender nuts. ..	Spray 1% B.M. in combination with Endrex at 25.5 C.C. for every 22.5 litres of Bordeaux Mixture.
	Leaf-Rot ..	Spray 1% B.M.
	Mites ..	Spray 0.014% Parathion
	Scales and Bugs ..	Spray 0.05% Parathion.
	Beetles ..	Spray 0.02% Parathion or 0.05% Endrin or 0.01% Ekatin.
Brinjal ..	Wilt ..	Practise crop rotation, Drench soil with 1% B.M. or Streptocycline or Ceresan.
	Root-Rot ..	Follow crop rotation. Drench soil with Formalin or Mercuric Chloride.
	Bud Borer ..	Spray 0.03% Endrin or D.D.T. or Dimecron.
	Beetles ..	Spray 0.16% D.D.T.

1	2	3
	Jassids ..	Dust 5% B.H.C.
Bhendi ..	Masaic ..	Plant disease-resistant varieties.
	Fruit Borer and ..	Control insect vectors.
	Shoot Borer. ..	Spray 0.03% Endrin.
	Leaf Roller ..	Spray 0.05% B.H.C. or 0.025% Parathion solution.
	Jassid and Aphids etc. ..	Spray Malathions Thiodin or Rogor.
Curcurbits ..	Powdery Mildew ..	Dust Sulphur.
	Root-Rot and Fruit-Rot. ..	Practise croprotation. Improve drainage.
	Mosaic ..	Uproot and destroy affected Plants.
	Beetles ..	Spray 0.16% D.D.T.
	Leaf Caterpillar ..	Spray 0.1% Lindane or 0.03% Endrin.
	Semi-Looper and Fruit Fly..	Spray 0.03% Endrin.
Tomato ..	Damping off ..	Use raised seed-bed for proper drainage. Drench soil with Captan 406 or Cheshunt Compound or Formalin 2 oz. in 1 gallon of water @ one gallon per sq. foot area.
	Wilt ..	Practise crop rotation. Use resistant varieties and drench soil with Streptocycline (1 gm. in 90 litres) or 0.1% Ceresen.
	Late Blight ..	Spray 1% B.M. or Captan or Dithane Z-78 every 15-20 days (3-4 times).
	Beetles ..	Spray 0.16% D.D.T.
	Caterpillar ..	Dust 1% B. H. C.
Sweet Potato.	Weevil ..	Spray 0.25% D.D.T.
Banana ..	Leaf Spot ..	Adopt proper cultural and manurial practices and irrigate timely. Spray 4 : 4 : 50 B.M. during April-May and August-September or any Copper Fungicide.

1	2	3
	Fruit-Rot	Spray 2: 2 : 50 B.M. or Captain (1:500). Protect bunches from flies every 10 days.
	Black Tip and Black Finger Tip.	Spray 2 : 2: 50 B.M. or Captan (1 : 500) Protect bunches from direct sunshine.
	Wilt (Panama)	Drench soil with 0.2-0.5% Formalin (40%) in trenches. Use disease-free suckers.
	Bunchy Top	Plant disease-free suckers. Uproot and destroy affected plants. Adopt clean cultivation and spray Malathion @ 1 litre in 100 litres of water.
	Tip Rot	Spray 5 : 5 : 50 B.M.
	Leaf and Fruit Beetle	Spray 0.2% Dieldrex 18 E.C. i.e. (1:500). Adopt clean cultivation.
	Borer	Adopt clean cultivation. Avoid ratooning. Remove and destroy affected plants.
Mango	Die-Back	Spray 4 :4 : 50 B.M.
	Powdery Mildew.	Dust sulphur or spray wettable Sulphur before flower opening and after fruit set.
	Red Rot	Spray 4 : 4 : 50 B.M. during moonsoon, or spray Lime Sulphur in cold winter.
	Fruit-Rot (Anthracnose)	Spray 3 : 3 : 50 B.M. in February or April.
	Hoppers	Spray Endrex 20 E.C. (0.2%) or Geusarol 550 (1:200).
	Leaf and Shoot Half-eating Caterpillar.	Spray Guesarol-550 (1:200) or Hexadrine (Endrex 1:800).
Cashew-nut	Gummosis	Apply Bordeaux Paste and drench soil with Copper Fungicide or Cheshunt Compound.
	Die-Back.	Spray 1% B.M.
	Shoot Borer	Spray 0.1% B.H.C. (50% w.p.) or Endrex 20 E.C.
	Thrips	Spray 0.05% B.H.C.

1	2	3
Maize	Leaf Spot and Blight	Use disease-resistant varieties. Practise crop rotation.
	Borer	Spray Endrin or Diazinon or D.D.T. (50%).
	Aphis	Spray Nicotine Sulphate.
Potato	Early and Late Blight	Spray B.M. or any copper fungicide. viz.-Captan 406, Dithane Z-78, Shell Copper or Fytolan or Blitex @ 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 Hydrochloric Acid before planting.
	Leaf Roll and Mosaic	Plant disease free tubers.
	Tuber Moth	Dust 5% B.H.C.
	Greasy Surface	Dust 5% B.H.C. at 7 kgs. per acre.
	Caterpillar Cut Worm	Spray Aldrex 30 E.C.
Tobacco	Wilt	Disinfect the seed-bed.
	Caterpillar and Thrips.	Dust 5% B.H.C.
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 Formation (1:50) or Mercuric Chloride (1:2000) @ 2 gallons per sq.

1	2	3
		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 or water).
	Caterpillar, Thrips, Jassids, Semi.	.. Spray Malathion-1.5 C.C. in 1 litre of water.
	Looper and Butterfly	.. 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.
Citrus ..	Canker	.. Prune and spray 5: 5: 50 B.M. or Captan 406 (1:500) or Cuman (1:1000).
	Scab	.. Same as in Canker. Spray in early spring.
	Wither-Tip	.. Spray 5: 5: 50 B.M. or Captan 406. Paste the pruned branches with Bordeaux Paste. Adopt proper cultural and manurial practices.
	Gummosis	.. Scrap off diseased parts and apply Bordeaux Paste (1:1:1).
	Sooty Mould	.. Spray Nicotine Sulphate (1:30) or Malamar 50 (1: 1000).
	Foam	.. Scrap off diseased parts and use Bordeaux Paste.
	Seedling Wilt	.. Treat the soil with Ceresan (1: 1000) or 40% Formaldehyde (1:5000).

1	2	3
	Die-Back	.. Adopt proper cultural and manurial practices. Take care of orchard and adopt prophylatic spray with fungicide and insecticides to check the malady.
	Pink Disease	.. Scrap off the diseased parts and use Bordeaux Paste.
	Aphids	.. Spray Malathion 50 (1:1000) in every new flush or spray Dimecron 50 (1 C.C. in 5 litres of water).
	Leaf-Miner	.. Spray Dimecron 50 (1:1500) or Malathion.
	Lemon Caterpillar	.. Spray Guesarol 550 (1:200) or Endrex 20 B.C. or Hexadrine (1800).
	Green Bug	.. Dust 5% B.H.C. or spray Guesarol 550.
	Borer	.. Spray Endrex (20 E.C.) or D.D.T. (50%) in May and September.
	Mealy Bug	.. Spray Nicotine Sulphate (1:60) or Malathion 50 (1:1000) or Dimecron.
	Mites	.. Spray Lime Sulphur or Dimecron 50 (1 C.C. in 5 litres of water).
	Scales (Insect)	.. Spray Dimecron 50 (1:2500) or Malathion.
Groundnut ..	Tikka Disease	.. Spray 4: 4: 50 B.M. or any Copper Oxychloride.
	Collar-Rot	.. Grow resistant varieties, avoid water stagnation.
	Caterpillar	.. Dust 5% B.H.C.
Guava ..	Red Rust	.. Spray 4: 4: 50 B.M. in monsoon or Lime Sulphur in winter.
	Leaf-Blight	.. Spray 4: 4: 50 B.M.
	Anthracnose	.. Spray 4: 4: 50 B.M or Captan 406. Spray 2:2:50 B.M. after fruit-set. Spray Dimecron 50 W.P. (1:500).

1	2	3
	Leaf-Beetle	Spray Dieldrex 19 E.C. (1:500).
	Fruit-Fly	Fumigate Tunnels with Petrol.
	Stem-Borer	
Jute	Stem-Rot, Root-Rot and Seedling.	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.
	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 balt.
	Semi Looper	Spray 50% B.H.C. (W.P.) or Endrin (20 E.C.) or Thiodin.
Litchi	Leaf Curi	Spray Lime Sulphur solution (1:10) or Dimercron 100.
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.
	Caterpillar and Sawfly	Dust 5% B.H.C. @ 6Kg. per acre.

1	2	3
Onion	Thrips	Dust 5% B.H.C.
Matimah & 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.
Beans	Wilt	Provide good drainage and drench soil with Mercuric Chloride (1:1000).
Pineapple	Heart-Rot or Stem-Rot, and Leaf-Spot.	Improve drainage and spray 4: 4: 50 B.M. or other fungicide.
	Base Rot Fruit Rot.	Use disease-free suckers. Adopt clean cultivation.
Papaya	Stem-Rot, Foot-Rot	Improve drainage and spray B.M.
	Leaf-Spot	Spray 2: 2: 50 B.M. or other fungicide (1:25).
	Anthracnose	Spray 2: 2: 50 B.M. or Captan.
	Mosaic	Rogue out and destroy affected plants. Use disease-free seeds.
	Root-Rot	Drench soil with Ceresan or Formalin. Practise crop rotation.
Pan Leaf	Fruit-Rot and Leaf-Rot	Plant disease-free cuttings. Spray 2: 2: 50 B.M. and irrigate the plant with B.M. once a month from May to September.
	Rhizoctonia, Root-Rot	Irrigate the plants with 2: 2: 50 B. M. once a month from September to December.
Kachu	Colocassia Blight	Spray 4: 4: 50 B.M.
Sesame	Leaf Spot	Treat the seeds in hot water for 30 minutes (128° F).
Pea	Poery Mildew	Dust Sulphur @ 25 lbs. per acre or spray with Soiber or Thiovit.
	Rust	Grow resistant varieties. Dust Sulphur 25 lbs. per acre.
Grape-Vine	Powdery Mildew	Dust Suplhur.

(Source—Department of Agriculture, Assam).

APPENDIX—B

Statement showing the Area, Average yield and Production of the principal crops

Name of the crop	1955-56			1960-61		
	Area	Average yield	Production	Area	Average yield	Production.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Rice						
(a) Autumn rice ..	63.42	907	56.75	80.08	713	56.24
(b) Winter rice ..	1,53.75	9,94	1,50.04	156.33	1036	1,59.25
(c) Spring rice. ..	0.91	1,345	1.22	1.56	840	1.31
2. Rape and Mustard.	22.46	392	8.81	21.93	407	8.95
3. Jute ..	3,439	1,135	2,1698	31.56	1,037	18,149
4. Sugar cane ..	2.63	22,416	5.90	2.88	35,196	10.04
5. Potato ..	4.23	47,39	20.04	5.31	4,769	25.36
6. Gram ..	0.26	504	0.13	0.27	616	0.18
7. Maize						
8. Wheat						
9. Other cereals and small millets						
10. Tur (Arhar)						
11. Rabi pulses						
12. Sweet potatoes						
13. Castor						
14. Sesame						
16. Linseed						
17. Cotton						
18. Mesta						
19. Tobacco						
20. Chillies						

Note : Area is given in hectare.
Average yield is in kg. per hectare.
Production in tonnes.

—B.

in the district of Goalpara since 1955-56 to 1971-72.

1965-66			1970-71			1971-72		
Area	Average yield	Production	Area	Average yield	Production	Area	Average yield	Production
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
121.55	912	109.18	1,31,520	747	96,674			
166.16	915	149.76	1,98,300	877	1,71,231			
6.68	379	5.99	5,500	1,170	6,435			
25.41	456	11.59	26,300	406	1,06,78	25,000	466	11,650
31.77	1,387	2,44.77	35,000	1,558	3,02,944	38,400	1,318	2,81,173
2.19	16,595	3.93	2,430	45,510	11,623	1,800	29,938	4,796
5.35	1,820	9.74	6,860	5,645	38,725	6,600	5,7703	8,082
0.77	460	0.35	280	455	127	280	464	130
			1,210	500	605	1,210	500	605
			10,000	500	5,000	13,000	1,206	15,678
			2,030	505	1,025	2,500	500	1,250
			390	730	285	390	732	285
			15,000	381	5,717	16,200	400	6,478
			1214	3,400	4,128	1,220	3,400	4,148
			40	400	16	40	400	16
			2,430	480	1,166	2,400	480	1,152
			200	452	90	200	450	90
			200	75	83	200	72	80
			1,620	650	5,850	4,050	655	14,738
			1,220	830	1,013	1,220	830	1,013
			1,400	640	896	1,000	650	650

Note— Area in hectare.
Average yield in kg./hectare.
Production in tonnes.

APPENDIX–C.

Statement showing some important registered river and bil fisheries of the Goalpara district with their annual revenue income during 1973-74.

	Name of Fisheries	Revenue in Rupees
1.	Naitora chaitora bil	10,005.00
2.	Kaya bil and others	8,025.00
3.	Dalani and Harinchatura	81,120.00
4.	Geruah Kumarpatta and Naitoia Chaitara	21,151.00
5.	Hasila bil	N.A.
6.	Tamranga Group Fisheries	N.A.
7.	Dhir bil	1,57,775.00
8.	Sareswar	1,12,325.00
9.	Subit Kanzi	251.00
10.	Nalciya and others	55,785.00
11.	Tariar chara and Bhammirchara	1,215.00
12.	Dahar jugra	11,111.11
13.	Bhelakulea and others	3,125.00
14.	Hakma and Sonamukhi	13,591.00
15.	Bhaispuri	5,325.50
16.	Matir Khuthi and others	4,525.50
17.	Bherbhangi	3,100.00
18.	Seutiagethola	5,125.00
19.	Meel bil	3,895.00
20.	Rovea and others	7,850.00
21.	Sena bil	11,875.00
22.	Shaluaria and others	6,525.00
23.	Bholiadanga and others.	10,105.00
24.	Harinchara and others.	1,505.00
25.	Bhangamere	50,125.00
26.	Chandokhuli and others	21,500.00
27.	Gobarchara and others	601.00
28.	Bhelka and others	1,725.00
29.	Dekra and others	30,926.00
30.	Polna	1,123.00
31.	Diptai	19,225.00
32.	Raidak	4,025.00
33.	Tipkai	3,775.00
34.	Toreha	2,825.00
35.	Maragaurang	5,501.00
36.	Raghunathchar	2,825.00
37.	Dudia	751.00
38.	Kamandanga	2,500.00
39.	Maramanah bil	1,405.00

CHAPTER V

INDUSTRIES

(a) *OLD TIME INDUSTRIES* :

Principal manufactures of Goalpara district prevalent during early British period were brass and iron utensils and instruments, gold, silver and copper ornaments, knitting, sewing, cloth-weaving, oil pressing, carpentry and pottery Of note were copper or brass cups, known as *Kansas* made by braziers, and the goldsmiths' silver tray called *Thagi* or *Sarai* often in-laid with gold are characteristics of Assam. Cloth for wearing was woven from the *muga* and *eri* silk but the cloth woven in Goalpara, though more durable, was coarser in texture than that woven in Upper Assam. Most of the coarser cloth was manufactured from *eri*.[1] With improved means of communication and import of machine-made cheaper articles from Lower Bengal and other parts of the country, indigenous manufacturers declined and the condition of the manufacturers deteriorated to such an extent that many had to abandon their occupation. A brief account of some of the old time industries that flourished in the district is given below.

(i) Weaving : Handloom weaving is an important cottage industry that flourished in Assam from ancient times. It still occupies a place of pride in every Assamese household which invariably maintains a handloom. It is a universally practised cottage industry by rich and poor alike and has no stigma of caste or creed attached with it.

With the advent of the British, came the dark era of handloom weaving in Assam. The British did not evince any interest in the development of this national industry. They were keen only to find markets for their Lancashire products and as such weaving industry faced keen competition from the mill-made cheap goods which dominated the markets situated even in the remote areas. The traditional weavers wilted under increasing pressure and many left their age old occupation to find other avenues of employment. However, the industry was so deeply rooted in the substratum of Assamese life that though severely mauled, it could save itself from total annihilation. To this day, it continues to be an important occupation, especially of the womenfolk. Their

1. W.W. Hunter : *A Statistical Account of Assam*, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1975, (Reprint), p. 74.

skill and dexterity led Mahatma Gandhi, Father of the Nation to remark that Assamese women could weave "fairy tales in their cloths."

The principal articles woven are *Patanis* or cloths worn by women by tying above the breast, large cloths called *gilap* or *Borkapor* usually made from *eri*, smaller shawls called *Pachara*, and *Gamochas* or napkins. Various types of looms grouped into four categories i.e., through shuttle loom, loin loom, Pit loom and fly shuttle loom, are in use in the district. The first one is found in almost every Assamese house hold while the second one is in common use among the hill tribes. The Bengali weavers who have migrated from East Pakistan (now Bangla desh) mostly use Pit looms. The Fly shuttle loom which is of recent introduction, has an improved type of frame which considerablyincreases the output of the weavers.

Raw materials used by weavers in Goalpara district are mainly cotton and *eri* threads. Various counts of yarn ranging from 10" to 80" are generally used by the weavers. The yarn is mostly purchased from the markets and only a few do the spinning at home. Almost whole of the cotton yarn and a greater part of the silk yarn (*eri*) are imported from outside the State.[2] The number of professional weavers in the district is very small. As per Census of 1961, there were only 3,550 weavers (out side the co-operative fold) of which 766 were full-time weavers and the rest part-time weavers. Of the full-time weavers only 104 were males (662 females) and of the part-time weavers numbering 2,784, male weavers accounted for 141 only. Besides there were 1,897 weavers in the co-operative sector forming 114 co-operative societies. However, of these artisans, males constituted the majority.

Since the Second Five Year Plan much emphasis has been laid on the development of village handicrafts andcottage industries with a view to solving the baffling problem of ever-increasing unemployment. Handloom industry, if geared to the commercial exigencies, would provide lucrative employment, especially to the womenfolk as a full time as well as a part-time occupation. Keeping this in view various Boards like the Khadi and Village Industries Board, the All India Handicrafts Board, the All India Handloom Board, the Central Silk Board, the Coir Board, and the Small Industries Board, have been established. The Directorate of Sericulture and Weaving and the Directorate of Industries of Assam, also look after the development of village and cottage industries in the State.

The Directorate of Sericulture and Weaving, Assam, comprises two wings—Sericulture and Weaving. Under its Weaving Wing there is one Superintendent of Weaving with headquarters at Kokrajhar to look after the development of weaving in the district. He is assisted by three Weaving Inspectors, one for each subdivision of the district, and by other staff mentioned below.

2, *Handicrafts of Assam, Census of India*, 1961, Delhi, 1966, pp. 4-5.

Seventeen Weaving Demonstrators are in charge of Demonstration Centres at Kokrajhar, Sidli, Dotma, Goalpara, Ghengamari, Dhenubhanga, Balijana, Lakhipur, Matia (I), Gossaigaon, Manikpur, Barabazar, Bongaigaon, Baitamari, Matia (II), Agomoni and Salkocha. These Demonstrators keep the artisans abreast of the latest development in handloom industry and impart training on new designs and techniques of production and use of improved looms and implements. There are Weaving Extension Service Centres at Goalpara, Agomoni, Kokrajhar, Bilasipara and Dudhnoi each under one Inspector helped by two Demonstrators and other staff. During the years from 1972 to 1975 these centres together produced 2,443 metres, 1,427 metres, 1,863 metres and 2,350 metres of cloth respectively. Weaving training classes are provided in the Centres at Ramphalbil and Goalpara. Training at each Centre is conducted by a Weaving Inspector and a Weaving Demonstrator helped by other staff. The Handloom Production Centre at Dotama is in charge of one Weaving Inspector and it produced 1,494 metres of cloth during 1975-76. The department has also arranged supply of improved looms and other weaving implements on subsidy basis with a view to popularising weaving.

(ii) Sericulture : Sericulture, another cottage industry of the district, is however, not as important as in other plains districts of the Brahmaputra valley. It is practicised during the agricultural off-season as a subsidiary occupation.

Like weaving, silk industry also had its period of crisis during the British regime when even markets situated in farflung areas were flooded with foreign millmade artificial silk cloths. But the industry has stood the test of time having survived and risen from ravages. The Department of Sericulture and Weaving came into being in 1948-49 (after it was separated from the Cottoge Industries Department) and the various schemes undertaken by it since then for the development of sericulture provided a fresh lease of life and the industry appears to be making steady progress. The Central Silk Board of India has also been of great assistance to the State by providing finance for the effective implementation of various schemes for the development of Sericulture.

There are three principal varieties of Silk found in the State. *pat* is the costliest, *endi* is coarser and is generally used by the common people. *Muga* is stouter and more durable than *pat* but coarser and less glossy. In Goalpara district, however, only *eri* worms are most commonly reared.

Little *eri* silk is produced for sale. The main producing Centres of the district are Rongjuli, North Salmara and Eastern Duars. The *eri* worm (*attacus ricini*) derives its name from the *eri* or castor plant (*ricinus Communis*) on which it is usually fed. Patches of this plant are commonly seen in the gardens of most of the villages. "The worm belonging to the *Saturniidae* is for

all practical purposes habitant of Assam",[3] as fairly heavy rainfall and moist climate are considered ideal for it. In a year five or six broods are generally reared and those who 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. Worms when fully grown are dirty white or green and vary in length from 76.20 to 88.90 mm. After the final moulting, the worms are transferred from tray to forked twigs suspended across a piece of wood and as soon as they become ready to spin, they are placed on dried plaintain leaves or withered branches which are hung from the roof of a hut. Before spinning, cocoons are softened by boiling in water with a solution of alkaline and the silk produced by each empty cocoon is equivalent to three quarter of its weight. The most useful garment made of *eri* silk is the *bar-kapor*, a large sheet about six metres in length by about 1.5 metres wide, which is folded and used as a wrap in cold weather by all sections of the people. *Eri* cloth is also made into coats and shirts. The tools and implements required for the industry are few and simple and almost all of these are made by the artisan himself and by the members of his family or can be had from the market at a moderate price.

The sericulture activities in Goalpara district are under the control and supervision of the Superintendent of Sericulture with headquarters at Goalpara. He is assisted by two Inspectors of Sericulture whose headquarters are at Dhuburi and Kokrajhar. Other field staff consist of two Extension Officers with headquarters at Matia and Kokrajhar, and Cocoon Marketing Inspector with headquarters at Goalpara and a host of Managers, Supervisors, Operators, Rearers and Demonstrators at different seed farms, seed grainages, eri concentration centres, mulberry gardens and reeling units in various parts of the district. The Eri Seed Grainage at Kokrajhar was able to produce 68,155, 75,126 and 96,784 disease free layings in 1973, 1974, and 1975 respectively. Corresponding production figures of the Dhenubhanga Eri Seed Grainage during those years were 66,835, 32,425 and 73,758 layings. Each of these grainages is manned by a Manager, a Supervisor and three Operators. There are Eri Concentration Centres at Matia, Rongjuil and Kuchdhowa, each under one Demonstrator and subordinate staff. Although among the three varieties of silk produced in Assam only *eri* flourished during early part of this century in Goalpara district, serious efforts have been initiated by the Government to introduce *pat* and *muga* silk also in the district. Towards this end a Government Mulberry Sericulture Farm was established at Agia and the total number of layings produced in this farm during 1973, 1974 and 1975 was 1,09,640, 46,446 and 33,686. The Mulberry gardens at Kuchdhowa, Matia and

3. *Glimpses of Silk Industry in Assam*, Sericulture & Weaving Department, Govt. of Assam, Shillong, 1955, p. 3.

Baitamari are also some steps towards production of *pat*. The Basic Muga Seed Farm at Kokrajhar was able to harvest 181,600, 2,47,000 and 1,04,810 seed cocoons during 1973, 1974 and 1975 respectively. *Muga* is also produced at the Government Mulberry Sericulture Farm at Agia. A Tassar Seed Cocoon Farm was established on an experimental basis at Kokrajhar with a view to producing seed cocoons for Tassar producers ; but the farm has been abolished. Training facilities have been arranged by the Directorate to train local youths in the art of sericulture. Grants-in-aid and subsidies have also been provided on a liberal scale to individual rearers and reeling associations to encourage them.

(iii) Pottery : Pottery, a very ancient industry of Goalpara, has lost much of its past glory and is now confined only to making common earthen wares such as jars and pitchers. The State of affairs of the pottery industry in the district is not encouraging. Local pottery has mostly been replaced by superior clay or porielain goods and metal utensils imported from outside. The profits of the industry are also small and most of the traditional potters have been attracted by more remunerative occupations. According to Census of 1961, the persons engaged in manufacture of earthen ware and earthen pottery were 6,673 (males 3,121 and 3,555 females) out of the total potter population of 13,773 in the State.

The raw materials required for the industry are the glutinous clay and coarse sand, the latter being added whenever necessary. The tools and implements used are the wheel (*Chak*), about 90 cm. in diameter ; the mould (*athali*), a hollow basin about 39 cm. long by 8.7 cm. deep ; the mallet (*baliya piteni*) and the polisher (*chaki*). The main articles produced are cooking pots (*hari* and *paitta*) big and small water jars (*kalsi* and *bashna*) and larger vessels (*hari* and *jauga*) as also lamps, pipes and drums. Potters of Gauripur in Goalpara are engaged in *tiles* production. These are exported to Tinsukia and other parts of the State.[4] In the urban areas there are small groups of potters who specialise in making images of *Durga*, *Kali*, *Saraswati* and other gods and goddesses. The artisans often display consummate artistic skill in making the images and are paid handsome amounts. During the slack season they make beautiful dolls, toys etc., and sell them in the nearby markets or *melas*.

In recent years some schemes have been taken up by the State Khadi and Village Industries Board, Assam, with a view to encouraging the village potters to switch over from their traditional items to the production of glazed pottery wares and bricks and tiles which have better markets. The Board has been providing training facilities to the artisans. The principal centres of industry in the district are at Fakirganj, Gauripur, Rupsi, Satyapur, Rokakhata, Dubapara and Marnai.

4. *Selected Handicrafts of Assam*, Census of India, 1961, Delhi, 1966, p. 38.

(iv) Brass and bell metal industry : The brass and bell metal industry was highly developed throughout the State in the past. Copper and brass cups of Goalpara district known as *kansas* have already been mentioned. The principal articles manufactured are flattish bowls for drinking (*lota, bati*), water jars (*kalsi, gagari*), trays (*sarai*), boxes for betelnut and lime (*tema, temi*), and vessels used for boiling rice. It must however be remarked that at present, the industry is facing stiff competition from products made of aluminium, stainless steel and other durable substances.

(v) Blacksmithy : That blacksmithy attained a high degree of perfection in the district may be inferred from a cannon manufactured in 1597 A.D. which is still in possession of Gauripur Raj family. At present, however, the activities of the blacksmiths are confined to the making of simple agricultural implements, domestic tools, the tools of the craft like anvils, bellows, hammers and chisels. According to the census of 1961, only 548 persons were engaged in this industry of whom only 3 were females.

(vi) Gold and silver smithy : The industry is mainly concentrated in the urban areas. The artisans are from families who have been traditionally associated with the industry. Its survival may primarily be attributed to the higher rate of profit in the trade and traditional fondness of Indian women for jewellery. Ability of the jeweller to cater to individual taste has placed the industry in an advantageous position and saved it from the competition of mass-produced, stereotyped jewellery and ornaments. The indigenous jewellers exhibit considerable amount of skill in making gold and silver ornaments. The goldsmiths who have come from Bengal constitute the bulk of the artisans in the trade. Among the indigenous goldsmiths only those who have adopted themselves to the changing pattern of jewellery still survive.

(vii) Cane and Bamboo works : Among traditional crafts the making of bamboo and cane products is perhaps the most universally practicised by all the sections of the people throughout the State. Its products may be termed as 'pure handicrafts' products where even elementary mechanical devices are not used. Its products have wide range of uses and as such are commonly found in every household.[5]

The craft is now mainly a household industry and occupies an important place among the handicrafts of the district. It provides subsidiary occupation to the cultivator and full-time occupation to those highly skilled artisans who produce fine decorative baskets, furniture and mats etc., on commercial scale. The making of bamboo products is mainly a rural industry. Its heavy concentration in the rural areas may primarily be attributed to the availability of bamboos in abundance in the villages and the great demand for its products in every

5. Ibid, p. 197.

rural household. Among bamboo products mention may be made of a broad-brimmed hat made from split bamboo and the leaves of the *nahar* (*masua ferra*) or *sal* tree (*shorea robusta*). Bamboo traps for catching fish called *dingaru, thupa, sepa, gui, bhari, darki, Khoidan*, and *Katia* are also made.

Mat making is still prevalent in the district though on a smaller scale than before. The mats made in the district are of four kinds. *Pati* mats are manufactured from the *patidoia* (*maranta dichotoma*) ; *kaths* are made of *moi* (*saccharum ciliare*) and are woven in a frame like cotton on the loom ; *dharas* are made of plaited bamboo and *kathiadhara* of reed.

The making of cane products is an important and growing cottage industry of the district. The raw material required for the industry is cane, in which this district abounds. Extrication of the thorny cane from the thick jungles is a difficult task. The forest authorities grant leases to the *Mahaldars* to extricate cane from the forests. The tool and implements required for the industry are mainly *dao* and knife, and it is only in the making of furniture that a few hammers, pliers or pincers etc., are required. The industry requires a certain amount of skill even in producing simple articles of day to day use. The making of furniture and other products of artistic value calls for a high degree of skill. Most of the workers engaged in making cane furniture are artisans from East Pakistan and indigenous workers engaged in this trade are few.

The main product of the cane industry is the plucking basket which is required in large numbers every year by the tea gardens. As the tea planters find it convenient to purchase in bulk, and the small establishments of artisans find it difficult to meet their requirements, the supply of the plucking baskets has become the monopoly of the few firms that can afford to produce the baskets on a large scale. These firms have monopolised this trade. Deprived of this market, the petty artisans turn to the needs of the individual consumers and manufacture various types of furniture and sundry articles like boxes, cradles, cane-stools (*murrha*), office trays, tiffin baskets, bottle carriers, bicycle baskets, waste paper baskets etc.

viii) Cork Industry of Goalpara district :

The Cork is locally called *Sola*. *Sola* is an aquatic plant grown in the low land near *bils* and Bao paddy fields. This is mainly utilized for making hats, musks, different types of figuers, monkey (Hanuman), birds, head wear (*Mukut*) etc. It is also used as floats of fishing nets. Images and heads of locally worshipped deities like Kali, Manasha, Chandi etc. also are manufactured along with Rash Puja and Maroi Puja effigies and these are purchased by people in local *melas* to decorate house interiors. This Cottage Industry is concentrated mainly in Golokganj, Balajan, Agomoni, Baterhat, Dhepdhepi, Moterjher and Bishandoi of Dhuburi Sub-division.

Marketing arrangements : The products of *Sola* which is called *Kuhila* in the other parts of Assam, are generally sold in local markets and *hats* specially during *melas* and fairs.

Recently, the Government of Assam has taken up its sale through Assam Government Marketing Corporation and State Emporiums in Calcutta, Delhi, Bombay, as an export cottage industry product from this district.

Reasons for the decay of old time Industries :

Although cottage industries still play a vital role in the economy of the district, as described above, 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.

The principal one is that during the British rule the indigenous industries faced keen competition from sophisticated foreign industries producing the same articles on such large scales as to flood the local markets. Such mass-produced articles were often sold at cheaper prices. As a result many indigenous products lost their markets and the value they brought in became unremunerative. On the other hand spread of western education and change in fashion of living were also partly responsible for causing distaste for local products and preference for a finer mill-made articles, loss of patronage of former kings, and indifferenc of the foreign Government, led to extinction of many reputed industries and caused many others to languish at the hands of poor artisans.

(b) *POWER SUPPLY* :

The State Electricity Board took over power supply in the Goalpara district since 1957 by phases. A beginning was made by starting Thermal stations in Goalpara and Kokrajhar towns while diesel generating sets were installed with initial capacities of 124 KW at Goalpara and 150 KW at Kokrajhar. Power supply in Dhuburi town was then managed by the National Power Supply Corporation which had started functioning in the district since 1954 and prior to that another private company supplied electricity in this town for some years. The Board took over power supply in Dhuburi in 1966 making a beginning with Diesel generating sets. Thus the number of power stations under the management of the State Electricity Board increased to three in 1966, and in 1971, another station with a 25 KW Diesel set was commissioned at Mankachar. In the initial stage, lines of electricity in Goalpara and Kokrajhar towns extended upto about 19 kms. and in Dhuburi (under the management of the private company) upto about 20 kms.

At present the Board supplies electricity to the district from Umium-Umtru-Chandrapur power stations through grid-sub stations. The district on

the north bank of the Brahmaputra receives electricity through 33 K.V. lines from 132-33 K.V. grid sub-station at Kahilipara and on the south bank through 33 K.V. lines from 132/33 K.V. grid sub-station at Dhalaigaon.

A thermal power project with two 60 M.W. Turbo Generator sets with extension by another 3 x 60 M.W.—set has now been undertaken near Bongaigaon by the Board which is extending electrification to other towns and even rural areas in phased manner.

It may also be mentioned that some big industries including the tea industry have their own Diesel generating sets. Moreover, the Railways have their own power houses at Bongaigaon and Fakiragram junctions.

In Dhuburi sub-division, the total consumption of units of electricity per hour stood at 17,40,190 Kwts. D.C. and 98,678 Kwts. A.C. in 1969-70, and increased gradually to 31,11,721 Kwts. D.C. and 7,12,278Kwts. A.C. in 1973-74. The following statement shows the consumption of units of electricity under different heads in Goalpara and Kokrajhar subdivisions during 1972, 1973 and 1974.

(Consumption in Kilowatt)

Subdivision	Year	Home consumption.	Street light	Irrigation & other irrigational uses	Public water supply	Industries.	Other
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Kokrajhar subdivision	1972	9,86,892	1,96,377	82,873	N.A.	10,25,711	6,69,254
	1973	15,18,611	3,68,860	1,22,322	N.A.	12,73,942	8,46,121
	1974	17,46,220	3,79,380	1,83,112	N.A.	13,50,037	8,46,871
Goalpara Sub-division	1972	4,69,039	68,038	N.A.	61,823	78,272	N.A.
	1973	4,89,896	79,889	2,800	69,635	1,20,665	N.A.
	1974	5,68,483	79,741	2,000	80,033	18,81,927	N.A.

The first rural electrification scheme in this district was sanctioned during 1972-73 by the Rural Electrification Corporation. The scheme envisages electrification of 84 villages within the Kokrajhar and Gossaigaon Police Stations in a period of five years. The second scheme sanctioned under the Minimum Needs Programme in 1975-76 envisages electrification of 104 villages of Sidli and Bijni Police Stations. This scheme will be completed in 1980-81.

Besides these two schemes, the Electricity Board has already taken up formulation of schemes in the areas under Abhayapuri, Bilasipara, Dudhnoi, Goalpara, Dhuburi and Golakganj *thanas* under Minimum Needs Programme. It is expected that these schemes will be sanctioned by Electrification Corporation during 1976-77.

The total number of villages in the Goalpara district electrified upto 31-3-76 was 105 which covered 4.14 per cent of the total population of the district. When all the above schemes are completed, 8.2 per cent of the total population will be benefited.

In order to electrify tribal areas, the Rural Electrification Corporation has taken up Tribal Area sub plans (plains). This Corporation has so far electrified 13 tribal villages of Bijni and 12 of Sidli Police stations at costs of Rs. 7,410 lakhs and Rs. 6.840 lakhs respectively under the Minimum Needs Programme scheme.

Bongaigaon Thermal Power Project : The Bongaigaon Thermal Power Project was sanctioned on 1-7-75 at an estimated cost of Rs. 47.02 crores. It will be installed near Nandangiri Hill at a considerable distance from Bongaigaon and will be known as 'Nandangiri Thermal Project.'

There will be installed 2×60 M.W. Turbo Generator set with provision for extension by another 3 x 60 M.W. set. The turbine sets will be fed by steam raised in boilers at the rate of 260 metric tonnes per hour at 95 kgs. per square Centimetre pressure. There will be two boilers for the two turbines. The required coal of 1,500 metric tonnes per day will be supplied from the West Bengal-Bihar coal mines as the coals of Margherita-Ledo contain high sulphur content.

The required water estimated at 1,500/2,000 cubic metres per hour will be supplied from the Champamati river from a distance of 4 kms. from the plant site.

The total generation of energy in the power station will be 66 crore units annually and the power will be transmitted by one 132 K.V. double circuit line upto Bongaigaon where it will be connected to the Assam State Electricity Board's grid supply. The cost of generation of power is estimated at 16 paise per unit.

The power from the first set is expected to be available from June, 1979 and from the second set within December, 1979. Construction of staff quarters and other buildings is now under progress.

(c) *INDUSTRIES AND MANUFACTURES OF THE DISTRICT* :

(i) **Heavy Industries** :

Refinery-cum-Petro Chemical Complex, Bongaigaon : The foundation stone of this one million tonne Refinery cum-Petro Chemical Complex at Bherbheri, 5 kms. from Bongaigaon was laid by the Prime Minister on January 19, 1972. This public sector undertaking, expected to be completed in about four years time at a total cost of over Rs. 96 crores, is the biggest industrial project in the district. The crude will be supplied by Oil India Ltd. from Naharkatiya and Moran Oil Fields and by Oil and Natural Gas Commission from Lakwa and Rudrasagar Oil fields. Additional requirement of crude if any, will be met from Geleki and Nazira fields of Oil and Natural Gas Commission. Besides refining petroleum this undertaking will produce polyester film, D.M.T. Polyester, Para and Orthosculene and various other petroleum products. On the basis of these down stream products, it will be possible to set up various industries for manufacture of a wide range of sophisticated industrial goods and consumer items. Messers J. K. Chemicals Ltd., Bombay hopes to set up a factory for manufacture of carbon black. D.M.T. Polyester fibre is a versatille raw material for manufacture of terelene and may open up a wide base for the development of textile industry in the State either by itself or by blending with natural fibres-cotton, wool and silk. This heavy industry complex in an industrially backward district like Goalpara is expected to usher in an era of industrial prosperity.

(ii) **Large Scale Industries** : Ashok Paper Mills Ltd., Jogighopa : Assam has one of the richest bamboo resources in the country and the Government of Assam has always been keen to develop paper industry in the State. So when an integrated paper mill in the name of 'Ashok Paper Mills Ltd.' which was proposed to be set up at Darbhanga in Bihar suffered a serious set back due to sudden death of its principal promoter and was faced with liquidation in 1967-68, the Government of Assam negotiated with Government of Bihar and finalised a scheme of collaboration for this paper mill on the basis of a second unit to be set up at Jogighopa in Assam. Initiative was taken in raising funds from financial institutions and the Assam Government was able to revive the company and assist it in setting up the Jogighopa unit. The foundation stone of this unit was laid by the Prime Minister in October, 1970 and project planning and engineering works were taken up immediately thereafter. Some machineries were brought from the Darbhanga unit and together with new machinery, the Jogighopa unit has been set up and has already gone into production. The total cost of this paper mill is about Rs. 31 crores and the Jogighopa unit has provided employment to about 1,000 persons. It is capable of producing 100 tonnes of pulp and 90 tonnes of paper per day. Bamboo for the paper mill is obtained from the forests of Goalpara district and power is supplied by the Assam State Electricity Board. The Board has started work for drawing 132 K.V. lines from Bongaigaon to Jogighopa. Bamboo forests have been planted in the hilly areas of the State particularly around Jogighopa to ensure steady supply of bamboo to the mill. It is expected that the paper mill will provide indirect employment by way of bamboo extraction and connected forest operations to

atleast five thousand persons. There is scope for anciliary industries for manufacture of lime, alum, and for utilisation of hydrated calcium carbonate.

Caustic Soda and Chlorine are important chemicals required for paper making. To assure supply of these chemicals to the papermill, a captive unit is being set up by the Company near the paper mill site. This unit will have a capacity of producing 25 tonnes of caustic soda and slightly over 22 tonnes of chlorine per day. It is expected to cost nearly Rs. 7 crores and will provide employment to about 30 persons.

Match Factory, Dhuburi : Prior to the imposition of import duty on safety matches in 1924, most of the matches required in India were imported from abroad. Imposition of duty and availability of *Simul* timber in abundance in Assam led a Swedish Company to form the Assam Match Company and set up a Match Factory at Dhuburi. It went into production in 1926. Located within Dhuburi town this factory has a total area of about 9 hectares of land. In September, 1975 its working capital was Rs. 99.27 lakhs. The Assam Match Company has been taken over by the Western India Match Co. Ltd., and produces over 95 thousand cases annually. It provides employment to nearly 1,400 persons. Its products are mainly marketed in the States of Assam, Meghalaya, West Bengal, Bihar, U.P. and Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh. Besides *Simul* timber which is abundantly available in the State, other raw materials like sulphur and phosphorus are imported. It also gets some match splints from the Match Splint Factory, Bijni, set up by the Industries Department.

Railway Workshop, Bongaigaon : The Railway Workshop at Dibrugarh being over-burdened with the works of carrying out repairs of locomotives, carriages, and wagons, a second Railway Workshop was established at New Bongaigaon in Goalpara district in 1965 covering an area of about 80 hectares. This project at New Bongaigaon consists of 3 amalgamated factories and was completed at a cost of about Rs. 10.52 crores. It has a periodical overhauling capacity of 1,500 units of passenger coaches and 3,000 units of goods wagons per annum. It also undertakes manufacturing work for various Divisions of North-east Frontier Railways. The total number of employees in the workshop is 2,125 including 1,470 Class III and 655 class IV staff. Over 64% of the staff have been provided with accommodation by the Railways in the colony spread over an area of about 440 hectares and lying about a kilometre from the workshop.

Tea Industry : Tea plays an insignificant role in the economy of the district. There were only 10 tea estates with an area of 2,172 hectares under tea in 1973. Production in that year was 30,32,000 kgs. It employed daily 4,616 labourers. For other particulars regarding tea industry references may be made to the District Gazetteers of Sibsagar, Lakhimpur or Darrang.

(iii) **Small Scale Industries** : Saw Mills : The district is rich in forest resources and offers ample opportunity for the development of timber industry in the form of saw mills, plywood factories etc. There are at present 46 saw mills in the district employing 172 persons. Most of the saw mills are in Kokrajhar Subdivision. There is only one plywood factory in the district which at present, employs 44 persons.

Rice Mills : In the urban areas of the district, there are rice mills, some of which are combined rice and oil mills. There are at present 19 rice mills in the district. The permission for setting up new rice mills is very much restricted. The Government is encouraging hand-pounding of rice through the Khadi and Village Industries Board. A number of licences to install rice-hullers have been issued in recent years.

The capital investment in the rice mills ranges from Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 2,50,000. Average number of labour per day employed in each mill varies from 30 to 50 though a lesser number is also found in very small establishments. The raw material required for the industry is paddy which is locally procured and its main product is rice which finds its way into the local markets. Paddy procurement is the monopoly of the State Govt. and the millers are allotted paddy from time to time for milling on commission basis.

Flour Mills : With the completion of the roller flour mill at Bongaigaon in 1975, the number of flour mills in the district has increased to 4. There are also a number of *chakki* mills in different urban areas of the district. One or two small units are also attached to some rice and oil mills. Wheat is allotted by the State Govt. and the product which mainly comprises flour is sold locally.

Oil mills : There are 6 oil mills in the district, the majority of them being located at Dhuburi A number of rice-mills also have oil crushing plants attached to them. The oil mills employ 10-40 persons and produce mustard oil.

Miscellaneous Industries : Among other industries and manufactures of the district mention may be made of two Aluminium Utensil Factories and one Chemical Unit producing D.D.T., Endrin etc., and an ice factory. There are also about 12 washing soap factories whose products cater to local needs ; 7 trunk and box factories which also undertake repair of these items ; 9 motor reparing workshops ; 18 printing presses mostly small ; agricultural implement manufacturing units numbering 9 ; 13 wooden furniture works producing furniture and other household items ; 2 cotton ginning mills and one *Khoir* making centre. In recent years a number of *bidi* manufacturing units have sprung up in Goalpara Sub-division.

(vi) **Cottage Industries** : Important cottage industries that exist in the district namely, weaving, sericulture, pottery, bamboo and cane works,

brass and bell metal, gold and silver smithy, and black-smity have already been described as old time industries. A reference may, however, be made to the hand pounding of rice. It is commonly practised in almost every household in the rural areas of the district. Every rural family has a wooden instrument called *Dhenki* in Assamese to husk paddy by pounding it with the foot, The rural people regard it as an essential part of their family requirements and about three-fourths of the entire husked rice of the rural areas are processed in the *dhenki.*

Carpentry, in the rural areas, is more or less a subsidiary occupation. Village carpenters do not specialise in any branch and generally do all types of works like furniture-making, house-building etc. Wooden agricultural implements like plough, harrow, yoke, etc., are the main items manufactured by the village carpenters. Cart wheels and boats are also made.

Among other industries of the district, mention may be made of rope-making, fishing implements-making, bee-keeping, leather-tanning, oil-crushing etc., practised by the individuals here and there in the district. In the sugarcane producing areas, gur-making is also not uncommon.

The Assam Khadi & Village Industries Board has taken a number of schemes to develop cottage industries such as bee-keeping, match-making, *endi*-making, soap-making, *ghannies*, rope-making etc.. The Board has established 7 bee-keeping centres at Marzakhali, Dhuburi, Krishnai, Dubapara, Bilasipara, Srijangram and Singritola. Opening of a new bee-keeping centre at North Salmara is also under consideration. The board has established production centres at Kokrajhar and Marzakhali with a view to encouraging Khadi weaving, bee-keeping and *Gur* and *Khandsari* industries. It has also a proposal to set up *Ambar Charkha* at Manikpur. The Board is also running four *Khadi Bhandars* for sale of *Khadi* products at Bongaigaon, Dhuburi, Kokrajhar and Goalpara, established in 1968, 1970, 1975, 1974 respectively. The activities of the Board are supervised by a Zonal Officer with his headquarters at Kokrajhar. In recent years, tailoring also appears to have made large inroads into interior areas of the district.

Due to increasing use of bicycles, the cheapest means of conveyance of village folk, a number of cycle repairing shops are coming up, even in the rural areas of the district, although the majority are located in urban and semi-urban areas. Among the new cottage industries which are gradually coming up in the urban and semi-urban areas, mention may be made of radio and watch repairing shops, bakeries, soap-making units etc. There are also 2 units making *agarbatti*, 3 units making toys and dolls, and 20 units making mat and *sital pati*.

(d) *INDUSTRIAL POTENTIALITIES AND PLAN FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT* :

The dawn of Independence found the district of Goalpara trailing behind

most plains districts of Assam in the sphere of industries. Its main industries then consisted of only one large scale industry namely, the Match Factory at Dhuburi ; a few small scale industries mostly rice, oil, *chakki*. and saw mills and traditional cottage industries striving on their own with little help from the Government. Its few tea gardens contributed little to the district economy, and petroleum and coal, exploited and developed by the British in Upper Assam, were conspicuous by their absence. Through consistent efforts of the Government of Assam, assisted by the Government of India. steps have been taken to accelerate the growth of industries in the district. Along with development of transport and communication, power supply, technical know-how, marketing, capital and quality control, it has been possible to make some headway in industries mainly through erection of a heavy industry viz., the Refinery-cum-Petro Chemical Complex with crude oil from oil fields of Upper Assam, establishment of large scale industries like the paper mill at Jogighopa, and active assistance and guidance to small scale industries provided mainly by Assam Small Scale Industries Development Corporation and Small Industries Service Institute. A boost was also provided to rural industries of the district by selecting Gauripur as headquarters of the only Rural Industries Project taken up in Assam. To provide an infra-structure for the potential industries,Govt. have established one Industrial Estate at Bongaigaon and one Growth Centre at Goalpara in the district. Despite all such measures and pending full realisation of the potentialities of newly established industries, the district of Goalpara is still principally dependent on agriculture and in 1971 as many as three-fourths of its total working population were engaged in agriculture.

The district has enough potentialities for the development of forest and agro-based industries. The forest resources of the district offer scope for the establishment of more saw mills, timber treatment and seasoning plants, plywood factories, manufacture of hard-board, safety matches etc. The district is also one of the main jute growing areas and offers the possibility of setting up a jute mill. The Assam Industrial Development Corporation has already applied for a licence to the Govt. of India for setting up a jute mill in Goalpara district. Taking all factors into consideration the Assam Industrial Development Corporation (Govt. of Assam undertaking) has decided to set up the following industrial projects in the district of Goalpara.

Caustic Soda and Chlorine Plant, Jogighopa : In order to meet the requirements of Caustic Soda and Chlorine for the Ashok Paper Mills Ltd., the Assam Industrial Development Corporation obtained industrial licence for setting up a Caustic Soda and Chlorine Plant at Jogighopa. A company under the name and style 'Assam Alkali and Allied Chemicals Ltd.' was formed for the purpose. But as setting up the unit independently was not considered to be economically viable, it was subsequently decided to set up the unit as a captive

plant of Ashok Paper Mills Ltd. So, after completing most of the initial works of the project it was handed over to M/S Ashok Paper Mills Ltd. This project, set up in technical collaboration with M/S Udhe of West Germany will be capable of producing 7,700 tonnes of Caustic Soda and 6,780 tonnes of Chlorine and will provide employment to about 150 persons.

Brewery Plant : Based on the good demand for beer in the entire North-Eastern Region, the Assam Industrial Development Corporation is planning to set up a Brewery Plant with a capacity of 50,000 hecto litres per annum at Maliagalagaon near Bongaigaon. A new Company under the name and style 'Purbanchal Breweries Ltd.' has been formed and the total investment in the project is estimated at Rs. 180 lakhs. It has been undertaken as a Joint Sector Project with a group of private entrepreneurs and the agreement for financial collaboration has been signed. Some land has been acquired and preliminary steps for supply of machinery etc., have been taken. The raw materials viz., barley, malt, sugar rice, and hops will be obtained from in and outside the State.

Cigarette Factory : The said Corporation has also obtained an industrial licence for setting up a cigarette factory with a capacity to produce 3,000 million pieces of cigarette per annum. This project in Bilasipara circle will be set up in collaboration with M/S Golden Tobacco Company Ltd., Bombay, under the joint sector. The total investment for the project is estimated at Rs. 500 lakhs in which M/S Golden Tobacco Company Ltd. will have 25 per cent of equity shares. For implementation of the project and for its subsequent management a new Company named 'North Eastern Tobacco Company Ltd.' has been formed. The raw material viz., tobacco, cigarette paper, filter tipped, and flavouring chemicals required for the project will be obtained from in and outside the State. About 27 hectares of land have been acquired at Bamuni village near Bilasipara. Its employment potential is estimated at about 550 persons.

Based on the Refinery—cum-Petro Chemical Complex at Bongaigaon, the Corporation has identified the following projects which are expected to yield good results in the district of Goalpara.

Based on	Projects
1. **O-Xylene :**	It can be used for the production of pathalic anhydride which can be readily transported to different corners of the country for utilization for the manufacture of pathalate plasticisers dyes, etc.
2. **Polyester Fibre :**	Polyester Staple Fibre can be utilised in cotton, silk, handloom, power loom, and textile mills for the production of polyester blended fabrics.

3. **Polyester Fibre :** Using different films like metallic yarn, magnetic tapes, photo films etc., the following products can be synthetised.
   (1) Synthetic *Jari* (for decorative purpose).
   (2) Computer tapes, Video tapes, Audio tapes, Cartiges of Cassettes etc.
   (3) X-Ray plates, amateur and professional films etc.
4. **Aromatic extract :** Aromatic extract can be utilised for the production of carbon black.

The Assam Small Industries Development Corporation which has been established to promote the growth of small scale industries in the State has already assisted about 17 industries in the district by way of advancing seed, money, equity participation and providing machinery, on hire purchase terms etc. It has also established one raw material depot at Bongaigaon to supply fresh materials to the small scale industrial units located in Goalpara district. It has also carried out a survey of Goalpara district with the assistance of North Eastern Industrial and Technical Consultancy Organisation (N.E.I.C.O) for determining the feasibility of industries. The survey has identified the possibility of establishing 41 industries, details of which are given in the Appendix-A.

The Small Industries Service Institute also conducted a survey on the industrial potentiality of Goalpara district. The survey has identified industrial potentiality of the district more or less on the same line as described above.

There is scope for introduction of cottage-industries like-weaving, cane and bamboo work., carpentry, tailoring, jutemat and carpet making, cork industry and doll making in the 3 jails of the district. Besides earning good revenue for the State, it will help to rehabilitate the prisoners after their release from jail. At present, there is a small unit of bamboo and cane industry in the Dhuburi jail of the district and its produces are in good demand all over the country.

There are a number of Trade Unions in the district, which are looking after the interest of the working class. Names of some such Unions are siven at Appendix—B

APPENDIX—A

Industrial Profiles at a Glance (New Industrial Possibilites in Goalpara)

Sl. No.	Name of industry	Location	Capacity of the unit	Cost of the machinery & equipment.	Total cost of the project.	Profitability	Employment potential
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
				(Rs. in lakhs)	(Rs. in lakhs)		
Large and Medium Industries :							
1.	Pothalic Anhydride	Bongaigaon	700 tonnes/year	300.00	400.00	22%	114
2.	Jute twine	Dhuburi/ Kokrajhar	10 tonnes/day	30.00	63.00	24%	300
3.	Commercial plywood.	Kokrajhar	21 million sq.ft./year	40.00	67.00	24%	250
4.	Collapsible tubes.	Bongaigaon	9.68 lakh pcs./month	15.00	19.00	36%	80
Small Scale Industries :							
5.	Sun flower.	North bank	10 tonnes seeds/day	3.25	16.50	40%	16
6.	Potato-starch	Goalpara	120 tonnes/year	2.00	4.50	18%	20
7.	Banana powder	Goalpara	2 tonnes/day	3.50	5.40	30%	20
8.	Absorbent cotton	Main towns	500 kgs/day	6.25	9.75	25%	40
9.	Solvent extraction plant. ..	Dhuburi	15 tonnes/day	9.18	24.64	24%	59
10.	Match splint	Bijni	1 tonne splint & 2000 gross veneers/day	0.75	2.10	25%	25
11.	Manufacture of Matches. ..	Fakiragram	500 gross/day	1.75	5.25	16%	90
12.	Cotton hosiery	Main towns	18,000 dozen/year	1.50	3.00	20%	12

Appendix—A (Contd.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
13.	Leather tanning unit	Kokrajhar	Products worth Rs. 30 lakhs/year.	4.50	10.25	24%	205
14.	Bone meal unit.	Kokrajhar	5 tonnes/day	2.00	4.25	30%	15
15.	Oxalic Acid.	Kokrajhar	250 kg/day	6.00	8.00	21%	40
16.	Paper Board unit.	Bongaigaon	700 tonnes/year	8.00	11.25	25%	70
17.	Insecticide & Pesticide Formulation	Dhuburi	200 tonnes/year	0.75	1.75	22%	15
18.	Farm Hand Tools.	Main towns	Rs. 17 lakhs worth of farm tools/year.	5.00	10.50	28%	30
19.	Aluminium utensils.	Main towns	5 tonnes/month	1.50	3.25	23%	17
20.	Mosaic tiles.	Main towns	1000 tiles/day	1.00	2.25	22%	26
21.	Industrial fasteners.	Dhuburi/ Bongaigaon	100 tonnes/year.	2.00	3.50	29%	25
22.	Bakery unit.	Main towns	1,00,000 nos. bread & biscuits/year.	0.50	1.50	33%	20
23.	Paper bags unit.	Dhuburi/ Bongaigaon	500 kg/day	0.75	2.25	33%	10
24.	Flush doors	Dhuburi	12,000 dozen/year.	1.50	3.25	31%	20
25.	Semi-mechanised brick plant. ..	Bongaigaon	20,000 bricks/day	1.50	5.25	24%	55
26.	Butter's hardware.	Bongaigaon	45 tonnes/months.	3.50	7.00	30%	30
27.	Tyre retreading.	Dhuburi/ Bongaigaon	12,000 nos./year	2.00	4.55	27%	15
28.	Injection distilled water ..	Dhuburi/ Goalpara	41 lakhs ampules/ year.	1.00	2.60	27%	15

Appendix—A (Contd.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
29.	Bus body building unit. ..	Main towns	250 bus bodies/year	1.00	2.30	25%	10
30.	Pilfer proof closures. ..	Bongaigaon	60,000 pcs/day	4.00	8.30	25%	33
31.	Wood working saws. ..	Goalpara	1,30,000 nos./year	6.20	13.25	22%	27
32.	Wooden toys. ..	Gauripur	17 lakhs toys/year.	3.75	11.00	20%	150
33.	Wood wool. ..	Bongaigaon	Rs. 6 lakhs of wool/ year.	1.50	2.90	22%	25
34.	Automobile ancillaries..	Bongaigaon	81,000 nos./year.	3.50	11.20	34%	40
35.	Palmrosa Oil. ..	Main towns	20 kg oil per year	0.65	3.15	22%	60
36.	Topioca Starch. ..	Goalpara town, Dhuburi	3 Tonnes Starch per day	1.50	5.70	14%	35
37.	Phenyl Butazone.	Bongaigaon	20 kg per day	2.00	5.00	28%	20
38.	Phenacet in P-Acetamol P-Anisidine. ..	Bongaigaon	10 kg per day	1.50	2.50	22%	14
39.	Ferric Alum. ..	Jogighopa	5 tonnes per day.	6.00	11.00	19%	15
40.	Cattle & Poultry feed...	Kokrajhar	8 Tonnes per day.	0.50	3.50	20%	21
41.	Bibycle Tyres & Tubes. ..	Bongaigaon/ Dhuburi.	400 Tyres 500 Tubes per day.	4.63	9.82	17%	40

APPENDIX—B

Trade Unions in Goalpara district.

	Name of Unions.	Regd.No.	Date	Membership.
1.	Assam Match Co. Sramik Sangha, INTUC Unions Office, Dhuburi. ..	374	23.10.56	635
2.	Goalpara Zilla Bidi Workers Union, Dhuburi	530		369
3.	Dhuburi Transhipment Workers Union, Dhuburi, Assam.	330	..	50
4.	Lower Assam Mill Mazdoor Sangha, Dhuburi, Assam.	445	16.5.60	190
5.	Dhuburi Consumers Co-operative Employees Union.	651	1969	19
6.	Lower Assam PWD Labour Union, Dhuburi, Assam.	540	..	220
7.	AMCC. Technician's Union, Dhuburi. ..	687	29.7.70	108
8.	Goalpara Zilla Electricity Supply Workers Union, INTUC. Union office, Dhuburi. ..	432	1958	61
9.	AMCO Staffs Union, Dhuburi, Goalpara, Assam.	846	..	15
10.	Dhuburi Plywood Factory Mazdoor Union, Dhuburi.	375	23.10.56	31
11.	Lower Assam Dokan Karmachari Sangha, Dhuburi.	618	27.11.67	110
12.	Dhuburi Municipal Employees Union, Dhuburi	608	26.6·67	131
13.	Dhuburi Jute Workers Association.	245	19·54	130
14.	All Assam Navik Jal Mazdoor Sangha, Dhuburi	434	4.10·58	148
15.	AMCO. Employees Union, Dhuburi. ..	187	23.5.5:	140
16.	Dist. Municipality Harijan Mazdoor Sangha, Dhuburi.	511	1.5.62	61
17.	Dhuburi Shop & Establishment Workers Union	708	9.12.70	27
18.	Dhuburi Press Workers Union.	559	20.3.64	24
19.	Uttar Goalpara Zilla Motor Karmi Sangha. ..	707	5.12.70	245
20.	Goalpara Zilla Contractors Labour Union, INTUC office, Dhuburi, Assam.	433	1958	305
21.	Asok Paper Mills Employees Union, Goalpara	802	2.3.74	274
22.	Labour Assam Mill Mazdoor Sangha, Dhuburi	485	16.5.60	190

CHAPTER—VI

BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE

A. BANKING AND FINANCE

(a) *HISTORY OF INDIGENOUS BANKING* :

As observed by the Assam Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee in 1929, the history of indigenous banks in Assam is shrouded in obscurity. During the Pre-British days when the economy of the country was mainly based on barter system, there was hardly any need for credit money while money itself was scarcely available to the public for day-to-day transactions except coins of smaller denominations and *cowries* or conch-shells which were used in minor transactions. Such an economy would have never fostered the growth of any banking institutions or so-called indigenous banking in those days. We may have a glance at the affairs of the district during the early years of the British administration from W.W. Hunter's *Statistical Account of Assam*, which states that the district had ordinarily a surplus crops which were disposed of in the local markets in exchange of other necessaries.[1] In the permanently settled areas, money required by a tenant to pay land rent to the *Zaminders* was obtained from sale of the surplus produce in the market. If the tenant failed to pay arrear land rents, the *Zaminder* arrested and detained him until the tenant paid the landlord by borrowing from some subordinate or relative of the landlord on execution of a stamped bond.[2] "Accumulation of coin made by the lower classes are usually hoarded; the middle and upper classes employ their savings in trade and lend them out on usury".[3] During natural calamities viz., flood or draught, the *Zaminders* provided money or paddy as loans and very often on charity to the tenants particularly undertenants who failed to get any Government loan for want of security (before the passing of the Goalpara Tenancy Act.). Co-villagers also helped each other in the shape of doles of paddy or with money or paddy loans. In the temporarily settled tract of the Eastern *Duars* also similar situation prevailed.

1. W.W. Hunter : *A Statistical Account of Assam, Vol. II*, New Delhi, 1975 (Reprint) p. 76.
2. Ibid, p. 67
3. Ibid, p. 81.

Meanwhile, the British administration was consolidated in Assam and the people became well acquainted with their currency system. Assam witnessed the growth of free trade and commerce which attracted a number of business talents from outside Assam. Marwari businessmen from Rajasthan and Bengali merchants from Bengal established commercial enterprises in different trade centres of the district. They extended branches of their establishments to the rural areas as well as to the tea gardens which were, of course, a very few in number in the district. These merchants had ready money which they could afford to lend at a profitable rate of interest besides investing in trade. They issued loans generally for short terms. They also transacted a large business in *hundies*, cheques or drafts. This type of banking transaction was a secondary business of these people in those days. Some of the businessmen succeeded in mobilising the savings in the rural sector. They used to accept deposits from the villagers and interest was paid on the deposits by some firms. It is evident from the statement of a Marwari merchant of Dhuburi before the Banking Enquiry Committee. He stated, "We accept deposits but pay no interest. There are Marwari traders who pay interest at 9 to 11 per cent on deposits which are used by them in business".[4] The sense of security which the Marwari firms could instill in the minds of the depositors encouraged the latter to entrust those firms with their savings. The deposits were of the nature of deposit-at-call. Pass-books were rarely used, though receipts were frequently granted to the depositors. The Marwari firms and other money lenders also made advances for short terms to agriculturists in the villages against their crops in stipulation to purchase at the market rate,—though in fact, it means a perpetual income and great profit to the lenders due to under estimation of the crop-yeild as the economically poor borrowers in most cases are never able to repay the loan in time. The intermediary *beparis* who also made such advances agaimst crops with borrowed money from the big firms in the towns, charged interest generally in terms of crops, which in terms of money was exceedingly lucrative and such interest varied from 50 to 75 per cent.

(b) *GENERAL CREDIT FACILITIES* :

It was only during the early part of the current century that the credit structure of the district took some concrete shape. So long credit facilities were provided by the money-lenders, indigenous banks and landlords as already referred to. The money-lender had freehold upon the credit field and earned big profits on usury without check. In 1879, W.W. Hunter observed : "There are no banking establishments in Goalpara;

4. *Assam Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee*, 1929-30, p. 437.

loans are conducted by shopkeepers who combine their regular trade with money lending and also by the wealthy land holders".[5] The money lender retained the predominant hold upon the people even after banking institutions grew up. The Co-operative Town Bank, Dhuburi registered in 1909, was the first banking institution organised in the co-operative sector. This bank catered to the needs of credit in the Dhuburi Municipal area only. It was followed by the Central Co-operative Banking Union, Dhuburi, registered in 1917 and Central Co-operative Banking Union, Bijni, registered in 1922, for financing the co-operative credit societies already organised. The credit societies having got the source of finance began to advance credit to their respective members in rural areas. In the meantime, loan offices of Joint Stock Banks incorporated out-side the district were established. In 1929-30, there were seven loan offices in the district. The Dhuburi Loan Office incorporated within the district covered under its operation the Assam Valley Division and also Bengal to some extent. The United Bank of India opened its branch office at Dhuburi on 26th September, 1938. Notwithstanding the development of such credit facilities, the money lenders retained its predominent position hitherto held in the credit field. Though Government provided loans at times of natural calamities, the sub-tenants who had no professed title to landholdings before the passing of the Goalpara Tenancy Act, 1929 could scarcely avail of Government loan facilities for want of security. On the other hand, the loan offices also issued loans against security and the co-operative credit societies played only an insignificant part in this regard. Naturally the people became the exploit of the moneylender. Friends and relatives were another important source of credit next in importance to the money lender. These two sources supplied four fifths of the rural credit.[6]

Along with the change of time the relative position of the credit sources also changed as a consequence of various control measures and Acts passed in regard to money lending and expansion of the other credit facilities after independence. The Co-operative Societies have come in a big way to meet credit requirement in the rural sector. With a view to ensuring steady flow of credit the entire, organisational set-up of the rural credit has been refashioned with the Assam Co-operative Apex Bank at the top and the Primary Co-operative Credit Societies at the base. Thus, out of the total loans issued by the Co-operative Department though the Primary Agricultural Credit Societies in Goalpara the total loans outstanding at the end of June, 1968, amounted to Rs.53,47,000. In addition to

5. W. W. Hunter : *A Statistical Account of Assam, Vol. II*, New Delhi, 1975, (Reprint) p. 81.

6. P. C. Goswsami : *The Economic Development of Assam*, Calcutta, 1963, p. 63.

increasing co-operative credit facilities, some of the Commercial Banks after Bank nationalisation have opened branches in the rural areas of the district to cater to the needs of the rural people. At the end of June 1974, the number of offices of Commercial Scheduled Banks reached 24 in Goalpara district including 12 offices in rural areas and the total volume of advances made by these offices amounted to Rs.1.69 crores. The State Government by providing increasing facilities for loans for specific purposes in the shape of Agricultural Loan, Rehabilitation Loan, Cattle Loan, Industrial Loan etc. has played a significant role as a source of credit.

With the expansion of credit facilities, the demand for credit has also steadily gone up. It is difficult to ascertain the proportion of the credit provided by different sources mentioned above. The *Kabuliwalas* who hail from Afganisthan and engage themselves in money lending are still noticed in the district.

The Sample Survey in jute growing areas of Assam in 1963 estimated the relative position of different credit sources in Goalpara as follows : Agricultural money lender—1.1 per cent, Local money lender—51.0 per cent, Whole-seller in jute—1.0 per cent, Government agricultural loan—2.4 per cent, Co-operative Societies—19·4 per cent, Relatives 12.1 per cent, Commercial Banks—3.1 per cent, Kabuliwala—3.8 per cent, Others—6.1 per cent of the total amount of debt.[7]

The Planning Commission recently discloses that easier credit facilities should be extended to small and marginal farmers in order to enable them to utilise the infrastructure facilities provided by Goverment like irrigation, transport, warehousing facilities, technical method employed in modern farm practice. Credit is the critical requirement to purchase the necessary farm implements, fertilisers etc. Banks spreading to rural areas extend credit only against security. The Nationalised Banks provide only long-term loans through organised institutions but are reluctant to give short-term loans except security. Consequently such farmers are to approach the money-lender for credit on usurious rates of interest. Recent moratoria and control measures have though brought some effect, the money lenders cannot be eliminated from the credit field so long the real gap in credit supply persists and the bigger land owners act as money-lenders. It is suggested that the rural banks should take the risk of lending on the basis of crop-loans to achieve the desired end.

7. *Report on the Survey conducted in the Jute Growing Areas of Assam for study of Indebtedness among the Cultivators*, 1963, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong p. 40.

(i) **Rural and urban Indebtedness** : Rural Indebtedness : There is considerable burden of indebtedness in the rural sector. "Growth of population and stagnation of rural productivity with limitation of employment opportunities are sure to lead to greater indebtedness" [8] It has been observed in the old District Gazetteer of Goalpara in this regard as follows : "Indebtedness is reported by the local officers to be fairly common, but it is probably in few cases that it is of a serious character".[9] This observation made under the economic conditions prevailing at a time when there were limited credit facilities and retarded growth of population no longer held good in subsequent years when there was a population spurt due mainly to immigration vis-a-vis growing credit facilities. Loss of crops due to floods and draughts as well as stagnant production increased the credit needs of the agriculturists. In 1921-22, Government alone lent about Rs.1,50,000 in Dhuburi and Rs.50,000 in Goalpara and the Gauripur Estate about Rs.10,000 among its tenants who failed to get the Government loan. Likewise other estates also provided loans to their respective tenants. This shows the magnitude of rural indebtedness. But for want of proper survey of the district, it is not possible to assess the rural indebtdness. The Provincial Bankings Enquiry Committee, 1929-30, estimated rural indebtedness at 62 per cent to the total families in the sample; the average debt per family at Rs.111·00 and indebted family at Rs.180·00. In this respect Goalpara occupied a better position than most of the districts of Assam. Compared to All Assam figures of rural indebtedness, the incidence of debt was also less in Goalpara district. The said enquiry revealed that the average debt per family in Assam was Rs.205 and per indebted family Rs.242. The All India Rural Credit Survey fixed the average debt per family in Assam at Rs.219. The All India Rural Debt and Investment Survey conducted by the Reserve Bank of India in 1961 indicated that 20.1 per cent of the rural households in Assam reported borrowings during the period of survey as against 49.1 per cent for all India. The average amount borrowed per rural family was Rs.33, the average for cultivators and non-cultivators being Rs.36 and Rs.23 in Assam as against the corresponding all India averages of Rs.180, Rs.205 and Rs.111 respectively.[10] The survey further revealed that the proportion of households reporting outstanding loans was 39.5 per cent in Assam against the all India percentage of 62.1.[11]

According to the Sample Survey conducted only in jute growing areas in Assam in 1963, 30.6 per cent of the families in the sample areas

8. P. C. Goswami : *The Economic Development of Assam*, Calcutta, 1963, P. 60.
9. B. C. Allen *Assam : District Gazetteers, Vol. III, Goalpara*, Calcutta, 1905, P. 96.
10. *Census of India, Vol. III*, Assam, 1961, p. 427.
11. *Economic Survey of Assam*, 1970, Department of Economics and Statistics, of Assam, pp. 111-112.

of Goalpara were in debt. The total debt amounted to Rs.14,069 showing the average debt of Rs.201 per indebted family. These findings, however, differ from the findings in the preceding rural economic survey of the district in which 42.7 per cent of the families were found indebted with Rs.120 as the average debt per indebted family.

The same survey revealed that loans were obtained from different sources with or without security. Generally, loans from friends and relatives were free from interest while other agencies like money-lenders, co-operative societies, banks and Government charged interest besides security. In Goalpara, the loans bearing interest either in cash or kind accounted for 64.7 per cent. Of the secured loans the largest number was under simple mortgage of land bearing interest of about 14 per cent of the total amount of loan. Only 2.8 per cent of the total loans were contracted under usufructuary mortgage of land. In some areas peculiar types of securities such as lease of land by borrower with transfer of possession and lease obtained by the borrower himself on the usufructuary land for cultivation were also prevalent.[12]

With the economic depression in 1931-32, the debt burden of the people increased considerably. The Assam Money Lenders Act was enacted in the year 1934 to mitigate the hardship caused by the exorbitant rate of interest. During the period from 1936 to 1939 several Debt Conciliation Boards were formed under the Assam Debt Conciliation Act of 1936. The Second World War opened ample avenues of employment and vastly improved the trade and commerce of the province. The burden of debt in the rural sector is believed to have been materially affected by the soaring prices. Although rise in prices of agricultural products has to some extent relieved the agriculturists from the pressure of the inflation of the plan period, such inflation has on the whole enhanced the demand for rural credit. It is believed that the financial assistance provided by different financial institutions has not been commensurate with needs.

The debt in the rural sector is incurred by the people for various purposes viz; repayment of old debt, marriage, *sraddha*, purchase of farm cattle, implements and seeds, purchase of land or its improvement, education of children, medical expenses, and during famine and failure of crops. As regards proportions of loans incurred for different purposes in Assam, P.C. Goswami observed : "Social ceremonies like marriage, *sraddha* (funeral ceremonies) etc. account for one-tenth to one-fifth of the total

12. *Report on the Survey conducted in the Jute Growing Areas of Assam for Study of Indebtedness among the Cultivators*, 1963, Department of Economics and Statistics Govt. of Assam, Shillong, pp. 14-18 and p. 42.

loans, and productive purposes like purchase of cattle, seeds, implement etc. and improvement of land, only for 15 to 30 per cent. The proportions of loans for education of children and medical expenses are quite insignificant. Famines and crop failures are the general causes of loans."[13] The proportion of loans under unproductive purposes is always higher than that for productive purposes. The proportion of unproductive loans would be more pronouncing if the grain loans taken during famine and crop failures and credit purchase of consumer goods are also added to it. P.C. Goswami also quotes from All India Rural Credit Survey Committee's report for all India the proportion under different purposes of d ebts as follows—"(a) Capital Expenditure on Farm, 27.8%; (b) Current Expenditure on Farm, 9.3%; (c) Non-Farm business Expenditure, 6.6%; (d) Family Expenditure, 50.2%; (e) Other Expenditure, 5.7%; (f) More than one purpose, 0.4%".[14]

A striking contrast is, however, noticed in Goalpara district in which purchase of food articles covered 76.2 per cent of the total amount of loans as revealed by the Sample Survey in jute growing areas of Assam in 1963. The high proportion of debts under unproductive purposes including family expenditure was the natural outcome of low productivity of the soil and crop failure due to frequent floods. Such crop failure has been a regular phenomenon in the economy of Assam as a whole. In recent years, rural indebtedness on such account has rather assumed greater proportion due to food shortage and high prices, the food problem having been affected by the recent exodus of the East Pakistani (Bangladesh) refugees.

Generally the debt burden is higher for the non-cultivating families than for cultivating ones and in both these categories land-owners bear heavier burden than the landless. This is due to better credit worthiness of the land-holders.

Urban Indebtedness : The source of urban credit are almost the same as those of the rural credit; but the role of each of those organisations is different in these two sectors. While the *Mahajans* or land owners play a significant role in providing loans in the rural areas, the businessmen, particularly wholesale dealers, occupy an important place in providing credit in the urban areas. They allow credit to the trusted retailers. No interest is usually charged on the outstanding amount for a certain period. In most cases, the transaction is completed on the basis of some entries in their registers, usually called *Rokar*. Total amount of credit provided in this way is believed to be more than what the petty dealers secure from

13. P. C. Goswami, *The Economic Development of Assam*, Calcutta. 1963, p. 62.
14. Ibid, p. 242.

other sources. The Commercial Banks have set up branches mostly in the urban areas. Various types of loans are advanced by these banks for industry, trade and commerce. Various sections of people avail of the credit facilities extended by these banks. As a result, new industries are coming up in the towns and the volume of trade is also fast expanding in the urban areas. Figures showing the extent of urban credit in Goalpara district are, however, not available. The present inflationary trend is believed to have seriously affected the purchasing power and enhanced the debt burden of the low income group living in the towns; because they are to purchase all they require for their subsistence.

(ii) **The Role of Private Money Lenders** : It has been already pointed out that the private money lenders, professional and semi-professional, played a prominent role in the rural finance. In the past, they were the only persons, to whom the people in distress could look for credit. Even in spite of legislations curtailing the earnings of the money lenders, expansion of banking institutions and co-operative credit societies etc. the money lender continues to be the most important source of rural credit. As revealed by the Sample Survey in jute growing areas of Assam in 1963, the money lenders, agricultural money lenders and middlemen and wholesalers in jute trade together accounted for 60.81 per cent of the total loans. This is because of the privileged position of the moneylender who is always at the door of the needy people whose requirement he fulfills immediately without much formality and security required by the banks and other sources. Moreover, the money lender often makes advances against crops to be paid after the harvest and the debtor can hope to make repayment in easier instalments though in fact most of them cannot. The high rate of interest is out-weighed by such privileges. According to the Census Report of 1891, there were only 1,792 professional money-lenders in the whole of the Brahmaputra Valley. Figures of professional money lenders are not available in the subsequent censuses, presumably because the money-lenders do not want to return themselves as such with motive to save their business from regulation. On the other hand, money-lending is only a side business of the rich merchants. However, the only perceptible business of the *Kabuliwalas* is money lending, but they shift their area of operation frequently and provide no clue to their volume of transaction. The total number of money lenders including pawn-brokers was censused as 43 in Goalpara district in the 1961 Census.

Rate of interest : The rate of interest charged by the money lenders varies from 10 per cent to more than 50 per cent and sometimes to 150 per cent. The calculation of the rates of interest presents difficulties in case of loans taken in kind or in cash as advance against standing crops. The

rates of interest charged by the *Kabuliwalas* is exorbitant but the terms of repayment appear to be alluring to the poor villagers. The *Kabuliwalas*, who formerly confined their business in the tea gardens have now-a-days extended their business into the villages. They do not pay to the loanee the full amount of the loan but only a part of the principal deducting the interest for the first year from it.

On the other hand, the rate of interest of loans issued by the Industries Department, the Co-operative Banks and other Commercial Banks varies from 4 per cent to 10 per cent. As revealed by the Sample Survey in jute growing areas of Assam in 1963, 89 per cent of the debts in Goalpara carried interest above 50 per cent and these loans were obtained from the money lenders. In spite of the low rates of interest of other agencies like Government, Commercial Banks (both nationalised and private) etc. the usurious business of the money lenders has been flourishing. This predominant hold of the money lender rests on his popularity as the saviour on distress being available at the door with ready money and easier terms of contract. On the other hand a viable network of banking institutions is yet to cover the rural areas and only a few of them are situated in towns and semi-urban areas. Hence, they are not easily accessible in times of urgency. Besides, the rural people are ignorant about the complex procedure of securing loans from commercial banks. Moreover, the potential borrowers of villages scarcely have tangible assets to hypothecate against a loan. In order to eliminate the evils of usury, it is now urgently felt that the banking institutions, particularly those in public sector, should be more viable spreading to the rural areas and issuing crop loans.

(iii) **Joint Stock Banks** : There is no Joint Stock Commercial Bank incorporated in Goalpara district. There are only twenty six branch offices of Commercial Scheduled Banks such as the United Commercial Bank – the Lead Bank in the district ; United Bank of India ; Union Bank of India ; Punjab National Bank and the State Bank of India. It has been already mentioned that the United Bank of India opened a branch office at Dhuburi on 26.9.38. This Bank has now six branch offices in this district including its Dhuburi Branch. The other branch offices are located at Abhayapuri opened on 14.12.70, Krishnai on 28.2.73, Dhupdhara on 26.3.73, Jogighopa on 30.4.73 (confined to the Ashok Paper Mills only) and Bongaigaon on 30.3.74. It is one of the fourteen scheduled commercial banks nationalised in July, 1969. The State Bank of India has five branch offices at Goalpara, Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, Dhuburi and Bilasipara and two sub-offices at Basugaon and Golakganj. The United Commercial Bank of India, the 'Lead Bank' in the district has now thirteen branch 14. ies all over the district. Obviously, the expansion of banking facilities in

Goalpara district has been mainly after bank nationalisation in July, 1969. In December, 1969, the Reserve Bank of India introduced the 'Lead Bank Scheme' for setting up adequate banking facilities in the underbanked districts of the country. The 'Lead Banks' are entrusted with the task of taking leading role in surveying credit needs, development of branch banking and extension of credit facilities in the districts allotted to them. Under this scheme, Goalpara along with Kamrup and Darrang districts has been allotted to the Commercial Bank of India. The thirteen branch offices so far established in the Goalpara district by this Commercial Bank of India are located at Dhuburi. Goalpara, Kokrajhar, Lakhipur, Bongaigaon, Gauripur, Bijni, Gosaigaon, Dudhnai, Mankachar, Sapatgram, Chapar, and Dotama. Two other nationalised scheduled banks viz., the Union Bank of India and the Punjab National Bank have also opened banking offices in this district, each now having one branch office at Bongaigaon. Thus at the end of 1975, the total number of banking offices functioning in the public sector in Goalpara district reached twenty six against only five at the end of June, 1969, just before nationalisation of the fourteen scheduled banks. These branch banking offices are distributed over nineteen centres of which Bongaigaon claims four, Dhuburi three, Kokrajhar two and others sixteen. At the end of June, 1974, the district had twenty four such banking offices which mobilised total deposits of Rs. 4,61 lakhs and issued a total advances of Rs. 1,96 lakhs against 22 branch banking offices with total deposits of Rs. 4,31 lakhs and total advances of Rs. 1,03 lakhs at the end of June, 1973 when the offices were confined to seventeen centres.

However, expansion of banking facilities in rural areas of the district has been tardy. The number of banking offices in rural areas of the district stood twelve at the end of June, 1974 against ten at the end of June 1973. The total deposits mobilised by these branches in the rural sector during the period decrease from Rs. 92 lakhs to Rs. 75 lakhs while advances increased from Rs. 12 lakhs to Rs. 27 lakhs.

The following table shows the nature of bank deposits in the district.

Deposits

(Amount in Lakhs)

Year	Current		Savings		Fixed		Others		Total	
	No. of Accts.	Amount	No of Accts.	Amount	No. of Accts	Amount	No. of Accts	Amount	No. of Accts	Amount
1974	7,076	138	21,853	164	5,165	154	1,456	5	35,538	461
1973	6,442	158	15,790	141	3449	127	1,452	4	27,133	430

Though vast areas in rural sector are yet to be covered by banking offices leaving much leeway in meeting the credit needs of the rural people, credit advances have been extended to every field of industry or occupation in an increasing way. As already pointed out, total advances by the banking offices in the district increased from Rs. 38 lakhs at the end of June, 1970 to Rs. 103 lakhs at the end of June, 1973 and then to Rs. 169 lakhs at the end of June, 1974 when outstanding credit covering all fields amounted to Rs. 251.39 lakhs of which small-scale industries accounted for Rs. 49.55 lakhs. The following table shows the occupation-wise break-up of outstanding credit in 1973 and 1974.

Occupation-wise classification of outstanding credit of scheduled Banks in Goalpara.

(Amount in thousand)

Occupation	As on June/74		As on June/73.	
	No. of Accts.	Amount	No. of Accts.	Amount
1	2	3	4	5
1. Agriculture	1,775	3,764	1,188	2,830
2. Industry	469	13,143	194	4,407
3. Trade	875	6,465	337	3,481
4. Personal loans (including consumer durables) ..	195	702	139	374
5. All others	584	1,065	88	374
Total Bank Credit	3,898	25,139	1,946	11,466
Small-Scale Industries	225	4,955	95	2,991

The United Bank of India : The United Bank of India incorporated at Calcutta opened a branch office at Dhuburi on 26-9-38 which was its only branch in the district till 14-12-70 when its Abhayapuri Branch was opened. Since then it has opened four other branches at Krishnai (28-2-73), Dhupdhara (26-3-73), Jogighopa (30-4-73) and Bongaigaon (30-9-74). This bank has now its regional office at Gauhati. Under 'Lead Bank Scheme' the United Bank of India is the 'Lead Bank' in Upper Assam districts. This bank now extends credit advances to almost all fields. The following tables show the position of deposits and advances of the six branches of this bank as on 30-6-75.

Advance position of branches in the district of Goalpara upto 30-9-76.

(Amount in thousands).

Total Advance	Priority Sector Advances as on 30-6-75.							
	Agri-culture	R.T.O.	S.S.I.	Retail Trade	Small Busi-ness	Profes-sional & self emp.	Others	Tradi-tional
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
46.60	6.11	1.90	7.05	12.19	0.24	1.52	2.08	15.51

Deposit position of branches in the district of Goalpara upto 30th June, 1975.

(Amount in thousand)

year	Total of Deposits	Demand Deposit		Time Deposit		S. B. Deposit		Other Deposit		Remarks
		Amo-unt.	P.C.	Amo-unt.	P.C.	Amo-unt.	P.C.	Amo-unt.	P.C.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1975	163.64	26.84	16%	65.51	40%	59.49	36%	12.80	8%	

The State Bank of India : The State Bank of India opened its first banking office at Goalpara on 29-8-56 followed by Kokrajhar branch on 26-10-56 and Dhuburi branch on 26-9-57. Its regional office is located at Shillong. In recent years only, it has opened two other branches at Bongaigaon on 31-7-72 and Bilasipara on 25.8.75 and two sub-offices at Golakganj and Basugaon. The State Bank now transacts all types of banking business in addition to Government transactions. The following statement shows the figures of advances granted by the State Bank of India through its old three branches to industries, small business, professionals, traders, agriculture etc., in Goalpara district as on 31-12-1970.

Occupations	No. of Units	Limit of amount sanction (Rs. in thousand)
1	2	3
1. Agricultural finance	516	19,69
2. Small Scale Industries	49	23,53
3. Small buiness and professionals ..	175	17,38
4. Industries	..	..
5. Traders	40	22,97

(iv) **Co-operative Credit Societies and Banks** : Goalpara district is now served by the Assam Co-operative Apex Bank Ltd., through its three branches at Dhuburi, Goalpara and Kokrajhar ; the Goalpara District Central Co-operative Bank, Dhuburi and a network of Co-operative Credit Societies—both agricultural and non-agricultural. At the end of June, 1968, Goalpara district had 578—Primary Agricultural Credit Societies and 16 Primary Non-agricultural Credit Societies. The Goalpara District Central Co-operative Bank had four offices including the head office at Dhuburi town at the end of June, 1968 and had as members 518 Co-operative Societies and 97 individuals. Before we discuss the organisational set-up and performance of the Co-operative Credit Societies in respect of rural credit, it will be interesting to trace briefly the growth and development of these societies in the district.

The co-operative movement in Assam started after the enactment of the Co-operative Societies Act of 1904. As elsewhere in Assam, a few number of rural agricultural credit societies (*Gaolia* Banks) were organised in this district. The Co-operative Town Bank, Dhuburi was registered in 1909 to finance the municipal area only. This was the first banking institution in the district. Gradually the need to extend the movement to non-credit aspect was felt. Accordingly, the Co-operative Societies Act of 1912 was passed. This Act provided for formation of both credit and non-credit societies. The societies formed in this district could not make much headway during the initial years for want of a central organisation for financing and co-ordinating the societies. It was only in 1917 that the Central Co-operative Banking Union, Dhuburi was registered. However, this bank did not cover the entire district ; therefore, another bank of the type - the Central Co-operative Banking Union, Bijni, was organised and registered on 19-7-22. Thus, the gap in the Co-operative Banking was bridged. Gradually, these two Central Banks extended their operation to cover all credit and

non-credit societies of the district and financed them. Under the guidance and supervision of these Central Banks, a number of Co-operative Societies both credit and non-credit in the field of agriculture, industry and trade were formed. It may be noted here that these two Central Banks were amalgamated after Independence on 1-7-57 to form a viable central institution—the Goalpara District Central Co-operative Bank Ltd. with headquarters at Dhuburi.

Unfortunately, the growth and working of these societies were not satisfactory in this district and the movement could not make much headway in Assam as a whole till Independence inspite of Government patronage. The movement received a serious set-back during the great depression of the thirties. However, due to timely efforts of the Government, the movement managed to survive. The Second World War, which followed the crisis geared up the co-operative movement in the State and a number of Co-operative Consumers' Stores and Trading Societies were formed and flourished in this district as elsewhere in the State. Thus, there was a brief span of prosperity in its history. After the War, the movement again suffered from similar crisis. Most of the Consumers' Stores and Trading Societies went into liquidation and the Agricultural Credit Societies groaned under overwhelming burden of overdues. The position further deteriorated at the time of Independence when the movement was virtually on the verge of decay.

After Independence, efforts were made to reorganise the co-operative movement in Assam. The Assam Co-operative Societies Act, 1949, was passed repealing the old Act.

During the First Five Year Plan, efforts were renewed to revitalise the Co-operative Societies with financial assistance from the Reserve Bank of India. The Assam Co-operative Apex Bank was set up in 1948 and was entrusted with the onerous task of supplying credit to the Co-operative Societies and other organisations. During the Second Five Year plan, the co-operative organisation was reoriented on the lines of recommendations of the Rural Credit Survey Committee of the Reserve Bank of India. During this plan period, the Warehousing Corporation was also formed facilitating storage of agricultural produce. Several Warehouses have since been built in the district. As years rolled on, the co-operative organisation of the district grew in size and strength. During the 3rd and 4th Five Year Plans the emphasis has been placed on the rationalisation of the credit structure at primary level on the basis of viability. During the 4th Five Year Plan, the policies and procedure of credit co-operative societies and land development banks are oriented in favour of small cultivators.

The Co-operative Societies have made a phenomenal progress during the plan period. Besides the Primary Credit Societies, various categories of Service Co-operative Societies, Industrial Co-operative Societies, Farming Co-operative Societies, Co-operative Marketing Societies and Producers' Co-operatives have been established in the district. Mention may also be made of the tremendous responsibility shouldered by the Apex Marketing Society in connection with the monopoly paddy procurement through the Co-operative Societies since the beginning of the Third Plan. More important is now the Government take-over of food-grains trade in paddy which is being implemented through the Co-operatives. To carry out the trade, some new type of Co-operatives have been organised throughout the State.

Credit Revitalisation Scheme : It may be mentioned that the Service Co-operatives formed during the end of the Second Plan, were entrusted not only with the task of disbursing credit but also with such other responsibilities as distribution of fertilisers, establishment of effective links between credit and marketing and so on. But these societies emerged as weak and uneconomic units with overwhelming burden of overdues. Therefore, during the middle of the Third Plan, a credit revitalisation scheme was initiated. Under this scheme, weak and uneconomic units were amalgamated with strong and viable ones, and the dormant societies were liquidated. Such reorganised Service Co-operatives were made co-terminus with Gaon Sabha areas. Agricultural credit was made production oriented and crop-loan system was introduced in the areas of operation of the Nowgong, Tezpur, and Cachar Central Banks.

Another important development in the co-operative banking sector during the Third Plan was the enactment of the Banking Laws (Applicable to Co-operative Societies) Act, 1965. This Act has brought the co-operative banks within the purview of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

Recent developments : The Assam Co-operative Apex Bank Ltd., incorporated at Shillong and registered on the 7th December, 1948, has now shifted its headquarters to Gauhati. Till recently, this Bank financed the Co-operative Credit Societies through the District Central Co-operative Banks. After the formation of the Gaon Panchayats under the new Panchayat Act, 1972, Government of Assam took a decision to reorganise the credit structure and accordingly, 663 Gaon Panchayat level Co-operative Societies were organised in Assam. The principal functions of these societies would be wholesale and retail trade in consumer goods including wheat/wheat products, rice, sugar and cloth ; supply of agricultural loans—short-term, medium-term and long-term ; marketing, distribution, storage of agricultural produce and inputs, and to

serve as agencies for distribution of agro-based mechanical services. The onerous task of financing these societies was laid upon the Apex Bank which accordingly prepared a massive programme to meet the credit requirements of these societies. The Apex Bank now finances them directly bypassing the District Central Co-operative Banks with its five branches at Dhuburi, Goalpara, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon and Bilasipara, as instructed by the State Government. Thus, the co-operative movement has now achieved a new dimension covering all aspects of development in industry, agriculture, trade and commerce, distribution etc., in addition to banking.

The Assam Co-operative Apex Bank Ltd, Gauhati has three branch offices at Dhuburi, Goalpara and Kokrajhar ; the first two were opened in July, 1949 and the last one on the 22nd June, 1974. Since inception, the Dhuburi and Goalpara branches of the Bank financed the Central Trading and other Co-operatives. Since 1956, the Bank has been shouldering the responsibility of rural credit finance from funds available from the Reverve Bank of India and also from its own resources. Accordingly, the Dhuburi Branch of the Bank began to finance the Goalpara District Central Co-operative Bank at Dhuburi for financing the Credit Societies within the area of its operation. But now, the Apex Bank shoulders the responsibility of financing the societies directly through its branches in the district. It has now been decided to take over the complete charge of the Goalpara District Central Co-operative Bank at Dhuburi by merging it with its branches as one of the wing of the Apex Bank as per direction of the Reserve Bank of India and State Government and for which an ordinance has already been passed in the State Assembly. Besides issuing short-term, medium-term and long-term credit to the societies, the branches of the Apex Bank also receive deposits in Current, Fixed, Saving Bank, Recurring, Call Deposit or money at Call accounts for a short period from general public, educational institutions, Government and semi-government organisations, farms and Companies etc. General banking facilities such as collection of bills and cheques and their discounting are also provided in these branches of the Bank.

The total assets and properties of the Dhuburi Branch of the Apex Bank stood at Rs. 1,81,87,409 and total liabilities at Rs. 58,77,263 on 30.6.75. Since beginning of the First Five Year Plan upto 30.6.75, the deposits in the Dhuburi Branch have amounted to Rs. 16,98,41,909 of which Demand Deposits account for Rs. 13,25,67,771, Time Deposits Rs. 35,95,322 and Savings Deposit Rs. 3,36,78,816. The total advances during the period have amounted to Rs. 7,54,72,885 of which Trade and Commerce accounts for Rs. 5,01,55,559 or by 66.55%, Agriculture Rs. 2,13,29,097 or by 28.27% and remaining 5.28 per cent accounting for personnel advances. The following tables show their respective position since 1964 :

Deposits-Dhuburi Branch.

(in Rs.)

Heads.	1964	1969	1974
Co-operatives. ..	4,66,626	9,38,580	8,88,859
Individual, firm and Companies. ..	16,10,398	31,40,435	33,38,007
Total ..	20,77,024	40,79,015	42,36,866

Loans and Advances--Dhuburi Branch.

(in Rs.)

Heads	1964	1969	1974
Co-operatives. ..	13,79,810	63,65,425	1,34,21,860
Individuals. ..	351	38,525	15,147
Total ..	13,80,161	64,03,950	1,34,73,007

The following table shows the yearwise deposits and advances of the Goalpara Branch of the Assam Co-operative Apex Bank since 1952.

Deposits received by the Assam Co-operative Apex Bank Ltd. Goalpara Branch, from June, 1952 to July, 1975.

Year	Total Deposit. (Rs.)	Demand Deposit (Rs.)	P.C.	Time Deposit (Rs)	P.C.	Savings Deposit (Rs.)	P.C
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1952	11,35,890.00	10,41,774.00	91%	1,151.00	..	92,965.00	8%
1953	3,35,346.00	2 46,984.00	73%	1,425.00	..	86,937.00	26
1954	3,51,250.00	1,79,208.00	51	3,980.00	1	1,68,062.00	48
1955	10,64,291.00	7,53,718.00	71	55,430.00	5	2,55,143.00	24
1956	21,89,533.00	16,91,116.00	77	30,585.00	1	4,67,832.00	12
1957	21,16,543.00	12,53,501.00	59	25,720.00	1	8,37,322.00	40
1958	18,20,364.00	13,62,307.00	74	18,400.00	1	4,3 9,657.00	25
1959	23,16,728.00	15,94,668.00	68	56,313.00	2	6,65,747.00	29
1960	21,86,239.00	14,08,834.00	64	67,675.00	3	7,09,730.00	34
1961	27,15,900.00	22,37,346.00	82	16,371.00	..	4,62,183.00	17
1962	27,19,644.00	17,64,340.00	64	28,161.00	1	9,27,143.00	34
1963	23,02,344.00	17,20,770.00	74	1,38,442.00	6	4,43,132.00	19
1964	28,37,551.00	19,09,566.00	67	5,53,327.00	2	8,72,658.00	31
1965	49,72,539.00	36,72,745.00	74	47,056.00	..	12,52,738.00	25
1966	50,94,318.00	35,88,558.00	71	45,213.00	..	14,60,547.00	29
1967	53,00,484.00	37,49,424.00	71	1,38,721.00	2	14,12,339.00	27
1968	70,94,394.00	37,80,948.00	53	37,575.00	1	32,75,871.00	46
1969	73,41,997.00	52,25,947.00	71	50,050.00	1	20,66,000.00	28
1970	70,92,899.00	47,85,792.00	67	88,648.00	2	22,18,459.00	31
1971	82,12,956.00	58,30,482.00	71	1,74,000.00	2	22,08,474.00	27
1972	73,90,123.00	45,34,075.00	61	1,49,523.00	2	27,06,525.00	36
1973	67,51,952.00	34,86,722.00	52	1,24,100.00	1	31,41,130.00	46
1974	81,62,393.00	42,64,836.00	52	2,29,000.00	2	36,68,557.00	45
1975	1,05,41,626.00	38,11,897.00	36	75,240.00	1	66,54,489.00	63

Advances made by the Assam Co-operative Apex Bank Ltd., Goalpara Branch since June, '52 up to June,' 75.

Year	Total Advances Rs.	Purpose of Advances: Industry		Trade & Commerce		Agriculture		Profe-ssional		Personal	
		Amount Rs.	P.C.	Amount Rs.	P.C.	Amount Rs.	P.C.	Amount Rs.	P.C.	Amount Rs.	P.C.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1952 ..	10,81,692.00			10,81,692.00	100%						
1953 ..	46,628.00			13,611.00	29	33,017.00	71				
1954 ..	2,82,082.00		..	1,99,909.00	72	81,173.00	29				
1955 ..	5,19,919.00		..	3,78,206.00	72	1,41,713.00	28				
1956 ..	5,23,648.00	450.00	..	3,42,097.00	65	1,81,001.00	34				
1957 ..	9,03,054.00	1,26,439.00	15	2,95,842.00	32	4,80,773.00	53				
1958 ..	9,10,148.00	34,313.00	4	2,92,320.00	32	5,83,515.00	64				
1959 ..	3,21,811.00	10,280.00	3	3,11,531.00	97						
1960 ..	13,79,192.00	4,675.00	1	13,74,517.00	99						
1961 ..	11,97,233.00	4,908.00	1	11,92,325.00	99						
1962 ..	6,94,680.00	2,655.00	1	6,92,025.00	99						
1963 ..	2,90,675.00		..	1,94,795.00	66	95,880.00	34				
1964 ..	3,42,436.00		..	2,79,516.00	81	62,920.00	19				
1965 ..	3,42,342.00		..	2,86,088.00	83	65,254.00	17				
1966 ..	1,78,367.00		..	1,06,670.00	60	71,697.00	40				
1967 ..	6,74,068.00		..	5,26,165.00	76	1,40,733.00	21	7,170.00	3		
1968 ..	13,31,198.00		..	2,85,466.00	22	10,48,732.00	78	5,000.00	..		
1969 ..	29,92,640.00		..	3,31,731.00	11	26,54,034.00	89	6,875.00	..		
1970 ..	46,21,407.00		..	1,41,806.00	3	44,77,976.00	97	1,625.00	..		
1971 ..	29,78,170.00		..	14,554.00	..	29,42,741.00	99	7,875.00	..	13000.00	
1972 ..	17,375.00		..		..		..	17,375.00	100		
1973 ..	22,43,875.00		..	2,09,875.00	93	2,33,328.00	5	15,000.00	7	2800.00	
1974 ..	46,23,586.00		..	43,87,458.00	95						
1975 ..	51,49,382.00		..	50,43,339.00	98	93,918.00	2	12,125.00	..		

Deposits received by the Assm Co-op. Apex Bank Limited, Kokrajhar Branch since 24.6.74

Year	Total Deposits Rs.	Demand Deposits Amount Rs.	P.C.	Time Deposits Amount Rs.	P.C.	Savings Deposits Amount Rs.	P.C.
1973-74	2,21,282.00	2,18,466.00	98%			2,816.00	2%
1974-75	3,68,349.00	2,98,487.00	81%	6,922.00	0.01 8%	62,940.00	17%

Advances-made by the Assam Co-op. Apex Bank Limited Kokrajhar Branch Since 24.6.74

Year	Total advance Rs.	Purpose of advances: Trade and Commerce Amount Rs.	P.C.	Personal Amount Rs.	P.C.	Others Amount Rs.	P.C.
1973-74	220.00			220.00	100%		
1974-75	31,25,103.00	1,84,385	0.59%	11,020.00	0.03%	29,29,698.00	93%

Goalpara District Central Co-operative Bank, Dhuburi :

It has been already mentioned that after independence this Bank was organised by amalgamating larger credit societies with the Central Banking Union at Dhuburi and was reorganised by amalgamating the Central Banking Union at Bijni at the beginning of the Second Five Year Plan (1.7.57) for creating a viable central institution for organising, supervising, and financing rural credit societies and other non-credit societies. In 1948-49, these two Central Banks had a total membership of 130 and had total working capital of Rs. 81,549 and issued Rs. 4,012 only as loans to members and other societies. In 1956-57, the Goalpara District Central Co-operative Bank had 263 members-23 individuals and 240 banks and societies with a total working capital of Rs. 6,89,228. During that year, the Bank advanced Rs. 5,88,090 as loans to its member banks and societies at the rate of 6 per cent interest. In the same year, Bijni Central Co-operative Banking Union had 112 members-16 individuals, 98 banks and societies with a total working capital of Rs. 2,75,926 and advanced Rs. 2,22,880 as loans to its member banks and societies. After reorganisation, the Goalpara District Central Co-operative Bank, Dhuburi began to make rapid strides. In 1958-59, it

had three offices at Dhuburi, Goalpara, and Kokrajhar with total membership of 599 and its total assets and liabilities stood at Rs. 27,36,000 and Rs. 27,29,000, respectively. During that year, total loans and advances amounted to Rs. 8,82,000 of which Rs. 3,71,91,000 stood outstanding. The Bank made a profit of Rs. 8,32,00 during that year. During the period ending in June, 1967, the number of its branch offices increased to four and membership to 776 including 726 primary societies and 50 individuals and others.

Its total assets and liabilities increased to Rs. 42,88,000 and Rs. 43,63,000 respectively and its total working capital to Rs. 4,012,000 including Rs. 584,000 paid-up Capital.

The financial position of the Bank since 1968 is shown below :

Sl. No.	Particulars	Amount in lakhs of rupee 1967-68	1973-74
1.	Working capital.	74.10	272.03
2.	Paid-up capital	8.14	26.36
3.	Total assets.	77.12	..
4.	Total liabilities.	78.40	..
5.	Total deposits.	8.30	21.25
6.	Advances	8.76	193.02
	(a) Cash credit & overdrafts.	45.46	
	(b) Loans	62.96	..
7.	Loans outstanding		
8.	Borrowings—	43.80	180.54
	(a) From Apex Bank	x	
	(b) From Govt.		
9.	Borrowings outstanding	52.46	..
	(a) Apex Bank	4.73	..
	(b) Govt.		

At present, the Bank has five Branch offices at Dhuburi, Goalpara, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon and Bilasipara. It has been already pointed out that the Assam Co-operative Apex Bank which is now shouldering the responsibility of financing rural credit directly, has decided to take over the Central Bank with its branches as a wing of it.

Land Mortage Bank : Dhuburi :

The Primary Land Mortage Bank at Dhuburi was set up with a view to advance long-term loans for 15 years and 20 years to its members against mortgage of lands as such long-term loans were not available

from other sources of credit. Long-term loans are advanced for the purpose of purchasing land, redemption of mortgages, reclamation of lands etc., The following shows its financial position and membership since 1967-68.

Year	Members.	Working capital					Total Assets	Total liabilities.	Loans advanced during the year.	Loans outstanding.
		Total	Paid-up	Reserves	Deposits	Borrowings				
1967-68	154	1,26,000	9,000	..	..	1,15,000	1,41,000	138,000	10,000	1,16,000
1973-74	301	1,80,000	38,671	98,000	..	4,650				

Primary Co-operative Credit Societies : In order to open a Primary Co-operative Society, 15 or more persons should meet in an 'Inaugural General Meeting' which is also attended by a departmental officer. The model bye-laws provided by the Department are accepted in the meeting and the general body elects the functionaries of the Society, particularly the Chairman and the members of the Managing Committee. The area of operation of the Society, its functions and objects are also finalised in the meeting. The proceedings of the meeting are then forwarded to the Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies. The Society is then registered by the Department and the former immediately comes under purview of the Co-operative Societies Act. The working capital of a primary society, whether agricultural or non-agricultural, is composed of : (1) paid-up share capital ; (2) reserve fund ; (3) other funds ; (4) deposits from members ; (5) deposits from non-members ; (6) borrowings from Central and Provincial Banks ; (7) borrowing from other Societies ; and (8) borrowing from Government Departments. The first four items constitute the internal, and the other items, the external capital. A Primary Co-operative Society is managed by a Managing Committee consisting of 7 to 8 elected members. The Secretary of the Society is usually appointed by the Society and is responsible for maintaining the accounts of the Society. The Co-operative Department carries out audit from time to time.

In Goalpara district, there were 578 Primary Agricultural Co-operative Credit Societies with 51,142 members and 16 Non-Agricultural Co-operative Credit Societies with 1,338 members at the end of June, 1968. The financial position of these societies was as follows :

Financial position of the Primary Agricultural Co-operative Credit Societies at the end of June, 1968.

1.	Total tiabilities.	Rs.	64,34,000
2.	Total working capital	Rs.	58,60,000
3.	(a) Paid-up Capital	Rs.	8,43,000
	(b) Reverves & other funds ..	Rs.	79,000
	(c) Deposits	Rs.	2,33,000
	(d) Borrowings	Rs.	47,05,000
	Total assets	Rs.	66,93,000
4.	Cash balance	Rs.	1,47,000
5.	Investment	Rs.	7,52,000
6.	Loans outstanding	Rs.	53,47,000
7.	Loans advanced (during the year 1967-68).	Rs.	31,54,000
8.	Loans recovered (1967-68) ...	Rs.	6,88,000

During 1967-68, total loans advanced by these societies amounted to Rs. 31,54,000 against a recovery of Rs. 6,88,000. Thus, the total loans outstanding at the end of June, 1968 amounted to Rs. 53,47,000 of which Rs. 22,18,000 was overdue and Rs. 14,000 had been doubtful debts. The value of goods procured and distributed by the societies during the year amounted to Rs. 2,82,000. During the year, 159 societies made a profit of Rs. 36,000 and 323 societies incurred a loss of Rs. 1,30,000.

The financial position of the Non-Agricultural Credit Societies at the end of June, 1968 was as follows :

1.	Total liabilities	Rs. 1,37,000
2.	Total working capital	Rs. 1,18,000
	(a) Paid-up capital	Rs. 38,000
	(b) Reserves and other funds	Rs. 37,000
	(c) Deposits	Rs. 22,000
	(d) Borrowing	Rs. 21,000
3.	Total assets.	Rs. 4,43,000
4.	Cash balance	Rs. 33,000
5.	Investment	Rs. 3,34,000
6.	Loans outstanding	Rs. 27,000

(c) *LIFE INSURANCE* : The Life Insurance business in India was nationalised in 1956 and the Life Insurance Corporation of India was established on 1.9.56 under the provisions of Life Insurance Corporation Act, 1956. Prior to nationalisation, there was no office of any Private Insurer within the district of Goalpara. One of the main objectives of nationalisation was to spread the message of Life Insurance to every nook and corner of the

country and to offer the benefit of Life Insurance to every eligible person. To render service at the door of the insuring public and to penetrate effectively into rural areas, it was necessary to have offices in all important towns. With this end in view, the Life Insurance Corporation of India opened a branch office at Dhuburi in 1956, the year of its nationalisation. For mobilisation of insurance business in the Goalpara subdivision, a Development centre was opened under the Dhuburi Branch Office. This Branch office completed a total business of Rs. 58,53,000 in 1957, the intial year of its establishment. This began to show promising success and its volume of total completed business increased considerably from its initial business to Rs. 63,74,250 in 1958 and thence to Rs. 78,95,000 and Rs. 80,63,000 in 1959 and 1960 respectively.

General Insurance Corporation of India : The General Insurance Corporation of India has been set up after nationalisation of General Insurance industry in the country. It is an apex body under which the Govt. of India have set up 4 subsidiary unit companies for operation all over India. The unit companies are—

(1) The Oriental Fire and General Insurance Co. Ltd.
(2) The New India Assurance Co. Ltd.
(3) The United India Fire and General Insurance Company Ltd.
(4) The National Insurance Company Ltd.

The Oriental Fire and Generai Insutance Co. Ltd. has their Divisional Office at Gauhati to administer areas comprising the State of Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram. This divisional office has its branch offices at Dhuburi and Bongaigaon and one Inspector at Kokrajhar. They have 30 Agents in the Goalpara district. Annual Premium collection of this unit of General Insurance was Rs. 2 lakhs in June, 1976. Besides, they have got a block Government premium of about Rs. 15 lakhs annually against the insurance cover granted to M/S Ashok Paper Mills, Jogighopa.

There is no question of lapse of General Insurance Policies as the policies are issued for a short term of one year only. They pay Rs. 5% commission to the Agents for business secured against fire policies and 10% commission against accident and other policies. They give Insurance cover for almost all items of the State's economy i.e, industrial undertaking, shops and establishments, vehicles, tea-plantation, burglary and house-breaking, cash-insurance, mechinery breakdown insurance, fidelity guarantee insurance etc.

New India Assurance Co. Ltd. has only 3 seperate Inspectorate Officials at Dhuburi, Bongaigaon and Kokrajhar. Their business are conducted in 3

categories, (1) fire insurance, (2) marine insurance and (3) miscellaneous insurance covering all risks, burglary, accident, liability, money interest risks. There are numbers of Agents engaged on commission basis under the Asurance Act. Number of agents working in the district are sixty. Total amount of premium collected by this Company from general assurance in the district in 1977 is Rs. 46,000/- against its average collection of Rs. 25,000/- in between 1973 and 1976.

National Insurance Co. Ltd. has one branch office at Dhuburi and one Inspectorate at Bongaigaon. Their activities cover all the risks connected with burglary and house-breaking, cash-insurance, machinery-breakdown (both agricultural and otherwise), national calamities, accident etc. A number of Agents are in employment in field on usual commission basis. In 1977, Dhuburi branch of this company has collected about Rs. 8 lakhs 10 thousand as premium in 1977.

Small Savings : This scheme was introduced to inculcate the habit of savings amongst the people particularly in the rural sector and mobilise dormant capital for utilisation in planning and developments. But progress of mobilisation of small savings in the Goalpara district has not been upto expectation. During 1960--1971, though gross collections recorded increase from Rs. 5.7 million, to Rs. 13.6 million, the net collections recorded ups and downs and settled at the same level of Rs. 0·8 million of 1959-60. The following shows the collections in the Goalpara district since 1959-60 to 1973-74.

(in million rupees)

	Gross amount	Net amount
1959-60	5.7	0.8
1960-61	7.0	1.5
1961-62	5.3	0.5
1962-63	10.3	0.9
1963-64	6.7	1.3
1964-65	7.6	1.0
1965-66	9.2	1.3
1966-67	10.6	2.4
1967-68	11.4	1.1
1968-69	10.8	1.0
1969-70	11.8	1.9
1970-71	13.6	0.8
1973-74	14.9	1.5

(d) *STATE ASSISTANCE TO INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT* : The Government of Assam has set-up a vast net-work of offices and training centres all over the State with a view to rendering assistance to industries, creating an industrial conciousness and providing an impetus to development of new industries. For this purpose, the Directorate of Industries combining the major and small and cottage industries was set up in 1958 with offices at the district level. A Techno-Economic Survey of Assam was completed by the National Council of Applied Economic Research. Govt prepared project reports for different possible industries. To remove the causes of industrial backwardness such as dearth of capital, raw materials, technical personnel, power etc., the State Government has implemented through its Industries Department various measures such as training programme, financial assistance, supply of raw-materials, hire purchase of machineries, power subsidy, technical guidance, marketing facility for industrial products, establishment of industrial estates etc. Industrial estates have been established under the Industries Department in each district to provide factory sheds for small and cottage industries at concessional rents and to assist the entrepreneurs in securing loans from banks, Industrial Finance Corporation, Industrial Development Corporation etc. State Emporiums have also been set-up in each district to provide marketing facilities. Industrial Fairs have also been organised from time to time to give wide publicity as to available State assistance and facilities for further development of industries.

Financial assistance is given in the shape of loans, subsidies, grants-in-aid, stipends etc. Loans upto Rs. 2,500 may be sanctioned at the district level and beyond this upto Rs. 20,000 are generally granted by the Cottage Industries Directorate at low rates of interest and easy instalments. Loans beyond Rs. 20,000 are dealt with by the Industrial Finance Corporation. Government may consider loan upto Rs. 50,000 as a special case.

The following statement shows various State assistance to industrial development in Goalpara district since, 1951.

(a) **Industrial loan.**

Period	Amount in Rs.	Nos. of persons or units.	Trade
1	2	3	4
1951 to 1955 (General loan)	8,100.00	3 nos.	Printing press and horticulture.

1	2	3	4
1956 to 1960 (General loan)	1,69,870	191 nos.	Carpentry, blacksmithy, tailoring readymade garments, dairy, printing press, welding industries, photography, bee-keeping, arms-repairing, oil *ghani*, goldsmithy, net-making, book-binding, pottery, battery & cycle-repairing, R.C.C. ring, soda water, bidi-factory, ivory works, shoe-making.
1961 to 1965 (General loan.)	48,755.00	399 nos.	Brick, weaving, saw mills, carpentry, blacksmithy, tailoring, cane & bamboo works, cycle-repairing, printing works, looms & accessories works, radio-repairing, tiles factory, net-making, pottery, bakery, R.C.C. ring, watch-repairing, oil *ghani* photography, chalk-pencil industries, tinsmithy, fruit preservation.
1961 to 1965 (Rufugee loan)	92,900.00	30 nos.	carpentry, weaving, pottery & clay work, bidi factory, tailoring, blacksmithy, candle-making, steelmetal works.
1961 to 1965 (Gold-smithy loan)	1,13,650.00	138 nos.	Grocery, clothshop, vegetable business, silversmithy.
1966 to 1970 (General loan)	1,11,700.00	64 nos.	Carpentry, tailoring, oil *ghani*, pottery, cycle-repairing, dry-cleaning, instrument-repairing, printing press, pati-making, radio-repairing, blacksmithy, cane & bamboo works, tiles factory, engineering works, chalk-pencil, bricks, readymade garments, saw mill, dairy production, weaving.
1966 to 1970 (Gold-smithy).	27,000/-	63 nos.	Grocery, cloth shop, vegetable business, silversmithy, seasonal crops, goldsmithy loan.

1	2	3	4
1971 to 1975 (General loan).	3,64,100/-	160 nos.	Black-board making, knitting works, mat-making, tailoring, cycle-repairing, umbrella handle making, carpentry, weaving, cuttery, dry cleaning, brick mfg, bakery, *chalni* making, printing press, tyre-retreading, net making, R.C.C. ring, washing soap, oil-making, grinding, rubber stamp.

(b) Grants-in-aid to individuals belonging to schedule caste & schedule tribes, and handicraft institutions and societies.

Period	Amount Rs.	Nos. of person or units.	Trades.
1	2	3	4
1951 to 1955	Nil.	Nil.	Nil.
1956 to 1960	7,620.00	Individual 32 nos. Society 2 nos	Knitting, net-making, tailoring, carpentry, pottery works, blacksmithy, shoe-making, cane & bamboo works, soap, making.
1961 to 1965.	33,056.00	Individual 92 nos. Society 30 nos.	Tailoring, net-making, carpentry, bakery, blacksmithy.
1966 to 1970	35,700.00	Individual 120 nos. Society. 18 nos.	Pottery, bamboo works, carpentry, bell-metal works, radio-repairing, tailoring, leather works, net-making, cycle-repairing.
1971 to 1975	1,45,655.00	Individual 359 nos. Society 73 nos.	Carpentry, sewing, pottery, brick-making, knitting, cyclerepairing, pottery, net-making, flyshuttle, cane & bamboo, blacksmithy, pati-making, brass metal, oil *ghani*, paddy-husking etc.,

(C) Small and Large scale Industries received 10%, 15% outright Central Subsidy

1	2	3	4
1974-75	Rs. 4,74,394.00	8 nos. unit	1. Saw mill. 2. Flour mill. 3. Cycle oil. 4. Rice mill. 5. Oil mill.

(D) Small scale industries received Bank assistance during the plan.

Rs. 47,36,879.00	74 nos.	Saw mill, candle works, rice mill, wooden furniture, aluminium utensils, printing press, rice & oil mill, pottery works, engineering works, umbrella assembling, etc.

Apprentice Training :•

Under the scheme, stipends were awarded to 289 persons and they have so far been trained in different trades. This includes I.T.I. passed trainees for Ashok Paper Mills. One welfare institution viz,-Sakti Ashram has also been assisted under the scheme.

Study tour :

Educated unemployed youths willing to set up new industries are encouraged to undertake study tour both inside and outside the State. 13 entrepreneurs have so far been encouraged to undertake study tour. Besides second class Rly. fare to and from, a lump sum of Rs. 200.00 also is granted to each entrepreneur as pocket allowance.

The Assam Small Industries Development Corporation was set, up on 27th March, 1962 as a Government undertaking to promote, set up and help growth of small industries in the State. It has so far established a Match Splint Factory at Bijni and a Raw Material Depot at Bongaigaon and has promoted 17 small scale industries in the Goalpara district by providing assistance like hire purchase of machinery, seed-money for bank -finance etc. Thus, the value of machinery on hire-purchase system upto 1.6.74 in the Goalpara district amounted to about Rs. 2.78 lakhs ; seed-money to Rs. 5,600, and industrial loans given to three enterprises and three

individual entrepreneurs amounted to Rs. 1,22,000 and Rs. 9,800 respectively. It may be mentioned that the Corporation gives various other assistance to promoting industries. Indigenous machinery and equipment of value upto Rs. 1 lakh are supplied to educated unemployed and upto Rs. 2 lakhs in case of engineering and technological degree holders on easy hire-purchase terms. The entrepreneur is to pay only Rs. 5/- of the cost of machinery as earnest money. The rate of interest is only 9 per cent per annum and moratorium upto 18 months is allowed. The other assistance include equity participation, training, marketing, consultancy, assistance in installation, supply of raw material, industrial work-shed and commercial estates. Under training in plant scheme, the corporation has so far given aid to 6 persons ranging from Rs. 150 to Rs. 400 p.m. for one year ; all of them to be absorbed in the Ashok Paper Mill at Jogighopa. It may be recalled that the Assam Small Industries Development Corporation has already carried out a survey of Goalpara district with the assistance of the North Eastern Industrial and Technical Consultancy Organisation and launched an intensive campaign with the joint collaboration of the said Organisation, Director of Industries, financial institutions, and the Small Industries Service Institute.

The Assam Industries Development Corporation was set up on 21st. April, 1965 with similar objectives of promoting, setting up, and helping growth of industries in the State. This corporation has already obtained licences for establishing 3 big industries viz., Caustic Soda and Chlorine Plant at Jogighopa, Brewery Plant at Bongaigaon and Cigarette Factory in Bilasipara circle. Besides, this corporation also assists and finances industrial undertakings in the private sector and develops entrepreneurship. It has proposed to establish a growth centre near Bongaigaon to provide infra-structure facilities for setting up various industrial units.

In addition to such assistance, Government also participated in the share capital of some big industries, particularly in the co-operative sector. Recently, Government has introduced a scheme for development of industries in the industrially backward districts by providing additional facilities and greater attention. Goalpara district falls under such category of industrially backward districts. Various incentives for industries are now available in such districts such as concessional finance by the Industrial Bank of India, Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India, and refinance from the Industrial Bank of India, relief in income tax, consultancy for technical services, interest subsidy, subsidy on fixed investment, supply of machinery on hire-purchase, special import facilities, transport subsidy etc.

(*h*) *CURRENCY AND COINAGE* :

Numismatic evidence of the pre-Ahom period is very meagre ; but there is distinct proof of the use of coins even in the ancient times in Assam. The Nalanda Seal and the copperplate inscription of Bhaskarvarman of seventh century A.D. bear testimony to the art of melting metals and impressing seals on melted metal. The king presumably struck coins of his own. It is also mentioned in the Silimpur stone slab inscription that the king (Jayapala 1115-1175A.D.) offered 900 gold coins together with other gifts to a learned Brahmin, Prahasa by name. However, no coins of this period have yet been discovered.

Ahom Coins : The Ahom coinage system had but little bearing on the district of Goalpara. As early as the fourteenth century, Sudangpha *alias* Bamuni Konwar (1397-1407 A.D.) struck coins in his name at the time of his accession to the throne. Since then, the practice of issuing coins by the kings at the time of coronation was in vogue. However, the credit of minting the first Ahom coin is ascribed to Suklenmung by A. W. Botham in his book *Catalogue of Provincial Coin Cabinet Assam*. During the Ahom period, both gold and silver coins were in circulation. These coins were octagonal in shape, some bearing the Tai inscription, some Sanskrit and the latest ones Assamese and Sanskrit inscriptions. Rajeswar Sinha issued square coins also with Assamese script. The earlier Ahoms coins with exception to those of Suklenmung bear the date of accession of the king who minted them but with the annual issue of coins only the year of issue was indicated on the obverse side together with the name of the king.

Koch Coins : The Koch kings srtuck their own coins. The kingdom of Koch king Naranarayan extended over the whole of Assam Valley. Coins of Koch kings are round in form and bear inscriptions in Sanskrit, in Archaic and Assamese script. The first Koch king to strike coins in his name was Naranarayan. His son Laksminarayan and his descendants, however, ruled over the western part of the vast kingdom, only as vassals of the Mughal 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 (1633A. 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 Raghudev is known to have issued some rupee coins.

The British currency system : Goalpara came under the British administration as early as 1765 and since then the British currency system prevailed and was kept in circulation till 1957 when the decimal coinage system was introduced through out India.

The British found different types of rupee coins as medium of exchange through out the country, and this posed a problem in trade and commerce. With a view to introduce a uniform legal tender money, they introduced one rupee silver coins of 180 grams in Madras in 1818. This was made the sole legal tender through out the country in 1835. In 1893, mints were closed to free coinage of silver and the rupee became a token coin divorced from full value of silver. The exchange ratio of Indian rupee with British sterling which was fluctuating at the time was fixed at 1s.4d. per rupee in 1898. During 1914-1919, the Gold Exchange Standard was adopted and the value of Indian rupee was retained at 1s.4d. in terms of sterling. Nickel coins of 2 *annas*, 4 *annas* and 8 *annas* were also in circulation in addition to 1 *paisa* copper coins. Since 1939, the rupee lost its former fineness from 160 grams of silver to 90 grams of silver and even such coins were driven out of circulation by nickel rupee coins.

Side by side, the paper currency was introduced since 1861 and notes of various denominations such as Rs. 10, 20, 50, 100, 500, 1,000, and 10,000 came into vogue. In 1946, government demonetised the paper notes of Rs. 500 and above.

Under this old system, the lowest unit was the copper coins of one *paisa* denomination and 4 *paisas* made one *anna* and 16 *annas* one rupee. Under the present decimal system 100 *paisas* make one rupee. Nickel coins 2, 3, 5, 10, 25, 50 and one rupee denominations are now prevalent along with 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100 rupee paper notes.

B. TRADE AND COMMERCE :

(a) *COURSE OF TRADE* :

In early times, good overland communication system was not feasible and therefore, scope for external trade was very much limited. Besides, political situation was not conducive to external trade. Adverse diplomatic policies of the ruling kings of different kingdoms were mainly responsible for holding up the growth of such trade though some amount of trade was carried between Assam and Bengal and with neighbouring hill tribes during normal times. "The trade with the neighbouring inland provinces was mainly carried by river transport."[15] Thus, trade between Assam and Bengal was carried through the Brahmaputra river. Historically, after the downfall of the Koches, Goalpara formed a part of the Muhammadan province of Bengal till 1765 when it passed into the hands of the East India Company. During the Muhammadan and early British periods, Bengal trade with Assam was conducted from Rangamati, Goalpara and Jogighopa, the three eastern outposts of Bengal lying

15. E. A. Gait—*A History of Assam, Calcutta*, 1967 ((Reprint), p. 273.

in the present Goalpara district. The *Duaria Barua*, the agent of the Assam Government resided at the customs house at Hadira or the Assam *Chauk* at the mouth of the Manas river. He exchanged Assam goods for Bengal products and realised all duties on exports and imports.[16] During the Muhammadan period, the chief export from Bengal was salt which amounted to 120,000 *maunds* a year in the seventeenth century or barely one-sixth of the quantity exported at a latter period. As a part of Bengal, Goalpara town was connected with Calcutta by two overland routes, one lay through Murshidabad, Maldah, Dinajpore, Rongpur, Bagwa, and Goalpara and the other *via* Dacca, Dumary, Pucuoloo, Jamalpore, Singimari, and Goalpara. Both these routes were almost impassable during the rains and had not much commercial importance.

The trans-frontier trade with Bhutan was carried through the Eastern Duars and with the Garos on the border *hats* under the control of the *Zamindars*. Such trade was generally done by the barter system.

During the early British period in the district, the course of trade was the same as in the past. However, volume of trade improved considerably. Salt, copper, English woolens, and spices were the principal exports of the Company to Assam and imports from Assam consisted chiefly of muga silk, stick lac, munjit or madder, elephants' task, cotton, paper and mustard seed. After British occupation of Assam in 1826, Goalpara was added to Assam as a separate district and the course of trade began to change. The customs house at Hadira *Chauk* was abolished in 1835. W.W. Hunter in his *Statistical Account of Assam* published in 1879 pointed out that the district trade was carried on in the periodical fairs and the markets. The principal seats of commerce were Goalpara, Bilasipara, Bijni, Dhuburi, Jogighopa, Dumaria, Gauripur, Patamari, Agamoni, Simlabari, Kherbari, Dimakari, Bagribari, Marnai, Rangjuli, Damrajira, Nibari, Singimari, Rajabala, Puthimari, Mankachar, Karaibari, and Dalo. The weekly *hats* or markets along the Garo frontier such as Damra, Jira, Nibari, Patamari etc, were attended by the Garos who sold or bartered their hill products for their requisites. Mustard seed, jute, cotton, timber and lac were the principal exports while rice, salt, pulses, oil, cotton thread, sugar, piece-goods, gold, tobacco and metals formed the principal imports. Thus, there was an adverse balance of trade for the district. The local trade was principally in the hands of the Marwari traders.[17] In the beginning of the current century, there was not much change in the course of trade, volume

16. Ibid p. 274 and also S. K. Bhuyan's *Anglo Assamese Relations* 1771-1826. Gauhati, 1949. p. 50-51.
17. W.W. Hunter : *A Statistical Account of Assam*, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1975 (Reprint), p. 75-76.

of exports and imports. B. C. Allen in his District Gazetteer of Goalpara points out that unhusked rice also formed an item of export. The bulk of the export and import passed through the Marwari merchants who also did a considerable retail business. There were also Bengali and up-country shopkeepers while local people had a small share of retail trade. In the Eastern Duars, trade was generally carried on at the markets by barter. The Bhutias came down the rivers with boat-loads of dried fish and earthen pots and exchanged for unhusked rice and such trans-frontier trade with Bhutias was of little importance. "The greater part of the total trade still enters and leaves the district by water, and much of it is carried by country boat. The rivers also take a very prominent part in the distribution of the internal trade of the district."[18]

A considerable amount of retail business was done in the local markets. The articles offered for retail sale in the markets were rice and other grains, fruit and country vegetables, poultry, earthenwares and metal vessels, oil, molasses, tobacco, and cotton cloth.

There was not much change in the trade position of the district during the following years till Independence except in case of import trade. The growth of population, particularly due to immigration of foreigners and neglect of the foreign administrators towards indigenous industry caused considerable increase in the volume of import trade. Foreign articles such as mill-made cloth and yarn, oil, and other necessities flooded the local markets and sold at cheaper rates, and became more popular. This import trade remained generally confined in the hands of the foreigners who carried the articles by steamer in the Brahmaputra and by rail.

A network of railways was laid in the northern part of the district. Dhuburi was connected with Calcutta by a section of the Eastern Bengal Railways (now Northeast Frontier Railways) which entered the district near Golakganj. Another line was extended from Golakganj *via* Fakiragram, Kokrajhar and Bijni to Amingaon opposite Gauhati. Besides the North Trunk Road, various roads were constructed in this part of the district while the southern part of it which still remains without rail link was served by roads including the South Trunk Road. Road transport, was slowly introduced and some private vehicles plied on the Trunk Roads carrying some amount of trade. After Independence, the position began to change rapidly. A vast net-work of road communication was developed in the district.

Due to disruption of the Calcutta-Dhuburi line as aforesaid, the Assam Rail Link was constructed from Alipur Duar to Fakiragram on

18. B. C. Allen : *Assam District Gazetteers*, Vol. III., Goalpara, Calcutta, 1905. p. 103.

the Golakganj-Amingaon line. Now this northern part of the district is served by the broad gauge railway line which takes off from Jalpaiguri to Bongaigaon and thence to Jogighopa, the river port north of Goalpara. Cargo-services run from Jogighopa to Gauhati and Bangladesh. The commercial services of the State Inland Water Transport Directorate are mainly concentrated in the lower Assam reaches of the Brahmaputra in Assam and between Assam and Bangladesh where there is maximum concentration of traffic. The trade routes are between Gauhati, Palasbari, Goalpara, Jogighopa, Dhuburi in Assam and Gauhati to Phulsari and Bahadurabadghat in Bangladesh. In the Upper Assam region of the river Brahmaputra, the trade route is only between Sonarighat and Dibrugarh. For the schemes to be implemented during the Fifth Five Year Plan, the Govt. of India have sanctioned an amount of Rs. 75 lakhs for introducing criss-cross Cargo-cum Passenger Service on the river Brahmaputra between (i) Sadiya and Dhuburi ; (ii) Sadiya and Dibrugarh, and (iii) Dibrugarh and Neamati. Following table shows the volume of various cargo commoditywise and destinationwise.

Name of Cargo	From	To	Quantity in quintal	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5
1. Iron and Steel Products.	Gauhati	Jogighopa	2,000	
	Jogighopa	Gauhati	700	
2. Cement	Gauhati	Jogighopa	2,530	
3. Food grains	Gauhati	Dhuburi	20,000	
	Sonari	Dibrugarh	27,456.66	
4. Other Cargo	Dhuburi	Gauhati	1,000	
5. Timber & Forest Product.	Gauhati	Dhuburi	10,000	
	Gauhati	Dhuburi	400	
	Gauhati	Bahadurabad in Bangladesh	7,400	
	Gauhati	Bahadurabad in Bangladesh.	2,360	
	Gauhati	Naravangang	2,550	
			76,396.66	

There are altogether 15 major ferry services, operated by the Directorate on the river Brahmaputra. Of these services only, two viz., Dhuburi-Fakiraganj covering a distance of 15 kms. and Jogighopa-Goalpara-Pancharatna covering a distance of 4 kms. are in the Goalpara district. The

following table shows the volumes of goods traffic on each ferry service during 1972-73 to 1974-75,

(in tonnes)

Name of the ferry	Goods carried by the ferry		
	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
1	2	3	4
1. Jogighopa-Goalpara-Pancharatna	24,000.00	25,323.00	26,278.00
2. Dhuburi-Fakiraganj.	1,440.00	2,493.00	1,987.00

In recent years, the Directorate has augmented its commercial fleet and there has been manifold increase in its cargo carrying capacity. Till the end of 1973, there was no commercial vessel under the Directorate and it was only in 1974, that it acquired 5 vessels with a capacity of 490 M.T. which in 1974 increased to 600 M.T. By the end of 1976, it is expected that the Directorate will have 22 vessels with a cargo carrying capacity of 2590 M.T.

Apart from the Brahmaputra the other rivers of the district are also used to varying degrees for purposes of trade and commerce. The development of roads has somewhat lessened the importance of river traffic. But it is still discernible on the Ai, Jinjiram, Gangadhar, Sankosh, Manas, Dudhnoi, and Krishnai rivers. Direct Corporation Bus Services run from Gauhati to Goalpara and Dhuburi. The Dhuburi-Fakiraganj and Jogighopa-Goalpara-Pancharatna Ferry services connect the southern and northern parts of the district and besides, Corporation buses now ply on several routes from the district and subdivisional headquarters. This has led to the growth of a number of trade centres in the nooks and corners of the district. A considerable volume of business both internal and external is carried on by these routes. It may also be mentioned that development activities during the Five Year Plans such as construction of roads, bridges, buildings, and new industries have increased import of various materials such as ironsheets, cement, bolts and nuts, coal, kerosene, petrol, lubricants, machineries and machine parts, tools and implements, raw materials etc. sports goods, cosmetics, cloths and yarns, garments, fancy goods, leather and leather products and luxury goods are also imported in larger quantities than before. Assorted food articles in packed tins such as milk, butter, ghee, salt, sugar, medicine and numerous industrial products not produced within the district, form other items of import. Though Goalpara is an agricultural district, pulses, onion, potato etc., are imported to it. Among exports, tea,

jute mustard and other oil seeds, rice, molasses (*gur*), *til*, cinnamon medicinal herbs, betel-nuts, timber and other forest products, spun-silk cloths and yarns, raw-hides and bones, may be mentioned.

The following shows the annual volume, value and destination of import and export trade of the Goalpara district for some past years.

Imports of Agricultural Commodities of Goalpara District.

Imports	*Quantity*	*Value,*	*Destination*
Commodities :			
1. Coconut oil	15,000 mds.	Rs. 14,55,000	From Calcutta to Dhuburi.
2. Tobacco.	7,000 ,,	Rs. 11,90,000	From West Bengal to Dhuburi
3. Ghee.	4,000 ,,	Rs. 26,000	From Garo-Hills to Dhuburi
4. Vegetable ghee	20,000 ,,	Rs. 17,60,000	From Calcutta to Dhuburi
5. Spices.	10,000 ,,	Rs. 8,00,000	From Calcutta to Dhururi
6. Gur.	50,000 ,,	Rs. 10,00,000	Bihar & U.P. to Dhuburi
7. Pulses.	60,000 ,,	Rs. 12,00,000	From Bihar & U.P. to Dhuburi.
8. Mango	3,000 ,,	Rs. 48,000	From Bihar and U. P. to Dhuburi.
9. Ground nut.	5,000 ,,	Rs. 35,000	From West Bengal and Bihar.
10. Potato	20,000 ,,	Rs. 3,00,000	From Bihar and Shillong
11. Tobacco.	950 ,,	Rs. 1,52,000	From Koch Bihar to Goalpara.

Export of Agricultural Commodities of Goalpara District.

Exports.	*Quantity*	*Value*	*Destination*
1. Matikalai (dal)	20,000 mds.	Rs. 2,60,000	From Dhuburi to Upper Assam.
2. Khesari (dal)	52,000 ,,	Rs. 46,800	From Dhuburi to Calcutta.
3. Sesamum	4,000 ,,	Rs. 1,08,000	From Dhuburi to West Bengal & Orissa.
4. Sesamum.	1,2000 ,,	Rs. 32,000	From Goalpara to W. Bengal
5. Jute.	15,00,000 ,,	Rs. 3,75,000	From Dhuburi to Calcutta.
6. Jute.	52,000 ,,	Rs. 13,00,000	From Goalpara to Calcutta
7. Mustard oil	40,000 ,,	Rs. 12,80,000	From Dhuburi to West Bengal.
8. Ginger.	10,000 ,,	Rs. 2,00,000	From Dhuburi to Upper Assam.

Exports.	Quantity.	Value.	Destinaton.
9. Oranges.	1,50,000 mds.	Rs. 6,000	From Dhuburi to Calcutta.
10. Dhania.	40,000 ,,	Rs. 16,00,000	From Dhuburi to West Bengal.
11. Batelnut (dry)	15,000 ,,	Rs. 19,50,000	From Bongaigaon, Bijni Sapatgram to Calcutta.
12. Cotton.	10,725 ,,	Rs. 11,15,400	From Goalpara to Calcutta.
13. Cotton.	54,000 ,,	Rs. 5,42,16,000	From Dhuburi to Calcutta
14. Onion.	40,000 ,,	Rs. 3,60,000	From Dhuburi to Upper Assam.
15. Pineapple.	..	Rs. 10,000	From Dhuburi to Calcutta.
16. Lac.	2,104 ,,	..	From Goalpara to Calcutta.

(Source : Agricultural Marketing Inspector, Dhuburi).

The following statements will give an idea of the river and railborne trade of the district during recent years.

Cargo carried by ferries under the Directorate, Inland Water Transport across the Brahmaputra in Goalpara district.

Name of ferry	goods carried (in tonnes)		
	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
1. Jogighopa-Goalpara-Pancharatna.	24,000.00	25,323.00	26,278.00
2. Dhuburi-Fakirganj.	1,440.00	2,493.00	1,987.00

Foodgrains carried by Cargo services of the Central Inland Water Transport Corporation pertaining to the Goalpara District.

Name Cargo Service	Foodgrains carried in tonnes.	Total freight charge in Rs.
1972 Jogighopa to Gauhati	3,767	84,980
1973 Jogighopa to Bangladesh	3,920	1,31,712.00

The following table shows the operational details of the Central Inland Water Transport Corporation in Assam in 1972-73.

Routes Operated	Route length. (in kms)	Nature of cargo moved	Total cargo moved (in tonnes)	Total freight charged (in Rs)	No. of vessels. Owned	Being utilized.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Jogighopa to Gauhati.	141	Foodgrains	3767	84,980.00	..	..
2. Jogighopa to Bangladesh.	210	—do—	3920	1,31,712.00	87	14
3. Gauhati to T.T. Sheds (Calcutta)	1,393	Tea Chests	425	60,382.00	..	..
4. Gauhati to Narayanganj.	738	Timber	325	30,941.00	..	..

Source : Central Inland Water Transport Corporation, Ltd.

Statement of parcel carnings of Railway Stations amounting to Rs. 20,000 and more per annum in Goalpara district.

	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
Bijni	26,982.98	47,582.25	27,631.00
New Bongaigaon	27,031.10	34,769.10	37,149.00
Dhuburi	23,927.45	52,004.95	29,705.45

(*b*) *TRADE CENTRES* :

(1) **Centres of Wholesale Business** : Dhuburi town is the principal centre of wholesale business in the district. It is connected by a network of roads and railways with all important trade centres on the north bank of the district as well as outside the district. Formerly, it was a steamerghat from which the products of the district got outlet to various places. A regular ferry service runs between Dhuburi and Fakirganj on the south bank. Dhuburi is also connected by air service. All these facilities have made it the nerve centre of trade in the district. Jute, Paddy, rice, matches, timber, tea, oilseeds, cotton etc. are the important products dealt in and exported to Gauhati, Calcutta and North Bengal. Dhuburi serves as the distributing centre of all imported commodities like cloth, yarn, medicine, building materials, sugar etc. Rangamati, the old trade centre is not far from it.

Goalpara, situated on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, is an important old time trade centre. The British established their first godown at this town. Though there is no railways in the south bank comprising the Goalpara subdivision, Goalpara is well connected by roads. It is linked up with Gauhati by the National Highway, and regular corporation transport services ply to and from Gauhati. Connected by a regular ferry service between Goalpara *via* Pancharatna, and Jogighopa, the broadgauge railhead ; Goalpara develops its trade and commerce. The exports of the Goalpara subdivision to Calcutta find their outlet through this important river-port *via* the broadgauge railway. Its main exports are cotton, jute and mustard seeds. It acts as the distributing centre for the imports from Gauhati, Dhuburi and Calcutta in the Goalpara subdivision. The importance of Goalpara as a trade centre has now been further enhanced by Jogighopa on the north bank, the old time trade centre, which, at present, has come to more prominence being the broadgauge railhead and riverport connected by two cargo services run by the Central Inland Water Transport Corporation, one from Jogighopa to Gauhati and the other from Jogighopa to Bangladesh. Thus, Jogighopa now plays a vital role in the trade and commerce of the district. New Bongaigaon, the industrial town of the district is not far from Jogighopa. Due to location of various industries particularly, the second public sector oil refinery, petro-chemical complex, railway colony and workshop, Bongaigaon has emerged also as an important wholesale trade centre. Besides being a broadgauge railway station, it is connected by the metregauge railways with all important places of Assam. Number of Marwari traders and refugee businessmen have settled there and a large number of retail shops conduct the trade in this new town.

Gauripur is another important wholesale trade centre of the district. There are a number of Marwari traders who deal in wholesale business in jute and paddy. But due to increasing importance of Dhuburi as a trade centre, wholesale trade in Gauripur loses importance. Other wholesale trade centres in the district are Kokrajhar, Bilasipara, Chapar, Fakiragram, Sapatgram, Golakganj, Abhayapuri, Mankachar, Lakhipur, Krishnai, Dudhnoi, Dhupdhara etc. Wholesale and retail business run side by side at these centres. Weekly *hats* are held in most of these centres where shops deal in retail business in various necessities. Wholesale purchase of some items like pulses and sugar is done in the production centres, most of which are located outside the State. It is important to note that there is no wholesale market (*Mandis*) in this district.

(11) **Important retail trade centres** : As referred to above, in all wholesale trade centres, retail trade is done by the shops dealing in various commodities of daily necessity. The number of such retail shops is increasing day by day in Dhuburi, Goalpara, Kokrajhar and other towns. In rural areas village centres are growing up due to location of some industry, office or other institution. This leads to growth of retail shops dealing in various items, particularly grocery, stationaries etc. Each village has got at least one grocery shop which caters to the necessities of the people. A net work of bus services facilitate the mobilisation of business of the district. Every teagarden is, in a sense, an important centre of retail trade.

The *hats* are important centres where a great deal of retail business is transacted. These *hats* are held either weekly or bi-weekly on particular days. According to the 1961 Census, there were 188 *hats* and markets in the Goalpara district and of these *hats*, 89 were held bi-weekly and 3 *hats* daily. Here, the villagers bring their surplus agricutural products such as vegetables, rice, betel-nuts, poultry, cattle, goats, home-made cloths. *eri* cocoons and cloths for disposal. It has been already referred to that the Garos on the south and the Bhutias on the north came down to attend the weekly *hats* held in the border areas for exchanging their hill products such as cotton, rubber, pepper, etc. for rice, cloth and other requirements. They still attend these border *hats*. The sellers also include a section of petty traders who gather here from towns and trade centres with their wares which consist of cotton goods, sugar, pulses, spices, toys, crockery, utensils and various other tit-bits. The petty dealers in cloth hold licences issued under the Assam Cotton Cloth and Yarn Dealers Licensing Act, 1953. Middlemen and *beparis* purchase the village products and sell them to the wholesale merchants or take to some other dearer weekly markets. Even *beparis* from Gauhati visits the *hats* in Goalpara to collect vegetables, poultry, goats and the like. The important *hats* have rows of small temporary sheds mostly of bamboo and thatch.

The management of the *hats* was vested in the Local Boards till 1960 when the Boards were replaced by the Mahkuma Parishad and the management of the *hats* passed over to the Goan Panchayats. The daily markets located in the towns are managed by the respective municipality or town committee.

The importance of the *hat* lies in the fact that it provides marketing facilities for surplus agricultural products including perishable goods at a short distance from the production areas and the articles of daily necessity are made available to the villagers who have little time to visit distant towns or trade centres. The most important markets in rural areas are Dumaria, Patamari, Agamoni, Simlabari, Kherbari, Bagribari, Marno-,

Damra, Singimari, Karaibari, Dhupdhara, Krishnai, Fakirganj, etc. Besides daily *bazars*, big weekly and biweekly *hats* are held in the towns of Bongaigaon, Gauripur, Bijni, Bilasipara, Abhayapuri, Mankachar etc. A list of *hats* is appended in the Appendix.

(III) **Fairs and Melas** : Many fairs are held in different parts of the district, most of which go on for some days and are attended by a large concourse of people. These fairs are seasonal and held on particular religious festivals. Apart from the merriment which marks these fairs, a good deal of buying and selling is also carried on. The congregation is generally composed of villagers, a section of whom bring their products for sale. Petty traders from towns and trading centres also visit the fairs with their wares. The special festival of the Assamese Hindus is the three *Bihus* which are enjoyed with great *eclat*; *Bihu melas* are held invariably in most villages, particularly in *Magh Bihu* and *Bohag Bihu* which is popularly known as *Rongali Bihu*. The *Durga Puja* is yet another festival widely held in the district amidst much rejoicing. Buying and selling activities in the *Puja* centres are equally important. A list of these fairs and *melas* are given below :

Names of the Places at which fairs are held.	Occasion on which fairs are held.	Date on which held
Bagribari.	Mohamaya mela on Bisoma or Bisuba Sankranti, lasts for 7 days.	1st to 7th Bohag or Middle of April.
Dalgoma. ..	Maghi-purnima.	In the month of Magh or January.
Sri Surjya Pahar. ..	Maghi-Purnima.	In the month of Magh or January.
Dhuburi	Asokastami Mela.	In the month of Choitra or mid April.
Satrasal.	Dol Purnima Mela.	In the month of Fagun or middle of March.
Bijni.	Lakshmi Puja.	In the month of Ahin or October.
Gauripur.	Gosala Mela.	In the month of Pooh or December.
Dhuburi.	Vijaya Dasami Mela.	In the month of Ahin or October.
Bakhalgaon. ..	Lakshmi Puja Mela.	In the month of Ahin or October

(*c*) *CO-OPERATIVE IN WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE (CO-OPERATIVE MARKETING)* :

It has been already pointed out that co-operative consumers' stores and marketing societies were functioning during the Second World War for distribution of scarce commodities at controlled price. Almost all such societies went on liquidation during the Post-War period. It was in 1958, that the Assam Co-operative Apex Marketing Society was organised. Primary Co-operative Marketing Societies were organised in each district to carry on the trade, and wholesale District Co-operative Societies were also organised in some paddy growing districts. In 1966-67, there were 15 General Primary Marketing Societies in Goalpara district--6 in Dhuburi subdivision, 4 in Goalpara sibdivision and 6 in Kokrajhar subdivision. The total membership of these societies was 2,392 and their total paid-up capital stood at Rs. 3,77,867. Their total assets and liabilities amounted to Rs. 73,965 and Rs. 14,22,627 respectively. During that year, the Dhuburi Wholesale Trading Co-operative Stores Ltd. had 68 members (individuals only) with a total paid-up capital of Rs. 11,600 and its total assets and liabilities amounted to Rs. 2,51,840 and Rs. 2,49,478 respectively. The Dhuburi Wholesale Consumers' Co-operative Ltd. had 4 branches with 887 individual members and 1 Government member. The total paid-up capital of this co-operative including the branches stood as government Rs. 1,00,000 and individuals Rs. 23,630 and the total assets and liabilities amounted to Rs. 1,32,131 and Rs. 1,25,047 respectively. It made a profit of Rs. 3,832 during that year. There were 38 primary trading and consumers' stores in the district recording 5,110 members with paid-up capital of Rs. 59,962, assets of Rs. 2,15,674 and liabilities of Rs. 2,12,801. Their retail-sale business in foodgrains amounted to Rs. 9,67,072 and in others to Rs. 47,475.

State Trading : With a view to create a buffer stock of paddy for distribution in times of emergency, food shortage due to flood, drought etc, at controlled rate, Government of Assam undertook paddy procurement at the district level through the Supply Department before 1959. In that year, the State Trading in Foodgrains scheme was introduced for procuring paddy at controlled price fixed at a reasonable level to give the producers benefit of increasing price of paddy. The scheme was entrusted to the Co-operative Department. The Apex Co-operative Marketing Society was formed to shoulder upon the responsibility. The State Trading in Foodgrains (paddy) was introduced in the districts of Nowgong, Darrang, Kamrup, Cachar and the subdivisions of North Lakhimpur (now district), Diphu and Goalpara and subsequently extended to other areas. The Apex Marketing Society took up the monopoly of paddy procurement at fixed price subject, however, to changes, with the help of Primary Marketing Societies as agents and the village Co-operatives were organised to act as sub-agents.

In 1964, Government allowed the millers to procure paddy side by side the Apex Marketing. The monopoly was restored again to the Apex Marketing Society in 1965. Except for 1966-67, when the Food Corporation of India obtained the licence for monopoly procurement of paddy, the Apex Marketing has been functioning till now and the two organisations deal in the trade side by side in some districts.

During 1966-67, the Primary Marketing Societies in Goalpara district made a total purchase worth Rs. 10,52,917, Dhuburi subdivision accounting for Rs. 3,67,127, Goalpara Rs. 3,92,640 and Kokrajhar Rs. 2,88,150. For storing of paddy Dhuburi had 3 godowns, Goalpara 4 and Kokrajhar 6.

Fair Price Shops : In order to secure proper distribution of essential articles at controlled price, fair price shops have been opened through out the district since the beginning of the State Trading Programme. There were altogether 234 fair price shops in Goalpara district during 1962-63. The number of such fair price shops has been increased as to cover each village by at least one such shop. In the urban areas, their number has also been increased greatly so that people can easily collect their necessaries. Controlled commodities such as rice, sugar, *atta*, flour etc., are sold at fixed price in these shops to holders of family indentity cards issued by Supply Department which appoints the fair price dealers. The Department fixes the price also. These fair price shops have been very useful in checking the rise of prices of essential commodities. The officers of the Department regularly inspect the stock and check the accounts of the fair price dealers.

Weights and Measures : Till the introduction of the metric system of weights and measures in 1959, the inhabitants of the district followed the age-old system of weighing and measuring which very often lacked standardisation. Specimen of the old weights and measures are still found in some remote villages. The *Doon* which is a bamboo container of almost conical shape was prepared with fine bamboo strips for measuring rice and paddy. Its capacity varies from 2 *seers* to 3 *seers* from place to place. A ring is attached at the bottom to enable it to stand on the ground. The *Dhol* looks like the *Doon* but is of much bigger size and holds approximately 20 *seers* of paddy. It was used for measuring paddy only. Liquid molasses locally called *gur* was measured in terms of *Kalah* which is a big earthen jar. Land was measured in terms of *bigha, katha, lecha* etc. Small linear measurement was done in terms of *yab. anguli. gira, muthi, beget, hat, kathi* (Gauge) etc. The English units of linear measurement such as inch, foot, yard, pol, chain, furlong, mile etc., were used

side by side. The old system of weighing gold in terms of *rati, anna,* and *tola* is still in vogue.

The old units of measurement of weight and capacity were *tola, chattak, Powa, seer, maund* etc. *Tulachani* was the weighing scale commonly used in the village *hats*. This is of two circular bamboo trays which are suspended with strings from both the ends of a round wooden pole. Bamboo *sungas* were used for measuring liquid things. On the basis of recommendations of the Weights and Measures Committee (1913-14), the uniformity of weights and measures was brought into force. Accuracy of the indigenous weights and measures including some of those mentioned above was always doubtful. The lack of uniformity in weights and measures also exposed many illiterate villagers to cheating by unscrupulous traders. According to the provisions of the Assam Weights and Measures (Enforcement) Act, 1958, metric system of weights and measures was made compulsory in the Goalpara district since 1962, metric weights from 1st April, 1962, metric measures from 1st October, 1962, metric capacity measures from 1st April, 1963.

Although the Directorate of Weights and Measures have been enforcing the metric system of weights and measures by launching prosecution as well as by arranging supply of standard weights and measures to the needy traders, yet the traditional measures have not altogether fallen into disuse. The following table gives the conversion factors of the basic units of measurement.

LENGTH

1 inch	..	25.4 millimetres
1 foot	..	30.48 centimetres
1 yard	..	0.9144 metre
1 mile	..	1.609344 kilometres
1 centimetre		0.393701 inch
1 metre	..	1.09361 yards
1 kilometre		0.62137 mile.

AREA

1 sq. inch.		6.4516 sq. centimetres.
1 sq. foot		9.2903 sq. decimetres
1 sq. yard		0.83613 sq. metre
1 acre	..	0.404696 hectare
1 sq. mile		2.58999 sq. kilometre
1 hectare		2.47105 acres

WEIGHT

1 ounce	..	28.3595 grams
1 pound	..	0.4535924 kilogram
1 ton	..	1.01605 metric tonnes
1 kilogram	..	2.20462 pounds
1 metric tonne	..	0.98420 ton.

APPENDIX
LIST OF HATS AND MARKETS IN THE DISTRICT

Sl. No.	Name of *Hats* and Markets.	Place where it is held	Whether Daily/ Bi-weekly/Weekly/ Fortnightly.
1	2	3	4
1.	Borghola	Borghola	Bi-weekly
2.	Kirtonpara	Kirtonpara	—do—
3.	Kakila Hat	Kakila	—do—
4.	Rangapani	Simlabari	—do—
5.	Nararbhita	Nararbhita	—do—
6.	Lengtichinga Hat	Lengtichinga	Daily & Weekly
7.	Malegorah Hat	Malegorah	Bi-weekly
8.	Sidalsuti	Sidalsuti	—do—
9.	Ambari Hat	Ambari	—do—
10.	Dalanbhanga	Dalanbhanga	—do—
11.	Singimari	Singimari	—do—
12.	Harirchar Hat	Harirchar	Weekly
13.	Dhupdhara Hat	Dhupdhara	—do—
14.	Khutabari Hat	Bechimari	—do—
15.	Khekapara	Khekapara	Weekly
16.	Tiplai Hat	Tiplai	—do—
17.	Salpara Patpora	Salpara Patpora	—do—
18.	Dhenubhanga	Dhenubhanga	—do—
19.	Rangjuli Sarapara	Sarapara	—do—
20.	Rangjuli	Rangjuli	—do—
21.	Daranggiri	Daranggiri	—do—
22.	Amjonga	Amjonga	—do—
23.	Kahibari	Kahibari	—do—
24.	Dudhnoi	Dudhnoi	—do—
25.	Damra	Damra	—do—
26.	Lela	Lela	—do—
27.	Chunari Hat	Chunari	Bi-weekly

1	2	3	4
28.	Rongsai Hat	Rongsai	Bi-weekly
29.	Lakhipur	Lakhipur	—do—
30.	Tulshibari	Tulshibari	—do—
31.	Jaleswar Hat	Jaleswar	—do—
32.	Gosaidubi Hat	Gosaidubi	Weekly
33.	Khalishabhita	Khalishabhita	—do—
34.	Karko Hat	Karko	Bi-weekly
35.	Dhumarghat	Dhumarghat	Weekly
36.	Kalabari	Kalabari	—do—
37.	Felengpara	Felengpara	—do—
38.	Mayenbari	Mayenbari	Bi-weekly
39.	Sunabari	Sunabari	—do—
40.	Sikatari	Sikatari	—do—
41.	Patharchali	Patharchali	—do—
42.	Pachimdeoldi	Pachimdeoldi	Weekly
43.	Baghbor	Baghbor	—do—
44.	Ramapara	Ramaparapam	—do—
45.	Dala	Dalagaon	—do—
46.	Pub-deoldi	Pub-deoldi	—do—
47.	Mara Baz	Mara Baz	—do—
48.	Kadamtola/Sausunara	Sausunara	—do—
49.	Kabaitari Hat	Kabaitari	Bi-weekly
50.	Maligaon	Maligaon	—do—
51.	Bajitpara	Bajitpara	—do—
52.	Kachudala	Kachudala	—do—
53.	Mechelkhowa Hat	Mechelkhowa	Weekly
54.	Yaparbhita Hat	Balabhita	—do—
55.	Ramharirchar, Gosalbarihat.	Rambarirchar, Ghosalpara	—do—
56.	Balijana Hat	Balijana	—do—
57.	Dowli Hat	Dowli	—do—
58.	Bardamal Hat	Bardamal	—do—
59.	Kharmauza Hat	Kharmauza	—do—
60.	Balbala Hat	Balbala	—do—
61.	Sonahara Hat	Sonahara	Weekly
62.	Markula	Markula	—do—
63.	Ramhari-Tirapara Hat	Ramhari-Tirapara	—do—
64.	Rowmari Hat (Go-Hat)	Rowmari Joypur	—do—
65.	Fakiragram Bazar	Fakiragram	Bi-weekly
66.	Chithila Bazar	Chithila	—do—

1	2	3	4
67.	Jogdoi Bazar	Jogdoi	Bi-weekly
68.	Dotma Bazar	Dotma	—do—
69.	Serfanguri Bazar	Serfanguri	Weekly
70.	Ramfalbil Bazar	Ramfalbil	—do—
71.	Banargaon Bazar	Banargaon	—do—
72.	Sakti Ashram Bazar	Sakti Ashram	—do—
73.	Patgaon Hat	Patgaon	Weekly Friday
74.	Simborgaon Hat	Simborgaon Hat	—do—Saturday
75.	Balajan	Balajan (Tinali)	—do—
76.	Balagaon Hat	Balagaon	—do—Tuesday
77.	Daloabari	Daloabari	—do—Friday
78.	Roinadabri	Roinadabri	—do—Wednesday
79.	Dholamora	Dholamora Lalkura	—do— —do—
80.	Basugaon Hat	Basugaon	Twice a week
81.	Salakati Hat	Salakati	Weekly Monday
82.	Borobazar Hat	Borobazar	Weekly
83.	Bagargaon Hat	Bagargaon	Bi-weekly
84.	Ledopara	Ledopara	Weekly
85.	1. Ballamguri Bazar	1. Ballamguri	—do—
	2. Okiguri Hat	2. Okiguri	—do—
86.	Subhaijhar	Silbaridagarpara	—do—
87.	Silbari Hat	Silbari Village	—do—
88.	No. I Bishnupur	Bishpani	Bi-weekly
89.	No. II Bishnupur	No. II Bishnupur	—do—
90.	Ulubari Hat	Silkhaguri	Weekly
91.	Panbari Hat	Ballimari	—do—
92.	Bogidwara Hat	Bogidwara	—do—
93.	Bhiranggaon Ujan Bazar	Bherbheri	—do—
94.	Ouguri	Ouguri	—do—
95.	Kajalgaon	Dangaigaon	Weekly
96.	Dalabill	Chottanihibari	—do—
97.	Kashikatara	Dhupguri No. I Jasgujatara	Weekly
98.	Thankubari	Silghabari	—do—
99.	Patabari	Mawpar	—do—
100.	Balaijhar	No. I Salbari	—do—
101.	Amguri	Amguri	—do—
102.	Bengtol	own patta land of Shri Raja A.N. Deb Bidyapur	—do—
103.	Garubhasa	Garubhasa	—do—

1	2	3	4
104.	Yamahat	Yamahat	Bi-weekly
105.	Bhaoraguri Hat	Bhaoraguri	—do—
106.	Dingdinga Hat	Grahampore	—do—
107.	Kamandanga	Kamandanga	Weekly
108.	Harafuta Hat	Bhainguri	—do—
109.	Tulsibil Hat	Tulsibil	Bi-weekly
110.	Baghdokra Hat	Baghdokra	Weekly
111.	Kokiladonga Hat	Kokiladonga	—do—
112.	Kacharigaon Hat	Kokiladonga	—do—
113.	Gaidang Hat	Gambhinguri	—do—
114.	Bijni Hat	Bijni	Bi-weekly
115.	Bijni Daily Bazar	Near Bijni Railway Station	Daily
116.	Patiladaha Bazar	Near Patiladaha Railway Station	Bi-weekly
117.	Nayar Bazar	No. 1 Charagaon	—do—
118.	Pakhiriguri Bazar	No. 2 (Pakhiriguri Noapara)	—do—
119.	Sonaikola Hat	Sonaikola	—do—
120.	Palengbari Hat	No. 2 Monakosha	—do—
121.	Alukhunda Bazar	No. 1 Goraimari	—do—
122.	Noagaon	Noagaon	—do—
123.	Bechimari	Bechimari	—do—
124.	Bagribari	Bagribari 8/9	—do—
125.	Bagribari	Bagribari 12/6	—do—
126.	Mayerchar	Mayerchar	—do—
127.	Ghunimari	Ghunimari	—do—
128.	Lakhiganj	Lakhiganj	—do—
129.	Futkibari	Futkibari	Weekly
130.	Tipkai	Tipkai	—do—
131.	Mungala Jhora	Mungala Jhora	Bi-weekly
132.	Raniganj	Raniganj	—do—
133.	Naya Hat	Naya Hat	—do—
134.	Chapar Hat	Kajipara	—do—
135.	Bahalpur	Bahalpur	—do—
136.	Arearjhar-Monatari	Monatari	—do—
137.	Shalkocha Hat	Shalkocha	Weekly
138.	Chaibari T.E.	Chaibari	Bi-weekly
139.	Chandardinga Hat	Chandardinga	—do—
140.	Kaldoba	Kaldoba	—do—
141.	Satrasal	Ramrayer Kuthi	—do—
142.	Ranpagli Hat	Jhapusabari	—do—
143.	Kherbari Hat	Kherbari	—do—

1	2	3	3
144.	Silghagri	Pokalagi	Bi-weekly
145.	Halakura Hat	Sonakhuli	—do—
146.	Baterhat Bazar	Kaimari	—do—
147.	Kumarganj Hat	Petla	—do—
148.	Paglahat Bazar	Kachakhana North	—do—
149.	Harirhat Bazar	Kachakhana South	—do—
150.	Mahadebganj Bazar	Kursakutir	—do—
151.	Fakirganj Hat	Fakirganj	—do—
152.	Fakirganj go-hat	Fakirganj	—do—
153.	Salmara Hat and Daily Bazar	South Salmara	—do—
154.	Patakata Hat	Patakata	Weekly
155.	Hazirhat	Hazirhat	—do—
156.	Medhartari Hat	Medhartari	Bi-weekly
157.	Porabhita Hat	Porabhita	—do—
157.	Porabhita Hat	Porabhita	—do—
158.	Muhurirchar Hat	Muhurirchar	Weekly
159.	Sarkergaon	Sarkergaon	—do—
160.	Choto Nisinpur	Nisinpur	—do—
161.	Chirakuti Hat	Chirakuti	Bi-weekly
162.	Sonarhat	Bank of Sonai river	—do—
163.	Hamidabad	Hamidabad	—do—
164.	Airkata Hat	Airkata	Weekly
165.	Naya Hat	Bank of Kadamtoli river	Bi weekly
166.	Salkata Hat	Salkata	—do—
167.	Bahadurkata Bazar	Bahadurkata	Weekly
168.	Sukchar Hat	Sukchar	Bi-weekly
169.	Kalapani Hat	Kalapani	Weekly
170.	Jhawdanga	Jhawdanga	—do—
171.	Diara Bazar Hat	Diara	—do—
172.	Mankachar Hat	Mankachar	—do—
173.	Bengerbhita Hat	Bengerbhita	—do—
174.	Mankachar Bazar	Mankachar	Daily
175.	Oidoba Hat	Oidoba	Weekly
176.	Puthimari Hat	Puthimari	—do—
177.	Kakripara Hat	Kakripara	—do—
178.	Pipulbari Hat	Pipulbari	—do—
179.	Sahebganj Hat	Sahebganj village	Bi-weekly
180.	Pratapganj Hat	Moterjhar village	—do—
181.	Rupshi Hat	Rupshi Village	Bi-weekly
182.	Golakganj Hat and daily market	Tokrerchara village	—do—
183.	Sona Hat	Bishkowa village	—do—
184.	Kachari Hat	D. Hasdaha village	—do—
185.	D. Hasdaha Hat	D. Hasdaha village	—do—
186.	Dhepdhepi Hat	D. Hasdaha village	—do—
187.	Balajan Hat	Balajan village No. 1.	—do—
188.	Bashbari Hat	Bashbari village	Fortnightly.

Census of India, 1961.

CHAPTER VII

COMMUNICATIONS

(a) *OLD TIME ROUTES AND MODES OF CONVEYANCE*

As a part of he ancient kingdom of Kamarupa, the present Goalpara district had close trade and cultural links with the rest of India and neighbouring foreign countries. Its geographical position also favoured such ties. The mighty Brahmaputra which flows through the district was a natural waterway to the outside world and its tributaries were used for purposes of internal trade and commerce. The *duars* or passes to the mountainous countries on the northern part of the district, notably the Bijni, Sidli, Chirang, Ripu and Guma *duars* were outlets through Bhutan to Tibet and China. Tavernier mentions a trade route from Bhutan along the mountains to Kabul through which merchandise from Assam found an outlet to the outside world and goods were imported to Assam. Another important land route was the Gohain Kamal *Ali* from Koch Bihar to Narayanpur in Lakhimpur district of Assam which was constructed during the reign of Koch king Naranarayan and was completed in 1547 A.D.

Immediately after the British annexation of Assam, M'Cosh in 1837 found that the most frequented route from Assam to Calcutta was down the river Brahmaputra *via* Jennai to the Pabna and then to the Ganga and finally to Calcutta through the Matabanga or the Jellingi. The voyage from Goalpara to Calcutta took from 25 to 35 days and the reverse journey took about 8 days more. There were also three principal land routes from Bengal to Assam at this time. Two of these routes were through Goalpara. The first was the Murshidabad-Maldah-Dinajpur-Rongpur-Bagwa Goalpara route which was the line of the Calcutta Dak. But it was almost impassable during the rains. The second route was *via* Dacca-Dumary-Pucuoloe-Jamalpore-Singimari and Goalpara. This route was also almost inaccessible during the rainy season.[2]

The old accounts of Assam suggest that most of the travellers used horses, ponies, elephants, bullock-drawn carts, palanquins, country-boats and rafts. The palanquin (*dola*) and the chariot (*rath*) were used by the royal families in early times, but the chariots gradually fell into disuse.

1. B. K. Barua : *A Cultural History of Assam, (Early Period) Vol. I.* Gauhati, 1969, p. 113.
2. J. M' Cosh : *Topography of Assam,* Delhi, 1974. (Reprint), pp. 8-9.

The palanquin was a popular mode of conveyance even till the early part of the present century in the district. The horse was used not only by the cavalry, but also by the royal messenger and ordinary traveller.

(*b*) *ROAD TRANSPORT* :

We have already alluded to the deplorable condition of the two principal land routes connecting Goalpara with Bengal during early days of the British annexation of Assam. When A. J. Mills visited Assam in 1853, the roads were few and bad. Although Public Works Department was established in 1868, roads were the concern of the Deputy Commissioner assisted by a Committee. The Assam Local Rates Regulation of 1879 provided for the levy of a local rate and appointment of a Committee in each district to control the expenditures on roads etc. Such Committees were replaced in 1882 by subdivisional Local Boards which were entrusted with the maintenance of all roads within their jurisdiction except a few main routes. It was only in 1890 that provincial roads and ferries were taken over by the Public Works Department which was also to execute all works costing more than Rs. 500.00. Hunter's account published in 1879 mentions that the principal route in Goalpara was that portion of the Assam Grand Trunk Road which enters the district from Kamrup at Dhupdhara. Till 1871, the Assam Trunk Road was completed upto Agia only. But subsequently, after formation of the Chief Commissionership of Assam, it was extended to join the Bengal system of roads. Another important road under the management of the Public Works Department was the one from Goalpara to Singamari. This road was about 102 kms. in length. There was another road from Dhuburi to Kherbari about 42 kms. away. This road joined the Koch Bihar road beyond the Sankosh river. Roads under the Deputy Commissioner at the time were those from Goalpara to Karaibari, Goalpara to Jira, Goalpara to Lakhimpur, Jogighopa to Datma, Bijni to Raha (in Kamrup). Another route was constructed from Jogighopa to Bijni. Hunter also refers to some pathways of the district viz., Damra to Dhupdhara, Darma to Salmara, Goalpara to Nibari, Ketekibari to Jira, Jogighopa to Raha, Salmara to Bijni, Jogighopa to Salmara, Jogighopa to Bilasipara *via* Salemcha and Hakma and from Bilasipara to Gauripur where it joned the road from Dhuburi to Kherbari. The road from Raha to Bijni was extended to Haldibari during the Bhutan expedition. Hunter states that at the end of 1875-76, there were about 74 kms. of first class, about 54.4 kms. of second class and about 480 kms. of third class roads in Goalpara.[3]

3. W.W. Hunter : *A Statistical Account of Assam*, New Delhi, 1975 (Reprint), pp. 72-73.

At the beginning of the current century, B.C. Allen, describing the road system of the district, states that the principal roads were the two Trunk Roads on either side of the Brahmaputra. The North Trunk Road started from Dhuburi and passed through Kachugaon about 80 kms. away from where it turned sharply to the east and ran through the Eastern Duars to Raha in Kamrup. There was another route from Dhuburi to Bilasipara and thence through Chapor and North Salmara to Raha. The trunk road was joined by two roads from Bilasipara, one joining at a little to the west of Patgaon or Saralbhanga and the other at Garubhasa. Access to Bengal was by two roads, — one took off at Kachugaon and the other near Pratapganj. The South Trunk Road ran from Dhupdhara (Kamrup) to Fakirganj opposite Dhuburi *via* Rongjuli, Krishnai, Agia, Baida, Lakhipur and Lengrabhita. There was a road from Mankachar to Fakirganj linking the trunk road. Goalpara town was connected to the trunk road by roads which met it at Agia and at a point a little to the west of Krishnai. There was another road from Damra to the Brahmaputra near Dalguma. Altogether in 1904, there were in Goalpara district 256 kms. of roads maintained by the Public Works Department and about 570 kms. under Local Boards. There was not a single metalled road in the district at the time.[4]

It was only after the constitution of the Road Board in 1926-27 in Assam that the construction of roads made some headway. A separate Board was constituted for the administration of the Tea Cess Fund, for improvement of roads. Classification of roads into metalled, gravelled and unsurfaced was proposed and adoption of mechanical means of construction was recommended. It was also proposed to finance construction of bridges over 300′ in length by raising separate loans.[5] In 1928, the Road Development Committee called for a change of the road policy of the Government, and suggested taking over of a bigger share of the road building activities. On the basis of the recommendations of the Committee, the Government of India set up in 1929, a Central Road Fund with the proceeds of the surcharge of two *annas* a gallon of petrol in order to enable them to make annual block grants to provinces out of this Fund. From 1929-30 on wards, Assam received a substantial amount from the Central Road Fund. During the Second World War, road building activities were stepped up in Assam and the South Trunk Road from Goalpara to Saikhowaghat was widened, metalled and black-topped and bridges on it were improved. Road link from the broad-gauge rail-head at Siliguri to

4. B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetteers, Vol. III, Goalpara*, Calcutta, 1906, pp. 99-100.
5. P. C. Goswami, *The Economic Development of Assam*, Bombay, 1963, pp. 192-198.

Jogighopa was established and improved.[6] The conference of Chief Engineers held in 1943 at Nagpur worked out a plan known as the Nagpur Plan wherein the targets of road mileages were fixed for the provinces of India. Though an elaborate scheme to reconstruct roads was prepared under the Post-War-Development Scheme, the programme had to be dropped even before it could get half way through, for want of fund. Till Independence, the development of roads was neglected except in some tea garden areas where good roads were constructed connecting tea gardens with railway stations and steamerghats. Due recognition was, however, given to the importance of roads in the economic, social and cultural life of the people in the Five Year Plans. Rapid strides were made in the development, extension and proper maintenance of roads during the Plan period. We proceed to summarise the progress of roads under the principal agencies which were instrumental for their growth.

(1) Roads under Public Works Department : Under this head are included National Highways, State Highways and major district roads. In 1948-49, there were only about 229 kms, of metalled roads, about 150 kms. of gravelled roads and about 256 kms. of natural soil motorable roads under the Western Assam Division of Public Works Department, [7] comprising the district of Goalpara. These figures indicate the paucity of roads in Goalpara district at that time. At the end of the First Five year Plan, there were about 661 kms. of all weather roads, and about 523 kms. of fair weather roads giving a total of 1,184 kms. of roads under the Public Works Department in Goalpara district.[8] Roads in the district further increased during the Second Five Year Plan. According to the Census of 1961, the total roads in Goalpara district under the Public Works Department stood at 1,590.531 kms. consisting of 286.086 kms. of black-topped roads, 1,096.423 kms. of gravelled roads, 203. 549 kms. of earth-roads and 4.473 kms. of metalled roads. The following table indicates further development of roads including National Highways in Goalpara district under the Public Works Department for some subsequent years.[9]

6. Ibid., p. 191.
7. *Statistical Abstract*, 1951, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam. Shillong, 1952, p. 107.
8. *Statistical Abstract*, 1958, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong 1960 p. 384.
9. *Statistical Handbook*, Assam, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, for the years 1965, 1966, 1968, 1969 and 1973.

Length in Kilometres.

Year	Black topped	Metalled	Gravelled	Motorable in fair weather i.e. earth	Bridle path	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1963-64 ..	294.4	4.8	1185.6	152.	..	1636.8
1965-66 ..	419.2	4.8	1257.6	123.2	6.4	1811.
1967-68 ..	418.	4	1254.	292.	6	1974.
1968-69 ..	446.	4	1390.	213.	6	2059.
1970-71 ..	554.41	Nil	1452.39	343.92	..	2350.72
*1971-72 ..	534.49	..	1614.41	315.60	..	2464.50
*1972-73 ..	544.78	..	1615.59	361.57	..	2521.94
*1973-74 ..	605.93	..	1743.60	274.70	..	2624.23

Sources : Public Works Department, Govt. of Assam, Gauhati.

National Highway No. 31 A, declared as such on 12-2-63, is confined to the north bank of the Brahmaputra in Goalpara district and enters the district at Baxirhat (Assam West Bengal Border) and leaves it at Bhalukadoba. National Highway No. 31 declared as such on the same date is also on the north bank of the Brahmaputra and runs from North Salmara to Jogighopa covering a distance of 17.79 kms. National Highway No. 37 (west) declared as such on 11-9-50 lies on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, enters the district west of Dhupdhara and ends at Pancharatna about 8 kms. west of Goalpara. A road connects Goalpara town with the National Highway. The total length of National Highways in the district increased from 235 kms. in 1961 to 275.6 kms. in 1970-71. Among important State Highways, mention may be made of the North Trunk Road (west) from Dhuburi *via* Gossaigaon to Tezpur in Darrang district, Dhuburi-Gauripur road covering 8.51 kms., Chagolia-Baxirhat road measuring 2.33 kms, Raimana - Sandosh about 9.60 kms. in length, Dhuburi-Kachugaon (Balajan-Kumarganj) measuring 20 kms, and Gossaigaon- Kachugaon road covering 10.40 kms.

The Nagpur Plan of 1943 laid down the objective of providing a well-balanced road system suitable to the needs of the country and the target indicated in the Plan was an achievement of an average of 26 miles ie., about 42 kms. of road per 100 square miles i.e. 259 square kms. of area in 20 years' period. The total area of Goalpara district according to

the 1961 Census was 10,305.8 sq. kms. and it had about 1,519 kms. of road under the Public Works Department. This shows that the target was well within reach.

The following table shows the roads under each division of the Public Works Department in Goalpara district as on 31.3.74.[10]

Name of division	Length in kms.				
	Surfaced	Metalled	Gravelled	Earth	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6
Dhuburi	135.73	..	525.18	125.94	786.85
Goalpara	75.80	..	544.28	82.05	703.13
Kokrajhar	95.42	..	655.44	64.71	815.57
Gossaigaon ..	62.24	..	10.88	2.00	75.12
Abhayapuri ..	158.64	..	7.82	..	166.46
Goalpara National Highway.	78.10	..	..	..	78.10
Total for district. ..	605.93	..	1,743.60	274.70	2,624.23

Road bridges : According to the Census of 1961, there were 165 bridges of all types including semi-permanent ones over National Highways in the district. There were also nine important bridges on State Highways in the district. Bridges across important Highways are generally sufficiently raised above their surroundings as to be effective even during heavy floods when the adjoining areas are submerged. The construction of a bridge across the Brahmaputra at Jogighopa so as to facilitate communication with the south bank of the Brahmaputra remains a cherished hope of the people of the district.

(ii) Local Board and Panchayat Roads : Till the implementation of the Assam Panchayat Act, 1959, some minor district roads and important village roads were under the management of Local Boards at Dhuburi and Goalpara. Total length of Local Board roads in 1955-56 was 1,976 kms.[11] of which only 67.2 kms. were all weather motorable roads. After implementation of the Assam Panchayat Act, 1959, some of the important Local Board roads were taken over by the Public Works Department and the

10. Source : Public Works Department, Govt. of Assam, Gauhati.
11. *Statistical Abstract, Assam*, 1958, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong, 1960, p. 384.

rest were transferred to the Panchayats. According to the Census of 1961, there were 656 village roads in the district with a total length of 2,564.169 kms.[12] Since then substantial amounts have been spent by the Panchayats for development of rural communication. The following table shows the progress of roads in different Blocks *cum* Panchayats of the district during 1969-70.

Name of Block	New *katcha* roads constructed.	Existing *katcha* road improved	Culverts constructed	Culverts repaired
1	2	3	4	5
1. Gossaigaon ..	..	24	..	..
2. Kokrajhar ..	..	..	..	..
3. Mankachar ..	6	10	..	..
4. Srijangram ..	7	14	..	..
5. Agomani ..	51	4	9	..
6. Baitamari ..	2	2	3	2
7. Gauripur ..	..	..	..	..
8. Lakhipur ..	..	..	..	..
9. Manikpur ..	4	..	1	1
10. Kachugaon ..	19	35	7	..
11. Matia	..	..	..	..
12. Sidli Sirung ..	..	..	..	..
13. Bilasipara ..	31	45	5	..
14. Chapar Shalkocha	..	34	..	..
15. Golakganj ..	3	40	6	1
16. Balijana ..	..	12	7	1
17. Dudhnoi ..	5	17	7	7
18. Datma ..	..	4	1	..

(iii) Roads under Municipal Boards and Town Committees : The Municipal Boards and the Town Committees of the district have their own roads, other than Public Works Department roads. These roads are maintained and improved by them out of their own budget grants. Municipalities are financially better off and have their own trained staff for construction and maintenance of roads while the town Committees can hardly afford to keep engineers in their pay-rolls. Financial stringency is also a

12. *Census of India*, 1961, *Assam, District Census Handbook, Goalpara*, Gauhati, 1965, p. 541.

great hurdle which these bodies are to overcome in order to undertake any extensive scheme of road development. In 1968--69, there were 146.29 kilometres of roads under the Municipal and Town Committees out of which 57.63 kms, of roads were owned by the Municipal Boards of the district while the Town Committees had 88.66 kilometres of roads. Out of 146.29 kms. of roads, 60.86 kms. were metalled, 83.39 kms. were unmetalled.

(iv) Vehicles and Conveyances : In the agricultural economy of the district, the traditional cart plays an important role. The carts have open wheels, fitted with iron rims, wooden spokes and iron axles and are capable of rough handling on *katcha* roads. Usually a pair of stout bullocks can draw a cart with a load of six to seven quintals. These are used for transporting the bundles of harvested paddy(*dangaris*), or of jute from the field and also for carrying merchandise from place to place Horse drawn carts are also not uncommon in the district and are used for goods traffic. Bicycles are now an important and widely used means of transport in both rural and urban areas. Automobiles have also increased with improvement of roads. These provide prompt transportation of both passengers and goods.

The statements in pages 255 & 256 show the number of motor vehicles on roads in Goalpara district from 1965 to 1973 and the total number of vehicles registered during 1968 to 1972 in the district.[13]

(v) Public Transport : Road transport in Assam was nationalised as early as in 1948, but it took time for its effect to be felt all over the State. The first route on which State buses plied in Goalpara district was the South Trunk Road from Gauhati to Goalpara over a distance of 150 kms. Operation of State buses was gradually extended to other routes of the district. The State Transport Organisation was converted into a Corporation named the Assam State Road Transport Corporation on August 31,1971. Subsequently, with the creation of the new State of Meghalaya, the Corporation has been renamed as the Assam and Meghalaya State Road Transport Corporation. The object of the Corporation is to provide effcient, economic and comfortable services to the travelling public. The journey hours in long distance routes have been reduced by introducing express and super express services. Facilities in the shape of waiting rooms, advance booking provisions and canteens have been extended by the Corporation.

13. *Transport Statistics of Assam*, 1973, Department of Transport and Tourism, Govt. of Assam, Dispur, 1974, pp, 25-38,

Goalpara District.

Motor vehicles on road - by types during 1965-1973

Year	Buses	Private carriers	Public carriers	Motor cycles	Taxi cars	Motor cars & Jeeps.	Tractors	Trailors	Govt. vehicles	Auto rick-shaws	Others	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1965	..	162	286	507	35	9	97	14	12	..	..	1112
1966	..	166	446	336	38	7	81	11	14	..	..	1099
1967	..	188	450	343	40	7	147	12	14	..	..	1201
1968	..	309	340	447	69	10	242	13	19	62	3	10	1524
1969	..	130	270	639	43	5	214	16	21	67	2	21	1328
1970	..	230	275	558	49	5	215	21	24	82	2	22	1483
1971	..	298	651	527	30	23	317	52	48	113	..	24	2083
1972	..	234	656	535	32	23	320	53	49	114	6	21	2043
1973	..	252	667	553	80	35	374	61	52	118	8	24	2224

Source : Commissioner of Transport, Assam.

Goalpara District.

Total number of vehicles registered during 1968-1972.

Year	Buses	Private carriers	Public carriers	Motor cars	Motor cycles & Scooters	Taxis	Tractors	Trailors	Auto rick-shaws	Govt. vehi-cles	Others	Jeeps	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1968	6	24	20	16	5	--	3	1	..	16	1	12	104
1969	5	31	30	18	5	--	9	9	..	..	11	..	118
1970	133	117	87	71	33	8	8	6	..	10	4	..	477
1971	13	4	47	11	5	2	3	3	..	7	..	..	95
1972	11	13	46	9	13	1	2	1	--	16	6	..	117

Source : Commissioner of Transport, Assam.

There is another public sector corporation namely Central Road Transport Corporation carrying on inter-State operations in goods only between Assam and the rest of India. Its present fleet strength is 222 trucks.

The important places served by Assam and Meghalaya State Road Transport Corporation buses on the north bank of the Brahmaputra in Goalpara district are Dhuburi, Gauripur, Golakganj, Fakiragram, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Abhayapuri, Jogighopa and Bijni. On the south bank, the principal routes in the district are the Goalpara-Gauhati (150 kms.) *via* Agia, Krishnai, Dudhnoi, Rongjuli ; Goalpara-Gauhati (140 kms.) *via* Dubapara, Marnoi, Dalgoma, Matia, Uppartola, Dudhnoi, Amjonga, Darrangiri and Rongjuli ; Goalpara-Mankachar (148 kms.) *via* Agia, Dwaraka, Maladhara, Baida, Rongsoi, Medhipara, Tikkrikilla, Holaidanga, Nidhampur, Phulbari, Bhalbari, Rajabala, Kukurmara, Dairabazar and Jhaodanga. A portion of the Shillong-Tura route also traverses Goalpara sub-division and runs along National Highway No. 37 (West) before turning southwards.

Besides Corporation buses, there are other Stage Carriages viz., privately owned public buses which ply between various important places not adequately served by the former. Also privately owned are Contract Carriages numbering 98 at present. Noteworthy among them are 65 *bazar* buses which convey passengers and goods to and from *hats* (weekly or bi-weekly markets) and thus play a vital part in rural life. Introduced later and of lesser importance are the other Contract Carriages consisting of 35 taxis and 8 auto-rickshaws in 1973. It is, however, noticeable that privately owned vehicles do not generally compare favourably with Corporation buses in respect of punctuality, comfort and fares. Some important Stage Carriage routes of Goalpara district are shown below :—

Stage Carriage Routes of Goalpara district :

Name of Bus Association	Route
1. M/S Bijni-Kuklung-Manikpur Bus Association.	Bijni-Kuklung-Manikpur-Bishnupur-Kokrajhar *via* Chapaguri-Sidli-Basugaon-New Bongaigaon and Bongaigaon.
2. M/S Abhayapuri-Bongaigaon Bus Association.	Bongaigaon-Chapaguri-Sidli-Talguri-Basugaon, Chapar-Abhayapuri-Kashikotra-Bijni-Hatipota-Bengtol-Kabaitari-Jogighopa, Bongaigaon-Chapar, Bongaigaon-New Bongaigaon *via* Abhayapuri-North Salmara.

3.	M/S Kokrajhar-Bilasipara Bus Association	Kokrajhar - Garubhasa - Serfanguri - Sankosh - Fakiragram - Basugaon - Sidli - Bijni, Kokrajhar - Chapar, Kokrajhar - Saralpara, Kokrajhar - Garubhasa, Kokrajhar - Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar - Satgparam - Gossaigaon.
4.	M/S. Dotma-Sapatgram-Barkanda Bus Association.	Bilasipara - Sapatgram - Dotma - Gossaigaon - Kokrajhar - Fakiragram.
5.	M/S Dhuburi-Boxirhat Bus Association.	Dhuburi - Golakganj - Boxirhat - Agomoni - Satrasal - Golakganj - Kachokhana - Halakura - Binnachora - Satrasal.
6.	M/S Dhuburi-Tamarhat - Kachugaon Bus Association	Dhuburi - Balajan - Tamarhat - Gossaigaon - Kachugaon - Garufella - Saraibil - Tamarhat - Sri Rampur - Pratapganj - Paglahat-Saraibil - Raimona - Gossaigaon - Bhowraguri - Sapatgram - Fakiragram - Kokrajhar.
7.	M/S Dhuburi-Gauripur-Dingdinga Bus Association (City Bus)	Dhuburi - Gauripur - Bashbari - Dingdinga - Patamari - Golakganj - Kazigaon-Dharmasala.
8.	M/S Goalpara Bus Owners' Association.	Goalpara - Lakhipur - Damra - Dolgoma - Matia - Bajengdoba - Chunari-Karaikhowa - Fakirganj - Mankachar-Jhowdanga - Haldiganj.

Administration of Public Buses : The Regional Transport Authority, Dhuburi, is a statutory Board consisting of the Deputy Commissioner as its Chairman, the District Transport Officer as the Secretary and some non-official mentors. The Board sits from time to time and disposes of applications for Contract Carriages, Stage Carriages, and Public Carriages. Permits for such vehicles are also issued by the Board.

The District Transport Officer, aided by his staff including the Motor Vehicle Inspector is responsible for proper maintenance of the records of all vehicles of the district, enforcement of the provisions laid down in the Motor Vehicles Act, 1939 (as amended) and rules framed thereunder. The

multifarious functions of the District Transport Officer also include registration of vehicles, maintenance of records of transfer of vehicles, issue of driving licences, ensuring fitness of vehicles, realisation and assessment of taxes under the Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, 1936, and supervision and control of bus services on the routes for which permits are issued. He can suspend or revoke the registration certificates of vehicles for non-payment of taxes.

There are ten bus owners' organisations in the district. They are, (1) Bijni Bus Owners' Organisation, (2) Abhayapuri Bus Owners' Organisation, (3) Bilasipara Bus Owners' Organisation, (4) Kokrajhar Bus Owners' Organisation, (5) Boxirhat Bus Owners' Organisation, (6) Tamarhat Bus Owners' Organisation, (7) City Bus Owners' Organisation, Dhuburi, (8) North-Bank Contract Carriage Owners' Organisation, (9) Goalpara Bus Owners' Organisation and (10) South Goalpara Contract Carriage Owners' Association. There is also an Employees' Association viz., Uttar Goalpara Zilla Motor Karmi Sangha constituted by drivers and conductors of the district. This is a registered Trade Union. Its main purposes are to ensure security of service of members and redress of their grievances. This Union owns a bus whose income goes to the fund of the organisation. This is an instance of participation of workers in management.

(c) *RAILWAYS* :

Dhuburi was connected with Calcutta by a metre-gauge branch rail-line of the Eastern Bengal Railway in 1902. It entered Goalpara at Bishkhoa *Nadi* and ran past Golakganj, Balajan and Gauripur to Dhuburi. The Eastern Bengal Railway extended its connection from Golakganj to Amingaon opposite Gauhati in 1905 - Bansbari, Tipkai, Sisapani, Fakiragram, Kokrajhar, Basugaon and Bijni being the intermediate stations in Goalpara - and Golakganj became a junction. Since then no new line was laid in this district till after Independence when the partition of the country and the hostile attitude of Pakistan led to a complete disruption of railway communication with Calcutta. This resulted in the Rs. 8.9 crore project of establishing railway link between Assam and the rest of India through Indian territory. As a part of this project, the Assam Rail Link which took off from Alipurduar in North Bengal and joined at Fakiragram the existing line in Goalpara was started in January, 1948 and completed in December, 1949. This line entered the district a little to the west of Srirampur and passed through Gossaigaon and Chowtara to Fakiragram which since then has been a junction. This Assam Rail Link provided a direct metre-gauge link between Assam, North Bengal and the rest of India. However, the rail link between Calcutta and Golakganj *via*

East Pakistan continued amidst gradually deteriorating Indo-Pak relationship which culminated in the Indo-Pak War of 1965. This led to complete closure of the said line and since then Golakganj has become an intermediate station on the Dhuburi-Fakiragram section.

In the meantime, broad-gauge railway line was established in North Bengal connecting Calcutta. Extension of the broad-gauge line to Assam was necessitated by the increasing railway traffic and strategic needs consequent on the Chinese aggression in October, 1962. The Project of extending broad-gauge line from Jalpaiguri to Bongaigaon and thence to Jogighopa, a length of 289.68 kms. at an estimated cost of Rs. 32 crores was taken up in October, 1963 and completed in May, 1965. It was opened to goods traffic on June 15, 1965 and to passenger traffic in January, 1966, ushering a new era in the rail transport in the State of Assam. Extension of the broad-gauge line from New Bongaigaon to Gauhati is in progress.

Since 1947, the management of the Assam portion of railway lines was vested on a new system known as the Assam Railways with headquarters at Pandu, which was merged with the North-eastern Railways zone with headquarters at Gorakhpur in April, 1952. Again in January, 1958, the management of the railway lines east of Katihar was separated and vested on the newly formed Northeast Frontier Railway Zone with headquarters at Pandu, then Maligaon. Since then, the railway lines in Assam are under the Northeast Frontier Railways. The divisional scheme of organisation has been introduced since 1969 dividing the zone into 4 divisions with headquaters at Katihar, Alipurduar, Lumding and Tinsukia.

Of the existing lines in Goalpara, the main line of the Northeast Frontier Railways enters Goalpara a little to the west of Srirampur and leaves it at Patiladah. The stations in the district are Srirampur, Gossaigaon, Chautara, Fakiragram, Kokrajhar, Salekati, Basugaon, Dangtol, Goabari, Bongaigaon, Chaprakata, Bijni, Fagunagaon and Patiladah. The broad gauge line which takes off from New Jalpaiguri runs side by side with the main line upto Bongaigaon (New Bongaigaon) and then turns south to Jogighopa, a riverport of the Brahmaputra. The stations on this line are New Bongaigaon, Majgaon, Abhayapuri, Kerkhabari and Jogighopa. There is a branch line from Dhubuti to Fakiragram covering a distance of 66 kms, the stations being Dhuburi, Gauripur, Balajan, Golakganj, Materjhar, Bansbari, Mangaljhar, Tipkai, Sapatgram, and Fakiragram which is a junction on the main line. All these lines lie on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, there being no railway on the south bank of the river in Goalpara subdivision. However, people of the south bank

can catch the train at Jogighopa or Dhuburi after crossing the Brahmaputra by Goalpara-Pancharatna-Jogighopa Ferry or Fakiraganj-Dhuburi Ferry.

(*d*) *WATERWAYS, FERRIES, AND BRIDGES* :

We have already alluded to the fact that since time immemorial and till the early days of British occupation of the district, its chief means of communication to the outside world was by the Brahmaputra. The journey continued to be time consuming till 1848 when Government steamers began plying between Calcutta and Gauhati. In 1860, the Indian General Steam Navigation Company entered into a contract with the Government to run a pair of vessels every six weeks provided the Government boats were withdrawn from the line and since then Steam Navigation of the Assam Valley was in the hands of the Indian General Steam Navigation Company with whom they were associated. The daily mail steamer service was started in 1884 on the Brahmaputra between Dibrugarh and Dhuburi. From Dhuburi, a steamer plied to Jatrapur which was connected with Calcutta by rail in 1884. Dhuburi, Bilasipara, Goalpara and Dalgoma were the ports of call in Goalpara district. The position in 1905 was that there was a daily steamer carrying mails from Dhuburi to Gauhati and *vice & versa*. All ports of Goalpara district were also touched by another vessel which plied between Goalpara and Dibrugarh daily in each direction. Large Cargo steamers also called at the ports of the district.[14]

The river services played a vital role in maintaining communication between Assam and the rest of India. They used to operate through two major routes viz., Assam-Calcutta and Cachar-Calcutta. Of these, the first one was the principal water transport route stretching from Dibrugarh to Calcutta *via* Goalpara, Jogighopa and Dhuburi in Goalpara district and East Bengal (now Bangladesh). Most of the tea, jute, mineral oils, timber exported from Assam were carried by this route. The river services in Assam had their hey day till 1950. The Great Earth-quake of 1950 caused considerable changes in the course of the Brahmaputra resulting in deterioration of the navigable channel particularly in the upper reaches. This led to the closure of the river transport services in the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra by the Joint Steamer Companies in 1954. The construction of rail-*cum*-road bridge known as Saraighat Bridge across the Brahmaputra at Pandu (Kamarup district) in 1962 has greatly facilitated terrestrial transport and relieved the dependence on water transport. Even then, a considerable volume of traffic between Assam and Calcutta used to be

14. B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetteers*, Vol. III, Goalpara, Calcutta, 1905, p. 98.

carried by the waterways. Ninety-three per cent of tea, and 90 per cent of jute grown and exported from Assam used to be carried by the river services till closure of the trans-Pakistan route to Calcutta in Sepetember, 1965. To over come this, arrangements were made to run internal river services based on two rail heads - the broad-gauge from Calcutta at Jogighopa and metre-gauge from Barauni at Dhuburi. Subsequently, River Steam Navigation Company went into liquidation and in its place the Govt. of India set up the Central Inland Water Transport Corporation Limited to takeover the assets and liabilities of the River Steam Navigation Company which used to operate trans-Pakistan waterways services. It has already undertaken the task of reorganising the river services. With the emergence of Bangladesh, the Corporation has recently resumed the river services between Assam and Calcutta *via* Bangladesh.

Assam has internal waterways of more than 9,600 kms. of which 1,600 kms. are navigable by steamers and large country boats and the rest by small country boats. These waterways were utilized for years by country boats, P.WD. ferries and vessels of various steamer companies for carrying cargo traffic but there was no agency in Assam for dealing with matters relating to investigation, planning and designing of various projects concerning these waterways. As per recommendation of Gokhale Committee, Govt. of Assam set up Inland Water Transport Directorate in 1957 for development of inland water transport in the State. It was entrusted with the construction of inland river port at Pandu near Gauhati in Kamrup district at an estimated cost of Rs. 30. lakhs under the guidance of the Central Organisation. The first phase of it has been completed and handed over to the Central Inland Water Transport Corporation. Besides, the Directorate has carried out hydrographic and traffic survey in some of the important rivers of the Brahmaputra valley, Barak valley and in Mizo Hills. It is also associated with the construction at Jogighopa, a major inland river port with all modern and up-to-date cargo handling facilities.

In 1968, the Directorate took over all the major ferries on the river Brahmaputra from Sadiya to Dhuburi from the P.W.D. (R&B) and introduced some more ferries in the important crossings of the river Brahmaputra.

The Bhagwati Committee, set up by the Govt. of India to study the existing water transport problems of the country made the following recommendations for the improvement of water transport in Assam :—

(i) Criss-cross service on the river Brahmaputra.
(ii) Commercial river service on the Borak.
(iii) Subansiri river service.

All these schemes were included in the Fourth Five Year Plan as centrally sponsored schemes. The Ai is navigable for 64 kms. from Nepaltargaon to its confluence with the Manas river. Country boats ply on it during the rainy season and small dug-outs ply throughout the year. This river is a recognised outlet for rice, mustard, thatching grass, and timber. The Jinjiram is also largely used throughout the year as a trade route. Its navigable reach consists of 80 kms. The Sonkosh and Manas are also navigable throughout the year for about 48 kms. each. The Dudhnai is navigable during the rainy season by country boats from Damra to its confluence with the Brahmaputra. The Krishnai's navigable portion is about 96 kms.

It may be mentioned here that boats which always supplemented steamer services on the Brahmaputra are still used extensively and they still serve the purpose of trade and commerce. In 1971-72, there were about 799 private boats and 193 commercial boats in Goalpara district.[15]

Ferries : Since the closure of the River Steam Navigation Company, the Directorate of Inland Water Transport has taken over ferry services across the Brahmaputra from Dhuburi to Fakirganj and from Jogighopa to Pancharatna *via* Goalpara. In 1972-73, goods carried by these two services amounted to 1,440 tonnes and 24,000 tonnes respectively.

Other Ferries : Apart from the ferry services mentioned above, there are others over smaller rivers of the district. These are still under the management of the Public Works Department. A list of important ferries manned by various divisions of the Public Works Department in the district is given below.

Dhuburi Division :

1. Guma Ferry on the Kaldoba, Gharialdanga, Jinkata, Halakura, Baterhat, Tamarhat road.
2. Sealdah Ferry on the Dhuburi and Patamari road.
3. Joyma, Bhowraguri and Harbhanga Ferries on the Gossaigaon and Sapatgram road.
4. Bamungaon Ferry on the Shalkocha-Lakhiganj road.

Kokrajhar Division :

1. Abadi ferry on the Pakalanga river on the Manikpur-Bagulamari and Chakisali road.

15. *Transport Statistics Assam*, , 1973, Govt. of Assam, Dispur, 1974, p, 59.

2. Pakalanga ferry on the Pakalanga river on the Raha - Bagulamari Road.
3. (a) Manas ferry on the Manas river on the North Trunk Road (Sec.II)
   (b) Manas ferry on the Manas river on Lengtisinga Lengla Road.
4. Dulani ferry on the Dulani river on the Binji Panbari Road.
5. Kawatika ferry on the Ai river on the Bijni Sulejhar Road.
6. Jaraguri ferry on the Ai river on the Kawaimari Tetliguri Road.
7. Kutchikata ferry on the Ai river on the North Salmara-Bhalukadoba Road.
8. Ai ferry on the Ai river on the North Trunk Road (Sec.III).
9. Champa ferry on the Champa river on the Charaikhola-Basugaon Road.
10. Champa ferry on the Champa river on the Balagaon Basugaon Road.
11. Champa ferry on the North Trunk Road. (Sec. V)
12. Tarang ferry on the Tarang river on the Kokrajhar-Patalpur Road.
13. Gaurang ferry on the Gaurang river on the Kokrajhar Monakosho Road.
14. Gaurang ferry on the Kokrajhar Ramphalbil Road.
15. Saralbhanga ferry on the Saralbhanga river on the Dotma-Balagaon Road.

Goalpara Division :

1. Jinjiram ferry service on the Jinjiram river on the Phulbari South Salmara Road.

Air Transport : Surface communication is the only means of transport in the district.

(*e*) *TRAVEL AND TOURIST FACILITIES* :

There are three Circuit Houses in the district, one each at Dhuburi, Goalpara and Kokrajhar. These are under the control of the Deputy Commissioner, Dhuburi and the Sub-divisional Officers concerned. There are also three Dak-Bungalows, one in each of these places under the control of the said officers. Hotels and Restaurants in the district do not generally have modern amenities. There are a number of Inspection Bungalows maintained by the Public Work Department, the Forest Department and the Irrigation Department which, when not occupied by officials can accommodate travellers. Most of the Inspection Bungalows have 2 to 3 furnished rooms and are provided with crockery and cooking utensils. The Chowkidar in each Inspection Bungalow caters to the needs of visitors. A list of Inspection Bungalows/Rest Houses in Goalpara district is given below :—

(Under Public Works Department)

1. Lakhipur, 2. Dudhnoi, 3. Dolgoma, 4. Rangjuli, 5. Dhupdhara, 6. Kharmauja, 7. Kokrajhar, 8. Basugaon, 9. Sidli, 10. Manikpur, 11. Bilasipara, 12. Shalkocha, 13. Chapar, 14. Fakirganj, 15. Dotma, Sesargaon, 17. Gossaigaon, 18. Paglabat, 19. Tamarhat, 20. Kachugaon, 21. Sapatgram, 22. Agomani, 23. Balajan, 24. Golakganj.

(Under Forest Department)

1. Haltugaon, 2. Jharbari, 3. Ultapani, 4. Saralpara, 5. Loapani, 6. Ranikhata, 7. Deosiri, 8. Kokrajhar, and 9. Patgaon. Besides these I.Bs, there are a number of small hotels in Dhuburi, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon and Goalpara and also two good hotels namely (1) Town Hotel and (2) Tripti Hotel in Dhuburi town.

(f) *POST AND TELEGRAPH FACILITIES* :

In 1875-76, there were only 12 post offices in the district and subsequently in 1903-04, number of post offices of all categories rose to 34 including 4 combined post and telegraph offices. Besides, there were departmental telegraph offices at Dhuburi and Goalpara. The mail was brought from Calcutta to Dhuburi and was usually distributed by runners..[16] Although there were some important improvements in postal facilities prior to Independence, it was only in the post-Independence period—especially after creation of a new division for Goalpara and Garo Hills in 1964-65—that rapid progress was made. The total number of post offices was increased to 137 including head office at Dhuburi, 24 sub-post offices and 112 branch offices.[17] The manual telephone exchanges at Dhuburi and Goalpara were converted to automatic ones.

Expansion of postal facilities has continued and in 1975, the number of post offices of all categories in the district increased to 269 comprising one head office at Dhuburi, 47 sub-offices and 221 branch offices. All post offices are delivery offices and have arrangements for money orders and savings bank account. Most of them are under the Goalpara Division of Post and Telegraph Department but a few others are under Shillong and Kamrup Divisions. The list of post offices in the district is given in Appendix 'A'.

16. B. C. Allen: *Assam District Gazetteers, Vol III, Goalpara*, Calcutta, 1905, p. 101.
17. *Classification list of Indian Post Offices and R.M.S. Offices and Sections, Part-I*, September, 1964—206 th edition, p. 41.

It is interesting to note that although there were only 34 post offices in 1903-04, they were so located as to cover practically all seats of leading *Zamindars* of the district. Post-Independence expansion has on the contrary been village-oriented. Although much remains to be done even now, the department has been successful in providing facilities to many far-flung areas of the district. Out of the present 269 post offices in the district, as many as 253 are located in rural areas. This emphasis on rural coverage has been justified by the consequent increase in volume of postal transactions. Whereas, the total number of letters and post-cards delivered in 1903-04 was 4,78,000 only, in 1974-75 as many as 231,91,750 letters, 1000,09,603 post-cards, 52,504 registered newspapers, 63,257 registered parcels, 12,96,012 registered letters, 46,258 insured letters, 11,317 insured parcels and 23,619 V.P. parcels were handled by post offices in the district.[18] Appendix 'B' shows the activities of post offices in Goalpara district during 1971-75.

Almost all sub-post offices are provided with telegraph facilities. Provisions for public calls are made in 21 such offices viz., Abhayapuri, Agomoni, Bagribari, Basugaon, Bilasipara, Bijni, Kokrajhar, Mankachar, Patiladaha, North Salmara, South Salmara, Sapatgram, Serfunguri, Sidli, Agia, Baladmari, Dhupdhara, Dudhnoi, Goalpara, Krishnai and Lakhipur. During the year, runners conveyed mail over a distance of 1,545 kms. and motor services covered 333 kms.

There are at present seventeen telephone exchanges in the district most of which were established during the sixties and are now of automatic type. There is a proposal for an exchange at Rongjuli. The automatic exchange at Dhuburi has been designed to handle the maximum number of calls - there being provision for 600 lines. The table in page 267 gives particulars about telephone exchanges in the district.

(g) *RADIO AND WIRELESS* :

There are no Radio Stations in Goalpara district. The Assam Police Radio Organization has its usual network of wireless stations with district headquarters at Dhuburi connecting it with Goalpara and Kokrajhar. V.H.F. sets have been recently provided to police in the district and these portable sets, capable of receiving and transmitting messages within short distances, have proved very useful in maintenance of law and order.

18. Collected from Superintendent of Post Offices, Goalpara Division, Dhuburi.

Statement showing the details of Telephone Exchanges in the portion of Goalpara District, under S.D.O.T ; Dhuburi as on 1.4.1975.

Sl. No.	Name and Location of Telephone Exchanges	Year of establishment	Type and Capacity at the time of establishment.	Type and existing capacity	Lines	Remarks.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Abhayapuri ..	12.1.65	Auto 25 Lines	Auto 50 Lines	36 Lines	Nil
2.	Basugaon ..	31.11.68	Auto 25 Lines	Auto 25 Lines	9 Lines	Nil
3.	Bilashipara ..	31.3.66	Auto 50 Lines	Auto 50 Lines	42 Lines	Nil
4.	Bongaigaon ..	9.5.57	Mag. 50 Lines	CBNM 200 Lines	182 Lines	Trunk Exchange.
5.	Choibari ..	14.8.69	Auto 25 Lines	Auto 25 Lines	10 Lines	Nil
6.	Dhuburi ..	28.8.51	Mag. 100 Lines	Auto 600 Lines	437 Lines	Trunk Exchange.
7.	Fakiragram ..	17.3.67	Auto 25 Lines	Auto 25 Lines	17 Lines	Nil
8.	Golakganj ..	13.3.66	Auto 25 Lines	Auto 35 Lines	30 Lines	Nil
9.	Gossaigaon ..	26.2.68	Auto 25 Lines	Auto 35 Lines	28 Lines	Nil
10.	Gouripur ..	28.10.58	Mag. 50 Lines	Auto 100 Lines	66 Lines	Nil
11.	Jogighopa ..	30.3.74	Auto 50 Lines	Auto 50 Lines	30 Lines	Nil
12.	Kokrajhar ..	15.6.63	CBNM 50 Lines	CBNM 200 Lines	120 Lines	Trunk Exchange.
13.	Sapatgram ..	23.6.66	Auto 25 Lines	Auto 35 Lines	24 Lines	Nil
14.	Bijni ..	1965	Auto 50 Lines	Auto 50 Lines	24 Lines	Nil
15.	Goalpara ..	1955	Mag. 50 Lines	Manual 150 Lines	122 Lines	Nil
16.	Mankachar ..	1964	CBNM 50 Lines	Auto 50 Lines	28 Lines	Nil
17.	Krishnai ..	1972	Auto 25 Lines	Auto 25 Lines	11 Lines	Nil

APPENDIX—'A'

LIST OF POST OFFICES IN GOALPARA DISTRICT :

1. **Abhayapuri (L.S.G.) S.O.C.O.**
P.C.O. 783384.

Borgola Srijangram
Chandmara
Deoldi
Dumaria Piradhara
Isabpur
Kapatalichikri
Kirtanpara
Kushbari
Lengla
Lengtisinga
Madrasapara
Mayanbari
Nararvita
Rangapani

2. **Agomoni S.O. C.O. P.C.O.**
783335

Bidyadabri
Chagalia
Jhapsabari
Kaldoba
Kherbari
Koimari
Mahamayahat
Margadadhar
Pabarchera RKS
Pokalagi
Satrasal

3. **Ashok Paper Mill S.O.**
(C. Class)

4. **AMCO Road S.O. C.O.**
783323. (C. Class)
(Town Sub-Office)

5. **Bagribari S.O. C.O. P.C.O.**
783349. (C. Class)
Bondihana

6. **Basugaon S.O. C.O. C.O.**
783372. (B. Class)

Bidyapur
Bilaspur
Dhantola Bazar
Kalipukhuri
Kokiagaon
Ranchaidham
Salakati

7. **Bhowraguri S.O.**
783336. (C. Class)

Binyakhata
Gambaribil
Kamalsing

8. **Bidyapara S.O.C.O. Rs.**
783324 (B. Class)

Dharmasala
Patamari

9. **Bilasipara (L.S.G.) S.O. C.O.**
P. C.O. 783348

Barkanda
Hakama
Hatipota
Lakhiganj Bazar
Shalkocha
Silgara

10. **Bijni (L.S.G.) S.O.C.O.**
P.C.O. 783390

Amguri Bazar
Ananda Bazar
Bagargaon
Ballamguri Bazar
Bhandra Bazar
Bholatal
Bhotagaon
Boro Bazar

Appendix—A (Contd.)

25. **Kokrajhar (L.S.G.)S.O.C.O.**
P C.O. 783370

Bismuri
Choibari
Haltugaon
Kasipara Bhotgaon
Magurmari
Nayekgaon
Raijhora Bahalpur
Simbargaon
Titaguri
Ultapani

26. **Manikpur S.O.C.O. 783392**
(C. Class)
Adlaguri
Chakihali

27. **Mankachar S.O.C.O. P.C.O**
783131 (A. Class)

Jhowdanga
Kakripara
Kalairchar
Katuli
Purandiara
Radhamadhabhat

28. **New Bongaigaon S.O.C.O.**
783381 (B. Class)

29. **Patiladaha S.O.C.O.P.C.O.**
R.S. 783391 (C. Class)

Alukunda Bazar
Chakla
Kokila
Numbarpara
Panbari
Sonaikhola

30. **Salmara North S.O.C.O.P.C.O.**
783383 (C. Class)

Bhotguri Huramara
Chakapara
Chalantapara
Kakaijana
Khagarpur
Nayagaon
Sidalsati

31. **Salmara South S.O.C.O.P.C.O.**
783127 (C. Class)

Patakata
Ravatari
Sarkarergaon

32. **Sapatgram (L.S.G.)S.O.C.O.**
P.C.O. 783337

Bashbari
Bhumka
Chithila Bhubannagar
Duligaon
Kartimari
Manglajhora (RS).
Moterjhar (RS)
Raniganj
Tipkai (RS)
Tulsibil

33. **Serfunguri S.O.C.O.P.C.O.**
783346 (C. Class)

Aflagaon
Athiabaribazar
Gossainisina
Jharbari
Pakriguri
Patgaon
Ramfalbil

34. **Sidli S.O.C.O.P.C.O.**
783373

Garubhasa
Karigaon
Runikhata

35. **Srirampur S.O.R.S.**
783361 (C. Class)

Haraputa
Jaraguri

36. **Sukchar S.O.**
783128 (C. Class)

Fekamari
Fulerchar
Hazirhat
Kokradanga
Mohorirchar

Appendix—A (Contd.)

37. **Tamarhat S.O.**
78333 (C. Class)
Kamandanga
Srinagar.

38. **Agia S.O. C.O. P.C.O. 783120**
Baida
Bardamal
Dwarka
Markula
Suarmari

39. **Badalmari S.O. C.O. P.C.O.**
783121 (B. Class)

40. **Dhupdhara S.O.C.O.P.C.O.**
783123 (C. Class)
Bagdoba
Salpara

41. **Dudhnoi S.O. C.O. P.C.O.**
783124 (C. Class)
Amjonga
Kushdhowa
Upartola

42. **Goalpara (L.S.G.)S.O. C.O.**
P.C.O. 783101.
Dubapara
Kharmauza
Ramharirchar
Ujirerchar

43. **Krishnai S.O. C.O. P.C.O.**
783126 (C. Class)
Harimura
Ialabari

44. **Lakhipur S.O.C.O.P.C.O.**
783129 (B. Class) (Goalpara)
Ambaribazar.
Baguan
Balarbhita
Chunari
Jaleswar
Kafarihara
Nidanpur
Joypur Bazar
Tulesibari

45. **Matia S.O. C.O.**
783125 (C. Class)
Bahati
Bakaitari
Chakla
Dahela
Dalgoma
Marnoi
Matia Bazar
Sutarpara

46. **Rangali S.O. C.O.**
783130 (C. Class)
Athaibari
Sesapani
Simlatola
Tiplai
Barkona
Dhanuagaon
Kalapani
Jairamukuchi.

APPENDIX 'B'

Statement showing the Nos. of Articles posted in the Goalpara District.

Subject	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
1	2	3	4	5	6
No of articles posted :					
Letter	1,49,93,214	1,72,13,124	1,91,72,743	2,11,61,849	2,31,91,750
Post card	61,13,361	62,19,321	81,13,129	87,13,241	1,00,09,603
Registered news	41,003	45,012	48,113	51,003	52,504
Regd. & the Regd. parcels	51,440	56,293	58,213	61,294	63,257
Regd. letters	6,13,215	6,99,322	9,21,436	10,44,319	12,96,012
Insured letter	36,005	37,109	40,192	43,122	46,258
Insured parcel	5,932	6,118	7,219	9,241	11,317
V.P. parcel	15,330	16,961	17,221	20,113	23,619
Money orders :					
No. of M.Os. issued	10,96,115	12,67,217	12,99,162	1300521	13,16,450
Amount collected (Rs.)	8,72,91,312.80	9,32,62,531.75	10,96,33,211.15	13,11,21,121.25	13,78,01,287.50
No. of M.O. Paid (No)	2,65,518	2,98,611	3,19,621	3,56,992	3,67,350
Amounts paid (Rs.)	3,01,16,629.27	3,52,11,321.12	3,81,71,829.17	4,01,161,32.13	4,16,78,255.00
Indian Postal order.					
No. of I.P.Os sold (No)	29,601	31,006	31944	33,600	35,200
Amount collected (Rs.)	1,31,626.29	1,53,211.69	1,60,021.89	1,62,602.80	1,73,600.00
No. of I.P.Os Paid (No)	5,106	5,622	5,821	6,109	6,250
Amount paid (Rs.)	58,199.17	60,291.25	61,212.18	66,219.25	68,050.10

Appendix—B (Contd.)

B. R. L. :					
No. of licences issued or renewed (No) ..	81,660	86,322	89,116	91,132	95,800
Amount of fees collected (Rs.)	9,32,171.85	11,21,296.25	11,33,216.00	13,11,945.15	15,38,450.00
N.S.C. N.P.S.C.					
No. of issued (No.)	8,788	8,997	9,005	9,127	10,528
Amount collected (in Rs.)	8,75,432	8,98,791	9,63,421	6,65,441	10,01,960
No. paid (No.)	9005	9112	9383	9426	10,543
Amount paid (in Rs.)	23,18,192.65	23,19,166.15	24,16,237.17	2467129.60	25,85,142.00
Saving Bank Accounts :					
Amount deposited in S.B. Acctts. (Rs.) ..	28,10,13,116.12	29,14,11,369.63	29,15,12,112.13	29,18,17,332.15	30,27,61,117.60
Amount withdrawals from S.B. Acctts.(Rs.)	10,19,64,716.85	12,11,56,219.45	13,00,11,261.15	13,16,21,113.60	13,59,20,014.00
C.T.D. :					
Amount deposited (Rs.)	54,19,123.13	55,86,132.80	6,199,132.25	64,13,731.40	66,12,840.60
Amount withdrawn (Rs.)	1999132.95	21,29,173.10	24,31,274.15	25,32,497.75	28,55,758.80
No. of accounts standing at the end of the year	1,70,032	20,8775	2,79,321	2,88,653	2,99,965

CHAPTER VIII.

MISCELLANEOUS OCCUPATIONS.

(a) *PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION* :

The total number of persons employed in Public Services in the district of Goalpara, according to the Census of 1961 was 7,244 including 1,965 females. This, however, does not include those employees of the Government, Quasi-Government bodies and Local Authorities, whose sphere of activities fall outside administration. Thus, those persons who are serving under transport, communication, information and broadcasting, education and scientific services, health, industries, production, construction, marketing and financial institutions have not been censused under publice servics. The following table shows the distribution of persons in various categories of public services (administration) in the district as per the 1961 Census.[1]

Category of Service	Persons employed		
	Male	Female	Total
1. Police Organisation	806	..	806
2. Under Central Government	1,418	19	1,437
3. Under State Government ..	881	62	943
4. Under Quasi-Government, Municipalities, Local Boards etc.	3,974	84	4,058

The Census of Assam Government employees conducted by the Department of Economics and Statistics reveals that on 31st March, 1967, the total number of State Government employees in the district was 6,954. The distribution of the State Government employees according to status is indicated below[2] :

1. *Census of India*, 1961, *Assam. District Census Handbook, Goalpara*, Gauhati, 1965, p. 265.
2. *Census of Assam Government Employees*. Department of Economics and Statistics, Shillong, 1967, p. 16.

Status	Total number of employees	Permanent	Temporary
Gazetted	209	77	132
Non-Gazetted	3,273	923	2,350
Grade IV	3,765	1,813	1,952
Total	7,247	2,813	4,434

The big difference between the figures of the State Government employees in the 1961 Census and that of the Census of Assam Government Employees, 1967 is largely attributed to the omission of employees belonging to certain categories in the 1961 Census and expansion of branches of departments of the Government of Assam in the following years after 1961. Government employees increased by 293 persons in their 1967 Census over 6,954 in their preceeding Census of 1966. This figure further increased to 10,390 on 31st March, 1973 as per the Government Employees Census, 1973. It is also interesting to note that the 1967 Census of Assam Government Employees reveals that the females constituted only a small percentage of the total population of the employees. There were only 194 female employees serving in the district under the Government of Assam in 1967. This figure, however, increased to 432 on 31/3/73. There was one Government employee per 213 persons of the district. In that year, there were 1,131 Scheduled Tribes (both Hills and Plains) employees and 572 Scheduled Castes employees and 1,760 other Backward Classes employees in the Goalpara district.[3]

The following figures in tabular form indicate the total number of administrators and executive officials of Government in the district.[4]

Description ..	Total	Male	Female	Urban areas Male	Urban areas Female
1. Administrators and Executive Officials, Government. ..	2055	2,032	23	777	3
2. Administrators and Executive officials in Central Govt...	346	345	1	130	..

3. *Representation of Scheduled Castes/Tribes in the State Government Service*, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong, 1970. pp. 5,6 and 14.
4. *Census of India*, 1961, *Assam, District Census Handbook, Goalpara*, 1965, Gauhati pp. 272-73.

Description ..	Total	Male	Female	Urban areas Male	Urban areas Female
3. Administrators and Executive Officials, State Govt. ..	815	811	4	337	3
4. Administrators and Executive officials, Local Bodies. ..	118	108	10	53	..
5. Village Officials ..	294	294	..	..	..
6. Administrators and Executive officials, Quasi-Government.	226	225	1	55	..
7. Administrators and Executive Officials, Govt. N.E.C.	256	249	7	202	..

Special amenities to the Government employees : Some of the benefits available to the employees of the State Government are :— (1) General Provident Fund benefit, (2) Pension and Gratuity after retirement, (3) Joint Family Pension, Liberalised Family Pension, Commuted Pension, (4) Free Medical Treatment for the employee and his family members, (5) Earned Leave for three months with full average pay and for one month with half average pay at a time, (6) Medical Leave with full average pay and also maternity leave for the female employees, (7) Sickness Benefit for treatment of some serious diseases, (8) 15 days' casual leave plus 2 days' special causal leave within one calender year, (9) 120 days' leave with full average pay at the time of retirement, (10) Provision for a Government employee in permanent employment for going on lien for other service, (11) Provision for leave-travel concession benefit for employees going home on earned or casual leave whose native place of residence is more than 200 kilometres from the place of posting once in a period of two years, (12) Facilities for house-building advance, (13) Conveyance advance for purchasing motor cars, motor cycles, bicycles etc., (14) Provision for rent-free quarters for certain employees and house rent for others, and (15) Provision for free education to children of the Central Government employees. Now-a-days, more facilities are available to the employees belonging to the weaker section of the society serving both in the State and Central Government establishments. Total number of holidays under the State Government is not less than a month during a year.

Public Employees' Organisations : With a view to safeguard the general interest of the Government employees and to promote their common welfare, some categories of employees serving under both State and Central Governments have formed Associations. The organisations of Central Government employees are formed on all Assam basis. There are district units of both these types of organisations in the Goalpara district. These organisations try to ventilate their grievances in a peaceful way. Most of these organisations have been formed with prior permission from the Government.

The followings are some of the associations of the Government employees.

1. All Assam Ministerial Officers' Association (in State Government Service).
2. All Assam 4th Grade Employees' Association (in State Government Service).
3. All Assam Transport Workers' Union.
4. All Assam *Mandal Kanungo Sanmilan*,
5. All Assam Sericultural Officers' Association.
6. All Assam Mohurirs' Association.
7. All Assam P.W.D. Workers' Union, Goalpara Branch.
8. Assam Civil Service (Class I) Association.
9. Assam Civil Service (Class II) Association.
10. Employees' Association of Electricity Board, (Goalpara Branch).

(*b*) *LEARNED PROFESSIONS* :

In the pre-Independence period, the percentage of persons engaged in learned professions, such as teaching, medicine and surgery, engineering and legal practice, was negligible. But with the expansion of different educational facilities in the district and the increase of literacy at all level during the last few decades, Goalpara has made much progress in the above fields. According to the 1961 Census, the total number of persons engaged in technical profession and related works was 8,149, of which 7,410 were males and 739 females. Such persons engaged in urban areas were 2,045 including 203 females. They constitute slight by less than 0.53 per cent of the total population. The statement below indicates the number of persons engaged in medical and related services in Goalpara district.[5]

5. Ibid, p. 271.

Categories	Total	Male	Female	Urban	
				Male	Female
1. Physicians, Surgeons and Dentists. ..	629	619	10	227	6
2. (a) Physicians and Surgeons, Alopathic. ..	128	126	2	36	2
(b) Physicians, Ayurvedic ..	150	148	2	96	2
(c) Physicians, Homeopathic	121	121	..	58	..
(d) Physicians, Surgeons and Dentists, N.E.C.	148	144	4	12	..
2. Nurses, Pharmacists, and other Medical and Health Technicians, ..	625	534	19	63	19
(a) Pharmaceutical Technicians.	126	125	1	37	1
(b) Medical and Health Technicians, N.E.C. (Excluding Laboratory Assistants,	309	300	9	10	1

In 1974, there were 109 registered Government doctors and assistant surgeons, 119 pharmacists, 20 health visitors, 3 midwives and 39 nurses in Goalpara district. Besides the Government doctors, nurses and medical technicians, there are a number of doctors and other personnel serving in the private dispensaries and hospitals belonging to the tea gardens in the district. The number of doctors, surgeons, and dentists was 629 as shown in the above table and out of them 227 males and 6 females served in the urban areas, the rest in the rural areas. Ayurvedic and Homeopathic methods of treatment of diseases have been gradually gaining grounds all over the district. A department of Ayurvedic method of treatment has already been attached to the civil hospital at Dhuburi. This section is run by Government Ayurvedic doctor. The number of doctors of these two systems has been increasing day by day. In this district, the medical field excluding

nursing and mid-wifery is predominated by the male persons although females are coming up on this line.

Legal Practice : Prior to the establishment of the Gauhati University in 1948, the students from Assam had to study in Calcutta or other Universities outside Assam. At present, the two Universities of Gauhati and Dibrugarh are turning out law graduates every year. But only some percentage of them enter into this legal practice. In 1961, there were 154 Jurists including one female in the Goalpara district, out of which 140 including one female worked in the urban areas. The total number of persons engaged in legal services as shown in that Census was 462 of whom 368 were Barristers, Advocates, Solicitors, Mukteers, Pleaders, Muhuris, Munshis and 94 were Kajis engaged in matrimonial services.

Teachers : In the field of learned professions, teachers play a very important role in the district. Along with the expansion of educational institutions from the primary schools to the colleges, number of teachers has also been increasing rapidly in the district. The total number of teachers serving in the different educational institutions in the district as per 1961 Census is given below :—

Year	Categories of educational institution.	No. of teachers			No. of teachers in Urban areas		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1961	Teachers.	4,508	611	5119	589	175	764
	(a) Teachers, Secondary Schools.	789	174	963	108	67	175
	(b) Teachers, Middle and Primary Schools.	2,958	282	3,240	145	83	228
	(c) Teachers, N.E.C.	719	109	828	296	20	316

The largest number of women teachers serve only in the Primary and Middle Schools. In Secondary education such teachers are small in number. In 1961, there were 611 women teachers, out of whom 175 were serving in the urban areas and the rest were in the rural areas.

Engineers : The total number of Architects, Engineers and Surveyors in the district was 333 in 1961, of whom 230 worked in the urban areas. The number of Biologists, Veterinarians, Agronomists, and related scientists in the district was 55. There were no female workers under the above 2 categories. Biologists, Veterinarians, Agronomist and related scientists were engaged in the urban areas. Out of 161 male Surveyors 106 worked in urban areas and 103 Architects, Engineers and Surveyors worked in the rural areas.

The number of social scientists and related workers was 103 in 1961 including 9 females. 55 including one female of this group worked in the urban areas and the rest in the rural areas. There were 92 photographers and related camera operators in the district. In 1961, 108 persons were worked in services, sports and recreation service etc.

Domestic and Institutional Services : The caste system of the old days in relation to its particular occupation has gradually faded away from the society. This is no doubt an impact of the expansion of education among the masses in the district. In fact, it has been noticed now-a-days that people adopt any profession irrespective of their caste, as the means of livelihood. Some occupational castes of the old days like Goldsmiths (*Sonaries*,) Potters (*Kumars*), Blacksmiths (*Kamars*), Fishermen (*Nadiyals*), Silk-worm rearers (Jugis) etc. are losing their importance as occupational castes due to their diversion towards agriculture and other occupations. The main reason for their diversion was that the traditional occupational castes were always looked down in the society and at the same time their occupations were also not very encouraging.

In 1901, in the district of Goalpara, nearly 8 per cent of the population were said to be supported by farm service and field labour and in respect of Goalpara, marked departure from other districts of the Brahmaputra valley where there was complete absence of a labouring class is seen. In the district, the great majority of the labourers were women. Other occupations that supported more than one per cent of the total population in 1901, were fishing, dealing in grain, general labour and begging.

In 1961, there were 3,590 persons engaged in household and institutional services like house-keepers, cooks, maids, bearers, matrons, stewards, butlers, waiters etc., of whom 868 were females. The house-keepers, matrons, stewards (domestic and institutional) numbered 510 including 84 females and of them 27 males worked in urban areas. Again cooks, cook-bearers (domestic and institutional) were 1,083 persons (840 males and 243 females) of whom 536 males and 96 females were in the urban areas. 1,666

including 327 females were butlers, bearers, waiters, maids and other servants (domestic) in the district in 1961 and out of them 786 males and 142 females were in the urban areas. There were 285 house-keepers, cooks, maids and related workers (not elsewhere classified), of whom 106 were males and 179 females. Only 14 males were in the urban areas. The service conditions of workers categorised under domestic servants, waiters etc. are not apparently good and their monthly wages are within the range of Rs. 50.00 and Rs. 75.00, although their bare necessities of life viz food, lodging and clothing are supplied by their employers.

Barbers : Barbers as a professional group are generally seen in the urban areas of the district although their visit in the rural areas is also not uncommon. It is stated that they accepted both kind and cash from the villagers. But this system is now no longer common. Barbers' shops have been established in the towns and important places of the villages. The saloons of big sizes are run by the owners employing paid workers. In urban areas of district like Dhuburi, Goalpara, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon etc. the charge for hair-cutting only is Rs. 1.00 and for a shave it varies from thirty to fifty paise. But in rural areas, such charges are paid less and varied from Rs. 0.75 to one rupee for hair-cutting and 20 paise to to 30 paise for shaving. The total number of Barbers, Beauticians, Hairdressers and other related workers was 1,210 according to the Census Report of 1961. This figure included 8 females and 359 males engaged in the urban areas. The rest were in the rural areas.

Washermen : The washermen also constitute an important section among those who are engaged in the miscellaneous occupations. But most of them are in the urban areas of the district and the number of washermen in the rural areas is very small.

Washing of clothes is usually done on the bank of the rivers, streams and ponds ; and ironing is done either in the family houses or in the laundries. Now-a-days, the laundries are also growing up in rural centres. Almost all the washermen do the work with the help of the members of their families. The rate of charge for washing of cloth varies from 25 paise to 30 paise per piece. But in case of urgent washing, the washermen charge higher rates. According to the Census Report of 1961, the district had 300 persons including 27 females under the occupational group, 'Laundrymen, Washermen and Dhobies.' Out of them 172 males and 16 females were in urban areas. Now-a-days, in urban areas, some dry cleaners' shops have been established. They do dry cleaning of woollen garments, washing of silk cloths and other costly cloths besides

dyeing. In 1961, there were 323 Launders, Dry cleaners and Pressers including 27 females. 175 males and 16 females worked in urban areas.

Tailors : Tailoring engages a considerable section of the population of the district. Most of the reputed tailoring shops are found in the important towns only. With the rise of the standard of living, there has been an increase in the variety of sartorial makes and designs and as a result of it, the number of tailoring shops is also on the increase. Owners of the tailoring shops engage workers on monthly wages to assist them. Stitching charges are higher in towns than in villages. The stitching charge of cotton trousers, at present, is Rs. 10.00 and warm trousers varies from Rs. 20.00 to Rs. 30. There is, however, no uniformity of rates charged by different tailors. Another important aspect of tailoring in the district is that a large section of the tailors sell their ready-made clothes in the towns, garden *hats* and *bazars* in the rural areas. In 1961, there were 1,732 tailors, dress-makers and garment-makers in the Goalpara district including 73 females. Out of them 774 persons worked in the urban areas.

Cobblers : According to the Census Report, 1961, the district had 391 leather cutters, lasters and sewers (except gloves and garments) and related workers including 20 females. Some rich cobblers have established their own small shops where they manufacture foot-wears. Some cobblers sit on the road-side of the towns and attend the weekly *hats*.

Rickshaw-pullers : The rickshaw-pullers also constitute a considerable section among occupational groups, mostly in the urban areas of the district. It is a means of easy communication in the towns and their suburbs. Now-a-days, along with the increased activities on the lines of commerce, trade, industries etc., the demand of rickshaw is also increasing. To cater to the needs of the people, their number has also been increasing. The rates charged by the rickshaw-pullers generally varies. The rickshaws are to be registered with the Municipalities and Town Committees concerned for the purpose of taxation.

Table showing the number of Population under Miscellaneous occupations as in 1961 Census : Goalpara District.

Sl. No.	Division and Group	Occupational distribution					
		In all areas of the district			In urban areas of the district.		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	**Professional, Technical and Related Workers.**	7,410	739	8,149	1,842	203	2,045
	(a) Architects, Engineers and Surveyors	333	..	333	230	..	230
	(b) Biologists, Veterinarians, Agronomist and related Scientists	55	..	55	28	..	28
	(c) Physicians, Surgeons and Dentists	619	10	629	227	6	233
	(d) Nurses, Pharmacists and other Medical Technicians ..	534	91	625	63	19	82
	(e) Teachers	4,508	611	5,119	589	175	764
	(f) Jurists	153	1	154	139	1	140
	(g) Social Scientists and related workers	94	9	103	54	1	55
	(h) Artists, Writers and related workers	166	4	170	42	..	42
	(i) Draughtsmen, Science and Engineering Technicians N.E.C.	41	..	41	23	..	23
2.	**Administrative, Executive and Managerial Workers :** ..	3,683	28	3,711	2,175	6	2,181
	(a) Administrators and Executive Officials, Government. ..	2,032	23	2,055	777	3	780
	(b) Directors and Managers, Wholesale and Retail Trade ..	179	1	180	90	1	91
	(c) Directors, Managers and Working Proprietors Financial Institutions.	9	..	9	7	..	7
	(d) Directors, Managers and Working Proprietors, Others. ..	1,463	4	1,467	1,301	2	1,303

Sl. No.	Divisions and Group	Occupational distribution					
		In all areas of the district.			In urban areas of the district.		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3.	**Clerical and Related Workers :**	4,846	69	4,915	2,469	44	2,513
	(a) Book-keepers and Cashiers	133	2	135	92	2	94
	(b) Stenographers and Typists	77	3	80	53	3	56
	(c) Office Machine Operators	2	..	2	2	..	2
	(d) Clerical works, Miscellaneous	3,130	64	3,194	1,645	39	1,684
	(e) Unskilled Office Workers	1,504	..	1,504	677	..	677
4.	**Sales Workers :**	26,816	1,547	28,363	10,190	245	10,435
	(a) Working Proprietors, Wholesale and Retail trade ..	16,584	1,162	17,746	8,254	214	8,468
	(b) Insurance and Real Estate Salesmen, Salesmen of Securities and Services and Auctioneers.	1,448	9	1,457	32	..	32
	(c) Commercial Travellers and Manufacture's Agent ..	328	18	346	11	..	11
	(d) Salesmen, Shop Assistants and related workers, ..	8,413	358	8,771	1,888	31	1,919
	(e) Money-Lenders and Pawn Workers	43	..	43	5	..	5
5.	**Farmers, Fishermen, Hunters, Loggers and Related Workers :** ..	4,436	1,181	5,617	532	5	537
	(a) Farmers and Farm Managers	243	18	261	15	..	15
	(b) Farm workers	1,588	488	2,076	18	2	20
	(c) Fishermen and related workers	83	..	83	..	..	..
	(d) Loggers and other Forestry workers	1,880	444	2,324	497	3	500

Sl. No.	Divisions and Group	Occupational distribution					
		In all areas of the district.			In Urban areas of the district.		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6.	**Miners, Quarrymen and Related Workers :**	3	1	4	3	1	4
	(a) Miners and Quarrymen	3	1	4	3	1	4
7.	**Workers in Transport and Communication :** ..	4,370	24	4,394	2,558	11	2,569
	(a) Deck Officers, Engineer Officers and Pilots, Ship. ..	54	..	54	54	..	54
	(b) Deck and Engine-Room Ratings (Ship) Barge Crews and Boatmen	1,045	..	1,045	615	..	615
	(c) Drivers and Firemen, Railway Engine	181	..	181	45	..	45
	(d) Drivers, Road Transport	1,594	..	1,594	944	..	944
	(e) Conductors, Guards and Breakesmen (Railway) ..	90	..	90	73	..	73
	(f) Inspectors, Supervisors, Traffic Controllers and Despatchers, Transport	73	..	73	25	..	25
	(g) Telephone, Telegraph and related Tele-Communication operations	47	16	63	44	7	51
	(h) Postmen and Messengers	577	..	577	92	..	92
	(i) Workers in Transport and Communication Occupations, N.E.C.	709	8	717	666	4	670
8.	Craftsmen, Production Process Workers and Labourers, N.E.C.	36,491	38,072	74,563	9,411	1,453	10,864
	(a) Spinners, Weavers, Knitters, Dyers and related workers ..	1,504	30,823	32,327	171	706	877
	(b) Tailors, Cutters, Furriers and related workers	2,071	228	2,299	784	16	800

Sl. No.	Division and Group	Occupational distribution					
		In all areas of the district.			In urban areas of the district.		
		Male	Famale	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	(c) Leather Cutters, Pasters and Sewers (except gloves and garments) and related workers. ..	371	20	391	206	1	207
	(d) Furnacemen, Rollers, Drawers, Moulders and related Metal making and treating workers	634	11	345	269	7	276
	(e) Precision Instrument makers, Watch makers, Jewellers and related workers	923	4	927	198	2	200
	(f) Tool makers, Machinists, Plumbers, Welders, and related Workers.	939	1	940	488	..	488
	(g) Electricians and related Electrical and Electronics workers ..	334	..	334	86	..	86
	(h) Carpenters, Joiners, Cabinet Makers, and related workers	3,284	..	3,284	1,410	..	1,410
	(i) Painters and Paper Hangers	22	..	22	22	..	22
	(j) Bricklayers, Plasterers and Construction workers, N.E.C. ..	848	43	891	212	1	213
	(k) Compositors, Printers, Engravers, Book-Binders and related workers	75	3	78	67	1	68
	(l) Potters, Kilnsmen, Glass and Clay Formerers and related workers.	1,157	1,011	2,168	176	150	326
	(m) Millers, Bakers, Brewmasters and related Food and Beverage workers	1,405	2,848	4,253	295	42	337
	(n) Chemical and related process workers	36	..	36	35	..	35

Sl. No.	Division and Gronp	Occupational distribution					
		In all areas of the district.			In urban areas of the district.		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	(o) Tobacco preparers and Products makers	304	23	327	193	13	206
	(p) Craftsmen and Production Process workers N.E.C. ..	1,664	275	1939	952	4	956
	(q) Testers, Packers, Sorters and related workers	29	..	29	20	..	20
	(r) Stationary Engine Executing and Lifting Equipment Operators and related workers	39	..	39	7	..	7
	(s) Labourers N.E.C.	20,852	2,782	23,634	3,860	510	4,370
9.	**Service, Sports and Recreation Workers :** ..	7,366	976	8,342	3,252	308	3,560
	(a) Fire Fighters, Policemen, Guards and related workers	2,126	1	2,127	1,055	..	1,055
	(b) House keepers, Cooks, Maids and related workers ..	2,722	868	3,590	1,363	239	1,602
	(c) Waiters, Bartenders and related workers ..	1	..	1	1	..	1
	(d) Buildings, Caretakers, Cleaners and related workers ..	816	72	888	252	53	305
	(e) Barbers, Hair Dressers, Beauticians and related workers..	1,202	8	1,210	359	..	359
	(f) Launders, Dry Cleaners, and Pressures	296	27	323	175	16	191
	(g) Photographers and related Camera Operators	92	..	92	39	..	39
	(h) Service, Sport and Recreation Workers N.E.C.	111	..	111	8	..	8
10.	**Workers not classified by occupation :**	2,731	527	3,258	312	38	350
	(a) Workers reporting occupations unidentifiable or unclassifiable	1,669	528	2,193	149	37	186
	(b) Workers not reporting occupation	1,062	3	1,065	163	1	164

CHAPTER—IX

ECONOMIC TRENDS

INTRODUCTION :

Though Goalpara district falls under the category of agro-industrial district, agriculture is the chief occupation of more than 78 per cent of its total workers. According to the 1971 Census, it comprised an area of 10,380 square kilometres with a total population of 22,25,103 souls (11,54,449 males and 10,70,654 females) distributed over three Sub-divisions, thirteen Police Stations, twelve towns and 3,819 villages. Twenty Community Development Blocks and Panchayats are functioning in the district towards achieving all-round development. It is expected that installation of large scale industries like the second public sector Oil Refinery and Petro-Chemical Complex at Bongaigaon will further add to its industrial bias. Industrially the district still lags behind other plains districts of Assam. In 1960-61, the district contributed Rs. 35.59 crores towards State's national income. This constituted only 10 per cent of the State's national income. Agriculture was the greatest contributor accounting for 69.9 per cent of the total district income. The per capita income of the district in the same year was Rs. 236 being the least among the plains districts. Its financial backwardness was mainly due to its industrial backwardness, which in turn was caused largely by the agrarian occupation of the people and their lack of incentive under the *Jamindary* system upto 1957. The communication bottle-neck between the northern and southern parts of the district has been still a deterent factor and in the latter rail link is still lacking.

(a) *LIVELIHOOD PATTERN OF THE DISTRICT* :

In an analysis of the livelihood pattern of the district, a brief review of the basis of classification of the population in decennial censuses is essential. Before the 1961 Census, the basis of classification of the population was religion which was substituted in the 1951 Census by the economic classification on the basis of livelihood. This basis of classification was replaced in the 1961 Census by the criteria of actual work which was retained in the 1971 Census. But in this census, the worker definition underwent a basic change. The livelihood pattern of the people of Goalpara was revealed for the first time by the 1951 Census in which the entire population of 11,08,124 persons of the district was classified into two broad

categories of agricultural classes and non-agricultural classes claiming 9,43,682 and 1,64,442 persons respectively. This shows that the agricultural classes with 85.16 per cent of the total population predominated the economy of the district in 1951. The agricultural population was again divided into four classes viz., 7,05,260 cultivators of land wholly or mainly owned and their dependents, 1,96,203 cultivators of land wholly or mainly unowned, 25,825 cultivating labourers and their dependents and 15,894 non-cultivating owners of land and their dependents. Among the non-agricultural population, 49,458 were engaged in production, 48,211 in commerce, 8,764 in transport and 58,009 in other services and miscellaneous occupations, all including their dependents. Lastly, each of these eight classes were further subdivided into three sub--classes according to the economic status viz. self-supporting persons, earning dependents and non-earning dependents. A further analysis of these figures would reveal that more than 59 per cent of the population were non-earning dependents against about 26 per cent self-supporting or whole-time workers. The remaining 15 per cent were part-time workers or earning dependents like school and college going boys and girls. It is interesting to note that in the agricultural sector, the percentage of non-earning dependents being about 59 per cent of the total agricultural population was more than twice the percentage of whole-time workers. On the other hand, the land owning cultivators had the largest number of such dependents about thrice their own strength. The impact of non-earning dependence in both sectors was almost equally pronounced. However, these figures donot lend themselves to comparision with the figures of subsequent censuses due to change of the basis of classification. Both in the 1961 and 1971 Censuses, actual work was the basis of classification but in the latter worker definition was strictly followed as to record actual workers who participated in economically productive activity physically or mentally and eliminated those who casually helped or participated in work but really were unemployed. Accordingly, in both these Censuses population was broadly classified into workers and non-workers and the workers were again distributed into nine categories viz., (1) Cultivators ; (II) Agricultural Labours ; (III) Mining, Quarrying, Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Plantations, Orchards and Allied activities ; (IV) Household Industry ; (V) Manufacturing other than Household Industry ; (VI) Construction ; (VII) Trade and Commerce ; (VIII) Transport, Storage and Communication and (IX) Other Services. However, in the 1971 Census, category III was bifurcated as category III Livestock, Forestry etc., and IV Mining and Quarring which were shown under one category as in the table below. Again category IV & V were shown in this Census under one category i.e., V (a) and (b). The following table is arranged for a comparative analysis :—

Distribution of Population into Workers and Non-workers in the 1961 and 1971 Censuses.

Categories	1961			1971		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1. Workers	4,48,644	1,64,666	6,13,310	5,82,442	16,444	5,98,886
Rural	4,14,286	1,62,196	5,76,482	5,34,485	14,308	5,48,793
Urban	34,358	2,470	36,828	47,957	2,136	50,093
2. Non-workers.	3,64,079	5,66,503	9,30,582	5,72,007	10,54,210	16,26,217
Rural	3,39,222	5,26,045	8,65,267	5,24,300	9,79,716	15,04,016
Urban.	24,857	40,458	65,315	47,707	74,494	1,22,201
Workers						
1. Cultivators	3,17,212	1,16,260	4,33,472	3,87,990	2,885	3,90,875
Rural	3,15,863	1,16,128	4,31,991	3,85,618	2,839	3,88,457
Urban.	1,349	132	1,481	2,372	46	2,418
11. Agricultural Labourers	33,280	5,242	38,522	72,031	4,558	76,586
Rural	33,015	5,218	38,233	71,077	4,525	75,602
Urban	265	24	289	954	33	987
III. In mining, Quarrying, Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Plantations, Orchards and Allied activities				(III & IV)		
	4,646	1,262	5,908	9,861	1,723	11,584
Rural	4,109	1,254	5,363	8,317	1,695	10,012
Urban	537	8	545	1,544	28	1,572
IV.. At household industry.				v(a)		
	4,392	33,219	37,611	7, 62	1,255	8,517
Rural	4,184	32,714	36,898	5,240	1,042	6,282
Urban	208	505	713	2,022	213	2,235

Categories	1961			1971		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
V. In Manufacturing, other than House-hold Industry	9,975	2,521	12,496	13,627	1,010	14,637
Rural	3,972	1,970	5,942	6,262	746	7,008
Urban.	6,003	551	6,554	7,365	264	7,629
VI. In construction	2,089	51	2,140	5,525	80	5,605
Rural	1,517	46	1,563	3,550	55	3,605
Urban	572	5	577	1,975	25	2,000
VII. In trade & Commerce	27,934	1,649	29,583	34,782	740	35,522
Rural	17,188	1,380	18,568	19,643	546	20,189
Urban	10,746	269	11,015	15,159	194	15,333
VIII. In Transport, storage and communication.	6,668	36	6,704	13,382	119	13,501
Rural	3,746	28	3,774	6,814	61	6,875
Urban	2,922	8	2,930	6,568	58	6,626
IX. In other services	42,448	4,426	46,874	37,982	4,074	42,056
Rural	30,692	3,458	34,150	27,964	2,799	30,763
Urban	11,756	968	12,724	10,018	1,275	11,293

V(b)

From the above table, it appears at the first sight that the working population depleted from 6,13,310 in the 1961 Census to 5,98,886 in the 1971 Census though there had been a general growth of population by 44.12 per cent in the district. This depletion was more striking in case of female workers whose number stood at only 16,444 against 1,64,666 in

1961 in constrast to male workers who recorded an increase of 1,33,798 persons or by 30 per cent. This is not due to the fact that the females returned as workers in the 1961 Census ceased to work but it is because of the change of worker's definition as already pointed out. The depletion of female workers in this Census was almost entirely recorded in the rural area which is predominantly agricultural and in which out of 10,70,654 females 9,79,716 were non-workers. It is, therefore, difficult to make a comparative assessment of the trend of the livelihood pattern in the district on the basis of such divergent figures. None-the-less, in 1971, agriculture was the source of livelihood of 78.06 per cent of the total workers of the district against 21.94 per cent claimed by other pursuits. The percentage of agricultural workers would be slightly higher if the labourers engaged in cultivation of plantation crops under category III were counted. In other words, the largest number of 4,67,464 workers in 1971 against 4,71,994 in 1961 earned their livelihood from agriculture having the burden of maintaining the largest number of non-working dependents particularly females. Among the agricultural workers in 1971, only 76,589 were agricultural labourers who constituted 12.79 per cent of the total workers against 6.28 per cent in 1961. It shows almost double increase of this class of people during the decade inspite of the number of female labourers showing a decrease. It is a matter of conjecture whether the number of the agricultural labourers had been inflated by outside infiltration or by enumerating some marginal cultivators who were thrown out of their means of livelihood by some subverting economic force like indebtedness. Inspite of various programmes under Grow More Food Campaign during the Five Year Plans for stepping up production and bettering of the conditions of the vast majority of agricultural population, their conditions in this district are yet unenviable. Though the total cropped area in Goalpara has recorded a gradual increase since 1901, its rate of increase is not commensurate to the growth rate of population. Thus, in 1961, the total net area sown in the district was 6,31,420 acres or about 2,55,094 hectares which meant on the average only about 1.5 acres or 0.60 hectares per cultivator. In 1968-69, the net area sown increased to 3,35,260 hectares but keeping in view the general population growth rate of 44.12 per cent during the decade 1961-71, the per capita sown area may be said to remain below one hectare. In respect of average yield per hectare of the principal staple crop i.e. rice, the district still lags behind other plains districts except Kamrup.

In the industrial sector, the number of workers increased in all categories i.e. from category III to IX except in the categories of household industry and other services. At the household industry, female-workers

numbered only 1,255 in 1971 against 33,219 in 1961, while male workers registered an increase of about 70 per cent. In other services, there was a loss of about 9 per cent workers, which was mainly due to decrease of male workers. On the whole, decrease of large number of female workers at the household industry alone exceeded the total increase under other categories of industrial workers and thus registered a total fall in the level of industrial workers who accounted for 1,31,422 in 1971 against 1,41,316 in 1961. However, the increase of workers in manufacturing industries other than household industry ; mining, quarrying, forestry, livestock, plantations etc ; construction ; trade and commerce and transports, storage, and communication is a happy trend of the economy of the district towards industrialisation. The installation of large-scale industry like the second Oil Refinery and Petro-chemical Complex further gives a filip to the industrial bias of the economy and thus will enhance the importance of industry as a source of livelihood of the people.

Details of occupational pattern of the industrial workers of the district are shown on the basis of the 1961 Census as 1971 Census data is wanting. In 1961, the industrial workers other than at household industry were further distributed into four classes on the basis of employment viz., employer, employees, single workers and family workers, each class claiming 3,197 ; 46,927 ; 39,117 and 14,464 respectively and those at household industry into 1,212 employees and 3,6399 others.

All these industrial workers were further subdivided in 1961 into eleven occupational divisions, 75 groups and 331 families or minor groups as shown below (divisions only).

	Male	Female	Total
Professional, Technical and related workers...	7,410	739	8,149
Administrative, Executive and Managerial workers.	36,83	28	3,711
Clerical and related workers.	4,846	69	4,915
Sales workers.	26,816	1,547	28,363
Farmers, Fishermen, Hunters, Loggers and related workers.	4,436	1,181	5,617
Miners, Quarrymen and related workers...	3	1	4
Workers in Transport and Communications...	4,370	24	4,394
Craftsmen, Production Process Workers and labourers not elsewhere classified.	36,491	38,072	74,563
Services, sports and Recreation workers. ..	7,366	976	8,342
Workers not classified by occupation. ..	2,731	527	3258

It may be mentioned that the tea industry, which plays a vital role in the economy of the other plains districts of Assam, is of little importance in Goalpara where there were only ten small tea gardens which provided livelihood to 2,529 persons including 908 females in 1961. Apart from the classification on the basis of primary occupation of the working population, it is also essential to analyse the secondary means of livelihood in order to form an idea of the actual economic status of the workers. According to the 1961 Census, of the cultivators 5,043 males and 49,521 females worked also at household industry and 8,078 males and 1,215 females as agricultural labourers ; of the agricultural labourers 567 males and 971 females worked also at household industry and 1,347 males and 225 females as cultivators and of the workers at household industry 429 males and 13,341 females worked also as cultivators and 123 males and 3,155 females as agricultural labourers. Then again, most of the workers in non-household industries, trades and professions etc. worked at household industry. Thus, secondary sources of livelihood also greatly helped a worker in framing his family budget.

Prices : Goalpara district like the rest of Assam had a self-sufficient economy even long after its British occupation. In his *Statistical Account of Assam*, 1879, W.W. Hunter points out to this fact that the district had sufficient crops to meet local demand.[1] Wants were, however, satisfied by exchange of one's surplus with the neighbourer or at the village *hat*. Exchange of produce was mainly effected through the system of bartering,[2] and such bartering between the people of the district and the neighbouring tribes at the border *hats* continued long afterwards. Sometimes, *Cowries* or Conch-shells were also used for minor transactions.

Even till the early years of the current century, the barter system persisted at least in some form in the rural areas along with the price system in terms of money. The circulation of money was not widespread in the rural areas. It was then a hard money, its purchasing power being very high. In other words, goods commanded little value and could be had at low prices. Even then, there had been some increasing trend in the general price level. Hunter points out that prices of foodgrains and other produce greatly increased between 1859 and 1876 when fine rice sold at Rs.5 and common rice at Rs.2 per *maund* against Rs.3 and Re.1 respectively in 1859-60.

B. C. Allen also takes a similar note of fluctuations in the price-level during 1863-1905. Fluctuations in the price-level were then of seasonal character, price of rice being generally higher in August than in February

1. W. W. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Assam, Vol. II, Reprint, Delhi*, 1975, p. 61.
2. E. A. Gait—*A History of Assam, Calcutta, Reprint*, 1967. p. 277

immediately after harvest. But in 1901, in Dhuburi subdivision, rice sold at higher prices in February than in August. It happened so in the Goalpara subdivision in 1880. In February, 1904 and 1905, common rice sold in Dhuburi at the rate of 16 *seers* for the rupee. Salt price fell from 10 *seers* to 12 *seers* and that of pulses remained steady at Rs. 2.50 a *maund.*[3] There had been a sharp rise in the price of rice in August, 1906 when rice sold at 7 *seers* for the rupee in Dhuburi. Marked by a slight fall in August, 1909, the price of rice came down to 12 *seers* for the rupee in February, 1910. There had been no such fluctuation in the prices of other essential goods.

During the First World War, prices increased manifold. At the end, there was a general fall in prices of all foodstuffs. The downward trend in prices was so sharp that it led to the great economic depression from 1929 to 1933. It was observed in the annual report of the Land Revenue Administration of Assam for 1933-34 as follows : "Prices of foodstuffs remained low as in the previous year. The prices of paddy rose in certain locality but not sufficiently to effect any benefit to the *raiyat* and there was temporary local rise in prices in March when excise duties on matches and tobacco were announced"...and even "village lands ceased to have any saleable value and the cultivators were deprived from this source of credit."

With the beginning of the Second World War in 1939, prices of all essential commodities spiralled. The position has been described in the 1951 Census 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 the 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 seizure 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,

3. B. C. Allen : *Assam District. Gazetteers, Vol. III, Goalpra.* Calcutta, 1905, p. 94, & Appendix. p. (16).

fuel and kerosine 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 the 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 foodgrains real, especially at the end of the war. Rationing was introduced in most of the towns in respect of rice, kerosine oil, and *dal.* Sugar, cloth and kerosine oil rationing was later on extended to rural areas also. They had their inevitable repercussions in the form of increased blackmarketing, profiteering and hoarding, depending upon the efficiency of the district authorities to enforce the control orders."[4]

There was virtually no check to the galloping prices in the post-war years. The all India wholesale price index (base 1939-100) shot up from 245 in 1945 to 389 in August, 1949. The increase was still higher in Assam where the wholesale price index (base 1939-100) for rice increased from 283 in October, 1946 to 469 in October, 1949 just before the devaluation of the Indian rupees in November, 1949.

During the post-devaluation period, the outbreak of the Korean War in June, 1950, decontrol of goods and natural calamities like heavy floods, earthquake of August, 1950 in Assam, plethora of paper currency leading to inflation were responsible for adding fuel to the fire and no wonder, the price index for rice reached 648 in October, 1950. It was observed in the annual report of Land Revenue Administration in Assam 1950-51, "prices of foodstuffs continued to be high as before." In the following year of 1951, prices of all essential commodities recorded the highest increase so far and in Goalpara district rice sold at Rs. 1.28 per *seer* in October, 1951, a price that was never heard of before.

Since the launching of the First Five Year Plan in 1952, the prices became stabilised and assumed a downward trend. As illustrated in the retail price list in the Census Report of 1961[5], the retail price per *seer* of rice gradually came down from Rs. 1.28, its highest mark of October, 1951 to Rs. 0.36 in January, 1954 and thence to Rs. 0.35 and Rs. 0.34 in January of 1955 and 1956 respectively. Though there was seasonal

4. *Census of India,* 1961, Vol. XII, Assam, Manipur and Tripura, p. 36.
5. *Census of India,* 1961, Assam, *District Census Handbook,* Goalpara, Gauhati, 1965, pp. 494-503,

upward movement of prices of the essential commodities and local variations, the general price level, on the average, maintained the downward trend. The fall in prices was due mainly to increased agricultural production and improvement of transport and communication.

Since the beginning of the Second Five Year Plan, prices again assumed an upward trend all over India. The all India price level increased by 30 per cent as against the decline of 18.4 per cent during the First Five Year Plan Period. In Assam, the wholesale price index (base 1951-100) rose from 117.6 in 1956 to 135.4 in 1961. In Goalpara district the wholesale price of paddy (Coarse) per *maund* in February, 1958 varied between Rs. 10.25 and Rs. 12.60 but at the end of September it varied between Rs. 14.12 and Rs. 16.00 in different primary markets, the price at Bilasipara being the highest. The Chinese aggression in 1962 followed by the Indo-Pak war in 1965 further aggravated the price situation and the price spiral moved in a galloping speed. The movement of the price line since 1962 as observed in the Economic Survey of Assam, 1970 is as follows: "The price situation in Assam is essentially a manifestation of the all-India phenomenon of rising prices. But the upswing of the price level in the State has been more pronounced due to certain factors like rapid growth of population, transport bottlenecks and a virtual dependence on outside supply for the essential consumer goods. The general index of wholesale prices for Assam (base 1953-100) rose by 82.4 per cent during the period 1961-67, from 135.4 in 1961 to 247.0 in 1967. In 1968, while the all-India index indicated a declining trend of wholesale prices, in Assam prices rose by another 6.6 per cent over the previous year."[6]

There was a slight fall in prices in 1969, when the general wholesale price index slumped by 7.9 per cent due mainly to fall in prices of food articles by 14.9 per cent against a rise in prices of other non-food articles by 11.5 per cent. This was but a brief interlude as the position was reversed in 1970 when food prices rose by 6.8 per cent. Non-food prices, however, declined by 4.9 per cent. The general wholesale price index shot up from 229.5 in January to 264.2 in November of 1970 showing an average of 250.1 in the year. Thus, the wholesale price index in Assam rose by 3.1 per cent in 1970 and by another 1.4 per cent in 1971 against corresponding increases of 3.9 and 6.2 per cent in all-India wholesale price index. In August, 1972, the index reached the peak of 276.5 against 260.5 in August, 1971. This shows the upward movement of prices in Assam as in whole of India and Goalpara shared equally the evils of increasing

6. *Economic Survey of Assam*, 1970, Department of Economics and Statistics, Government of Assam, Shillong. p. 73,

prices. The following table[7] shows the movement of the wholesale price index in Assam since 1954.

Index Numbers of Wholesale Prices in the State of Assam.
(Base 1953-100)

Period (Annual Average)		Food	Non-food	Agri-culture	Non-agri-culture	General
1		2	3	4	5	6
1954	..	116.9	114.1	116.1	113.6	115.9
1955	,, ..	101.7	107.7	104.8	100.4	103.8
1956	,, ..	117.9	117.3	119.2	112.9	117.7
1957	,, ..	113.6	128.0	133.3	128.7	131.3
1958	,, ..	130.3	116.8	124.5	125.1	124.8
1959	,, ..	129.0	116.9	133.7	124.1	123.8
1960	,,	128.8	135.1	132.1	128.8	131.2
1961	,, ..	130.9	144.8	137.8	123.8	135.4
1962	,, ..	136.2	135.3	136.4	133.7	135.9
1963	,, ..	153.4	140.4	150.2	144.4	149.1
1964	,, ..	167.2	159.1	165.2	160.6	164.4
1965	,, ..	176.5	176.2	179.0	165.1	176.5
1966	,, ..	218.1	199.1	221.5	169.6	211.6
1967	,, ..	272.8	194.7	261.1	185.6	247.0
1968	,, ..	292.3	206.1	281.7	184.3	263.3
1969	,, ..	248.8	229.9	255.4	186.7	242.5
1970	,, ..	265.8	218.7	263.6	191.8	250.1
1971	,, ..	269.6	221.7	261.5	219.9	253.6
1972	January ..	261.1	222.5	254.8	220.0	248.3
	February	255.2	220.2	248.8	220.9	243.6
	March ..	264.0	227.0	258.1	224.0	251.7
	April ..	269.5	229.3	264.2	221.2	256.1
	May ..	272.5	230.2	266.8	222.1	258.4
	June ..	281.8	236.0	277.0	221.5	266·6
	July ..	287.9	239.0	283.1	222.0	271.7
	August ..	298.3	232.8	289.3	221.5	276.5

7. *Wholesale Price Bulletin of Assam*, 1972. Department of Economics and Statistics, Government of Assam, Shillong, p. 17.

The following table[8] shows the price index of different articles in respective groups since 1966.

Index of Wholesale Prices : Assam
(Base 1953-100)

Year	Cereal	Pulses	Edible oils	Sugar & Gur	Total food	Liquors & tobacco	Raw materials	Finished Products	Total Non-food	All Commodities (col. 6+10)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1966 ..	252.2	187.5	219.5	158.9	218.1	188.0	244.7	165.5	199.1	211.6
1967 ..	321.4	279.3	249.1	285.8	272.8	160.8	227.5	176.2	184.7	247.0
1968 ..	360.5	254.1	222.1	377.8	292.4	244.9	230.6	178.1	206.1	263.3
1969 ..	274.4	212.2	227.1	250.6	248.8	318.6	267.9	173.2	229.9	242.5
1970 ..	295.6	227.9	252.7	176.4	265.8	240.4	258.4	151.1	218.7	250.1
1971 ..	294.9	268.9	280.9	248.1	269.6	178.0	250.7	206.2	221.7	253.6

During November, 1971, coarse paddy and masturd seeds sold at Dhuburi at the highest prices of Rs. 98.00 and Rs. 200.00 per quintal respectively in the State though other foodstuffs were comparatively cheaper. *Arahardal* was the cheapest at Dhuburi and was sold at Rs. 160.00 per quintal against the maximum price of Rs. 230.00 at Haflong. The retail prices of *sali* rice in the preceding month at Dhuburi and Kokrajhar recorded the highest in the State. Such rice sold at Rs. 1.80 per kg. at these markets and at Rs. 1.70 at Krishnai. At Kokrajhar, salt and sugar became scarce and sold at the highest prices of Rs. 1.00 and Rs. 5.00 per kg. respectively. During the following year (1972), though the wholesale price of coarse paddy recorded a slight fall at Dhuburi, the price at which the commodity was sold there in September of the year was the highest in the State. Such paddy sold at Rs. 90.00 per quintal at Dhuburi during that year. But the wholesale price of coarse rice recorded at Rs. 150.00 per quintal at Goalpara and Lakhipur was not only much higher than the price recorded at Rs. 135.00 at Dhuburi but also the highest in the State. The wholesale price of *masurdal* per quintal was Rs. 190.00 at Goalpara, Rs. 180.00 at Dhuburi and Rs. 205.00 at Lakhipur. The retail price of

8. *Economic Survey of Assam*, 1973, Department of Economics and Statistics, Government of Assam, Shillong, 1972. p. 70

coarse rice per kilogram varied between Rs. 1.35 and Rs. 1.40 ; of *masurdal* between Rs. 2.00 and Rs. 2.20 ; of mustard oil between Rs. 5.25 and Rs. 5.60 ; of sugar between Rs. 3.80 and Rs. 4.00 and of potato between Rs. 1.00 and Rs. 1.25 per kilogram during December, 1972 in the Goalpara district.[9]

The upward movement of prices of both food and non-food articles during the following two years in the country caused great concern to the administration as well as to the suffering public. The wholesale price index in Assam shot up to 291.1 in 1973 and thence moved still upward to reach 424.8 in September, 1974, when in Goalpara subdivision coarse rice was sold at Rs.3.13 per kilogram. Prices soared still higher in the following month of October and since then along with the start of the harvesting season, prices moved downward. With firm determination to arrest further upward movement of prices, Government took timely stringent measures. Various control orders were issued and regular supply of controlled goods through fair-price shops at prices fixed by Government was maintained. Soon followed the national emergency which brought some good results in checking rising prices which have since then stabilized at a tolerable level.

Consumer Price Index : The consumer price index number in terms of 1949 prices for working classes in the urban centres of Assam during the last few years follows more or less the rising trend of wholesale prices as discussed above. The index for Assam as a whole rose to 239 in 1968 over 173 in 1966 and came down to 213 in 1969 and then rose to 230 again in 1970. This reflects the continuous upward trend in the cost of living of the working class as a whole in the urban areas. The consumer price index number based on 1944 prices for rural population in the plains districts of Assam as a whole recorded a continuous rise during 1966-1970 except for decrease by 1 point in 1969, from the consumer price index of 278 prevailing in 1968. Still it was 48 points higher than that of 1966. In 1970, the index number stood at 288, surpassing all previous figures of the cost of living of the rural population.

The high price index has led the government, both the State and the Union to adopt many remedial measures, such as liberalising the imports, increasing the production both in the agricultural and industrial sectors, limitation of dividends, intensification of the small savings schemes, enforcement of control over selected items of consumer goods, distribution

9. *Wholesale and Retailsale Price Bulletin*, 1971 and 1972, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong.

of consumer goods at controlled prices through fair-price shops, dehoarding of the accumulated stocks and rationing of foodstuffs etc. When the Defence of India Rules were enforced, the District Magistrate of Goalpara fixed prices of essential commodities under those rules. These prices, however, ceased to be operative when the Emergency was lifted from the country. Sugar of Government stock was sold at the price of Rs. 2.25 per kilogram, in March 1972, but in the open market sugar was not available at a price less than Rs. 3.25 per kilogram. As a result of the persistent pressure of increasing prices, there has been irresistable demand for rise in wages and salaries. Government had to accede to the demands for pay rise. The minimum wages of several categories had to be revised upwards and the cost of plan projects have consequently gone up.

"Prices cannot be expected to remain constant in a growth conscious economy. Rather very often a slow but very limited rise in price level is believed to act as an incentive to economic growth. But the prices in India have already reached a level where a continuance of the present trends may well pose a threat to economic growth itself. With a view to imparting a degree of restraint on monetary and credit expansion (without, however, affecting the growth of the priority sectiors) and also putting a curb on hoarding and speculative rise in prices, the Reserve Bank of India has recently raised the Bank rate from 5 per cent to 6 per cent. It has also increased the minimum net liquidity ratio for purposes of determining the penal rate of interest chargeable on the excess borrowing of a bank from the Reserve Bank from 33 per cent to 34 per cent. Though it is early to hazard a prediction on the possible impact of the above and other measures like selective credit control, nevertheless, in view of a large segment of the economy being outside the organised money market, the Reserve Bank's actions alone are not likely to be adequate to meet the situation. Therefore, a further streamlining of efforts by the Union and the State Governments through an integrated approach on money supply, wages, productivity and real income seems necessary."[10]

Wages : During the nineteenth century, the level of wages in Goalpara district as elsewhere in Assam was very low. Of course, wage earners in those days formed a very negligible portion of the population and they had but little difficulty in managing their livelihood in an economy which was not afflicted by sky-rocketing prices of the modern days. From Hunter's *Statistical Account of Assam*, it is known that in 1850, farm labourers and agricultural day labourers had Rs. 3.00 and carpenters and bricklayers

10. *Economic Survey of Assam*, 1970, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, p. 78.

Rs. 12.00 a month which rates increased to Rs. 4.00 and Rs. 15.00 respectively in 1860 and almost doubled within the next twenty five years at the end of which their respective rates stood at Rs. 6.00 and Rs. 20.00 a month.[11]

The level of wages continued to be very low during the early years of the current century. The minimum wages paid to tea garden labourers before and after 1903 varied from Rs. 4.00 to Rs. 6.00 per month for women and from Rs. 5.00 to Rs. 6.00 for men.[12]

B. C. Allen observes in the old *District Gazetteer* of Goalpara (1905), "The daily wages of an ordinary Cooli (labourer) range from 4 annas to 6 annas a day, but labour of this kind is not easily obtainable. Farm labourers are often paid in kind. Servants are usually paid Rs. 3 to Rs. 4 per mensem, in addition to their food. Advances are often given to induce them to take service."[13] According to R. Friel, the rates of wages increased during the next ten years, the daily wages of tea garden labourers ranged from Rs. 0.50 to Rs. 1.00 ; monthly wages of domestic servants varied from Rs. 6.00 to Rs. 8.00 in addition to their food. But it is to be borne in mind that local labourers as a rule could not be easily obtained without intervention of some influential persons. The teagarden and other menial labourers as a matter of fact, mostly came from other States. The increase in the level of wages, however, proved ineffectual in the teeth of war-time price inflation. "The question of wages earned by tea garden coolies (labourers) has always engaged the attention of government. It was found that wages had not increased in the same measure as prices"[14] and this led to a numbers of strikes and riots in 1921 when a Committee was appointed by Government.

Wages in general were still low before and after the general economic depression in 1929. During this period, besides other commodities, even land lost its saleable value. Though the low level of prices was advantageous for the wage earners, yet the loss of employment exposed them to great distress. The inflationary trend generated by the Second World War adversely affected the material condition of the wage earners of all categories and the demand for more wages became persistent. Their condition was further aggravated during the post-war price spurts. In 1950, average wage indices in Assam were 95.1 for carpenter ; [illegible] for blacksmiths,

11. *W.W. Hunter—Statistical Account of Assam Vol. II. Reprint, Delhi*, 1975. p. 6[illegible]
12. *Report on the Administration of Assam for the year*, 192[illegible]-22, Govt. of Assam, Shillong.
13. B. C. Allen—*Assam District Gazetteers, Vol. III. Goalpara*, Calcutta, 1905. P. 93.
14. *Report on the Administration of Assam* for the year 1921-22, Govt of Assam, Shillong. p. 58.

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88.0 for men and 84.9 for women of field labourer ; 86.0 for men and 81.2 for women of other agricultural workers and 95.7 for herdsmen. These indices gradually increased since then and in 1956 reached 106.6 for carpenters ; 98.4 for blacksmiths and likewise increases in case of other labourers.[15] The daily average wages in rural areas in Assam in 1956 were Rs. 4.20 for carpenters, Rs. 3.50 for blacksmiths, Rs. 2.42 for field labourers (men), Rs. 2.36 for other agricultural labourers (men) and Rs. 1.75 for herdsmen.[16]

The 1961 Census recorded the wages of different agricultural labourers prevailing during 1957-60 in the Goalpara district. Wages of field labourers and other agricultural labourers (men) stood at Rs 3.00 in December 1957, which was higher than the all Assam average but began to fall down gradually to Rs. 2.00 in October, 1959. During 1960, their wages continued around Rs. 2.00 with slight variations. Skilled labourers such as carpenters (men) obtained varying rates according to local demands, but they had an overall increase from Rs. 3.50 to Rs. 5.00 during the period.[17] The fall of wages of agricultural labourers was probably the impact of abolition of *Zamindari* system in 1957. Such low rates of wages in the district were also recorded in the survey in jute growing areas in 1963 when a man obtained Rs. 2.50, a woman Rs. 2.00 and a child Rs. 1.50 in the district.[18]

The gradually rising prices brought in its wake higher wages during the following years. The Indo-Pakistan War in 1965 altered the all Assam average wages of skilled labourers. For instance, in 1965, the blacksmith earned almost Rs. 6.45 per day and the carpenters Rs. 5.70 against Rs. 4.74 in the previous year. Wages of unskilled field labourers (men) increased to Rs. 3.00 ; of agricultural labourers (men) to Rs. 3.01 and of herdsmen to Rs. 2.58 from Rs. 2.54, Rs. 2.40 and Rs. 2.48 respectively in the previous year.

The following table shows the trend of average daily wages of labourers in the rural areas of Assam during recent years.[19]

15. *Statistical Abstract*, Assam, 1958, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong, 1960. p. 447.
16. *Economic Survey of Assam*, 1967, Deptt. of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong, 1967. p. 51.
17. *Census of India*, 1961, *Assam, District Census Handbook*, Goalpara, Gauhati. 1965. pp. 440-457.
18. *Report on the Survey Conducted in the Jute Growing Areas of Assam for Study of Indebtedness among the Cultivators*, 1963, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong p. 28.
19. *Economic Survey of Assam*, 1970, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam. Shillong, 1970 P. 82

As per day per worker (amount in Rupees).

Year	Carpenters	Blacksmith	Field labourer	Other agricultural labourer (man)	Herdsman
1	2	3	4	5	6
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	5.72	3.73	3.02
1970 ..	6.77	6.28	3.73	4.15	3.29

After 1959, the ordinary unskilled lobourers in tea plantations received wages at the following rates.

Assam.	Total wages (in Rs.)		Basic wages and D. A. (in Rs.)
	Men	Women	Children
Zone A ..	1.89	1.76	0.91
Zone B ..	1.82	1.70	0.88
Zone C ..	1.78	1.70	0.88

The following rates of basic wages for tea plantation labourers as recommended by the Wage Board have been effective since 1-4-66.[20]

(In Rupees)

	From 1-1-66 to 31-3-66			From 1-4-66		
	Men	Women	Children	Men	Women	Children
Goalpara ..	2.06	1.95	1.04	2.08	1.97	1.05

20. *Tea Statistics*, 1968-69. p. 116.

In addition to these rates, the labourers can obtain cereals at concessional rates of Rs. 53.58 per quintal. Over and above, they are entitled to dearness allowance at the rate of Rs. 0.4 paise per day. This can be increased to 0.6 paise if the All India Price Index exceeds 170. It may be noted that the wages paid to the factory labourers are slightly higher.

As regards the pay of other employees, there are three scales of pay for clerical staff, medical staff, artisans and technicians and other subordinate staff. The minimum pay is Rs. 60/- and the maximum pay is Rs. 250/- fixed for the medical staff in gardens with an area over 300 acres, and Rs. 220/- in smaller ones. The employees receive 20% of the basic pay as Dearness Allowance. The basic pay increased by 0.4 to 0.8 per cent against every point of rise in the all India Price Index above 170. A variable Dearness Allowance and servant allowance ranging between Rs. 15.00 to Rs. 55.00 according to grade of employees and size of plantations are given to certain categories of employees.

Recent trend of Wages :

Minimum Wages : With a view to root out the economic injustice to the working class people, the Minimum Wages Act was introduced in the State in 1952. To start with, the workers in tea plantations, public motor transport, and rice and flour mills were covered by the Act. The Act was extended during the subsequent years (1953-59) to cover agricultural labour and workers under the P.W.D. (road construction, building operation, stone breaking and stone crushing) and under local authorities." "The minimum wages for workers under the P.W.D. were revised in 1964 at Rs. 3.25 per day for unskilled workers and the provisions of the Act were extended to workers engaged in maintenance of roads and building operations. The workers engaged in steamerghats were brought under the Act in 1965 and the rate fixed for unskilled workers was Rs. 85.00 per month. In 1966, the minimum wages for workers in the engineering and the ply-wood industries were fixed at the rate of Rs. 3.25 per day for unskilled hands. The Minimum Wages Act was extended to the bidi making industry in 1966 and to the jute baling industry a year later. The rates of wages were Rs. 2.75 per thousand bidis for the former industry and Rs. 85.00 per month for unskilled workers in case of the latter."

In 1970, the wages in the plantation industry were revised and as a result of this, the wages are likely to go up about 20 per cent by 1972. The wages in the engineering industry also underwent upward revision during the year. Besides, a tripartite body has been set up to consider the revision of wages in the ply-wood industry.

Standard of Living : We may have a glimpse of the standard of living of the people of Assam in general in the past from the following observation of E. A. Gait : "The standard of living 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 clothes and silver ornaments. Fertility of the soil made it easy for average Assamese villager to produce his necessities in plenty. As the *Fathiah-i-Ibriyah* says : "Eatables are not sold in our markets ; but each man keeps in his house stores for a year, and no one either sells or buys."[21] Goalpara district lying contiguous to East Bengal (now Bangladesh) presents a somewhat different picture from the rest of Assam in points of history and economy. Though the district had in the past and still has a predominantly agricultural economy, the major portion of it had been groaning under the age-old *zamindary* system till 1957. Prior to the passing of the Goalpara Tanancy Act, 1929, the cultivators had no permanent heritable right on the land which they cultivated. This explains the position of the tenant class in those days. The Eastern Duars on the northern part were subject to frequent raids and oppressions by the Bhutias and the British annexed them only after the Bhutan War of 1864. This explains the adverse material conditions of the people there in those days. Though the people produced all necessities of life leaving a surplus, they could but little think of comforts and luxuries. In describing the material conditions of the district during the third quarter of the 19th century, Hunter points out that the people were in prosperous circumstances but had little educational facilities. A common peasant worn simply a waist cloth and a cotton shawl and lived in a clustered hut made of bamboo, grass, reeds, woods etc. He went on barefooted and sometimes used wooden sandals. His furniture consisted of a few mats, seats and a wooden lamp. With exception of the *zamindars* a few big land owners or holders and a few well-to-do shopkeepers, the general living standard of the great majority of the people was low.[22] In the beginning of the current century, the people had no better standard than in the past. There was no improvement in the mode of living, food and dress, furniture etc. The staple food of the people was boiled rice, pulses, spices, fish or vegetable curry. The houses were built as in the past. To quote B. C. Allen, "The furniture of the ordinary cultivator is very simple, and consists of a few boxes, wickerwork stools and baskets, brass and bell metal utensils, glass bottles and earthern pots, and pans. His bedding is a quilt made of old clothes, and he either sleeps on a mat on the damp floor or on a small bamboo *machan* or platform. The well-to-do

21. E. A. Gait, *A History of Assam*, Calcutta, Reprint. 1967. pp. 265;266.
22. W.W. Hunter—*Statistical Account of Assam*, Vol. II, Reprint, Delhi, 1975, pp. 51-58.

have beds, tables, and chairs in their houses."[23] Education was yet to make headway among the people. Capital generally accumulated in the hands of a few capitalists from outside. The *raiyats* obtained the cash by the sale of paddy, mustard or jute, or by working in the forests but in this respect they faced some difficulties for want of garden markets. The standard of living of the people in general was low, nevertheless, it was above the line of poverty.

No data on the per capita income and the index of cost of living of the people in the past is available, so, it is difficult to measure the standard of the living of the people in the past. Though the district went under the British administration much earlier than the rest of Assam, it lagged behind in respect of education, industry etc. Probably, it was due to the peculiar *zamindary* system in the district. Literacy among the people is another essential factor that brings in its wake ideas of decent living. The rural people remained ignorant and unsophisticated, being confined in their traditional agriculture without contact with modern city life. The conditions remained more or less the same during the following years till and even for sometime after independence. According to the 1951 Census, 85.16 per cent of the people depended upon agriculture. At that time, the sample surveys in rural areas of other plains districts revealed that the family-sized economic holding was a farm consisting of an area between 30 *bighas* (about 4 hectares) and 50 *bighas* (about 6.7 hectares) but such optimum farms constituted only a small fraction of the total holdings. On the otherhand, small or uneconomic holdings comprising less than 10 *bighas* (about 1.34 hectares) formed the largest portion of the total holdings. Thus, in Goalpara district also, a few families having the optimum farm, had a tolerable living standard. They could have spared some amount for spending on conventional necessities and requirements of progressive life such as education, medical treatment, travelling, recreation, etc., as well as luxuries. But the largest percentage of the people in the rural areas lived below the minimum standard of living. In 1963, the survey conducted in the jute growing areas covering Darrang, Nowgong, Kamrup and Goalpara districts showed that the average size of operational holding per household was 5.75 acres (about 2.33 hectares) and the total cultivated area per household was 4.89 acres (about 1.98 hectares); the findings in Goalpara district being 6.09 acres (2.46 hectares) and 5.03 acres (about 2.03 hectares) respectively. It was found that agriculture to the majority of the cultivators was a deficit economy. The inherent defects of our agricultural system were mainly responsible for keeping the cultivators below the level of subsistence. However, due to developmental activities in the

23. B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetteers*, Vol. III, Goalpara, Calcutta, 1905. p. 96.

fields of education, public health and sanitation, communications etc., during the first two plan periods, there was a considerable change in the standard of living both in urban and rural areas.[24] According to Agricultural Census Operations, 1970-71, the average size of operational holding in Goalpara was 1.44 hectares against 1.47 hectares in Assam.

An idea, however, can be made about the trend in the standard of living of the people in general with a brief reference to the State per capita income and expenditure. The State per capita income at current prices decreased from Rs. 290.7 in 1950-51 to Rs. 274.1 in 1955-56 and thereafter increased to Rs. 311.1 in 1960-61, Rs. 418.2 in 1965-66, Rs. 547.7 in 1967-68 and then started decrease again and reached Rs. 545.1 in 1969-70.[25]

As revealed by the National Sample Survey 19th Round (State Samples 1964-65), the monthly per capita consumption expenditure of a family both in urban and rural areas of Assam was Rs. 32.79 and Rs. 25.54 respectively. Food covered the higher percentage (74.71) in a rural family than in an urban family (67.21) in which case milk and other items covered higher percentage than in a rural family. The fact that non-food articles covered higher percentage of expenditure in urban areas than in rural areas also shows that the standard of living in the former was higher than in the latter.[26]

The average per capita income and expenditure does not, however, indicate the general level of the standard of living. It is already shown that a small fraction of the people are moderately well-to-do while the vast majority have below the minimum income. The average budget of a rural family is always a deficit one which enhances indebtedness in the rural sector. The index number of parity between prices received and prices paid during the First, Second and Third plan periods did not materially change much. It was because the high prices of agricultural commodities were neutralised by the simultaneous rise in the cost of cultivation and consumption. In recent years, of course, there has been some rise in the parity index. Planning and development activities have no doubt exerted

24. *Report on the Survey conducted in the Jute Growing Areas of Assam for study of indebtedness among the Cultivators*, 1963, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong, pp. 14, 21.
25. *Statistical Handbook*, 1970, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong, pp, 127-128.
26. *Economic Survey of Assam*, 1970, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong. p. 110.

positive results. The social structure has vastly changed with a corresponding change in social outlook. Progressive ideas and taste for decent living are increasingly growing up in the mental outlook of the people in rural areas along with wide diffusion of education and knowledge. Saving habits are now on the increase. More attention is now being given towards health, hygiene and sanitation, food and dress, education of children etc. Parents in most cases are now quite anxious for higher education and good health of their children. Though the normal budget of the average man in the rural areas is a deficit one, there is no hesitation to incur debts for such higher objectives. The rural landscape has now vastly changed. There are in most villages either Public Works Department road connecting nearby towns with bus transport or a good panchayat road. Electrification of some key villages has further imparted a sense of decent living in rural areas. The overall impression made by a visit to the rural area with the sight of a number of fine houses (in some cases electrified houses), good roads, children clad in fine dresses with shoes or sandals, people hearing news at community listening centres or enjoying music in radio etc, is that, the standard of living has vastly improved over what it was before Independence.

The common items of consumption of an average family in rural areas consist of rice and rice products, vegetables, fish or meat, eggs, salt and spices, mustard oil, gur and sugar, milk and milk products. Clothings such as *dhoti* and *sola* (sometimes pants and shirts), readymade garment for the grown-ups, women and children, kerosine oil and fuel, tea, tobacco, betelnuts etc, are some other common items of consumption. Shoes, sandals, umbrellas etc., are now increasingly used. Ornaments of gold, fine silk (*Muga & Pat*) dresses, cosmetics are also used by women of more affluent families.

Family Budget in the Rural Area : It has already been pointed out that the average budget of an average family in rural area in Assam is always a deficit one. It is because of the fact that the main source of income of a rural family is agriculture which is inherent with basic defects of tiny and fragmented holdings, overstrained soil, outmoded cultivation practices, vagaries of monsoons and insecurity of harvest. Returns from land do not cover the farming and domestic expenditure of the cultivator. As revealed by the sample surveys in rural areas of Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur (undivided) during 1950-56, the average annual net income of a rural family varied from Rs. 906 in Lakhimpur to Rs. 1,168 in Nowgong and the average annual expenditure from Rs. 1,068 to Rs. 1,266 respectively. These findings nearly hold good in case of family budget of a rural family under similiar conditions of the Goalpara district

in those days. The supplementary sources of his income are trade, service, professions, cottage industries etc.

Since then, there has been much developments in the rural areas under the Five Year Plans. Agriculture has undergone a considerable change resulting in greater production. The increasing prices of agricultural produce have brought to the cultivator also higher income but the benefits derived from high prices of his produce are neutralised by simultaneous rise in the cost of production as well as by high prices paid for necessities of daily life. The parity indices between prices received and prices paid by the farmers in Assam remained sluggish upto 1965 but increased gradually to 139 in 1968 and then fell again to 126 in 1969 only to recover to 132 in the following year.

An idea of consumer expenditure in Goalpara can be obtained from the household consumption data in Assam collected through National Sample Survey from time to time. According to the National Sample Survey-State Sample-14th to 16th round (1959-60—1961-62), the monthly *per capita* expenditure in rural areas of Assam was Rs. 22.42 of which food covered 73.3 per cent, clothing 9.2 per cent, fuel and light 5.3 per cent and others 4.2 per cent. About 54.45 per cent of the people had a monthly *per capita* expenditure below Rs. 21. i.e. below the average. In the following surveys in 1963-64, 1964-65, 1965-66, the monthly *per capita* expenditure in rural areas of Assam was worked out at Rs. 21.78, Rs. 25.54 and Rs. 28.19 respecttively of which food covered 70.94, 74.71 and 76.51 per cent respectively. The last survey revealed that percentage of people with consumption expenditure below Rs. 21 per head per month came down to 45.83 per cent.

The following table shows the broad pattern of consumption expenditure in rural and urban areas of Assam as revealed by the National Sample Survey 20th round (1965-66 State Sample).

Per capita consumer expenditure per month (in Rupees).

Item	Rural families		Urban families	
	Expenditure	per cent	Expenditure	per cent
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1. Food grains.	12.95	45.94	11.35	28.22
2. Milk and milk products. ..	1.23	4.36	2.47	6.14
3. Other food items. ..	7.39	26.21	12.19	30.31
Total food items... ..	21.57	76.51	26.01	64.67

Item	Rural families		Urban families	
	Expenditure	per cent	Expenditure	per cent
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
4. Fuel and lighting.	2.15	7.63	2.92	7.26
5. Clothing.	1.18	4.19	1.87	4.65
6. Other non-food items ..	3.29	11.67	9.42	23.42
Total non-food items. ..	6.62	23.49	14.21	35.33
Total	28.19	100.00	40.22	100.00

The latest available data on consumer expenditure as prepared by the National Sample Survey from the State Sample show that the per capita consumption expenditure in Assam in 1971-72 was about Rs. 41 in the rural areas and Rs. 64 in the urban areas against Rs. 40 and Rs. 58 respectively in the year 1970-71. The rise in consumption expenditure in the rural and urban areas of Assam during the period from 1965-66 to 1971-72 thus come to 46 and 58 per cent respectively. This, however, did not have much effect on standard of living of the people, which somewhat remained unchanged as increase in consumption expenditure was mainly due to increasing trend in prices of consumption goods. Rise of consumer price index number for rural population and industrial workers in Assam, has been found to be 45 and 65 per cent respectively between the period from 1965 to 1972.

According to 1971-72 National Sample Survey, expenditure on food in the rural areas was 76% of the total per capita consumer expenditure in 1971, while it is 65% in the urban areas. Monthly per capita expenditure in rural house-hold was Rs. 15/- and above ; 33% per cent of rural population had a per capita monthly expenditure of Rs. 42/- while 3.06 per cent rural household had a per capita consumption of Rs. 75.00 and above per month. This figure is in striking contrast with 24.25 per cent of urban house-hold in monthly per capita consumption group of Rs. 75.00 and above, 25.58 per cent in Rs. 55.00-74.99 group, 23.53 per cent in Rs. 43.00—54.00 group and 0.53 per cent only in the monthly per capita consumption expenditure of Rs. 15.00— 23.99 group. The largest bulk of the rural population is concentrated in the expenditure groups of Rs. 24-55/- while in the urban areas concentration is in the group of Rs. 43-75/-

(b) *GENERAL LEVEL OF EMPLOYMENT :*

According to the 1971 Census, 26.91, per cent of the total

population were workers against 39.7 per cent in 1961. Of these workers, agriculture provided employment to 78.06 per cent (including 12.79 per cent labourers) and industry and services to the rest. The distribution of workers into different categories has been shown in the feregoing section.

Some of the salient features of the general employment are shown below on the basis of the 1961 Census, figures of 1971 Census being not available.

Name of occupation	Nature of employment	Male	Female	Total
1. Agriculture. ..	1. Cultivator.	3,17,212	1,16,260	4,33,472
	2. Labourer.	33.280	5,242	38,522
Total :		3,50,492	1,21,502	4,71 ,994
2. Household ..	1. Employees.	640	572	1,212
Industry. .. .	Others.	3,752	32,647	36,399
Total ..		4,392	33,219	37,611
3. Non-Household	1. Employer.	3,097	100	3,197
Industry ..	2. Employees	42,805	4,122	46,927
	3. Single worker.	36,521	2,596	39,117
	4. Family worker	11,337	3,127	14,464
Total ..		93,760	9,945	1,03,705
Total 2 & 3 ..		98,152	43,164	1,41,316

From the above table, it may be said that in the agricultural sector, the self employed cultivators also provided employment to 38,522 labourers consisting of 33,280 males and 5,242 famales. The non-agricultural sector provided employment to 1,212 employees in the household industries and 46,927 employees in the non-household industries. This was in addition to employers, self-engaged single workers and family workers. Thus, the total number of employees in the industrial sector stood at 48,139 including 43,445 males and 4,694 females as per the 1961 Census. Of these employees, services including public service claimed the highest number of 24,517 employees and trade, commerce and transport came next with 6,421

employees. In this district, tea industry is not of much importance and in 1961, the total number of employees in plantation crops stood at 2,340 only.

The general level of employment (in public and private sectors combined) in the district as envisaged in the District Employment Exchange, Dhuburi rose from 30,125 on 30.6.65 to 37,204 on 30.6.75 registering an overall increase of 7,079 persons during the last ten years. The increase was more spectacular in the public sector which showed an increase of 4,752 persons against 2,327 in the private sector during the period. The total employment in the public sector was 26,305 on 30.6.75 against 21,553 on 30.6.65 and the corresponding employment in the private sector was 10,899 and 8,572 respectively.

The overall employment situation in Goalpara district during the last few years registered increases which were of course subject to seasonal variations. At the end of March, 1975, the general level of employment registered an increase of 1.8% or of 621 persons as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year. Slight increase was noticed in all fields and the gain was due to identification of new establishments in services, construction, electricity, manufacturing etc. It may be mentioned that the general level of employment begins to rise during the second quarter of a year and reaches the peak at the end of the third quarter ending on 30th September of a year and thence assumes a downward trend. The primary factor effecting the swings in the curve of employment is dismissal of casual employees during slack season in private sector including tea industry. The overall employment level maintained an upward trend during the last two years as shown below.

Description	No. of persons employed as on 31.3.74	No. of persons employed as on 31.3.75	Variations
Agriculture, Livestock & Forestry. ..	5,601	5,547	—54
Manufacturing.	2,253	2,360	+107
Construction.	2,061	2,426	+365
Electricity.	688	558	—130
Trade & Commerce.	941	896	—45
Transport & Communication ..	5,138	4,642	—496
Services.	17,163	18,037	+874
Total	33,845	34,466	+621

Public Sector : According to Employment Market Survey conducted by the Directorate of Employment Exchange, employment in the Public

sector in the State slumped by 15 per cent in the last quarter of 1962 over the previous quarter's figure and increased by 3 per cent at the end of the first quarter of 1963. The level registered a further increase of 2.5 per cent at the end of June, 1963. In Goalpara district, employment in this sector was recorded at 15,987 (about 8.2 per cent of the total in Assam) on 31st March, 1963 and then increased to 17,064 (about 8.6 per cent of the total in Assam) showing an increase of 1,077 persons or by about 6.74 per cent over the previous quarter. On 31st March, 1964, the figure reached 19,250 showing a total increase of 3,265 persons or by 20.42 per cent over the previous year. This increase of employment in the Goalpara district also increased its proportional strength in relation to the total public sector employment in the State. The employment increased continuously to 20,004, 21,337 and 23,340 on 31st March of 1965, 1966 and 1967 respectively. The level of employment in the public sector thus maintained an upward trend during the third plan and the State as a whole recorded 34.4 per cent increase of public sector employment. During 1967 from 31st March to 30th September, there was a big increase of employment in Goalpara district and on the latter date, the figure stood at 27,877. Since then, the level of public sector employment in the district assumed a downward trend and the figure came down to 22,910 on 31st March, 1968 and then to 21,720 on 31st March, 1969 against a corresponding increase at the State level. Soon afterwards, level of employment in this district reasserted itself and came to stand at 24,370 on 31st December, 1973 and then increased to 25,180 on 31st December, 1974. The figure which rose to 25,216 on 31st March, 1975 shot up to 28,789 on 30.9.75 due mainly to take-over of primary schools by the State Government. At the end of the year on 31.12.75, the level slightly declined to 27,047 due mainly to retirement of primary school teachers. The overall rise in employment in this sector was mainly due to expansion of State and Central Government Departments in Transport and Communications, Nationalisation of Banks, expansion of Banking system in rural areas, and take-over of primary education

The following table shows the employment variations by broad industrial divisions in public sector as on 31 .3.74 and 31.3.75

Description	on 31.3.74	on 31.3.75	Variations
Plantation & Forestry.	913	917	+4
Manufacturing	57	57	x
Construction.	2,061	2,426	+365
Electricity.	688	540	—148
Trade & Commerce.	777	747	—30
Transport and Communications. ..	5,138	4,642	—496
Services.	15,056	15887	+831
Total	24,690	25,216	+526

Private Sector : The employment in the private sector is not of much importance in Goalpara district as in other tea growing districts of Assam, as there are only about ten tea gardens in this district. There was an overall increase of 2,327 persons during the last ten years from June, 1965 to June, 1975 registering a total growth rate of about 27.15 per cent. The number of women employees outstriped by far the number of male employees and in this respect, the tea industry occupies the predominant position. The employment in this sector at the end of March, 1975 was 9,247 as against 9,155 at the end of March, 1974 showing an increase of about 1.0 per cent. At the beginning of 1974, the figure stood at 9,676 on 30.6.74 and rose to 9,991 on 30.9.74 but fell to 9,362 on 31.12.74 then to 9,247 on 31.3.75. During 1975, the level of employment rose to 10,899 at the end of June against 9,247 at the end of March and then rose to 10,841 at the end of September, the peak harvesting season in tea industry. It has already been pointed out that the upward or downward swings in the level of employment particularly in the private sector are of seasonal nature. The balance employment at the end of March in a year gives an approximate idea of the level of employment

At the end of March, 1975, the level of employment in this private sector was registered at 9,247 as against 9,155, 8,490 and 8,260 on corresponding dates of 1974, 1973 and 1972 respectively. Thus, in the last few years, this sector recorded an upward trend in the level of employment.

Employment of Women : It has been already pointed out that the female working force depleted from 22.5 per cent in the 1961 Census to 1.54 per cent in the 1971 Census in relation to the total population of the district. This does not mean that the trend of employment of women is a negative one. Along with the spread of education and establishment of new industries in both private and public sectors, the number of women employees in various concerns is increasing year by year. The tea industry though of lesser importance here, absorbs the largest number of female workers in the district. As revealed by the Employment Exchange market information, women workers represented in 1975 more than 12.09 per cent of the total employment in the district. Out of this total women workers, about 67.7 per cent were employed in the private sector and 32.2 per cent in public sector and the tea industry alone in the private sector accounted for 61.5 per cent of the total women employees in the district during the year. At the end of March, 1975, there were altogether, 3,720 women employees distributed as 2,291 in tea industry, 1,158 in services and the rest in others as against 3,757 in the previous year showing a decrease of 37 in their strength. This was due mainly to retrenchment of temporary female workers in tea gardens. At the end of June, 1975, their number increased

to 4,571 showing an increase of 851 women over the previous growth. This was increased by another 310 employees in the next quarter of the year recording their number at 4,891. These increases were due to employment of casual women employees in the tea plantations for havesting as well as to appointment of mistresses in educational institutions. At the end of the year, their number fell down to 3,787 due mainly to discharge of seasonal women labourers in the tea plantations. Thus, their overall employment recorded an increase from 3,720 on 31.3.75 to 3,787 on 31.12.75.

It is, however, observed that the percentage of government employees belonging to the district of Goalpara is comparatively low. As per the Census of Government Employees of 1972, percentage of Government employees whose home is in Goalpara district is 9.3 per cent to the total of the State while it is 20 per cent in Kamrup, 17.3 per cent in Sibsagar, 14.6 per cent in Cachar and 11.4 per cent in Nowgong. It may be mentioned here that most of the Government employees in Central Government establishments like Post and Telegraph Department, Railways, State Bank of India and Office of the Accountant General of the eastern region belong to Cachar district which has become the home of the erstwhile East Pakistan refugees coming from Sylhet. The same possibility also can be presumed in case of Kamrup and Nowgong where a number of Central offices situate. The following tables will illustrate the subdivisional position of Government employees as per grade, social status and sex.

Table A.

Number of employees according to status in the three sub-divisions of Goalpara district as on 31-3-73.

Sub-division	Gazetted			Non-Gazetted		
	Class-I	Class-II	Total	Class III	Class IV	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dhuburi ..	30	236	266	2357	2,522	4,879
Goalpara ..	15	116	131	1602	1,683	3,285
Kokrajhar	19	114	133	384	842	2,226

Number of employees by status whose home is in Goalpara district as on 31-3-73 is as follows :—

Class-I	..	52
Class-II	..	231
Class-III		4,249
Class-IV	..	4,135

Table B.

Number of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes of Govt. employees according to status and sub-divisions of posting in Goalpara district as on 31-3-73.

	Gazetted		Non-Gazetted	
	Class-I	Class-II	Class-III	Class-IV
A. Dhuburi :				
Scheduled Castes	Nil	8	107	230
Scheduled Tribes (Hills) ..	Nil	1	43	27
Scheduled Tribes (Plains) ..	1	12	155	273
Other Backward Classes. ..	5	35	469	515
B. Kokrajhar :				
Scheduled Castes	2	4	36	38
Scheduled Tribes (Hills) ..	Nil	Nil	7	2
Scheduled Tribes (Plains) ..	2	11	285	162
Other Backward Classes ..	1	22	358	295
C. Goalpara :				
Scheduled Castes	Nil	5	90	159
Scheduled Tribes (Hills) ..	Nil	1	13	46
Scheduled Tribes (Plains) ..	1	3	101	163
Other Backward Classes. ..	2	15	438	723

Table C.

Sub-divisional distibution of male and female employees in Goalpara district as on 31-3-73

Sub-Division	Male	Female	Percentage of female employees to total employees in each Sub-division.
Dhuburi	4,829	316	6.1
Goalpara	3,363	53	1.6
Kokrajhar	2,296	63	2.7

Sources : Census of Assam Government Employees by Director of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Gauhati.

As revealed by the 1971 Census, the percentage of actual workers to the total population of the district depleted from 39.7 per cent in 1961 to 26.91 per cent in 1971. This seems to indicate an increasing trened of unemployment although the difference is mainly due to change in worker definition in the 1971 Census. As revealed in the Employment Exchange, Dhuburi durinig 1958-62, the number of job seekers in the live Register gave cumulative increase to 10,972 persons of which only 475 persons were placed in jobs. Since 1965, a total number of 25,342 persons registered their names in the Dhuburi Exchange which placed 1,363 persons in employment. The following table shows yearwise break-up of registration and placement since 1965 in Dhuburi Exchange.

APPENDIX I.

Statement showing the yearwise break-up of Registration/Placement

Year	Registration	Placement
1965	4,450	68
1966	1,480	59
1967	1,518	39
1968	1,775	75
1969	1,569	76
1970	3,206	456
1971	2,171	84
1972	1,489	127
1973	1,848	109
1974	2,020	137
1975	3,816	115
Total	25,342	1,363

The rate of growth of un-employment has been very high in the district since Independence, due to high growth rate of population both in rural and urban areas, influx of migrants and displaced persons and expansion in general education. The additional employment opportunities generated during the Five Year Plan periods have not sufficiently kept pace with the increased number of unemployed. An ever-increasing number of unemployed persons is, therefore, always left to be provided with jobs at the end of each plan period.

The projections relating to unemployment can-not be taken as accurate as there is no fool-proof machinery to assess, the actual position from time to time.

Un-employment in the district of Goalpara is growing during the last few years. The number of employment seekers stood at 2,447 on 30.9.65 as against 3,173 on 31.12.75. Highest number of persons on the register of Employment Exchange belong to un-skilled category followed by job seekers interested in clerical and other white-coller jobs. Un-skilled labour comprises mainly of un-employed rural population. There is considerable underemployment in villages also. Employment market Information thrown out by the Employment Exchanges show that while employment in the public sector has been increasing, non-agricultural paid employment in the organised private sector is indicating a decline. It is against this background of unemployment, the State Govt. have been formulating certain measures to relieve the problem. Important among them are establishment of a second Oil-Refinery and Petro-Chemical Complex at Bongaigaon, a Paper Mill at Jogighopa and a Thermal power project at Basugaon, which will generate considerable employment opportunities for various categories of persons including those of un-skilled category.

The Employment Service came into being in India under the stress of post-War demobilisation. Till the end of 1946, the facilities of the employment services were only available to demobilised service personnel and discharged war-workers. In 1947, at the time of partition of the country, the Employment Exchanges were called upon to deal with the resettlement of a large number of persons who were displaced in consequence of the partition. In response to growing demands, the scope of the service was gradually extended and by early 1948, the Employment Exchanges were thrown open to all categories of workers.

Based on the recommendations of the Training and Employment Service Organisation Committee (which is known as Shiva Rao Committee) and the acceptance of these recommendations by the Union Government and the State Governments, the day-to-day administration of the Employment Exchanges was handed over to the State Government, by the later part of 1956, when several Employment Exchanges were set up under different plan periods. The District Employment Exchange Dhuburi was set up in 1958 during the 2nd Five Year Plan. The Exchange at Dhuburi since its inception has been functioning to the fullest satisfaction of Job-seekers as well as employers.

The present position of the organisation is that the Government of India i.e Directorate General of Employment & Training still continues to be responsible for formulation of the policies in matters of employment for the cause of uniformity and liaison with different States while the State

Directorate i.e. Director of Employment & Craftsmen Training administers, controls and inspects Exchanges in the State. It is also the responsibility of the State Directorate to ensure that agreed policies and procedures are observed at the Exchanges in the State

The district Employment Exchange, Dhuburi was set up in 1958 and till 1971 it had a sub-divisional status manned by an Assistant Employment Officer. In 1972, this exchange was up-graded to the status of a District Employment Exchange, having its jurisdication over the revenue district of Goalpara and headed by an Employment Officer.

It is commonly understood that the sole function of the Employment Exchange is to provide job seekers to employers and to obtain jobs for the employment seekers but apart from the placement function, the National Employment Service performs a variety of functions and serves the larger objective of optimum utilisation of the country's Manpower. In pursuance of this objective, it assists the employment seekers and others in planning their careers and in obtaining suitable jobs, apprentice-ships or admission in training institutions and finally, it assists the Government in Manpower Budgeting & Planning by furnishing data to that effect.

Since 1965, a total number of 25,342 persons registered their names with this exchange while 1,363 persons were placed in employment through the efforts of District Employment Exchange, Dhuburi.

A Vocational Guidance Unit is functioning at the District Employment Exchange, Dhuburi since 1970. The Vocational Guidance and Employment counselling programmes are designed to give intensive vocational guidance to those who seek such assistance. The term Vocational Guidance, more appropriately connotes assistance to youth whereas employment counselling refers to the assistance given to the adults. The Vocational Guidance Unit since its inception has been successfully carrying its responsibility in the matter to the satisfection of jobseekers and others.

(c) *NATIONAL PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT* :

The First Five Year Plan of Assam (1951-56) was preceded by the post-war developmental activities. The post-war programme, which was responsible for the beginning of educational and training institutions like the Assam Medical College, Assam Agricultural College, Assam Veterinary College, Assam Ayurvedic College and the Assam Forestry School, languished in 1949 when the Central grants were curtailed or withdrawn as a

result of the inflation then prevailing. The State Government was hard put to continuing the institutions which had been started, but soon after, with the setting up of the Planning Commission, the First Five Year Plan was formulated to continue the tempo of development generated during the post-war years and to take up development activity in other spheres. The setting up of the Planning Commission and the initiation of the First Five Year Plan were steps towards fulfilment of the aspirations of the national struggle for freedom in the economic sphere after the political freedom had already been achieved.

The objective of the planning as set forth in the national First Five Year Plan was "raising living standards and opening up to the people new opportunities for a richer and more varied life." The First Five Year Plan of Assam was conceived as a modest effort designed to remove the shortages and dis-equilibrium in the economy following the war and partition and to fulfil the needs of the most essential items of development in which the State was lacking. The programme had a long-range objective of strengthening the economy and to build up institutions which would pave the way for accelerated development in future. High priority was given to agricultural development, setting up of essential institutions of higher education and professional learning, development of communication, etc.

The Second plan of Assam sought to carry this process further, accelerate the rate of growth and to strengthen the institutional set-up designed to make the State's economy more progressive in terms of defined economic and social needs. It aimed at a balanced distribution of outlays between different sectors of development with particular emphasis on development of agriculture, irrigation, power, transport, education and health services.

The Third Plan was drawn up as an integral part of, and in conformity with the overall concepts and objectives of the national Third Five Year Plan, and experience of the first two plans as well as the requirements of future development provided the guidelines for the formulation of the Third Five Year Plan. During the Third Plan, while agriculture was given high priority, the requirements for accelerating the industrial development of the State as well as the development in social services, transport and power were kept in view. Special emphasis was placed on flood control. The three-tier panchayat organisation was built up and strengthened with a view to serving as an institution for participation of the people in the process of development. The actual achievement in the State, however, was much lower than expected in many fields. Assam which has been persistently lagging behind other States in important sectors such as industries, power, communications, technical education, urban development, etc., has further lagged behind other States during the Third Plan period.

The agricultural sector showed an upward trend in production but due to the occurrence of floods and absence of suitable flood protection measures and other factors, the expected progress was not achieved. The industrial development in the State suffered a setback as a result of the Chinese aggression and Indo-Pakistan conflict. The achievement in physical terms, in other sectors, was also not entirely satisfactory.

Pending the finalisation of the Fourth Five Year Plan and the determination of well-defined strategy for development, during 1966-67, 1967-68, and 1968-69 ad-hoc plans have been taken up. These annual plans were formulated broadly on the basis of assumptions and concepts as indicated in the approach to the Fourth Five Year Plan and were designed to carry forward the stage of development reached at the end of the Third Plan and to prepare the economy for the implementation of the Fourth Five Year Plan. The main factors that govern the level of development have been summarised there-in as follows.

(a) A Comparatively Less-developed Base : Unlike some other advance and more developed States in the country, Assam embarked on her programme of plan development with a weak and less developed economy. The partition and the disruption of the normal channels of trade had put a further strain on the economy of the State. The lower level of development at the initial stages of the start of the planning process has been one of the reasons for accentuation of the difference in level of development in the State as compared to the other parts of the country.

(b) Investment on Central Projects : Central investment on industrial projects would be justified on the basis of its natural and mineral resources and the necessity for accelerating industrial development in view of its comparative backwardness. There was no investment on Central industrial projects in Assam during the First and Second Plan periods. During the Third Plan, the investment amounted to Rs. 32.8 crores and the total investment as provisionally assessed upto 1968 would amount to Rs. 40.2 crores which forms 1.6 per cent of the total investment of the Central Government on industrial projects in various States. As compared to this, the investment in Orissa was 17.1 per cent, in West Bengal 16.7 per cent and 14.6 per cent in Bihar.

(c) Financial Assistance by Different Financing Institutions : The financial support and assistance provided by the different financial institutions to the State has also not been commensurate with the needs. The financial assistance including refinance facilities given by the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) is only 0.10 per cent of the total assistance disbursed. Similarly, Assam has received 2.87 per cent of total assistance given by the Agricultural Refinance Corporation so far as against 74.64 per cent received by Andhra Pradesh and 10.17 per cent received by Tamilnadu. Assam has received 2.28 per cent of the net financial assistance sanctioned by the Industrial Finance Corporation so far as against 15.11 per cent received by Tamilnadu and 18.48 per cent received by Maharastra. The State Banking Co-operative sector did not receive finance for long from the Reserve Bank since 1961.

(d) Private Investment : Investment in the Private sector is governed by a variety of complex factors. The Chinese aggression and the Indo-Pak conflict added as deterrants to private capital investment in the State. It is estimated that capital formation in the private sector in the State was of the order of Rs. 150 crores during the first two plans and of the order of Rs. 136 crores in the Third Plan period. No accurate estimate of the anticipated private investment during the Fourth Plan period can be made ; yet it is clear that one of the reasons for low level of development in the State is the insufficiency of private investment during the plan periods.

(e) High price Index : The trends in the price situation in Assam have been very disquieting. The index of wholesale prices in Assam (base 1953-100) rose from 131 in 1960 to 136 in 1962, 149 in 1963, 212 in 1966 and to 247 in 1967. The high prices prevailing in the State had an obvious impact on the cost of living and neutralised the impact of rise in income. The consumer price index number series show that there was a rise of 33.3 per cent in the consumer price index for the general working class during the Third Plan period. As a result of the persistent pressure of increasing prices, there has been an irresistible demand for rise in wages and salaries. The Government has to accede to the demands for pay rise ; the minimum wages of several categories of workers had to be revised upwards and the cost of the plan projects has gone up.

(f) High Rate of Population Growth :- As already pointed out, the rate of growth of population in the State has been the highest in the country and a greater effort and larger investment are needed to raise the level of development of the State.

(g) Agricultural Production :— The agricultural production in the State could not stabilise and show the expected increase primarily due to the vagaries of nature. The floods affected adversely food production during the Third Five Year Plan period and the absence of suitable flood protection measures accentuated the gravity of the situation. On the other hand, drought affected certain areas in the State and, lack of adequate irrigation projects resulted in a fall in agricultural production. As the agricultural sector contributes more than 48 per cent to the total State income, the adverse trends in agricultural production have affected the State per capita income and consequently the level of development.

(h) Shortage of Technical and Administrative Personnel : In the first two plans the State faced a serious shortage of technical and adminstrative personnel. In the Third Plan, the difficulty had somewhat ceased. In the Fourth Plan, the manpower difficulties are likely to be considerably removed and the State will be in a position to complete the schemes according to the schedule and achieve the physical targets aimed at.

With a view to overcome this difficulty, training facilities in various crafts have been expanded, three engineering colleges, three medical colleges and a number of Industrial Estates have been opened in the State.

(i) State Income : During the period 1951-52 to 1965-66, covering the period of the first three Five Year Plans, the State income of Assam at 1960-61 prices rose from Rs. 279.2 crores to Rs. 450.7 crores or at the rate of 3.2 per cent per year. The Third Five Year Plan sought to secure an annual growth rate of about 5.1 per cent per annum. The growth rate during 1961-66 of the State income stood around 4 per cent. The shortfall in the target was solely due to a setback in agricultural production in 1965-66. It is of significance to observe that over the first four years of the Third Plan ending with the year 1964-65, when agricultural production was at its normal level, the annual growth rate of the State's economy was of the order of 5 per cent which is very close to the desired rate envisaged in the Third Plan.

A study of the composition of the State's income during the fifteen years of planning will show that the economy of the State has started revealing the structural changes which are quite significant and will indicate that it has reached the "take-off" stage. From 63.3 per cent in 1950-51, the income from the agricultural sector as percentage of the total State income has come down to 49.2 per cent in the year 1965-66. The percentage share of income from mining, manufacturing and construction has risen from 17.6 per cent in 1950-51 to 24.1 per cent in 1965-66. This

high rise in percentage share is attributable mainly to the increased production of crude oil and oil refining industry. Income from factories other than tea and oil refining has also shown increase. However, compared to all-India standards, these figures are rather low. In 1965, Assam accounted for only 1.99 per cent of the employment in factories in India. The income from factory industries in the State was still lower—only 2 per cent of the all India figure in 1964-65. Similarly, the income from small enterprises in Assam was barely 2.8 per cent of that of all-India for 1964-65.

(j) Per Capita Income : The disparities and low level of development of the State become more evident on an examination of the per capita income of the State. In spite of about 61 per cent increase in the State income (at 1960-61 prices) over the period 1950-51 to 1965-66, the per capita income of Assam recorded a rise of bare 5 per cent over the 15 year period. The annual rate of growth of per capita income at constant (1960-61) prices in the State comes to 0.3 per cent which is evidently very low.

The above analysis which highlights the generalities involved in the Five Year Plans and ad-hoc plans reflects the limitations in achieving the economic development in Goalpara district *vis-a-vis* Assam. The district figures relating to the plan outlay and achievenents not being available in full, the review has been confined only to the broad features of planning. However, main achievements in the field of agriculture, education, power, industry and health have been shown in respective chapters.

Community Development : The Community Development Programme was launched all over India on Second October, 1952 by inaugurating the first series of 55 original pattern Community Development Projects of which Assam had two Projects viz., Cachar Community Development Project and Darrang Community Development Project. Each Project covered a fairly large area and involved intensive operations spread over a period of three years. The District of Goalpara, however, was not alloted any project of this series.

In 1953, more Community Projects were launched in two successive instalments and in the meantime the National Extension Service was inaugurated all over India on Second October of the same year. The first Block in Goalpara district was the Sidli-Chirang which was started under the National Extension Service Programme in October, 1953. The basic difference between the two movements was that the National Extension Service was a permanent organisation with officials and non-officials and a minimum financial provision for development and after successful results had been

achieved with maximum popular co-operation, a National extension service Block was selected for intensive development for a period of 3 years when it was called a Community Project.

Prior to introduction of revised pattern of the Community Development Blocks in 1956, one more block under National Extension Service was started in Goalpara district. It was the Matia Block started in October, 1954. Thus, the district had two Blocks under the National Extension Service till 1956 when three more Blocks were started in the district. Each of the National Extension Service Blocks was in charge of a Project Executive Officer who was assisted by a team of technical officers for agriculture, animal husbandry., health, co-operation, social education and engineering. In addition to this staff at the headquarters of a Block, there was for a convenient number of villages (usually 10 or more) a *Gram Sevak* or a multipurpose village level worker. This organisation functioned as a team and brought to the rural people the result of scientific research in agriculture and other fields, organised supplies and services needed for the development programmes, spread the co-operative movement on the countryside, and more important than everything else, stimulated local leadership and local initiative and harnessed the unutilised energy of the people for all-round development of rural life.

At the Block level, there was a Project Advisory Committee consisting of the Deputy Commissioner as Chairman and with the local heads of the various Development Departments and leading representatives of local non-officials as members. All local members of Parliament, the State Legislature and the Local Board as well as a specified number of representatives of rural panchayats, co-operative societies, leading social workers and progressive farmers were also members of this Committee. At the village level, there was for every village or convenient group of villages, a Village Development Committee consisting of a number of local leaders informally elected by the people themselves.

The revised pattern of Blocks was introduced in 1956 by amalgamating the two programmes. Under this, the existing National Extension Service Blocks were converted into Community Development Blocks and more Blocks under this new type were started all over the State and in Goalpara three such Blocks were started in 1956--Bijni Development Block in April, Balijana and Datma Development Blocks in October. These new types of Blocks were to pass through three stages of developments viz, Pre-extension Stage, Stage I and Stage II of intensive developments and then Post-stage II or normalised. Accordingly the two older Blocks entered

into Stage I and the three new ones started in the Pre-extension Stage. At the beginning of the Second Five Year Plan, Bilasipara Development Block was started in October 1957 and was followed by Chapar-Shalkocha in April 1958, Mankachar in October, 1959 and Golakganj in April, 1959, thus raising the number of Blocks to nine in the district. In the mean time, the new Panchayat Act, 1959 came into force and under it, the Anchalik Panchayats were made co-terminus with the Community Development Blocks. The district was covered by twenty Anchalik Panchayats during 1959-60. Of these, nine became co-terminus with the existing Blocks and the rest not covered by the Community Development Programme functioned as Shadow Blocks. In October 1960, two more Blocks were started in Pre-extension Stage in the district to cover Srijangram and Manikpur Anchalik Panchayats. South Salmara and Kokrajhar Anchalik Panchayats were covered by Blocks in Pre-extension Stage during April-October, 1961. All the Anchalik Panchayats-cum-Shadow Blocks were covered by the Community Development Programme by 1963. Meanwhile, the older ones were due to cross the Stage II of intensive development and by now all Blocks are normalised.

With the enforcement of the Assam Panchayats Raj Act, 1972, the old Anchalik Panchayats which were co-terminus with the Community Development Blocks have been abolished. All development functions hitherto done by the Blocks are being transferred to the Mahkuma Parishads.

Staff Pattern : The Deputy Commissioner is entrusted with the full responsibility of the Community Development Programmes in the district. The staffing pattern of the Block at present is as follows--(1) One Block Development Officer who heads the organisational set-up of the Block, (2) Extension Officers, one each for Agriculture, Veterinary, Industry, Panchayat, Co-operatives, (3) Social Education Organisers-(male and female), (4) Medical Officer. (5) Overseers, (6) Veterinary Field Assistants, (7) *Gram Sevakas* and *Gram-Sevikas*, (8) Agriculture Demonstrators, (9) Sanitary Inspector, (10) Lady health Visitor, (12) Cinema operator and besides other ministerial staff, and Grade IV staff. The Block Development Officer remains in overall executive charge of the Community Development Block. He is helped in his work by the Extension officers who are the field officers for implementing various development works in their respective fields. They are also under the supervision and technical guidance of their respective Heads of Departments. The *Gram Sevak* plays a crucial role in planning and development at the village level, as he is the main instrument in execution of the schemes. Prior to the abolition of the Anchalik Panchayats, the Block Development Officers acted as their Secretaries.

As in other districts of Assam, the District Development Board and the District Development Committee formed in the initial stage were replaced by Sub-divisional Development Boards and Sub-divisional Development Committees. The Sub-divisional Development Boards were again replace by the Mahkuma Parishads in 1960. The post of the District Rural Development Officer was abolished simultaneously and the post of the Sub-divisional Planning Officer was created in each sub-division, in persuance of the provisions of the Assam Panchayat Act, 1959. The Sub-divisional Planning Officer acts as the ex-officio Secretary of the Mahkuma Parishad. Formerly, it discussed and approved the schemes and budget proposals of the different Blocks-cum-Anchalik Panchayats. The Sub-divisional Development Committee formed with the different District Heads of Departments and Blocks Development Officers with the Deputy Commissioner or Sub-divisional Officer as the Chairman as the case may be is responsible for formulating the development schemes and acts as the co-ordinating body.There are also various other Committees both at the Sub-divisional and Block levels.

Government Expenditure : The average expenditure per Block (excluding the amount spent on special programme) was worked out to 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 on 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 ..	208.0	170.0	197.8	152.5	146.4

The total expenditure incurred by the Government in the Community Development Programme in Assam in the ten main heads of expenditure since 1952-53 to 1969-70 stands at Rs. 3,418.6 lakhs. The annual total expenditure showed a sharp 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.

A review of the achievements of the Community Development Blocks during 1971-72 throws some light on their functioning. Physical achievements of the Community Development Programme in the district in certain fields such as agriculture, traditional crafts and industries, co-operation, social education etc., were quite considerable. More than ten thousand quintals of improved paddy seeds besides oil seeds, vegetable seeds etc., were distributed during the year. About twelve thousand quintals of fertilisers were also distributed. In other fields also, the achievements were quite encouraging.

Rural health and sanitation also made considerable progress. There were about 7 primary health centres per 10 blocks in 1971-72 and the average number of dispensaries functioning per block was 4. The number of family planning centres also increased during the year.

Progressive introduction of special development programmes namely Applied Nutrition Programme was noticed. During 1971-72, four Blocks—Dudhnoi, Baitamari, Golakganj, and Kokrajhar were covered under the Programme. This programme covered about 254 villages, 30 *mahila samities*, 30 youth clubs etc., and about 72 school gardens, 730 kitchen gardens and 18 community gardens were started within the area of the said four Blocks.

The Blockwise physical achievemen s during the year (1971-72) are shown below :—

Physical achievements in individual Blocks of Goalpara district during the year ending in March, 1972.

Items	Name of Blocks.									
	Gauri-pur	Aga-moni	South-Salmara	Lakhi-pur	Baita-mari	Kachu-gaon	Kokra-jhar	Gossai-gaon	Bali-jana	Golak-ganj
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Communication :										
1. New Kacha Roads Constructed (kms.) ..		51	..	..	2	19	..	..	..	3
2. Existing Kacha Roads improved (kms). ..	..	4	..	..	2	35	..	24	12	40
3. Culverts Constructed (No.) ..	..	9	..	..	3	7	..	..	7	6
4. Culverts Repaired (No.) ..	..	..	..	..	2	..	..	..	1	1
Panchayati Raj :										
5. Meeting of Panchayat Samities/ Block Development Committees.	4	9	..	..	11	12	8	9	16	7
6. Average No. of persons attending Panchayat Samities/Block Development Committees.	17	31	..	..	13	23	83	152	17	80
7. Members of Panchayat Samities trained at Panchayati Raj training centres.	..	..	..	..	..	..	57	5	14	..
8. Members of Gram Panchayats trained in Panchayati Raj.	..	..	..	..	..	..	278		120	..

Physical achievements in individual Blocks of Goalpara district during the year ending in March, 1972.

Items	Name of Blocks.									
	Man-kachar	Chapar-Salkocha	Bilasi-para	Matia	Srijan-gram	Sidli-Chirang	Manik-pur	Bijni	Dodh-noi (T.D.)	Dotma (T.D.)
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Communication :										
1. New Kacha Roads Constructed (kms) ..	6	..	31	..	7	..	4	..	5	..
2. Existing Kacha Roads improved (kms) ..	10	34	45	..	14	..	..	..	17	4
3. Culverts Constructed (No.)	..	..	5	..	..	..	1	..	7	1
4. Culverts Repaired (No.) ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	7	..
Panchayati Raj :										
5. Meeting of Panchayat Samities/Block Development Committees. ..	..	7	2	1	8	1	5	..	23	3
6. Average No. of persons attending Panchayat Samities/Block Development Committees...	..	40	45	24	24	10	21	..	74	47
7. Members of Panchayat Samities trained at Panchayati Raj training centres. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
8. Members of Gram Panchayats trained in Panchayati Raj. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

Physical achievments in individual Blocks of Goalpara district during the year ending in March, 1972.

Items.	Gauri-pur	Agamoni	South-Salmara	Lakhi-pur.	Baita-mari	Kachu-gaon.	Kokra-jhar.	Gossai-gaon.	Golak-ganj.	Man-kachar.
1	2		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Agriculture :										
Distribution of improved Seeds:										
1. Paddy (Qtl.) ..	66	248	33	3,814	49	61	66	408	244	271
2. Others (Qtl.) ..	104	374	283	1,209	75	38	49	94	231	..
3. Pulses (Qtl.) ..	10	45	..	6	8	3	..	22	5	..
4. Oil Seeds (Kgs.) ..	1,280	300	..	1,2695	675	2,510	2,631	1,690	9,100	..
5. Vegetables (Kgs). ..	58	..	..	45	206	35	240	177	14	..
Distribution of fertilizers and mannures.										
6. Chemical fertilizers (Qtl.) ..	682	1,208	181	12,46	628	564	879	579	212	48
7. Others (Qtl.) ..	4	59	60	75	64	19	144	39	..	4
8. Green manure (Kgs.) ..	..	1,605	15	..	..	..	..	150	20	..
9. Distribution of Iron Ploughs (Nos.) ..	..	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
10. Sprayers. ...	..	13	..	10	18	..	..	7	..	4
11. Agricultural demonstration held	10	46	33	27	48	22	42	15	14	62
12. Chemical Pesticides distributed.	344	750	952	1,623	937	314	246	3,057	84	34
13. Compost pits dug. ..	..	3625	1350	39	728	740	986	424	458	250

Physical achievements in individual Blocks of Goalpara district during the year ending in March, 1972.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
14. Area under package practices and intensive cultivation.	1,591	2,070	19	963	223	40	669	1,164	163	7
15. Land reclaimed. ..	5	..	..	..	..	22	..	10	..	4
Animal Husbandry :										
16. Improved Birds supplied (No.)	..	..	..	115	..	..	150	219	390	..
17. Animals Castrated (No.) ..	310	135	69	95	431	108	322	204	21	..
18. Animals artificially inseminated.	..	..	..	38	..	..	302	..	..	..
Co-operation:										
19. Primary Agricultural credit and Multipurpose societies (No.) ..	63	25	6	29	20	33	16	1	21	124
20. Joint farming collective/farming.	2	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	3	..
21. Others. ..	24	8	9	11	17	11	18	5	28	
Membership of Societies.										
22. Primary Agricultural credit and Multipurpose societies. ..	4,900	4,266	2,890	6,573	1,803	2,230	1,944	2,602	2,067	47 1,336
23. Joint Farming/collective farming	105	..	..	186	..	..	..	..	144	—
24. Others. ..	853	417	362	410	1949	170	52	125	276	..

Physical achievements in individual Blocks of Goalpara district during the year ending in March, 1972.

Items.	Bilashi-para	Matia	Srijan-gram	Bali-jana.	Sidli-chirang	Manik-pur	Dudhnoi (T.D.)	Dotma (T.D.)	Chapar-Salkocha	Bijni
1	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Agriculture										
Distribution of improved Seeds: ..										
1. Paddy (Qtl.) ..	125	188	287	135	1,122	331	324	994	300	N.A
2. Others (Qtl.) ..	688	91	134	86	64	151	23	415	119	N.A.
3. Pulses (Qtl.) ..	22	..	26	..	..	..	5	4	18	N.A.
4. Oil Seeds (Kgs.) ..	14,412	1,988	3,700	2,555	7,900	..	..	1,697	671	N.A.
5. Vegetables (Kgs). ..	..	..	28	274	..	110	15	..	..	N.A.
Distribution of fertilizers and mannures: ..										
6. Chemical fertilizers (Qtl.) ..	164	570	378	577	488	791	358	1901	261	N.A.
7. Others (Qtl.) ..	17	60	226	162	21	13	35	129	21	N.A.
8. Green manure (Kgs.)	2,006	..	450	..	..	1,100	90		4,314	N.A.
9. Distribution of Iron Ploughs (Nos.) ..	..	28	2	5	..	7	48	1	1	N.A.
10. Sprayers. ..	..	11	16	..	..	4	10	1	14	N.A.
11. Agriculturol demonstration held.	36	41	51	86	43	35	64	98	51	N.A..
12. Chemical Pesticides distributed	1,929	359	895	1,530	670	396	911	5,922	565	N.A.
13. Compost pits dug. ..	..	1,019	745	1,289	880	728	672	..	..	N.A

Physical achievements in individual Blocks of Goalpara district during the year ending in March, 1972.

1	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
14. Area under peackage practices and intensive cultivation. ..	1528	..	111	5	339	1,303	105	711	310	N.A.
15. Land reclaimed. ..	..	139	23	..	..	238	..	..	35	N.A.
Animal Husbandry :										
16. Improved birds supplied (No.)	..	..	..	..	..	..	404	232	..	N.A.
17. Animals Castrated (No.) ..	354	605	838	614	341	222	1,594	1,106	500	N.A.
18. Animals artificially inseminated.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	N.A.
Co-operation:										
19. Primary Agricultural credit and Multipurpose (No.) ..	35	18	31	19	15	16	20	10	13	N.A.
20. Joint farming collective farming.	5	3	2	1	..	..	3	1	..	N.A.
21. Others. ..	18	29	21	..	2	12	25	12	8	N.A.
Membership of Societies.										
22. Primary Agriculture credit and Multipurpose. ..	204	2,438	2,891	197	3,216	2,964	1,784	2,459	1,352	N.A.
23. Joint Farming collective farming.	212	102	88	16	..	..	66	50	..	N.A.
24. Others. ..	704	514	440	..	906	340	790	139	..	N.A.

CHAPTER X

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

In the first and the second chapters, we have already described the several changes in jurisdiction which the district underwent under the British. Sufficient it is to say here that Goalpara was finally incorporated in the new Province of Assam when the latter was created into a separate administrative unit in 1874. The headquarters of the district initially located at Goalpara were subsequently transferred to Dhuburi in 1879.

Dhuburi was under the immediate charge of the Deputy Commissioner and Goalpara sub-dividion was under an Assistant Magistrate who was usually a native of the country. The Deputy Commissioner had two subordinate Magistrates and a Sub-Deputy Collector as his Assistants at the headquarters. Separate officers were in charge of the Police, Forests, Public Works and Medical departments. The new judicial cadre was constituted in 1956 and the civil suits were decided by the Munsiffs, Sub-judges and the District Judge. It may be noted here that the judiciary was separated completely from the executive in 1967 and since then, all criminal as well as civil cases are tried by the Munsiffs and the Judicial Megistrates.

The district has now three sub-divisions -- Dhuburi, Goalpara and Kokrajhar. At present, besides the Deputy Commissioner, there are a number of officers in the district. There are one Additional Deputy Commissioner, one Sadar Sub-divisional Officer at Dhuburi, two Sub-divisional Officers in the other two sub-divisions, one Assistant Commissioner, one Treasury Officer, one Deputy Director of Supply, one Superintendent of Excise (State), one Sub-divisional Planning Officer, besides a host of non-Gazetted Officers, who look after their respective branches of the district administration. The Deputy and the Assistant Commissioner belong to the Indian Administrative Service, the latter being a new recruit placed on probation. The Additional Deputy Commissioner is generally a member of the Assam Civil Service (Senior Grade). The Extra Assistant Commissioners belong to Assam Civil Service. From time to time, one or more officers belonging to the Assam Civil Service II which is also known as the Assam Junior Civil Service designated as Sub-Deputy Collectors are also posted to assist the Deputy Commissioner.

The Deputy Commissioner and his office : The Deputy Commissioner is the pivot of the district administration. The functions of the Deputy Commissioner has increased tremendously during the post-independence period when the character of the administration has undergone a great change. Till the separation of the judiciary in 1967, the Deputy Commissioner tried criminal cases and heard appeals from some of the lower courts in the capacity of the District Magistrate. The Deputy Commissioner still exercises the magisterial powers primarily under the exigencies of his executive functions. Under the present administrative set-up, the Deputy Commissioner is linked up with several departments of the State Government, though these departments are not directly under him. Thus, he is the chairman of the Regional Transport Authority in which capacity, he presides over the meetings of the Regional Transport Authority. He is the ex-officio-chairman of various educational institutions. The Deputy Commissioner also exercises some amount of control in investigation of criminal cases by police although the Superintendent of Police is the head of the Police organisation in the district. He is also closely associated with the developmental activities carried out by other departments such as Agriculture, Veterinary, Industry, Medical, Public Health etc. Thus the multifarious functions of the Deputy Commissioner form a sprawling net that fringes the area of operation of some departments and overshadows entirely that of a few others.

The office of the Deputy Commissioner is a miniature secretariat. 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 Excise, Supply, Election and Registration are separate branches of the State Departments but the district offices of these departments are under the immediate control of the Deputy Commissioner. Various subjects that are dealt with in various branches show the multiplicity of the functions of the Deputy Commissioner.

The Revenue Branch is headed by a *Revenue Shirastadar* who is a senior member of the ministerial staff. There is one Principal Revenue Assistant who is a member of the Assam Civil Service. He assists the Deputy Commissioner in the disposal of revenue matters. The Revenue Branch is sub-divided into various other branches such as Land Ceiling Settlement, *Bakijai* and land-sale, *Touzi*, Encroachment, Relief, Fisheries, Grazing Reserves etc. The *Bakijai* deals with the recovery of loans and advances and various other arrears of Government dues. *Touzi* branch deals primarily with the collection of revenue through *Mauzadars*. The Encroachment branch deals with eviction of the encroachers from Government lands, reserves etc. The main function of the Relief Branch is to make necessary arrangements for relief in the event of any natural calamity 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 *Kanango*, who is a member of the ministerial staff maintains permanently the records of land settlements.

Other 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 located in the office of the Deputy Commissioner through a group of peons designated as *Jarikdraks* or process servers. The other functions of the *Narir* are to maintain the accounts of stores and receipts of the Circuit House and the *Dak Bungalow* under the Deputy Commissioner and to assist the revenue officers in execution of the orders of eviction passed by the Deputy Commissioner or some other revenue officer subordinate to him.

The Magistracy branch under the Deputy Commissioner deals with issue of arms licences, matters relating to law and order situation in the district, disposal of criminal cases in the various courts of the Magistrates, matters relating to the compensation under Workmen Compensation Act etc. Till some years back, the Treasury was entrusted to some Magistrate who in addition to trying cases had to do all the works of the Treasury. The Treasury Officer of the Finance and Accounts Service has been appointed recently. 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.

The Deputy Commissioner and the Additional Deputy Commissioner exercise concurrent powers of the District Registrar. There is one Sub-Registrar in the district of Goalpara. He is entrusted with the task of registration of documents. He is to act under the control of the Deputy Commissioner but the Registration Department of the Government of Assam regulates the transfer and promotion of the Sub-Registrar.

Other offices under the Deputy Commissioner : The Supply branch is headed by the Deputy Director of Supply in the district. The officers of this branch belong to Supply Department ; but the ministerial staff of this branch is of the amalgamated establishment of the Deputy Commissioner. The Deputy Commissioner exercises control over the supply matters through the officers of the Supply Department. When the Defence of India Rules were in force, the Deputy Commissioner was empowered to fix prices of essential commodities and to control the distribution. This power is exercised in some cases till now under various laws in force at the time.

The Election Branch is headed by an Election Officer who belongs to the Election Department. The general electorate role for Panchayat and general election is prepared in this branch. It is however, an important responsibility of the Deputy Commissioner to conduct elections to the State Assembly and the Parliament assisted by the Election Officer and other officers.

The Housing branch under the Deputy Commissioner deals with applications for housing loans. 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 the textile goods in the district. The Development Office headed by the Sub-divisional Planning Officer deals with the Community Development Blocks. The District Information and the Public Relations Officer is to act under the control of the Deputy Commissioner apart from that of his own Department.

The district is divided into sixteen revenue circles. One Sub-Deputy Collector is posted in each revenue circle. He is a revenue officer who is invested with requisite powers to dispose of important revenue matters on behalf of the Deputy Commissioner. Where the pressure of work is heavy, the Sub-Deputy Collector who remains in charge of the revenue circle is assisted by one more Sub-Deputy Collector. When these officers are entrusted with the works connected with the Settlement Operation that takes place usually after a period of thirty years, they are designated as Assistant Settlement Officers whose services are placed under the disposal of the Settlement officer of the district. Sub-Deputy Collectors are subordinate to the Deputy Commissioner.

In each Development Block, there is one Block Development Officer who is a member of the Assam Civil Service (Class II). The Block Development Officer is directly under the control of the Deputy Commissioner. He was also the ex-officio Secretary of the Anchalik Panchayats till enforeement ef the new Panehayat (amendment) Act.

Information and Public Relations Department : Recently the name of the department has been changed from "Information and Publicity Department' to "Information and Public Relations Department".

The District Information and Public Relations Officer, Goalpara is the head of the district unit of this department and is under the control of the Director of Information and Public Relations, Assam, Gauhati. The District Information and Public Relations officer issues press-releases on Governmental activities and acts as Press Liaison Officer of the Government in the district. He gathers information on developmental activities in the Blocks and other departments and focusses public attention on these activities by issuing feature articles to the press. Attached to his office, there is a District Information Centre. This officer also arranges public meetings and group discussions on subjects relating to national programmes like Civil Defence, increased production of food, Family Planning etc. Fixed loud speaker system has been installed in Dhuburi town for wide broadcasting of All India Radio news and important announcements. Arrangements for occasional cinema shows and exhibitions are also regarded as important functions of the department.

The Rural Broadcasting system in the village and in the suburbs of the town is managed by the District Information and Public Relations Officer. The Community radio sets are installed in the village Libraries and *Sanghas* by this department to popularise the Governmental and other national development activities in the villages. Generally, 25% of the total price of the radio is borne by the honorary keepers of the radio and the rest is paid by the Government. These radios are repaired when these go out of order by the technician of the Department at Dhuburi free of cost.

The general administration of the district has expanded very fast with the expansion of the functions of the Government. Numerous departments and offices have sprung up commensurating the expansion of activities of the Government. The organisational pattern of the important departments such as Education, Agriculture, Police, Cooperative, Veterinary, Forest, Industries and the Judiciary has been discussed in detail in relevant chapters. However, the functions of the Information and Public Relations Department have been briefly narrated here.

Sub-divisional Administration : The sub-divisional administration is similar to that of the district administration. The Sub-divisional Officer of the sub-division is responsible for all the executive works of his sub-division to the Deputy Commissioner under whom his sub-division falls. As such approval of the district authority is required to be obtained for all the policy matters and major issues done in the sub-division. The Sub-divisional Officer is at the helm of administration in the sub-division and presides over all the Boards or Committees constituted for execution of the development programmes under the plans.

APPENDIX

A list of Officers at the district and sub-divisional level.

1. District Agriculture Officer, Dhuburi.
2. Assistant Jute Development Officer, Dhuburi.
3. Divisional Forest Officer, Dhuburi Division, Dhuburi.
4. Superintendent of Fishery, Dhuburi.
5. Executive Engineer, P.W.D., (R&B) Dhuburi.
6. Executive Engineer, E & D. Dhuburi.
7. Assistant Agricultural Marketing Officer, Dhuburi.
8. District Transport Officer, Dhuburi.
9. District Information & Public Relations Officer, Dhuburi.
10. Deputy Controller of Civil Defence, Dhuburi.
11. Superintendent of Excise, Dhuburi.
12. Superintendent of Police, Dhuburi.
13. Relief & Rehabilitation Officer, Dhuburi.
14. District Registrar, Goalpara, Dhuburi.
15. Settlement Officer, Tenant, Dhuburi.
16. Deputy Director of Supply, Dhuburi.
17. District and Sessions Judge, Dhuburi.
18. Labour Officer, Dhuburi.
19. Deputy Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Dhuburi.
20. Compensation Officer, Dhuburi.
21. Election Officer, Dhuburi.
22. Superintendent of Taxes, Dhuburi.
23. Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Kokrajhar.
24. Assistant Director of Cottage Industries, Dhuburi.
25. Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Dhuburi.
26. Assistant Examiner, Local Accounts, Dhuburi.
27. Inspector of Weights & Measures, Dhuburi.
28. Superintendent of District Jail, Dhuburi.
29. Employment Officer, Dhuburi.
30. Inspector of Schools, (G.D.C.) Dhuburi.
31. Deputy Inspector of Schools, Kokrajhar.
32. Superintending Engineer, P.W.D., R & B. Western Assam Circle, Goalpara.
33. Superintending Engineer, lateral re-construction Works Division, Abhayapuri.
34. Superintending Engineer Western Assam Circle, Dhuburi.
35. Executive Engineer, National Highway Division, Dhuburi.

36. Superintending Engineer, Western Assam Circle, Dhuburi.
37. Executive Engineer, R & B., Goalpara.
38. Executive Engineer National Highway Division, Goalpara.
39. Superintending Engineer, Irrigation Division, Kokrajhar.
40. Executive Engineer, Irrigation Division, Kokrajhar.

Most of the district level officers have got the subordinate officers in the Kokrajhar and Goalpara sub-divisions to help them in the discharge of official duties. Similarly the Divisional and Zonal Officers also in almost all cases have got their subordinates. In some cases officers of equal rank and status have been posted in Kokrajhar and Goalpara sub-divisions for smooth running of the administration.

Besides these State offices, there are Semi-Government, quasi-Government as well as autonomous bodies or institutions functioning in the district.

The Central Government have the following departmental officers in the Goalpara district.

1. The Officer-in-Charge of Civil Aerodrome, Rupshi.
2. The Officer-in-Charge of Aerometrical Communication Station, Rupshi.
3. Superintendent of Post Offices, Dhuburi.
4. Superintendent of Post offices, Goalpara.
5. Commandant 84 Bn. B.S.F. Alomganj.
6. Assistant Collector, Central Excise, Dhuburi.
7. Works Manager, North Frontier Railway, New Bongaigaon.
8. Assistant Bridge Engineer, North Frontier Railway, Bongaigaon.
9. Executive Engineer (W.S.), North Frontier Railway, Bongaigaon.
10. District Electrical Engineer, North Frontier Railway, Bongaigaon.
11. Chief Train Examiner, North Frontier Railway, New Bongaigaon
12. Chief Chemist & Metallurgist, North Frontier Railway, New Bongaigaon.
13. Loco-Foremen, North Frontier Railway, New Bongaigaon.
14. Income Tax Officer, Dhuburi.
15. Field Publicity Officer, Dhuburi.
16. Office of the Food Corporation of India, Dhuburi.
17. Office of the Central P.W.D., Dhuburi.

There are also other Central Government offices in the district which deal with the Central Banking and Insurance activities of the government. Most of the Scheduled Banks have their branches in the important places of the district.

CHAPTER XI

LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

(a) *INTRODUCTION* :

Before the formation of the circles in an uniform pattern in all areas of the district as units of land revenue administration, Goalpara consisted of two distinct tracts, viz, I permanently settled areas covered by the jurisdiction of the three *thanas* of Goalpara, Dhuburi and Karaibari as that jurisdiction stood in 1822 and (II) Temporarily-settled areas, the Eastern Duars. The area covered by the three *thanas* as mentioned above, initially formed part of the permanently-settled Bengal District of Rongpur, and was exempted from the operation of the General Regulation. After the cession of Assam by the Burmese to the East India Company in 1826, the Goalpara district was annexed to the new province then constituted and for revenue purposes was, until the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation was passed, administered according to the spirit of the Bengal Regulations.[1] After passing of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation of 1886, land revenue administration of these tracts was brought thereunder.

There were altogether 19 permanently-settled Estates covering an area of 2,884 square miles, which were distributed amongst six families of Landlords. These six families belonged to the former Bijni Estate, Gauripur Estate, Mechpara Estate, Karaibari Estate, Parbatjoar Estate and Chapar Estate. These Zamindary Estates as stated above, were subsequently acquired by the Government during 1956 and 1957 according to the Assam State Acquisition of Zamindaries Act, 1951 (Assam Act XVIII of 1951) and their revenue administration was vested in the Government.

The Eastern Duars comprised five tracts or *Duars* in the north of the district viz., Bijni, Sidli, Chirang, Ripu and Guma covering an area of 1,004,749 acres or 1569.9 sq. miles and extending from the Manas river on the east to the Sankosh on the west. After incorporation of these tracts into Goalpara district, they were exempted from the operation of the General Regulation by Act XVI of 1869, but their revenue administration was brought under the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation 1886 which was

1. *The Assam Land and Revenue Manual, Vol. 1, Eighth Edition, Introduction,* Shillong, 1964, P.XII.

extended to the whole of Goalpara district. By rules issued under the Regulation, of the five tracts mentioned above, the last three became the sole property of the Govt. Since then the revenue system applied to them has been the same as that in-force in the Temporarily-Settled Tracts of the other districts of the Brahmaputra Valley. Now these Temporarily-settled areas are covered by Gossaigaon circle, Sidli Circle, Dhuburi town and Latka mauza.

Permanently-Settled Estates : The brief historical account of the permanently-settled estates indicates that before the British obtained possession of the *Diwani* in Bengal in 1765, the Mughals had annexed the lower portions of the Brahmaputra Valley. The exact position of the boundary between their possessions and those of the Ahoms varied from time to time, but after Mir Jumla's abortive expedition in 1662 A.D. the frontier was permanently fixed at the town of Goalpara. The administration of the tract was, however, left in the hands of the border Chieftains, who paid a nominal tribute only to the Mughal Emperors. When the British acquired the *Diwani*, this tribute was accepted as land revenue. No settlement in deail was ever made at the decennial settlement, and the permanent settlement practically fixed the old assessment in perpetuity. Twelve *parganas* mentioned below so settled in perpetuity were originally held by the border chiefs as referred to above. They were (1) Parbatjoar, (2) Ghurla, (3) Chapar, (4) Jamira, (5) Gola Alamganj, (6) Taria, (7) Aurangabad, (8) Karaibari. (9) Kalumalupara, (10) Mechpara, (11) Habraghat, and (12) Khuntaghat ; These *parganas* had since been formed into 9 separate estates regarded as permanently settled.[2] These separate estates reduced subsequently into six estates viz., Bijni, Mechpara, Gauripur, Karaibari, Parbatjoar, and Chapar.

These estates were functioning under their respective management till 1956, when acquired by the Government under the Assam State Acquisition of Zamindaries Act, 1951. Accordingly, under this Act, the rights and interests of the proprietors and tenure holders in the permenently-settled estates have been acquired by the Government. After acquisition of the 6 Zamindaries Estates by the Government during 1956-57, they were grouped into 4 units for administrative converience as follows. (1) Gauripur-cum-Karaibari Acquired Estate (acquired on the 14th April, 1957, (2) Bijni Acquired Estate (acquired on the 14th April, 1956) (3) Parbatjoar-cum- Chapar Acquired Estate (acquired on the 14th April, 1956) and 4) Mechpara Acquired Estate (acquired on the 14th April, 1956).

2. *Ibid*, p. XIII

For the purpose of revenue administration, these acquired estates were placed in charge of Managers appointed by the Government. Under the provision of the Act, the Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara district was the competant authority on behalf of the State Government to look after the activities of the Managers of the acquired estates. Deputy Commissioner here includes any Revenue Officer or Extra Assistant Commissioner empowered by the State Government to discharge any of the functions of the Deputy Commissioner under any provisions of this Act. Even after the formation of the revenue circles on 1.1 .62 in the permanently-settled areas, the Managers continued to collect land revenue till they were replaced by Tahsildars/Circle Officers with effect form 3.6.63.

The following give a short history of different acquired estates and their revenue administration.

(1) Gauripur-cum- Karaibari Acquired Estate : Both these acquired estates were formerly parts of the permanently - settled Bengal District of Rongpur and were by Regulations of 1822 separated from that district. They were exempted from the operation of the General Regulation and were subject to a special system of Government along with other permanently-settled estates.

During the pre-acquisition period, the Gauripur Estate was managed by a *Dewan* and the Karaibari Estate by a Manager. They were the proprietors of their estates. The Gauripur Estate originally held seven *parganas* and later on nine *parganas* namely Ghurla, Jamira, Gola Alamganj, Aurangabad, Noabad Faturi, Kalumalupara, Makrampur, Taria (Jointly with the proprietors of Parbatjoar estate), and Dhuburi. The proprietors of the Karaibari Estate held one *paragana*, namely Karaibari prior to acquisition. Zamindars paid land revenue to the East India Company and thereafter to the Government of India at a fixed rate in perpetuity. However, local rates payable was subject to enhancement.

They had rights over fishery, forests, quarries and all corporeal rights over the lands. They used to lease out the lands directly to the cultivators as well as to the intermediaries, permanent tenureholders, *Jotedars*, *Ashidha* and *Lakhirajdars*. The intermediaries used to enjoy land at a very concessional rate and the rate of rent of the direct tenants were considerably high. The intermediaries after keeping some lands for their personal cultivation, used to lease out the land again to the tenants and others.

During the pre-acquisition period, the Gauripur Estate was managed by a *Dewan* and the Karaibari Estate by a Manager. They were the sole

authority of rent collection, settlement of *khas* land, sanctioning of mutation and partition cases. There were one *Naib Dewan* and one Superintendent in the Gauripur Estate under the *Dewan* to assist him. The *Naib Dewan* got the power of sanctioning settlement of *khas* land and was in charge of the Estate with complete powers to manage the Estate affairs and the Superintendent supervised the work of Tahsildars and took all measures for improvement of collection.

The Gauripur Estate was divided into several *dihis* (collection centres) of rent collection. The officers incharge of the *dihis* were called Tahsildars or *Naibs*. In each *dihi* under Gauripur Estate, there were one or two *Muharrirs* and four to five *Barkandazes* (*Dihi* peon) under the officer. Each of the Tahsildars was in charge of a *dihi*. They collected rent and remitted the money to Sadar treasury. They also submitted reports regarding mutation and partition cases and had to enquire into the matter of land disputes. In Gauripur Estate, there were four circles. Each circle was formed with 4 to 5 *dihis*. The officer-in-charge of the circle was designated as Circle Officer. Circle officer got the power of mutation, partition and dealt with the miscellaneous cases. They submitted supplementary proposal to the *Dewan* for approval. They had to supervise the *dihi* works and inspected the accounts of *dihis* regularly. There were one or two S. Ks. and a surveyor under the Circle Officer.

Besides the above mentioned *muffosol* staffs, the following branches were under the *Dewan* at Sadar. These were (1) *Munshi khana* (General Branch). (2) *Jama Sheresta* (Revenue Branch) (3) *Sumar* (Accounts office), (4) *Mahapesh khana* (Record office), (5) Law office, (6) Treasury, (7) P.W.D. Office, (8) Forest Department, (9) *Debarchana* and (10) *Nazarat*.

After the acquisition of the Estate, some of the above mentioned departments have been abolished and forests and *Sairat Mahals* have been transferred to the Forest Department and Deputy Commissioner respectively. *Hats* and Bazars were transferred to the local bodies.

In Karaibari Estate, there were five co-sharers who managed their respective shares by their managers or Superintendents. The area under Karaibari Estate is covered by *tauzi* No. XVI. The area under each *Tauzi* was separately managed by two sets of proprietors. There were three *tarafs* of the proprietors of the areas of *Tauzi* No. XII and two *tarafs* of proprietors of *tauzi* No. XVI.

Before acquisition, the Karaibari Estate had 11 *dihis* for the purpose of rent collection. In each *dihi*, there was one Tahsildar with 2 to 3 *Bar-*

kandazes (*dihi* peon). The Tahsildar or *Naib* collected the rent and sent the money to their respective proprietors and in some cases, to the Manager. There was also a staff of Surveyors for survey works and a staff of law clerks for instituting rent suits and other miscellaneous law suits. Since the vesting of the Estate in the Government, the number of *dihis* of the Karaibari Estate have been reduced to 5 only for the sake of minimising administrative expenses. For the purpose of survey, settlement, assessment and collection of land revenue, the Zamindars of these Estates maintained staff including Supervisor *Kanagoes*, *Amins*, Surveyors, and Inspectors. Though the Survey was not systematic, yet they maintained maps, *Khatians* and *Chithas* of all holdings and *Khas* lands. The papers they prepared were called *Kandaz Survey Papers*. The *Khas* lands shown in *Kandaz* Survey were settled from time to time with different persons and maps and *Chithas* prepared for such holdings were called *Tadanta Survey Papers* and all such papers were properly kept in the Sadar Record Room. Settlement of lands were generally made with big *Jotedars* at the rate of rent per *bigha* varying from 3 *annas* to 12 *annas*. The relations between Tenants, *Jotedars* and Land lords were regulated by the Goalpara Tenancy Act, 1929. Settlement of Agricultural land was made at a premium varying from Rs. 10/- to Rs. 25/ per *bigha*. The rate of rent for new Settlement of *Khas* lands varied from 10 *annas* to 12 *annas* per *bigha*.

The rate of rent of the agricultural land of the Karaibari Estate of *Tauzi* No. XII varied from Rs. 1/5 to Rs. 1/8 per *bigha*. The rate of rent of homestead land varied from Rs. 3/8 to Rs. 5/- per *bigha*, The rate of rent of *Chandina* (a kind of Land Tenure) land is generally Rs. 20/- per *bigha*. The rate of rent of *Tauzi* No. XVI of Karaibari Estate for cultivable land is-/14/-*annas* to Rs. 1/4/- per *bigha*. The rate of rent of *Basti* land is Rs. 3/- to Rs. 6/- per *bigha*. The rate of rent of *Chandina* land is Rs. 20/- per *bigha*.

For the purpose of collection of land revenues, both of the Estates have been divided into several *dihis* (collection centres). The officers in charge of the *dihis* are called Tahsildars or *Naibs*. Each of the Tahsildars is in charge of a *dihi*, The Tahsildar is assisted by one or two *Muharrirs* and few *Bar-Kandazes*. They collect rent and remit money to Sadar Treasury. There were twelve Tahsil *Kacharies* under Gauripur Acquired Estate. Like-wise the Karaibari Acquired Estate has 5 *dihis* for rent collection.

Land revenue and local rates of these two Estates before and immediately after acquisition were as follows :

Estate	Before acquisition		After acquisition	
	Land revenue	Local rate	Land revenue	Local rate
1	2	3	4	5
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Gauripur ..	5,298.67	84,133.23	1,17,408.50	20,093.59
Karaibari ..	..	19,113.67	38,572.00	6,428.00

(2) Bijni Acquired Estate : The history of Bijni Estates dates back to Vijita or Chandra Narayan who obtained a portion of the kingdom of his father Parikshit as a *Diwani* under the Mughals. He added to it the Bijni *Duar* from Bhutan. About the middle of 18th Century, Mechpara and Chapar formed out of it a separate Zamindary and Bijni Estate assumed its form existing prior to acquisition and consisted of two *parganas* viz., Habraghat *pargana* on the south and Khuntaghat *pargana* on the north bank of the Brahmaputra. The Bijni *Duar*, however, was settled with the Raja on periodic lease. The headquarters (*Rajbari*) of the Estate was at Abhayapuri.

At the time of the British occupation, the tribute which they used to pay to the Mughals was commuted to a fixed revenue under permanent settlement. The amount of revenue so fixed in perpetuity was Rs. 2,100/- which continued till acquisition.

In the Estate, survey, settlement, assessment and collection of land revenue were done with its own staff consisting of Surveyor, *Kanungoes*, *Amins*, *Naib*, *Muharrirs* etc. The system of survey was not a scientific one and settlement of land was made on similar line with that of Gauripur. For collection of land rent, the estate was divided into 16 *dihis*, which were collection units. Land rent was collected by the *Naibs* assisted by *Muharrirs* and supervised by Circle Officer. Separate staff was maintained to look after forest work under the Manager or *Dewan*. Collections made in the *dihis* were remitted weekly to Sadar Office at Abhayapuri.

The following were the rates of assessment per *Bigha* which prevailed in the estate since 1862.

Khuntaghat Pargana —	*Bhithi*	Re. 1/- (reduced to 8 *annas*)
	Sali	9 *annas* 4 *pies*.
	Ahu	4 *annas*

Habraghat Paragana —	*Bhithi*	11 *annas* 4 *pies*,
	Sali	6 *annas* 3 *pies*,
	Ahu	2 *annas* 10 *pies*.

These rates, however, varied in some villages. Immediately after acquisition of the Estate, the total revenue from this acquired Estate stood at Rs. 6,79,144.00 in 1959-60.

(3) Parbatjoar-Cum-chapar Acquired Estate : Parbatjoar and Chapar were two other *parganas* of the Twelve *parganas* held by the border Chieftains and constituted two separate permanently-settled estates during the British period. These two were formed into one administrative revenue unit at the time of acquisition of Zamindaries during 1956-57. The tenants in Parbatjoar Estate held land directly under zamindars mostly under verbal contract. The Chapar Estate comprised *pargana* Chapar and Kashbegila.

The tenants held land by custom contract on periodical lease. Two kinds of Surveys viz., *Ekandaz* or general survey by block and *Ijara* or periodical survey on petition of tenants were in vogue in Chapar Estate. The zamindars maintained their own land record staff on the similar line with other permanent estates. At the beginning of the current century, the managerial system of revenue administration was introduced. The manager was the administrative head and held office with some assistants designated in Mughal fashion viz., *Jamanavis* (Revenue Officer) ; *Sumarnavis* (Accountant) ; *Tankinavis* (surveyor) ; *Munshi* (Head Clerk) ; *Patranavis* (Reference Clerk) ; Tahsildar (Collecting Agent).

In case of new settlement, premiums varied from Rs. 5/- to Rs. 10/- per *bigha* in settlement of *Char* lands and Rs. 10/- to Rs. 20/- in case of *Kayam* (high) land. The rates of assessment per *bigha* were 12 *annas* for homestead, 10 *annas* for *Sali* and 4 *annas* for *Ahu* and Rs. 20/- for *Chandina* lands. The general rate of *Char* land was 13 *annas* per *bigha*.

For collection of land rents, the Estate was divided into *dihis* which were collection units in charge of a *Naib* assisted by *Muharrirs* and supervised by the Circle Officers or Tahsildars. The Tahsildar remitted the collection money to the Sadar office from time to time.

The income of the Estate includes besides land rent and local rate, various fees and cesses imposed on the tenants. The revenue income of the two Estates forming the Parbatjoar-cum-Chapar Acquired Estate during 1958-59 stood as follows :

1. Land revenue	Rs.	2,18,043/-
2. Local rates	Rs.	36,027/-
3. Interest	Rs.	2,965/-
4. Miscellaneous	Rs.	8,200/-
5. *Sairat* (fishery revenue)	Rs.	61,690/-
Total : ..	Rs.	3,26,925/-

(4) Mechpara Acquired Estate : The Mechpara Estate was one of the twelve *parganas* during the Mughal period. This Estate covered an area of 399 square miles and occupied the strip of country lying between the Brahmaputra and the Garo Hills. The management of the Estate was very poor in pre-Court of Wards time. The Court of Wards management came in since 1917 and Deputy Commissioner assumed charge on behalf of the Court of Wards and managers were appointed to look after the interest of the Estate. The Estate had three divisions - *Pargana* of Mechpara, "A" Mahal and "B" Mahal (in Garo Hills).

The first division, Consisting of *Taluk* Goalpara, *Khas Char* Niwabad, Digdhar Brahmaputra and Dekdhowa. "A" Mahal, was under the management of the Government, for which the Zamindars got 75% of the gross collection. The 'B" Mahal was managed by the Court of Wards for which the Government got 15% of the gross collection. The management of the 'B' Mahal was not mixed up with that of the *pargana*. A separate staff was maintained for it.

The Zamindary survey system was known as *Tuaki* system and the *Amins* responsible for survey were called *Tunkinabish* who were assisted by *Kanangoes*. The settlement was offered on petitions very liberally on realisation of survey fee and notice fee and the respective rates were Re 1/- and Re. 1/- and *annas* 4 respectively.

There was another levy on such settlement cases which was known as *Selami* and this varied from Re. 1/- to Rs. 6/- per *bigha* according to class of land and subject to sweet will of the Zamindars.

There was no uniform rates of assessment of rents. The various rates of assessment on various classes of land were as follows :—

(a) *Abadi*	Re. 1/- per *bigha*.
(b) *Basti*	Rs. 3/- per *bigha*.
(c) *Chandina*	Rs. 20/- to Rs. 30/- per *bigha*.

Special rates were prevalent at Goalpara town as follows :—

(a) *Basti* .. .. .. Rs. 12/- to Rs. 40/-

(b) *Chandina* .. .. .. Rs. 20/- to Rs. 30/-

(i) Trade site Rs. 60/- to Rs. 100/-.

(ii) Behind trade site Rs. 25/- to Rs. 50/-

For collection of land rent etc., the entire Estate was divided into six Tahsils namely Lakhipur, Chunari, Jamadarhat, Balijana, Goalpara and Balabhita and each Tahsil was divided into *dihis*. The Tahsils were managed by *Naibs*, *Muharrirs*, peons and Chowkidars. Arrears of land rent were realised by coercive means.

The income of the Estate during Court of Wards time was land revenue Rs. 2,48,063.47, local rates Rs. 39,951.97 and *Sairat* Rs. 32,449.00. Over and above, various taxes and levies were collected from the tenants. The income of the Estate after acquisition was land renenue, Rs. 3,09,751.71, local rate Rs. 49,846.45, *Sairat* Rs. 2,747.34 and miscellaneous Rs. 9,548.66.

It may be noted that there were different kinds of tenures such as, direct settlement with tenants (Raiyatwari), intermediary settlement through *Jotedars* and *Lakhiraj* estates which were rent free within these permanently settled estates. The relations between the landlords and tenants were regulated by the Goalpara Tenancy Act, 1929, which continued till 1974 in its amended forms. The rights and interests of *Lakhiraj* estates within the permanently settled estates were simultaneously acquired along with the parent estates and "Acknowledged Estates" which follow discussion.

Eastern *Duars*— (A Temporarily-Settled Area) : The Eastern *Duars* comprised five tracts or *Duars* in the north to the district, viz. Bijni, Sidli, Chirang, Ripu and Guma covering an area of 1,004,748 acres or 1,569.9 square miles, and extending from the Manas river on the east to the Sankosh on the west. The *Duars*, which were annexed by the British in 1866 from Bhutan Government, were exempted from the operation of the General Regulations by Act XVI of 1869, but their revenue administration was governed by the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886, which had been extended to the whole of the Goalpara district, including the *Duars* and by rules issued under the Regulation. Out of these five tracts mentioned above, the last three viz, Chirang, Ripu and Guma were the sole property of Government and the revenue system applied to them was the same as that in force in the temporarily - settled tracts of the five (now six) districts of the Brahmaputra valley.

These temporarily settled estates were held direct from the Government for a term of years under periodic leases or on an annual basis under annual leases.

Settlement The 1st settlement of the Eastern *Duars* was made in 1872. The rates of assessment in Bijni, Sidli, Chirang, Ripu and Guma were Re. 1/- 8 *annas* per acre of homestead on transplanted rice lands, and 12 *annas* an acre for all other kinds of lands. In Guma, the rates were Re. 1/- and *annas* 8 respectively. The Ripu and Chirang *Duars* were settled with Chapar Zemindars and Gauripur Zamindars respectively. But subsequently, as they defaulted in payment of rent, the *Duars* were settled direct with the cultivators. These rates remained unchanged in Guma till 1915 when a new settlement was made. The rates of assessment per *bigha* were *basti* Re. 1/-, *Heonthian* (lands growing transplanted winter rice) 13 *annas*, *Buari* (lands growing broadcast winter rice) 11 *annas*, *Faringati* 10 *annas*. The land was mainly held by *Jotedars*, a class of middlemen and the cultivators were their tenants. The periodical land revenue increased from Rs. 22,135/- to Rs. 26,562/- or by 20% in 1915. The term of settlement was for twenty years and extended from time to time till 1954 when fresh settlement took place. In Ripu and Chirang *Duars* including Santal Colony, rates of assessment in the re-settlement of 1921 were *Basti* 8 *annas*, Rupit 10 *annas* and *Faringati* 10 *annas*.

It may be mentioned that Ripu was divided into 3 mauzas viz, Santal Colony, Ripu I and Ripu II for administrative purposes. Chirang, Ripu I and Ripu II were resettled for 10 years with effect from 1st April, 1935. The term of settlement of these areas extended from time to time upto 31st March, 1954 when resettlement took place. The settlement of Santal Colony expired on 31st March, 1922 but its term has been extended from time to time till 1954. The same rates applied in that area, but only annual *pattas* were issued.

Acknowledged Estates · The first two *Duars* i.e., Bijni and Sidli stood on a different footing from the other three *Duars*. Immediately after annexation, the Bijni *Raja* laid his claim on the Bijni *Duar* and the Sidli *Raja* on Sidli *Duar*, as they had been holding these under the Bhutan kings. In 1867, the Bengal Government decided that the *Rajas* of Bijni and Sidli should be regarded as "hereditary Zamindars" entitled to a settlement of these *Duars* as 'Acknowledged Estates'.

In 1882, the Government of India determined what areas to be regarded as included in the Acknowledged Estates to the two *Rajas*. To the *Raja* of Bijni was assigned 1,30,000 acres and to the *Raja* of Sidli 1,74,000

acres out of 4,70,000 of the two *Duars*. The Sidli Estate as thus determined, was ordered to be made over to the *Raja's* son, (at that time a minor), as soon as he was considered capable of managing it. The Bijni estate was ordered to be kept under the direct management of the Deputy Commissioner. In neither case, the period of settlement to exceed ten years. In the northern portion to the Bijni *Duar*, and in the middle of the Sidli *Duar*, certain "forests and wastes" existed at the time the *Duars* were acquired which were uncultivated and uninhabited. These were excluded by the Government of India from the Acknowledged Estates.

In 1882, the Chief Commissioner directed that the settlement of the "Acknowledged Estates" should be made in accordance with the provisions of Act XVI of 1869 (now repealed). Further, it was directed that the settlement was to include a record-of-rights of the cultivators, to be reorded in a *Chitha* and *Jamabandi*, while the rights of the *Rajas* as proprietors entitled to settlement were to be recorded in a *rubakari*, a proceeding assessing the revenue at 80 per cent of the rent. Again in 1885, a ten-year settlement was offered to the *Raja* of Sidli and the *Rani* or Bijni at a revenue of 80 per cent of the rent, the estates to remain under the management of Government as neither the *Raja* nor the *Rani* was considered capable of managing them themselves. The offer having been refused, the *Raja* and *Rani* received respectively 20 per cent and 7½ per cent of the gross rent of these estates, which were held *Khas* by Government and settled annually with the cultivators like the other *Duars*. The forests and wastes of both the *Duars* were constituted reserved in 1883 and 1887. The rates of rent allowed to be charged were for *basti* and *rupit* eight *annas* a *bigha* and for *faringati* four *annas*.

In 1901, a new settlement for ten years was made, on the basis of the rental demand of 1899-00. The revenue so assessed for Bijni was Rs. 27,383/- at 80 per cent of the gross demand, allowing *Rani* 7½ per cent of the *malikhana* and 12 per cent as collection costs. These terms were accepted by the *Rani*, but tenants, rates were not changed. Similarly, the settlement in Sidli on an allowance of 30 per cent (20 per cent for *malikhana* and 10 per cent collection cost) was accepted by the *Raja* and the revenue assessed was Rs. 31,776/-. But due to the illness of the *Raja*, he was alowed to resign in July 1901, and his estate was again brought under *Khas* management. A Land Record establishment was maintained in each estate at Government expense.

In 1914, a further settlement for 10 years on somewhat similar terms was again offered to each land-holder. However, tenants' rents were not enhanced and were not allowed to be enhanced during the period of re-

settlement. The assessment was made on the demand of 1913-14, being 80 per cent in the case of Bijni and 70 per cent in that of Sidli and this amounted to Rs. 34,670/- in the case of Bijni and Rs. 48,226/- in the case of Sidli. After 4 years in 1918, the Bijni Estate came under the management of the Court of Wards and on being restored to solvency, was returned to the *Raja* with effect from 1st October, 1944.

At the resettlement of 1924, the rates of tenants' rent were for the first time raised. The rates adopted were those fixed for mauzas Ripu and Chirang and the Santal Colony viz, *basti* 8 *annas*, *rupit* 10 *annas* and *faringati* 6 *annas*. Though other terms were much the same as before, but owing to great progress made in settlement in Sidli by immigrants, the *Raja's* share of the land revenue had risen to high figure. This figure was very considerably reduced as a result of the immediate enforcement of the new Settlement, the figure in full being about Rs. 1,04,000. A reduction of the Government demand by Rs. 25,000/- in 1924-25 lessened by Rs. 5,000 a year till it disappeared in 1929-30 was to be allowed. The revenue assessed on the Bijni *Duar* was Rs. 77,081/-

The *Raja* of Sidli refused settlement, and the Estate remained under *Khas* management upto December, 1945 during which period, the *Raja* received 20 per cent of the rental demand as *malikhana* together with 30 per cent of the gross proceeds from forests. The management of the Sidli *Duar* was proposed to be made over to the *Raja* in 1944 on certain terms which he accepted, but the making over and taking over of charge spread over a period and was completed pending execution of the lease by December, 1945 ; the charge of forest portion of the Estate was made over in May, 1947.

The lease which was drafted and sent to the *Raja* for formal execution, was not actually executed by the *Raja* on certain grounds till 1951 and in the meantime, the *Raja* failed to deposit into the Treasury the requisite revenue demand together with the local rates representing the Government dues and the Estates fell into huge arrears of land revenue which caused some anxiety to Government. Government considered the matter carefully and decided that the management of the Estate should be taken over and accordingly, the Estate again came under the management of Government with effect from 1st October, 1951.

The following statement shows the different classes of Estates in the district and the ordinary land revenue demand and settled area in 1950-51.[3]

3. *The Assam Land Revenue Manual*, Eighth edition, Shillong, 1968, *Introduction* p. XIIX.

Classes of estates	No. of estates	Area in acres	Ordinary land Revenue demands.
1	2	3	4
I. Permanently-settled estates ..	19	1,51,89,822	11,411
II. Temporarily-settled estates ..			
(a) Eastern *Duars* (ordinary cultivation,	14,876	77,687	1,32,188
(b) Eastern *Duars* (special cultivation) ..	2	848	1,265
(c) Dhubri town ..	503	117	10,021
(d) Special cultivation ..	43	3,01,898	2,33,502
Total-Temporarily-settled	15,424	3,80,550	3,76,976
III. Revenue free ..	40	99,055	..
IV. Waste land grants ..	..	..	..
Total of district ..	15,483	19,98,583	3,88,387

Special Cultivation—Tea : An Introduction to Land and Revenue Regulation of 1886, would be incomplete without some reference to the tea industry which has contributed so much to the present prosperous condition of the State of Assam and its people, and also, in no small degree to the steady increase in land revenue. But tea cultivation in Goalpara is not of much importance. The first Tea plantation was started on land leased to planters by the Zamindar of Mechpara. Till the abolition of the Zamindary, there were altogether eight Tea gardens in Goalpara holding approximately 13,944 acres of land leased from the Zamindars of the district. Besides, there were two small gardens in the district. One covering 99 acres of land held from Government on periodic lease and the other garden holding 749 acres. These two leases known as N.L.R. Grants for 30 years were issued under the Settlement Rules of 1876.[4]

The following statement shows the position of tea gardens in Goalpara district of some selected years commencing from 1895 to 1951.

4. Ibid.. p. XIIX

(A) Does not include land leased by Zamindars.

Goalpara district.

Year	No. of gardens	Area taken up for tea (in acres)	Area under tea (in acres)
1	2	3	4
1895 ..	3	552(A)	400
1915 ..	4	1247	717
1928 ..	12	15,100	3,256
1951 ..	10	14,792	3,693

Latka Mauza : The mauza Latka is a small resumed *Lakhiraj* land situated in the junction of the permanently settled *parganas* of Taria, Khosbegila and Ghurla. The estate was a non-*badshani brahmottar* grant to one Ramprasad Chakravarty by the Zamindar of Taria. But ten years after the transfer of *Diwani* of Bengal to the East India Company on the 12th August, 1765 A.D., it was considered invalid and the assumption proceeding lasted seven years from 1840 to 1847 which resulted in the resumption of the estate by the Government. The estate was settled on *Ijara* lease with the Zamindar of Gauripur for 20 years renewable in every ten years. Since 1868, it was settled directly with the individual occupant *raiyats* on periodic leases. At the expiry of the periodic settlement of Latka mauza in 1892-96, the periodic leases were converted into annual ones. In the last resettlement operation, this Latka mauza was surveyed and classed on the same classification sanctioned for Gossaigaon and Sidli Circles areas. The total settled area was 682 *bighas* and the revenue at the time of last resettlement was Rs. 801/-.

Town Settlement-- Dhuburi : The Headquarters of the Goalpara district was shifted to Dhuburi town in 1879. It comprises the Dhuburi *pargana* covering 179 *bighas* obtained as gift from the Zamindar of Gauripur in 1869 and the resumed *Lakhiraj* of *Kasbe Jamira* covering originally an estimated area of 604½ *bighas*. It includes in addition to some other rent free aeas two small revenue free permanently settled estates covering an area of 8 *bighas* 1 *katha* 2 *lessas* reserved for the use of the *Raja* of Gauripur, and the hilly plot covering an area of 1 *bigha* 2 *kathas*, 11 *lessas* of the Sikh Temple land. Excepting the total rent free area of 13 *bighas*, 1 *katha* 15 *lessas*, the town is temporarily settled.

The settlement of Dhuburi town first took place in 1899 for a period of 30 years. The rates assessed per acre varied from Rs. 21/- rising to

Rs. 30/- in the eleventh year, to Rs. 9/-. Practically the whole of the land suitable for trade sites was settled *enbloc* with the municipality for 10 years in 1895. The area of the land was about 30 *bighas* and revenue assessed was Rs. 5/- per *bigha*. The next settlement took place in 1930-31 for a period of 30 years.

Under this settlement, an area of 29 *Bighas* , 2 *Kathas* settled with the Municipality covering the Laine Market, Kayapati and Daccapati are classed as trade site and assessed at Rs. 10/- per *bigha*. The rest of the area on the mainland was thrown into 5 classes viz class 1, II, III, IV, V with Rs. 10,8,7,6 and 3 as their respective full rate of assessment. The *char* area in the south was settled at Re. 1/- per *bigha* with the Municipality for sanitary purposes.

Statement of surveyed area in the Resettlement in 1930-31.

Khiraj area	*Lakhiraj*	Land occupied but not settled	Land occupied by public holdings.
B.K. L.	B.K. L.	B.K. L.	B. K. L.
160-4-9	13-1-15	61-0-8	85-2-1
Land occupied by roads & drains	**Religious Places**	**Grave-yard.**	**Playground.**
B. K. L.	B. . L.	B. K. L.	B. . L.
75-2-7	4-0-12	6-2-2	34-3-10
Land liable to be settled.		**Total area of the town.**	
B. K. L.		B. K. L.	
272-1-16		813-4-0	

Assessment according to the rates prevalent in the year preceeding to resettlement in 1930-31.

Class	Area B.K.L.	Rate of revenue per bigha (in Rs.)
Residential I	27-1-7	10-0-0
Residential II	68-4-1	8-0-0
Residential III	60-3-19	7-0-0
Residential IV	55-1-19	6-0-0
Residential V	29-4-13	3-0-0
Bazar	29-2-0	10-0-0
Annually settled in town ..	2-2-19	..
Annually settled in *char*. ..	724-2-1	1-0-0

B=Bigha, K—Katha, L=Lessa

Assessment according to the resettlement operation in 1930-31.

Class	Area B.K.L.	Rate of revenue per *bigha* (in Rs.)
Special residential	47-4-15	50-0-0
Residential I	101-4-13	30-0-0
Residential II	28-0-15	20-0-0
Residential III	7-4-11	20-0-0
Residential IV	9-1-13	15-0-0
Faringati	0-1-18	2-0-0
Trade I	39-2-8	200-0-0
Trade II	10-1-10	150-0-0
Trade III	3-3-13	40-0-0
Special rate	1-2-17	250-0-0
Unutilised trade	0-0-16	30-0-0

The following shows the gradual enhancement of revenue for different classes of land prescribed during the resettlement in 1930-31.

Classes of lands	Assessment.		
	1st 3 years	Next 2 years	thereafter
1	2	3	4
1. Special Trade sites	100	175	250
2. Trade site I	50	100	150
3. Trade site II	40	70	100
4. Trade site III	20	30	40
5. Residential Special	15	20	50
6. Residential I	12	16	20
7. Residential II	9	12	15
8. Residential III	8	10	12
9. Residential IV	4	5	6

The rates of revenue for borrow pits raised by earth works (classed as Residential Class III) were Rs. 3 per *bigha* for the 1st 15 years and Rs. 6/- a *bigha* for the 2nd 15 years of settlement.

The Assam Local Rates Regulation : In addition to the ordinary land revenue assessment, all estates, whether revenue paying or held free of revenue, are assessed to local rates under the provisions of the Assam Local Rates Regulation, 1879. The whole of these rates were previously made over to the different local Boards and now to the Panchayats to meet expenditure that may be incurred for relief and prevention of famine or for local purposes. In 1895-96, the local rates demand in Goalpara district was Rs. 61,546/- which stood at Rs. 3,64,379/- in 1950-51. By the Assam Local Rates and Local Self Government (Amendement) Act, an extra rate is levied on all lands actually under tea. Accordingly, all such land is to pay a rate varying from eight *annas* to one rupee per acre including the ordinary local rate and the extra amount is to be spent for the improvement of road communication in the district from which the rate is levied. The Act came into force from the 1st April, 1927.

(b) *COLLECTION OF LAND REVENUE IN THE DISTRICT*

Land Revenue is derived from the assessment of land according to the area taken up for cultivation. Land revenue receipts of the district are always considered as one of the principal sources of income. In 1874-75, the total land revenue receipts of the district was Rupees 1,25,791 including Rupees 296 miscellaneous land revenue. The miscellaneous land revenue has developed considerably in recent years. The tax is levied at various rates in different districts. In the very recent years, receipts from fisheries, professional graziers in the unclassed state forests etc., have increased considerably. In 1944-45, total land revenue of Goalpara district was Rs. 6,38,778/- of which Rs. 4,19,048 were ordinary land revenue and the rest of Rs. 2,19,730/- were miscellaneous land revenue.[5]

The following statement shows the land revenue collection from both the permanently-settled areas and temporarily-settled areas of Goalpara district during the years from 1948-49 to 1956-57.[6]

Year	Collection	Year	Collection
1948-49	Rs. 2,42,272/-	1953-54	Rs. 4,68,274/-
1949-50	Rs. 4,48,304/-	1954-55	Rs. 3,68,893/
1950-51	Rs. 3,35,417/-	1955-56	Rs. 3,20,848/-
1951-52	Rs. 3,73,254/-	1956-57	Rs. 3,81,826/-
1952-53	s. 4,63,174/-		

5. *The Assam Land Revenue Manual*, Vol. I Eighth Edition, Shillong, 1968, Introduction, P. XXVIII

6. *Statistical Abstract of Assam*, Shillong., 1958, p. 371.

Acquisition of Zamindaries and after : The Assam State Acquisition of Zamindaries Act, 1951 (Assam Act XVIII of 1951), is a landmark in the history of land revenue administration in Assam in general and Goalpara in particular. This aims at abolition of Zamindaries in the permanently settled portions of the districts of Goalpara, and Garo Hills and the Karimganj sub-division of the Cachar district. This Act also extends to the *Lakhiraj* estates within the boundaries of a permanently-settled estate and the acknowledged estates in the Bijni and Sidli *Duars* of Goalpara district settled with the *Rajas* of Bijni and Sidli. This Act has been enacted with a view to remove the intermediaries and bring the tenants directly under the State and thus to give them better rights on their lands.

The Act was subsequently amended in 1953, 1954 and 1955 for removing certain difficulties in the implementation of the it.

Immediately after acquisition of Zamindaries all lands and interests therein were vested with the Government and came under General Regulation of Land Laws applicable in other temporarily-settled areas and districts. In the meantime, the temporarily-settled areas of the district were brought under resettlement operation since 1955 and it was extended to the acquired estates. These operations were completed in 1962.

In order to give a modest beginning as per provisions of the Act, Government on 1.10.62 by notification has formed 16 revenue circles covering all areas of the district. These circles are (1) Dhuburi, (2) Golakganj, (3) South Salmara, (4) Mankachar, (5) Goalpara, (6) Lakhipur, (7) Dudhnoi, (8) Matia, (9) Baitamari, (10) Srijangram, (11) Kokrajhar, (12) Gossaigaon, (13) Bilasipara, (14) Sidli, (15) Bijni and (16) Chapar[7]. Subsequently, another circle was formed at Abhayapuri.

7. *The Assam Land Revenue Manual* Vol. I, Eighth Edition. p. 469.

The areas covered by the individual circels as on July, 1976 are given below.[8]

Name of the circles	Areas covered (in *Bigha*, *katha* and *lessa*)
(1) Mankachar ..	1,81,589 *Bighas* 3 *kathas* 12 *lessas*
(2) South Salmara ..	4,49,974 ,, 2 ,, 18 ,,
(3) Dhuburi ..	2,45,884 ,, 2 ,, 15 ,,
(4) Golakganj ..	4,08,592 ,, 2 ,, 16 ,,
(5) Chapar ..	2,13,063 ,, 3 ,, 16 ,,
(6) Baitamari ..	2,96,341 ,, 1 ,, 16 ,,
(7) Srijangram ..	2,58,356 ,, 1 ,, 6 ,,
(8) Balijana ..	3,49,719 ,, -- ,, 4 ,,
(9) Matia ..	3,50,399 ,, -- ,, 8 ,,
(10) Dudhnoi ..	3,47,862 ,, 4 ,, 19 ,,
(11) Lakhipur ..	1,53,139 ,, 1 ,, 13 ,,
(12) Bilasipara ..	2,80,198 Square kilometres
(13) Bijni ..	10,386 ,, ,,
(14) Sidli ..	1,080.0 ,, ,,
(15) Kokrajhar ..	1,310.7 ,, ,,
(16) Gossaigaon ..	1,287.2 ,, ,,
(17) Abhayapuri ..	2,58,356 *Bighas* 6 *lessas*

(c) *PRESENT SYSTEM OF SURVEY, ASSESSMENT AND COLLECTION OF REVENUE* :

The settlement operation after the abolition of the Zamindaries in Goalpara district has commenced from 1955. For the purpose of settlement operation, all areas of the district were surveyed and Cadastral Survey was in operation. Thus, according to settlement operation rules, the Revenue and Settlement Officer, Goalpara was invested with powers of settlement of lands and assessment of rents thereon. Under the present system of Survey, the village boundaries are fixed by a survey based on theodolite observations, which are connected with two or more points fixed by previous surveys. For each village, a map, usually of the scale of 16 inches to a mile is prepared, showing the roads, rivers, railways and other physical features of the country, as well as the homesteads and other fields. The fields are serially numbered on the basis of *dag* numbers given in the *Chithas* where fragmentation is rampant as in the urban areas maps of the scale of 32 inches to a mile are prepared.

8. *Director of Land Record*, Assam, Gauhati, Shillong 1968

Assessment of land revenue : The land revenue is assessed at every resettlement operation and the rate of revenue remains the same till the expiry of the term of resettlement. Generally, after every resettlement operation, the land revenue is enhanced, taking into consideration various factors such as the growth of the population, the pressure on land, economic condition of the people, improvement of the means of communication, trade and commerce, increase in the standard of living, setting value of land and prices of agricultural goods etc. The increase in the rate of land revenue is, however, governed by different clauses of the Assam Land and Revenue Reassessment Act, 1936 (Assam Act VIII of 1936). Such increase must be limited by several factors, such as,-(i) the pressure of the existing rates of revenue on the land owners, (2) the probable trend of the future price level and (3) the prospects for the general improvement of the condition of the people in future.

Under the present system, assessment of revenue is done on the basis of the classification of villages into groups. In a settlement operation, all lands are classified into certain groups of villages depending upon the use of the soil, productivity of the land, soil properties etc. The soil-factors are taken into consideration and a detailed investigation is made to determine it. Previously assessment of revenue was done at flat rate per *bigha* but in the last operation the soil-unit system of assessment was adopted.

In the past, the incidence of land revenue on the lands used for tea cultivation was low ; because the mode of the assessment of land revenue on these lands were entirely different from that which was followed in case of other lands. The need to patronise the industry in which the British capital was invested and to promote the industry which had an unlimited prospect of promotion were the two factors which led to the assessment of land revenue at a low rate. The disparity between the rate of revenue between the land used for ordinary cultivation and tea industry is quite considerable.

Collection of Land Revenue : At present in the major portions of the district, land revenue is collected through *Tahsildar* i.e. Circle Officer. This system is in vogue in 15 Circles out of 17 Revenue Circles in Goalpara district. Only two Circles i.e. Dhuburi and Golakganj are divided into different mauzas as land revenue collection units. The name of the mauzas under Dhuburi Circle are (1) Debitola, (2) Gauripur, (3) Alamganj, (4) Dhuburi, (5) Patamori, (6) Dharmasala and (7) Dhubrikhas Mahal. Similarly, under the Golakganj Circle, mauzas are (1) Golakganj, (2) Tokrersora, (3) Balajan Demakuri, (4) Dhepdhapi, (5) Basbari, (6) Goalmoni, (7) Mohamayahat, (8) Simolbari, (9) Laskhana Satrasal and (10) Agamani.

In tracing the history of the Tahsildari system in Assam, we find that, in 1883, it was proposed by Government to abolish gradually the mauzadari system in Assam and to substitute a similar system to that of the Tahsildari system of Upper India by which collections are made by Salaried Officers with no personal interest in the assessment or collection. The main object, however, of the change was economy.

The Tahsildar is responsible for the general management of all business in connection with the Tahsil. He distributes work territorially among the *Muharrirs* subordinate to him assigning to each, one or more *parganas* according to the number of mahals contained. Under the Tahsildar, each *Muharrir* will have a fixed place in the Tahsil office assigned to him and a placard must be affixed at the place, indicating the *parganas* or mauzas of which he is in charge. The cash *Muharrir* will also have a place assigned to him as close as possible to the Tahsildar, who should specially supervise his work. Under this system, all payments shall be made by means of Chalans in Form No. 71. Further, for the purpose of recovering arreas of land revenue and local rates, the Tahsildar usually follows the procedure laid down in the Land and Revenue Regulation, and the rules from time to time issued thereunder.

The following registers are maintained in each Tahsil. There are (1) *Tauzi* of estates (Form No. 72), (2) *Tauzi* of miscellaneous revenue other than house-tax (Form No. 73), (3) Cash Book for land revenue and Local rates (Form No. 75), (4) Cash Book for miscellaneous revenue (Form No. 76), (5) Land Revenue Demand (Form No. 115), (6) Local Rates Demand (Form No. 116), (7) Daily Payments into Treasury (Form No. 77), (8) Chalan-writers (No. Form prescribed), (9) Court-fees realised (Form No. 85), (10) petitions (Form No. 84), (11) Bakijai Process (Form No. 78), (12) Counterfoil Receipt Book (Form No. 59), (13) Processes (Form No. 79), (14) Inspection Order Book (No Form prescribed) etc. The Tahsildars also require to submit a weekly return of gross collections during the collecting season, and a fortnightly return at other times.

Revenue Officers : The Deputy Commissioner, Extra Assistant Commissioners, Sub-divisional Officers, Tahsildars i.e. Circle Officers etc., are regarded as Revenue Officers for the purpose of revenue administration in the district. Now, for the purpose of revenue administration, the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886 is in force in the district. Accordingly, all the Revenue Officers of the district are subordinate to the Deputy Commissioner. Subject to the general supervisions of the Deputy Commissioner, the Revenue Officers of a Sub-division are Subordinate to the Sub-divisional

Officer, who is also a Revenue Officer. The Extra Assistant Commissioners, Tahsildars i.e. Circle Officers and the *Muharrirs* (where revenue is collected through Tahsildars) are the Revenue Officers of the district. Similarly, the *Mauzadars* under the Dhuburi and Golakganj revenue Circles are regarded as Revenue Officers so far as the collection of land revenue is concerned. During settlement operations, the Government appoints one Settlement Officer for the district. Under the Settlement Officer, Senior Assistant Settlement Officers, one for each Sub-division and one Assistant Settlement Officer for each of the revenue circle, are appointed for carrying out the Settlement operations. The Settlement Officer and the Officers subordinate to him function only during the period for which the settlement operations continues. During the period of settlement operation, the Settlement Officer and the Assistant Settlement Officers are also designated as Revenue Officer and Assistant Revenue Officers respectively. The Assistant Settlement Officers also have powers of Assistant Survey Officers under the Regulation as may be notified and all Assistant Settlement Officers so appointed shall be subordinate to the Settlement Officer. Usually, during the period intervening two resettlement operations, one Tahsildar/Circle Officer is appointed in each revenue Circle. At times two Tahsildars/Circle Officers are also appointed in a revenue Circle depending upon the volume of work. The function of each category of Revenue Officer and the procedure of appeal against their orders are governed by the provisions of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation.

The Deputy Commissioner and the Sub-divisional Officers are assisted in the revenue administration by a number of Extra Assistant Commissioners and the Tahsildars/Circle Officers who are posted at the district and the Sub-divisional headquarters. The Deputy Commissioner is also assisted by the Additional Deputy Commissioner who exercises concurrent powers.

It has been mentioned earlier that under the Tahsildar/Circle Officer, the *Muharrir* is there to assist the Tahsildar in the matter of land revenne collection. Similarly, in the mauzas (Dhuburi and Golakganj Circles are divided into mauzas as units of land revenue collection), *Mauzadars* are there to assist the Circle Officers in collection of land revenue. The *Mandal* is the lowest Survey Officer and is to regularly inspect the fields of the group of villages, collectively called a *lot*. He is to report cases of unauthorised occupation of the Government land, test the boundaries of the fields which have been taken up in recent years to see whether they are in accordance with the map. He is to survey land which has been broken up for regular settlement or for which a formal application has been filed. He is to maintain a complete record of all the title and possession

of all the fields of villages of his *lot* and to calculate the land revenue to be paid for each plot of land. The record of all lands that are relinquished by some landholders, or those which are thrown up by rivers while changing their courses or eroded by rivers are also maintained by him whose additional responsibility is to collect the crop statistics, and sub-letting the land etc. The Supervisor *Kanungo* supervises the works of the *Mandal* as the case may be. Thus, the Tahsildar/Circle Officer carries on the revenue administration with the help of his subordinate Officers mentioned above in their respective jurisdiction and is under the immediate control of the Sub-divisional Officer subject to overall control of the Deputy Commissioner.

Maintenance of records of rights : Three important sets of records of rights are maintained by the Land Revenue Department. The *Chitha* is the field index of a village prepared after survey and demarcation in course of a resettlement operation. It contains the number of the field, area of the field, name of the settlement holder, his father's name and residence, tenure, name of the tenant, his father's name and residence, assessment, class or classes of the field etc. The *Mandal* maintains the *Chitha* and makes necessary correction in respect of the change of the ownership possession, pertition, relinquishment of land etc., with the help of this register. The *Chitha* is replaced from time to time, when the old *Chitha* becomes unfit for use due to overwriting. The second set of registers is the *Jamabandi*, a copy of which is maintained in the office of the Deputy Commissioner and the Subdivisional Officer under the disposal of the officer called the Registrar *Kanango*. The *Jamabandi* is prepared on the basis of the *Chitha* and the field map. Separate *Jamabandis* are prepared for (a) periodic *patta* and (b) annual *pattas*, the former at regular intervals and the latter annually. In addition, there are separate *Jamabandis* for special tenures, such as *Lakhiraj* and *Nisfkhiraj*. The *Jamabandis* are prepared in duplicate, one copy is kept with the recorder and the other, with the Registrar *Kanango*, who is to maintain it up-to-date. The *Jamabandi* contains the number of the *patta*, name of the settlement holder, his father's name and the address, number of each field, class of each field, area of each field, the amount of revenue assessed on each field etc. The field maps are prepared on the basis of survey on the expiry of the term of settlement. These maps indicate the fields by the number as recorded in the *Chitha*. The area of each field indicated in the map is to correspond with the area shown in the *Chitha* and *Jamabandi*. The maps are corrected by the *Mandals* who are the recorders, on the basis of orders of the competant authorities.

Income from land revenue and special cases connected with it : Land revenue in the past was the most important source of income. Even now, it is a major source of revenue to the State Exchequer. The table at Appendix 'A' shows the Demand, Collection and Balance of Land Revenue in the district of Goalpara since 1968-69 to 1973-74.

Registration fees also is a very important soucre of State revenue in the district. Collection of Registration fees in the district from 1970 to 1977 is as follows :

1970—	Rs. 2,26,924.22	1976—	Rs. 3,72,028.81
1975—	Rs. 4,26,399.62	1977—	Rs. 3,10,795.02

(d) *ADMINISTRATION OF OTHER SOURCES OF REVENUE* :

As regards assessment and collection of revenue from other sources, both Central and State, there are different departments in the district. The important sources of State revenues are Excise Duties, Forest Revenue, Sales Tax, Finance Sales Tax, Amusement and Betting Tax, Motor Spirit & Lubricaut Tax, Professional Tax, Agriculture Income Tax, Purchase Tax, and Motor Vehicle Tax and Fees etc.

Excise Revenue : The Government of Assam has imposed Excise duty on various items, such as country spirit, foreign liquor, medicated wine, *tari* and methylated spirit etc. There is one Superintendent of Excise at Dhuburi who is the district head of the Excise Department. He is assisted by one Deputy Superintendent of Excise, Goalpara and a number of Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors of Excise in realising the excise revenues as well as in detecting excise cases. There are several country liquor shops called *Mahals*. They are sold in auction for a stipulated period, by the State Government. This constitutes the bulk of the excise revenue in the district. The lessee is bound to keep proper accounts of sale and to follow certain restriction in respect of the sale of liquor. He is also bound to sell liquor of certain strength permitted by the Government. The following statement shows the excise revenue of the district upto 1966-67.

Year	Amount	Year	Amount
1948-49	5,90,314.00	1960-61	6,86,230.71
1950-51	4,81,501.00	1965-66	21,327.00
1955-56	6,02,009.00	1966-67	17,450.00

Forest Revenue : Revenue from forest of the district is an important source of income to the State Exchequer. It mainly comprises royalty levied on the extraction of timber, fuel and other forest produce, elephant catching etc. Forest revenue in the district is administered by four Forest Divisions, namely, Haltugaon Forest Division, Kachugaon Forest Division,' Goalpara Forest Division and Dhuburi Forest Division. The following table shows the forest revenue of the district.

Name of Forest Division.	Revenue realised (in Rupees) during		
	1973-74	1974 -75	1975-76
1	2	3	4
1. Haltugaon ..	49,23,793.26	31,85,134.78	46,97,616.91
2. Kachugaon ..	37,86,453.56	33,50,810.33	48,62,770.60
3. Goalpara ..	36,09,878.53	34,74,925.40	38,19,303.23
4. Dhuburi ..	35,11,306.48	41,07,740.13	49,14,560.42

Revenue from Motor Vehicles : The revenue from this source mainly comprises taxes and fees levied by the Government under the Motor Vehicles Act and Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation Act on motor vehicles. The taxes are administered by the District Transport Officer, Goalpara with headquarters at Dhuburi. The following table shows the revenue under the above Acts in the district.

Year	Receipts under Assam Motor Taxation Act.	Receipt under Motor Vehicle Act.
1	2	3
1950-51 ..	1,57,295.53	7,372.00
1955-56 ..	1,92,816.36	13,023.62
1960-61 ..	3,42,688.30	21,689.17
1965-66 ..	8,15,367.58	30,422.50
1966-67 ..	8,87,332.50	31,582.00
1967-68 ..	9,07,822.12	31,155.00
1968-69 ..	9,08,491.82	17,053.00
1969-70 ..	9,99,870.00	34,884.00
1970-71 ..	10,78,528.00	33,860.50
1971-72 ..	12,57,005.00	47,709.50
1972-73 ..	13,73,879.00	54,561.00
1973-74 ..	13,62,023.50	55,206.00

Revenue collected by Commissioner of Taxes : This organ administers tax, duties and fees levied under Acts such as The Assam Sales Tax Act, 1947 ; The Assam Finance (Sales tax) Act, 1956 ; The Central Sales Tax Act, 1956 ; The Assam (Sales of Petroleum and Petroleum Products including Motor Spirit and Lubricants) Taxation Act, 1955 ; The Assam Professions, Trades, Callings and Employment Taxation Act, 1947 ; The Assam Passengers & Goods Taxation Act, 1962 ; The Assam Electricity Duty Act, 1964 ; The Assam Purchase Tax Act, 1967 ; The Assam Agriculture Income tax Act, 1939 ; The Assam Amusement and Betting Tax Act, 1939 and The Assam Carriage Tax Act, 1961. For administration of taxes, duties etc., under the above Acts, there are offices of the Superintendent of Taxes at Dhuburi , Goalpara and Kokrajhar established in 1953, 1964 and 1969 respectively. Presently, there are 3 Superintendents of Taxes and 6 Inspectors of Taxes at Dhuburi, 2 Superintendents of Taxes and 4 Inspectors of Taxes at Goalpara and 2 Superintendents of Taxes and 2 Inspectors of Taxes at Kokrajhar to assess and collect revenues. These officials are assisted by a number of 3rd and 4th Grade Staff. The tables at Appendix 'B' shows the revenue collected under the each Act from the district of Goalpara since 1948-49 to 1973-74.

Central Taxes ; There is an Income Tax Office at Dhuburi for collection of Central Taxes such as Estate Duties, Income Tax etc. in the district. Collection of Gift Tax and Wealth Tax by the office in the district from 1974 to 1978 (ending on 31st. March) is as follows. *

Year	*Gift Tax*	*Wealth Tax*
1974-75 ..	Rs. 5,000.00	Rs. 15,000.00
1975-76 ..	Rs. 5,000.00	Rs. N.A.
1976-77 ..	Rs. 4,000.00	Rs. 48,000.00
1977-78 ..	Rs. 10,000.00	Rs. 19,000.00

Source-Income Tax Officer, Dhuburi

Land Settlement Policy (1968) ; Under the settlement rules incorporated in the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, all the waste lands under the disposal of the Government can be settled by the Government with any citizen of India. Under these rules, a large section of the non-agricultural population became the owners of the bulk of the cultivable land. The Government of Assam formulated certain land settlement policies keeping in view the interests of the actual tillers of the land. These policies were implemented by the officers who were authorised to make settlement of land. The latest policy statement of the Government of Assam lays down the principles to be followed in giving settlement of land. This

is known as the policy of Land Settlement (1968). The following are the important features of the aforesaid policy :

(i) Settlement of land will be given on the basis of a family. A family consisting of husband and wife, as the case may be and sons and daughters (excluding married sons and daughters having separate mess) would be treated as one family.

(ii) All settlement of Government agricultural land for ordinary cultivation shall henceforward be made with the actual tiller of the soil only, that is to say, with a person who actually cultivates the land himself.

(iii) No person already having more than 10 *bighas* of agricultural land either in his own name or in the name of any member of the family will be allotted new Government land for the purpose of cultivation.

(iv) The area to be settled per family, whose existing total holding is less than 10 *bighas*, shall be so much as will, together with any land already held, make the total holding equal to 10 *bighas*, but priorities in settlement shall be determined in the following order :

(a) those who have no land ;
(b) those who have lands below 5 *bighas* ;
(c) those who have lands between 5 *bighas* and 8 *bighas*.
(d) those who have lands above 8 *bighas*.

(v) Land for homestead purposes may be settled upto a maximum of 2 *bighas* with a homeless rural family. This would be exclusive of the land mentioned in (iv) above.

Besides, for the purpose of settlement of homestead lands, settlement-holders who have been rendered landless due to flood, erosion, requisition or acquisition will get preference over other landless persons.

(vi) In case of all new planned settlements in large blocks of 100 *bighas* or more, except those which have already been taken up under the Five Year Plans, *Gram Sabha* will be formed on the line of a *Gram Sabha* under the *Gramdan* Act to manage and plan the pattern of cultivation in general and also to watch that allottees do not make any transfer of their allotment without the permission of the *Gram Sabha*. However, cultivation on co-operative or collective basis will be encouraged even in lands under such *Gram Sabhas*. In giving settlement on the *Gramdan* pattern, the names of individual allottees should be distinctly recorded and possession of their lands clearly demarcated.

Further, it should be ensured that facilities for co-operative finance to the allottees on the *Gramdan* pattern are made available, as otherwise due to non-transferability of land, such allottees may find difficulty in raising finance for agricultural operation. For that purpose, the members of the *Gram Sabha* should be encouraged to form Co-operative Credit Society.

(vii) While encouraging formation of Co-operative Farming Societies the district authorities shall ensure that no person having lands above 10 *bighas* may get new land by being a member of any such society. Such person may, however, be allowed to join such Co-operative Society only when he agrees to pool his own cultivable lands with the co-operation of landless tillers.

(viii) Selection of allottees for settlement of land in any case which involves more than 10 *bighas* will henceforward be made in cousultation with the local Land Settlement Advisory Committee. A panel of landless cultivators should be prepared by every *Gaon sabha* formed under the Panchayat Act and this panel should be consulted when selecting allottees for settlement of land in rural areas. Government, however, reserves the right to earmark special areas of homestead and cultivable lands for settlement with people rendered homeless due to flood, erosion, requisition or acquisition and with displaced persons whom Government undertakes to rehabilitate.

(ix) When surplus lands from tea gardens are requisitioned and acquired for cultivation by landless cultivators, an area upto 50% of such land should be allotted to the unemployed tea garden labourers who have no land for cultivation.

(d) *LAND REFORMS* :

Relations between Landlord and Tenant : On the subject, W.W. Hunter observes : "On the whole, where no unusual cupidity is displayed on the part of the *Zamindars* or their underlings and no extra-ordinary recusancy is exhibited by the occupants, the present relations of the landlord and tenant are satisfactory".[9] This gives the history of their relations that existed during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It is further stated that in collection of land rent falling in arrears reppressions and coersive measures like arrest and detention of the defaulter tenant were also resorted to in order to avoid institution of regular rent suit in the Court, though such cases were few in number. Such detention, however,

9. W. W. Hunter ; *Statistical Account of Assam*, Delhi, Vol. II, 1975 (Reprint) p. 63

did not amount to wrongful confinement and was deemed to be merely a dispute between the landlord and tenant. It may be mentioned that in the permanently-settled estates of the district the landlords who were the sole owners of land were at liberty in respect of survey, settlement, assessmnet and collection of land rent subject to enhancement. The tenants, particularly the under-tenants had no permanent, heritable and transferrable rights in land they cultivated and therefore could not avail the opportunity of loans from Government and banks for want of security. The affairs in these estates went on in their own way till 1929 when the Goalpara Tenancy Act, 1929 applicable to the permanently-settled areas of Goalpara came into force.

The Goalpara Tenancy Act, 1929 is the landmark in the history of land reforms in Assam. It governed the relations between the landlord and tenant in the permanently settled areas of Goalpara district. This Act improved the conditions of the tenant class by conferring upon the occupancy *raiyats* permanent, heritable and transferrable rights and the right, of use and occupancy and some rights to sub-tenants and undertenants. Protection was accorded to the tenants against illegal ejectment and enhancement of land rent. This Act was in force even after abolition of the *Zamindary* system in 1956-57 and was amended in 1970 to include new development in the concept of tenancy, mainly the provision of the Assam *Adhiars* Protection and Regulation Act, 1948, applicable to the whole district and thereby repeated the same within its area of operation. It was finally repealed in 1974 when the Assam (Temporarily-settled Areas) Tenancy Act, 1971 was extended to the acquired *Zamindary* estates of the district by an Act viz., the Assam Land Holdings (Adoption of Relationship under the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886 in the Acquired Permanently Settled Estates) Act, 1974.

The next tenancy legislation was the Assam (Temporarily Settled Districts) Tenancy Act, 1935 applicable to the temporarily-settled areas of Goalpara. This Act recognised 4 classes of tenants--privileged *raiyat*, occupancy *raiyat*, non-occupancy and under-*raiyat*. This Act was amended in 1953 and thereby superior rights of use and occupancy ; permanent, heritable and transferrable rights were conferred upon the first two classes of tenants while subordinate rights of use and occupancy with suitable protection against illegal ejectment upon the last two classes. Thus the Act regulated the rights and liabilities of the agricultural tenants and their landlords.

In the meantime, to regulate share of crop-rent payable by a cultivator to the landlord and to give him protection against indiscriminate

eviction, the Assam *Adhiars* Protection and Regulation Act, 1948 was passed. As aforesaid, this Act was applicable to Goalpara district. Under this Act the cultivator was entitled to get three-fourths of the total crop if the landlord supplied plough cattle or else four-fifths. The Assam Non-Agricultural Urban Areas Tenancy Act, 1955 was passed to regulate relations between the landlord and tenant of non-agricultural land in urban areas. The Assam Urban Areas Rent Control Act, 1961 as amended from time to time aims at fixation of fair rent of houses in urban areas including cantonment Areas.

As aforesaid, the Assam (Temporarily-Settled Areas) Tenancy Act, 1971 is now in force in the Goalpara district. The broad features of the Act are as follows :

(i) Share-croppers will be treated as tenants.

(ii) Right of occupancy will accrue on occupation for 3 years as against 12 years prescribed in the earlier.

(iii) The Government has been given the power to acquire the right of ownership and the intermediary rights in favour of occupancy and non-occupancy tenants. Till the Government do so, an enabling right has been given to the tenants cultivating their own lands to acquire, such right by depositing the compensation.

(iv) Illegally ejected tenants will be restored possession through Revenue Officers.

(v) A limited right to mortgage has been given to non-occupancy tenants to obtain credit from the recognized Financial Institutions for agriculture, whereas the occupancy tenant has been given permanent, heritable and transferrable right of use and occupancy in the land of his holding.

To implement the provisions of this Act a crash programme for preparation of tenants record-of-rights has been taken up in all districts of Assam including Goalpara. Upto 30th June, 1976, in Goalpara district, 1,950 persons have been recorded as tenants (all in Kokrajhar Subdivision). For the landless tenants having their houses on the lease land there is an enabling provision in this Tenancy Act, 1971 for them to acquire ownership rights by depositing compensation at the rate of 50 times of the land revenue payable for the land held by them.

Various schemes for providing land and house sites viz., settlement, allotment of house-sites to landless agricultural workers under Minimum Needs Programme, rehabilitation of flood and erosion affected families, Scheduled Caste fishermen families, and other landless families have been undertaken in the whole State. Under the Minimum Needs Programme for providing house-sites to rural landless agriculturists allottees are also granted development costs of house-sites at Rs. 150 per family.

Other Land Reform measures : Since Independence, the State Government of Assam have enacted several land reform legislations of which the following are now in force in the Goalpara district. The aims of these Acts are to confer virtual ownership of the agricultural land on the actual cultivators and reduce the vast holdings of owners and landlords.

The Assam Land (Requisition and Acquisition) Act, 1948 (Assam Act XXV of 1948). The Act provides for requisitioning and acquiring surplus waste lands of Grant holders to provide land to the landless, flood-affected or displaced persons or to Co-operative Societies formed for the purpose of cultivation. Though the Act has other objectives in view, in practice, it was found more useful for the purpose of acquiring surplus lands fit for cultivation (specially unutilised tea grants) and allotting these to the landless, flood-affected and displaced persons. The life of the Act was for 5 years in the first instance and then extended for 5 years in 1953 and for another term of 5 years in 1958.

The Assam Asssement of Revenue Free Waste Land Grants Act, 1948 (Assam Act XXIV of 1948) : By this Act the expressed exemption contained in the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886 (Regulation I of 1886) from assessment under the terms of any waste land grant was made liable to assessment to revenue on and from 1st April 1948 in addition to the local rates and local cesses, if any. But the other terms and conditions of those grants remained as before.

The aforesaid Act was amended in 1949 by the Assam Assessment of Revenue Free Waste Land Grants (Amendment) Act, 1949 (Assam Act XV of 1949).

The Assam Management of Estates Act 1949 (Assam Act XVII of 1949) : This measure was adopted by Government as a step preliminary to the abolition of *Zamindary* System in Assam.

The Act empowers Government to take possession of any estate of over 4,000 *bighas*, whether permanently-settled or temporarily-settled, and to manage it as a Court of Wards Estate. The primary object of this Act was to prevent mischief by Proprietors or *Zamindars* to their estates.

The Assam State Acquisition of *Zamindaries* Act, 1951 (Assam Act XVIII of 1951) : This Act aims at abolition of Zamindaries in the permanently-settled portion of the State on payment of compensation to the owners. This measure has been enacted with a view to remove the intermediaries and bring the tenants directly under the State and thus to give them better rights on their lands.

The Act was subsequently amended in 1953, 1954 and 1955 for removing certain difficulties in the implementation of the Act.

The Assam Fixation of Ceiling on Land Holdings Act, 1956 (Assam Act 1 of 1957) : This Act aims at fixing a limit on agricultural holdings of a person at 150 *bighas* and of acquiring the surplus land by the State for distribution of the same to the landless and other actual cultivators. This indirectly removes the petty intermediaries and also brings the tenants into direct contact with the Government. In addition, it creates greater interest of the tenants on land who would make such improvement of the soil as would yield better crop.

The Act was amended in 1957 on the direction of the President of India providing for certain exemptions to the industrial undertakings.

The Assam State Acquisition of Lands belonging to Religious or Charitable Institution of Public Nature Act, 1959 (Assam Act IX of 1961) : Under section 2(b) of the Assam Fixation of Ceiling on Land Holdings Act, 1956 (Assam Act of 1957) lands belonging to any religious or charitable institution of a public nature are excluded from the operation of that Act. It is intended to acquire lands of such institutions (permitting them to retain certain lands) in order to give a better status to the actual occupants, to ensure them fixity of tenure and also to settle the unoccupied lands with landless people.

The Assam *Gramdan* Act, 1961 (Assam Act of 1962) : The Act aims at facilitating donations of lands as *Gramdan* in pursuance of the *Gramdan* Movement initiated by Acharya Vinoba Bhave providing for the simplifying legal formalities for transfer and management of lands in *Gramdan* villages with the main object of (i) distribution of land donated by the owners, (ii) administration of justice through *Gram-Sabha Adalat* and (*iii*) development of *Gramdan* villages by exercising functions it has for such developments. The Act has been brought into force with effect from 10th March 1962 in the whole State of Assam except the Autonomous Districts under Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

Recent amendments of the Ceiling Act, 1956 : The progress of acquisition under the Assam Fixation of Ceiling on Land Holdings Act, 1956 which came into force from 15th February, 1958 was not very speedy largely because of the different tiers of appeals as prescribed in the Act. It was not applicable to the tea gardens due to lack of specific mechanism for ascertaining actual area under tea and purposes ancillary thereto. The Government therefore evolved a formula known as 112 formula for acquisition of land from tea gardens for rehabilitating flood and erosion affected families. The Ceiling Act was amended in 1970 whereby the lands that can be retained by the tea gardens have been specifically mentioned and the ceiling limit of land retainable by a person was reduced from 150 *bighas* to 75 *bighas*.

Following the announcement of the 20-point economic programme, the State Government constituted a high power Committee known as the State Land Reform Committee headed by the Minister, Revenue as Chairman to speed up distribution of ceiling surplus lands. Such Land Reform Committees have also been set-up at Subdivisional, Circle and *Gaon* Panchayat levels for preparation of list of landless persons. In consultation with the State Land Reform Committee, the Government have distributed the acquired ceiling surplus lands and issued allotment certificates without conferring on the allottees any transferrable rights and requiring them also to join an Agricultural Farming Corporation if and when formed. Meanwhile the Ceiling Act was further amended in 1975 bringing down the limit from 75 *bighas* to 50 *bighas*. The exemption on account of orchards was also reduced to 4 *bighas*. Provision has also been made to take advance possession of the estimated ceiling surplus lands for public purpose. A time-bound programme was chalked out to eomplete the acquisition of surplus lands by 30th June, 1976. For speedy competition of the work, an ordinance known as the Assam Fixation of Ceiling on Land Holdings (Amendment) Ordinance, 1976 (Ordinance 1 of 1976) was promulgated and came into force from May 3, 1976. This has reduced the statutory period for objections in regard to draft statements from 30 days to 15 days. By July 24, 1976, in the Goalpara district 1,02,770 *bighas* of ceiling surplus lands have been acquired and 24,230 *bighas* have been distributed among the beneficiaries. 200 Scheduled Caste and 1,070 Scheduled Tribes people have also benefited in Goalpara district. The following shows the Subdivision-wise break-up.

Acquisition of Ceiling Surplus lands in Goalpara district as on 24th July, 1976.

(Area in bighas)

Subdivision	No. of cases instituted.	No. of cases disposed.	Land acquired				Total	
			Individuals		Tea Co.			
			No. of cases.	Area	No. of cases.	Area	No. of cases.	Area
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Dhuburi ..	2,234	2,132	998	40,555	..	..	998	40,555
Goalpara ..	1,270	1,126	532	33,857	..	..	532	33,857
Kokrajhar ...	1,612	1,612	1037	26,268	1	2090	1038	28,358
Total ..	5,116	4,870	2567	1,00,680	1	2090	2568	102,770

Distribution of Ceiling Surplus lands in Goalpara district as on 24th July 1976

(Area in *bighas*)

Subdivision	Total		Scheduled Caste		Scheduled Tribes	
	No. of families	Area	No. of families	Area	No. of families	Area
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dhuburi	2,142	6,900	111	333	11	4
Goalpara	1,455	6,607	43	214	312	1,309
Kokrajhar	1,913	10,723	46	290	747	3,770
Total	5,510	24,230	200	837	1,070	5,083

APPENDIX A.

Statement Showing the Demand, Collection and Balance of Land Revenue in the district of Goalpara since 1968-69 to 1973-74.

(Figures in Rs.)

Year	Sub-division and district.	Demand			Collection			Balance			Remarks
		Current	Arrear	Total	Current	Arrear	Total	Current	Arrear	Total	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1968	(a) Kokrajhar ..	7,60,668.07	15,86,798.57	23,47,466.64	3,94,862.61	4,23,365.60	8,18,228.21	3,65,805.46	11,63,432.97	15,29,238.43	Rs. 6606.25 Remission in Kokrajhar Sub-division.
1969	(b) Dhuburi ..	13,80,267.93	34,94,947.47	48,75,215.40	2,42,860.60	6,17,993.90	8,60,904.50	11,37,307.33	28,77,003.57	40,14,310.90	
	(c) Goalpara ..	9,61,281.13	25,47,326.37	35,08,607.50	3,24,827.27	3,11,637.53	6,36,464.80	6,36,453.86	22,35,688.84	28,72,142.70	
	Total : District	31,02,217.13	76,29,072.41	107,32,289.54	9,62,650.48	13,52,987.03	23,15,597.51	21,39,566.65	62,76,125.38	84,15,692.03	
1969 &	(a) Kokrajhar	8,36,010.51	16,72,122.02	25,08,132.53	4,47,993.75	4,38,028.23	8,86,021.98	2,88,016.76	12,34,093.79	15,22,110.55	Rs. 36541.58 was granted as remission in Goalpara Sub-division.
1970	(b) Dhuburi ..	13,94,545.50	40,20,782.29	54,15,327.79	3,11,051.50	9,43,199.84	12,54,251.34	10,83,494.00	30,77,582.45	41,61,076.45	
	(c) Goalpara ..	9,23,907.58	29,40,351.52	38,84,259.10	3,80,254.03	51,888.34	4,32,142.37	5,43,653.56	24,41,463.18	29,85,116.74	
	Total : District	31,54,463.59	86,53,235.83	118,07,719.42	11,39,299.28	14,33,116.41	25,72,415.69	20,15,164.32	67,53,139.42	87,68,303.74	
1970 &	(a) Kokrajhar ..	7,67,238.58	13,10,620.24	20,77,858.82	3,37,599.68	3,00,015.30	6,37,614.98	42,938.90	10,10,604.94	10,53,543.84	
1971	(b) Dhuburi ..	13,21,438.13	42,04,628.89	55,26,067.02	2,36,311.30	6,71,123.39	9,07,434.69	10,851,26.83	35,33,504.50	46,18,631.33	
	(c) Goalpara ..	9,38,537.20	31,34,300.81	40,72,838.09	1,81,738.45	1,53,419.68	3,35,158.13	7,56,798.75	298,08,881.21	3,05,656,79.96	
	Total : District	30,27,213.91	86,49,550.02	116,76,763.93	7,55,649.43	11,24,558.37	18,80,207.80	18,84,864.48	3,43,52,990.65	3,62,37,855.13	

Appendix—A (Contd.)

Statement Showing the Demand, Collection and Balance of Land Revenue in the district of Goalpara since 1968-69 to 1973-74

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1971 & 1972	(a) Kokrajhar	10,03,614.30	19,15,271.52	29,18,885.82	4,22,355.85	4,83,757.86	9,06,113.71	5,81,258.45	14,31,513.66	20,12,772.11	
	(b) Dhuburi ..	13,34,875.37	47,23,596.16	60,58,471.53	2,10,479.14	6,47,562.30	80,58,041.44	11,24,396.23	40,76,033.86	52,00,430.09	
	(c) Goalpara ..	9,32,776.26	35,47,122.79	44,79,899.05	1,73,139.44	1,39,236.96	3,12,376.40	7,59,636.82	34,07,885.83	41,67,522.65	
	Total : District	32,71,265.93	1,01,85,990.47	1,34,57,256.40	8,05,974.43	12,70,557.12	20,76,531.55	24,65,291.50	89,15,433.35	1,13,80,724.85	
1972 & 1973	(a) Kokrajhar ..	10,28,586.43	20,30,188.15	30,58,774.58	6,99,892.10	11,26,006.24	18,25,898.34	3,28,694.33	9,04,181.91	12,32,876.24	
	(b) Dhuburi ..	14,33,076.29	52,49,248.57	66,82,324.86	3,26,876.94	12,89,833.24	16,16,710.18	11,06,199.35	39,59,415.33	50,65,614.68	
	(c) Goalpara ..	9,85,573.56	35,46,905.95	45,32,479.51	2,59,869.37	3,34,175.51	5,94,044.88	7,23,279.28	31,78,991.58	39,02,270.86	
	Total : District	34,47,236.28	1,08,26,342.67	1,42,73,578.95	12,86,638.41	27,50,014.99	40,36,653.40	21,58,172.96	80,42,588.82	102,00,761.78	
1973 & 1974	(a) Kokrajhar	10,05,418.08	21,97,932.08	32,03,350.16	4,46,473.33	5,05,915.96	9,52,389.29	5,58,944.75	16,85,409.27	22,44,354.02	
	(b) Dhuburi ..	13,98,336.27	50,81,679.15	64,80,015.42	2,40,195.20	6,51,123.08	8,91,318.28	11,58,141.07	44,30,556.07	55,88,697.19	
	(c) Goalpara ..	10,26,183.70	36,40,987.34	46,67,171.04	2,76,586.78	3,86,739.78	6,63,326.56	7,49,596.92	32,54,247.96	40,03,844.88	
	Total : District	34,29,938.05	1,09,20,598.57	1,43,50,536.62	9,63,255.31	15,43,778.82	25,07,034.13	24,66,682.74	93,70,213.30	118,36,896.04	

Appendix B.

Sources of revenue	1950-51	1955-56	1960-61	1965-66	1966-67
1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Assam Sales Tax ..	4,43,343.00	10,84,054.00	9,10,876.25	11,33,557.29	9,89,494.79
2. Professions Tax ..	14,981.00	51,937.00	66,632.95	1,11,833.60	1,07,794.00
3. Amusement & Betting Tax	1,31,902.00	1,45,591.00	2,05,114.52	3,87,939.09	4,33,453.55
4. Motor Spirit & Lubricant Tax. ..	1,28,520.00	2,97,975.00	2,09,206.68	64,916.48	20,296.86
5. Assam Finance (Sales) Tax.	..	..	..	..	..
6. Central sales Tax ..	..	..	..	..	..
7. Assam Passengers & Goods Tax	..	..	..	..	..
8. Assam Electricity duty ..	..	..	..	..	..
9. Carriage Tax ..	..	..	..	..	..
10. Purchase Tax ..	..	..	..	..	..

Appendix—B (Contd.)

1967-68	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
7,72,303.18	6,98,866.59	7,18,869.80	7,64,977.46	6,53,453.00	9,19,885.00	8,80,198.00
1,03,329.00	1,07,097.00	1,14,406.00	1,19,956.00	1,49,591.00	1,52,445.00	1,86,603.00
5,15,575.79	5,21,849.74	6,10,543.50	6,38,781.66	7,80,825.00	9,18,383.00	12,49,903.00
5,541.06	11,801.42	21,854.25	42,171.90	63,744.00	1,07,457.00	1,06,142.00
18,21,643.54	22,11,284.43	24,70,588.67	28,67,315.57	29,30,454.00	28,84,714.00	25,14,449.00
1,45,604.76	1,16,307.64	1,45,086.50	1,51,269.24	1,56,164.00	1,77,644.00	1,65,396.00
3,12,335.88	3,16,356.27	3,28,240.09	3,39,180.31	2,99,966.00	3,76,597.00	3,51,797.00
20,116.33	11,870.41	34,445.58	43,624.78	64,593.00	98,169.00	1,39,607.00
46,288.19	..	42,806.00	1,30,487.02	95,666.00	18,710.00	26,728.00
..	..	..	..	1,17,563.00	9,22,488.00	11,11,769.00

CHAPTER XII

LAW, ORDER AND JUSTICE.

(a) *INCIDENCE OF CRIMES* :

In ancient times, no record of criminal trial was maintained in the country. In Goalpara, which was a part of ancient Kamarupa and Kamata kingdom, rule of monarchy was prevalent. In was supposed to be the sacred duty of the king to protect his subjects and to give them security of life and property. The people believed in the devine origin of kingship and addressed him as the *Dharmaraja*. The king was the fountain of justice and he was assisted by his officers in administration of justice as well as in maintenance of law and order.

The administration of criminal justice was characterised by sternness and very often amounted to physical torture. Local offences were decided by the local chieftains or royal agents on behalf of the king. But seditious matters or rebels were tried directly by the king. Punishment for rebellion was severe - varying from flaying and roasting alive, impaling, hanging, cutting throats, grinding between two wooden cylinders, sawing as two planks and application of red-hot iron-rods or burning hoes to different parts of the body untill death. Capital punishment was very often extended to the whole family of the rebels. As found by Francis Hamilton in the beginning of the nineteenth century, except the gang from Bengal, there were no robbers, pirates or atrocious house-breakers here, as summary punishments for such offences were thrusting out eyes or cutting off kneepans. Petty thefts were punished with whipping and cutting off the nose or ears.

Preservation of case records and preparation of crime statistics are the legacy of the British. As in the olden times, this system was not in vogue, it is difficult to have any idea regarding the incidence of crimes prior to British rule. Hunter's "Statistical Account of Assam" gives a detailed account of criminal statistics during the year 1872 and states that during that year, 653 cognizable cases were reported to police of which 189 were found to be false. Convictions were obtained in 126 cases in which 530 persons were tried and 288 of them or 54.34 per cent were convicted.

505 non-cognisable cases were instituted and processes were issued against 538 persons. 563 persons actually appeared before the court, of whom 247 or 43.87 per cent were discharged ; 14 or 2.48 per cent were acquitted ; and 291 or 51.69 per cent were convicted.[1] Without reproducing here the report of the Inspector General of Police for the year, like Hunter does, we may note in passing the meticulous care with which crime statistics were prepared during the period with detailed classification of offences under both cognisable and non-cognisable heads, their further sub-division into serious and minor offences and further grouping under such heads as offences against the State, Public tranquility and justice, serious offences against the person, serious offences against person and property, minor offences against the person, minor offences against the property etc. Such detailed reports give a vivid picture of the crime position at the time.

During that year, 'Offences against the State, public tranquility and justice, rioting and unlawful assembly' top the list with a total of 43 cases in which 116 persons were tried and 61 were convicted. These figures include both cognizable and non-cognizable cases. Under the head 'serious offences against the person, criminal force to public servant or woman, or in attempt to commit theft or wrongfully confine' led to 10 cases involving the trial of 15 persons of whom 4 were convicted. Nine persons were convicted of grievous hurt, one of rape and one of culpable homicide leading to the conclusion that there were few serious offences against the person. 'Serious offences against property' such as dacoity and robbery with hurt led to only 2 cases involving the trial of 7 persons but no conviction was obtained. However, lurking house trespass or house breaking with intent to commit an offence or having made preparation for hurt occasioned 104 cases leading to 12 persons being tried of whom only 8 were convicted. Among 'minor offences against the person', there were as many as 53 cases involving wrongful restraint and confinement which led to 21 persons being convicted out of 53 tried. Non-cognisable offences under the same head gave rise to 331 cases in which criminal force was used and 176 persons of the 353 tried, were convicted. 'Minor offences against property' was dominated by ordinary theft in which 72 persons were convicted out of 130 tried in 229 cases. This was followed by criminal or house trespass which led to 83 cases in which 57 persons were convicted out of 93 tried.

Crime position in the district, 30 years later as has been summed up by B. C. Allen, was "there is not much serious crime in Goalpara, and most of the offences were either house breaking and house trespass or

1, W.W. Hunter—*A Statistical Account of Assam*, Vol. II., New Delhi, 1975, (Reprint), p. 80.

petty thefts."[2] In 1902, there were altogether 852 cases under the Indian Penal Code returned as true of which the immense majority were either offences against property or against the human body. The following table shows the crime position in the district during the years 1902, 1903 and 1904[3] :

Criminal Justice	1902		1903		1904	
Number of cases	True	Detected.	True	Detected	True	Detected.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Sections 143-153, 157, 158 and 159 ..	14	4	8	4	4	2
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquility, etc. ..	6	4	8	6	8	3
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide. Sections 302-304, 307, 308 and 396. ..	2	..	3	..	2	1
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Sections 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335. ..	22	7	14	7	9	4
(v) Serious criminal force, Sections 353, 354, 356 and 357 ..	7	2	9	2	13	2
(vi) Other serious offences against the person	13	2	14	6	19	7
(vii) Dacoity. Sections 395, 397 and 398	..	..	..	..	..	..
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal Sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430-433 and 435-40.	13	5	15	2	10	2
(ix) House-breaking and serious house trespass, Sections 449-452 454, 455 and 457-460. ..	105	7	149	21	110	10

2. B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetteers, Vol. III, Goalpara*, Calcutta, 1906. p. 132.
3. Ibid, Appendix Table—xi, p. 20.

Criminal Justice	1902		1903		1904	
Number of cases	True	Detected	True	Detected	True	Detected
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(x) Wrongful restaint and confinement. Sections 341-344. ..	5	1	5	2	3	..
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property. ..	1	1	..	..	1	..
(xii) Theft. Sections 379 and 382. ..	151	55	202	59	151	55
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Sections 411 and 414. ..	20	17	19	19	24	16
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house-trespass. Sections 453, 456, 447 and 448. ..	45	17	54	19	47	21
(xv) Other minor offences against property. ..	7	..	7	3	3	..
Total : ..	411	122	507	147	404	123

During the next four decades, crime showed an increase mainly due to growth of population primarily through influx of immigrants, development of communication facilities including railways, political upheavals, war time price spurt, economic depression of thirties etc. Thus, in 1944, number of serious crimes alone in the district returned as true was 953. The position worsened in the following years when the corresponding figures rose to 1,232 in 1946 ; 1,087 in 1947 and 1,280 in 1948.[4]

Post-Independence economic planning and development and rapid growth of population have added a new dimension to the crime situation of the district. Aftermath of partition like border raids, smuggling etc., gave rise to concomitant law and order problems. Moreover, social outlook having changed, litigants who had formerly shunned courts and had bowed down to the decision of village panchayats now form the habit of frequenting courts even for small matters. Ever increasing pressure on land and strained family budget also contributed towards growth of crimes in the district.

The following statement shows the comparative crime figures for the years 1960-1974 in the district of Goalpara.

4. *Statistical Abstract, Assam*, 1951, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, 1952, p. 79.

Statement Showing the Comparative Crime Figures for the Years 1960 to 1974 in the District of Goalpara.

Type of Crime	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1774	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	69	17
Total Crimes	1,862	1,752	1,924	1,822	1,822	1,880	1,940	1,900	2,555	2,321	2,948	3,123	3,337	3,521	4,345	
Dacoity ..	23	20	19	26	18	23	39	27	13	14	15	26	26	43	80	
Robbery ..	12	34	11	19	12	21	19	18	31	11	14	19	17	16	42	
Burglary ..	289	272	252	227	224	279	285	260	267	246	366	556	496	632	882	
Theft ..	221	250	292	331	363	402	386	407	397	401	613	780	716	831	1,184	
Murder ..	16	21	28	25	24	26	22	30	32	38	32	44	46	57	68	
Rioting ..	143	126	142	153	173	161	198	211	297	389	396	517	565	478	526	
Smuggling ..	27	4	8	13	17	12	19	23	17	29	33	41	49	37	62	
Border raids	18	27	47	41	46	56	63	73	81	76	82	71	67	102	115	
Sex crimes ..	18	23	10	12	16	18	9	11	9	13	16	12	14	11	15	
No. of other crimes ..	1,113	993	1,162	1,016	975	738	963	913	1,491	1,180	1,463	1,469	1,457	1,416	1,486	
Charge Sheet to total crimes..	631	611	657	643	662	691	711	671	719	672	786	1,258	1,452	1,452	1,359	(six cases refused investigation in the year, 1971).
Final Report to total crimes..	845	823	851	773	817	823	917	862	1,201	1,279	1,270	1,203	1,212	1,193	1,415	
Cases pending at the end of the year. ..	386	319	416	406	343	366	312	367	635	570	892	481	673	876	1,571	

Varieties of crimes and their relative importance : From the above statement, it is clear that a variety of crimes occur in the district but there is no particular crime which is peculiar to the district. Offences against property like theft and burglary are the most common and have shown appreciable rise since 1970. Dacoity and robbery are also ascendant during 1973 and 1974. Murder which ranged between 16 to 26 annually during 1960 to 1966 rose to 30 in 1967. It increased to 38 in 1969 and after rising to 46 in 1972 crossed the fifty mark in 1973 during which year there were 57 cases. 68 murders reported in 1974 has been the highest since 1960. As in other parts of the State, law and order problems have been rising since the late sixties. After reaching the maximum of 565 rioting cases in 1972, it declined to 478 in 1973 only to increase again to 526 in 1974. There has not been any appreciable change in the position of sex crime in the district during the period. There were 18 such crime in 1960 and the average annual figure till 1974 was 13.8—the maximum recorded being 23 in 1961. Goalpara being a border district, border raids are not infrequent. During the period 1960-71, border raids averaged about 55 per year. But during the next four years, the corresponding figure rose to about 89. The greatest number of border raids recorded during the period has been 115 in 1974. The following statement shows the sub-divisionwise crime position (Cognisable and non-cognisable) of the district for the years 1960-74.

Year		Goalpara	Dhuburi	Kokrajhar	Total of district.
1		2	4	5	5
1960	..	811	1,531	491	2,833
1961	..	697	1,584	443	2,724
1962	..	828	1,640	405	2,873
1963	..	764	1,586	459	2,809
1964	..	708	1,591	427	2,726
1965	..	913	1,610	483	3,006
1966	..	996	1,281	568	3,091
1967	..	1,053	1,570	502	3,125
1968	..	1,221	2,003	688	3,912
1969	..	1,065	2,030	550	3,645
1970	..	1,199	2,650	667	4,516
1971	..	1,406	2,592	1,029	4,027
1972	..	1,482	3,359	996	5,837
1973	..	1,616	3,703	1,088	6,407
1974	..	1,877	4,321	1,268	7,466

Uptill now, the district of Goalpara has been saved from the evil effects of industrial urbanisation as it can be gathered from the fact that no case under the Juvenile Offender's Act has been reported in any of the sub-divisions of the district.

Offences under the Excise Acts : Goalpara district has been declared dry from 1960. Since then a number of cases under the Liquor Prohibition Act has been detected and tried in the different courts of the district. As Bongaigaon is the biggest and the busiest railway junction in Goalpara, a hectic activity on smuggled prohibited goods goes out and occasionally a big haul of Excise goods are made there. The following statistics will give a picture of the offences under various prohibition Acts in the district.

Year	Courts	Liquor Prohibition			Ganja & Bhang Prohibition		
		Reported.	Tried	Convicted.	Reported.	Tried	Convicted
1970	Goalpara district..	533	237	48	13	7	5
1975	Dhuburi Sub-divn.	117	100	5	19	19	3
	Kokrajhar Sub-divn.	82	82	Nil	1	1	1
	Goalpara Sub-divn.	250	235	3	7	1	Nil
1976	Dhuburi Sub-divn.	103	95	27	17	17	3
	Kokrajhar Sub-divn.	102	97	Nil	7	7	3
	Goalpara Sub-divn.	136	100	21	Nil	Nil	Nil
1977	Dhuburi Sub-divn.	98	92	36	6	6	1
	Kokrajhar Sub-divn.	136	124	3	5	5	2
	Goalpara Sub-divn.	65	40	19	12	Nil	Nil
Total of the district.	..	1,622	1,202	162	87	63	18

No case under the Opium Prohibition Act has been reported in any of the sub-divisions of the district under the Opium Prohibition Act between 1970 to 1977.

(b) *ORGANISATION OF POLICE* :

The Police organisation in the form that we know of at present is a legacy of the British administration. It was raised in order to ensure security of life and property of the people. In 1824, after formation of Goal-

para district, the police force consisted of only 15 officers and 68 footmen. In 1860, the strength stood at 23 officers and 102 men. The regular police was first formed in 1861 and by the end of 1872 the force in Goalpara district consisted of one District Superintendent, 2 Subordinate officers, 53 lesser paid officers and 265 foot police constables. There were no municipal police in the district and rural police or *haftadars* were merely servants of the *Zamindar* or land owners.[5]

A table is given below to show the strength of police force for the years 1881, 1891 and 1901.[6]

Strength of Police Force :

Particulars	1881	1891	1901
Civil Police :			
Supervising Staff :			
District and Assistant Superintendents	1	1	2
Inspectors	2	2	2
Subordinate Staff :			
Sub-Inspectors	6	7	12
Head Constables	30	34	27
Constables	171	217	225
Rural Police	621	717	883
Union and Municipal Police	6	..	..
Total Expenditure	Rs. 77,516	88,363	1,11,444

Note : The figures above give actual strength for 1881 and sanctioned strength for other years. As the full sanctioned number of Sub-Inspectors was not entertained during the year 1901, only the actual number of Sub-Inspectors and Head Constables is shown for that year.

The police force in the district was expanded at the beginning of the present century. It appears in the old District Gazetteer of Goalpara that there were 8 police stations and one outpost in the district in 1905. The chart of police stations and out-posts along with sanctioned strength of staff at each of these is reproduced below :[7]

5. W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Assam, Vol. II.*, New Delhi, 1975 (Reprint), pp. 88-89.
6. B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetteers, Vol. III., Goalpara*, Calcutta, 1905, Appendix p. 32.
7. Ibid, Appendix p. 32.

Name of Police Station or Outpost	Sanctioned Strength			
	Sub-Inspectors.	Head Constables	Constables	Total
1	2	3	4	5
Dhuburi Sub-division				
1. Agamani P.S.	2	1	8	11
2. Bilasipara P.S.	2	..	8	10
3. Dhuburi P.S.	2	1	9	12
4. Mankachar P.S.	1	..	6	7
5. South Salmara P.S.	2	..	8	10
Goalpara Sub-division				
6. Dudhnoi P.S.	2	..	8	10
7. Goalpara P.S.	2	1	9	12
8. Lakhipur P.S.	1	..	6	7
9. North Salmara P.S.	2	..	8	10

Describing the organisation prevalent at the time, the old Gazetteer states that the Civil Police were in charge of a District or Assistant Superintendent of Police. The sanctioned strength consisted of 2 Inspectors, 25 Sub-Inspectors and 243 Constables. 113 smooth bore Martinis were allotted to Goalpara and a reserve of men was maintained at the district and sub-divisional headquarters who were armed with these weapons and were employed on guards and escort duties. Up-country men, Nepalese and members of the local tribes were usually deputed to the work. The village chowkidar was required to report all serious crimes to the officer-in-charge of the Police Station, arrest persons committing crimes in his presence, collect vital statistics, observe movement of bad characters and generally to inform police of anything likely to affect the peace. Police duties beyond their regular ones consisted of checking returns of vital statistics, management of pounds, enquiry into cases of unnatural death, furnishing guards and escorts whenever required and serving process in warrant cases.

Present position of the district police force : The police organisation has been gradually increasing since the beginning of the century but the rapid expansion of the Department is largely a post-Independence

phenomenon. Specialised wings have been established to bring about improvement in the field of scientific investigation, better communication, prevention and control of hazards, modernisation of training methods, prevention and detection of corrupt practices, collection of local intelligence etc. The number of Police Stations and Out Posts in the district has been increased and staff position augumented. Most of the Police Stations have been provided with telephones and wireless sets. Fire service organisations has also been set up under the Police Department and the earliest Fire Station in the district was established at Dhuburi on 31-3-62. During the post-Independence period, there has been marked improvement of residential, recreational and other amenities besides substantial rise in salar es.

The following table shows the expansion of police organisation in Goalpara district during the period 1966 to 1974.

YEAR	Supdt.	A.S.P.	D.S.P.	Inspr.	S. I.	A.S.I.	Head Constable	Constable
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1966 ..	1	1	4	10	136	122	13	911
1967 ..	1	1	4	10	136	122	13	911
1968 ..	1	1	4	10	136	122	13	910
1969 ..	1	1	4	10	136	131	13	911
1970 ..	1	2	4	10	136	131	13	911
1971 ..	1	2	4	10	138	132	13	919
1972 ..	1	2	3	10	140	134	13	931
1973 ..	1	2	3	10	140	134	13	931
1974 ..	1	2	3	10	146	134	13	955

Number of Police Stations and Outposts in Goalpara district during 1971 to 1974 is shown below :—

Year	Police Station	Police Out-Posts
1971	13	28
1972	13	29
1973	13	30
1974	13	30

The Armed Branch of the district police force in 1974 consisted of 2 Inspectors, 11 Sub-Inspectors, 50 Havildars, 23 Naiks, 22 Lance Naiks and 564 Constables besides 22 Driver Constables. It may be mentioned here that the strength of the Armed Branch has remained constant from 1965 to 1974 except that the number of Driver Constables has increased from 17 in 1972 to 22 since then. The police force in the district is headed by the Superintendent of Police who is assisted by the Additional Superintendent and Deputy Superintendents of Police. A few Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors and Assistant Sub-Inspectors are posted in the district headquarters and are attached to the office of the Superintendent of Police to assist him in administration. The Inspectors of Police are placed in charge of Circles and they inspect Police Stations which fall within their Circle. Police Stations are in charge of one Sub-Inspector of Police who is invested with powers of investigation. He is popularly known as *Daroga*. Some Assistant Sub-Inspectors, literate constables and a batch of constables are placed in the *thana* under the officer-in-charge of the *thana* in order to assist him in his works. The *Daroga* or officer-in-charge of a Police Station supervises the works of the out-posts or beat-posts which fall within the jurisdiction of his Police Station. A reserve force of police is generally kept in the headquarters for supplementing or replacing the force posted in the *thanu* whenever required. The posts of the Inspectors and above are all gazetted ones and lower posts are non-gazetted. All the posts are filled up by direct recruitment but there is provision for departmental promotion also.

In order to maintain law and order, Police Stations and Out-posts are established in important places of the district. Out-posts are generally situated in interior areas. In 1974, there were 13 Police Stations in the district at Gossaigaon, Kokrajhar, Sidli, Bijni, Golakganj, Bilasipara, Dhuburi, South Salmara, Mankachar, Abhayapuri, Lakhipur, Goalpara and Dudhnoi besides the 30 Out-Posts situated in interior places.

Traffic Control : The flow of traffic has increased considerably in the main towns with the growth of commercial and industrial activities. Traffic Control has posed a problem to the police in towns. A section of the police has now been trained in the use of modern traffic signals and equipments. "Road Safety Weeks" are observed to educate pedestrians and motorists to inculcate road sense amongst them. The number of motor vehicle accidents in Goalpara district was 52, 75, 102, 90 and 56 in 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973 and 1974 respectively.

Training of police personnel : Police personnel are imparted training at the Assam Police Training College, Dergaon in Sibsagar district. The

college which was at first established at Salonibari in Darrang district was shifted to its present site on August 15, 1952. The number of recruits has been gradually increasing and at present the College trains about 30 Sub-Inspectors, 40 to 50 Assistant Sub-Inspectors and approximately 500 to 600 constables depending upon the yearly recruitment. The Institution also provides supplementary training to the I.P.S. officers posted in the State of Assam. Instructions given in the College consist of both field and class-room work and cover all aspects of police duties including jurisprudence. The Principal who is a senior police officer, is assisted by the Assistant Principal who is of the rank of a Deputy Superintendent of Police and also a host of Instructors.

Fire Service Organisation : The present strength of Dhuburi Fire Station which was established on 31-3-62 consists of one Station Officer, helped by 4 Assistants, 14 Firemen and 3 Drivers. Among its appliances mention may be made of 2 Water Tenda Pumps of 1,000 gallons capacity each and 2 other pumps of 600 and 500 gallons capacity. There are Sub Fire Stations at Goalpara established in July, 1962, at Kokrajhar established in July, 1967 and at Bongaigaon established in June, 1974. Sub Fire Stations are under Sub-Officers who are each assisted by 2 Assistants, about 10 Firemen and 1 or 2 Drivers.

Railway Police : This branch of Police organisation functions under the direct control of the Superintendent of Railway Police, whose head-quarters are at Haflong. The main functions of the Railway Police are the prevention and the detection of crimes happening within the Railway areas and also in the running trains. The Railway Police maintains watch over inter-State criminals and suspicious movement of travellers in trains. The Railway Police is not required to perform watch and ward duties for which the Ministry of Railways has its own force known as the Railway Protection Force which provides escorts to treasures and goods trains. The Railway Police in Goalpara district has one Police Station at Bongaigaon with 4 Out-Posts at Fakiragram, Golakganj, Dhuburi and New Bongaigaon. Jogighopa Beat Post is yet to start functioning for want of accommodation. The total strength of Railway Police in the district consists of 5 Sub-Inspectors, 5 Assistant Sub-Inspectors, 4 Head Constables and 56 Constables. Crime figures of Bongaigaon Police Station for 1970 to 1974 are shown below :—

	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974
Murder :					
Reported	..	..	2	1	3
F. R.	..	..	2	..	..
P. I.	..	..	..	1	3
Dacoity :					
Reported	..	..	..	2	..
F. R.	..	..	..	2	..
Robbery :					
Reported	..	..	3	1	1
Charge sheeted		..	1	1	..
P. T.	..	..	1	1	..
F. R.	..	..	2	..	..
P. I.	..	..	..	..	1
Burglary :					
Reported	1	..	1	1	2
Charge sheeted	..	..	1	1	..
P. T.	..	..	1	1	..
F. R.	1	..	..	..	1
P. I.	..	..	..	..	1
Theft :					
Reported	23	62	97	115	106
C. S.	6	12	26	24	10
Convicted	4	8	11	3	..
Acquitted	1	..	..	..	..
P. T.	1	4	15	21	10
F. R.	17	49	68	81	19
Transferred	..	1	3	1	..
P. I.	..	..	..	9	77
Copper Wire Theft :					
Reported	7	36	44	37	23
Charge sheeted	1	..	3	1	..
Convicted	..	..	2	..	..
Acquitted	1	..	..	1	..
P. T.	..	..	1	..	..
F. R.	6	36	41	36	23

Note : F. R. - Final Report, P.T. - under Police investigation

Anti-Corruption Branch : The Anti-Corruption Branch was first started in 1945. This branch is mainly concerned with detection of corrupt practices among the Government employees.

The Village Defence Organisation : The Village Defence Organisation was first started in Goalpara district in the year 1953 with the Superintendent of Police in over-all charge. Starting as a voluntary organisation it is now subsidised by Government and is responsible for maintaining peace, order and tranquility in villages. The Village Defence Parties consisting of adult villagers patrol villages at night, apprehend robbers and thieves, and hand them over to police, guard vital installations including railway tracks, and perform other allied duties aimed at ensuring safety and security of the village populace. Government provides members of the Village Defence Parties with such essentials as lanterns, torch lights, whistles, blankets, umbrellas etc. Each Village Defence Party also receives an amount of Rs. 60.00 per annum. The organisation has emerged as a very powerful instrument for prevention and detection of crimes. In 1974, there were 525 registered Village Defence Parties in the district.

Home Guards : The Home Guards Organisation was abolished in 1949. In the wake of the Chinese agression in 1962, important towns of the State were brought under the Civil Defence Scheme. There is one Home Guard Commandant at Goalpara who is in charge of Home Guard organisation of the district. He is to work under the direct control of the Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara, and the Director of Civil Defence and Home Guards, Gauhati. Young boys are recruited for training. During the training period and the camp period, the Home Guards are supplied with uniforms, ammunitions, food and are also paid wages. When emergency arises they are called for duties. In 1974, there were 4,552 trained Home Guards in the district and of them 401 were deployed for various duties.

Prohibition Squad : The Superintendent of Excise is the head of the Excise Organisation in the district of Goalpara. He works under the immediate control of the Deputy Commissioner and is under the overall supervision of the Commissioner of Excise, Assam. The Superintendent is assisted by a number of Inspectors, Assistant Inspectors and some Constables. The department enforces prohibition laws such as the Assam Opium Prohibition Act, 1947 ; the Assam Liquor Prohibition Act, 1960 ; the Assam Ganja and Bhang Prohibition Act, 1958 etc., which are in force in the district. The District Police helps the Excise parties at the time of conducting raids.

(c) *JAILS* :

The District Jail, Dhuburi is located in the north-eastern part of Dhuburi town by the side of Dhuburi-Kokrajhar road and covers an area of about 1.8 hectares. There is a nine bedded hospital within the jail premises where sick convicts and under-trial prisoners are treated. The Doctor and Pharmacist of the Police Hospital, Dhuburi looks after the Jail Hospital as a part-time job. Serious cases of sickness requiring better and specialised treatment are transferred to the nearby Civil Hospital.

Due to over-crowding in the lock-up at Kokrajhar, many of the under-trial prisoners of Kokrajhar Court are detained in this jail and are produced before the Court whenever required from here. The Court building at Dhuburi is only about 1.5 kms. from the jail and prisoners are usually taken to the Court in the prison van maintained by Police.

Goalpara Jail : Formerly, there was only a magistrates' lock-up at Goalpara town, the headquarters of the Goalpara Subdivision. It was only in recent years that a subsidiary jail was started there to relieve the Dhuburi jail from congestion of prisoners. There was no prisoner at the beginning of the year 1956 during which 696 prisoners including 690 males, 6 females were received in this jail and of them only 90 male prisoners remained at the end of the year. The daily average of the prisoners was 90.39 males and 0.43 females. Since then there has been considerable increase in the number of its inmates. Usual amenities are provided to them including a hospital for the sick which has been mentioned elsewhere. The Board of Visitors looks into grievances of prisoners.

Prison Organisation : The Superintendent of Jails is the head of the staff in each jail. The Jailor is primarily responsible for maintenance of prison discipline and works under the supervision of the Superintendent of Jails. The Jailor is assisted in his works by an Assistant Jailor, Head Warders, Warders and Female Warders besides other staff.

Prison Discipline : Strict discipline is maintained in both the jails by the jail staff. No incidence of violence has occurred within the jails at any time. The Wards are locked just before sunset and unlocked again in the morning. Food is supplied to the jail prisoners as per scale laid down in the Assam Jail Manual where provisions regulating conduct of prisoners are also prescribed.

Average daily population of the District Jail, Dhuburi is given below :

Year	*Average daily population,*
1965	210.09
1966	225.07
1967	212.31
1968	213.79
1969	236.93
1970	210.85
1971	259.80
1972	262.97
1973	265.97
1974	497.30

There is very little vacant land available within District Jail, Dhuburi and it is possible to grow vegetable only over a very small patch of land. There is a manufacturing section in the District Jail, Dhuburi, where selected prisoners are engaged and trained in bamboo and cane works. Products like basket, flower case, *murhas* etc. produced here have a good demand.

Welfare of Prisoners : Due to occasional overcrowding in the jails, sanitation becomes a serious problem and the jail authorities have therefore to be vegilant regarding cleanliness of jails. Medical facilities available for inmates of the jails have been described above. Facilities for recreation include indoor games and sports but lack of space has prevented outdoor games like foot-ball, volley-ball etc.

Board of Visitors : In order to inspect the sanitary condition of the jail and the general administration therein, the Government of Assam appoints a Board of Visitors for each District Jail. There are Boards of Visitors for both the jails of Goalpara. The Board of Visitors consists of both official and non-official members. It holds periodical meetings, inspects the jail premises and the wards and hears the grievances of the prisoners. The Board has no statutory powers and is advisory in nature.

Classes of Prisoners : The convicts are divided into three classes, viz., A.,B. and C. The Magistrates earmark the class of the particular convict. The A and B class convicts are given some additional benefits. The security prisoners also enjoy some additional facilities including special diet and recreational facilities.

Lock-ups : Lock-ups are attached to almost every police station of the district. They are generally meant for keeping the arrested persons for a period not exceeding twenty four hours after the arrest. The prisoners are

then produced before the magistrate of the court having jurisdiction. Such lock-ups are attached to the jails also.

Probation system : The Probation of Offenders Act, 1958 came into force in Assam in 1962, but the Act was given effect in the district of Goalpara in 1963. One District Probation Officer who since 1970 has been re-designated as the District Social Welfare Officer was appointed with his headquarters at Dhuburi. The Probation of Offender's Act is an attempt to reform the first offenders of tender age. The Act provides for the release of the offenders of tender age, on conviction, by accepting a guarantee of good conduct as an alternative to imprisonment in jail. The Magistrate refers the case to the District Welfare Officer after the guilt has been established. After enquiry this Officer gathers information about the guilty persson in respect of his socio-economic back-ground, environment, previous records, etc. The Officer tries to ascertain the causes which led the offender to commit such offence. The Welfare Officer then prepares a statement and submits the same to the court with his comment as to whether the particular offender may be released on probation or be given institutional treatment. If the court is satisfied, it releases the offender on probation. The District Social Welfare Officer assumes responsibility for finding some suitable vocation for the offender with a view to rectifying his conduct. The officer visits the offender occasionally and gives necessary instructions on the basis of correctional methods. But if the offender on probation violates the rules and regulations or commits further offences, the District Welfare Officer refers his case to the magistrate concerned for taking appropriate action.

The year-wise statistics of offenders released on probation are given below :—

Year	No. of released on probation.
1963 ..	1
1964 ..	33
1965 ..	39
1966 ..	35
1967 ..	14
1968 ..	5
1969 ..	1
1970 ..	8
1971 ..	2
1972 ..	22
1973 ..	4
1974 ..	2

Problem of Juvenile Delinquency is not serious in the district. Some and except a few cases of Dhuburi town, practically no case under the Juvenile Delinquency (Probationery) Act had been reported in the district.

(d) *CIVIL AND CRIMINAL COURTS* :

Civil : Goalpara including the Garo Hills but excluding the Eastern *Duars* was originally administered from Rongpur and formed part of the Province of Bengal which was transferred from the Mughal to the East India Company in 1765. Under the provisions of Regulation of 1822, Goalpara was cut off from Rongpur and constituted into a separate district with headquarters at Goalpara. This district was treated as a part of the ordinary jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Assam till 1867 when the Bengal Commissionership of Cooch Behar was formed including Goalpara and the newly acquired Eastern *Duars*. In 1868, its judicial administration was restored to the Judicial Commissioner of Assam but its executive control remained with the new Commissionership till the formation of the Chief Commissionership of Assam in 1874. The legal position of the four districts of Assam viz. Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang and Nowgong was defined by Act II of 1835 which placed all functionaries in these districts under the *Sadar* Courts in civil and criminal cases and of the Bengal Board of Revenue in revenue matters. In 1837, a set of rules known as the Assam Codes was drawn up for the regulation of procedure in civil and criminal cases. There were, however, no special instructions regarding conduct of revenue business.[8] In 1860, the Codes of Civil and Criminal Procedure were extended to the Brahmaputra Valley and the Indian Penal Code came into force. In 1862, the Assam Code was superseded. There was, however, uncertainity as to the operation of the other laws in force in Bengal and conflicting opinion prevailed till the passing of the Scheduled Districts Act, XIV of 1874 and the Laws Local Extent Act, XV of 1874. A series of notifications under the Scheduled Districts Act placed the plains of Assam in much the same legal position as other parts of India. The Easten *Duars* in Goalpara were administered in civil matters in accordance with Rules under the Scheduled Districts Act in-lieu of the Civil Producedure Code which was not in force there.

Sadar Dewani Courts were established in the Lower Assam districts including Goalpara in 1835. The administration of Civil Justice in Goalpara district like other plains districts of Brahmaputra Valley was under the control of the District Judge with headquarters at Gauhati. The District Judge was under the direct control and supervision of the Calcutta High Court.

8. E. A Gait, *A History of Assam*, Calcutta, 1976, pp. 350-351.

The administration of civil justice at the turn of the present century was as follows[9] :—

"The civil work of the district is not heavy and the Deputy Commissioner acts as subordinate judge, while one of the assistant magistrates in each subdivision acts as *munsif*. In 1902, the subordinate judge heared 9 original cases and 18 appeals, while 1,229 cases were disposed of by the *munsifs*. Only a little over one-seventh of these cases were contested, and a large proportion of them were simple money suits. In spite of the fact that the greater part of the district is permanently settled the number of rent and title suits is very small. Special rules are in force for the administration of civil justice in the Eastern Duars. The Code of Civil Procedure is not in force. The rules are fit for the simple and primitive people inhabiting the tract, and provide that, unless one or other of the parties objects, civil suits should be disposed of by a village panchayat. The panchayats are chosen of by the parties to the case, and the proceedings of the panchayat when endorsed by the Deputy Commissioner or his assistants are final. When the parties refuse to refer their suit to the panchayat the case is tried by the Deputy Commissioner or his assistants. No appeal lies as a matter of right from the decision of the Deputy Commissioner or his assistants, but the Commissioner of the Assam Valley districts or the Deputy Commissioner may, if he sees fit, upon application of the parties, call for and revise the proceedings of the lower court."

Consequent upon the formation of a High Court for Assam, the control and supervision of the Calcutta High Court over all courts of Assam ceased to exist. The Judgeship of Lower Assam had jurisdiction over Goalpara district. For sometime the Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara was the ex-officio Sub-Judge with jurisdiction over the entire district. At a later stage a Sub-Judge was appointed for Goalpara district.

At present, there is one District and Sessions Judge and one Assistant District and Sessions Judge at Dhuburi besides Munsifs, who are posted in all the three Sub-divisions of the district. The pecuniary jurisdiction of the Munsif extends to all civil suits of value not exceeding 5,000 rupees as against the previous pecuniary limit of 1,000 rupees. The District and Sessions Judge's pecuniary jurisdiction is unlimited. Appeal lies with the Assistant District and Sessions Judge from the *munsif's* court. The cases exceeding pecuniary limit of the *munsif* are instituted in the court of the Assistant District and Sessions Judge. Appeal from the decree of the Subordinate Judge as original court lies with the District and Sessions Judge. Other appeals lie with the Gauhati High Court. The Subordinate Judge is empowered to exercise the powers which are invested in the District Judge in respect of matters under the Indian Succession Act.

9. B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetteers, Vol. III., Goalpara*, Calcutta, 1905, pp. 132-33.

The statement showing the number of civil suits in the district during the period, 1967 to 1975.

Year	Suit for money/movable property	District Judges Court suit under Rent law.	Title and other suit	Total	Value of suits	Other Civil Courts. Original	Appellate	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1967 ..	248	19	1,465	1,732	5,75,344.00	1,585	77	1,662
1968 ..	301	87	1,210	1,598	3,79,933.00	2,414	136	2,550
1969 ..	281	56	1,045	1,382	4,28,090.53	2,544	113	2,657
1970 ..	234	99	1,005	1,383	4,15,153.76	1,853	109	1,962
1971 ..	268	33	825	1,126	3,24,453.50	1,832	226	2,058
1972 ..	266	28	676	970	3,31,798.59	2,357	160	2,517
1973 ..	326	22	782	1,130	8,22,922.70	1,961	93	2,054
1974 ..	227	13	499	730	4,92,640.00	2,162	149	2,311
1975 ..	272	16	571	859	4,76,544.32	1,966	332	2,298

Criminal : For the purpose of administration of criminal justice, there were, at the beginning of this century, a few Magistrates in the district. Only an Assistant Magistrate who was in-charge of Goalpara Subdivision and only 2 Subordinate Magistrates in addition to the Deputy Commissioner were entrusted with dispensation of criminal justice in the district. B. C. Allen sums up the position at the beginning of the current century as follows.[10] :—

"Appeals lie to the Deputy Commissioner, from orders passed by magistrates of the second or third class, and from the orders of first class magistrates to the Judge of the Assam Valley districts, whose headquarters are at Gauhati. Appeals from the Judge lie to the High Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal. In 1902, there were four stipendiary magistrates in the district, who decided 717 original criminal cases. In the course of these proceedings, 2,227 witnesses were examined. Altogether, there were 852 cases under the Indian Penal Code, either offences against property or against the human body. There is not much serious crime in Goalpara, and most of the offences were either housebreaking and house-trespass or petty thefts."

The volume of work was gradually on the increase and as such, the number of magistrates was also increased. The Extra Assistant Commissioners and some of the Sub-Deputy Collectors were invested with magisterial powers of 1st, 2nd and 3rd class. Trials were held under the provision of the Criminal Procedure Code. A magistrate is, at the initial stage, invested with third class magisterial powers. When he gathers experience and shows efficiency, the State Government on the recommendation of the District Magistrate, invests him with magisterial powers of the second class. But at the time of conferring the magistrate 1st class powers, the Session Judge is ordinarily consulted.

The criminal cases are tried, at the first instance, by magistrates in accordance with the powers conferred upon them. In a sessions triable case, it is committed to the court of sessions by a First class Magistrate, when it is found that a prima-facie case is established. On receipt of such commitments, the Sessions Judge may keep the records with him for trial by himself or he may transfer the same to the Assistant Sessions Judge for trial. All criminal appeals are, at the first instance, filed in the court of the Sessions Judge. Appeals from the decision of magistrates of Second or Third class lie in the Court of the District Magistrate who does not have powers to hear appeals against orders of First Class Magistrates. Appeals from the decision of First Class Magistrates lie with the Sessions Judge.

10. Ibid, p. 132.

Appeals against the orders of the Sessions Judge and Assistant Sessions Judge lie with the High Court. The Sessions Judge also exercises power under sections 435 and 528 (2) Cr. P. C. over all magistrates.

Besides trying cases within the courts, magistrates sometimes hold local trials. The local trial gives the trying magistrates an opportunity to acquiant himself of the actual circumstances under which the alleged offences were committed. Till 1946, many of the cases instituted under section 100 Cr. P. C. against habitual offenders were locally tried. These trials had a salutary effect on the people of the locality. Characters with criminal disposition felt the hammer of law, while the peace loving local people were doubly assured of their security.

Since 1953 competent courts have taken up holding of trials on open streets to detect offenders on the spot under the Municipal Bye-laws and Motor Vehicles Act. The courts are generally known as mobile courts and the practice is adopted for fostering better civic sense in the minds of all people.

Generally, once a month the district Magistrate holds a meeting of the magistrates under him to discuss the progress of dispensation of justice in their courts and to devise means for quicker disposal of long pending cases by removing difficulties hindering their completion. Such discussions help in taking proper steps for minimising the number of cases pending for a long time.

Whenever the civil file of the *Munsif* is comparatively light, he is invested with magisterial powers to enable him to try and dispose some criminal cases. Now-a-days, *Munsifs* also try criminal cases besides of his normal civil duties. The State cases in the magistrate's court are conducted by the Prosecuting Inspector who is assisted by an Assistant Public Prosecutor. All the prosecuting officers belong to the Police Department.

For conducting prosecution in sessions cases and for appeals and revisions before the sessions courts, there is a Public Prosecutor who is assisted by a panel of Assistant Public Prosecutors. They are selected from amongst the lawyers of the station. The Public Prosecutor receives a retainer's fee over and above the fees paid to him for the actual work done and the Assistant Public Prosecutors are entitled to remuneration in accordance with the scale of fees as laid down in the Assam Law Department Manual. A panel of defence lawyers is also maintained to give legal assistance to paupers accused of offences punishable with death or imprisonment for life. Such lawyers also get remuneration as laid down in Assam Law Department Manual.

Separation of Executive and Judiciary : Since the sixties, there has been separation of executive from judiciary in Goalpara district. A set of judicial officers who are under the direct control of the Gauhati High Court have been posted in all three Sub-divisions of the district. These officers are entrusted with the trial of criminal cases and are under the supervision of the Chief Judicial Magistrate of the district with headquarters at Dhuburi. Under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (Act No. 2 of 1974) trial of cases is done by Judicial Magistrates and powers of Executive Magistrates under the District Magistrate have been curtailed. The following tables show the trial of persons involved in criminal cases and punishment inflicted during 1967-1973.

Statement showing the trial of persons involved in criminal cases.

Year		No. of offences reported	No. of persons under trial	Discharged or acquitted.	Convicted	Committed or referred	Died, escaped or transferred	Person remaining under trial at the end of the year
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1967	..	6,148	14,057	6,191	2,717	217	15	4,886
1968	..	5,869	13,601	4,885	2,233	112	17	6,354
1969	..	4,861	14,687	4,979	1,988	71	11	7,338
1970	..	4,307	16,019	6,517	2,092	103	9	8,191
1971	..	4,323	19,289	7,774	1 980	245	11	9,278
1972	..	5,696	18,547	7,759	4,508	168	11	10,054
1973	..	4,872	21,469	9,495	1,764	95	12	10,083

Statement showing the Punishments inflicted in criminal cases in the district.

Year	No. of persons sentenced to :						Total amount of Fine		No. of persons sentenced to imprisonment.			
	Imprisonment	Fine or forfeiture	Give security	Fine of Rs. 10 or under	Fine of Rs. 10 or over	Imposed	Realised	Paid as compensation	15 days and under	Above 15 days to 6 months	Above 6 months to 2 years	Above 2 yrs.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1967 ..	550	2,437	42	813	1306	23,441.00	20,604.00	Nil	644	283	12	..
1968 ..	353	1,987	59	999	814	50,920.00	41,681.00	3932.00	229	113	16	..
1969 ..	457	1,527	50	1,025	973	45,966.00	16,824.00	Nil	469	225	25	..
1970 ..	387	1,401	15	488	781	1,71,545.00	34,381.00	Nil	217	131	39	..
1971 ..	398	1,642	7	451	898	42,232.00	36,634.00	Nil	301	144	6	..
1972 ..	2188	2,417	9	1,099	911	42,014.00	21,414.00	Nil	1886	295	4	..
1973 ..	444	432	22	483	782	53,021.00	29,277.00	Nil	251	172	20	1

Revenue Courts : Over and above the courts mentioned above, there are other courts, namely, revenue courts and labour courts, Adhi Conciliation Board etc. Various revenue courts are constituted under the Assam Land Revenue Regulation. The Deputy Commissioner, Extra Assistant Commissioner, Settlement Officer, Assistant Settlement Officer, Survey Officer, Assistant Survey Officer, Sub-Deputy Collector hold courts to dispose various revenue matters within the limits of their local jurisdiction. In deciding revenue cases the presiding officers of the revenue courts may summon any person whose physical attendence before the court is considered necessary. Various revenue courts decide matters relating to mutation, settlement, partition of estates and other matters. The appeals against the orders of the Revenue Officers lie as follows :— to the Board of Revenue, from the orders passed by the Deputy Commissioner, Settlement Officer or Survey Officer ; to the Deputy Commissioner from orders of the Sub-Divisional Officer, Assistant Commissioner, Extra Assistant Commissioner and Sub-Deputy Collector ; to Settlement Officer from orders passed by the Assistant Settlement Officer ; to Survey Officer from orders passed by Assistant Survey Officer. It is thus clear that the Assam Board of Revenue is the highest revenue court in the State and in several matters of revenue, jurisdiction of the High Court is barred.

Labour Court : All the industrial disputes or labour disputes under the various Labour Acts are tried by the Labour Court. The Presiding Officer of the Labour Court, Gauhati has jurisdiction over the entire district of Goalpara. Besides this Labour Court, there are Industrial Tribunals to which appeals lie from the orders of the Labour Court.

Adhi Conciliation Board : The Assam Adhiar Protection and Regulation Act 1948, (Act XII of 1948) provided for the formation of the *Adhi* Conciliation Boards. This *Adhi* Conciliation Board decided disputes between the landlord and the *adhiar*. These Boards have been abolished since December, 1971.

Bar Association : Legal practitioners of each of the three Subdivisions of the district are members of Bar Associations which look after the interest of the members. The Bar Associations at Goalpara and Dhuburi have their own libraries containing law books for use by members. The petition writers of the district have also their association.

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 Goalpara, B.C. Allen, has observed as follows :

"The Public Works Department was entrusted with the construction and maintenance of all the larger public buildings. The most important were the jail, the public offices, schools and telegraph offices at district and sub-divisional headquarters, circuit houses, dak bungalows, and inspection bungalows on provincial roads.....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 artisan class, and the scarcity and dearness of unskilled labour." [1]

With the manifold increase in constructional activities after Independence, some changes were effected in the Department. It was bifurcated into two wings (1) Public Works Department (Roads and Buildings) and (2) 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. At a later stage, the two wings were converted into separate departments and placed under separate Chief Engineers who

1, B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetteers, Vol. III, Goalpara*, Calcutta, 1905, p. 131.

acted as the technical as well as the administrative heads of the respective departments. The department of Embankment and Drainage was later on re-designated as Flood Control and Irrigation Department.

The nomenclature Flood Control and Irrigation Department was further changed to Flood Control Department with the creation of a new department known as the Public Works Irrigation Department with effect from 1st January, 1974. All matters connected with irrigation and drainage hitherto dealt by the Flood Control and Irrigation Department and Agriculture Department (Engineering Wing) was transferred to the newly created department.

For administrative convenience, the entire State has been divided into a number of Circles. Each circle comprising one or more districts or a part thereof is placed under one Superintending Engineer. The circle is further divided into divisions, each of which is under the charge of an Executive Engineer. 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 subdivisions and each sub-division is placed under the 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. The officers of the rank of the Subdivisional Officer and above exercise financial powers delegated to them. The number of divisions and subdivisions in the districts varies with the work load.

Public Works Department (Roads and Buildings) : At present, there are six divisions viz., Goalpara R & B division, Goalpara National Highway division, Dhuburi division and Kokrajhar division under Western Assam Circle with headquarters at Dhuburi ; Abhayapuri Construction Division and Gossaingaon Lateral Road Division under Lateral Road Works Construction Circle. Besides, there is one mechanical division at Abhayapuri under mechanical circle, Gauhati. Each of these divisions has under its control a number of subdivisions. Goalpara division has three subdivisions, Goalpara National Highway division two subdivisions, Dhuburi division four subdivisions, Kokrajhar division three subdivisions, Abhayapuri Construction division five subdivisions and Gossaingaon Lateral Roads division two subdivisions. In Goalpara district, roads including National Highways under Public Works Department totalled 2,624.23 kms. on 31-3-74 of which 605.93 kms. were surfaced, 1,743.60 kms. gravelled and

274.70 kms. earth. Besides construction, maintenance, repairs of roads, the Public Works Department is also charged with the construction and the upkeep of important public buildings like district and subdivisional courts, circuit houses, dak bungalows, inspection bungalows and rest houses. The construction works of the river port at Jogighopa has also been largely entrusted to this department.

Flood Control : As mentioned earlier, this department under its present name came into being on January 1, 1974. It has two divisions at Goalpara and Dhuburi under the Superintending Engineer, Bijni Investigation Circle at Bijni. The first has two sub-divisions and the second three subdivisions. Important flood protection works have been described in Chapter—IV, Agriculture and Irrigation.

Public Works Irrigation Department : This department under its present name also came into being in January, 1974. Prior to it, its activities were the joint responsibilities of Flood Control and Irrigation Department and engineering wing of the Agriculture Department. This department has at present four divisions within the district viz., (1) Kokrajhar Irrigation Division, (2) Kokrajhar Irrigation Investigation Division, (3) Gauripur Irrigation Investigation Division under Superintending Engineer, Kokrajhar Irrigation Investigation Circle with headquarters at Kokrajhar, and (4) Goalpara Irrigation Investigation Division under Superintending Engineer, Western Assam Irrigation Circle, Gauhati. Gauhati Irrigation Division, Gauhati also looks after irrigation works in Goalpara subdivision on south bank of the Brahmaputra. Gauhati Mechanical Irrigation Division, Gauhati is responsible for mechanical and electrical works in the district of Goalpara. Major irrigation works in Goalpara district have been described elsewhere.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE :

During the pre-Second World War period, the emphasis on agriculture was rather meagre. Only one Agriculture Inspector and one Demonstrator had the responsibility of looking after the agricultural activities in the district. Their services were placed under the Deputy Commissioner. The staff position was gradually augmented and some Inspectors and Demonstrators were posted in important places. Till 1945, there was, however, no noticeable increase in the strength of officers and staff. The officers were mainly occupied with Government farms, village level demonstrations, distribution of improved seeds and giving technical advice to the cultivators.

To cope with food shortage and unprecedented rise of prices during the Second World War, the Government launched the Grow More Food

Campaign with a seven point integrated programme to increase agricultural food production. Accordingly the Agriculture Department was reorganised and expanded. The District Agriculture Office at Dhuburi headed by the District Agriculture Officer, was started in 1945. He was under the Director of Agriculture who was the technical and administrative head of the Department. The strength of the field staff was increased by appointing one Irrigation Inspector and a few Demonstrators in each Sub-divisional headquarters in 1950. With the inauguration of Community Development Blocks, Agriculture Inspectors were posted at Block Development Offices. Subdivisional Agriculture Officers were posted in 1956.

The District Agriculture Officer, Dhuburi heads the district organisation of the Agriculture Department and is fully responsible for implementation of the programme of agricultural development through his subordinates. There are two subdivisional Agriculture Officers at Goalpara and Kokrajhar who are under the control of the District Agriculture Officer, Dhuburi. All such officers including the Sub-divisional Agriculture Officer, Dhuburi attached to the District Agriculture Office have financial powers and are responsible for implementation of the agricultural programmes under their jurisdictions. For implementation of special schemes like Jute Development Scheme, and Horticulture Development Scheme Inspectors have been posted in each Sub-division. There are also a host of officers for plant protection, agricultural marketing, agricultural information, agronomy etc., in the district attached to the District Agriculture Office.

There are 20 Community Development Blocks in the district and at each Block there is an Agriculture Inspector known as Extension Officer (Agriculture) who is under the immediate control of the Block Development Officer subject to technical and administrative guidance of the District Agriculture Officer. At the Block level there are also Additional Extension Officers and Demonstrators for implementing various schemes. It has already been stated elsewhere that the Agriculture Engineering Section now comes under the purview of the newly created Irrigation Department. The details of the activities and achievements of the Agriculture Department have been discussed in Chapter--IV.

(c) *ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND VETERINARY DEPARTMENT* :

Prior to 1953 it was known as the Civil Veterinary Department, headed by a Superintendent whose headquarters were at Gauhati. Only four Veterinary Inspectors were posted at Gauhati, Jorhat, Dhuburi, and Silchar. The Department posted one or more Veterinary Field Assistants in the District headquarters and Subdivisional headquarters of other districts. There were only a few

Veterinary hospitals and dispensaries in the towns in charge of Veterinary Surgeons in Assam.

It was in 1953 that the Office of the District Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Officer was established at Dhuburi. This officer was the head of the district organisation of this department. In 1959, the financial powers of the Livestock Inspectors were withdrawn and invested in the district officer.

Along with the inauguration of the Community Development Blocks the district organisation of this department was also expanded to cover all the Blocks. Each Community Development Block had a Veterinary dispensary in 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 under the Department. The post of Sub-divisional Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Officer was created during the early sixties. The two Subdivisional Officers at Goalpara and Kokrajhar are under the control of the District Officer at Dhuburi and are responsible for animal husbandry and veterinary works. The hospitals and dispensaries are in charge of Veterinary Assistant Surgeons assisted by a few Veterinary Field Assistants. Each Block Development Officer, has under his administrative control one Veterinary Extension Officer helped by a number of Field Assistants. The Department is mainly concerned with the health and improvement of breed of livestock and poultry. Under the first comes preventive measures like mass vaccination against Rinderpest, Anthrax Haemorrhagic Septicemia, Black Quarter, Ranikhet, Fowl Cholera, and curative treatment for combating foot and mouth diseases and diseases mentioned above. Parasitic diseases like Liver flukes, round worm, tape worm are also treated with modern drugs in hospitals and dispensaries. For improvement of breed the department has taken various measures like cross breeding of local varieties of animals and birds with better varieties, artificial insemination, castration of weaker animals, maintaining of breeding bulls in Key Village Centres etc. With the above objects in view the Department has 3 hospitals, 29 dispensaries, 7 artificial insemination centres, 25 first aid centres, one goat farm and one poultry farm in the district. There is one District Diagnostic Laboratory with one Assistant Research Officer, one Technical Assistant and two Laboratory Assistants besides other manual staff. Detailed activities of the Veterinary Department have been given in Chapter IV.

(d) *INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT* :

In Goalpara district, Industries Department was first headed by a Superintendent of Industries. The Assistant Director of Cottage Industries with headquarters at Dhuburi now heads the district organisation and

is under the direct control of the Director of Industries, Government of Assam. One Superintendent of Industries is appointed in each Subdivisional Office of the Industries Department at Kokrajhar and Goalpara. These two officers work under the control and guidance of the Assistant Director, Cottage Industries, Dhuburi. In each Community Development Block of the district, there is one Extension Officer (Industries) under the immediate control of the Block Development Officer. There is one office for Rural Industrialisation Project at Gauripur. The Project Officer and Ex-Officio Deputy Director is the head of this office. He is assisted in his work by the Extension Officer (Industries), Economic Investigator and Survey and Planning Officers. The Assistant Director of Cottage Industries, who is invested with financial powers is responsible for development of cottage and small scale industries in the district.

For the development of Industries in the district, Government of Assam offered assistance to the industrial units or new enterpreneurs in the form of loans, grants, outright capital subsidy, transport and power subsidy, infra-structure facilities, technical know-how, raw materials, import licence, apprenticeship and implant training, study tour etc. Such assistance and facilities are channelised through the Assistant Director, Cottage Industries. The activities of the department in Goalpara district have been described in Chapter--V.

(e) *CO-OPERATIVE DEPARTMENT* :

The Deputy Registrar of Co-operative Societies heads the organisation at the district level and is under the control of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Assam, Gauhati. The Deputy Registrar is assisted by Assistant Registrars of Co-operative Societies posted at Goalpara, Kokrajhar and Dhuburi and Inspectors attached to his office. One Assistant Co-operative Officer is posted in each of the Community Development Blocks under the control of the Block Development Officer and is known as Extension Officer (Co-operative). Senior auditors are placed in charge of different Co-operative organisations such as marketing, credit revitalisation, Consumer Stores, Pilot projects, farming and industrial societies etc. There is one Deputy Handloom Officer in charge of Co-operative handloom societies. One Liquidation cum-Bakijai Officer is posted in each subdivision and work under the control of the respective officers who head the sub-divisional offices of Co-operative Department.

(f) *FOREST DEPARTMENT* :

Prior to March 1968, there were two forest divisions in the district namely Goalpara East and Goalpara West Division with headquarters at Kokrajhar and Dhuburi respectively. Since then the forest divisions

of the district are Goalpara, Dhuburi, Haltugaon and Kachugaon with headquarters at Goalpara, Dhuburi, Kokrajhar, and Gossaigaon. Another non territorial division namely 'Third Working Plan Division' was created on 1-9 71 with headquarters at Kachugaon. Each Forest Division is under the charge of a Divisional Forest Officer who is assisted by Rangers, Deputy Rangers, Foresters, and Forest Guards. Generally Sub-beats are in charge of Foresters assisted by some Forest Guards. These personnel also man beats under supervision of Deputy Rangers, Ranges are under Range Officers who are assisted by Deputy Rangers. Foresters and Forest Guards.

Goalpara Forest Division : In 1972-73, it had 46,459 hectares under it consisting of 20056 hectares of Reserved Forests and 26403 hectares of Unclassed Forests. Rongjuli, Krishnai, Lakhipur and Northern Range are the four ranges under it. These ranges are subdivided into beats varying from four in the case of Northern Ranger to a maximum of seven beats in case of Rongjuli. There are also three independent beats namely Dubapara, Bardamal and Pancharatna.

Dhuburi Forest Division consists of Goma, Khoraghat, Rupshi, and Bahalpur ranges. The first has six beats, and the second and third have nine beats each. Beats and sub-beats under Bahalpur number thirteen. It also has a check station and nine Timber Depots under it. In 1972-73, Dhuburi Forest Division had 38,812 hectares of Reserved Forests and 8,820 hectares of Unclassed Forests under it.

Haltugaon Forest Division : Ranges under Haltugaon Forest Division which in 1972-73 was the largest Forest Division in the district with 1,01,172 hectares of Reserved Forests and 1,248 hectares of Unclassed Forest are Gaurang, Jharhari, Ultapani and Sidli. Beats and sub-beats under the first three ranges number nine whereas Sidli Range alone has ten such beats or sub-beats. There are also three Depots under this division.

Kachugaon Forest Division : Area-wise this Forest Division comes next to Haltugaon and in 1972-73, it totalled 82,373 hectares of which 81,973 hectares were under Reserved Forests. Four ranges namely Central, Sanfan, Western and Tramway range under it, have in all ten beats.

CHAPTER XIV.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

(a) *HISTORY OF THE LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN THE DISTRICT* :

The present system of local self-government in Assam is a legacy of the British Administration and its origin may be traced to the principle of local taxation embodied in Regulation 13 of 1813 which lays down that "those who congregate together for any purpose and thereby made it necessary to make special arrangements for the protection of their life and property must pay for the maintenance of police."[1] However, some form of local self-government were in existence even during the pre-British days. Among the Hindus, the institution of *Namghar* was something like a village parliament run on broad demographic principles. It exercised a close spiritual control over the members of the community and held them back from many evil acts. It was a village court, trials of crimes and disputes were held in it.[2]

The Boro-Kacharis of Darrang, North Kamrup and Kokrajhar and Dhuburi Sub-divisions of Goalpara district elect a *Deuri* in each village to decide the petty disputes among the villagers. Those Boro-Kacharis who observe *Kherai Puja* have a peculiar system of selecting the *Deuri*. On completion of the *Puja*, the *Deodhani* (female dancer) pours water over a particular person who then becomes the *Deuri*. In those Kachari villages where *Kherai Puja* is not celebrated the *Deuri* is selected in *Garja puja*. The *Vichar* (trial) among the Kacharis commences after the aggrieved party deposits certain amount with the assembly of persons who are invited to settle disputes. This amount is called *Sabhni*. The opposite party is required to deposit twice the amount deposited by the first party. The amount deposited by the losing party is forfeited and distributed among the members of the assembly. The *Deuris* get no fixed salary but they are offered something in kind. The antiquity of this system is difficult to ascertain but the rigidity of the system has been mellowed by the lustre of the present day courts.

1. V. V. Venkata Rao : *A Hundred Years of Local Self Government in Assam*, Calcutta, 1967, p. 28.
2. M. Neog, *The Vaishnava Renaissance : Aspect of Heritage of Assam* 1959, p. 4.

In their travalogues many foreign visitors have made mention of the local self-government in Assam in the pre-British days. In this famous *Report on Assam*, Moffat Mills suggested reconstitution of the village councils and appointment of an influential class of men as *Gaonburhas* for management of local affairs and thereby eliminate the constant interference of Government in the affairs of the village. Suryya Kumar Bhuyan has observed in his *Anglo Assamese Relations* that Scott, the first Commissioner, of Assam, instituted Panchayats in populous *parganas* and villages.

Three types of institutions of local self-government viz., local boards, municipalities and town committees and Panchayats were evolved during the British period. Of these institutions the first one no longer exists.

(b) *LOCAL BOARDS* :

Prior to the formation of the Local Boards in the district, there were 'District Committees' in the various districts of the State. But we have little information regarding their composition and actual functioning in the district. These Committees were abolished in 1882 by executive orders and their place was taken by Local Boards established in each sub-division.

The following account from the old District Gazetteer of Goalpara gives the history of the Local Boards in the district till 1905.

"In 1874, when Assam was erected into a separate Administration, the Government of India assigned one-seventeenth of the net land revenue for local purposes. The district improvement fund was then started, and the administration of its resources was as before entrusted to the Deputy Commissioner assisted by a committee. The actual amount placed at their 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 executive order, and their place was taken by boards established in each subdivision, which are the local authorities in existence at the present day. The Deputy Commissioner is Chairman of the board of the headquarters subdivision ; the Goalpara board is presided over by the Subdivisional Officer. The Local Boards are entrusted with the maintenance of all local roads within their jurisdiction, the provision and maintenance of local staging bungalows and dispensaries, and the supervision of village sanitation, vaccination, and the

district post. They are also in charge of primary education, subject to the general control of the Education Department, and are empowered to make grants-in-aid to schools of higher grade, subject to certain rules. For these purposes they have placed at their disposal the rate which is levied under the Assam Local Rates Regulation of 1879, at the rate of one anna per rupee on the annual value of lands, as well as the surplus income of pounds and ferries, and some minor receipts. This income is supplemented by an annual grant from Provincial funds. The annual budgets of the Boards are submitted to the Commissioner for sanction. Estimates for all works costing Rs. 500 or over must be submitted to the Public Works Department for approval, and important works, requiring much professional skill, and made over for execution to that department. Less important works are entrusted to the board overseers."[3]

The Boards so constituted in 1882 were known as Local Boards. In the District of Goalpara then two Local Boards were constituted one for Goalpara Sub-division and the other for Dhuburi Sub-division. The strength of the Local Board varied between eight to twenty four. The exact strength of the Board was determined by the Government from time to time. However, initially the majority of members in both the Local Boards were officials and European members.

A Royal Commission was appointed in 1907 with Hobhouse as its Chairman to evolve a process of democratic decentralisation. The Commission submitted its report in 1911, and the Government of Assam did not agree with many of its suggestions. However, certain important changes were incorporated in the Assam Local Board Act, 1915. This piece of legislation was a land mark in the history of local self-government in Assam. Under this Act, Local Boards were authorised to appoint District Engineers, Health Officers and Sanitary Officers. It prohibited the salaried Government officials from contesting the office of the Vice-Chairman. The Act provided for the appointment of committees consisting of persons who were not members of the Board. The provision for elective non-official majority and the election of non-official Chairman and Vice-Chairman sought to give greater degree of democratic decentralisation to the local bodies. The elected members were divded into four classes, being elected by an electorate of its own. The four classes were the planter's representatives headquarter members who were elected by the residential voters of the headquarters, mercantile representatives and rural members who were elected by the general electorate.

The Assam Legislative Council appointed a Committee to suggest amendments to the Local Self-Gobernment Act, 1915. on the basis of the

B. G. Allen, Assam District Gazetteers, Vol. 111, Goalpara, Calcutta, 1905, pp. 106-08

suggestions of the said Committee the Local Self Government Act was passed in 1926.

In 1927, the strength and composition of the Local Board was revised in conformity with the Local Self-Government (Amendment) Act of 1926, which provided for three types of constituencies-Muhammadan, Non-Muhammadan and Planters.

In 1945, the strength and composition of the Local Boards were further revised to accommodate the scheduled tribe (plains) who were demanding persistently for more seats. As a result the number of elected seat was increased and that of the nominated seats reduced. Other important features of this Act were abolition of the ex-officio element and provision for election of the members from the scheduled tribes.

The Local Self Government Act, 1953, again revised the composition and strength of the Local Boards. Under this Act, Government could nominate not more than two members from among those sections of people who were so far unrepresented. The Government also had the power to reserve some seats for the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes but the proportion of reservation was subject to population of the sub-division concerned. The Assam Panchayat Act which came into force in 1960, abolished the Local Boards.

Functions of Local Boards : Under Local Rates Regulations, 1879 the District Committees were entrusted with different public utility works. The main functions were construction, repair and maintenance of roads and other lines of communication. The improvement of canals, rivers, maintenance of embankments, bridges, repair of school buildings, granting of scholarships, training of teachers, establishment of hospitals, dispensaries, lunatic asylums, tanks, rest houses for travellers were the main functions of the District Committees.

The Local Board Act, 1915 empowered the Local Boards to construct, repair and maintain roads, the embankments, bridges, water canals. Boards were also entrusted with planting of trees by the roadside and removal of the branches of trees hanging over the roads, construction and maintenance of railways, rope ways, and establishment of steamer services as cheap means of communication. They were vested with the power of management of primary and middle vernacular schools. Local Boards could appoint vaccinators and make provisions for sanitation, conservancy, protected water supply and drainage system.

The local boards had the power to construct and maintain travellers bungalow, *sarai* for travellers and to destroy dangerous animals and stray dogs ; the management and control of fairs and festivals and establishment of veterinary dispensaries, the provision for breeding cattle and horses.

Under the Local Boards Act, 1953, the Boards lost the powers to construct the railways and rope ways, but were entrusted with maintenance and management of the ferry services.

Sources of Revenue : Before 1874, there was only one amalgamated fund for the welfare of the public. Later on, it was divided into two-general fund and local fund. The local fund consisted of the amounts from ferry collection, net tolls from district roads, balance of the convict labour fund, balance of the cattle trespass fund, receipt from fishery, one per cent of the road fund of certain districts, balance of fund for the improvement of certain Government estates. The general fund was utilised for construction of important roads and feeder roads. A portion of it was also utilised for metalling the existing roads.

The principal source of revenue of the District Committee which was constituted under Local Rates Regulations of 1879 was local rates on the annual value of land. The rate was 2 *annas* per cultivated acre. Of the total collection from local rates 3/8 th was left for works of provincial importance, the balance 5/8th was spent in the district subject to the Government of India's requirement for famine etc. Besides local rates, the other sources of revenue of the local boards were rents, tolls on ferries, pounds and grants from Government. The Act of 1915 empowered the Local Boards to impose taxes on construction of railways and ropeways, but the Act, 1953 abolished imposition of these taxes by Boards. The Boards could levy any tax after obtaining previous permission from Government. It was also authorised to impose taxes on cinema halls, circuses, variety shows, tea stalls etc.

Budget : Under the Local Rates Regulations, 1879, the District Committees had to prepare the budget for the Local Boards. In every financial year before the 15th October, they had to submit the budget estimates showing the detailed income and expenditure to the Civil Secretariat. After receiving the approval of the Government, the District Committees had to prepare a detailed expenditure statement showing expenditure incurred on the improvement of roads and had to submit it to Public Works Department. The Chief Commissioner had the right to reject or accept the budget. Before preparation of the budget, the District Committees had to

consult the appropriate authority. In 1899, a slightly different procedure was evolved for scrutiny of the budget and issuing sanctions. The Local Boards were to submit the budget first to Deputy Commissioner for his approval. The latter suggested modification but the former had the liberty to follow or reject. The final authority for rejection or acceptance was the Chief Commissioner.

In the year 1915, elaborate arrangements were made for scrutiny of the budget. The budget had to be submitted to the Deputy Commissioner who could suggest modification or could despatch it to the Commissioner. If the budget was returned the Board met at a special meeting for consideration. The final authority for the rejection or acceptance of the budget was the Commissioner. In 1953 the power was vested with Government.

The following table shows the receipts and expenditure of the two Local Boards for the year 1956-57.

Receipts and Expenditure of Goalpara Local Board.

Receipts	Amount Rs.	Expenditure	Amount Rs.
Land Revenue ..	..	Refund & Drawbacks ..	..
Provincial rate ..	39,787	Land Revenue ..	..
Law & Justice ..	49	Local rate ..	..
Police ..	4,404	Interests ..	..
Education ..	..	General Administration ..	15,137
Medical ..	34,103	Law & Justice ..	184
Scientific & minor Depts.	..	Police ..	13
Superannuation etc. ..	..	Education ..	803
Stationery ..	..	Medical ..	64,013
Miscellaneous ..	17,057	Scientific & minor Depts.	310
Civil works ..	1,88,972	Superannuation etc. ..	764
		Stationery & Printings ..	460
		Miscellaneous ..	1,400
		Famine Relief ..	18,044
		Civil works ..	2,67,652
Total ..	2,84,372	Total ..	3,74,780
Debts & Deposits ..	1,858	Debts & Deposits ..	4,153
Opening Balance ..	17,828	Closing Balance ..	86,125
Grand Total ..	4,65,058	Grand Total ..	4,65,058

Receipts and expenditure of Dhuburi Local Board.

Receipts	Amount Rs.	Expenditure	Amount Rs.
Land Revenue ..	29,491	Refund & Drawbacks ..	..
Provincial rate ..	1,47,257	Land Revenue ..	1,051
Interest ..	..	Local rates ..	76
Law and Justice ..	85	Interest ..	2,200
Police ..	18,305	General Administration ..	27,493
Education ..	..	Law and Justice ..	270
Medical ..	89,305	Police ..	847
Scientific & other .. minor Departments.		Education * ..	42,187
Superannuation & pension	..	Medical * ..	2,30,783
Stationery & printing ..	..	Scientific & other Depts.	9,058
Miscellaneous ..	14,690	Superannuation Allowance & pension ..	3,390
Civil works ..	2,55,600	Stationery & Printing ..	965
Text Relief work ..	25,000	Miscellaneous ..	..
		Famine Relief	
		Test Relief work ..	10,731
		Civil works × ..	4,53,996+
Total ..	5,79,733	Total ..	7,83,047
Debts & Deposits ..	39,176	Debts & Deposits ..	29,519
Opening Balance ..	6,56,898	Closing Balance	44,63,241
	12,75,807		12,75,807

* Including expenditure on buildings.
\+ Including uncashed cheques.
× Excluding expenditure on Educational and Medical buildings.

A number of village authorities were established under the Assam Local Self—Government Act, 1915 and some of them had been invested with judicial powers under the Bengal Village Self-Government Act, 1919 (Bengal Act V of 1919).

(c) *MUNICIPALITIES & TOWN COMMITTEES*:

The most important institution of Local Self-Government in the urban areas is the Municipality which has played a significant part in fostering among the people a sense of participation in administration.

At present, there are three Municipal Boards in Goalpara district namely Dhuburi, Goalpara and Kokrajhar. Goalpara is the oldest municipality in the district.

The Goalpara Municipality was first constituted into a town committee under the Act of 1868 on 1st May 1875.[4] In 1878, it was constituted into a Municipality under Act V (B.C.) of 1876. Earlier in 1849, the Commissioner of Assam sought the permission of Bengal Government for the levy of municipal tax in certain stations. The Bengal Government having agreed in principle referred the matter to the Board of Revenue. The latter pointed out that there was no legislative sanction for the levy of such tax and hence the proposal had to be dropped. However, from all these acounts, it is evident that there were some non-statutory town Improvement Committees functioning in some towns of Assam where the Magistrates had his headquarters and these may be described as "the genuine type of Local Self-Government institutions." [5]

With a view to enabling the inhabitants of any place (excluding Calcutta) to establish a Municipal Board, the first Municipal Act (Bengal Act X) was passed in 1842. The Act proved inoperative as the introduction of it in any town required the consent of two-third house holders. The Act was repealed by the Act of XXVI of 1850. This Act was also permissive in nature but its introduction in any town was subject to the consent of the inhabitants. Under this Act, on the petition of 113 inhabitants of Gauhati praying for the introduction of the Act, first statutory Municipal Board was established at Gauhati. The Act was not extended to any other town in Assam.

In 1864, the District Municipal Improvement Act was enacted. Under this Act. Lt. Governor was authorised to extend the Act to any town in his discretion, to determine the administrative area, amount of tax to be levied and to appoint Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Municipal Board should consists of not less than 7 members and the Executive Engineer and the District Superintendent of Police were appointed as the Ex-Officio members of the Board. The proceeds of the tax were to be utilised for the maintenance of the police force and improvement of sanitation. After a long discussion as regards its introduction in the State of Assam it was extended to the Gauhati town. Some minor amendments in the Act were effected in 1867. In 1868, the District Towns Act, 1868 was passed.

4. V. Venkata Rao : *A Hundred Years of Local Self-Government in Assam*, Calcutta, 1967, pp. 62-63.
5. Ibid, p. 37.

The object of this Act was to provide some special arrangements for improvement of towns which were not fit for introduction of District Municipal Improvement Act, 1864. Under this Act, Goalpara was constituted into a town committee on May, 1875.

In 1876, the Government of Assam adopted the Bengal Municipal Act, 1876. Urban areas under this Act were categorised into four classes viz., first and second class Municipalities, Stations and Unions. Under this Act second class Municipalities were established at Goalpara and Dhuburi in 1878 and 1883 respectively. In 1887, the Government of Assam adopted the Bengal Municipal Act of 1884 but retained the Municipal Act of 1876 as the new Act did not provide for the establishment of Stations and Unions which Govt. did not want to abolish wherever they were established in the State.

Thus the position in Assam was that two Municipal Acts were in force and under them there were two types of Municipalities, Unions and Stations. This caused much administrative inconvenience. Besides, some of the provisions of these Acts were also considered obsolete. Hence a need to simplify the municipal laws was felt and as a result for the first time, Assam enacted its own Municipal Act of 1923. This Act was substituted by the Assam Municipal Act of 1956 and subsidiary rules framed thereunder by the Government from time to time.

In the 19th century, the Municipal Boards were entrusted with a few items of works relating to the civic amenities of the people of the urban areas. The area of its activities were gradually expanded particularly during the current century. Under the provisions of the Town Improvement Act, 1850, the Municipal Board was entrusted with the task of making, repairing, cleaning, lighting or watching any public street, road, drain and tank or for the prevention of any sort of nuisance or for improving the said town or its neighbouring areas. The Board had also the power to appoint and could determine the property liable for taxation. The Board also had the power to enter into contracts. The Municipal Act, 1864 retained the same list of functions of the Board and added a few other items. It empowered the Board to remove encroachment and pull down dangerous structures and to frame bye-laws for ensuring better type of local administration. The same idea persisted in the Municipal Act of 1876. The Act contained provisions for the maintenance of police, the payment for its establishment and repayment of interest of the loans taken from the Government. In addition to these, it entrusted the Board to undertake all the works of public utility which were calculated to promote the health and comfort for the inhabitants

of the Town. Accordingly, the Board could establish schools, hospitals and dispensaries and run the administration of vaccination. In 1884, the Municipal Board was relieved of police functions. More functions added to the existing list included construction of tramways, laying out of parks, establishment of veterinary dispensaries, libraries, fire brigades and the establishment benches for the trial of offences under Municipal Act, the supply of protected water to promote the health and hygiene of the inhabitants. The Act of 1923 further enlarged the scope of rendering more amenities to the public by the Board. It had entrusted the Municipal Board with the planting and preservation of trees, maintenance and construction of town-halls and payment of gratuity to its servants. The Act of 1956 replaced the Act of 1923, but retained the list of functions laid down in the earlier Act. The present functions of the Municipal Board are multiferious in nature. It includes supply of protected and pure drinking water to its inhabitants, construction and maintenance of roads, waterways, and bridges. The Board is entrusted with the maintenance of the proper drainage system. The Board is to arrange for the street lighting, to provide for medical and public health facilities, to maintain proper conservancy and to keep the records of births and deaths. Besides, the Municipal Board maintains and establishes some schools, libraries and community halls and arranges for the marketing facilities for the people providing for *bazars* in each locality. It also maintains a sanitary branch to ensure proper hygienic condition in the town.

Dhuburi Municipal Board : The town is situated on the right bank of the Brahmaputra at the point where the river turns south to enter the plains of Bangladesh. It is favourably placed as regards communication and is an important trade centre especially of Jute. In 1971, the town covered an area of 6.47 square kms. with a Population of 36,503. This is exclusive of the area (2.09 square kms) and population 9,086 of the Bidyapara outer growth.

It was constituted into a municipality in 1883 under Act V (B.C.) of 1876, and subsequently, Act III (B.C.) of 1887 was extended to the town in 1901. Presently, its Municipal Board comprises 9 elected members and 2 nominated members with elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman amongst its membes. In 1961-62, the total receipts and expenditure of the Municipal Board amounted to Rs. 2,76,543.00 and Rs. 3,02,964.00 which in 1972-73 increased to Rs. 4,40,657.75 and Rs. 74,937.00 respectively. The following table shows the details of receipt and expenditure of the Dhuburi Municipal Board for 1971-72 and 1972-73.

amount in Rs.

	Items	1971-72	1972-73
1	2	3	4
Receipts	(a) Municipal Rates of Taxes.		
	1. Taxes on house & lands ..	36,462.00	56,188.00
	2. Water tax ..	54,032.00	74,685.00
	3. Light tax ..	12,443.00	21,619.00
	4. Latrine tax ..	..	83,467.00
	5. Taxes on persons (urban tax) ..	9,451.00	36,850.00
	6. Warrant fees ..	105.00	435.00
	Total ..	1,13,583.00	2,73,244.00
	(b) Realisation under special Acts. ..		
	(i) Pounds ..	..	130.00
	(c) Revenue from Municipal property etc. ..	1,06,263.00	1,14,276.00
	(d) Govt. grant ..	1,99,814.00	37,217.76
	(e) Miscellaneous ..	16,520.00	14,093.99
	(f) Extraordinary & Debts ..	..	1,750.00
	Grand Total ..	4,36,180.00	4,40,657.75
Expenditure	(a) General Administration & Collection charges. ..	43,611.00	1,09,096.00
	(b) Public Safety (Light) ..	17,461.00	17,127.00
	(c) Public Health & Conservancy		
	(i) Water Supply ..	44,215.00	58,548.00
	(ii) Drianage ..	12,414.00	18,772.00
	(iii) Conservancy ..	1,55,700.00	1,54,010.00
	(iv) Hospital & Dispensaries ..	1,473.00	1,144.00
	(v) Others ..	54,363.00	33,869.00
	(d) Public works ..	93,947.00	45,875.00
	(e) Public Institution and construction. ..	3,570.00	11,640.00
	(f) Miscellaneous ..	24,603.00	24,856.00
	Total ..	4,51,457.00	4,74,937.00

Goalpara Municipal Board : Goalpara was constituted into a Town Committee on May, 1, 1975 under the District Towns Act of 1868. In 1877, the Town Committee was upgraded to a 2nd Class Municipality under the Bengal Municipal Act, 1876. There was no public representation and munici-

pal administration was carried on with the help of Government servants and Government nominated members till the enactment of Assam Municipal Act, 1923 when elections were held for the first time. Presently, the Board comprises 12 elected and 2 nominated members. Prior to shifting of district headquarters to Dhuburi in 1879, it was the headquarters of the district.

Goalpara town in 1971 covered an area of 5.95 sq. kms. and had a population of 24,433 with a density of 2,803 persons per sq. km. Water supply scheme was introduced in 1963. About two-thirds of the town are supplied water with pipes and the rest of the town is served with wells and tube wells. The Board has also provided street lights since 1956. In 1901, Municipal Board had an income of less than Rs. 7,000.00. This increased to Rs. 1,83,160.12 in 1961-62 and to Rs. 4,78,208.00 in 1972-73. Likewise expenditure has also increased from Rs. 7,439 in 1901 to Rs. 2,17,228.53 in 1961-62 and to Rs. 2,33,592.29 in 1972-73. The following table shows the details of receipts and expenditure of Goalpara Municipal Board for 1971-72 and 1972-73.

amount in Rs.

Receipts & Expenditure	Items	1971-72	1972-73
Receipts	(a) Municipal Rates & Taxes. ..		
	(i) Tax on houses and lands ..	36,547.86	32,256.82
	(ii) Tax on animal & vehicles. ..	1,229.00	2,463.25
	(iii) Tax on professions, trade etc. ..	4,634.00	16,373.00
	(iv) Water rate ..	16,395.67	16,332.34
	(v) Light tax ..	11,692.37	10,683.00
	(vi) Latrine tax ..	35,805.18	36,309.44
	(vii) Taxes on persons (urban tax) ..	6,535.21	8,165.86
	(b) Realisation under Special Acts. ..		
	(i) Pounds ..	..	31.25
	(ii) Others ..	..	350.00
	(c) Revenue from municipal property etc. ..	20,759.17	25,789.13
	(d) Govt. grants ..	1,16,564.35	76,281.00
	(e) Miscellaneous ..	3,521.82	14,277.00
	Total ..	2,53.686.63	4,78,208.00
Expenditure	(a) General Administration and Collection charges. ..	1,00,680.02	36,211.50
	(b) Public safety		
	(i) Light ..	10,839.15	10,746.30
	(c) Public Health & conservancy		
	(i) Water supply ..	26,934.04	21,870.21
	(ii) Drainage ..	387.50	6,499.36
	(iii) Conservancy ..	1,00,125.68	91,142.15
	(iv) Hospital & Dispensaries. ..	3,737.42	3,512.88
	(v) Others ..	5,555.37	10,023.21
	(d) Public works ..	59,288.91	49,822.41
	(e) Public Instruction and construction	2,480.00	..
	(f) Miscellaneous ..	6,261.73	3,564.27
	(g) Extraordinary and debts ..	200.00	200.00
	Total ..	3,16,489.82	2,33,592.29

Kokrajhar Municipal Board : Town Committee was formed in 1956 and later on upgraded to Municipal Board. Its Municipal area is divided into 10 wards to elect 10 municipal Commissioners. According to the Census of 1971, the town has a population of 17,060 of whom 9,764 were males and 7,296 females. Its municipal boundary covers an area of 6.29 sq. kms. with a density of population of 2,712 persons per sq. km. It is the Sub-divisional headquarters of the Subdivision named after it. The following table shows the details of receipts and expenditure of the Kokrajhar Municipal Board for 1971-72 and 1972-73.

(amount in Rs.)

Receipts & expenditure	Items	1971-72	1972-73
Receipts	(a) Municipal Rate & Taxes ..		
	(i) Tax on houses & lands ..	23,572.63	20,220.79
	(ii) Tax on animals & vehicles	728.25	2,317.50
	(iii) Tax on trade, Profession etc.	4,651.00	5,326.50
	(iv) Light tax. ..	10,440.16	11,661.75
	(b) Realisation under Special Act.		
	(i) Pounds ..	240.00	91.00
	(ii) Others ..	1,385.00	1,240..00
	(c) Revenue from Municipal property etc. ..	17,178.50	19,882.25
	(d) Govt. Grants ..	1,14,991.13	7,07,114.74
	(e) Miscellaneous ..	10,960.15	4,310.00
	(f) Extraordinary & Debts ..	..	8,859.00
	(ii) Loans. ..	2,115.00	500.00
	Total ..	1,88,261.82	7,81,523.53

Expenditure	(a) General Administration and Collection charges ..	47,589.85	38,167.61
	(b) Public safety ..	15,000.00	10,935.17
	(c) Public Health & Conservancy		
	(i) Water supply ..	8,866.45	108.40
	(ii) Conservancy ..	11,674.95	12,247.40
	(iii) Others ..	8,714.74	3,288.20
	(d) Public works ..	38,065.88	71,624.69
	(e) Miscellaneous ..	1,725.85	325.38
	(f) Extraordinary debts (others) ..	1,452.10	509.64
	Total : ..	1,33,089.82	1,37,201.49

The followng table shows the income and expenditure of the three Municipal Boards of Dhuburi, Goalpara and Kokrajhar from 1961-62 to 1972-73.

(amount in Rs.)

Name of the Municipal Board ..	Year	Receipts	Expenditure
1	2	3	4
1. Dhuburi ..	1961-62	2,76,543.00	3,02,964.00
	1962-63	2,98,403.00	2,85,416.00
	1963-64	2,83,606.00	3,09,197.00
	1964-65	3,15,184.00	3,10,360.00
	1965-66	3,48,056.00	3,05,593.00
	1966-67	3,29,142.00	3,74,231.00
	1967-68	3,05,873.00	3,06,721.00
	1968-69	3,26,983.00	2,93,341.00
	1969-70	3,61,694.00	4,28,682.00
	1970-71	4,33,170.00	N. A.
	1971-72	4,36,180.00	4,51,357.00
	1972-73	4,40,657.75	4,74,937.00
2. Goalpara ..	1961-62	1,83,160.12	2,17,228.53
	1962-63	1,39,126.42	1,30,667.99
	1963-64	1,34,880.78	1,26,813.59
	1964-65	1,24,956.01	1,25,100.10
	1965-66	1,65,692.34	1,65,908.79
	1966-67	2,02,667.58	1,92 869.35
	1967-68	1,81,068.93	1,94,605.80

1	2	3	4
	1968-69	1,50,853.46	1,81,187.12
	1969-70	2,03,936.53	1,79,295.03
	1970-71	2,54,206.37	2,02,172.23
	1971-72	2,53,686.63	3,16,489.82
	1972-73	4,78,208.00	2,33,592.29
3. Kokrajhar	1961-62	25,333.65	53,569.89
	1962-63	41,925.59	66,652.46
	1963-64	35,299.65	55,544.36
	1964-65	30,577.14	57,572.61
	1965-66	43,129.36	68,130.89
	1966-67	48,014.93	78,793.83
	1967-68	64,620.71	64,684.73
	1968-69	78,403.96	1,01,669.13
	1969-70	83,100.87	1,14,480.48
	1970-71	1,35,542.64	1,13,995.56
	1971-72	1,88,261.82	1,33,089.82
	1972-73	7,81,523.53	1,37,201.49

1. Gauripur Town Committee :

The Town Committee for Gauripur was constituted in 1919. It has now 4 elected and 2 nominated members. According to the Census of 1971, the town has a population of 12,850 of which 6,867 are males and 5,983 females. Its municipal area comprises 2.85. sq. kms.

2. Bilasipara Town Committee :

Bilasipara Town Committee was constituted on adhoc basis in 1959 under Notification No. LML.314/55/55 dated 13.8.58 issued under the Assam Municipal Act, 1956 (Assam Act XV of 1957). It comprised 6 members nominated by Government on adhoc basis. Regular elections were held in 1961 and 1965 for election of 4 members from the 4 wards. At present, the Town Committee comprises 6 members, of which 4 members are elected from the 4 wards and two are nominated by the Government. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman are elected by the members. The town comprises an area of 3.88 sq. kms. According to the Census of 1971, the town has a population of 12,553 persons of whom 6,867 are males and 5,983 females. The Town Committee has constructed 60 nos. of ring wells

to supply drinking water in the town. It is also maintaining 17·96 kms. roads in the town of which 6.14 kms. are black-topped, 4.54 kms. gravelled and the remaining 7.28 kms. *Kacha* roads. From 1968-69, the Committee has also provided electric street lights throughout the town. Conservancy service in the town is provided by 10 sweepers maintained by the Committee. It also makes available non-recurring grants to the Primary Schools and town Government High School. The Committee has under its control 6 nos. of *hats* and bazars.

3. Sapatgram Town Committee :

The Sapatgram Town Committee was first constituted in 1955. All its 6 members were nominated by the Government. Since then, regular elections have taken place in 1958, 1963, 1967 and 1971. The Committee at present comprises 6 members, of whom 4 are elected from 4 wards and 2 are nominated by the Government. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman are elected by the members. The town covers an area of 2.59 sq. kms. with a population of 7,546 of whom 4.102 are males and 3,444 females as per the Census of 1971.

4. Bongaigaon Town Committee :

Bongaigaon Town Committee was formed in 1961 with an area of 4.79 sq. kms. It is gradually coming up as one of the important industrial towns of the district. The location of the Refinery-cum-Petro Chemical Project has added new dimension to its growth. Its population from 8,763 in 1961 has increased to 13,907 in 1971. Its urban agglomeration is spread over an area of 6.79 sq. kms. with a population of 24,960. Presently, its Town Committee consists of 4 elected and 2 nominated members.

5. Bijni Town Committee :

The town was first constituted into a notified area under Notification No. MA.223/65/61 dated 25.2.70 and subsequently raised to a status of small town. In April, 1971, a town committee was constituted under Notification No. MA/225/65/87 dated 11.1.71. The Committee comprises six nominated members and is still functioning under the extended terms. Bijni town covers an area of 2.95 sq. kms. with a total population of 7,999 of which 4,342 are males, 3,657 females. Among the activities of the Town Committee, mention may be made of the provision of street lighting since 1971, construction of drainage and management of three markets.

6. Lakhipur Towm Committee :

The town was said to be founded in the early part of the nineteenth century by a scion of an old Zamindar family of Mechpara. Its Town Committee was constituted on November 10, 1972. The Committee comprised six members, all nominated by the Government. According to the Census of 1971, the town covers an area of 3.22 sq. kms. and has within its ambit a population of 5,332 persons, of whom 2,956 are males and 2,376 females. The town is very beautifully laid out and has natural tanks and ponds within its area.

7. Abhayapuri Town Committee :

The Town Committee was constituted in 1960. It now covers an area of 4.71 sq. kms. with a population of 7,030 of which 2,956 are males and 2,376 females.

There are two more Town Committees at Mankachar and New Bongaigaon Railway Colony which were declared town as per Census of 1961 and 1971 respectively.

Under the Assam Municipal Act, 1956, Town Committees have also been formed for Gossaingaon and Basugaon in 1972 and 1973 respectively. The particulars of these four Town Committees in 1971 are as below :

Name of the Town Committee	Class of Town	Area in Km.	Population	Density of population per sq.km.
Mankachar	IV	3.88	12,349	3,183
Bongaigaon Railway Colony ..	IV	1.90	11,043	5,812
Basugaon	IV	4.87	10,380	2,076
Gossaingaon	VI	6.42	4,217	659

The nature and functions and sources of revenue of the Town Committees are more or less same as those of the municipalities. The Town Committees also derive their income from taxes levied on holdings, cinema halls, rice mills, flour mills, hotels, restaurents, bakeries, bamboo, firewood and timber godowns, pony carts, rickshaws, markets, etc. The Town Committees receive recurring and non-recurring grants from the Government.

One important duty of Town Committee is to maintain roads and bridges under its jurisdictions and to look after the sanitation and public health. All the Town Committees are now run in accordance with provisions laid down in the Assam Municipal Act, 1956 and subsidiary rules framed thereunder by the Government from time to time. The following table shows the receipts and expenditure of the Town Committees in the district (in rupees).

Year	Bilasipara Town Committee		Abhayapuri Town Committee	
	Receipt	Expenditure	Receipt	Expenditure
1	2	3	4	5
1961-62 ..	46,118.62	31,464.26	21,625.79	13,216.52
1962-63 ..	47,461.70	50,979.42	37,163.98	28,129.86
1963-64 ..	64,231.83	73,540.16	55,094.69	28,727.62
1964-65 ..	66,480.51	39,138.85	55,104.77	51,414.85
1965-66 ..	70,694.23	67,775.33	1,06,202.85	81,338.84
1966-67 ..	86,139.06	83,185.01	72,159.75	95,813.28
1967-68 ..	87,885.21	93,029.45	73,387.07	89,132.79
1968-69 ..	1,11,140.30	96,244.48	91,733.05	59,035.53
1969-70 ..	1,14,763.61	1,20,198.90	1,07,302.13	95,165.37
1970-71 ..	1,44,125.35	1,41,926.05	1,63,014.34	1,46,167.31
1971-72 ..	1,56,986.02	1,58,531.19	1,95,238.20	1,99,355.21
1972-73 ..	1,63,871.70	1,44,308.87	N.A.	N.A.
	Gauripur Town Committee		Bongaigaon Town Committee	
1961-62 ..	75,657.26	77,547.56	18,689.32	6,170.19
1962-63 ..	77,354.76	65,876.31	33,815.70	25,025.19
1963-64 ..	81,786.87	88,656.88	31,331.43	46,538.73
1964-65 ..	94,065.94	1,00,065.86	29,728.38	33,483.73
1965-66 ..	1,19,187.41	1,03,051.56	55,355.87	64,796.34
1966-67 ..	1,05,693.54	87,895.97	63,180.93	44,932.29
1967-68 ..	1,04,003.12	1,02,335.23	63,725.27	58,515.19
1968-69 ..	93,437.47	1,19,331.18	95,773.72	82,834.80
1969-70 ..	1,12,763.14	87,161.26	73,059.69	79,119.47
1970-71 ..	1,43,498.93	1,51,677.58	1,36,843.77	1,10,324.42
1971-72 ..	1,95,322.00	1,67,994.00	1,47,655.13	62,370.35
1972-73 ..	2,00,707.00	1,86,269.00	10,990.47	1,30,671.05

Sapatgram Town Committee. ..	1967-68	56,075.00	42,913.70
	1968-69	46,608.88	45,880.87
	1969-70	52,383.09	60,229.79
	1970-71	55,858.20	N.A.
	1971-72	63,894.68	45,701.03
	1971-72	74,521.94	56,248.85
Bijni Town Committee ..	1971-72	68,611.56	58,431.62
	1972-73	1,29,210.42	1,24,811.09
Gossaingaon	1972-73	31,875.25	24,674.29

(d) *PANCHAYATS* :

Panchayats in Assam have a long and chequered history. We have already discussed about some forms of local self-government that were functioning in different parts of the State. The Panchayats, however, were not officially recognised during the early part of the British administration in Assam. As early as 1871, the Governor General-in-Council vetoed the Municipal Bill which incorporated certain provisions authorising Panchayats to take up works of water supply and conservancy services. The Governor General-in-Council believed that time had not arrived for creation of the administrative machinery for the villages. It was only in 1915, that provisions were made under the Local Self-Government Act, 1915 for the formation of the really effective village organisations requiring the cooperation and sympathy of the Local Boards. "In the districts of Cachar, Sylhet and Goalpara, where the *Choukidari* system was in force, it was hoped that it would develop into a successful village Panchayat system. In the Assam Valley, other than Goalpara, where no village system was officially recognised, it was thought that it might be possible to develop a rudimentary form of authority."[7] However, the Panchayat system established under the Act of 1915 proved to be a failure as these were not autonomous bodies in the true sense of the term. The Panchayat Act, 1926, removed some of the difficulties faced by the Panchayats. The object of this Act was to provide a machinery capable of giving a scope to the villagers. However, these Panchayats also failed to become effective for various reasons including some lacunae of the Act.

For the first time after Independence, the State enacted its Panchayat Act - Assam Rural Panchayat Act in 1948. In order to constitute the

7. V. Venkata Rao : *A Hundred Years of Local Self-Government in Assam;* Calcutta, 1967, p. 32.

truely effective Panchayats, the districts were divided into some Rural Panchayats comprising a number of villages. Each village had a primary Panchayat. Election to the Panchayats was held on the basis of adult franchise.

This Act also proved a failure, "Of the 742 Rural Panchayats contemplated, only 422 were established by 1959 consisting of 2,657 primary Panchayats. Further, under the Act of 1948, only five Primary Panchayats could be established in any rural Panchayat".[8] Several difficulties were also experienced in the working of the Panchayats and as a result, a committee was appointed in 1953 to study the working of the Panchayats. An amending bill incorporating the suggestions of the Committee was introduced in 1955 but it was not proceeded with.

The three tier *Panchayat Raj* in Assam was introduced in pursuance of Balwant Rai Mehata Committee Report, 1957 and Assam was the first State in India to introduce it in all its plains districts. The main object of the Assam Panchayat Act, 1959 was to provide a State programme of democratic decentralisation with effect from October 1, 1959. The Act provided for three tier of Panchayats : The Gaon Panchayats at the village level, Anchalik Panchayat at the Block level and Mohkuma Parishad at the Sub-divisional level.

It has been noted earlier that after passing of the Assam Panchayat Act, 1959, the erstwhile Local Board and Rural Panchayats were abolished and their functions devolved on the three tier Panchayat system. Under the Act, the district of Goalpara as per the Census of 1961, had 343 Gaon Panchayats, 20 Anchalik Panchayats and 3 Mohkuma Parishads at Dhuburi Goalpara and Kokrajhar.

The Constitution of the Gaon Sabhas were the same as before with same functions but more clearly defined in the Act. The average population of each Gaon Sabha was 2,500 persons. It comprised President, vice-President and eleven to thirteen members directly elected by the voters. Between Gaon Sabha and Mohkuma Parishad, Anchalik Panchayat with an area co-terminus with Community Development Block was the main executive agency. It comprised representatives of Gaon Sabhas within its jurisdiction, members of the Assam Legislative Assembly representing the area concerned and also representatives of Cooperative societies. There was also a provision for co-option of member from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes if none was elected from them.

8. Ibid, p. 35.

The Anchalik Panchayat was the main agency responsible for the overall development of the area under its jurisdiction. The Gaon Sabha was the main executing agency for the village scheme. Mohkuma Parishad, which replaced sub-divisional Development Board and Local Boards, was mainly entrusted with the work of co-ordination and consolidation of Block programme with the examination and approval of the budgets of the Anchalik Panchayats and with the distribution of grants-in-aid to the Anchalik Panchayats. The Act was amended in 1961, 1962 and 1964 and ultimately replaced by the Assam Panchayati Raj Act, 1972 (Act No. XI of 1973).

In place of three tier Panchayats, Assam Panchayati Raj Act, 1972, provided two tier Panchayats abolishing the intermediary Anchalik Panchayats at Block level. Under the act, there shall be Gaon Panchayats at the village level covering a population of fifteen thousand to twenty thousand and Mohkuma Parishads at the Sub-divisional level in all the districts of Assam except the two autonomous districts of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills.

Organisations of Panchayats : The term of Gaon Panchayat is for four years and shall consist of elected members not more than 15. The President of the Gaon Panchayat is elected by the voters of Gaon Panchayat and Vice-President by the members of the Gaon Panchayat among themselves. One representative from the Chairman of Co-operative Societies falling with the area of Gaon Panchayat is nominated by the Government as ex-officio member. The Councillor of the Mohkuma Parishad representing the area of Gaon Panchayat is also an ex-officio member of the Gaon Panchayat. Further, the Government may appoint any Government official as an ex-officio member.

The number of constituencies under a Gaon Panchayat is determined by the Deputy Commissioner or Sub-divisional Officer as the case may be, but shall not exceed fifteen. Two of the constituencies on every new term are reserved by lot for the women candidates. If the population either of the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribes happens to be five per cent or more of the total population of Gaon Panchayat, then a constituency having the maximum number of population of that particular community, is reserved for the member of that community. This reservation of seats either for the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribes will not be available for the community if its population constitutes half of the total population of the Gaon Panchayat. The executive power of the Gaon Panchayat is vested in the President who shall carry out all resolutions and the directions of the Gaon Panchayat and the Mohkuma Parishad and any order of the State Govern-

ment. He will be assisted by the Secretary of the Gaon Panchayat appointed by the Executive Committee of the Mohkuma Parishad for due maintenance of the Gaon Panchayat office and for proper organisation and execution of Rural Development Programme within the area of the Gaon Panchayat. Block Development Officer shall have supervisory control over all the Secretaries of Gaon Panchayats falling within the Community Development area.

The strength of Mohkuma Parishad depends on the number of Gaon Panchayats lying within its jurisdiction. Each Gaon Panchayat sends one Councillor directly elected by the voters of the Gaon Panchayat, including one woman councillor elected from the reserved constituency selected by rotation on every term and the members of the Scheduled Caste and Tribes relected from the reserved constituencies, if any.

The provision of the reserved constituency for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is subject to the condition that total population of the either community must constitute five per cent of the total population of the Mohkuma Parishad. The constituency having the maximum total population either of the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes shall be a reserved constituency for that community. There will be no reservation of constituency in respect of Mohkuma Parishad if the population of either community constitutes fifty per cent of the total population of the Mohkuma Parishad.

Further, Mohkuma Parishad will also include representatives each not being a member of the State Legislature or Parliament, from the Municipality, Town Committee, Regional Board of Elementary Education and the Central Co-operative Bank and such other Govt. officers as the State Govt. may appoint from time to time as ex-officio councillors. The State Government may also nominate not more than two councillors to the Mohkuma Parishad from the tea garden areas falling within the jurisdiction of the Mohkuma Parishad.

The executive power of the Mohkuma Parishad is exercised by the Chief Executive Councillor. He is assisted by the Secretary of the Mohkuma Parishad in carrying out the resolutions and directions of the Mohkuma Parishad. The Secretary of the Mohkuma Parishad is an officer of the State Government whose services are placed at the disposal and control of the Mohkuma Parishad.

The Chief Executive Councillor and Chairman of the Mohkuma Parishad are elected in a meeting held for the purpose by the Councillors

among themselves. The term of office of a Chairman, Chief Executive Councillor of a Mohkuma Parishad, President, Vice-President or a member of Gaon Panchayats is four years unless any of them resigns during the term of office. They may also cease to hold office if any of them suffers from any of the disqualifications mentioned in sub-section (1) of the Section 12 or remains absent in three consecutive meetings of the Mohkuma Parishads or Gaon Panchayats as the case may be without assigning any reason therefor.

A Chairman, Chief Executive Councillor of a Mohkuma Parishad or a President or Vice-President of Gaon Panchayat may also be removed by a vote of No Confidence motion passed by two-thirds majority of voters present and voting in a meeting of Mohkuma Parishad or Gaon Panchayat as the case may be. The State Government may at any time suspend any of them pending his removal if his continuance in office is considered inadvisable on any ground for which he can be removed.

Standing committees of Executive Committee of the Mohkuma Parishad : Mohkuma Parishad has a number of Standing Committees to deal with different functions entrusted to it under section 36 of the Panchayat Act. It has a President elected by the members constituting the standing committee. The Secretary of the standing committee will be an officer whose services are placed at the disposal of the Mohkuma Parishad.

The Executive Committee of the Mohkuma Parishad which consists of all the Presidents of the standing committee exercises all the powers of the Mohkuma Parishad and carries out all the functions entrusted to the Mohkuma Parishad. The Chief Executive Councillor and Secretary function as its President and Secretary.

Block Advisory Committee : For each Community Development Block falling within the sub-division, Mohkuma Parishad may constitute a Block Advisory Committee to co-ordinate the activities of the connected Development Departments of the State Government and for giving necessary assistance to the Development Block staff in the organisation and implementation of the Community Development and allied programmes. This committee shall comprise all the councillors of the Mohkuma Parishad representing the areas of the Gaon Panchayats, and all the Presidents of the Gaon Panchayats falling within the area of the Development Block.

Planning & Review Board : For each Mohkuma Parishad, there shall be a Planning & Review Board consisting of the members of Legislative Assembly, members of Parliament from the sub-division concerned

and the chairman and chief Executive Councillor of the Mohkuma Parishad. The Deputy Commissioner or Sub-divisional or District Heads as the case may be, of Development Departments shall be the ex-officio members of the Board. The Chairman of the Board shall be nominated by the State Government from among the non-official members of this Board and the Secretary of the Mohkuma Parishad will act as the Secretary of the Board. The functions of the Board will be to prepare the sub-divisional Plan, to scrutinise the Annual Budget of the Mohkuma Parishad and to recommend the same to the State Government with suggestion and modification if necessary, to act as an evolution committee in respect of working of Panchayats and make recommendations to the State Government, to advise the Mohkuma Parishad on policy matters and on any matter on which advice may be sought by the Mohkuma Parishad and to make recommendations and render advice to the State Government on such matters as may rise from time to time.

Functions of the Panchayats : The duties and functions of the Gaon Panchayat have been broadly categorised into nine spheres viz., Sanitation and Health, Public Works, Education, Sports and Culture, Self Defence and Village Defence, Administration, Welfare of people, Agriculture, Forest and Animal Husbandry, Village Industries and any other duties and functions assigned to it by the Mohkuma Parishad and State Government. The Gaon Panchayat may take any scheme within limits of the funds and resources at its disposal in the above spheres.

Likewise, the duties and functions of the Mohkuma Parishad have been categorised into ten spheres as follows ; Sanitation, Medical and Public Health, Public Works, Education and Culture, Administration, Welfare of the people, Agriculture and Horticulture including minor irrigation, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary, Small Scale and Village Industries, Co-operatives and Revenue and Forests. Further, Mohkuma Parishad is empowered to inspect, supervise, control and guide any matter of a Development Block and of a Gaon Panchayat and its decision in all matters will be final.

Further, Mohkuma Parishad and Gaon Panchayat is empowered to make byelaws from time to time consistent with their respective powers and function. Both bodies have also been declared as local authority under the Section 2 (2) of the Assam Water Hyacinth Act, 1926 (Assam Act 111 of 1926). All the roads, embankments, water drains, tanks, bridges and culverts not being the private property or under the control of the State Government or any other authority, have been placed under the control of both the Panchayats within their jurisdiction for the maintenance and

repair. The Gaon Panchayat may take such steps as may be deemed necessary for proper supply of water in its area. For this purpose, all the rivers, tanks, ponds, springs etc., not being private property, are under the control of the Gaon Panchayat.

Financial power of the Panchayats : Subject to the approval of the Mohkuma Parishad, a Gaon Panchayat is empowered to levy taxes, cess, fees or rates in addition to the existing local rate collected in its area as follows :

(a) A tax on (1) Private *hat* or market place, (ii) supply of water, sale of fire wood, thatch or bamboo, conservancy, lighting and slaughter house, (iii) shops, pharmacies, tailoring, laundry, haircutting saloon, carpentry works and automobile workshops, (iv) cultivable land lying fallow for two consecutive years without any valid reason at a rate not exceeding fifty paisa per standard acre for every year being payable jointly or severally by those who are in possession of such land.

(b) A fee on (i) Registration of cattle sold within the Gaon Panchayat area (ii) fishing in the fisheries allotted to the Gaon Panchayat.

(c) Cess or water rate for recovering the cost of minor irrigation works taken up within the Gaon Panchayat area and such levy as may be necessary for the purpose of maintenance and repairs of such works.

(d) Licence fee (i) for running tea stalls, hotels, restaurants, sweetmeat shops and for collection of hides and bones ; (ii) in respect of cart, carriages, cycles, boats, elephants, circus, professional variety shows, fairs, confectionery and bakery ; (iii) on private fisheries used for commercial purpose.

The Mohkuma Parishad subject to the approval of the State Government may impose the following taxes :—

(a) A Panchayat tax on every household.

(b) Tax on profession, trades, callings, manufacture and production and employment save and except those levied under any provision of this Acts or under any enactment for the time being in force.

(c) Licence fee for cinema halls, brick or tile kilns, saw mills, timber depots, petrol and diesels sale depots, oil mills, rice mills and hullers.

(d) An extra charge on local rate collected from within the area of the Mohkuma Parishad in the manner prescribed.

(1) The taxes, fees for rates shall be imposed assessed and realised at such rate and in such manner as may be prescribed.

(2) Any person aggrieved by the assessment, levy or imposition of any tax, fee or charge may appeal to the State Government within 30 days of such assessment notice and the decision of the State Government in this regard shall be taken within six months and it shall be final.

(3) The State Government may suspend the imposition of any tax, fee or charge and may at any time rescind such suspension.

In discussing the financial aspect of the Panchayat, mention must be made about the Assam Rural Development Fund constituted under Section 58 of the Assam Panchayati Raj Act of 1972. The Fund is administered by the State Government through the Director of Panchayats, Assam and is held in his personal ledger account at treasury where the headquarter of the Director of Panchayats is situated. It is comprised of contributions from the Union and State Exchequers and a share of land revenue which shall be a sum not less than 10 paisa *Per capita* of the population of the district where Mohkuma Parishad has been established and this sum shall make Equalisation Fund for the purpose of the giving aids to the financially weak Mohkuma Parishad and Gaon Panchayats.

Likewise in the Sub-divisions, there is a Sub-divisional Rural Development Fund to which are credited the contributions from the Assam Rural Development Fund and any local authority, a private person and all other sums including revenue which may be assigned by the state Govt. It is administered in consultation with Mohkuma Parishad by the Deputy Commissioner or Sub-divisional Officer as the case may be and is held in the personal ledger in the treasury or sub-treasury. Payments from it are made to the Mohkuma Parishad and Gaon Panchayats in the manner prescribed in the Act.

Mohkuma Parishad Fund and Gaon Panchayat Fund :

Each Mohkuma Parishad and Gaon Panchayat has its own Fund known as Mohkuma Parishad and Gaon Panchayat Fund respectively. The former is administered by the Chief Executive Councillor subject to the control of Executive Committee of the Mohkuma Parishad and the latter is administered by the President of the Gaon Panchayat subject to the control of Gaon Panchayat. The Gaon Panchayat or Mohkuma Parishad Fund is made of sums mentioned in Sections 63. and 64 of the Act. It generally comprises all the sums collected by the respective Panchayat by the levy of taxes, fees etc., or the sums assigned to it by the State Govt. as well as grants from the State and Union Govt. The manner in which Gaon

Panchayat Fund or Mohkuma Parishad Fund is utilised, in order of priority is as follows :—

(a) To the payment of interest upon loans raised under Section 65 and to the formation of a Sinking fund when required.

(b) To the payment of the salaries and allowances of the staff and to officers placed at the disposal of the Mohkuma Parishad and establishment employed by the Gaon Panchayat or Mohkuma Parishad or in its behalf, for the purpose of the Act.

(c) To the payment of expenses incurred by the Gaon Panchayat or Mohkuma Parishad in the performance of the duties imposed or in the exercise of the powers conferred, under this Act.

(d) To the payment of expenses incurred by the Gaon Panchayat or Mohkuma Parishad subject to rules as prescribed in the acquisition by purpose or otherwise of lands and construction and maintenance of buildings for offices and out offices of the Gaon Panchayat or Mohkuma Parishad.

(e) To the payment of any expenses that may be incurred through the default of the Gaon Panchayat or Mohkuma Parishad in carrying out any of the duties imposed on it under this Act.

(f) To the payment of all expenses including all incidential charges thereto incurred by the Gaon Panchayat or Mohkuma Parishad in connection with the duties imposed under the provisions of the Act.

(g) To the payment of all the other expenses not mentioned in the foregoing clauses which the Gaon Panchayat or Mohkuma Parishad wants to incur within its jurisdiction provided that such expenses shall be only incurred with the prior approval of the State Government and shall be declared by the Gaon Panchayat or Mohkuma Parishad to be an appropriate charge on the Gaon Panchayat or Mohkuma Parishad Fund, as the case may be.

Budget preparation : According to the Act, every Gaon Panchayat and Mohkuma Parishad are required to submit annual budgets showing probable receipt and expenditure it proposes to incur and may from time to time furnish a supplementary estimate providing any modiffcation 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 Gaon Panchayat to Mohkuma Parishad and in the case of the Mohkuma Parishad to the Govt. for approval.

Under the new Act, Panchayat elections were held and 3 Mahkuma Parishads and 115 Gaon Panchayats were formed in 1974 in the district. Certain schemes viz., Sericulture and Weaving, Industry, all Community Development Schemes and village roads under the minimum needs programmes along with the fund have been transferred to the Mohkuma Parishads. The following table shows the details of each Mohkuma Parishads in the district.

Sl. No.	Name of the Mohkuma Parishad.	Area in Sq. Km.	Population as per 1971 Census	No. of village Panchayats.
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Kokrajhar	4707.2	685007	38
2.	Dhuburi	2723.7	757825	43
3.	Goalpara	2823.2	609977	34

CHAPTER XV.

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

(a) *HISTORICAL BACKGROUND* :

The system of education which prevailed in ancient times in the area constituting the present district of Goalpara is not definitely known. History is also silent about this. But as it was a part of the ancient kingdom of Kamarupa which had close relations in all fields of culture as well as in trade and commerce with the rest of India, it can well be presumed that the same system of education also prevailed in this part of the country. This proposition is borne out by the mythological accounts, numerous archaeological remains and a mass of literary evidence. The rulers of Kamarupa were noted for their Sanskrit culture. Many kings of ancient Kamarupa had contributed much towards the growth of literary works. Among them the name of Narayana Varman of Varman dynasty and of Purandarpala of Pala dynasty can be mentioned. Besides these two rulers, some rulers of Pala dynasty like Harsapala and Dharmapala were noted scholars.

The boundary of this kingdom extended far beyond its present boundaries. Though there were geographical barriers against proper communication between ancient Kamarupa and the rest of India, yet they did not stand as a bar in the field of education and culture. Many lovers of education and culture went to Nawadwip and Benaras for studies. Scholars and learned persons under the patronage of the kings of this country visited and often permanently settled in this land and worked for the diffusion of Indian culture.

The system of education which prevailed in early times in the district of Goalpara did not materially differ from the rest of the province. It was, in fact, the *Gurukula* system of education that found popular support and flourished in Goalpara as in other parts of Assam. The existence of some *tols* in different parts of the State bears testimony to the fact that the district of Goalpara was also under the same system of education. Here "those who had a thirst for knowledge usually flocked to a *guru* who had assignments of lands from the State for his maintenance and even for the maintenance of those who came to him"[1] Sanskrit was the vehicle

1. H. K. Barpujari, *A short History of Higher Education in Assam* (1826-1900), published in the Golden Jubilee Volume Cotton College, Gauhati, 1951-52 p. 3.

of thought and expression and lessons were imparted in various branches of classical learning such as grammar, astronomy, law (*samhita*), poetry and philosophy (*vedanta*, *sankhya*, *veda* etc.) The students received their education in the dormitories managed by their *guru* (teacher). Education, by and large, was free. The pupils were not required to pay tuition fees, except the voluntary gifts called *Guru Dakhina* on completion of their studies. Education was not a matter of State policy but a voluntary enterprise of the *Gurus* and free from any official interference.[2] Higher education was generally restricted to the Brahmins. These *Gurukulas* and *tols* further expanded and gained vitality during the period of local rulers.

Spread of Neo-Vaisnavism in sixteenth century gave rise to institutions called *Satras* in several parts of Assam which became centres of educational and cultural activities. Corresponding to *Satras* in other districts of Assam there were *Dhams* or priestly Colleges occupied by Vaishnavite monks in different parts of Goalpara district. Subsequent to the Muslim occupation of Goalpara, *Madrassas* and *mosques* were established. Both in the *tols* of the Hindus and the Madrassas of the Muslims, the 3 R's were taught, but in the latter, Urdu and Islamic learning were additional subjects. Generally speaking, however, during subsequent Muslim rule of Goalpara, *tols* and village *pathsalas* suffered from lack of royal patronage. Thus Hunter records that during 1872-73 the Deputy Commissioner stated that there was only one private *pathsala* in the district and the Deputy Inspector could locate no more such institutions though he 'always made every possible inquiry'.[3]

Beginning of western education : Education in Goalpara at the close of the Muslim rule was in doldrums due to political upheavals, insurrections and depredations of the hill tribe. In fact, it is said that when the British took possession of Assam, education but in Asosam as a whole, not only in Goalpara district had reached its lowest ebb. Initially, the British were hesitant to introduce English education in Assam and David Scott, the then Agent to the Governor General, North East Frontier, established a number of Schools in Lower Assam to promote indigenous system of education. These schools were, however, found unsatisfactory and led Jenkins, the then Commissioner of Assam to advocate establishment of English schools in Assam. Jenkins' proposal was readily accepted as it coincided with the decision of the Governor-General-in-Council in 1835 to establish schools for promotion of European literature and science amongst

2. B. C. Majumder : *Education in Assam*, p, 5.

3. W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Assam*, Vol. II, Goolpara New Delhi, 1975, (Reprint), p. 99.

Indians. Jenkins, the pioneer of Western education in Assam went a step further and proposed that in backward State like Assam, the responsibility of imparting education should be shouldered by the State. The over-all effect of his persistent endeavours was that it provided a boost to the education system. Thus from 10 schools of all grades found in the district by Mills in 1853, the number of government and aided schools in Goalpara district rose to 15 in 1856-57 and further increased to 31 in 1872-73. The number of pupils also inceased from 194 to 862 during 1856-73. Further, according to the Extension of Grant-in-aid Rules to unaided schools, initiated by Sir George Campbell, there were in the district 82 schools receiving Government-aid attended by 1,882 students on March 31, 1873.[4] It may be mentioned here that Bengali gained ascendancy over Assamese as the medium of expression in Courts and schools of Assam from 1835 to 1873 much to the chagrin of the majority of people in Assam.

Among the unofficial organisations, Christian Missionaries rendered invaluable service to the cause of spreading of western education among the Assamese. A number of vernacular schools were established by these Missionaries to encourage the study of English as well as the Assamese language. In this regard, the contribution made by the American Baptist Mission is notable. No doubt, in it they were mainly inspired in propagating the gospel but their efforts were no less responsible in spreading education in the district.

The following table shows the progress of education in Goalpara district for some selected years during the period 1874-75 to 1900-1901.[5]

Year	No. of secondary schools.	Pupils	No. of primary schools.	Pupils	Total No. of Pupils	No. of persons in district to each pupil	Percentage under instruction to those of School-going age	
							Male	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1874-75	15	580	89	1,840	2,420	160	8.15	0.37
1988-81	10	535	96	2,387	2,922	153	8.15	0.37
1890-91	16	894	178	4,037	4,931	92	13.23	0.78
1900-01	19	1,401	230	5,827	7,228	64	18.69	1,33.

4. Ibid., p. 93

5. B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetteer, Vol. III, Goalpara, Calcutta*, 1905, p. 186.

At the beginning of the present century in 1905, there were four High Schools in the district at Dhuburi, Goalpara, Abhayapuri and Gauripur. These High Schools were recognised by the Calcutta University as being capable of preparing students for the Entrance Examination. English constituted the medium of instruction in the four highest classes of such schools and vernacular was employed in other classes and in other schools. There were also Middle English Schools at Bilasipara, Bagribari, Mankachar and Dalgoma ; besides ten Middle Vernacular Schools situated in various parts of the district. The course of instructions at both these types of schools were the same except that English was taught in middle English Schools and not in the other. Educational institution of the period also included Lower and Upper Primary Schools which have been dealt at length in the subsequent pages. In 1903-1904 such institutions numbered 192 and 16 respectively in the district.

(b) *LITERACY AND EDUCATIONAL STANDARD* :

It has been remarked in the preceding pages that the state of education in the early stage of the British administration in Goalpara was deplorable in the extreme. As Goalpara district had never been a separate political entity under its own king, education lacked patronage unlike some other districts of Assam.

In 1901, 49 males per mille and 2 females per mille were returned as literate in the district. But among these literates, quite a large number were foreigners and more than half of them were educated in Bengali and other foreign languages. Moreover, prior to 1901 many persons, were shown as 'learning' whether they could read and write and as such it was difficult to form a correct estimate of the position of literacy.[6]

A steady rise in literacy was maintained during the next decade and in 1911, 74 males per mille and 4 females per mille were returned as literates in the district. Fortunately, the same increasing trend was maintained in the subsequent two censuses in the district. In 1921, 112 males and 10 females per mille were returned as literates ; the corresponding figures being 145 and 15 in the 1931 Census.

The following table exhibits literacy in the district as per Census of 1911, 1921 and 1931.[7]

6. *Census of India*, 1911, Vol. III, Assam, part I, Report, Shillong, 1912, pp. 92-93.
7. *Census of India*, 1921, Vol. III, Assam, part I, Report, Shillong, 1923, page III and Census of India 1931, Vol. III, Assam, part 1. Report, Shillong, 1932. page 164.

	All Ages			0-10		10-15		15-20		20 & above	
Year	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1911	41	74	4	10	1	71	7	94	8	111	5
1921	56	95	9	23	6	83	15	117	14	118	8
1931	76	129	14	51	13	91	20	156	19	156	12

During the 1951 Census, 229 males and 54 females per mille were recorded as literates showing good progress since 1931. Literacy figures continued to register further improvement and stood at 303 and 108 per mille for males and females respectively during the Census of 1961.

The rise of literacy in the district in the last two decades has been largely due to the efforts initiated by the Union and State Governments specially after independence and 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 i.e., Matriculation and above also increased in number during the period. The table below shows that according to the Census of 1961, 1,79,760 males and 61,486 females were literates without educational level ; 58,822 males and 16,368 females were literates of primary or Junior Basic standard and the rest of literates i.e., 7,913 males and 823 females were of Matriculation and above standard.

In the 1971 Census, the person who can both write and read in a language with understanding were also considered as literate and in enumarating the number of literate persons education also was taken into consideration. As per 1971 Census, in Goalpara district there were 4,88,989 literate and educated persons of whom 87,567 were in the urban areas. Maximum number of female educated and literate were 52,375 in Goalpara sub-division - its major slice of 41,235 being in rural Goalpara. Highest number of urban educated in the district was 44,212 and they were found in Dhuburi Sub-division.

The following tables show the position of education in all areas of the district and in urban areas according to the Census of 1961.

Appendix-(A)

Statement showing the education among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the District of Goalpara as per Census, 1961.

Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes.	Urban or Rural	Population			Literate			Literate Without Educational Standard.			Primary or Junior Standard.			Matriculation or above.		
		Male	Female	Total	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	15	16	17
Scheduled Caste.	Urban.	6,640	5,800	12,440	2,358	957	3315	1,791	690	8,288	501	257	758	59	10	69
	Rural.	34,507	31,179	65,686	8,306	3,524	11,830	6,497	2,909	9,406	1,719	613	2,322	90	2	92
	Total	41,147	36,979	78,126	10,664	4,481	15,145	8,288	3,599	11,887	2,220	870	3,180	149	12	161
Scheduled Tribes.	Urban	1,218	795	2,013	653	571	1,224	362	159	521	194	64	258	7	1	8
	Rural	115,426	109,046	224,472	71,765	93,868	165,633	35,000	13,291	48,291	8,136	1,858	9,994	525	29	554
	Total	116,644	109,841	226,485	72,418	94,439	166,857	35,362	48,450	48,812	8,330	1,922	10,252	532	30	562

Table—I.

AGE, SEX AND EDUCATION IN ALL AREAS GOALPARA DISTRICT

As per 1961 Census.

Sl. No.	Age-group	Total Population			Literate			Literate (without educational level)			Educational levels: Primary or Junior Basic			Educational levels: Matriculation and above		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1.	All ages ..	1,543,892	812,723	731,169	566,228	652,492	179,760	61,486	58,822	16,368	7,913	823	7,090	6,497	593	1,791
2.	0-4 ..	287,354	140,511	146,843	140,511	146,843	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
3.	5-9 ..	259,531	131,551	127,980	100,596	110,683	28,708	15,860	2,247	1,437	..	6	6	6	..	6
4.	10-14 ..	155,440	84,168	71,272	44,449	51,544	29,334	14,985	10,358	4,737	27	233	260	233	27	260
5.	15-19 ..	125,187	62,747	62,440	32,430	49,862	18,495	8,597	11,127	3,748	695	278	973	278	695	973
6.	20-24 ..	123,590	57,384	66,206	32,261	56,686	15,536	6,822	7,914	2,420	1,673	152	1,825	152	1,673	1,825
7.	25-29 ..	133,459	70,012	63,447	42,075	55,868	18,906	5,806	7,447	1,621	1,584	78	1,662	78	1,584	1,662
8.	30-34 ..	105,151	58,943	46,208	36,200	42,067	15,990	3,173	5,642	890	1,111	57	1,168	57	1,111	1,168
9.	35-44 ..	157,800	94,581	63,219	60,884	58,044	2,504	3,505	7,225	950	1,428	15	1,443	15	1,428	1,443
10.	45-59 ..	128,470	76,320	52,150	50,341	49,744	19,926	1,980	5,015	411	1,038	4	1,042	4	1,038	1,042
11.	60+ ..	66,831	35,911	30,920	26,090	30,036	7,668	736	1,809	144	344	..	344	..	344	344
12.	Age not stated. ..	1,079	595	484	391	452	153	22	38	10	13	..	13	..	13	13

Table—II.

AGE, SEX AND EDUCATION IN URBAN AREAS ONLY GOALPARA DISTRICT

As per 1961 Census.

Sl. No.	Age-group	Total Population			Illiterate		Literate (without educational level)		Educational levels: Primary or Junior basic		Educational levels: Matriculation or Higher Secondary	
		Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1.	All ages	102,143	59,215	42,928	26,104	26,444	20,289	10,832	8,956	5,060	2,952	527
2.	0-4	14,839	7,000	7,839	7,000	7,839	..	..	..	..	..	..
3.	5-9	14,956	7,546	7,410	4,300	4,663	3,079	2,254	167	493	..	..
4.	10-14	11,502	6,186	5,316	1,569	1,683	3,035	2,102	1,581	1,531	1	..
5.	15-19	9,317	5,291	4,026	1,511	1,446	1,674	1,403	1,644	944	372	182
6.	20-24	9,390	5,660	3,730	1,698	1,535	1,999	1,298	1,180	700	641	164
7.	25-29	8,808	5,614	3,194	1,770	1,566	2,023	1,082	1,105	435	546	94
8.	30-34	7,883	4,919	2,964	1,524	1,683	1,866	916	1,019	313	347	46
9.	35-44	11,108	7,624	3,484	2,995	2,161	2,910	904	1,051	380	479	34
10.	45-59	10,061	7,064	2,997	2,738	2,226	2,846	600	895	162	424	6
11.	60+	4,247	2,293	1,954	920	1,633	853	269	313	51	142	1
12.	Age not stated	32	18	14	13	9	4	4	1	1	..	..

Table—II (Contd.)

Educational Levels: Technical diploma not equal to degree		Non-technical diploma not equal to degree		University degree or post-graduate degree other than technical degree		Technical degree or diploma equal to-degree or post-graduate degree: Engineering		Medicine		Agriculture		Veterinary and Dairying		Technology		Teaching		Others	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33
23	4	182	10	630	51	23	..	44	..	5	..	3	..	3	..	1	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	23	1	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
5	2	63	5	69	26	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
6	2	19	2	133	13	6	..	2	..	1	..	1	..	1	..	1	..	..	..
4	..	19	2	127	4	1	..	9	..	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
5	..	26	135	1315	5	..	3	..	..	1	..	2	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
2	..	19	..	116	3	4	..	19	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..
1	..	13	..	49	..	..	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

The above tables show that an overwhelming majority of the literates were without any educational standard and that among those who attained primary and junior basic standards, the majority were in the rural areas. The details of educational standard above matriculation are available for the urban areas only. Out of 7,913 males and 823 females with matriculation and above educational standard in the district, 2,952 males and 527 females were concentrated in the urban areas alone. There were also in the urban areas 23 males and 4 females with technical diplomas not equal to degree, 182 males and 10 females with non-technical diplomas not equal to degree. There were also 630 male and 51 female University Degree or Post-graduate Degree (other than technical degree) holders in the urban areas. 23 male Engineering graduates and 44 male graduates in Medicine were also found in the urban areas. The number of persons in the urban areas of the district with degrees in Agriculture, Veterinary and Dairying and in Technology were 5, 3 and 3 respectively.[8]

Spread of Education among women : Early writers speak highly of the position of women in the Assamese society which never become the victim of cruel rites such as infanticide, *Sati*, dowry etc., commonly associated with the Hindu society in early days. However, the idea of educating females was not in tune with the time. Even the cultured families evinced little desire to impart some instructions in the rudiments of education to their daughters and wives. Greater emphasis was, however, given on inculcating such virtues as would make them hospitable, religious minded and dutiful wives.[9] The idea of female education took its root only some time after the beginning of the western education and the above analysis reveals that female literacy in the district since 1901 has shown some progress especially during last three decades. It is interesting to note that rate of growth of female literacy is higher than that of the males ; but the percentage of literates to total population is lower among the females than among the males. However, with the increase in the number of school-going girls, the disparity between male and female is declining and is expected to decline further in next decade. "The obstacles in the way of progress of female education lie in the very structure of the Indian society. Early marriage and difficulty of procuring women teachers are the two notable obstacles, but the greatest is the general spirit of social conservatism which regards the education of women as a dangerous western innovation which is liable to transform a dutiful affectionate girl into a

8. *District Census Hand book, Goalpara*, 1961.
9. H. K. Barpujari, *Assam in the Days of the Company*, 1826 *to* 1858, Gauhati, 1963 p. 274.

discontented shrew of a woman".[10] This spirit was very much widespread 30 or 40 years ago. Several distinguished people and educationists of Assam, as reported, had no hesitation in informing the then Census Superintendent, that education particularly higher education is not good for Indian woman. Some others were of the opinion that present system of female education was basically unsound as it made girls unfit for the domestic duties of their home life. The spirit of demanding emancipation of woman was only just raising its head at that time. But the changes in the social milieu during the last two decades have inspired the protagonists of the female education to intensify their activities. The only impediment standing on the way of female literacy at present, is economic backwardness of the indigenous people of the district who are mostly Rajbangshis. The child marriages are now uncommon in the district. Dearth of female teachers is not a problem. From recent trends it can safely be concluded that female education has taken firm roots in Goalpara district and would rapidly thrive and attain such stature as was not even dreamed of by the most optimistic grandfather. The result has been reflected in the gradually increased rate of female literacy which attained the percentage figure of 13.03 in 1971.

Education among Scheduled Castes and Tribes : It is seen that in the Post-Independence period education among these two backward communities made remarkable progress. The reason was that after Independence the Government has given much emphasis on the spread of education among these people. The Government provided many incentives on the people of Scheduled Castes and Tribes by way of liberal financial provisions in the shape of scholarships, free studentship, accommodation in the hostels etc. According to the Census of 1971, the district had a tribal population of 3,08,287. Out of this, 73,732 were returned as literates. Percentage of literacy among Scheduled Tribes stood at 23.9 in the 1971 Census compared to 26.21 in 1961.

Spread of education among the Scheduled Castes has also made considerable headway. According to the Census of 1971, the district had a a total Scheduled Caste population of 1,20,006 of whom 24,543 were returned as literates. Percentage of literacy amongst Scheduled Castes improved from 19.38 in 1961 to 2045 in 1971. Appendix 'A' shows the details of literacy among the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes as per the 1961 Census.

10. *Ceusus of India*, 1951, *Vol. XII, Assam, Manipur & Tripura*, Part-I A, Report, Shillong, 1954, p. 354.

(c) *GENERAL EDUCATION* :

Primary Schools : As in the other districts of Assam, primary education has made rapid progress in Goalpara since Independence. In 1874-75, there were only 80 Primary Schools with 1,840 students on their rolls. The number of such schools and their students rose in 1901 to 230 and 5,827 respectively. During the next 6 decades, there was more than a nine-fold increase in the number of such schools and their students multiplied more than twenty-one times. In 1960-61, the district had 2,071 Primary Schools including 541 Junior Basic Schools and 2 Nursery Schools. The total number of pupils in these schools was 124,331 of whom 84,793 were reading in the Primary Schools, 39,406 in Junior Basic Schools and 132 in Nursery Schools. Primary Schools continued to increase with great rapidity during the next decades and in the thirteen years, following 1960-61, such institutions increased by 786 representing a growth exceeding 60 Primary Schools per year in the district. During the thirteen years, enrolment in such institutions increased by nearly sixty eight per cent. Thus in 1973-74, the number of Primary Schools including Junior Basic Schools in the district stood at 2,857 with 208,649 students on their rolls.[11]

Primary education in the past was divided into lower and upper primary standards but in course of time the upper primary schools were abolished in Goalpara as in other parts of the State. Education at the primary stage mainly aims at imparting knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic though the present curriculum has been widened. The course of Primary Schools at present is for 5 years and the classes consist of A. B, I, II and III.

Basic Schools . The scheme of Basic Education based on Gandhian philosophy was introduced in the country after its acceptance in the Haripura Congress Session of 1938. It suffered a serious set-back with the outbreak of the Second World War and resignation of Congress Ministries in the provinces. The War ended in 1945 and the Congress again came to power in Assam in 1946 and took upon itself the task of implementation of the scheme of Basic education as a part of the national system of education. Emphasis was given by the gradual introduction of free, compulsory and universal basic education for the children of the age group 6-14 years. Provisions have been made in the various five year plans for the establishment of new basic schools and the gradual conversion of existing

11. Figures Compiled from official reports.

Primary Schools into the Basic Schools. The enactment of Assam Basic Education Act of 1954, has accelerated the expansion of basic education in the State.

Basic Education at present comprises of two sets of schools, namely Junior Basic Schools and Senior Basic Schools. In 1965-66, there were 547 Junior Basic Schools with 46,719 students in the district of Goalpara. After five years in 1970-71, the number of schools came down to 533 but there was a slight increase of students. In 1974-75, the number of schools further decreased to 529 with an enrolment of 46,609 students.

The Assam Primary Education Act of 1947, repealing the Assam Primary Education Act of 1926 provided for compulsory primary education in selected rural and urban areas for children of the age group of 6-11 years. In the district of Goalpara, compulsory primary education was introduced in some selected areas in 1948.

The Assam Primary Education Act, 1947 also provided for the constitution of the Provincial Advisory Board for Primary Education for the regulation, control and development of primary education in the Province with the Director of Public Instructions as the ex-officio Chairman. Similar Boards were constituted at the Sub-divisional level and all the Primary Schools were taken over from the local bodies and transferred to the new authority.

The above Act was repealed by the Assam Basic Education Act of 1954 which provided for the constitution of State Basic Education Board to advise the Government in all matters concerning primary education in the State. The Minister of Education and Director of Public Instruction were made the ex-officio Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board respectively. Under the Act, Regional Boards were constituted with a non-official Chairman and the respective Inspector of Schools as the ex-officio Secretary. The control of primary education was entrusted to the Regional Boards and the Department of Education advised by the State Education Board was entrusted only with general powers of control and supervision over primary education. The control over primary education in the Autonomous Districts was shared by respective District Councils and the Education Department.[12]

By enacting the Assam Elementary Education Act 1962, the State of Assam has evolved a new pattern of administration of primary education in the State which is very similar to the French system where the Govern-

12. S.C. Majumder, *Education in Assam*, pp. 21-27

ment remains exclusively responsible for inspection and supervision of schools and provisions of teachers. The Government also excercises exclusive authority to recruit teachers and control their service conditions besides prescribing standards for general education and training and bearing all expenditure on account of teachers' salaries and allowances etc. The local authorities are entrusted only with responsibility of the non-teacher part of the expenditure on elementary education and for that also they are provided with grants-in-aid. Under the Assam Elementary Education Act, 1962, which provides for the management and control of elementary education, similar authority devolves on the local authorities which are the Municipal Boards, Town Committees and Gaon Panchayats. There is a State Board for Elementary Education to advise the Government for the development, expansion, management and control of elementary education in the State. The Act covers all the institutions providing instruction, basic or non-basic and seeks to enforce free and compulsory elementary education in the State. The Act also repeals the Assam Basic Education Act of 1954.[13]

Secondary Schools : Like primary education, the spread of secondary education is also mainly a post-Independence phenomenon. At the beginning of this Century in 1900-1901, the centres of secondary education were 3 High Schools and 15 Middle Schools. After Independence of the country in 1947 there was much expansion of education at all levels in the district. In 1950 there were 113 Middle Schools with 9,024 students, and 37 High Schools with 8,642 pupils in the district. By 1955, 6 new Senior Basic Schools were opened, the number of High Schools increased to 46 and Middle Schools to 186. Students at these institutions totalled 372, 13,452 and 13,140 respectively. Secondary education progressed at a rapid rate during the next decade and in 1965 the number of Senior Basic Schools trebled, High Schools more than doubled and Middle Schools increased by over 100 over the corresponding figures for 1965. There were also 6 Higher Secondary Schools at that time in the district with 3,775 students. Students in Senior Basic Schools increased more than 7 times during the decade, in Middle Schools enrolment was more than double during the period and in High Schools it rose by about 44 per cent. Emphasis on spread of education through opening of more institutions has continued and in 1974, Higher Secondary Schools increased to 8, High Schools to 178 and Middle Schools to 481, but the number of Basic Schools has remained the same as in 1965. The following statement shows the number of Schools and scholars (boys and girls) under secondary education in Goalpara district for some selected years during the period 1950-1974.

13. *The Indivn Year Book of Education*, 1964 *Second Year Book Elementary Education By* National Council of Educational Research of Training New Delhi, p. 444-45 and 529.

16(A)

Year	Middle Schools/Students			Senior Basic Schools/ Students			High Schools/Students			Higher Secondary Schools/ Students		
	Schools	Boys	Girls	Schools	Boys	Girls	Schools	Boys	Girls	Schools	Boys	Girls
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1950 ..	113	7,217	1,807	..	..	..	37	7,489	1,153	..	..	..
1955 ..	186	9,735	3,405	6	253	119	46	11,359	2,093	..	..	..
1960 ..	180	10,903	4,556	21	2,044	735	53	14,124	3,934	1	1,246	..
1965 ..	291	21,816	8,019	18	1,827	913	100	17,576	6,125	6	2,904	871
1970 ..	417	27,120	14,049	18	1.854	1083	160	21,979	10,019	8	4,116	619
1974 ..	481	32,047	18,130	18	1,541	1012	178	27,269	8	8	4,547	698

14. **Source** : Directorate of Public Instruction, Assam.

Secondary education at present is imparted in various categories of schools, namely Middle English Schools, Middle Vernacular Schools, Senior Basic Schools, High Schools and Higher Secondary and Multipurpose Schools. The medium of instruction in the Secondary School is mother tongue of important linguistic communities and study of Hindi is also being made progressively compulsory in all the Secondary Schools. Special State grants are being given to schools for teaching Hindi.

The classes and syllabi in the Middle English and Middle Vernacular schools are the same except that English is taught as an additional subject in the former. A student is taught from class IV to class VI in Middle Schools. Education is free in M.V. Schools. As already stated in 1901, there were 15 Middle Schools with 64 students. The phenomenal growth registered by such institutions in the district till now can be judged from the fact that in 1974, their number reached 481 and there were 32,047 boys and 18,130 girls totalling 50,177 in such institutions of the district.

Senior Basic Schools which are of recent origin in the district are to impart practical-cum-theoretical education to the children of the 11-14 years age group. Like Middle schools, classes in these schools consist of IV, V, and VI. There were 21 Senior Basic Schools with a total of 2,779 students during 1960 but the number of such schools and their students decreased in 1974 to 18 and 2,553 respectively.

As against 3 High Schools in 1900-1901 with 86 students the district now has 178 such schools with 27,269 boys and 11,129 girls totalling 38,398 in their rolls. Almost all the High Schools in the district are Government aided High Schools and are under the management of respective Managing Committees. The course of High Schools is a 7 year one from Class IV to Class X.

The scheme for introduction of Higher Secondary Schools and Multipurpose Schools in Assam is of recent origin. It was introduced in the district in 1958 in pursuance of the recommendation of the Secondary Education Commission, 1953. The progress of conversion has been slow for lack of resources and dearth of teaching personnel. Thus, till 1960, only one existing High School was converted to the Higher Secondary and Multipurpose standard. To remove the shortfall in the way of conversion of High Schools to Higher Secondary standard, various measures such as In-service Training of teachers in Science subjects, a larger number of scholarships for higher studies in Humanities, Science, Home Science, Fine Arts and Agriculture and deputation of teachers for Post-graduate studies have been taken up by the State Education Department of the Government of Assam. In 1974, there were 8 Higher Secondary Schools in the district 3 of which were combined Multipurpose Schools also.

Although so far we have avoided separate accounts of the various secondary schools of the district, an exception has been made below in the case of an institution which although of comparatively recent origin has already succeeded in attracting students from far and near.

Sainik School, Goalpara : One of the seventeen Sainik Schools of the country was established at Marnai about 16 kms. from Goalpara in 1964. This residential school for boys prepares them academically, physically and psychologically for entry into the National Defence Academy and other walks of life. The training imparted here seeks to promote such qualities as character, team-spirit, dedication to purpose, a patriotic outlook and a desire to serve the country with zeal and efficiency. Originally started with classes V, VI, and VII ; it grew into a full-fledged Higher Secondary School in 1967 and from 1968 has been affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi. Much emphasis is laid in this military biased school on games, hobbies, co-curricular activities and outward field activities and facilities have been provided for their promotion. Admission to the school is made strictly on merit on the basis of an Entrance Examination, normally held in February each year, followed by medical examination and interview. Special relaxations have been made for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates. Its students are provided with a large number of scholarships by the Central and various State Governments. Till September, 1975 the school had sent 97 boys to join the National Defence Academy at Kharakvasla (Poona) of whom 57 were already commissioned into the Armed Forces. The School had in September, 1975 a total of 427 students in Classes VI to XI, Class V having been abolished from that year. The following table shows the year-wise admission of students to the School for the last five years.[15]

Year	Scheduled Caste.	Scheduled Tribe	Others	Total
1	2	3	4	5
1971 ..	1	37	24	62
1972 ..	1	5	60	66
1973 ..	1	17	81	99
1974 ..	1	2	63	66
1975 ..	3	3	54	60

15. The account on Sainik School has been compiled from the report received from the Principal of the School.

The school is governed and administered under a three-tier control exercised through (i) a Board of Governors under the Chairmanship of the Minister of Defence ; (ii) a Local Board of Administration consisting of high civil and military officers, educationists, the Member of Parliament of the constituency, elected representatives of parents and the Principal of the School ; and (iii) the School Administration consisting of the Registrar, and the Headmaster with the Principal as its head.

Collegiate Education : Prior to 1946, there was no institution in the district for imparting Collegiate education. Aspirants to such higher education had either to go to Calcutta or to Gauhati where the Cotton College was established in 1901. In 1946, the Bhola Nath College, Dhuburi, the first of its kind in the district came into being. The establishment of a large number of High Schools after independence and the opening of the College at Dhuburi gave encouragement to start a number of Colleges in the district. At present, the district has altogether 13 Colleges affiliated to the Gauhati University for imparting general education like Arts, Science and Commerce. The individual accounts of some of the important Colleges are given below.

B. N. College, Dhuburi : It was established at Dhuburi in August, 1946, and is a remarkable example of public enterprise backed by public charity in which the *Zamindar* of Lakhipur Estate topped the list of donors. The Dhuburi College was soonafter renamed as Bholanath College after the name of the father of the principal donor.

In 1946, it was affiliated as a second grade Arts College to the University of Calcutta and after the establishment of the Gauhati University in 1948, the College changed its affiliation to it. It became a first grade College in 1948 and Science section was opened in 1953. The College is located on the Patamari Road in the vicinity of Dhuburi town. As a full-fledged College, it now provides honours classes in a number of subjects in both Arts and Science Groups. Further, being the premier College of the district, it provides all possible facilities like hostel, library, scholarships etc. for the benefit of the students. The statement below shows the strength of students and financial assistance received by the College in recent years.[16]

16. Source--Principal, B. N. Collage, Dhuburi.

Year	Arts Section	Science section	Student belonging to S.C. & S.T.	Financial Assistance received(A)
	Total students both boys and girls.	Total students boys and girls		Rs.
1	2	3	4	5
1970-71 ..	410	557	92	4,60,346.00
1971-72 ..	670	558	102	4,65,666.00
1972-73 ..	739	514	82	4,41,674.00
1973-74 ..	944	655	106	4,98,400.00
1974-75 ..	1,108	747	101	5,92,972.00

(A) Includes grants from State and Central Govts and University Grants Commission.

In 1974-75, there were 58 teachers in both the sections.

The Goalpara College, Goalpara :: The Goalpara College is also an important institution for providing Collegiate education in the district. It was started in 1955 with 97 students. In 1959, a night section was opened in the College for the benefit of the earner-learners of the town. In 1961, the College was included in the deficit system of grants by the Government of Assam. It is a degree College having both Arts and Science subjects and is affiliated to the University of Gauhati. In 1974-75, there were 754 students in the College of whom the number of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled tribes students was 196.

Kokrajhar College, Kokrajhar : It was started in 1959, through public donation principally to provide Collegiate education to the plains tribal and other backward students of the area. As a degree College in both Science and Humanities groups affiliated to the Gauhati University, it has fulfilled a long-felt need of the people of the Sub-division which is predominantely inhabited by Rajbanshis, Bodos, Santals and other backward Classes and Tribes. In 1974-75, there were 1,029 students in the Humanities group and 247 in the Science group of the College.

The statement below indicates the number of students including the plains Tribal, Scheduled Castes and other backward classes admitted in the College in the last three years.

(Statement for both sections)

Year	No. of Boys.	No. of Girls	Total students	No. of Scheduled Caste	No. of Plains Tribal	No. of other backward classes
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1972-73	922	159	1,081	73	388	252
1973-74	997	222	1,219	74	477	273
1974-75	1,047	229	1,276	39	557	226

Bilasipara College, Bilasipara : This College at Bilasipara was started by some enlightened local people in 1960. Its buildings were donated by the ex-Zamindar of Bilasipara and as a token of gratitude the College was named after him. But in 1966, it was renamed as Bilasipara College as per decision of the College Governing Body. In 1969, the College was brought under deficit system of grants-in-aid by the State Government. The College is affiliated to the Gauhati University in Arts subjects and in 1955, there were about 500 students with 17 teachers in different subjects.

Pramathesh Barua College, Gauripur : The establishment of the College at Gauripur in 1964 has removed a long-felt want of the people of the locality. The College is named after Pramathesh Barua, who was a noted artist of Gauripur. This degree College in Arts is affiliated to the Gauhati University and in 1974-75, there were 492 students on the rolls of which 92 belonged to the Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, Plains Tribal and other backward classes.

Other Colleges of the district are Abhayapuri College, Bongaigaon College, Bijni College, Mankachar College, Gossaingaon College, Dudhnai College, Sapatgram College and Chilarai College, Golakganj. Most of these are venture institutions and are affiliated to the Gauhati University.

The Director of Public Instruction, Assam, under the Education Department to the Government of Assam looks after the general education of the State. Some of the powers are delegated to the Inspector of Schools, Dhuburi. For administration of Primary Education (including Lower Primary and Junior Basic Schools), Middle Schools (including Senior Basic Schools), there are three Deputy Inspectors, of Schools one in each subdivision of the district. Besides, there are a number of Sub-Inspectors and Assistant Sub-Inspectors who assist the Deputy Inspectors in their work of inspecting Primary Schools. In this context, it may be mentioned here that for administrative purposes of Primary education upto the Middle School standard, the district is divided into three Educational Sub-divisions which are further sub-divided into Circles, one or more of which remain in charge of each Sub-Inspector of Schools. The Deputy Inspectors who are also ex-officio Secretaries of the Regional Board for Elementary Education at the Sub-divisional level exercise control over Lower Primary, Junior Basic, Middle Vernacular, Middle English, and Senior Basic Schools within their jurisdictions.

The inspection and supervision of High Schools and Higher Secondary and Multi-purpose Schools are the responsibility of the Inspector of Schools, Dhuburi. He is assisted in his work by an Assistant Inspector of

Schools. It may be mentioned here that the Education Department bears the responsibility for the management and control of the Government Secondary Schools, while the Aided Secondary Schools are managed by the respective School Committees popularly known as Managing Committees. The private Schools are managed by the owners of the schools but are subject to inspection by the Inspecting Officers of the Education Department which is gradually extending its sway over such schools.

Colleges in the district are inspected by the Inspector of Colleges appointed by the Gauhati University and the Director of Public Instruction mainly looks after the financial aspects and considers various types of grants. For management of the local affairs of the Colleges there is a Managing Committee or a Governing Body in each College which is approved by the Government.

(d) *PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES* :

This district has four Teachers' Training Schools including three Basic Training Centres located at Golakganj, Kokrajhar and Dudhnai, and one private non-Basic Training School (Normal School) at Bongaigaon. Whereas the Basic Training Centres are in-service institutes with a course of one year, the Normal School imparts pre-service training for two years to Matriculates who desire to take teaching as a profession. Considering the number of untrained teachers in Primary and Middle Schools, the facilities extended for teacher's training appear to be limited.

The table below shows the number of trainees admitted to each Basic Training Centre and their teaching staff for some recent years.[17]

Name of Centre	No. of Students			No. of Staff		
	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74
(1) Basic Training Centre, Golakganj	62	69	70	6	7	7
(2) Basic Training Centre, Kokrajhar	90	77	93	8	10	10
(3) Dudhnai Basic Training Centre, Goalpara	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

17. Sub-Divisional Statistical Book, Dhuburi & Kokrajhar.

For the training of Secondary School teachers, there are two B.T. Colleges in the district one each at Goalpara and Kokrajhar, the former being a Government College. Generally, Secondary School teachers come here on deputation for training for one year. Although there is no other training institution for Secondary School teachers within the district, the teachers can go for training to the Post-Graduate Training College, at Jorhat. The college provides the Teachers, Diploma (T.D.) Course for under-graduate and also for graduate teachers. Certificate courses in the method of teaching Geography (T.T.G.) and the method of teaching English (E.T) are also conducted by the Gauhati University for teachers. These courses are attended by both the Graduate and Post-graduate teachers. Inspite of these facilities available both in and outside the district, the position in respect of the trained teachers is not very satisfactory. Individual accounts of the existing B.T. Colleges of the district are given below.

B. T. College, Kokrajhar : Kokrajhar B.T. College was started by the public of the locality in 1971 to remove the difficulty of finding qualified teachers for Secondary Schools. The College obtained affiliation from the Gauhati University in the same year. It provides post-graduate Training Course for B.T. degree. The Government of Assam allotted both land and money for the construction of its buildings. Duratoin of the course in the College is for one year. The course of study begins in July and ends in June every year. All the B.T. Colleges of the State under the Gauhati University provide similar courses which include principles of Education, Educational Psychology and Educational Statistics ; and general methods of Teaching ; School Organisation and School Hygiene. Besides, it provides courses in History of Education ; current problems of Education, English and Geography, modern Indian languages-Assamese and Bengali, History, Mathematics, Primary and Infant School subjects, etc. In 1974-75, there were 4 full-time and 6 part-time teachers with 115 trainees in the College.

Government B.T. College, Goalpara : The Govt. B.T. College, Goalpara, is the second Government B. T. College of the State and it came into being in June, 1974. The College is now accommodated in an old hostel of P. R. Govt. Higher Secondary and Multipurpose School, Goalpara. Being an infant institution, facilities available in the College are yet inadequate. Subjects taught in the College are similar with other B.T. Colleges of the State. At present, the teaching staff of the College includes one Principal, two Professors, five Lecturers and one Demonstrator. In 1974-75, 78 (61 male & 17 female) trainees in Arts were admitted to the College.

Law College, Dhuburi : A Law College has been started at Dhuburi town in 1969. This College is affiliated to the Gauhati University. In 1974-75, it had 115 students with 8 teachers.

Commercial College, Dhuburi : The Commercial College at Dhuburi provides instruction in type-writing, short-hand and similar courses.

Technical Education :

Industrial Training Institute, Bongaigaon : Under the second plan, facilities for technical education in Assam were expanded and five Industrial Training Institutes including one at Bongaigaon in Goalpara district were established in the State. This institute provides training for craftsmen and skilled artisans such as Carpenters, Blacksmiths, Welders, Fitters, Turners, Machinists, Draughtsman, Electricians, Sheet metal workers, Radio Mechanics, Surveyors etc. The institute provides a certificate course of one and half years' duration.

Statistics about the number of teachers and students in the institute for the last three years are given below.[18]

Year		No. of students.			No. of teachers		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1		2	3	4	5	6	7
1971-72	..	71	18	89	9	..	9
1972-73	..	102	9	111	9	..	9
1973-74	..	98	13	111	11	..	11

(e) *SCHOOLS FOR CULTIVATION OF FINE ARTS, MUSIC AND DANCING* :

The district of Goalpara, particularly Gauripur, is noted for its dance and music. For the instruction of modern and classicial music and different types of dances, there are three music schools, one at Dhuburi town and two at Gauripur and Chapar. All these institutions are aided by Government. In the Dhuburi Music School, there were 25 students and 7 music teachers in 1972-73. The Prabhat Chandra Sangeet Vidyapith, Gauripur, started in 1951, receives grants-in-aid of Rs. 150.00 per month from the State Government and Rs. 100/- from the Gauripur Town Committee. The School imparts lessons on classical music as per syllabus of Bhat-Khande College, Lucknow and also Local folk songs and dances, *Bhajan*, *Bargeet* etc. There is also arrangement for instrumental music classes.

18. *Sub-Divisional Statistical Book*, Kokrajhar.

(f) *ORIENTAL SCHOOL* :

Institutions imparting Oriental education in the district are very few. Oriental Schools consist of Sanskrit Schools (*tols*) and Arabic Teaching Schools (*Madrassas*). In 1974-75, there were three Sanskrit *tols* in the district one each at Dhuburi, Gauripur and Goalpara. The centres of Sanskrit learning in medieval and early modern times were Hakma, Salkocha and Gauripur where a number of Sanskrit Scholars concentrated their activities for the spread of Sanskrit education in the district. The present *tols* impart Sanskrit education upto title level. In the same year five Arabic Schools were functioning and imparted Arabic education to the Muhammadan students. Most of these schools are Govt. aided. During the early British period, we find that there were two Sanskrit *tols*, attended by thirty Brahmans. One was kept up by the family priest of the *Raja* of Bijni, and was paid remuneration from the Estate. The other *tol* was supported by the Gauripur *Zamindar*. In both these *tols* Sanskrit grammar and *Smriti* (Hindu Law) were tought.[19] Now the *tols* are under the Assam Sanskrit Board which prescribes syllabus, conducts examinations and renders financial aid.

(g) *ADULT LITERACY AND SOCIAL EDUCATION* :

The problem of adult literacy has assumed importance not only in the district of Goalpara but also in the rest of the country in view of the low rate of literacy revealed by the last Census. Over three-fourths of the population of the district still continue to be illiterate—the percentage of literacy in the district being only 21.98 in 1971.[20] The task of mass literacy is stupendous and is being tackled from two fronts namely, by rapid implementation of the programmes of compulsory primary education and by organising mass literacy campaigns.

Although the programme of adult literacy was in operation since the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the drive was intensified only with the formation of the Congress Ministries in 1937. The Second World War caused a set back but with the attainment of Independence the campaign was revived with zeal and vigour.

After Independence, the whole concept of social education has undergone a tremendous change. In the pre-Independence days, the chief aim of Social education was to acquaint the adults with the three "Rs." This no doubt remains to be a primary object of social education till to-day; but its scope has been enlarged to impart education in all those subjects which

19. W. W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Assam*. Vol. 2, Goalpara, 1975 (Reprint), p. 99

20. *Statistical Handbook Assam*, 1973, p. 3.

make him an ideal citizen. Thus literacy, education in citizenship and health, understanding of science as applied to every day life, acquisition of information and skills that improve vocational efficiency, development of hobbies and organisation of cultural and recreational programmes, form a part of the Social Education Programme.[21] Since 1952, the programme has been made an integral part of the Community Development Movement in the district and each Community Development Block has one Social Education Organiser and one Lady Social Education Organiser who look after social education in their respective areas. The District Social Education Officer, Goalpara supervises the works of the officials of the district.

Social Education Centres are organised for a duration of three months at a time of the year when adults are free from agricultural pursuits. The course comprises pre-literacy and post-literacy phases. In the pre-literacy phase adults are introduced to literacy while "in the post literacy state instructions in the advance studies are imparted. At the post-literacy level, libraries, clubs and community centres are organised, and literature for new literate adults and audio-visual aids are provided. Recreational and cultural activities including dramatic performances, *bhaonas*, music competitions, folk dances, games and sports etc., are organised by clubs and community centres".[22] Audio-visual aids such as films are also used in the social education centres. The Department of Social Education is also publishing one quarterly journal, *Jana Siksha*, as part of the campaign.

Since 1968-69, besides literacy centres, a number of Adult Schools are also functioning in the district under the general supervision of the District Social Education Officer, Goalpara. The statistics given below indicate the number of persons benefited in the district under various schemes of social education.

Persons benefited under Social Education Scheme.

Year	Male	Female	Total
1967	563	89	652
1968	313	279	592
1969	2320	969	3289
1970	1565	654	2219
1971	791	247	1038
1972	797	241	1038
1973	728	267	995

21. *The Indian Year Book of Education*, 1961, *Paper*—1, *National Revtew of Central Programmes*, by National Council of Educational Research Training, New Delhi, p. 257.

22. S.C. Majumder, *Education in Assam*, p. 101.

(h) *CULTURAL, LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES* :

Throughout the district of Goalpara, there are a number of cultural institutions or societies, some of which are Government registered and are getting financial aid regularly. Accounts of some of the important cultural institutions are summarised below :

Maynamoti *Silpi Samaj*, Bilasipara : This is a registered cultural institution located at village Dimatola within Bilasipara P.O. It has been established for the promotion of Art, Culture, music and dance among the people of the area. It was started in 1970. The institution performed a numbers of shows in various places of Bangladesh in 1971.

Assam *Sangha*, Dhuburi : Established in 1947, this institution stands for the promotion of Assamese literature and culture, and Assamese music and drama. Revival of old Assamese culture is an important object of this *Sangha* and with that end in view one *Natyamancha* or dramatic hall has been constructed on its permanent site through public donations. Govt. help was also extended for the construction of the building of the *Sangha*. The hall is christened as *Rupkowar Natya Mancha* where all public functions, meetings, theatrical performances etc., are held. The office of the *Asom Sahitya Sangha* (Dhuburi branch) is also accommodated in one portion of the hall.

Kranti Silhi Sangha, Dhuburi : This cultural institution meant for the promotion of music, dance, and drama was established at Dhuburi in 1946. It holds regular classes on all types of vocal and classical songs, modern and mythological dances and training in instrument like violin, Sitar etc.

Kala Tirtham, Gauripur : It is an association devoted to cultural activities, particularly for the folk songs and dances of Gauripur. Gauripur is noted for its *Goalparia Lokageet* in Assam and the *Kala Tirtham* stands for the promotion of such folk songs in and outside the State. Contributions made by Late Pramathes Chandra Barua, of Gauripur Raj family for the promotion of folk songs of Goalpara are also very significant.

Luit Paria Tarun Sangha, Kokrajhar : It was established at Kokrajhar in 1960 to extend understanding and cultural activities. Its present strength is 120 members.

Raisumari *Affat*, Kokrajhar : Established in 1960, this well-known Bodo cultural organisation presents various Bodo dances throughout the

State. Members of this *Affat*, took part in national programmes as well as in Television and Film. Its members participated in the East India Cultural Conference held at Gauhati in 1975 and at Bhubaneswar in 1976.

Some other similar cultural organisations of Kokrajhar are *Bithorai Affat*, Kokrajhar; *Demgaldi Affat*. P. O. Basugaon Established in 1967; *Narsan Affat*, Established in 1958, P.O. Borobazar: and *Reumailou Affat*, P.O. Sidli.

Sialmari Cultural Club. P.O. Manikpur and Magurmari *Koch-Rabha Kristi* party Kokrajhar are Bodo cultural organisations and they stand for the promotion of Bodo Culture in and outside the State.

Goalpara *Zila Anusandhan* Committee, Dhuburi : It was established in 1971 and was registered in 1973. It has been engaged in historical research and in finding out archaeological sports. So far the Committee has been able to find out five archaeological ruins including those of the Kamarupa kingdom of the 12th century. The said *Anusandhan* Committee has set up a small museum at Dhuburi. An Executive Committee with 11 members has been formed to conduct the activities of the Committee.

Asom Sahitya Sabha : The *Asom Sahitya Sabha*, the Premier literary association of the State was established in 1917. In Goalpara district it has its branches at Dhuburi, Gauripur, Golakganj, Agomoni, Halakura, Kachakhana, Bagribari, Bilasipara, Salkocha, Chapar and South Salmara.

The Bodo literary Association has also its branches in various parts of Kokrajhar subdivision, the stronghold of the Bodo language. There is one branch of the *Asom Sahitya Sabha* at Kokrajhar which was established in 1956.

Cultural and Scientific periodicals published from the district are very few and are mostly irregular. At present, the following periodicals are published from the district. They are *Sahitya Samannay*, published from Kokrajhar annually since 1971 ; *Gagana*, published annually since 1968 from Kokrajhar on the occasion of the *Rongali Bihu*; and *Pasowa* published half yearly from Gossaingaon, and first published in April 1976. These literary magazines are published with a view to promote literary activities of this region and to introduce local writers to the literary field.

(i) *LIBRARIES* ; *MUSEUMS* etc. :

Libraries are considered important centres for spread of education in a country. In Goalpara district, before Independence, except the Cotton

Library established at Dhuburi in 1898 and the Victoria Library at Goalpara which was started in 1905, there were few libraries of note. It was only after the establishment of the District Library at Dhuburi that adequate attention was paid to the development and spread of libraries in various parts of the district. At present, the total number of libraries in the district is 224 most of which are unregistered and are in rural areas. Many of the rural libraries are combined library, club and *Sangha* and receive annual grants from the State Social Education Department at rates varying from Rs. 100 to Rs. 200. Brief accounts of the two leading libraries of the district are given below.

District Library Dhuburi : This library *cum* club was established in 1898 under the patronage of the then rulers and the local *Zamindar*. It was built on the skeleton of the old Dhuburi Public Library and was named as the Cotton Library to commemorate the visit of Henry Cotton, Chief Commissioner of Assam to Dhuburi in 1898. The *Zamindar* handed over its management by a registered deed of gift to the Local Board, Dhuburi which maintained it in a worthy manner for 57 years. Subsequently it was converted into a District Library under the management of the State Government.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Memorial Library, Goalpara : Named as Victoria Library in 1908, it was founded in 1905 through contributions made by various *Zamindars* and the public. Its name was changed to its present form in 1955 to commemorate the visit of the illustrious leader to Goalpara. The library now receives monthly recurring grants from the Goalpara Municipality and annual Book Grants from the State Government. An Executive Committee of 15 members looks after its management.

CHAPTER XVI.

MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

(a) *SURVEY OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND MEDICAL FACILITIES IN EARLY TIMES* :

The information about the medical facilities available in early times is very meagre. Literary works of the mediaeval period refer to *Kavirajas* and *Ojhas* who attended to the ailments of the people. The *Ayurveda*, the science of medicine, was carefully studied. There was a State medical department with the royal physician at the head.[1] Ralph Fitch who visited the Koch kingdom in the sixteenth century refers to the hospitals for sheep, goats, cats, birds and for all living creatures. The Doobi grant of Bhaskarvarman (A.D. 594-650) mentions that even the kings assiduously cultivated the science of elephant lore. In those days, the horses and elephants constituted the hard core of the army and as such utmost care was taken for their upkeep.

"Divination was also resorted to for prognosis and cure of diseases. Incantations and *mantras* were also practised as specifics".[2] Incantation of *mantras* are still employed in rural areas of the district, particularly as cure for snake bites.

During the early part of the British rule, the curative side of human ailments was in the hands of *Kavirajas*, *Ojhas* etc. and other indigenous systems of medicines were also practised. The preventive side did not receive much attention. The sanitary condition of the urban and rural areas of Assam was miserable. With the establishment of the Local Boards and Municipalities, the work of sanitation was entrusted to them. But due to paucity of funds, no appreciable change in the unsanitary conditions, especially in the rural areas could be brought. The unsanitary character of the villages of district has been described by B. C. Allen as follows :[3]—

"There may be something in the climate, the subsoil level of the water, or some other factor which for the present remains obscure, which is prejudicial to life and health, but there can be no doubt that the conditions under which the people pass their days are not conductive to a long mean duration of life."

1. B. K. Barua, *A Cultural History of Assam*, Gauhati, 1969, p. 153.
2. E. A. Gait, *A History of Assam*, Calcutta, 1967 p. 282
3. B. C. Allen, *Assam District Gazetteers, Vol. III, Goalpara*, Calcutta, 1905, pp. 138-139

Fever and bowel complaints used to take heavy toll of human life, the latter occurring mostly during the season when mangoes and jack-fruits ripened. Cholera epidemics often broke out from time to time producing high mortality. Death per mille in 1884, 1886, 1891, 1895, 1897 and 1899 were 4.9, 4.9, 6.4, 6.7, 10.4 and 5.1 respeclively. It usually appeared in Bilasipara, Chapaguri and Agamoni Police stations mostly during April to July and in the months of November & December. Smallpox also broke out in virulent form from time to time and highest death rates per mille recorded due to it were 6.1 in 1894 and 1.2 in 1895. *Kalazar*, a deadly killer, believed to have been imported from Rongpur, entered Goalpara district in 1883. It broke out in such virulent form that between 1881 and 1891 the population of Goalpara subdivision decreased by no less than 18 per cent. Another disease, leprosy, is said to have enjoyed a position not only of provincial but even of Imperial eminence in Goalpara district. In 1901, it was ooe of the three districts in India with a larger proportion of male lepers.[4] Many lives were also lost owing to the lack of knowledge of midwifery. In the words of B. C. Allen "There are very few professional midwives, and a woman in her confinement is generally attended by her relatives or friends. In difficult cases they can render little help, and recourses is had to Heaven for assistance. A goat or duck is sacrified, and *mantras* are tied round the neck and arm of the woman, or inscribed on a brass vessel, which is placed where her eyes can fall upon it. In cases of false presentation attempts are made to drag the child out by anything that offers, and the abdomen is kneaded in the hope that the foetus may be expelled. 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 patients' bed generally consists of an old mat laid on the floor. If the labour is a natural one all is well, but if complications arise the case has usually a fatal termination. It is also probable that many lives are lost owing to a disregard of the rules of cleanliness which are of such paramount importance in these cases.",[5]

Medical facilities available were far from satisfactory. In 1881, the district had only four dispensaries. By 1891, there were five more additions and by 1900 the total number of dispensaries in the district increased to 14 including the private dispensary at Abhayapuri. The other dispensaries were at Dhuburi, Gauripur, Rupsi, Bargribari, Mankachar, Bilasipara, South Salmara, Agamani, Goalpara, Lakhipur, Krishnai, Marnai and Chapar. Full details are at the Appendix-I to this chapter. As for the registered

4. Ibid, pp. 38, 139-143
5. Ibid, pp. 143-144.

private medical practitioners, there are 132 Allopaths, 5 Ayurvedics, 125 Pharmacists. and 51 Diploma holders at present.

(b) *VITAL STATISTICS* :

In permanently settled parts of the district, registration in rural areas is done through the agency of the Police. *Chowkidars* enter village birth and death figures in *Hat chithas* (Village register of births & deaths). Such persons being often illiterate, they usually take the registers to the Panchayat or other persons to have the occurrences entered weekly. The *hat-chithas* are taken by them to the Police Station & Out Post weekly, fortnightly or monthly. The entries are copied in the *thana* register and a monthly return is submitted to the District Medical Officer of Health known as District Health Officer. In other rural areas of the district which are not permanently settled, the procedure followed is the same as in the plains districts of Brahmaputra Valley. In such areas compilation and submission of monthly returns to the health authorities is made by revenue officials. In tea gardens, where registration is compulsory, it is the managers' responsibility to maintain registers of births and deaths and they submit monthly returns to the District Health Officer. Within Railway areas, Station Masters mantain registers and submit them monthly to the Chief Medical Officer, who furnishes monthly returns to the Director of Public Health. In urban areas, Chairmen of Municipal Boards & Town Committees submit monthly returns to the District Health Officer.

For rural areas with the enactment of Assam Panchayat Act 1959, the collection of vital statistics has been entrusted to the Secretary of the Gaon Panchayat. He submits monthly return to the Block Development Officer who in turn submits a consolidated return to the District Health Officer (formerly known as District Medical Officer and Civil Surgeon).

Finally the District Health Officer submits a monthly return for the whole district to the Director of Health Services.

However, the collection of vital statistics in the State is admitted to be defective. The figures indicating the natural increase of population according to vital statistics do not tally with those of the censuses. Natural increase of population is not fully reflected in the vital statistics. It is reported that births are more often omitted than deaths. The main drawback with the collection of vital statistics in the State is that registration of births and deaths is not compulsory except in the tea gardens. Reporting of birth or death is not an obligation on the part of the house holder. Formerly, its prime collecting agencies were *Chowkidars* who were very often

illiterate, invariably low paid and burdened with many other duties. Even the change of the collecting agents from *chowkidar* to Secretary of the Gaon Panchayat did not bring any appreciable improvement in registration and collection of vital statistics. The following statement shows the figures of Vival Statistics for the period 1951-1971.

Year	Total number of Births.	Total number of Deaths.	Total increase (+) or decrease (—) of Births over Deaths.	Percentage increase of Births over Deaths.
1	2	3	4	5
1951 ..	10,744	7,899	+2,845	26.48
1952 ..	13,277	7,343	+5,934	44.69
1953 ..	14,612	8,328	+6,284	43.00
1954 ..	14,317	9,147	+5,170	36.11
1955 ..	13,028	9,725	+3,303	25.35
1956 ..	12,881	8,433	+4,448	34.53
1957 ..	12,657	9,662	+2,995	23.66
1958 ..	10,659	8,160	+2,499	23.44
1959 ..	15,879	12,062	+3,817	24.04
1960 ..	7,550	5,989	+1,561	20.67
Total ..	125,604	86,748	+38,856	30.93

Among the important causes of mortality during the decade 1951-60, fever headed the list by claiming as many as 72,981 victims. Next came Malaria, claiming 2,986 victims, dysentery and diarrhoea with 2,105 lives followed by respiratory diseases which were responsible for 1,892 deaths. Malaria which claimed a maximum of 784 lives during 1954 was largely checked during the subsequent years due to anti-malaria measures and death from it decreased to 91 in 1960. Mortality due to child-birth was also an important cause of death. *Kalazar*, a potent disease, especially prevalent south of the Brahmaputra in Goalpara district which between 1881-91 had depleted the population of the Goalpara Sub-division by no less 18 per cent, averaged only 13.3 victims per annum during the decade 1951-60. Small-pox which claimed 135 lives in 1951 was effectively controlled by mass vaccination and claimed only 2 lives in 1953. Since then, there was no death during the decade from Small-pox.

During the decade 1961-70, fever continued to be the chief cause of mortality claiming on average nearly 3176 victims annually. During the next three years ending in 1973, the annual average of the last decade was exceeded only in 1973 in which year 3,182 persons died of fever. It should

be noted, however, that prior to 1967, malaria and *Kala-azar* fatalities were included under fever. During the said decade other diseases (diseases not specifically listed in the table below) accounted for about 755 victims annually which increased to 1,476 during the next three years ending in 1973. It may be noted here that deaths due to cancer, leprosy and tuberculosis were included under this head prior to 1967. Deaths due to dysentery and diarrhoea which claimed about 418 persons annually during the decade 1961-70, increased during next three years and 2,633 ; 2,792 and 3,182 persons died of it during the years 1971, 1972, and 1973 respectively. Respiratory diseases which claimed about 286 lives during the said decade claimed 393, 326 and 505 lives during the next three years. During the period 1967-70, tuberculosis claimed on average 77 humen lives annually. In the next three years, this disease caused 83, 85 and 60 deaths. Deaths due to malaria averaged 73.5 in the four years ending in 1970 but during the next three years this average decreased to 57.66. During the four years 1967-70, *Kala-azar* accounted for 15.25 deaths annually. *Kala-azar* deaths decreased to 3 in 1971, nil in 1972 but rose again to 30 in 1973. Deaths in the district from small pox was nil during the period 1954 to 1961, and again during the period 1963 to 1967. There were 16 deaths from this disease in 1962 and 6, 3 and 28 during 1968, 1969 and 1970 respectively. During the next three years ending in 1973, there were 6, 18 and 23 deaths from this cause. Deaths due to cholera which averaged 3.6 during the decade 1951-60 increased by 15.5 annually during the next decade ending in 1970. A record number of 144 human lives were lost to this disease in 1968 and again in 1971. Since then, however, deaths from cholera declined to 22 in 1972 and 11 in 1973. Other causes of deaths include leprosy, cancer and deaths due to snake bites..

The following table shows the vital statistics in the urban and rural areas of the district from 1970 to 1977 and also the important causes of deaths in the district from 1961 to 1973.

Table I.

Statement showing the number of births and deaths in the district from 1970 to 1977.

Year	Area	Vital Statistics		Infant mortality
		Birth	Death	
1970	Urban ..	1,938	608	46
	Rural ..	14,423	4,840	720
1975	Urban ..	1,935	703	21
	Rural ..	2,637	1,154	80
1976	Both Urban and Rural ..	1,370	843	74
1977	Both Urban and Rural ..	3,094	640	55

Source : District Health Officer, Dhuburi.

TABLE—II

Statement showing the annual deaths from selected causes during the period 1961 to 1973 in the district.

Name of Diseases	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Cholera	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	144	..	11	144	22	11
2. Fever	9,636	6,705	1,629	1,528	2,035	1,593	1,745	2,361	2,686	1,839	2,633	2,792	3,182
3. Small Pox	..	16	..	..	..	..	..	6	3	28	6	18	23
4. Dysentery and Diorrhoea	294	229	326	498	743	469	350	504	417	372	505	623	683
5. Plague	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
6. Respiratory disease	196	90	146	190	221	156	369	520	510	460	393	326	505
7. (i) Suicides													
(ii) Snake bites	67	63	6,464	42	94	94	77	147	154	192	139	121	329
(iii) Wounds, accidents													
8. Child births	..	..	..	..	..	..	31	62	52	68	52	54	115
9. Malaria Prior to 1967, no seperate record for malaria and kala-azar is kept The figures are included in fever cases						..	55	76	27	136	63	42	68
10. Kala-azar	..	..	..	..	..	..	43	7	8	3	3	..	30
11. Tuberculosis	Prior to 1967 no seperate record of cancer, leprosy and tuberculosis is kept. The figures are included in any other disease cases.					..	53	79	89	87	83	85	69
12. Leprosy						..	1	..	5	4	3	4	4
13. Cancer						..	10	48	60	63	48	45	21
14. Other diseases	32	398	477	795	925	622	705	1,319	936	1,342	1,455	1,436	1,536

(c) *DISEASES COMMON TO THE DISTRICT* :

The most common diseases at present are Dysentery, Diarrhoea, Tuberculosis, Influenza, Cancer, Rheumatism, Typhoid, Bronchities, Measles, Cholera, Gastroentrities, Respiratory diseases, skin diseases etc. In early times *Kala-azar*, Cholera, Small pox broke out in epidemic form and took heavy toll of human life as has been mentioned elsewhere. *Kalazar* is on the wane and antimalarial measures have been instrumental for decreasing the incidence of malaria. Generally speaking, small pox has been kept under control. Leprosy mostly affecting the tribal population of the district has been controlled to some extent but even then there were 539 patients who were under treatment in different Leprosy treatment centres in the district. Diarrhoea, Dysentery and other bowel disorders occur especially at the time when the mangoes and jack fruits ripen. Goitre is a common disease especially in the western part of the district. In the months of July & August 1971, a large number of people suffered from conjunctivities. There was also an epidemic of gastroenterities in 1969, 1970, 1971 when mass innoculation was resorted to control the disease.

(d) *PUBLIC HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES* :

Organisation of the Medical Department : The District Health Officer is the head of the organisation at the district level and is responsible for both the curative and preventive aspects of the set up. There are two Sub-divisional Health Officers, one each at Goalpara and Kokrajhar who are entrusted with the affairs of the Department in their respective Sub-divisions. They work under the control and supervision of the District Health Officer, Dhuburi.

State Hospitals and Dispensaries : There were 8 State hospitals, 70 State dispensaries and 15 primary health centres with a total of 370 beds in 1969-70 in Goalpara district. During 1970-71, the number of hospitals and dispensaries remained the same but one primary health centre was newly opened, the number of beds remaining the same. By 31.3.72 three State dispensaries and one primary health centre were upgraded to State hospitals whose number increased to 12. Of these, there were seven civil hospitals at Dhuburi, Kokrajhar, Gauripur, Abhayapuri, Dudhnai, Baida and Goalpara, one police hospital at Dhuburi ; one chest hospital at Dhuburi ; two jail hospitals at Dhuburi and Goalpara and one railway hospital at Bongaigaon. On that date, there were also 67 State dispensaries and 15 primary health centres. The total number of hospital beds increased to 427. Out of 19,958 patients treated in medical institutions of the

district during 1969, there were 670 indoor patients and 1,928 outdoor patients. The total number of patients during 1970 increased to 27,116, there being 261 indoor patients and 21,855 outdoor patients. The number of indoor patients increased to 465 in 1971.[6] It may be mentioned that the total number of patients treated in the different medical institutions of the district during the year 1969-70 were the highest in the State during these years.

The State dispensaries are placed in charge of Assistant Health Officers of whom there are two grades-I and II. All the medical officers are concurrently empowered to act as the food Inspectors, to detect cases of food adulteration. In each civil hospital and dispensary, a paramedical staff is also entertained. All the hospitals and some dispensaries are also provided with nurses. Primary health centre is placed in charge of Assistant Health Officer I and covers population of about 40 to 60 thousand. Each of them is required to attend to both curative and preventive aspects of diseases occurring in the area, survey of diseases and other sanitary measures. These works are generally done in collaboration with public Health Engineer, Social Education Organiser and respective Block Officers. Each centre has three to four sub-centres to look after the curative and preventive aspects of diseases, maternity child welfare and family planning Services in their respective areas. Each primary health unit is usually run by a group of qualified medical personnel which include one Medical Officer, one Pharmacist, one Sanitary Inspector, one Public Health Nurse or Lady Health Visitor, Auxiliary Nurse and Midwives.

Railway Hospital and Dispensaries : Since 1970, there are one hospital, one dispensary and two health units in Goalpara district under the North East Frontier Railways. The hospital at Dangtal in New Bongaigaon has 30 beds and was manned by 7 Doctors, 9 nurses one midwife and thirty seven other personnel on 1.4.75. The other medical institutions in Goalpara district under the N.F. Rly. have three doctors, one midwife and seventeen other medical personnel. Facilities for indoor patients exist only in the hospital. The number of indoor patients treated during 1970 was 1,700, during 1972 it increased to 1,990 and in 1974 it increased to 3,118. The average number of outdoor patients treated per day during 1970, 1972 and 1974 was 294.5, 349.1 and 414.8. respectively.

Maternity and Child Welfare Services : The district has 15 maternity & child welfare centres located at Kokrajhar, Serfanguri, Chalantapara,

6. *Statistical Handbook of Assam*, 1973-74 ; Department of Economics and Statistics Govt, of Assam, Dispur, 1975, pp, 91-93

Gossaingaon, Chapar, Sapatgram, Golakganj, Lakhipur, Bijni, Rongjuli, Barabazar, Banargaon, Bilasipara and Abhayapuri. Some of these centres are attached to State dispensaries and primary health centres. In fact, maternity and child welfare facilities are available practically in all the hospitals, dispensaries and primary health centres. The staff of the maternity and child welfare centres includes midwives and *Dhais*. They also look after the health and condition of the expectant mothers and new born children and give useful advice for maintenance of health and sanitation.

All hospitals and almost all primary health centres have family planning centres attached to them. The additional District Health Officer (Family Planning) is responsible for implementation of the family planning programme in the district. Besides sterilization measures including both vasectomy and tubectomy, family planning is also resorted to by conventional methods including condoms, jellies, foam tablets, diaphragms etc. Public meetings are also organised in these centres from time to time. Seminars and *Gram-Laxmi* Camps are also organised in the Community Development Blocks. In 1971-72, loops were inserted in 351 cases and there were 4,963 cases of vasectomy and 28 tubectomy operations. During 1972-73, loops inserted increased to 442, there were 1,109 cases of vasectomy and 59 tubectomy in the district.

Tubercular Treatment : Such treatment is provided at Chest Hospital, Dhuburi, the district headquarters.

Ayurvedic treatment : Ayurvedic system of medicinal treatment which was the most advanced and scientific method of treatment in the country fell into the hands of uneducated village quacks after introduction of allopathic system of medicine into the country. But time proved the utility and effectiveness of the Ayurvedic system and so after the independence, the Government has taken up the cause of Ayurvedics and opened up Ayurvedic cells in Civil Hospitals of Assam. Besides the government Ayurvedic doctor, there are several local Ayurvedic as well as Homeopathic practitioners in the towns as well as in villages who are easily available to the people in general. Ayurvedic and Homeopathic medicines are more popular amongst the poor as these treatments are less costly. The old and aged people generally prefer Ayurvedic medicine while for the children and particularly for the infants, Homeopathic medicine is preferred even in the urban areas.

The district has four subsidised Ayurvedic dispensaries at Bisanbar, Malandubi, Mulagaon and Bongaigaon. There is also an Ayurvedic section

attached to the Civil Hospital, Dhuburi, run by two Government Ayurvedic doctors.

Leprosy Treatment : The Goalpara district has one leprosy control unit at Dotma which is provided with 30 beds. This control unit has 15 sub-centres for giving outdoor treatment to the leprosy cases. These 15 centres are located at Kokrajhar (attached to Kokrajhar Civil Hospital) ; Kachugaon (attached to Kachugaon Public Health Centre) ; Howraguri (attached to Howraguri State dispensary) ; Basugaon (attached to Basugaon forest dispensary) ; Serfunguri (attached to Serfunguri State dispensary) ; Athiabari (attached to Serfunguri State dispensary. Runikhala (attached to Runikhala State dispensary) ; Densiri (attached to Santipur State dispensary) ; Bahalpur (attached to Bahalpur State dispensary) ; Basugaon (attached to Basugaon State dispensary) ; Fakiragram (attached to Fakiragram State dispensary), ; Burabazar (attached to Bonorgaon State dispensary). The Dotma Leprosy control unit is provided with medical and para-medical staff consisting of one trained Medical Officer, one non-medical supervisor, one Physiotherapy technician, one pharmacist and other staff. Each of the 15 sub-centres is under supervision of one trained non-medical assistant.

There are three Survey Edication Treatment (S.E.T.) centres at Dhuburi (attached to Dhuburi Civil Hospital) ; Dhepdhepi (attached to Dhepdhepi State dispensary) ; and Rangjuli (attached to Rangjuli State dispensary). The centres are also meant for outdoor treatment of leprosy cases. The workers of the centres are also to impart health education to the patients as well as to the public. Their duties also include survey of their respective areas with a view to detecting leprosy cases for proper treatment. Each of these centres is under a non-medical assistant.

Leprosy treatment centres at Agia (attached to Agia Primary Health centre, Dudhnai (attached to Dudhnai State dispensary) give outdoor treatment to leprosy patients also. Each of these two centres are under the charge of one Leprosy worker.

Malaria Eradication Services : One Assistant Malaria Officer was posted in March, 1955 at Kokrajhar to control malaria in the district. His jurisdiction extended over the entire portion of the district north of the Brahmaputra and included some portions of Kamrup district also. The district south of the Brahmaputra fell under the jurisdiction of another officer with headquarters at Gauhati. The Assistant Malaria Officer who was a medical personnel was assisted by four Senior Inspectors and

four other Inspectors. Spraying of D.D.T. started in selected areas of the district in 1957. The activities of the organisation underwent a major change in 1958 when from control of the disease its eradication became the objective. In 1964, the post of Assistant Malaria Officer was abolished in favour of the post of Unit Officer. The office was shifted from Kokrajhar to Dhuburi in March 1975 and one Additional District Health Officer (P.H.) whose jurisdiction extended over the whole district of Goalpara became the head of the district organisation. He was assisted by five Senior Malaria Officers and four Malaria Inspectors posted one each in the nine sub-Units at Goalpara, Dudhnai, South Salmara, Gauripur, Bilasipara, Gossaingaon, Kokrajhar, Sidli and Bijni. Spraying of insecticides and surveillance works have been carried out in the district. Spraying of D.D.T. and B.H.C. in the houses, their compounds and drains etc. have frequently been carried out to control and kill the mosquitoes both in rural and urban areas.

Medical facilities in rural areas : Health care in the rural areas of the Goalpara district is of an integrated pattern, combining both preventive and curative services with emphasis on the preventive aspect. In pursuance of the recommendations of the Health Survey and Development Committee 1945, known as the Bhore Committee, primary health centres were established in rural areas. The World Health Organisation also endorsed the view that there should be integrated health care through primary health centres in the rural areas. There are 15 primary health centres in 20 Community Development Blocks in the district. Most of the State dispensaries and primary health centres are functioning in the rural areas of the district.

(e) *INSTITUTION FOR DISSEMINATING KNOWLEDGE ON PUBLIC HEALTH* :

The health Education Bureau started functioning in the State of Assam with effect from October, 1960. One of its objectives was to help people in achieving health by their own actions and efforts. People were also encouraged to fully utilise the health services provided by the Government. It also aimed at collecting base-line data of the prevailing pattern of health habits, attitudes, beliefs, values etc. ; of the people.

The Bureau has started work with three sections, namely Administrative, Material and Field Demonstrations under one Assistant Director of Health Services.

There are already six Health Education *cum* Mobile Dispensary Units, five for the Plains Tribal Areas and one for the Autonomous Hills Districts of Assam, carrying on with health education activities.

The Health Education Bureau has been undertaking programmes of Health Education for the inservice para-medical personnel, medical officers deputed for orientation course, vaccinators, nurses, health visitors etc. The Bureau has been conducting seminars, group talks etc. for the workers engaged in Malaria Eradication and other health programmes from time to time.

The Materials Section which was started in November, 1960 had successfully participated in an international health exibition organised at New Delhi in February, 1961 on the occasion of World Health Assembly and at Jorhat in the 6th All Assam Ayurvedic *Mahasabha*. It also brought out two publications on the progress of health on the above occasions. The Materials Section is also responsible for supplying the district and sub-division health services and other voluntary organisations with audio-visual aids on health and sanitation. The aforesaid section has been participating in a number of small exhibitions organised by the Health and other Departments.

With the appointment of an Anthropologist in the month of June, 1961, the State Health Education Bureau extended its activities in Field Demonstration in the selected areas of the State.

Apart from the aforesaid activities, documentary film shows on health and sanitation are exhibited in the rural areas of both the Hills and Plains districts of the State.

The Family Planning Clinics, Hospitals, Dispensaries, Maternity and Child Welfare Centres, Primary Health Centres and Community Development Blocks have been playing a significant role in disseminating knowledge on birth control. A short course for doctors, health visitors, mid-wives, and nurses is imparted in the Regional Family Planning Training Centre at Shillong. In the Fourth Five Year Plan, emphasis has been given on the Family Planning Programmes. A national programme has already been launched to reduce the birth rate from 40 per thousand to 25 per thousand. The operational means of achieving this objective is to create facilities for the married couples to adopt anyone of the following means :—

(i) Group acceptance of a small sized family.
(ii) Personal knowledge about family planning methods.
(iii) Ready availability of supplies and services.

The I.U.C.D. Programme was introduced in the State in 1956-66. In the Fourth Plan, emphasis was laid on expansion of the training facilities

and intensification of the Family Planning programme. Sterilisation facilities have been made available in the Civil Hospitals and Primary Health Centres. Use of contraceptives are also becoming increasingly popular. One mobile publicity unit is engaged in extending auido-visual aids to the people on birth control measures.

(f) *SANITATION* :

Administrative set-up for maintenance of public health and sanitation : Prior to February 1958, Public Health activities were carried on by one District Medical Officer of Health and one Subdivisional Medical and Health Officer with a number of rural dispensaries under their charge. Each of the hospitals and dispensaries had one Medical Officer for treatment of all diseases, survey of diseases, control of epidemics and sanitation. They were also entrusted with the responsibilities of detecting the cases of food adulteration. The Medical Officers were assisted by auxiliary health personnel, such as the Rural Health Inspectors, Health Assistants and Vaccinators. This set of officers confined their activities primarily to the rural areas. In February 1958, the Public Health Services were amalgamated with the Medical Services and all the dispensaries managed by the Public Health Department came under the control of the District Health Officer (formerly District Medical Officer or Civil Surgeon), Goalpara. It has been mentioned earlier that with the abolition of the Local Boards in 1959, all the Local Board dispensaries were also taken over by the Government.

After the amalgamation, the Public Health matters have been entrusted to the Civil Surgeon, now redesignated as District Health Officer. Besides the Assistant Health Officers having the charge of dispensaries, Public Health Centres or hospitals, a number of other officers, posted in all the areas of the district, are entrusted with the public health affairs. There is one Rural Health Inspector in each police station, and a few Health Assistants under each of the Health Inspectors. The Municipal Boards have their own set of Vaccinators and Sanitary Inspectors. The Health Assistants and the Vaccinators perform vaccination under the supervision of the Medical Officers of their respective areas.

The following table shows the number of vaccination performed during the last five years.

Year	Number of Primary Vaccination.	Number of revaccination.
1972	53,464	2,91,858
1973	95,978	1,48,579
1974	1,21,785	5,05,382
1975	59,088	3,60,756
1976 (upto March)	8,909	54,907

The Public Health Engineering Department of the Govt. of Assam is engaged in implementation of the schemes of water supply both in urban and rural areas. The Executive Engineer, Public Health Engineering, Dhuburi, heads the organisation at the district level and has 3 Sub-divisional Officers under him at Goalpara, Kokrajhar and Dhuburi.

Activities of Health and Sanitary Organisations : While in the rural areas improvement of environmental hygiene is a matter of utmost importance, emphasis has been given on improvement of the living conditions of the *Harijans* in the urban areas. The acute poverty and dearth of housing accommodation of the migratory population have led to the growth of tiny slums in the town. In fact, these can be termed as *bastis* rather than slums which is a by-word of squalor. Municipalities in the district have taken some steps to provide better accommodation facilities to *Harijans*. In other towns such as Bongaigaon, Abhayapuri, Lakhipur, Sapatgram, Bilasipara, Gauripur, Mankachar, Bijni, etc., there appears to be no problem of slums though housing condition in the industrial and commercial areas of these towns are somewhat congested.

In the rural areas, the Panchayats are entrusted with certain aspects of sanitation and public health. These Panchayats construct rural latrines *pucca* drains, supply smokeless *chullahs*, and provide for drinking water by constructing wells, renovating old wells and tanks, and installing hand-pump. In the year 1969-70, 116 rural latrines, 131 smokeless *chullahs*, 108 wells, were constructed in different Community Development Blocks of the district. 58 hand pumps were also installed, 94 wells were renovated and 88 paved village lanes were constructed.

Protected Water-Supply : Except in some portions of the municipal areas of Dhuburi, Goalpara, Kokrajhar and Bongaigaon where drinking

water is provided by the municipalities, the people in other areas of the district depend mostly on wells, tube-wells, tanks, rivers, canals etc., for their drinking water. According to the Census of 1971, wells headed the list of sources of drinking water-supply and were followed by rivers and tube wells. According to that Census, 3,397 villages were provided with wells, 761 villages drew water from rivers, 717 from tube-wells, 55 from taps, 33 from tanks, 31 from fountains, 18 from canals and 40 from other sources. The following table shows sources of water-supply in the villages in the district (Police Station-wise) as per the Census of 1971.

Statement showing sources of drinking water-supply in the villages of the district as per 1971 Census.

Sl. No.	Name of the Police Station	Well	Tube Well	River	Canal	Others.	Tank	Tap	Fountain
1.	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.	Abhayapuri ..	350	29	126	2	17	..	..	..
2.	Bijni ..	293	22	68	..	1	2	..	..
3.	Bilasipara ..	436	76	79	..	4	1	18	14
4.	Dhuburi ..	175	109	47	..	2	1	1	1
5.	Dudhnai ..	229	39	12	8	..	5	2	..
6.	Goalpara ..	179	51	41	1	3	1	8	10
7.	Golakganj ..	190	146	43	..	1	2	13	..
8.	Gossaingaon ..	426	12	73	..	..	8	..	..
9.	Kokrajhar ..	369	7	35	3	3	..	4	..
10.	Lakhipur ..	228	107	112	1	6	6	5	5
11.	Mankachar ..	61	14	8	3	2	..	..	1
12.	Sidli. ..	277	1	28	..	..	..	..	..
13.	South Salmara ..	184	104	89	..	1	7	4	..
	Total : ..	3,397	717	761	18	40	33	55	13

The Public Health Engineering Department has completed pipe water-supply schemes at Chapar, Pachania and Bhouranguri costing more than rupees nine lakhs each. There are five water-supply schemes in progress at Dalgoma, Krishnai, Fakiragram, Golakganj and Moligaon. Moreover, 800 hand operated tube-wells have been installed in the rural areas of the district. Augmentation of the Dhuburi Water-Supply scheme is also nearing completion. Special emphasis has been given on protected water-supply and sanitation programmes during the Fourth Five Year Plan. A substantial portion of the outlay has been earmarked for urban water-supply and sanitation programmes. Particular attention has been given during the Fourth Plan to provide protected water-supply to areas prone to cholera, filariasis and areas of chronic scarcity.

APPENDIX I

Statement showing the number of Hospitals, Public Health Centres and Dispensaries in Goalpara District.

Sl. No.	Name of the Centre	Date of foundation	Location	Various sections	No. of Physicians	No. of nurshing staff	No. of beds.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
(a)	**Hospitals :**						
1.	Dhuburi Civil Hospital ..	24.12.54	Dhuburi	General, Maternity, & Child Welfare.	11	24	130
2.	Goalpara ,, ,,	1.10.55	Goalpara	-do-	4	11	65
3.	Kokrajhar ,, ,, ..	1.4.59	Kokrajhar	-do-	5+1	9+2	56+4
4.	Dudhnai ,, ,, ..	30.5.54	Dudhnai	-do-	1	2	20
5.	Abhayapuri ,, ,, ..	24.8.58	Abhayapri	-do-	2	2+1	18
6.	Gauripur ,, ,, ..	1.6.59	Gauripur	-do-	1+1	2+2	12+14
7.	Baida ,, ,, ..	1955	Baida	-do-	1+1	3+2	16+4
8.	Chapor ,, ,, ..	14.5.73	Chapor	-do-	6+1	13+2	30+4

APPENDIX—I (Contd)

Statement Showing the number of Hospitals, Public Health Centres and Dispensaries in Goalpara District

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
(b)	**Public Health Centres :**						
1.	Bongaigaon ..	1.4.60	Bongaigaon	General & Maternity	3	7	6
2.	Bollomguri ..	1.7.60	Bollomguri	-do-	1	5	6
3.	Matia ..	1963	Matia	-do-	1	5	6
4.	Boitamari ..	9.5.57	Boitamari	-do-	2	5	6
5.	Mornai ..	1.10.66	Mornai	-do-	2	6	6
6.	Sidli ..	1963	Sidli	-do-	2	5	10
7.	Kachugaon ..	14.5.57	Kochugaon	-do-	2	6	6
8.	Golakgonj ..	1968	Golakgonj	-do-	3	7	6
9.	Agia	1932	Agia	-do-	1	5	6
10.	Srijangram ..	15.9.69	Srijangram	-do-	1	5	6
11.	Manikpur ..	1.8.68	Manikpur	-do-	2	5	6
12.	Halakura ..	23.10.73	Halakura	-do-	1	5	6
13.	South Salmara ..	2.1.57	South Salmara	-do-	2	6	6
14.	Dotama ..	20.2.67	Dotama	-do-	2	6	6
15.	Ranigonj ..	1.10.62	Ranigonj	-do-	2	5	6
16.	Gossaingaon ..	Nov. 1973	Gossaingaon	-dc-	2	5	6
17.	Rongjuli ..	July, 1976	Rongjuli	-do-	2	2	6
18.	Lakhipur ..	July, 1976	Lakhipur	-do-	1	6	6
19.	Balajan ..	1976	Balajan	-do-	1	3	6

APPENDIX—I (Contd)

Statement Showing the number of Hospitals, Public Health Centres and Dispensaries in Goalpara District

1	2		3	4	5	6	7	8
	(c) Dispensaries :							
1.	Bilasipara	..	1.4.59	Bilasipar	no section	3	1	x
2.	Bogribari	..	1.4.59	Bogribari	-do-	1	x	x
3.	Lakhigonj	..	10.10.58	Lakhigonj	-do-	1	x	x
4.	Tipkai	..	15.5.62	Tipkai	-do-	1	x	x
5.	Futkibari	..	n.a.	Futkibari	-do-	1	x	x
6.	Bahalpur	..	n.a.	Bahalpur	-do-	1	x	x
7.	Nayekgaon	..	10.3.57	Nayekgaon	-do-	1	x	x
8.	Salkocha	..	1.4.59	Salkocha	-do-	1	x	x
9.	Kakripara	..	1.10.59	Kakripara	-do-	1	x	x
10.	Jhawdanga	..	1.10.59	Jhawdanga	-do-	1	x	x
11.	Sukchar	..	1.4.59	Sukchar	-do-	1	x	x
12.	Kukurmara	..	1.4.59	Kukurmara	-do-	1	x	x
13.	Kajigaon	..	16.8.67	Kajigaon	-do-	1	1	x
14.	Bashbari	..	Jan. 1978	Bashbari	-do-	1	1	x
15.	Kachakhana	..	1.4.59	Kachakhana	-do-	1	1	x
16.	Boterhat	..	1.4.59	Boterhat	-do-	1	1	x
17.	Agamoni	..	1.4.59	Agamoni	-do-	1	1	x

APPENDIX—I (Cootd)

Statement Showing the number of Hospitals, Public Health Centres and Dispensaries in Goalpara District

1	2		3	4	5	6	7	8
18.	Satrasal	..	1.4.59	Satrasal	No section	1	x	x
19.	Medertary	..	1.4.59	Medertary	-do-	1	x	x
20.	Rupshi	..	1.4.59	Rupshi	-do-	1	x	x
21.	Moterjhar	..	1.4.59	Moterjhar	-do-	1	1	x
22.	Dhepdhepi	..	1.4.59	Dhepdhepi	-do-	1	x	x
23.	Berbhangi	..	1.10.59	Berbhangi	-do-	1	x	x
24.	Mankachar	..	1.4.59	Mankachar	-do-	2	3	x
25.	Patakata	..	4.7.61	Patakata	-do-	1	x	x
26.	Bosgaon	..	n.a.	Bosgaon	-do-	1	x	x
27.	Jaraguri	..	15.6.63	Jaraguri	-do-	1	x	x
28.	Gossainichina	..	Dec. 1973	Gossainichina	-do-	1	1	x
29.	Serfanguri	..	1955	Serfanguri	-do-	1	x	x
30.	Bonorgaon	..	1.4.59	Bonorgaon	-do-	1	x	x
31.	Fakiragram	..	1.9.58	Fakiragram	-do-	1	x	x
32.	Sakti Ashram	..	January'78	Sakti Ashram	-do-	1	1	x
33.	Bijni	..	1.4.59	Bijni	-do-	1	x	x
34.	Jhawbari	..	1.4.59	Jhawbari	-do-	1	x	x
35.	Sapotgram	..	1.4.59	Sapotgram	-do-	1	x	x
36.	Tamarhat	..	1.4.59	Tamarhat	-do-	1	1	x
37.	Bhawraguri	..	1958	Bhawragiri	-do-	1	x	x
38.	Ranchaidham	..	1.4.59	Ranchaidham	-do-	1	x	x
40.	Runikhata	..	12.5.55	Runikhata	-do-	1	x	x
41.	Amguri	..	1975	Amguri	-do-	1	1	x
42.	Santipur	..	22.6.72	Santipur	-do-	1	1	x
43.	Gorubhesa	..	15.9.59	Gorubhesa	-do-	1	x	x
44.	Borabazar	..	1.4.59	Borabazar	-do-	1	x	x
45.	Subhaijhar	..	1.10.67	Subhaijhar	-do-	1	x	x
46.	Rowmari	..	12.1.78	Rowmari	-do-	1	1	x

APPENDIX—I (Contd)

Statement Showing the number of Hospitals, Public Health Centres and Dispensaries in Goalpara District

1	2		3	4	5	6	7	8
47.	Basugaon	..	14.11.73	Basugaon	-do-	1	x	x
48.	Salekati	..	4.4.58	Salekati	-do-	1	x	x
49.	Simbargaon	..	14.11.73	Simbargaon	-do-	1	x	x
50.	Patgaon	..	7.10.59	Patgaon	-do-	1	x	x
51.	Chaklakokila	..	1.4.59	Chaklakokila	-do-	1	x	x
52.	Rangapani	..	19.2.62	Rangapani	-do-	1	x	x
53.	Kharmuza	..	25.12.38	Kharmuza	-do-	1	x	x
54.	Boguan	..	1.4.63	Boguan	-do-	1	x	x
55.	Bodahapur	..	1957	Bodahapur	-do-	1	x	x
56.	Bordamal	..	1976	Bordamal	-do-	1	1	x
57.	Ambari Bazar	..	1976	Ambari Bazar	-do-	1	1	x
58.	Chunari	..	1.4.59	Chunari	-do-	1	x	x
59.	Dhumarghat	..	1961	Dhumarghat	-do-	1	1	x
60.	Simlitola	..	1.4.59	Simlitola	-do-	1	1	x
61.	Bikali	..	26.8.58	Bikali	-do-	1	1	x
62.	Kushdoha	..	18.2.67	Kushdoha	-do-	1	x	x
63.	Chalantapura	..	1.4.59	Chalantapara	-do-	1	x	x
64.	North Salmara	..	1.4.59	North Salmara	-do-	1	x	x
65.	Majgaon	..	16.4.59	Majgaon	-do-	1	x	x
66.	Dolgoma	..	30.10.58	Dolgoma	-do-	1	x	x
67.	Dilmajakhili	..	1961	Dilmajakhili	-do-	1	x	x
68.	Krishnai	..	1.4.59	Krishnai	-do-	1	x	x
69.	Harimurah	..	1956	Harimurah	-do-	1	x	x
70.	Dehelamajakhili	..	1.1.67	Dehelamajakhili	-do-	1	x	x

Sl. No.	Name of the Centre		Date of foundation	Location	Various sections	No. of physicians	No. of nursing staff	No. of beds.
1	2		3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Dhuburi Chest Hospital	..	1954	Dhuburi	..	2	9	74
2.	Dotama Leprosy Control Unit		1954	Dotama	..	1	x	x
	(d) Maternity and Child Welfare Centres							
1.	Golakganj Maternity and Child Welfare Centre	..	..	Golakganj	Both outdoor and indoor	1	2	4
2.	Bilasipara Maternity and Child Welfare Centre		1974	Bilasipara	-do-	1	2	4
3.	Dotama Maternity and Child Welfare Centre	..	..	Dotama	Outdoor and inservice	..	1	..
4	Sapatgram Maternity and Child Welfare Centre	..	..	Sapatgram	-do-	..	2	..
5.	Serfanguri Maternity and Child Welfare Centre	..	..	Serfanguri	-do-	..	1	..
6.	Bijni Maternity and Child Welfare Centre.	..	..	Bijni	-do-	..	2	..

CHAPTER XVII

OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES

(a) *LABOUR WELFARE* :

The Labour Departments of the Central and State Governments shoulder the responsibility of looking into the problems of labour welfare in the district of Goalpara.

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 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 Establishment 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 Journalist (Condition of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1955 ; The Assam Tea Plantation Provident Fund Scheme Act, 1955 etc.

These Acts and Regulations cover a wide range of labour welfare measures such as the provision of housing, medical facilities, 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 relating to labour welfare, there is one Labour Officer at Goalpara. He is assisted by one Labour Inspector and their jurisdiction extends throughout Goalpara district. Under the factories Act of 1948, all the factories of the district are inspected by an Inspector of Factories who is under the control of the Chief Inspector of Factories, Assam.

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 for various facilities to their employees. The Act is applicable to all tea, coffee, rubber and cinchona plantations with an area of 25 acres (about 10.12 hectares) or more and employing 30 or more persons. It can be extended to other plantations by the State Government. It also provides for setting up of inspecting staff by the State Govt. and penalties for the contravention of the provisions of the Act. Under this Act, the employers are required to provide for drinking water, sufficient numbers of latrines and urinals for men and women, canteens in every plantation wherein 150 or more workers are employed, cretches where 50 or more women are employed. Employers are also to make arrangement for proper medical and educational facilities for the workers and their children. Providing standard type of 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.

The introduction of the Assam Tea Plantations Provident Fund (And Pension Fund) Scheme Act, 1955, to the labour statute book has ushered in a new era of socio-economic upliftment for the plantation workers in the State of Assam.[1] 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 pursurance of the provision 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 on March 31,1973. In the district of Goalpara, all ten tea gardens are covered by this scheme. Till March 31, 1973, there were 2,260 members in the district under this scheme as against 2,281 during the previous year.

1. Compiled from the Annual Reports of the Working of the Assam Tea Plantations Provident Fund and Pension Fund Scheme of years, 1968-69 to 1971-72 and Facts about Assam Tea Plantation Provident Fund and Pension Fund Scheme Published by the Board of Trustees, Assam Tea Plantation Provident Fund Scheme, Shillong.

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 & 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 employers and employees.

The scheme provides for advances, refundable and non-refundable to the members from their provident fund accummulations 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 premium, purchase of shares of co-operative societies and subsistence when famine condition prevails due to natural calamities and unemployment due to closure of gardens. The following table shows the extent of the scheme in the district of Goalpara from 1969-72.

Year ending on 31st March.	No. of tea gardens convered by the scheme	Members			Total
		Staff	Adult	Adolescent & children	
1	2	3	4	5	6
1969	10	141	2,439	29	2,609
1970	10	141	2,144	28	2,313
1971	10	138	2,129	27	2,294
1972	10	135	2,124	22	2,281

The scheme is administered by the Board of Trustees with its head office at Shillong and the cost of the 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 diceased 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. 1,000/- Rs. 500/- and Rs. 250/- in respect of the clerical staff, male labour and female labour members respectively at their option. According to the scheme, all the insurance policies are assigned to the Board of Trustees who will keep these in their custody and shall prefer claims as and when necessary on Life Insurance Corporation. This obviates the medical examination or age proof of individual members and direct payment of premium 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 being 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 thousands 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 % 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 lumpsum 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 Government of India and of the amount annually transferred from the General Pension Fund @ 11.6% and 21.3% of the wages of the employees covered under the scheme respectively. Besides, Government 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 landmark in the history of welfare legislation for the tea employees in the State of Assam.[2] Under the provision 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 Government 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 rest in the Board of Trustees constituted by the State Government and shall be applied to meet the expenditure in connection with measures which in the opinion of the State Government are necessary for providing the welfare of the employees employed in the State of Assam. Without prejudice to this general provision, the Fund may be utilized by the Board of Trustees to defray expenditure on adult education ; community and social education centres including reading room and libraries ; community necesities ; games and sports, excursions, tours and holiday homes ; entertainment and other forms of recreation ; home industries and

2 Compiled from the Annual Reports of the Working of the Assam Tea Plantations Employees Welfare Fund Act, 1969 for 1970.

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 this Act and such other objects as would in the opinion of the State Government, improve the standard of living and ameliorate the social condition of the employees provided that the Fund shall not be utilised in financing any measures which the employer is required under any law for the time being in force to carry out.

In the matter of industrial disputes, the Labour Department endeavours to promote industrial harmony through peaceful settlement of disputes. The Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 is applicable to all the industrial establishments of the State. In cases where conciliation fails, they are referred to the Industrial Tribunal for adjudication. To try industrial dispute cases, the State Government has two Industrial Tribunals one for Upper Assam with headquarters at Dibrugarh and the other for Lower Assam including Goalpara district with headquarters at Gauhati.

(b) *PROHIBITION* :

(i) **Opium** : References have been made in various accounts to the large consumption of opium by the people of the Brahmaputra Valley. Captain Welsh in 1792 reported to Lord Cornawallis that the king Gaurinath Sinha was intoxicated with opium. Its wide spread use and consumption was reported by Robinson and other writers including Mill who in 1853 said that "three fourths of the population are opium eaters, and men, women and children alike use the drug".[3] 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 *Raja* against the Muttocks.

At first, the British followed a policy of drift on the question of opium for revenue purposes in order to undersell the indigenous product. But restrictions were imposed for the first time in 1860, upon the cultivation of the poppy and the drug was issued from the treasury at Rs. 14 per *seer*. The price was 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 at which rate it continued to be sold till 1905. Licences for the retailsale of opium used to be issued free of charge when Assam was under the Bengal Government but in 1874, an annual fee of Rs. 12 was levied on each shop and in 1875, it was raised to Rs. 18. The system whereby the

3. *E. A. Gait* ; *A History of Assam*, *Calcutta*, 1967, p. 382.

right to sell opium in a particular mahal was put up to auction was followed between 1877 and 1883 but being found unsatisfactory it was discarded and from 1883 onwards the individual shops were sold. As a result of Government restrictions, the sources for procuring opium decreased. In 1873-74, there were 250 shops for the retail vend of opium in the district but in 1903-04, there were only 24.

Opium consumed in the district fell from 84 *maunds* in 1873-74 to 29 *maunds* in 1879-80, 22 *maunds* in 1889-90 and then to 8 *maunds* in 1899-1900. B. C. Allen records in the old District Gazetteer of Goalpara that at the time of writing, the amount consumed in the district was insignificant.

He further states that the drug was never really popular in Goalpara. Thus in 1873-74, the amount of opium consumed in the district was not much more than one-fifth of the amount consumed in Lakhimpur though the latter district had not one-third of the population of Goalpara.

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 per cent in the opium ration was affected and finally, the Congress Coalition Government in 1939 introduced total prohibition of opium in certain portions of Lakhimpur and Sibsagar districts. So long the opium offences were dealt under the provisions of the Opium Act of 1878 but with enactment of the Assam Opium Prohibition Act of 1947, 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 ground.

(ii) **Liquor** : Liquor is commonly used by the tribal people and the labourers of the tea gardens. People belonging to other sections also partake some liquor but their habits earn social disapprobation. In the year 1873-74, there were only 4 liquor shops in the Goalpara district and amount of revenue derived was only Rs. 120.00. But from 1873-74, the number of shops and the amount of excise revenue were gradually on the increase upto 1899-1,00. In 1879-80, the number of shops increased to 12 and revenue to Rs. 4,060. These increased to 21 and Rs. 17,151 in 1889-90 and 28 and Rs. 26,039 in 1899-1900. Outstill system i.e., right to manufacture and sell spirits at a particular locality was put up to auction and no revenue was levied on the actual quantity of spirit distilled. The success of the system was derived from the keen contest between auctioneers

who tried to outbid each other. Rise in consumption of liquor was also attributed to the large increase in foreign population most of whom were drinkers. Country spirit is manufactured by native methods which are described in detail by B.C. Allen in the old District Gazetter, 1905.

The apparatus employed for brewing 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 country liquor is made from rice, mohwa or molasses and distilled through indigenous method by adding some spices called *bakhar* in the brew. This drink contains a very strong quantity of spirit and hence is very much injurious to health. It is very mild and stimulating when drunk raw without distilation.

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 which 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 distill the liquor at the actual strength at which it will be sold. One disadvantage of the cheaper kinds of liquor is that it will not keep, and in four or five weeks it is said to lose all its spirituous qualities. Distiled liquor made from molasses is called *Sarap*, while the liquor made from rice is called *Phatika*.

Laopani : *Laopani*, or rice beer, is the national drink of the unconverted tribes, and a special name, *modahi*, is applied to those who have to some extent attorned to Hinduism, but have not yet abandoned their ancestral liquor. It is also taken by some of the humble Hindu castes, and is largely used by garden labourers if facilities are not afforded to them for obtaining country spirit. The following is the usual system of manufacture followed :

"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 *chattacks* of *bakhar* to some 8 or 10 quarts 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. 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."

The State Government has eancted the Assam Liquor Prohibition Act, 1952 and total prohibition is in force throughout Goalpara district.

(iii) **Ganja and Bhang** : *Ganja* and *Bhang* are primarily associated with 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 *Bhang*. The Assam Ganja and Bhang Prohibition Act, 1958 prohibits possession and consumption of *ganja* and *bhang* and its use except for social, religious, medical and scientific purposes.

(c) *ADVANCEMENT OF BACKWARD CLASSES* :

The description "Backward Classes" is commonly applied to Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, communities formerly described as criminal classes and other socially and educationally backward classes. There is no declared criminal community in Assam. According to the Censuses of 1961 and 1971, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are present in considerable numbers in the district as shown below :

Name of the Community.	1961			1971		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Scheduled Castes.	41,147	36,979	78,126	61,931	58,075	1,20,006
Scheduled Tribes.	1,16,644	1,09,841	2,26,485	1,56,257	1,52,030	3,08,287

People belonging to Namasudra, Kaibartta or Jaliya, Sutradhar, Jhalo, Malo or Jhalo-Malo, Muchi or Rishi, Patni, Hira, Bhuinmali or Mali, Brithial-Bania or Bania, Bansphor, Dhubi, or Dhubi. Dugla or Dhuli, Jalkeot, Mahara and Mehtar or Bhangi, are regrded as Scheduled Castes in the district. Namasudra (30,014), Kaibartta or Jaliya (14,725) and Sutradhar (13,443) constituted only slightly less than three-fourths of the Scheduled Caste population of the district in 1961.

Scheduled Tribes of the district who are most predominant in Kokrajhar sibdivision are Boro-Borokachari, Rabha, Kachari including Sonowal, Miri, Hojai, Mech and Deori. Boro-Borokacharis with a population of 1,60,351 formed more than seventy per cent of the Scheduled Tribes population in 1961 and were followed by Rabhas numbering 49,217 who constituted about 22 per cent. Other Backward Classes are Ahoms, Chutias, Koches, Jogis (Naths), 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 yet lie behind their brethren belonging to more advanced communities. During the British period, they were left to their own devices. Proselytisation by Christian missionaries among the Backward Classes opened the floodgate of progress for the converts.

It was only after Independance that atempts 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 the State Policy of the Constitution of India solemnly declares that the State shall promote with special care educational, social and economic interest of the weaker section of the people and in particular Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect 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 conditions of the backward classes since 1947 are briefly described below :—

(i) Reservation of Seats in the Legislative Assembly and Panchayats :- Out of sixteen Assembly constituencies of the district in the last General Election, Kokrajhar West, Sidli and Dudhnai were reserved for Scheduled Tribes and Abhayapuri was reserved for the Scheduled Castes. In the Anchalic and Gaon Panchayats also a number of seats are reserved for these classes in order to secure their representation in these 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 to 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. This policy of reservation of vacancies has been followed by all the departments in making appointments to services or post of the State Government subject to other terms and conditions as laid down in the Notification issued on the 24th August, 1963.[4]

(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 begining 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 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 scholarships schemes both in the secondary and collegiate stages and by free education scheme in the secondary stage. There are reservation of seats 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 the

4, Assam Government Notfication No. AAP. 66/63/482, dated August, 24, 1963.

backward classes including the Scheduled Castes and the 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. 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 the declared policy of the Government to ameliorate the condition of the weaker section of the society. Moreover, the plan programmes of the Government of Assam have been redesigned so as to bring the underprivileged into the fabric of enlightened community.

Public Trusts and Charitable Endowments : There is one charitable endowment in Dhuburi for the welfare of the children belonging to the weaker section of the society. At present, the Dhuburi Pre-Primary (Nursery) School is running in its building. The School is managed by a Committee headed by the D. C., Goalpara as its ex-officio Chairman.

CHAPTER-XVIII.

PUBLIC LIFE AND VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

(a) *REPRESENTATION OF THE DISTRICT IN THE STATE AND UNION LEGISLATURES* :

(i) **British period** : The principle of non-official representation in the Indian council as well as in the provincial councils was recognised under the Indian Councils Act, 1861, which was subsequently amended by the Indian Councils Act, 1892 providing for indirect election for the first time to the Indian Council.

During the early part of the British administration, Assam formed a part of the presidency of Bengal. In 1874, Assam was raised to the status of a Chief Commissioner's province. She was again tagged with East Bengal to form a separate province with its capital at Dacca in 1905 for a brief period till 1912. During this period, Assam was represented by three Assamese and one European in the council at Dacca as envisaged under the Morley-Minto Reforms Act of 1909. Assam was separated from East Bengal in 1912. The Assam Legislative Council was formed in January, 1913 with eleven elected and 14 nominated members. The Assam valley was reprsented by five members including one representative of the Muhammadans in this council, the members of which in turn elected representatives to the Indian Council at Delhi.

When Assam was raised to the status of Governor's province in 1920, the new Legislative Council was formed with 51 members, 39 elected and 12 nominated, of which three were officials and nine non-officials. It was formed in 1921 under the Government of India Act, 1919. The Legislative Council held its first sitting on the 3rd January, 1921 and His Excellency Mr. Nicholas Dodd Beatson Bell then Governor of Assam took his seat. The Province of Assam was represented in the Council of States by one member elected by the Assam Muhammadan and General Constituencies alternatively. Assam was represented in the Central Legislative Assembly by six members—two nominated and four elected.

This system of representation was in vogue till 1937 when for the first time Legislative Assembly was constituted in Assam with 108 members under the provisions of Government of India Act 1935, which introduced

provincial autonomy in the Indian provinces. Out of 108 seats, 34 seats were reserved for Muhammadans, 9 seats for Europeans, European Planting and European Commerce and Industry, one for women, 14 seats for Indian Christians, Backward Tribals (Plains), Backward areas (Hills) and Labour and the remaining seats were kept as general. For general constitutuencies, Goalpara was divided into Dhuburi, North, Goalpara South-East, Dhuburi Central, and Dhuburi South Constituencies. For Muhammadans, Goalpara district had five constituencies namely Dhuburi South, Goalpara East, Dhuburi West, Dhuburi North and Goalpara West. There was also one Tribal constituency.

The number of members of the Provincial Legislative Council was reduced to twenty one. Assam represented in the Council of States by five members including communal representatives.

The Provincial Legislative Assembly which was elected in April 1937, functioned for about nine years till 1946 instead of the normal period of five years on the basis of an amendment to section 62(2) of the Act, made in view of exigencies arising out of the Second World War. There was, however, interregnum of eight months extending from December 25, 1941 to August 24, 1942 due to suspension of the Constitution in the Province under section 93 of the Act and the Governor assumed all powers of the administration himself. The constitution was restored on August 25, 1942. The Assembly functioned till its dissolution on October, 1945. General Elections were ordered to take place by February 2, 1946. Elections to the Central Legislature were also held along with the Provincial Legislature in 1946. The constituencies also remained as in the elections of 1937.

On 16th August, 1946, the Legislative Assembly elected 10 (ten) representatives from ten different constituencies of the district to the Constituent Assembly.

(ii) **After Indipendence** : The First General Elections after independence were held in 1952 to elect representatives to the Assam Legislative Assembly and to the House of the People of the Union Legislature. The constituencies of Goalpara district were determined in accordance with the Delimitation of Assembly Constituencies (Assam) Order, 1951. The district was divided into ten Assembly constituencies of Mankachar, South-Salmara, Dhuburi, Golakganj, Gossaingaon, Kokrajhar-Sidli, Bilasipara, Bijni, North-Salmara and Goalpara. Kokrajhar - Sidli and Goalpara were double - member

1. Assam Gazettee No. 10 August 21, 1946.

constituencies one seat of each being reserved for Scheduled Tribes. For the Lok Sabha elections, the district formed part of Goalpara - Garo Hills constituency, a double - member constituency with one seat reserved for Scheduled Tribes.

In the Second General Elections of 1957, the number of Assembly constituencies in the district remained the same as in 1952. They were Mankachar, South-Salmara, Goalpara, North-Salmara, Kokrajhar, Gossaingaon, Golakganj, Dhuburi, Gauripur and Bilasipara. The double-member constituencies were Goalpara, North - Salmara and Kokrajhar. One seat in each of Goalpara and Kokrajhar constituencies was reserved for Scheduled Tribes while one seat of North-Salmara was reserved for Scheduled Castes. For the Lok Sabha elections, the district fell within two Lok Sabba Constituencies, Dhuburi and Goalpara. Dhuburi constituency comprised Garo Hills, and some portion of Goalpara district while Goalpara double-member constituency comprising the rest of Goalpara district and some portion of Kamrup district had one of its two seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes.

The Two-Member Constituencies (Abolition) Act, 1961 was enacted with a view to abolishing two-member parliamentary and assembly constituencies. In pursuance of clause (a) of section 4 of this Act, the question of splitting two-member constituencies formed under the Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Order, 1956, was taken up in the first part of 1961. As a result, the double-member Parliamentary Constituency of Goalpara was split into Barpeta and Goalpara, (S.T.) single member constituencies. Similarly, each of the three double-member Assembly constituencies of Goalpara, North Salmara and Kokrajhar were split up into two single member constituencies viz., Goalpara, Dudhnai (S.T.), Bijni and North Salmara (S.C.) and Kokrajhar and Sidli (S.T.). Thus, during the Third General Elections of 1962, the Assembly constituencies of Goalpara district were Mankachar, South Salmara, Dhuburi, Golakganj, Gauripur, Bilasipara, Gossaingaon, Sidli (S.T.), Kokrajhar, Bijni, North Salmara (S.C.), Goalpara and Dudhnai (S.T.) and they formed parts of Dhuburi and Goalpara (S.T.) Parliamentary Constituencies.

The important step of increasing the number of constituencies in view of the increase in the population of the district was initiated following the enactment of the Delimitation Commission Act, 1962 (61 of the 1962 Amendment Act). In pursuance of sub-section (1) of section 10 of this Act, the final order was published under Delimitation Commissions Notification, New Delhi, the 20th April, 1966 for the purpose of the Fourth General Elections, 1967 in Assam. Accordingly, the number of Assembly constituencies in the

district was increased to sixteen viz., Mankachar, South Salmara, Dhuburi, Gauripur, Golakganj, Bilasipara, Gossaingaon, Kokrajhar West (S.T.), Kokrajhar-East, Sidli (S.T.), Bijni, Abhayapuri, (S.C.), Bongaigaon, Goalpara - West, Goalpara - East and Dudhnai (S.T.), Kokrajhar-West. Sidli and Dudhnai were reserved for Scheduled Tribes while Abhayapuri for Scheduled Castes. For these elections, Goalpara district formed parts of the two Lok Sabha constituencies of Dhuburi and Kokrajhar (S.T.), the latter being reserved for Scheduled Tribes. This arrangement of the constituencies in respect of both the Assembly and the Lok Sabha constituencies is still continuing.

(b) *POLITICAL PARTIES AND THEIR HOLD UPON THE DISTRICT AT DIFFERENT TIMES AND AS REFLECTED IN THE ELECTIONS* :

First General Elections, 1952 : Legislative Assembly : Twelve representatives were elected from the ten constituencies of the district, which included two double - member constituencies. Eight out of 12 elected members belonged to the Indian National Congress and the rest were independent candidates. All seats were contested by the Indian National Congress Party. The main contesting parties in the district were Indian National Congress, Socialist Party, Tribal Sangha, Revolutionary Socialist Party, Communist Party and Krisak Mazdoor Praja Party. 38 independent candidates contested in all. In Goalpara double-member constituency, the Congress occupied both the seats one being elected uncontested. The Indian National Congress which put up 12 candidates in the ten constituencies got eight of its candidates elected and secured 10,798 valid votes in Mankachar constituency, 12,280 valid votes in Golakganj, 5,276 in Gassaingaon, 14,068 and 12,696 in Kokrajhar-Sidli, 9,555 in Bijni, 13,255 in North-Salmara and 21,261 in Goalpara constituencies. The number of valid votes polled in these constituencies were 16,276, 43,864, 27,100, 84,688, 24,384, 26,002 and 48,532 respectively. Four elected independent candidates secured valid votes of 14,541 in south Salmara, 11,433 in Dhuburi, 13,909 in Kokrajhar - Sidli and 14,736 in Bilasipara constituencies where 25,304 ; 31,512 ; 84,688 and 30,3993 valid votes were polled.

Lok Sabha : In the Goalpara-Garo Hills double-member Lok Sabha constituency, there were three contesting parties namely Indian National Congress, Socialist Party and Tribal Sangha besides three independent candidates. The two seats were secured by one Socialist and one Congress candidate by obtaining 1,82,093 and 1,65,144 valid votes respectively out of 7,04,435 valid votes polled.

Second General Elections, 1957 : Legislative Assembly : The main political parties, in these elections were Indian National Congress, Praja Socialist Party and Communist Party of India besides a number of independent candidates. Out of 13 seats in 10 constituencies, Indian National Congress secured 9 seats, Praja Socialist Party of India 2 seats and Independent candidates 2 seats. The details of votes polled by different parties are given in the Appendix.

Lok Sabha : The Dhuburi constituency seat was won by Praja Socialist Party of India whose candidate polled 57.98% of total valid votes of the constituency numbering 1,74,713 while the two seats of Goalpara constituency were secured by the candidates of Indian National Congress by getting 26.43% and 26.40% of total valid votes polled.

Third General Elections, 1962 : Legislative Assembly : Due to abolition of the double - member constituencies, the number of Assembly constituencies increased from ten to 13. The Indian National Congress captured ten seats, the Praja Socialist party one seat and independent candiates two seats. The other parties to contest the elections were the Revolutionary Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India.

Lok Sabha : Both the parliamentary seats were captured by the Congress party. Each constituency was contested by three candidates. Dhuburi seat was contested by Indian National Congress, Praja Socialist Party and by one independent candidate and Goalpara by Indian National Congress, Communist Party of India and Praja Socialist Party of India. The Indian National Congress polled 89,407 out of 2,09,435 valid votes in Dhuburi constituency and 94,209 out of 2,18,280 valid votes in Goalpara constituency.

Fourth General Elections, 1967 : Legislative Assembly : These elections brought in their wake many surprises and the firm hold of the Indian National Congress over the electorate slackened perceptibly. Out of 16 seats in the district, the Congress party could secure only 8 seats and the rest were shared by other political parties viz., Praja Socialist Party of India and one by the Communist Party of India and five by Independents. The Congress Party won the seats at South-Salmara, Dhuburi, Gossaingaon, Kokrajhar-West (Scheduled Tribes), Kokrajhar-East, Sidli (Scheduled Tribes), Bijni and Bongaigaon securing 51.16, 34.52, 70.28, 45.24, 48.04, 41.71, 41.47 and 33.89 per cent of the total valid votes polled which numbered 33,538, 28,988, 27,500, 24,926, 32,078, 26,507, 30,485 and 28,083 respectively. Praja Socialist Party captured two seats at Gauripur and Goalpara-West and the

Communist Party of India won the Dudhnai seat securing 37.03, 71.53 and 46.31 per cent of the total valid votes of 34,049, 41,157 and 29,153 polled respectively. Independent candidates returned from Mankachar, Goalakganj, Bilasipara, Abhayapuri and Goalpara-East constituencies by securing 64.32, 63.89, 60.33, 69.43 and 56.00 per cent of valid votes which numbered 35,722, 34,511, 32,307, 27,814 and 29,153 polled respectively.

Lok Sabha : In the Dhuburi constituency, there was a triangular contest between Praja Socialist Party, Indian National Congress and an independent candidate. The candidate of the Praja Socialist Party was elected securing 53.50 per cent of votes against the Congress candidate's 28.89 per cent. The Congress candidate for the Kokrajhar (Scheduled Tribes) constituency was elected uncontested.

Fifth General Elections : Lok Sabha : The Fifth General Elections to Lok Sabha were held in March, 1971. The Dhuburi Parliamentary Constituency seat was won by the Indian National Congress (Ruling) in a heptagonal contest by securing 180,226 votes out of 260,763 valid votes. The candidate of the Praja Socialist Party polled 30,478, Indian National Congress (0) polled 5,185 votes, and four independent candidates polled 7,075, 28,362, 6,876 and 2,561 votes. In Kokrajhar (Scheduled Tribes) Parliamentary constituency there was a triangular contest between Indian National Congress (O), Independent and Indian National Congress (R). The Indian National Congress (R) won the seat by polling 1,50,978 votes out of the total valid votes of 2,58,998. The candidate of Congress (O) and the independent candidate polled 14,710 and 93,301 votes respectively.

Legistative Assembly : As elections to Parliament were delinked from elections to the State Legislative Assembly, in view of the dissolution of the Parliament in December 1970 and the consequent elections to the Parliament in 1971, elections to the Assam Legislative Assembly alone were held in March, 1972. The Congress Party (R) retrieved its position by capturing 13 out of 16 seats in the district. From Golakganj and Bilasipara constituencies, two independent candidates were declared elected while the seat of Kokrajhar-West (Scheduled Tribes) constituency was held by the candidate of the Plains Tribal Council.

(c) *NEWSPAPERS* :

The history of Assamese newspapers and magazines began with the publication of the *Arunodai* by the Baptist Mission in 1846 from Sibsagar. The Editor was Mr. Oliver Cutter. This magazine ushered a new

era in Assamese literature and journalism. The next Assamese magazine *Jonaki* published in 1889 from Calcutta was the mouth-piece of the Assamese Language Improvement Society. In 1902, *Bijuli* another publication was published from Calcutta for a very short period. Lakshmi Nath Bez Barooah, the famous literateaur published *Banhi* from Calcutta in 1909. These magazines were the mirror of the Province of Assam and made deep impact on the people. After this, several magazines and papers were published but they continued only for a short period.

Of the present papers and periodicals published from the district, mention may be made of the weeklies *Biswadut* published from Dhuburi since 1954, *Prantabashi* published from Gauripur and Dhuburi since 1967, *Gana Chabuk* published since 1968 from Dhuburi and the only English publication of the district - a fortnightly named *The Assam Observer* started in 1973, and published from Sapatgram. All of these publications, however, are confined within local limits and have little circulation outside the district.

A number of School and College magazines are published from different educational institutions of the district. Presently, people's inclination towards reading of newspapers is on the increase and as such many newspapers and magazines are bought to the district. Among the widely circulated newspapers in the district are : *The Assam Tribune, Dainik Asom, Natun Asomiya, Asom Bani, Nilachal, Janambhumi etc,* Besides these, some Calcutta and Delhi papers are widely circulated in the district. They are the *Hindustan Standard, Jugantar, Amrit Bazar Patrika, Statesman, Times of India. Blitz* etc. The *Asom Batori. Nilachal, Sangram, Amar Pratinidhi, Desh, Dharmayug, Illustrated Weekly of India* and various cine and sports magazines are also widely circulated in the district.

(d) *VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANISATION* :

Sakti Ashram : The *Sakti Ashram* was established in 1931 about 6.4 kms. north of Fakiragram Railway junction by the side of the Bilasipara - Dotama road. The main object of the *Ashram* is to spread education among the people of the neighbouring villages mostly inhabited by Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and other backward classes. The *Ashram* runs one secondary school with technical sections like carpentry, weaving, tailoring and blacksmithy. It has also one basic school. Lower primary schools opened by the *Ashram* are now under the State Board of Elementary Education. The *Ashram* also encourages bee-keeping, fishery, agriculture, cattle rearing, and small scale industries. It has maintained since its inception an orphanage where some orphans and poor children are given free shelter and are educated upto the secondary stage. They are also given some training in technical subjects by the *Ashram*.

There is a managing Committee of six members including the President of the Committee which runs the *Ashram*.

Goalpara *Harijan Sevak Sangha* : This *sangha* works for the removal of untouchability and has its branches in many towns of the district. The Gauripur branch of the *Harijan Sangha* has opened a leather industry on co-operative basis and the industry was registered in 1958, under the Assam Co-operative Society's Act. This society is getting financial help from the State Khadi Board, Co-operative Department and the Industries Department of Govt. of Assam.

Harijan Seva Samiti : There is also a *Harijan Seva Samiti* in the district. It urges *Harijans* to send their children to schools and imparts lessons aimed at improving the standard of living.

Bharat Sevak Samaj : This has started functioning in the district with its headquarters at Golakganj. The institution is of recent growth. The main objective is to foster public co-operation in implementation of plan programmes. For achieving this in the field of public health, sanitation and constructional works, the *samaj* has raised some voluntary labour organizations.

Ramakrishna *sevasram* : There are Ramakrishna *Sevasrams* at Bidyapara, and Sapatgram. These voluntary social service organisations conducted by respective managing committees are extending help to the poor and infirm by providing free treatment and also help poor students in cach and kind.

Grahampur Mission : It is a charitable dispensary. There are also such other mission dispensaries at Jaymagme and Damara.

Santipara Mission *cum* Leprosy Institution : This institution has rendered since its inception free medical treatment to the leprosy patients. It was established by the English missionaries.

Among various other voluntary social organisations of the district, mention may be made of *Mahila Samities* which outnumber other organisations. Such *Mahila Samities* which aim at all round improvement of

women are found almost in urban and semi-urgan areas of the district. Child welfare and maternity works are also included in the programme of some *Mahila Samities*. Public Libraries-*cum*-child welfare centres also function in various parts of the district. For the advancement of the so-called socially and economically beckward classes of the district, a number of voluntary social service organisations have been formed mostly by students belonging to such communities. Such organisations run various institutions like Purbari Tribal Students Association Library, Tipkai, Goalpara District Boro Students Union Library, 12th Union Tribal Students Association and Library, Kokrajhar etc., and are granted financial aid by the Government. The Department of Social Welfare, Government of Assam, offers grants-in-aid to deserving voluntary organisations through the District Social Welfare Officer, Goalpara with headquarters at Dhuburi. Under the grants-in-aid to Voluntary Social Welfare Organisations Scheme, the State Government has provided financial assistance to various *Mahila Samities*, Youth Centres, Child and Women Welfare Centres etc., in the district, The following table shows the yearwise break-up of amounts sanctioned under the scheme in Goalpara district for some years.

Year	No. of organisation	Amount (in Rs.)
1	2	3
1966-67	1	1,250.00
1967-68	16	9,850.00
1968-69	49	13,600.00
1969-70	5	2,725.00
1970-71	27	12,100.00
1971-72	34	8,050.00
1972-73	11	13,800.00
1973-74	32	28,150.00
1974-75	17	18,500.00

Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the Department of Social Welfare also offers financial aid to physically and orthopaedically handicapped persons for purchase of artificial limbs, wheel chairs, hearing aids

etc. Yearwise break-up of such aid given in the district during recent years is shown below :—

Year	Total No. of persons	Total amount sanctioned (in Rupees)
1	2	3
1969-70	8	3,800.00
1970-71	5	2,300.00
1971-72	4	1,700.00
1972-73	6	1,520.00
1973-74	1	300.00
1974-75	11	3,300.00

There is a district branch of Assam *Pradeshik Mahila samity* at Dhuburi. The *samity* is running a weaving and craft training centre in their own building situating on the bank of river Brahmaputra in the heart of the town.

There is another women's organisation called Ladies Club at Dhuburi. This Club also carries welfare activities amongst women and children.

There are a number of branches of Assam *Pradeshik Mahila samity* in most of towns and advanced villages like Goalpara, Kokrajhar, Abhayapuri, Bongaigaon, Lakhipur, Dhupdhara of Goalpara district which carry on different relief and charitable works amongst the people.

APPENDIX—A

Table showing the result of the First General Elections of 1952 in the Legislative Assembly constituencies in the Goalpara ditrsict.

Sl. No.	Name of the constituencies	No. of seats	No. of contesting candidates	No. of total electors	Total No. of valid votes	Total No. of invalid votes	I. N. C	Independent	Socialist	Tribal sangha—	Revolutionary Socialist Party	Communist Party	K.M.P.P.	Name of the Party winning the seat.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1.	Mankachar ..	1	5	38,272	16,276..	7..	6,798..	6,626	2,852	..	..	..	..	Congress
2.	South Salmara ..	1	4	39,860	25,304..	6..	3,097..	22,207	..	..	..	..	..	Independent
3.	Dhuburi ..	1	8	50,904	31,512..	5..	6,460..	20,669	4,383	..	..	..	..	Independent
4.	Golakganj ..	1	4	43,868	24,515..	8..	12,280..	6,923	5 312	..	..	..	..	Congress
5.	Gossaingaon ..	1	9	44,649	27,100..	3..	5,276..	15,434	3,080	3,310	..	..	..	Congress
6.	Kokrajhar-Sidli (One S.T.) ..	2	11	79,596	84,698..	7,430..	14,068..	34,974	10,414	12,536	..	..	..	Congress
							12,696	549			..	..	..	Independent
7.	Bilasipara ..	1	9	41,773	30,393..	11..	3,120..	23,780	2,330	..	506	657	..	Independent.
8.	Bijni ..	1	6	42,148	24,384..	Nil..	9,555..	8,575	4,093	..	..	..	2,161	Congress
9	Goalpara (one S.T.)	2	4	88,315	48,532..	10..	21,261..	27,271	..	..	..	..	..	Conress
10.	North Salmara ..	1	3	47,060	26,002..	32..	13,255..	1,377	11,370	..	..	..	..	Congress

Abbreviation : I.N.C. : Indian National Congress.
K.M.P.P. : Krishák Mazdoor Praja Party.

APPENDIX-B

Statement Showing the result of Second General Elections of 1957 in all the Legislative Assembly Constituencies in the Goalpara district.

Sl. No.	Name of the constituencies	No. of seats	No. of the contesting candidates after retirement)	No. of electors	Total No. of valid votes polled	Percentage of valid to total votes	Congress		Independent		P.S.P.		Communist		Name of the Political party winning the seat.
							Total votes	P.C.	Total votes	P.C.	Total votes	P.C.	Total votes	PC.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1.	Mankachar	.. 1	3	40,549	15,615	38.59	7,545	84.32	834 7,236	5.34	..	..	..	..	Congress
2.	South Salmara	.. 1	2	40,569	18,269	45.03	7,661	41.93	..	..	10,608	45.07	..	..	P.S.P.
3.	Goalpara (one for S.T.)	.. 2	8	95,193	97,726	51.33	23,200 23,233	23.74 23.77	15,844 15,778 2,386 5.954	16.21 16.15 2.44 6.09	5,628	5.76	5,703	5.84	Congress (both ..seats)
4.	Gossaingaon	.. 1	3	42,574	20,604	48.40	8,202	39.81	8,631 3,771	14.89 18.30	..	..	..	..	Independent
5.	Golakganj	.. 1	3	46,007	25,611	55.66	11,004	42.97	7,924 6,683	30.94 6.14	7,973	..	..	..	Congress
6.	Dhuburi	.. 1	3	36,005	14.336	39.81e	87,38	60.95	880	6.14	4,718	32.91	..	..	Congress
7.	Gauripur	.. 1	3	41,314	25,323	61.29	7.886	31.14	9,464	37.37		31.49	..	..	Independent
8.	Bilasipara	.. 1	3	49,117	28,224	57.46	9,011	31.93	8,269	29.30	10,944	38.77	..	..	P.S.P.
9.	Kokrajhar (one for S.T)	.. 2	6	87,129	55.051	31.59	14.448 19,455	26.24 35.34	4,344 2,081 4,625	7.89 3.78 8.40	..	..	10,098	18.34	Congress (both seats)
10.	North Salmara (one for S.C.)	.. 2	6	87,512	78,235	44.67	22,377 23,739	28.88 30.32	51,92 5,605 16,460 4,862	6.63 7.16 21.03 6.21	..	..	..	..	Congress (both seats)

Abbreviations : I.N.C. : Indian National Congress
P.S.P. : Praja Socialist Party.

APPENDIX-C

Statement showing the results of Third General Election of 1962 of all Legislative Assembly constituencies in the district of Goalpara.

Sl. No.	Name of the constituencies	No. of contesting candidates	Electorates			No. of voters who Voted			No. of valid votes polled	No. of rejected ballot papers	P.C. of Poll	P.C. of rejection	Votes polled by the political Party					Name of the political party winning the seats
			Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total					I.N.C.	Independents	P.S.P.	R.C.P	C.P.I.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1.	Mankachar	.. 3	24,345	21,284	45,629	18,702	4,554	23,256	21,718	1,538	50.96	6.61	10,492	10,744 482	..	..		Independent
2.	South Salmara	.. 3	26,031	22,678	48,709	20,616	9,477	30,093	28,494	1,599	61.78	5.31	17,373	780	10,341	..	..	I.N.C.
3.	Dhuburi	.. 3	19,962	15,768	35,730	13,868	6,303	20,171	18,956	1,215	56.45	6.02	10,643	4,515 3,266 356 176	..	..	..	I.N.C.
4.	Golakgonj	3	25,399	22,116	47,515	20,257	1,0097	30,354	28,199	2,155	63.88	7.10	12,591	10,374	5,234	..	..	I.N.C.
5.	Gauripur	.. 6	22,704	20,635	43,339	18,944	1,3132	32,096	29,828	2,268	74.05	7.07	10,150	7,061 1850 1587 1048	1,832	..	..	I.N.C.
6.	Bilasipara	.. 4	25,183	22,151	47,334	18,062	1,2774	30,836	28,431	2,405	65.15	7.80	11,533	5,540 2001	9,307	..	..	I.N.C.
7.	Gossaigaon	.. 7	23,938	19,197	43,135	16,706	8,911	25,617	23,324	2,293	59.38	8.95	45,32	3,638 2012 1146 7350	3,338	1308	..	Independent

APPENDIX—C (Contd.)

Statement showing the results of the Third General Election of 1962 of all Legislative Assembly consituencies in the district of Goalpara

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
8.	Sidli (S.T.)	.. 3	22,167	19,266	81,433	12,382	6,033	18,415	16,402	2,013	44.44	10.93	9,625	5,702 1075	..	..	..	I.N.C.
9.	Kokrajhar	4	23,115	19,864	42,979	16,041	6,897	22,938	21.134	1,804	53.37	7.86	9,508	2,998	2,699	..	5,929	I.N.C.
10.	Bijni	.. 7	27,794	20,655	48,449	16,531	7,465	23,996	22,570	1,426	49.52	5.94	7,661	1,789 577 541 335	8,896	..	2,571	P.S.P
11.	North Salmara (S.C.)	5	28,270	22,160	50,438	19,253	9,954	29,207	27,280	1,927	57.91	6.59	15,505	3,892 1,623 1,333	4,927	..	..	I.N.C.
12.	Goalpara	.. 4	31,491	26,924	58,415	22,620	15,440	38,060	35,415	2,645	65.15	6.94	17,854	5,539 1,048	10,974	..	..	I.N.C.
13.	Dudhnai (S.T.)	.. 4	26,226	23,871	50,097	15,842	88,33	24,675	23,097	1,578	49.25	6.39	17,469	1,851	1,979	7,708	..	I.N.C.

Abbreviations :
- I.N.C. : Indian National Congress.
- P.S.P. : Praja Socialist Party
- R.C.P.I. : Revolutionary Communist Party of India.
- C.P I. : Communist Party of India.

APPENDIX-D.

Statement showing the results of the Fourth General Election of 1967 of all the Legislative Assembly Constituencies of the Goalpara district

Sl. No.	Name of the constituencies	Electors	Votes polled		Valid votes	Rejected votes		Votes polled by the political parties										Name of the political party winning seat
			Total	P.C		Total	P.C	I.N.C. Total	PC.	Independent Total		P.S.P. Total	PC.	C.P.M. Total	PC.	C.P.I. Total	PC.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1.	Mankachar ..	44,173	38,810	85.60	85,722	2,088	8.24	12,747	35.68	22,975	64.32	..	..	..	..		..	Independent
2.	South Salmara ..	42,081	36,606	86.96	33,588g	3,018	8.25	17,185	51.16	714	2.13	15,689	46.71	..	..	..	..	I.N.C.
3.	Dhuburi ..	38,723	31,715	81.90	28,988	2,727	8.60	10,008	34.52	9,765	33.69	..	...	..	..	..	..	I.N.C.
										9,215	31.79							
4.	Gauripur ..	45,314	37,870	83.57	34,049	3,821	1009	68,85	20.22	10,340	30.37	12,609	37.03	..	..	..	..	P.S.P.
										3,041	8.93							
										1,174	3.45							
5.	Golakganj ..	46,706	38,516	82.46	34.511	4,005	10.40	10,615	30.75	22,048	63.89	..	..	..	..	..	..	Independent
										1,079	3.13							
										769	2.23							
6.	Bilasipara ..	42,963	35,541	82.72	32.307	3,234	9.10	10,395	32.18	19,492	60.33	..	..	..	..	..	..	Independetn
										2,420	7.49							
7.	Gossaingaon ..	45,528	30,882	67.93	27.500	3,382	10.95	19,326	70.28	8,174	29.72	..	..	..	..	..	..	I.N.C.
8.	Kokrajhar West ..	42,641	27,531	64.56	24,926	2,605	9.46	11,277	45.24	5,437	21.81							I.N.C.
										3,134	12.57							
										3,082	12.36							
										1,996	8.01							
9.	Kokrajhar East ..	45,949	34,827	75.79	32,078	2,749	7.89	15,410	48.04	3,233	10.08	3,677	11.46	8,724	27.20	..	..	I.N.C.
										1,034	3.22							
10.	Sidli ..	43,445	29,849	68.71	26,507	3,342	11.20	11,055	41.71	8,283	31.25							I.N.C.
										4,447	16.78							
										1,940	7.32							
										782	2.95							
11.	Bijni ..	46,541	33,113	81.15	30,485	2,628	7.94	12,641	41.47	7,538	24.73	..	..	..	..	..	..	I.N.C.
										5,597	18.36							
										1,478	4.85							
										943	3.09							
										930	3.05							
										737	2.42							
										423	1.39							
										198	0.65							
12.	Abhayapuri ..	39,073	30,545	78.17	27,814	2,731	8.94	8,503	30.57	1,9311	69.43	..	..	..	..	..	..	Independent
13.	Bongaigaon ..	40,498	31,367	77,45	28,083	3,284	10.47	9,516	33.89	6,061	21.58	..	..	4,475	15,93	..	..	I.N.C.
										4,192	14.90							
										2,468	8.79							
										729	2.60							
										642	2.29							
14.	Goalpara West ..	55,465	44,744	80,67	41,157	3,587	8.02	11,716	28.47	..	..	29,441	71.53	..	..	..	..	P.S.P.
15.	Goalpara East ..	47,395	31.429	66.31	29,153g	2,276	7.24	12,828	44.00	16,325	56.00	..	..	..	..	..	..	Independent
16.	Dudhnai ..	45,641	25,408	55.67	23,474	1,934	7.61	6,867	29.25	5,737	24.44	..	..	..	..	10870	46.31	C.P.I.

Abbreviation : I.N.C. : Indian National Congress. P.S.P : Praja Socialist Party of India C.P.M. : Communist Party (Marxist) C.P.I. Communist Party of India.

APPENDIX-E.

Statement showing the results of the Fourth General Elections of 1972 of all the Legislative Assembly Constituencies in the district of Goalpara.

Name of the Constituencies	Electors	Votes	Valid votes	Rejected votes	Votes polled by the Political parties							Name of the political party winning the seat.
					I.N.C.	Independent	C.P.I.	S.P.	I.N.C.(O)	P.T.C.	C.P.M.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Mankachar	51,638	40,700	39,946	774	22,281	17,665	..	..	..	..	..	I.N.C.
South Salmara	51,347	40,248	39,436	812	29,407	10,029	..	..	..	..	..	I.N.C.
Dhuburi	45,054	32,737	31,713	1,024	24,595	4,037	358	..	..	..	..	I.N.C.
						2,723						
Gauripur	52,425	40,958	39,832	11,25g	22,641	2,164	..	11,327	..	..	..	I.N.C.
Golakganj	54,525	42,143	40,961	1,182	16,707	1,196	..	..	..	..	..	Independent
						23,058						
Bilasipara	51,050	40,008	38,421	5,187	14,819	23,602	..	..	..	..	..	Independent
Gossaingaon	54,569	35,359	33,537	1,822	22,242	1,463	..	..	4,093	..	..	I,N.C.
						5,739						
Kokrajhar West	49292	38693	27500	1193	17,665	1,415	..	..	..	18,420	..	P.T.C.
Kokrajhar East	56133	42052	40581	1469	32,649	..	..	..	..		7932	I.N.C.
Sidli	55570	40284	38423	1861	20682	17,731	..	..	..	..	..	I.N.C.

APPENDIX—E (Contd.)

Statement showing the results of the Fourth General Elections of 1972 of all the Legislative Constituencies in the district of Goalpara.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Abhayapuri	45,791	32,937	31.869	1,068	22,240	800	..	..	..	..	..	I.N.C.
						8,729						
Bongaigaon	52,225	33,595	32,488	1,107	27,581	1,796	1,532	458	..	..	1,124	I.N.C.
Goalpara West	60,676	42,897	41,482	1,415	28,760	9,219	..	..	..	..	..	I.N.C.
						3,502						
Goalpara East	56,896	35,393	33,975	1,418	23,193	34,775	2,302	..	..	..	..	I.N.C.
Bijni	53,975	38,955	37,870	1,085	13,880	9,546	..	..	..	..	..	I.N.C.
						13,271						
						11,93g						
Dudhnai	60,332	27,616	26,328	1,285	13,456	7,41	8,283	..	..	..	3,248	I.N.C.

Abbreviation : I.N.C. : Indian National Congress.
C.P.I. : Communist Party of India
C.P.M. : Communist party of (Marxist)
S.P. : Socialist Party
I.N.C.(o) Indian National Congress (Organisation)
P.T.C. : Plains Tribal Council.

APPENDIX—F

Statement showing the results of the House of the people constituencies in the General Election of 1952, 1957, 1962 1967 and 1972 in the district of Goalpara.

Sl. No.	General elections	Name of the House of the People Constituencies	Electorar tes in the House of the People consti-tuencies	Votes polled		Invalid or Rejec-ted votes		Valid votes polled		No. of votes polled by the different parties					
										I.N.C.		S.S.P.		Socialist	
				Total	PC	Total	PC	Total	PC	Total	PC	Total	PC	Total	PC
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1.	General Elections of 1952	Goalpara Garo Hills (H.P)	7,19,456	14,38,912	N.A	1,00,388	N.A	7,04,435	N.A	1,65,144	N.A	..	..	1,82,093	N.A
2.	General Elections of 1957	(1) Dhuburi (H.P.)	3,69,328	N.A	N.A	N.A	N.A	1,74,713	47.38	73,410	42.02	..	..	..	..
		(2) Goalpara (H.P)	7,83,396	N.A	N.A	N.A	N.A	6,96,041	44.43	1,83,974	26.43	..	..	..	..
										1,83,774	26.40	..	..	..	..
3.	General Elections of 1962	(1) Dhuburi (H.P.)	3,91,360	2,19,296	N.A	9861	4.5	2,09,435	N.A	89,407	N.A	..	..	..	..
		(2) Goalpara (H.P)	4,29,220	2,29,232	N.A	10,952	4.78	2,18,280	N.A	94,209	N.A	..	..	..	..
4.	General Elections of 1967	(1) Dhuburi (H.P)	4,02,189	2,87,387	71.46	17,956	6.25	2,69,431	N.A	77,833	28.89	..	..	..	..
		(2) Kokrajhar (H.P Scheduled Tribes)	4,15,618	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
5.	General Elections of 1971	(1) Dhuburi (H.P)	4,34,342	2.74.329	N.A.	13,566	N.A	2,60,763	N.A	1,80,226	N.A	..	..	..	..
		(2) Kokrajhar (H.P Scheduled Tribes)	4,69,738	2,74,983	N.A	15,985	N.A	2,58,998	N.A	1,50.978	—.A	..	..	..	..

Abbreviations : I.N.C. : Indian National Congress
I.N.C (R) : Indian National Congress Party (Ruling)
I.N.C(o) : Indian National Congress Party (Organisation)
S.P.I. : Socialist Party of India
K.M.P.P. : Krishak Mazdoor Praja Party
C.P.I. : Communist Party of India.

APPENDIX—F (Contd)

Sl. No.	General elections	Name of the House of the People Constituencies	Parties											
			Independent		Tribal Sangha		P. S. P		Communist		I.N.C(O)		C. P. I.	
			Total	PC	Total	PC	Total	PC	Total	PC	Total	PC	Total	PC
			17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
1.	General Elections of 1952	Goalpara Garo Hills (H.P)	1,58.651	N.A	1,1,6629	N.A	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
			42,967	N.A										
			38,951	N.A										
2.	General Elections of 1957	(1) Goalpara (H.P)	..	..	..	..	1,01,303	57.98	..	..	..	..	..	..
			..	..	..	..	65,580	9.42	1,03,151	14.82	..	..	..	..
			..	..	..	..	61,382	8.82	98,180	14.11	..	..	..	..
3.	General Elections of 1962	(1) Dhuburi (H.P)	61891	..	..	..	58,137	N.A	..	..	..	..	..	..
		(2) Goalpara (H.P)	..	..	..	..	60,296	N.A		..	..	..	63,775	..
4.	General Elections of 1967.	(1) Dhuburi (H.P)	47,457	17.61	..	..	1,44,141	53.50	..	..	..	..	..	..
		(2) Kokrajhar (H.P Scheduled Tribes)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
5.	General Elections of 1971	(1) Dhuburi (H.P)	7,070	..	..	..	30478	..	..	..	5,185	N.A		..
			28,362			•								
			6,876											
			2,561											
		(2) Kokrajhar (H.P.-- Scheduled Tribes)	93,301	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	14,710	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
S.W.A. : Swatantra Party.
P.T.C. : Plains Tribal Council.

CHAPTER—XIX

PLACES OF INTEREST.

Abhayapuri : Abhayapuri, situated about 20 kilometres north-east of Jogighopa, was the seat of former Zamindars of Bijni. This estate has since been acquired by the State Government under the Assam State Acquisition of Zamindaris Act, 1951. Abhayapuri, a railway station on the broad gauge line between Jogighopa and New Bongaigaon, is now an important commercial place. Its main exports are jute, oil seeds and *kalai* and important manufactures are pottery and wooden boats. It is situated in a paddy-growing area. Bi-weekly *hats* are held here on Mondays and Thursdays.

According to the 1971 Census, Abhayapuri Town Committee had an area of 4.71 sq. kilometres and a population of 7,030. The family temple of Bijni Zamindars at Abhayapuri has an image of Goddess Abhaya made of eight metals. Among other nearby temples, mention may be made of Madanmohan-Lakshminarayanbari, Durgabari, Manasabari, Kalimangal, Chandibari, Burhithakurani, Barithakurani and Chengkal Mahakal temples.

Bijni : Bijni is a railway station on the metre gauge line of the Northeast Frontier Railway and lies 127 kms. north-east of Dhuburi and 73 Kms. east of Kokrajhar. Bijni lies in a rice-growing area and its main exports include mustard seeds, jute and betel-nut. Among industries, mention may be made of a small Match Splint Factory which is steadily growing, a mini *Katha* producing factory and some rice, oil and saw mills. Besides the daily market, bi-weekly *hats* are held on Wednesdays and Sundays and a weekly cattle market is held here every Sunday.

Bijni is associated with the former Bijni estate and Bijni *Duar*, the history of which has been narrated elsewhere. Bijni was constituted a Town Committee in April, 1971 and according to the Census of that year, it had a population of 7,999 in an area of 2.95 sq. kms. Visitors to Bijni may be accommodated at the local Inspection Bungalow.

Bilasipara : Bilasipara is situated on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, north-east of Dhuburi at a distance of 44 kilometres from it by road. It is an important river-port and trade centre of the district. Its main exports are jute, *kalai*, and fish which are on display at the bi-weekly *hat*.

on Tuesday and Saturday. Its manufactures include *bidi* and biscuits. Its industrial importance has been enhanced by the cigarette factory, a major industry which is being set up by the Assam Industrial Development Corporation under joint sector.

Bilasipara, erstwhile family-home of Chapar Zamindars, is a growing town which according to the 1971 Census had an area of 3.88 square kilometres and a population of 12,553. It provides usual civic amenities including a College and has an Inspection Bungalow for visitors.

There is a temple dedicated to Dudhnath at Bilasipara. Near Bilasipara, there is Chandardinga hill which is traditionally associated with the name of Chand Sadagar - an opulent merchant-and his vessels. As narrated elsewhere, these hills are believed to have been formed by the spoils of Chand Sadagar's drowned vessels. On the occasion of Ashokastami, a big *mela* is held here annually.

Bongaigaon : Bongaigaon, one of the biggest railway stations in Assam, lies about 49 kms. north of Goalpara and about 113 kms. north-east of Dhuburi. This important trade centre whose main exports are timber, jute and betelnut has been given an industrial bias by the establishment of a railway workshop and an Aluminium utensils factory. Construction works of the second Oil Refinery cum Petrochemical Complex of the State in the public sector at Bherbheri, near it, has given further fillip to its industrial growth. Rapid growth of large and medium scale industries has given rise to ancillary industries many of which are being provided sheds in the Industrial Estate under construction at Bongaigaon. It is also proposed to instal at Bongaigaon the third plant for industrial gases in Assam as also a brewery.

The extension of the broad gauge line to Jogighopa via Bongaigaon has resulted in growth of a new railway township nearby. According to the 1971 Census, Bongaigaon Urban Agglomeration comprising Bongaigaon and New Bongaigaon Railway Colony had an area of 6.69 square kilometres with a population of 24,950. New Bongaigaon Railway Colony with an area of 1.90 sq. kms. and population of 11,043 in the 1971 Census was treated as a town for the first time in this Census.

In the market place there is the famous *Sani* temple and to its south-east lies Bagheswari *devalaya*. There is also a *Kali than* at Barpara near it. About 3 kms. south-west of Bongaigaon by the side of the road to Baitamari there is the Chaitanya *Dham* where the presiding deity is Lord Kalachand seated on a *Sinhasana*. Visitors to Bongaigaon can be accommodated in the local Inspection Bungalow.

Dhuburi : Dhuburi (26°1′N, 89°59′E), with an altitude of 35 metres above Mean Sea Level, is situated on the north bank of the Brahmaputra at the point where the river turns south to enter the plains of Bangladesh. It has been the headquarters of Goalpara district ever since 1879, when the headquarters were shifted here from Goalpara. Dhuburi is well connected by road, rail and river. There is a ferry service between Dhuburi and Fakirganj on the south bank. The air strip at Rupsi, 21 kilometres away from Dhuburi is, however, not touched by Indian Air Lines Corporation flights. Dhuburi is one of the biggest business centres of Assam, its main exports being tea, jute and timber. Its manufactures include match, plywood and soap. The Assam Match Company located here is a major industry of the State.

According to the Census of 1971, Dhuburi Municipality had an area of 6.47 square kilometres and a population of 36,503. Among its recreational facilities. mention may be made of 2 cinema halls and one library. It has the usual civic amenities including 2 Colleges. Visitors may get accommodation at the Circuit House, Dak Bungalow or Inspection Bungalow.

Dhuburi is a historically important place. The Koch king Parikshit had his fort at Dhuburi and the hillock here is said to have been artificially constructed in 1665 A.D. by the Mughal army under the orders of Guru Tez Bahadur. Near Dhuburi at the confluence of the Gadadhar and the Brahmaputra, there is a big slab of stone. People say that Dhubuni Netai, Lord *Siva's* washer-woman used to wash clothes on it as has already been referred to elsewhere. A big *mela* is held at Dhuburi on *Ashokastami* Day. *Gurudwar* of Dhuburi is said to be the oldest Sikh temple of Assam.

Fakiragram : Fakiragram lies between Sapatgram and Kokrajhar and is an important railway junction of the North-east Frontier Railways. There are two railway colonies near it which are known as Fakiragram Broad Gauge and Fakiragram Metre Gauge Colonies. Fakiragram is an important business centre and its proximity to several Reserved forests makes it probably the biggest timber depot in Assam. Bi-weekly *hats* are held on Tuesdays and Saturdays. There is an Inspection Bungalow at Fakiragram.

Gauripur : Gauripur is situated at a distance of about 10 kms. north of Dhuburi, the headquarters of the Goalpara district. It was the seat of the former Zamindar of Gauripur since 1850. The Zamindars of Gauripur (formerly Rangamati) were closely in touch with the Koch kings. Many relics of historical importance particularly the cannons of Raghudev, Lakshminarayan and Sher Shah are in possession of the Gauripur Raj-

family. Gauripur was declared a town in 1918 and since then a town committee is functioning. According to the 1971 Census, Gauripur Town Committee comprised an area of 2.85 sq. kms. and had a population of 12,850. Gauripur is the headquarters of the Rural Industries Project started during 1962-63 for intensive development of industries in selected rural areas of the State. It is well connected with almost all the towns by road and railways.

On the north of Gauripur by the side of the road to Bongaigaon, Rangamati, a place of historical importance is situated. Hussain Shah, the *Nawab* of Gaur conquered Kamrup and Kamata and established his capital at Rangamati and people believe that he built there a beautiful mosque in 1687 A.D. Other remains located at Rangamati hill are a masonry enclosure in which a tiger is said to have been confined, and an iddgah with a deep well.

Goalpara : Goalpara (26°10′N', 90°38'E), on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, is the sub-divisional headquarters of the sub-division bearing the same name and was in fact the headquarters of Goalpara district prior to 1879. Although the portion of Goalpara subdivision lying south of the Brahmaputra is not served by railways, Goalpara town is well served by roads especially the South Trunk Road. There is also a ferry service across the Brahmaputra between Goalpara river-port and Jogighopa, the terminal station of the broad gauge railway line. Goalpara is an important trade centre, its main exports being cotton, jute and rice. It is interesting to note that it was from Goalpara that the East Indian Company carried on trade with the Ahom kingdom. The chief manufactures of the small scale industries located at Goalpara are soap and *bidi*.

Goalpara was constituted a municipality in 1878 and according to the 1971 Census, it had an area of 5.96 sq. kms. with a population of 16,703. It offers usual civic amenities including one stadium, 2 cinema halls and a public library with reading room. At Mornai near Goalpara is situated a Sainik School which is the only institute of its kind in the State. Visitors may be accommodated at the local Circuit House or Dak Bungalow.

Besides the Bankatdev temple dedicated to *Siva* and the Jain temple within the town, mention may be made of the Narasinghbari temple, situated on a hillock to the west of the town. About 14 kms. south-east of Goalpara town lies Sri Suryya *Pahar* where remains of architectural interest are lying in profusion. *Puia* and *melas* are held on the occasion of *Maghi Purnima*. To its north, there is a Siva temple at Mahadev *pahar* where *Sivaratri* is observed ceremoniously. About 6 kms. south of Goalpara town, at the base of Rakshasini hill, there are two enormous rocks known as *Mama-*

Bhagina (maternal uncle-nephew). It is believed that there was an *Ashram* here in olden days and local people still regard it as a sacred spot. About 8 kms. to the west of the town lies Pancharatna which is connected by ferry services with Goalpara. The remains here have already been alluded to elsewhere.

Golakganj : Golakganj is situated on the left bank of the Gadadhar river and is an important railway station of the Northeast Frontier Railway line between Fakiragram and Dhuburi. It is also noted for its timber trade.

About 11 kms. west of Golakganj railway station, there is Satrasal *Satra* on the bank of the Sankosh which was established by Ramrai, brother of Sri Sankardev. More than 450 years ago Chilarai, brother of Koch king Naranarayan married Kamalapriya or Bhubaneswari, daughter of Ramrai at Satrasal.

Gossaingaon : Gossaingaon lies on the right bank of the Madati river and is an important railway station on the broad gauge line of the Northeast Frontier Railway. It lies about 22 kms. west of Fakiragram Junction. It is an important trade centre and rice grown in the neighbourhood has resulted in several rice mills being constructed here. There is a police station at Gossaingaon and an Inspection Bungalow for visitors.

Jamduar : It is situated on the extreme north-west corner of the district and on the left bank of the Sankosh river in Ripu Reserved Forest. The name of the place is said to have been derived from a tunnel that existed on the hillside. The literal Assamese meaning of the name *Jamduar* is the 'door to the God of death'. From Jamduar one can enjoy the natural beauty of the Bhutan Hills and Sankosh river. It is also a good fishing spot. Visitors to Jamduar can stay at the local Forest Inspection Bungalow. There is immense possibility for developing this place into a very beautiful tourists' centre.

Jogighopa : Jogighopa, situated about 35 kms. south of Bongaigaon town on the north bank of the Brahmaputra opposite Goalpara town, is a historic place. It was the site of an Ahom fort and a European colony as already described elsewhere. It has also been mentioned that the caves here were sanctified by different ascetics. In fact, the place derives its name from this, 'Jogi' means 'ascetic' and 'ghopa' means 'cave'. Its religious importance is enhanced by the Dudhnath temple dedicated to *Siva*. This temple resembles the Dudhnath temple at Bilasipara and contains rock-cut images of *Siva* and *Parvati*. On the occasion of *Sivaratri* and *Ashokastami* big *melas* visited by people from distant places are held here.

Jogighopa is fast coming up as an important trade centre, specially after the extension of broad guage railway line from New Bongaigaon to it. This important river-port is linked by ferry service with Goalpara and Pancharatna. The Ashok Paper Mills at Jogighopa is a major industry of the State. Bamboo forests have been planted around Jogighopa for feeding the mill.

Kokrajhar : Kokrajhar on the left bank of the Gaurang river is the subdivisional headquarters of Kokrajhar sub-division which was created in 1957. It and its adjoining areas are predominantly inhabited by colourful Bodos and Kacharis, rich in tribal folk-dance and music. As the northern part of the subdivision abounds in tree forests, Kokrajhar is a prominent centre of timber business. Among its main exports are timber, jute and oil seeds. Its chief manufactures are sleepers and bakery products. Kokrajhar, a flourishing railway station on the Northeast Frontier Railway is also well connected by road and is 75 kms. north-east of the district headquarters.

According to the 1971 Census, Kokrajhar Municipality had an area of 6.29 sq. kms. and a population of 17,060. Its civic amenities include a College, three public libraries with reading rooms and two cinema halls. There is a Circuit House and an Inspection Bungalow at Kokrajhar.

Krishnai : Krishnai is an important place on the South Trunk Road about 20 kms. south-east of Goalpara. A weekly *hat* is held here every Wednesday.

About 3 kms. west of Krishnai is situated Tukreswari hill and atop it, is the Tukreswari *Devalay*. At the base of the hill are situated *paduka-bari* (place of foot-wears), *bhog-ghar* (kitchen) and *nat mandir*. A tank and a beautiful spring lie nearby. On the way to the temple one encounters two female guards Jaya and Bijaya. People believe, that while Mahadeva (Siva) was wandering about the earth with the body of Sati (*Parvati*) on his shoulder, one of her limbs fell on the spot where the temple is situated. An imprint attributed to Siva's right foot is seen on a big slab of stone outside the temple. Every year, big fairs are held here on the occasions of *Durga puja* and *Basanti puja*. The temple was damaged by the earthquake of 1897 but was reconstructed in 1905. The hill is infested with monkeys.

Lakhipur : This former seat of Mechpara Zamindars lies 48 kms. south-west of Goalpara town on the South Trunk Road. It lies north of the Jinjiram river and is an important trade centre. Its main exports include paddy, jute and oil seeds. Lakhipur Town Committee was formed in

November, 1972. Products of Garo Hills like cotton, lac, timber, fruits etc., are available at Lakhipur. It is a pictureseque place and is visited by wild ducks and other birds on their way to the marshy Dhamar Reserve. There is an old *Siva* temple and an old *Masjid* at Lakhipur.

Mankachar : Situated in the south-west corner of the district near the Indo-Bangladesh border, Mankachar lies 100 kms. south of Dhuburi and is an important commercial centre. A few metres south of Mankachar across the river, there is a mosque dating back to the seventeenth century which was constructed by Mir Jumla Commander-in-Chief of Aurangazeb who encamped here for a few days while coming to invade Assam. A few metres north of the mosque, Kamakhya *than*, a beautiful temple is situated on a hillock. *People* from distant places come to witness the festivals of *Ambubashi* and *Durga puja* celebrated by the *than* authorities.

According to the 1971 Census, Mankachar Town Committee comprised an area of 3.88 sq. kms. and had a population of 12,349. As a trade centre, it exports jute, cotton and *kalai*. There is an Inspection Bungalow at Mankachar.

Sapatgram : Sapatgram, on the left bank of the Sankosh river, is a railway station of the Northeast Frontier Railway on the metre-gauge line between Fakiragram and Dhuburi. It is also well connected by road with the district headquarters which lies about 52 kms. south-west of it. Its main exports include timber, jute and leather and its manufactures are such varied products as steel trunks, brass metal utensils, furniture and sleepers. According to the 1971 Census, Sapatgram Town Committee had an area of 2.59 sq. kms. and a population of 9,879.

About 16 kms. south of Sapatgram lies Bagribari near which *Mahamaya Pith*, one of the most important pilgrim centres of Assam is located. There is a big stone image of Goddess *Mahamaya* in the temple. People believe that the image of *Mahamaya* is sinking slowly into the earth and only a portion measuring about 75 centimetres above the chest is now visible.

Sri Suryya Than : It situates in a hill called Suryya *Pahar* at about 14 kilometres south-east from Goalpara town. This place is filled up with *Sivalingas*, Suryya *mandir* and hundreds of images some of which are believed to be those of Tirthankar Jaina. People believe that about 99,999 *Sivalingas* were engraved by Vyas Deva there in order to build another Kashi there. Besides other gods and goddesses, there are found images of Lord Buddha, *Dasabhuja Durga*, *Ganesh*, *Suryya* and *Chandra*. The place is within a few miles from Sainik School Complex at Mornai.

GLOSSARY

A

Ali— An embankment across a rice field.
Ahu— A kind of paddy, harvested during summer.
Ati— A bundle of paddy.
Adhi— A system of crop-sharing by the tenant with the landlord.

B

Baodhan— A kind of paddy sown in flooded land.
Bhar— A load of paddy in particular carried on shoulder suspended from either end of a bamboo pole.
Boro— A kind of spring paddy grown on water-logging low land.
Bouchi-gudu—A team game resembling *Kabadi*.
Bihu— An Assamese National festival.
Biyanam— Assamese marriage song.
Bacha— A kind of small fish.
Bihu geets—Assamese folk-songs connected with *Bihu*.
Bihuan— A piece of cloth particularly woven by a female with foliage designs on it and presented to near and dear ones on the occasion of the *Rongali Bihu*.
Bigha— A measure of land standing for ⅓ th of a *pura* of land.
Bati— A bell-metal cup.
Baradhan— Glutinous paddy.
Bari— An orchard.
Bil— A small lake, a shallow pool of water.
Baki-jai— A list of defaulting *ryots* filed by *Mauzadar* for recovering arrear of revenue.
Basti— A homestead.
Bazar— A market place.
Bhari— A carrier of loads carried on shoulder suspended from either end of a bamboo pole.
Bar-kapor— Usually made from *eri* and used as a wrap in cold weather.

Bin— An indigenous musical instrument, made of string and played with a bow.
Bonja— A load of goods, particularly paddy.
Buranji— A History.

C

Char— A highland formed by sand and silt deposits of a river.
Chadar— A garment used to cover the upper part of the body.
Chunga— A hollow bamboo, sometimes the knot is retained at the bottom for using as container or measuring liquid.
Chapari— A highland formed on the banks and in the beds of a river by sands and silt deposits.
Charita— A Biography.

D

Daba— A big one-sided drum.
Daityas— Monsters.
Dangori— A large sheaf of paddy.
Dham— An abode of religious precepts where religious teachings are imparted ; a kind of temple.
Dhara— A bamboo mat.
Duar— Gateway or pass on the foothills.
Deodhani— A devotee dedicated to a temple who performs worship to the particular deity through dance under divine spell.
Dhenki— A paddle for pounding rice.
Dharagudu— An indigenous game played by two opposite teams.
Dhopkhela— An indigenous team game similar to the game of foot-ball.
Dong— A small depression in a cultivated land used for irrigation.
Doon— A conical shaped bamboo basket for measuring five *seers* of grain.
Dhoti— A lower wear for male worn down at the waist.

E

Eri— A species of silk, the cocoons of which are fed on castor plant.
Ekra— A kind of grass.
Earring— Ornaments meant for ears.

F

Faringati— A highland on which *Ahu* paddy and other grains like mustard and sugarcane are grown.

G

Gain— A pestle used for husking paddy or pesting grains in a mortar.
Ganja— An Indian hemp.
Gur— Molasses.
Garh— An embankment.
Ghar— Dwelling house.
Gagari— A pitcher.
Ghat— A landing stair or a bathing place on a river bank.
Gamocha— A kind of towel woven by a female with foliage design.
Gola— A ware-house for storing grains and other goods particularly paddy.

H

Hachini— A kind of trowel with a long handle.
Hat— A market place.
Hati— A row of dwellings particularly of the resident-Vaisnava-monks.
Haugudu— A team game like *Dhargudu*.

J

Jakai— A kind of bamboo scoop used in catching fish.
Jatkarma— A list of customary rites performed to initiate a Hindu into their own society.
Juluki— A kind of fish basket.
Jan— A brooklet.
Jikir— A kind of Assamese devotional folk-songs popular among the Assamese Muslims.

K

Kula— A flat bamboo tray.
Kalah— A pitcher.

Kunkis— A hunting elephant.
Kalasi— Water jar, A pitcher.
Kath— A mat made of grass or cork.
Kala-khar— An elkaline preparation extracted usually from banana plant ashes.
Khel— A division of people made by Ahom ruler for specific profession.
Kamij— A garment used to cover the upper part of the body.
Kheda-sikar—A process employed in catching elephant.
Katha— A measure of land standing for $\frac{1}{5}$th of a *bigha*.
Khol— A sort of musical drum played with devotional songs in particular.

L

Lahi— A fine variety of paddy.
Lota— A kind of water pot narrow in the middle and made of bell-metal and brass.
Lecha— A measure of land standing for $\frac{1}{20}$th of a *Katha*.

M

Mahal— A division of forests for different purposes.
Muga— A variety of Assam silks the threads of which are usually yellow with the tinge of gold.
Mela— A public show, an exhibition, a *fete*,
Mekhela— A lower-wear for female worn down at the waist.
Mela-Shikar—A process employed in catching elephant.
Makhana— A male elephant without tusk.
Mahout— An elephant driver.

N

Namghar— A prayer-hall in a *Vaishanava satra* in particular and in the villages of Assam.
Nam-kirtan— Prayer in conjunction with sounding cymbal and other instruments of the Assamese *Vaishnavas*.

O

Oja-pali— Assamese folk-dance accompanied by songs.

P

Pahar— A small hillock.
Pukhuri— A pond.
Pam— A camping place for agricultural farming. The movement of the people from one village to another, generally caused by agricultural activities such as search for better fields.
Pan— Betel-vine leaf.
Pat— A fine variety of Assam silk the yarns of which are prepared from mulberry-fed cocoons.
Pepa— A flute.
Pitha— A cake prepared with rice powder.
Pura— A measure of land standing for four *bighas* of land or four to five *doons* of grains.
Pati— A kind of fine mat.
Powa— ¼th of *seer*.

R

Riha— A kind of long wrapper used by the Assamese females round the waist and the breasts; a long diaper used as a girdle over brassier.
Rupit— Land on which winter crop or transplanted paddy is grown.

S

Salidhan—A principal variety of transplanted paddy.
Sarai— A tray with foot made usually of silver and bell-metal.
Sastra— Scripture.
Satra— A religious institution—generally established by *Vaisnava* preceptors of Assam.
Santi-sena—Peace squads.
Sepa— A kind of bamboo fish trap.
Sraddha—A religious rite performed for peace of the departed soul.

T

Tari— Indigenous liquor prepared by fermenting date-palm-juice.
Tenga— A sour preparation of fruit.

Tokari— An indigenous one-string musical instrument played with stroke of the ring finger.
Touzi— Revenue for the land entered into the land settlement register.
Tulasoni—Old time weighing scale.
Tulasi— A sacred and madicinal herb.

U

Ural— A wooden mortar used for pounding paddy and rice.
Uruka— The eve of *Bihu* day.

V

Vansa— A genealogy.

Y

Yubaraj— The Prince Regent.

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