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ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEERS



KAMRUP DISTRICT

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GAZETTEER OF INDIA
ASSAM STATE

KAMRUP DISTRICT

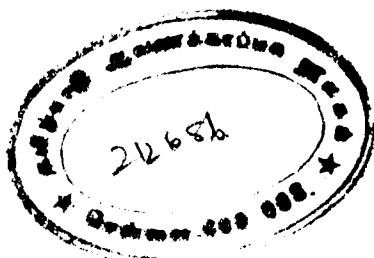
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FOREWORD

I am happy to present before the public the District Gazetteer of Kamrup which was long overdue. This is the seventh in the series of the District Gazetteers prepared and published by the Department of District Gazetteers under the Education Department, Government of Assam. It is a valuable document in so far as it contains almost all the information of this ancient and historically important district of the state.

I am thankful to the Editor-in Chief Dr.B.B.Hazarika and his staff for their untiring effort to make it an authentic document as far as practicable.

I hope the scholars, educationists, administrators and others in general will be benefitted by this treatise to a large extent.

Shri Brindaban Goswami
Minister, Education, Assam &
Chairman of State Advisory Board,
Deptt. of District Gazetteers,
Assam, Guwahati.

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Preface

In the series of District Gazetteers of Assam, published by the Département of District Gazetteers, Assam, this, the Gazetteer of the District of Kamrup, is the seventh. It took a very long time to release the volume from the Press, though approval for printing was received as early as 1979 and the work of printing has been completed in 1983 during the tenure of one of my predecessors, Srimati Suchibrata Roychoudhury in the office of the Editor-in-Chief. I must acknowledge with thanks the service of Srimati Roychoudhury. This humble self has been placed to shoulder the responsibility as the Editor-in-Chief only in the middle of 1986. So to effect the release of the volume from the press become an imperative on me as the volume was long due to be released. As the volume has been lying in the press for a long period, it also becomes imperative to review and revise quite a large portion of the textual matters for necessary modification and whenever possible updating the data. The revision as well as correction in a number of pages, not in serial order but in different places, of an already printed volume without disturbing its sequence and keeping intact the rest of the printed pages is a very difficult task. It is done by dropping a number of old pages and inserting new ones. It can not be claimed that the work has been to the full satisfaction as there are number of limitations. Despite the limitations an attempt has been made to collect all the available data upto 1977, unless specially mentioned in the text otherwise.

Importance of the District of Kamrup in the life of the State of Assam needs no emphasis. The District of Kamrup has certain unique features which distinguish it from the other parts of the State of Assam. It has a very rich historical past, as it formed passage to China during the very ancient period and over and above it was the capital of the once famous Pragjyotisha-Kamrupa Kingdom as it is now. The scholars are of opinion that the name 'Dispur' the present capital of Assam,

derives its name from 'Pragjyotishpur' the capital of ancient Kingdom of Pragjyotisha-Kamrupa. As the district of Kamrup has Dispur, the present Capital of Assam, within it most of the Central, State and quasi-Government establishments' Head offices are situated in the District's Headquarters-Guwahati. Further, it is the district abounding in places of pilgrimage for the followers of different religions and sects. A few of such pilgrimages are Kamakhya Temple, Hayagriva Madava Temple, Sukreswar Temple, Aswakranta Temple and Poa-Mocca. The district of Kamrup can boast of certain fine as well as old architectural species like the sites of the Kamakhya Temple, Satpukhuri, Sukreswar Temple and Janardana. It can also boast of a special dialect of its own known as Kamrupee Dialect and for its Muga and Endi rearing. The contents of the volume conform closely to the pattern laid down by the Central Government which initiated the project of re-writing the Gazetteers as the old District Gazetteers, published mainly in the first decade of the present century have become obsolete and out of date and thereby cease to serve much purpose neither to the scholars nor to the administrators.

The preliminary draft of the Kamrup District Gazetteer was prepared by the already defunct District Gazetteer Office at Guwahati in between 1959 and 1969, Sri Lohit Chandra Barua was its first District Compiler and he was succeeded chronologically by Sri Mahidhar Datta, Sri Milan Saikia and late Sachindra Nath Neog, during that period. To guide the District Compiler there was a District Advisory Board for Gazetteer headed by the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup, Guwahati and a few members who took keen interest in the work for which my thanks are due to them in a large measure. However a few chapters were prepared on assignment made on the advice of the State Advisory Board, by some scholars namely Prof. Madhab Chandra Goswami and Dr. Priyalata Das (chapter III), Professor Khorshed Alam (chapter VI), Professor S. Sarangapani (chapter IX), Advocate Suren Choudhury (chapter XI), Advocate Prasanta Kumar Barooah (chapter XII), Dr. Padmakanta Saikia (chapter XIV) and Srimati Indira Miri (chapter XV). My thanks are also due to them. But as the volume was lying in the Press for a long time,

it needed revision and modifications. Hence a number of chapters of the volume have been sent for scrutiny and modification to some experts like Dr. Moheswar Neog, Dr. Upen Goswami, Dr. Taher, Dr. N.N. Acharyya, Dr. J.N. Phukan, Dr. A.C. Bhuyan, Sri Murari Charan Das, Dr. (Mrs) L. Das, Sri G.N. Bhuyan and Sri Brigumani Kagayung.

On the basis of the scrutiny by experts, who have made several suggestions and in some cases who have even supplied new materials also, the relevant chapters have been improved by incorporating their suggestions for improvement. We, however, have to edit the chapters where necessary and add some more data to bring the matter into the line of the District Gazetteers. I remain ever grateful to the above mentioned contributors and reviewers without whose service we would have still been lingering far behind the work. After obtaining approval from the State Advisory Board the revised and modified chapters have been sent to the press for reprinting and eventually the job has been completed.

We have tried our best to cover all the subjects dealt with the book exhaustively but remained far off from our target in spite of stringent efforts for which I crave excuse from the scholars as well as the public.

I would like to avail the opportunity to offer my sincere thanks to Sri Brindaban Goswami, the Minister of Education, Assam and the Chairman of the State Advisory Board for the Department of District Gazetteers, Assam and to all members of the said body for having proffered their help and advice and to the Gazetteer Unit of the Central Government for their suggestions and co-operation. My thanks are also due to all the officials, past and present of the Education (CTM) Department of Government of Assam for their constructive, helpful and sympathetic approach and attitudes towards the requirement of this Department and its working. I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to all those individuals and agencies like Libraries, Private Institutions, People Organisations and to all those officials and non-officials who in one way or another have helped in the collection of materials and in the

preparation, printing or bringing out of this volume. My thanks are also due to Sri R. N. Dutta Baruah, Proprietor Sree Guru Press and his staff for printing the volume.

Lastly, but not least I owe special thanks to all my colleagues, past & present including late Sachindra Nath Neog, Editor, and Compiler late Rameswar Das, and late Padma Kanta Baruah, Sri Mohan Chandra Bhuyan, Sri Ramesh Chandra Medhi, Srimati Binata Das, Srimati Bharati Hazarika, Srimati Ashadeep Deka, Srimati Zabin Ahmed and Sri Rajdeep Talukdar and Dr. Binod Sarma, Editor, Translation Scheme, and of other cadres also in the Department for their co-operation, loyalty and high sense of devotion to duty. I must here specially acknowledge with thanks the service rendered by Sri Rajdeep Talukdar in the matter of revising and incorporating the suggestions of the experts in the volume at the stage of reprinting without which, I doubt, the job of reprinting would have not been completed within a short period. In this regard Sri Gagan Chandra Talukdar, U.D.A. in-charge, Sri Sitamohan Nath, L.D.A., Srimati Labanya Datta, Typist, and Sri Mahesh Chandra Medhi, L.D.A. deserve my special thanks.

Regret is expressed here for a number of printing mistakes for which an errata has been appended at the end of the book. Hope, the scholars, administrators and the public for whom the book has been intended, would appreciate our difficulties and excuse our short-comings with magnanimity and also hope the book will meet at least a fraction of the deficiency in the field.

Dr. Bijay Bhushan Hazarika,
Editor-in-Chief,
District Gazetteers
Assam, Guwahati.

Guwahati,
20th March, 1990.

CHAPTER I

GENERAL

(a) INTRODUCTION:

(1) **Origin of the name Kamrup** : The present district of Kamrup was a part of the ancient kingdom of Kamarupa. The extent of the old Kamarupa kingdom varied from time to time. The origin of the name Kamarupa is also associated with Kamakhya. "The words Kamarupa and Kamakhya also suggest an Austric or Alpine origin. The word Kamakhya is probably derived from an Austric formation, such as *kamoi* (demon) in old *Komer*; *kamoit* (devil) in Cham; *kamet* (corpse) in Khasi; *komui* (grave) or *komuoch* (corpse) in Santali. It may be a substitution of the word like *momuoch*, meaning grave or the dead"¹. The word Kamarupa is derived from the formation like *kamru* or *kamrut*, the name of a lesser divinity in Santali, and the land is thus associated with magic or necromancy². Both Kamarupa and Kamakhya are closely associated in literature. B. K. Kakati thinks that the word Kamarupa symbolises a new cult, and in exaltation of it, the land was rechristened. The very name Kamarupa-Kamakhya suggests, in his opinion, that the cult is to be derived from some Austric divinity.

The traditional origin of the name Kamarupa, as given in the *Gopatha Brahmana*, which relates the story of Kamadeva's revival after being burnt up by *Siva*, may be explained in the light of the prevalence of the cult of magic and sorcery, associated with the Austric-Alpine culture of Assams. Besides literature, the word Kamarupa is also mentioned in epigraphs. That the word Kamarupa is a Sanskritisation of some earlier formation, is proved by other sources. The usual name is found as *Kamru* or *Kamrud* in the Buddhist *Caryas*, the *Hara-Gouri Samvada*, and the Muslim sources like the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* and the *Riyaz-us-Salatin*.

1. B. K. Kakati : *Assamese—Its Formation and Development* 1972...., pp. 53-54.
2. P. C. Choudhury : *The History of Civilisation of the People Assam to the Twelfth Century A. D.*, 1959, p. 38.
3. Ibid.

Among all the sources of the origin of the name Kamrup, the legendary source as mentioned earlier appears to be more popular. According to this source, Kamadeva, the God of Love was reduced to ashes by the fiery glances of Lord Siva in the island of Umananda and later he regained his form (*rupa*) here and that is why the name Kamrup or Kamarupa was chosen for this place.⁴

(II) **Location, General boundaries, Total area and Population :**

The district of Kamrup lies between latitude 25°43' and 26°53' north and longitude 90° 39' and 92° 11' east. It is bounded on the north by the Bhutan, on the east by the districts of Darrang and Nowgong, on the south by the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills district (now in Meghalaya) and on the west by the district of Goalpara.

According to the Census of 1971, the district of Kamrup covers an area of 9,863.0 square kilometres only. On 1st September, 1951, an area of 32.8 square miles was ceded to Bhutan⁵ and since then no change occurred in the area of the district.

(III) **History of the district as an administrative unit :** As an administrative unit Kamrup was constituted a district in about 1834. In the same year, Goalpara, Darrang (including Biswanath) and Nowgong were formed into separate districts in Assam. Since 1834, Kamrup includes the country along both banks of the mighty river Brahmaputra, from the Manas in the west to the Bar Nadi in the east; its capital was at Gauhati which was also the headquarters of the Commissioner of Assam⁶.

(IV) **Sub-divisions, Revenue Circles and Thanas :** For administrative purposes the district has been divided into three sub-divisions : Gauhati, Barpeta and Nalbari. Gauhati and Barpeta are the two oldest sub-divisions of the district while the 3rd sub-division at Nalbari was declared as such on 1st April, 1967. Gauhati sub-division covers the entire south bank and a portion of the north bank of the Brahmaputra. Both Barpeta and Nalbari sub-divisions are located on the north of the Brahmaputra. With the constitution of Nalbari as a separate sub-division, Gauhati sub-division now covers an area of 4,625.9 square kilometres.

4. Census of India, 1961-District Census Handbook, Kamrup, (Introduction)
5. Ibid pp. 9.
6. E. A. Gait : *A History of Assam*, (Reprint) 1967, p. 349-50.

Its second sub-division with headquarters at Barpeta was established in March 1841 and according to the census of 1971, it covers an area of 3,307.3 sq. km. The third sub-division in the district with sub-divisional headquarters at Nalbari came into being on 1st April, 1967 with publication of the Gazette notification No. AAP 10/64/546 of 28.3.67. It comprises an area of 2,022.8 square kilometres. For the creation of this sub-division, an area of 926 square miles was separated from Gauhati sub-division vide Gazette notification dated 28/3/67.

The statement below provides the sub-division-wise area (in square kilometres), population and density of population as in 1971.

Name of sub-division	Areas in square kilometres	Population	Density of population per sq. k.m.
1. Barpeta	3,307.3	9,71,737	294
2. Gauhati	4,625.9	11,82,632	256
3. Nalbari	2,022.8	6,99,814	346

Revenue circles and Mauzas : For the purpose of collection of revenues, the district is divided into eighteen Circles and the same area has been divided into eighty-nine *Mauzas*. Sub-divisional-wise names of the circles, *Mauzas* and areas of each circle are as follows :

Sub-division	Name of circle.	Area	Name of Mauza
1	2	3	4
		B.	K.L.
1. Gauhati Sub-Division	1. Gauhati Circle	2,13,928	0 0
			1. Ulubari
			2. Sahar Gauhati
			3. Beltala
			4. Jalukbari.
	2. Sonapur Circle	2,32,711	0 11
			1. Panbari
			2. Sonapur.
			3. Dimoria.

Sub-Division.	Name of circle	Area	Name of Mauza
1	2	3	4
		B. K. L.	
	3. Palasbari Circle	3,29,500	4 1 1. Bhora Gaon 2. Dakhin Rani 3. Ramcharani 4. Chayani 5. Rampur 6. D. S. Bangsor 7. Barduar
	4. Chaygaon Circle	2,68,456	2 16 1. Pantan 2. Goroimari 3. Pub-Chamaria 4. Bangaon 5. Sonatoli
	5. Boko Circle	1,96,167	3 6 1. Luki 2. Bekeli 3. Boko 4. Nagarbera 5. Chamaria
	6. Hajo Circle	2,69,132	2 3 1. Hajo 2. Pub Bangsar 3. Ramdia 4. Pashim Bangsar
	7. Kamalpur Circle Sub-circle Patidarrang	3,21,705	14½ 1. Modartola 2. S. S. Ghopa 3. Patidarrang 4. Pubpar 5. Karara 6. Barbangsar
	8. Rangia Circle Sub-circle Goreswar	3,34,210	4 1 1. Panduri 2. Pub Barigog 3. Pashim Barigog 4. P. K. Mohal 5. Kaurbaha 6. Betna

Sub-Division	Name of circle	Area	Name of Mauza
1	2	3	4
		B. K. L.	
2. Nalbari Sub-division	9. Nalbari Circle Sub-Circle Dharmapur	4,19,005	0 19 1. Pakowa 2. Bahjani 3. Upar Barbhag 4. Natundechar 5. Batahgila 6. Khata 7. Pub-Banbhag 8. Khetri Dharmapur. 9. Dharmapur 10. Pashim Banbhag
	10. Tamulpur Circle	3,94,149	3 3½ 1. Pub-Baska 2. Defeli 3. Kumari Kata
	11. Tihu Circle	1,16,070	2 6 1. Tihu 2. Namati 3. Nambarbhag
	12. Baska	3,93,086	3 18 1. Uttar Baska 2. Dakhin Baska 3. Madhyam Baska
	13. Barkhetri Circle	1,23,728	0 17 1. Pashim Barkhetri 2. Pub-Barkhetri 3. Madhyam Barkhetri 4. Uttar Barkhetri
3. Barpeta Sub-Division	14. Barnagar Circle	5,11,073	2 10 1. Howli 2. Gobardhana 3. Kharija Bijni 4. Damkachakabaushi 5. Rupsi
	15. Sarupeta Circle	2,28,256	0 9 1. Bhabanipur 2. Hastinapur 3. Bijni

Sub-division	Name of Circle.	Area	Name of Mauza
1	2	3	4
		B. K. L..	
16	Baghbar Circle	6,98,310	3 3½ 1. Baghbar 2. Jania 3. Mondia 3. Baguribari 5. Titapani
17.	Bajali Circle	3,63,752	2 5 1. Sariha 2. Koklabari 3. Uttar Bajali 4 Pub-Bajali 5. Chapaguri 6. Manikpur
18.	Barpeta Circle	4,81,526	0 4 1. Barpeta 2. Nowgong 3. Betbari 4. Chenga 5. Ghilajari 6. Paka 7. Sarukhetri
	Sub-Circles- Sarthebari, Chenga.		

Chaygaon circle has been bifurcated recently to form the revenue circle called Boko with Luki, Bekeli, Boko, Nagarbera and Chamaria *Mauzas*-keeping the other remaining *Mauzas* of original Chaygaon circle in the old circle.

Number of Sub-divisions in Kamrup is 3, Circles (Revenue)-18 and *Mauzas* 89 at present.

Originally Kamrup was divided into seventeen *Parganas* under the fiscal management of the *Choudhuris*. This number increased to forty-one in the thirties of the nineteenth century. There after, on suggestion of Captain P. Bogle who was then the Collector of the Lower Assam Division, the district was reorganised and *parganas* were divided as per natural boundaries into seventy fiscal divisions termed as *Mauzas*. Now the number of *Mauzas* have increased to eighty-nine.

Source : Director of Land Records, Assam, Gauhati.

The table below reproduced *Verbatim* from 'A Descriptive Account of Assam' by William Robinson shows the number and *Mauzas* of *parganas* as related to Police *Thana* areas in Kamrup district as it was in 1840.⁷

"Of the *Parganas* of Kamrup, and the number connected with each Police *Thana*h.

South Bank of the Brahmaputra.	<i>Thana</i> h.	
	Gowhatti	Desh Dimuria. ,, Panbari. ,, Beltulla. Purguna Ramsah ,, Bekali ,, Chumuria. ,, Barunti. ,, Choiani. ,, Dakhin ,, Sorubangsa. ,, Nagarbera
	Chumuria	.. Duwar Lakhi ,, Boko ,, Bungong ,, Bogie ,, Chorigong ,, Pantan ,, Burduwar ,, Bholagong ,, Mourapur Desh Rani
South Bank of the Brahmaputra.	<i>Thana</i> h	Purgana Betunah. ,, Pachim Kachari Mehal
Eastern Divn. of North Bank of the Brahmaputra	Byderghor	.. Purguna Kaoor Baha ,, Dumduma ,, Hochung ,, Panduri ,, Burigong ,, Jhargong ,, Ghoramara.

Centre Division of North Bank of the Brahmaputra	Komulpur in Purguna Purbpar.	Purguna Purbpar
		„ Madur Tulla „ Bar Bangsa „ Sinduri Gopa „ Ramdia „ Hazoo „ Patti Durrung „ Oottur Sorubangsa „ Silah
	Thanah Nalbari in Purguna Khatta	Purguna Uper Burbhag
		„ Purb Bunbhag „ Pachim Bunbhag „ Batasgila „ Khatta „ Bahajani „ Chandkuchi „ Pokawa „ New Dehur „ Dhurmpur „ Bar Khettree
	Thanah Bujali in Purguna Purb Bujali	Purguna Namburbhag
		„ Nowamati „ Manickpur „ Utter Bujali „ Dakin „ „ Suria „ Panbari „ Paka „ Soroukhettree „ Kuchojar „ Muremela
Western Division of North Bank	Thanah Buwanipur	Purguna Rupsi
		„ Buguribari „ Buwanipur „ Dumka „ Choka boose. „ Burpetah „ Chongah „ Kholabanda „ Hustinapur Talook Sila „

(V) **Population** : According to 1971 Census, the total population of the district was 2,854,183 of whom 1,510,149 were male and 1,344,034 female. The following brief statement indicates the increase of population with decade variation since 1902 to 1971, in the district.

Name of district	Year	Persons	Decade variation	Percentage decade variation.	Males	Females
Kamrup	1901	5,90,010			2,93,272	2,96,738
	1911	6,68,646	+78,636	+13.38	3,39,797	3,28,849
	1921	7,63,571	+94,925	+14.20	3,97,736	3,65,835
	1931	9,76,746	+2,13,175	+27.92	5,13,345	4,63,401
	1941	12,64,200	+2,87,454	+29.43	6,73,403	5,90,797
	1951	14,90,392	+2,26,192	+17.89	7,99,391	6,91,001
	1961	20,62,572	+5,72,130	+38.39	11,09,608	9,52,964
	1971	28,54,183	+7,91,611	+38.38	15,10,149	13,44,034

From the above table it can be seen that in Kamrup population increase rate is much above the all India rate, even the all Assam rate. In 1971, All India population increase rate was 22.55% over the 1961 population. This figure was also much above the natural increase rate which was 2.10% - birth rate and death rate being 3.70 and 1.60 per cent respectively. In Assam, rate of increase over 1961 population was 34.71% while in Kamrup it was 38.38%. It is apparent that this tremendous increase rate is due to influx of population from outside. In case of India, the influx is from East Bengal, Nepal, Tibet, Cylone, South Africa, America and Burma ; while in case of Assam, it is mainly from East Bengal and Nepal.

It may very well be noted that though Cachar has a very easy access from East Bengal (now Bangladesh) - decadal increase of population is much less there in comparison to other districts including Kamrup.

Statement showing percentage decade variation of population in the two border districts, two hill districts and Kamrup from 1931 and 1971.

Name of districts	1931					1941				
	Male		Female		Total P.C. variation.	Male		Female		Total P.C. variation.
	1	2	1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3
1. Goalpara	..	..	470557	412731	+15.76	539437	474848	+14.83	423371	+11.38
2. Cachar	..	..	422362	381332	+6.94	471769	46375	..	18062	+13.75
3. Karbi Anglong	..	..	17302	15542	..	49666	590797	+29.43	..	..
4. N. C. Hills.	..	..	513345	463401	+13.60	19299	673403	..	..	..
5. Kamrup	..	..	..	..	+27.92	..	..	..	..	..

Name of districts	1951					1961					1971				
	Male		Female		Total P.C. variation	Male		Female		Total P.C. variation	Male		Female		Total P.C. variation
	1	2	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	
1. Goalpara	588999	519125	588306	527559	+ 9.25	812723	731169	+39.32	1154449	1070654	+44.12	1154449	1070654	+44.12	
2. Cachar	588306	527559	588306	527559	+24.66	722487	655989	+23.53	891126	822192	+24.29	891126	822192	+24.29	
3. Karbi Anglong	65812	59965	65812	59965	+30.96	121040	104367	+79.21	202347	176963	+68.28	202347	176963	+68.28	
4. N. C. Hills.	20618	19045	20618	19045	+6.16	29087	25232	+36.95	41314	34733	+40.00	41314	34733	+40.00	
5. Kamrup	799391	691001	799391	691001	+17.89	1109608	952964	+38.39	1510149	1344034	+38.38	1510149	1344034	+38.38	

Column 3 for the year will show very clearly how population of these districts are effected by migration of people from outside. Other details are discussed in Chapter-III.

(b) TOPOGRAPHY :

(1) **Natural Divisions** : Topographically, the district is divided into two parts by the mighty river Brahmaputra from the east to the west. The northern portion of the district is about twice the area of the southern portion. Generally speaking, the district forms a great plains, comprising a few elevated tracts lying along the Bhutan and Khasi Hills which form respectively its northern and southern boundaries.

In the north of the district, the ground inundates considerably as it approaches the hills, so that the edge of the plains is not easily defined. The villages are exceedingly picturesque and have a very prosperous appearance.⁸

On the north of the Brahmaputra, the Kamrup plains falls roughly into three natural divisions, namely the tracts near the river, the central plains and the Kachari *duars* near the Bhutan Hills. Some of the hills also break the riverine areas just north of the river. On the south of the river Brahmaputra, the plains is much broken up by hills. The two Chamaria *mauzas* are low swampy tracts but below the Trunk Road there is hilly, almost mountainous, country and near the southern frontier of the district there are peaks over 3,000 feet in height.⁹

(II) **Hills** :— No portion of the Himalayas falls within the district of Kamrup. Never the less, there are a large number of hills on both the banks of the river, which consist of a section of the Assam range. The fringe of the Assam range consists of ridge upon ridge of hills, all of them covered with dense-tree forest and bamboo jungle which gradually sink from peaks, two to three thousand feet above the level of the sea, to hillocks whose tops are barely as many hundred feet above the flat alluvial plain. Some of these hills are (1) Basishtha, (2) Fatasil, (3) Chunsali, (4) Greenwood (5) Nilachal (Kamakhya), (6) Dirgheswari, (7) Sila, (8) Hajo (9) Kedar, (10) Madhab, (11) Hatimura, (12) Nagar-bera, (13) Dakhotia hills, (14) Sonpara (15) Powa Mecca (16) Ajna-thuri (17) Narakasura (18) Nabagraha (19) Kalapahar, (20) Bura-gohain, (21) Rakshasi (22) Gumi, (23) Mirza (24) Phulbari, (25) Sillathuri etc. These hills are all more or less covered with grass jungle and forest where *sal* trees are found in large numbers.

One peculiar feature of most of the hills of Kamrup district is that most of them are regarded as sacred by various sections of the Hindus.

8. W. W. Hunter : *A Statistical Account of Assam*, Vol. 1. page 4.

9. B. C. Allen : *District Gazetteer of Kamrup*, 1905. p. 1.

The Buragohain *parbat* (hill), in Chamaria *mauza* is stated to be dear to Lord Siva, in whose honour a temple has been erected at its foot. Similarly the Gumi hill, according to proverb, was the mount of a pair of cobras who troubled the people in the days of Siva Singha. The Buragohain hill in Chaygaon *mauza* is also stated to be sacred to Siva. Another hill named Gobardhan is consecrated to Vishnu. In Boko, there is a hill sacred to Parvati, which also bears the almost generic title Buragohain and has a temple to the Goddess on its summit, and in Luki and Bekeli, to the west, there are several holy hills such as Thakurpara, Tinibhani, Buragohain, Chilali, Borua and Chamna.¹⁰ Likewise, the Dakhola hill is consecrated by the presence of a *Lingam* and the Maliata hill is sacred to the Goddess Bhogeswari. The Dhomora hill is said to be dear to Durga, while the famous hill Nilachal near Gauhati is noted in the country for its Kamakhya Temple. This Kamakhya Temple is noted as a centre of pilgrimage to the Hindus and its beautiful Temple is located almost on the summit of the hill, the highest peak containing the temple dedicated to Goddess Bhubaneswari - another name of Sri Durga.

Besides, a number of hills of mythological importance are located in the Hajo circle of the district. The Kedar or Kameswar at Hajo contains a Temple which is an object of reverence to the Buddhists and the Hindus alike, with two deities - Siddheswara and Sanpara, is dedicated to Siva. The Powa-Mecca hill behind the Hajo bungalow is revered by Muhammedans and two small hills close by, called Duni (*Duani*) and Muni (*Muani*) - or *Dui-muni* are said to have been hallowed by the presence of two famous *Rishis*. The Hatimura, is also a noted hill in this region on account of its likeness to a kneeling elephant. Besides, the Madan Kamdeva and the Gopeswar are stated to be the two sacred hills situate in the Patidarrang *mauza* area of this district.

Most of these hills as stated above are seven or eight hundred feet in height. Generally their sides are steep and rocky and the hills are covered with dense tropical jungle. In some of the hills rows of *sal* trees (*shorea robusta*) are found in large numbers.

(c) RIVER SYSTEM

The Brahmaputra : The Brahmaputra is the principal river of the district which flows from the east to the west. The whole of the drainage of Kamrup district ultimately finds its way into the Brahmaputra which is an enormous river here even at a great distance from its source

10. B. C. Allen, District Gazetteers, Kamrup, 1905.

of origin. The following illuminating account shows the magnitude of the river not only as the principal river of Kamrup alone, but also of the entire state of Assam and some of the mountainous countries that surround it. "The intercourse between Assam and Bengal proper is almost properly maintained by water. There is a free communication between the Brahmaputra and the Ganges and boats of the largest burden pass by different inoscluations out of the one into the other throughout the year. The Brahmaputra may be called the great drains of Assam, and not of it only, but of all the mountainous countries that surround it; the numerous tributary streams of which swell it to a river of the very first rate magnitude, so as to make it out rival the great Ganges itself in its tribute to the ocean. History still leaves it doubtful whether or not it receives the waters of the Sampu, of Tibet; though the reasonable presumption is that it does so. Most certainly the Sampu does not flow into the Irawaddi and unless it flows into the Brahmaputra and is the same with the Dihang river, it is difficult to account for its course to the sea."¹¹

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

The other and better known name of the river is Brahmaputra, and it means 'son of Brahma' and that is quite within the orbit of Sanskrit nomenclature.¹²

The Ahoms called the river *Nam-Dao-phi*. It means the "river of the Star God". The Brahmaputra is formed by the Dibang and the Lohit rivers on the north-east merging into the Dihang, and thus joining

11. John M. Cosh : Topography of Assam, 1837. Calcutta, p. 6.

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

into one fat stream. The prefix 'Nam' in the Ahom language, like, *Li* in the Bodo language means water or 'river'.

The Hindu scriptures held that the river Brahmaputra rises in the sacred pool known as the Brahmakunda in the easternmost point of the State. It is a religious sanctituary and is situated about 50 miles east of Sadiya. In fact, an element of romance hangs over the river, as a certain portion of its course has never been actually explored, though there is little doubt that the Tsang-po, or great river of Tibet pours its waters through the Dibang into the river which is known as the Brahmaputra in Assam. The source of the Tsangpo is in 31°31'N. and 82°10'E. at Kubiangiri near the waters of the Indus and Sutlej; and a little to the east of the Mansarobar lake. Rising in these glaciers this mighty river Brahmaputra which has a total length of 1,800 (2,880 km.) miles and a drainage area of about 361,200 sq. miles, flows for about half of its length in a trough, north of the Himalayas running parallel to the main Himalayan range taking with it the waters of Raga Tsangpo, Ngang chu, Kyichu and Griamda chu the four important tributaries in Tibet. In the mountain range lying across the north-east border of Lohit district in Arunachal Pradesh, Lohit river takes the name Zayul chu. The Mishmis call it Tellu. In its course to Parashuram Kunda it receives a number of snow-fed perennial tributaries called Dou, Derai, Digaru, Ghalum (Kallong), Dichu, Tidding, Kamaleng and Noa-Dihing. Then it swings north-east, runs through gorges in a series of cascades and rapids, makes a hairpin bend at a few miles east of *Namcha-Burwa*. The bending is well marked near the longitude 94° near Pemkoi Sung, ten miles below Gylow Singdon. It then turns south-west first under the name Siong and taking the name Dihang. After receiving the waters of the Dibang and the Lohit. The united stream from this point flows 720 km. down the Assam Valley in a vast sheet of water dotted with numerous islands, the chief among them being Majuli and Umananda in Sibsagar and Kamrup districts respectively. The river Brahmaputra has an estimated high flood discharge of 2½ million cusecs at Pandu, near Gauhati and is one of the most important rivers in the world. The Brahmaputra is a turbulent river and has been causing a lot of damage to the neighbouring areas and towns along its course; especially after the earthquake of 1950, when the southern channel become violently active probably on account of aggradation of the north channel due to heavy silt from the land digs. The problem of erosion and the flood damage, therefore, became more acute after the heavy floods of 1950.

During its flow through Kamrup district it traverses a distance of about 130 km. from the confluence of the Barnadi to the meeting point

of the Manas on the north. On the south, two tributaries Digaru and Killing join together to fall into the Brahmaputra on the eastern end of the district.

The potential of the Brahmaputra is indeed very great, but there are practically no possibilities of providing storage on the Himalayan tributaries of the river. The southern tributaries of the river draining the northern Shillong plateau, with intermittent steep stretches and series of rapids and falls, are, however, suitable for power development. Though the catchment areas above the level stretches of these rivers in upper reaches are small, the heavy rainfall along the course favours the development of major hydro-electric power on these rivers.¹³

General features of the river basin and its tributaries. The mass of silt brought down from the Himalayas is sufficient to form sandbanks, and even islands in the lower valley, wherever it is flocked by any impediment in the current of the river which thus alters its channel amidst an intricate net-work of water-ways. Broad streams diverge from the main river and regain it after a long separate existence of uncontrollable meandering. The Brahmaputra is a braided channel throughout its length in Assam and flows in a number of channels and cross-channels between its high banks.

Most of the northern bank tributaries of the Brahmaputra are very much larger than those of the south bank. Characteristically, they also have very steep slope, shallow braided channels throughout their entire flow. All of them have coarse sandy bed, heavy silt discharge and also have flash floods.

At Gauhati, the Brahmaputra is confined between rocks and hills in a comparatively narrow channel, but even here the breadth of the Telegraphic wire across the river, measured from post to post is 1.45 miles. Lower down, the river spreads itself during the rains over the marshy country on either bank and, when in flood, the distance from one high bank to the other is very great. Between the main banks there is wide sandy strath in which the river oscillates from side to side, throwing out here and there divergent channels, which after a time, regain the parent stream or may be silted up. The waters of the river are heavily surcharged with suspended matter and the smallest obstruction in the current is liable to give rise to an almond-shaped *Chapori*, but the next flood may wash these *Chaporis* away or may only increase their size by fresh deposits of sand, covered with reeds and jungle grass in a few seasons. These operations of alluvium and

¹³ S. D. Misra : *Rivers of India*, National Book Trust of India, New Delhi, p. 32-33.

diluvium are continually being carried out in a gigantic scale by the Brahmaputra.¹⁴

The Brahmaputra is navigable throughout the year by steamer or large cargo boats, upto Dibrugarh, which is over 700 miles from the Sea. The view of the Brahmaputra is also very enchanting from the Bhubaneswari, the top of the Kamakhya Hill.

The bed slope of the Brahmaputra in the upper reaches is steep for a river of its size. Between Kabo and Dibrugarh its bed slope is 1.4 ft. per mile between Neamati and Gauhati 0.7 ft. per mile and between Gauhati and Dhuburi is 0.5 ft. per mile. The maximum discharge of the Brahmaputra as computed for the purpose of designing the Brahmaputra Bridge at Pandu was measured as 19.5 lakhs cusecs and the corresponding discharge at Dhuburi was reckoned to be about 22 lakh cusecs. The low water discharge of the Brahmaputra at Gauhati is about 1.3 Lakhs cusecs.¹⁵ The river Brahmaputra has a number of tributaries on its both banks within the district. Its principal tributaries on the north bank are the Manas, the Barnadi and the Pagladiya. Originally the Manas and the Barnadi formed the boundaries of Kamrup to the west and east respectively but due to the changes of their courses they have now wandered away from their former channels.

The Manas : It takes its rise in the Bhutan Hills and runs nearly north-south along the western boundary of the district finally falling into the Brahmaputra, opposite the town of Goalpara. This river originates from the high altitude of Indo-Bhutan and Tibet range. It is fed by two river systems of Tibet and Bhutan viz, Dagmechu or Manas from the east and Mangdechu or Tangsa from the west. The river Manas traverse through the great and sub-Himalayan mountain region of Tibet and Bhutan. Near Mathanguri the river enters into plains of Assam and flows through Manas Reserve Forest. Here, at Mathanguri the river bifurcates into two, the eastern branch known as the Beki and the western branch known as Manas. The western branch is met by Aie near Langtichinga in Goalpara district. The river Manas is most unstable meandering in nature. It changes its course very frequently. In the upper reach, the river flows with a steep gradient. Heavy silt and detritus are carried by this river from the hilly region through which it traverses. In the lower reach the river passes close to many shallow *bils* viz, Garabed,

Lachanga *bil* etc. In the *bil* area as mentioned above, the bifurcated course (Beki) again throws all its discharge and thus this *bil* area becomes water-logged and remains stagnant for certain period. *Kakila*, *Choulkhowa* and *Bhelengi* rivers which originate from these *bils*, join Manas below Lengtichiga.

The statement below shows the maximum and minimum discharges of the river Manas (at Mathanguri)

YEAR	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
Maximum Discharge Cusecs	2,44,990	1,34,920	2,60,691	2,70,295	2,39,508
Date	25.7.55	31.6.56	4.8.57	25.8.58	25.7.59
Minimum Discharge Cusecs	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

In respect of magnitude, frequency and duration of water discharge it may, however, be noted that the river Manas gets a very high discharge to the tune of more than 2,000 Lakhs cusecs every year. In the upper reach at the gorge site the river has bankful capacity of 3,12,000 cusecs. The flood slope of the river also varies at different reaches, in the upper reach (gorge site) flood slope is in the order of 1 in 300 ft. and in the lower reach it has an average slope of 1 in 3000 ft.¹⁵

Manas basin is bounded by Indo-Bhutan and Tibet range on the north, Pahumara basin on the east, Champamati basin on the west and the Brahmaputra on the south. The catchment area extends over an area of 13,313 sqr. miles of which 11,980 sqr. miles in the sub-Himalayan mountain region. The river Manas is navigable by boat throughout the year.

The Barnadi :-- Like the river Manas, the river Barnadi too rises in the Tonga district of Bhutan hills at an elevation of about 2,250 ft. above M.S.L. and its upper reaches falls within Bhutan territory. The upper region of this river is covered with dense hilly area with very steep slopes and gradually towards south region the area is rolling and undulated.

16. Master plan for flood control, page-129.

M.S.L.—Mean Sea level.

14. Kamrup District Census Hand Book, 1951 (introduction)

15. Master plan for flood Control-Vol. 1. (Brahmaputra Basin).

After flowing a length of about six kilometres in Bhutan it enters Darrang District at an elevation of about 2,900 ft. above mean sea level where it is known by the name 'Charrang'. The river flows more or less straight from north-east to south-west direction for a further distance of about twenty-six kilometres where it meets small tributary from the right at an elevation of about 250 ft. above mean sea level. The river in this place is known as the 'Bar'. After traversing a distance of about nineteen kilometres towards south, the river crosses the Rangia-Tezpur Railway line, and flows along the eastern boundary of Kamrup district.

Travelling for a further length of about 55.2 kilometres beyond this crossing the Barnadi falls into the mighty river Brahmaputra near North-Gauhati in Kamrup district. *Kolajal* or *Kolapani* is the main tributary of the Barnadi. Two small tributaries known as *Sonadong* and *Gerua* join near Muktapur to form *Kolajal* river.

It is also an unstable river which changes its course frequently. During the summer, the Barnadi used to flood the north bank in combination with other rivers, like *Nonoi*, *Dipila*, and *Kolajal*. In summer this river wanders away from its original channel because of the push from the Himalayas. Spills from these rivers inundate an area of 8,000 acres approximately - with 2'-4' deep water accumulation remaining stagnant for about 3 to 4 days at a stress.

The brief statement below shows the maximum and minimum discharge of the river (Discharge sites=N.T. Road crossing) in cusecs.

Year	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
Maximum Discharge	.. 5,146	4,545	4,051	3,130	4,538
Date	.. 29.7.55	23.6.56	24.6.57	28.5.58	25.6.59
Minimum Discharge	.. 118	40	9	14	10
Date	16.11.55	8.3.56	21.5.57	7.3.58	11.4.59

At discharge site its bankful capacity is about 5,000 cusecs.

This river is of considerable value as a trade route, boats of four tons burden being able to proceed as far as Sonarikhhal in the cold

weather and right upto Malmura Ghat in the rains and it thus affords an outlet to the rice, mustard, and pulse grown in the interior.

The Beki :— Originally a tributary of the Manas, the river Beki very recently has built up its own ridge from the silt and debris it carried during the rain and followed an independent course to meet the Brahmaputra near Bagbar. It is very unsteady and meandering in nature and changes course very frequently. Its total length of about 70 miles, is becoming shallow due to heavy silt deposits and is facing the damages of extinction. Maximum discharge of this river was 162,470 cusecs, and 109,770 cusecs in 1955 and 1959 respectively while the minimum discharge in these years was 11,033 cusecs and 6,287 cusecs respectively. At the discharge site it has a bankful capacity of 20,000 cusecs. During the flood, the approximate area affected by the discharge from this river is about 240 square miles, during June to September generally.

The Pagladiya :— It is also an important river of the north bank which originates from the Bhutan Hills. Originating from the Bhutan Hills, it flows from north to south direction. In the first reach, its slope ranges from 25 ft. to 10 ft. per kilometres.

In the next reach, when the bed gradient is of the order of five ft. per kilometre, the river has a braided channel. In this reach, in a small length little below the confluence of Mutanga, considerable quantity of flood water spills over the right bank of Pagladiya and flows along a deserted course called *Mora-Pagladiya*. Total length of Pagladiya from its source to outfall is about 104 kilometres. The Pagladiya is a river which, as the name implies, has been a continual source of trouble. In fact, Pagladiya is a real mad river which changes its course very often causing erosion and damage to cultivable and homestead lands. This river in course of its vagaries has converted valuable rice-fields into swamp, or, what is even worse, a stretch of arid land. During the rains it is navigable by boats of four tons burden as far as Alagjhar. Following is the statement of maximum and minimum discharges of Pagladiya.

(Discharge site near Nalbari)

(In cusecs)

YEAR	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
Maximum Discharge	12,943	18,914	34,782	29,682	19,785
Date	.. 26.7.55	27.6.56	21.6.57	12.8.58	25.6.59
Minimum Discharge	.. 41	211	13	12	13
Date	22.8.55	27.8.56	16.11.57	2.8.58	30.4.59

The Chaulkhowa : It is a small tributary of the Brahmaputra on the north bank which flows east and west and receives the drainage of most of the river streams in the north of the district. Like the Pagladiya, this river also rises from Bhutan Hills.

The Puthimari : Originating at an altitude of 12,500 ft. far above MSL. in southern hill-slopes of Bhutan, with steep slopes it flows through the plains of Kamrup from north to south to meet the Brahmaputra. The river is bounded by Boralia and Pagladiya basin on the west, Dhansiri and Barnadi basin in the east and the Brahmaputra on the south. In the upper reaches the river flows in a very deep gorges formed by lines of hills in Bhutan territory. After traversing about 33 miles (52.8 km.) in steep gradients from north to south in the hills, it enters Kamrup district. After the entry for about 10 miles it is known as Jiabarnadi. After this for about 45 miles (72 km.) run upto 90½ miles (144.8 km.) where it meets its tributary Sessa, the river is known as Puthimari. Near Hajo, this river is known as Lakhitara. After traversing over a distance of 109 miles (174.4 km.) the river falls at the Brahmaputra. In the plains, it flows through a wide and shallow section with Low banks and flat gradient. The flood slope in the back-water zone is in the order of 10,000 cusecs. Flood from this river is caused by heavy silt deposits at its bed.

Maximum discharges of the river Puthimari were 8,708 and 10,232 in 1955 and 1959 respectively while minimum discharge was 341 in these years. At discharge site its flood slope is 1 in 5,000 and bankful capacity is 10,150 cusecs - maximum discharge occurring during July to August is general.

Incidence of flood from this river is almost an annual event - the most recent devastating flood occurring in 1971. The occurrence of heavy flood in the plain reach of this basin is due mainly to excessive sedimentation and silt deposits on flatter beds during concentrated heavy rainfall occurring during the monsoon.

Nona and Baralia : Both the rivers originate at independent sources in Bhutan Hills and flow north to south almost parallelly to each other. They are fairly stable in the upper reaches but unstable and unpredictable in nature. Nona and Baralia meet each other at some distance in the north of Bijlighat and their combined course meet the Pagladiya near Bijlighat. Flood slopes in Nona varies from 2 in 1,000 ft. in the upper reach to 1 in 5,000 ft. in the lower reach while it is 1 in 2,000 ft. in upper reach and 1 in 1,500 ft in lower reach in Baralia. Bankful

capacity of Nona at its discharge site is about 1,150 cusecs while that of Baralia is about 7,200 cusecs at the same point.

Pohumara : Originating at southern slope of Bhutan Hills and fed by a number of streamlets of Bhutan the combined course taking the name Pohumara proceeds towards south and throws its discharge into a low-lying area consisting of Hiladal *bil*, Sintala *bil*, Rangia *bil* etc. Other two small rivers called Kaldiya and Tihu both of which also originate in Bhutan hills, too empty themselves in the Hiladal *bil* area and from this *bil* area water is drained to the Brahmaputra through Nakhandra river. In the upper reaches in the hilly region, the river Tihu is known as *Dirang*. At an altitude of 520 ft. it takes a southern course and after traversing a length of about 3 miles (4.8 Km.) it reaches a low-lying area where it is joined by a number of small stream. Then the combined course flows with the new name Tihu and finally ends in Hiladal *bil*.

Flood slopes of Kaldiya and Pohumara in the upper reaches is 1 in 2,000 ft while in the lower reaches for Pohumara is 1 in 5,000 ft for Kaldiya it being 1 in 8,000 ft. Flood slope of Tihu is very negligible. Bankful capacity of Pohumara, Tihu and Kaldiya is 9,350 cusecs. 3,150 cusecs and 5,000 cusecs respectively at their discharge sites.

The rivers (1) The Puthimari, (2) The Baralia, (3) Kolajal or Kolapani (a tributary of Barnadi) (4) the Sessa (a tributary of Chaulkhowa) (5) Kaldiya, (6) Pahumara, (7) Dekadong and (8) Beki (tributary of Manas) are considered very important. The Puthimari and Baralia rivers also are, of late, becoming serious threats to *Kshetri and Bangsor area* as during monsoon they take very turbulent form flowing over a very vast area along their banks. The Puthimari is also known as *Lakhaitara* near Hajo, and Baralia is known as *Sukle* in the upstream near Tamulpur. "Nearly all these rivers flow on sandy beds along shallow channels and, as a result, they do not infrequently shift their course. Many of them when they first debouch upon the plain vanish into the earth and reappear at some little distance from the hills. This shifting of the river courses and dissemination of the drainage is a phenomenon which is seen to some extent in Goalpara and Mangaldoi, but in no district is it found in so pronounced a form as in Kamrup"¹⁷. Most of these rivers are useful for the purpose of trade. The south bank tributaries have comparatively flatter pods, deep meandering channel almost from the foot hills, and banks are of non-alluvial soil. They have comparatively low

17. *Census of India, 1961, District Census Hand Book, Kamrup. Page 2.*

silt discharge. The number of rivers in the south bank of the district is comparatively low than in the north bank. The important rivers of the south bank are (1) the Umtru (Digaru), (11) the Singra (known as Khri in Khasi and Jaintia Hills), (III) the Kulsi (Umiam in the K. J. Hills border) (iv) the Boko (v) the Basistha and (vi) Bharalu. Most of these rivers rise in the United Khasi and Jaintia Hills (now in Meghalaya) and empty their waters in the Brahmaputra. The river Umtru when it passes through the Kamrup district is known as the Digaru. In the Khasi Hills portion, the water of this river has been harnessed to form the Umtru Hydel Project.

The individual accounts of some of the rivers of the south bank are as follows :

The Kulsi : The river Kulsi formed by the confluence of three tributaries viz., Khri, Dorang and Umsire in the Khasi Hills debouches into the plains of Kamrup district near village Kulsi, forming a loop of about five kilometres. Flowing for 3.2 kilometres in north-westerly direction the river is divided itself into three channels, namely *Kukurmara*, *Kulsi* and *Khar Kharia* near village Dhuligaon. It crosses the Assam Trunk Road on 12.8 kilometres near Kukurmara village and joins the Kulsi at 20.8 kilometre in north-westerly direction. The main channel Kulsi falls in the river Brahmaputra after traversing about 72 kilometres. In recent years the main branch of the river Kulsi has undergone great change in its flood conditions and has been causing great concern on account of its devastating effect. The Kulsi channel which had been active due to siltation of Kukurmara channel, got choaked and cut short its course towards north instead of westward for a distance of about 56 kilometres.

The Singra : The Singra is another important river which is originated in the Garo Hills and passes through the villages like Majpara, Singra, Sekhdari etc. and ultimately falls into the river Brahmaputra. The total length of the river is about 60 kilometres and the bed of the river is composed of loose soil mixed with small pebbles. The water courses of the river is more or less stable. Its maximum discharge as observed on 10.9.60 was 45,31,711 cusecs and the average normal discharge varies from 50 to 200 cusecs. The river is not navigable in the winter but in summer in some portions it becomes navigable. The banks are not spilling during the normal flood but in high flood the banks in some places of the river are spilling.

The Boko river : The river is originated from the Garo Hills and passes through the villages Damsapra, Boko etc and outfalls at river Singra about sixteen kilometres down stream from the Assam Trunk Road.

The length of the river is about 51.2 kilometres. The nature of the river bed is composed of loose soil mixed with small gravels. The water courses are more or less stable. The maximum discharge as observed on 15.9.60 was 1,655.84 cusecs and average normal discharge varies from 10 to 50 cusecs. The river is not navigable.

The Basistha River : This is a small river originated from Khasi and Jaintia Hills and outfalls at river Brahmaputra near Gauhati. The length of the river is about 35.2 kilometres. The nature of the river bed is sandy mixed with small gravels. The water course of the river is almost stable. The maximum discharge of the river as observed on 26.9.60 was 18.598 cusecs and average normal discharge varies from 3 to 20 cusecs.

Lakes and marshes : There is no lake of any considerable size in Kamrup, but there are a number of *bils* and marshes in different parts of the district. In 1873, there were about 27 deep marshes in Kamrup district with various length which ranges from 2 miles (3.2 Km.) to 8 miles. (12.8 Km.) These *bils* are actually shallow sheets of water which collect in the centre of a saucer-like basin. Near the Brahmaputra these *bils* are usually surrounded by a rich belt of pasture land and are shut in by a wall of elephant grass and reeds. Now, with the expansion of habitation, in the district of Kamrup, there are enumerated to be 111 such *bils* and most of them are sold as fisheries. Among important *bils* mention may be made of the Dipar *bil*, about 9.6 kilometres west of Gauhati. This important *bil* lies at the foot of the lower ranges of the Khasi Hills and is a sufficiently pretty and picturesque sheet of water. In 1876 its length was about 8 miles (12.8 Km.) which had been shrunk considerably in the subsequent years. Other important *bils* are the Satdola, the Johna, the Kukurmara, the Tanparia, the Kataktoli, the Asuchi, the Bar *bil*, the Hiladal, the Sintala, the Rangia *bil*, the Choudhuri *bil*, the Sala *bil* etc. These *bils* are generally fisheries which are sold, in auction by the local authorities and fetch good revenue for Government.

Ground water resources : Except in the southern part of the district, the entire district is part of vast alluvial stretch. Five geomorphic landscapes are distinctly recognisable in the alluvial plains of the district. These are (i) Subankhata - Kukulong surface (ii) Dhamdhama - Sarbhog surface (iii) Nalbari-Hawli surface (iv) Barpeta Dish and (v) the Inselberg zone.

The Subankhata - Kukulong surface forms the highest terrace of the quarternary landscape, skirting the foothills zone. This surface spreads

upto a distance of nearly 18 to 20 km. from the mountain front and corresponds to the "Bhaban belt" of the Ganga plain. The boundary is vaguely marked by the "spring belt" around 76 m contour.

water : The Directorate of Geology and Mining, Assam has surveyed hydrogeologically an area of approximately 4,500 sq. km. of the district. So far 48 bore holes have been converted into production wells out of 53 bore holes drilled in different parts. The discharge of water through the wells varies from $45\text{m}^3/\text{hour}$ to $144\text{m}^3/\text{hour}$. The ground water reserve of the district has been calculated approximately at $246,575 \times 10^4$ cubic metres.

Ground water condition : Ground water conditions of Kamrup district can be described under three discernible hydrogeological units viz, (i) the terraced piedmont plain (ii) the flood plains of the younger alluvium and (iii) the inselberg zone.

Terraced piedmont plain : In the piedmont plain ground water occurs under water-table conditions. The depth of water varies from 3 m. in the southern fringe of the piedmont plain to as much as 36m. towards the foot hills. Pierced water table is also observed locally. A few stray exploratory drillings have been carried out in the high terraces of the piedmont zone corresponding to the "Bhabar" zone. At Kakilabari, the Directorate of Geology and Mining, Government of Assam, has drilled a borehole upto a depth of 99m. and two saturated granular zone were encountered, one between 34m. and 43m. depth and the second between 53m. and 59 m. The aquifer between 53 m. and 59 m. depth gave a discharge of $22.5\text{m}^3/\text{hr}$; while the cumulative test conducted by tapping both the granular zones gave a discharge of $45\text{m}^3/\text{hr}$.

Another exploratory borehole drilled down to 131 m. near Tamulpur at Darranga Camp on Bhutan border, encountered mainly clay and silt with boulders and pebbles. The borehole was abandoned due to high percentage of clay in the granular zone. It is apparent from the above that the high terraces of the piedmont plain in Kamrup district are generally predominantly *argillaceous* in nature and have very limited scope for development of ground water.

In the southern fringe of the piedmont plain, which imperceptably merges with the younger alluvium, hydrogeologic conditions are somewhat different.

A few exploratory boreholes have been drilled at Tamulpur and Angulia. At Tamulpur the borehole was drilled down to a depth of 305 m. Nine saturated granular zones were encountered but the tube well was completed upto a depth of 189 m. which gave a discharge of $245\text{m}^3/\text{hr}$. for a draw-down of 3.8m. The depth of the piezometric surface was 2.03 m below land surface.

At Angulia the borehole was drilled down to a depth of 32.62m. The well taps 19.82m. saturated zones between the depths of 12.80 and 32.62 m. and yields $85\text{m}^3/\text{hr}$. for a drawdown of 0.93m. From the above it is obvious that the Southern fringe of the Piedmont plain holds good promise for developing ground water.

In all, ground water potential in Kamrup district though is limited to some extent in the 'Bhabar' zone as well as in the inselberg zone, can be classified as very good. In the higher terraces of the piedmont zone, the predominance of clay and boulders limits the exploitation of ground water for very large requirements. However, limited yields of upto $45\text{m}^3/\text{hr}$. can be had from tubewells constructed down to depths of 100-120 m. However, the southern fringe of the piedmont zone holds very good promise for developing ground water by means of heavy duty tube-well. Tubewells, 200 m. deep, yield about $24\text{m}^3/\text{hr}$. for a drawdown of about 4 m. only.

Recharge in the piedmont zone is very efficient due to direct infiltration of the rainfall, subsurface inflow of ground water from higher regions and also by influent seepage of run-off water in the numerous streamlets and other rivers.

Flood plains area : In the flood plains area ground water occurs both under confined and unconfined conditions. Sands of various grades with occasional gravel form the principal aquifers. Depth of water is shallow and generally varies between 1.5m to 3.5 m. below land surface.

In the flood plain area, which constitutes the largest part of the district, there is ample scope for constructing both shallow and deep tubewells and for developing ground water on large scale. Tubewells about 200 m. deep tap 5 to 6 aquifers and yield upto $200\text{m}^3/\text{hr}$. for drawdowns of upto 7 m. Even 100m deep tubewells can yield about $150\text{m}^3/\text{hr}$ for the above drawdowns. Possibilities of constructing artisan wells with free flow discharge varying between 15 to $27\text{m}^3/\text{hr}$ also exist in the zone broadly conforming to latitude $26^\circ 21'$.

The water table in the flood plain area lies very close to the land surface (upto 4 m. below ground level) and the seasonal fluctuation is of the order of about 2 m. The shallow prevalent water level is favourable for developing shallow tubewells because the drawdown would not create problem with the centrifugal pumps.

A number of exploratory boreholes have been drilled in the flood plain area of Kamrup district by the State and Central Government agencies and private individuals. A study of these boreholes reveals that in the flood plains area about five to six granular zones are encountered within the depth of 232 metres. The aquifer materials comprise sands of various grades with gravel and pebble.

The yields of the tubewells vary from 100 to 200m³/hr. for draw-down of less than 7 metres. Tubewells constructed down to depth of 100 m. also tap 3 to 4 aquifers separated by thin intervening layers of relatively less permeable material. The yields of such tubewells vary from 34 to 83m³/hr for drawdown of less than 1m. This shows that the tubewells are capable of giving higher yields with greater drawdown. The Ground Water Division of Geological Survey of India has delineated an artisan belt prevailing in a narrow zone along the National Highway leading to Tezpur and broadly corresponding to latitude 26° 21' and extending from a little East of Dumunichauki through Baihata, Kamalpur and westward up to Chaulkhowa *nadi*. This belt is about 30 km. long and about 5 to 6 km. wide. The tubewells in this belt tap confine aquifers at depth varying between 35 to 60m. The quantity of outflow ranges from 250 to 450 ltrs. per minute (15 to 27m³/hr.) The piezometric surface in these tubewells rises to heights of 0.41 to 1.62m above ground level.

Inselberg Zone : The inselberg zone is characterized generally by the flood plain deposits, but with distinct hydrogeologic set up. The thickness of the unconsolidated sediments varies from place to place because of the uneven bed-rock configuration over which the sediments were deposited.

In the inselberg zone, ground water occurs both under confined and unconfined conditions. Depth to water varies between 4 to 7.5m during pre-monsoon period but the water table rises immediately after the pre-monsoon showers. By midmonsoon (i.e., August) the water table rests within 1.0 m of land surface. Thus there is wide variation in the fluctuation of water level in the inselberg zone. In Gauhati area, the satura-

ted granular zones are markedly absent and the unconsolidated sediments comprise mostly clay and silt. The wide lateral variation in the lithology in the inselberg zone makes construction of shallow tubewells a matter of chance. However, deep explorations have not been tried in this zone particularly to the north of the Brahmaputra river.

A number of exploratory boring have been carried out in and around Gauhati area. In the eastern part of Gauhati i.e., towards Noonmati and Narengi, the sediments are predominantly clayey. Bed-rock (Granite or Gneissic complex) is encountered at a depth of around 27 to 30 m. The weathered zone of granite contains ground water and yields limited quantity of water (5 to 10m³/hr.) A tubewell constructed at Ulu-bari, pierced through clay down to 50.26 m and then fine to coarse sand between 50.26 and 83.8 m. bedrock (Granite gneiss) was touched at a depth of 89.9 m. The yield of the tubewell is 18m³/hr. for a drawdown of 9.1m. At Kalapahar, another tubewell 91.5m. deep, yields 31.5m³/hr. for a drawdown of 11.28 m. The well taps 42.35m of saturated granular material. The low yields of the tubewells in Gauhati is possibly due to the fact that the bulk of the granular material encountered in most of the borehole is in fact the weathered material of granite.

The formation water is generally fresh and potable. The chloride concentration varies between 5 and 225 ppm. The PH ranges from 6.8 to 8.7 ppm while bicarbonate content varies from 20 to 59 ppm.

The iron content in the ground water is generally above 0.2 ppm. However, in the piedmont zone as also in the inselberg zone the iron content is relatively low and within the permissible limit.

Geology : The hills along the southern boundary of the district and those isolated ones on both banks of the Brahmaputra river are all composed of a group of gneissic rocks of archaean (pre-Cambrian) age. The group is represented by a complex of older (para) and younger (ortho) gneisses being intimately mixed up, banded, folded and later intruded by granites, aplites, pegmatites and quartz veins of comparatively younger ages.

It is covered by undulating hills while towards north alluvial plains of Brahmaputra dominants. The altitude varies from 50 m to 615 metres.

The northern boundary of the district runs along the edge of alluvium touching the Bhutan foothills which are represented by a group of

Siwalik (Plio-pleistocene) sediments consisting of clays, sandstones, grits and conglomerates with occasional pieces of fossilwood and lignite.

In the district members belonging to the precambrian Gneissic-group lie, exposed as inliers, amidst recent alluvium laid down by the Brahmaputra. In the extreme northern part of the district exposures of Siwalik and Tertiary rocks occur. Barring these, the district is entirely covered by recent alluvium.

Precambrian rocks of the area occur as isolated inselburg separated by recent alluvial deposits. As a general rule the distinctive rock types occur in close association with each other and occasionally enter into the composition of banded, streaky or composite gneisses.

I. Geological formation of the district :

The chief rock type of the district, so far recorded, can be tentatively classified in probable time sequence, in the following order.

AGE	GROUP	FORMATION
Recent	..	—Recent alluvium, Older alluvium (red colour soil with pebbles boulder bed).
Tertiary (Miocene).	..	—Siwalik (sandstone and shale with vertibrate fossil).
	Acid	—Pegmatites, quartz vein with beryl and tourmaline. Porphyritic and coarsely crystalline biotite granite and granodiorite.
	Intrusive	—Dolerite Dykes/sills metamorphosed to metadolerite and in places to hornblende schists.
Precambrian	Basic	—Besite mostly sills exhibiting free texture and composed essentially of Amphibolite.

Age	Group	Formation
	Orthogneiss	—Augen Gneiss Biotite chlorite schists, hornblende, feldspar gneisses and with subordinate.
	Gneissic Group	—Quartzite ferruginous calc Granite, leptynite, coarse to medium grained hornblende granite and pyroenite.

The oldest rock formations comprise a group of para-metamorphites intruded by basic and acid igneous rock, metamorphosed under deep seated conditions. The most common type of the older gneisses is a finely banded coarse to fine grained biotite gneisses and its variants such as biotite-hornblende, hornblende-biotite and quartz-biotite gneisses. The paragneisses are intruded by basic igneous rock which occur as dykes and sills. These intrusives are intimately folded with the gneisses and are metamorphosed at places.

The most widely distributed rock types of the Archaean Group in the area under review, are the younger orthogneisses resulting from the acid igneous i.e. granitic intrusions.

The earliest phase of the granitic intrusion seems to be a very fine grained, leucocratic aplitic type of rock consisting essentially of quartz and microcline and rarely tiny flakes of biotite as minute specks and dots.

The aplites were followed by coarsely crystalline biotite granites which can be classified into (a) foliated and gneisses, quartz-feldspathic-gneisses, 'augen' gneisses and injection gneisses, (b) unfoliated but flow banded types including the porphyritic granites and (c) coarsely crystalline massive types showing no banding whatever such as Myllem (pink granite, biotite granite, hornblende granite etc).

The infectiongneisses are interbanded with thin leucocratic bands of quartz or aplites. The dark bands are composed of biotite, quartz, orthoclase, plagioclase feldspars upto the andestic in range with or without hornblende.

Quartz-feldspathic gneisses leucocratic type seen in the area, consists of quartz, microcline, orthoclase, myrmekite with subordinate dark minerals - hornblende and magnetites.

The augen gneisses are generally medium to coarse grained, compact, gneissic or occasionally granular rocks. At places they are highly contorted and foliated passing into a schistose texture.

The granite gneisses are coarse to fine grained, banded, grey coloured biotite gneisses intruded by pegmatites and quartz veins.

The prophyritic granites are either massive or with apparent gneiss texture, at times including enoliths of gneisses rocks.

The massive granites are represented by the biotite granites, hornblende granites and pink granite of the Myllem suite.

The permatite veins are of different sizes belonging to different cycles of granitic intrusion. They generally contain coarse aggregates of microcline, and orthoclase feldspars and quartz are also occur. However, such occurrences are only of academic interest. Graphic intergrowth of quartz and microcline or orthoclase are fairly common within the pegmatites.

The alluvium covering the district, varies from sandy types to brownish or greyish coloured plastic clays distributed at random throughout the district. The areas neighbouring the hills are generally covered by a reddish type of loamy soil derived from the weathering of gneisses rocks. The reddish colour is due to decomposition of iron-rich biotites of the rocks.

II. Structure : The general trends of foliation of the gneisses vary from E.W. to N.E.S.W. with high amount of dip variable with the intensity of folding - Granitic intrusion into the gneisses are, at times, of batholithic scale. Minor faults in the gneisses are not uncommon but no visible fault of any major intensity is so far recorded from the area.

In a broad outline, the Kamrup district represents a part of the Brahmaputra valley which was a through or "fore deep" in between the newly risen folded Himalayan mountain masses and the Shillong plateau, the latter having probably been raised up as a horst to the present elevation after the middle Miocene mountain building movements. The northern flank of the plateau is a fault scarp facing the plains. Contemporaneous to the uplift of Himalayas, the subsided area in between the Shillong plateau and the Himalayas, now occupied by the Brahmaputra valley, formed a through into which enormous quantities of sediments were brought down by the swift flowing rivers of the Himalayas, giving rise, in course of time, to the present disposition of the valley. When

on the older formation on north are thrust over the younger rocks on south, the amount of dip varies from 15°-50°. The structural pattern of the precambrian rocks are very complicated. The trend of formation varies from N-E and S-W. Dip varies in different directions along with the amounts.

The *economic minerals and under earth resources* occurring in the district are mainly - (i) Fuller's earth. (ii) Quartz and feldspar, (iii) Iron ore and (iv) Mica.

(i) **Fuller's earth :** Fuller's earth occurs around Subankhata and the deposits are situated on the left bank of the river Pagladia.

(ii) **Quartz & Feldspar :** The occurrences of quartz and feldspar are located around Hahim bordering United K & J Hills and Kamrup district. Pegmatite vein rich in good quality quartz and feldspar was traced in the foot hill region on the bank of the Gijang river. From the confluence of Gijang and Singra rivers the pegmatite vein occurs at a distance of 630m in the direction 50°W. The estimated reserves of quartz and feldspar are 13,865 tonnes and 14,952 tonnes respectively. The chemical analysis of quartz and feldspar indicated that they are highly suitable for ceramic and pottery industries.

Iron ore : The iron-ore occurs as banded hematite quartzite and found between the village Ranighat and the pint 1443. The lenticular mass of the banded ferruginous quartzite are located around the village, Aradonga and traced for a distance of nearly 6,000 ft. The reserve of iron is found to be nearly 1.3 million tonnes. But the ores are of comparatively low iron contents ranging between 43 to 45% and so, at present they are not suitable for economic utilisation.

Mica : Mica also occurs near Rajapara under Loharghat Forest range area in the district and the Berigaon which is situated on the south bank of river Kulshi and is about 70, km south-west of Gauhati.

The variety as well as its size are not upto the marks for using as sheet mica. These mica can be used as mica bricks.

However, the hard and compact varieties of granites and gneisses are providing suitable material for building, road metalling, railway ballasts and river embankments.

Clays suitable for pottery and brick-making are available in different parts of the district. Surface *lime* was discovered at the foot of the Bhutan Hills in 1871 by the Assistant Commissioner of Barpeta.

There are extensive granite gneiss rocks occurring along the northern hills, Shillong plateau, Goalpara, Kamrup and Nowgong districts, some of which are being quarried at present as building stones, road metal and railway ballast. Boulders and pebbles carried down by the rivers from the hills on the north bank of the Brahmaputra river are being used as road metal and for flood control measure. Pink and dark granites as well as basaltic rocks occurring at various places in the state offer scope for export as cut blocks or processed blocks.

III. **Special features** : Volcanoes, Earthquake, Earth tremors etc. The frequency of earthquakes in Assam is closely related to the geology of the region. Earthquakes occur in places where the crust is markedly unstable, such as mountain belts of geologically recent origin.

A list of dates of occurrence of some big earthquakes in Assam during the last 500 years has been furnished below :—

1. In the year 1548	8. In the year 1759
2. do 1598	9. do 1770
3. do 1601	10. do 1838
4. do 1642	11. do 1842
5. do 1660	12. do 1875
6. do 1696	13. do 1897
7. do 1732	14. do 1950

Kamrup, like the rest of Assam lies in a tectonic zone of disturbance and has always been liable to earthquake. Of all the recorded ones in Assam, the terrible cataclysm of 1897, which took place a little after 5 P.M. on the 12th June, was the most disastrous one to effect this district. The shock was so violent that nearly every masonry building in Gauhati was wrecked. The effect of the shock was terrible near Barpeta. The following descriptive account of earthquake as recorded in the old Gazetteers of Kamrup provides interesting reading. "All the public offices collapsed with the exception of the post and telegraph office, training school, and the dak bungalow ; and the European residents were rendered homeless. The wall surrounding the jail premises was thrown down, but, strangely enough, the wards, though they are erected on high pillars, were not injured. The roads began to crack as ice breaks up on the setting in of a thaw, and the water-supply of the town was thrown completely out of gear. The houses of the villagers, which are made of bamboos and reeds, were not as a rule thrown down, but in many parts of the district the fields were covered with water or deposits of sand. The ordinary

drainage channels were choked, the beds of the rivers were raised, and the town of Barpeta, which was built upon comparatively low ground, was at once sub-merged. The Sub-divisional officer was compelled to take up his residence in a country boat, and it was in these uncomfortable vessels that public business had to be transacted, and even the prisoners lodged. Country boats became, in fact, the *cutcherry*, the treasury, and the Barpeta jail. The actual loss of life was comparatively small and only 29 deaths were directly attributed to the earthquake. But the damage done to cultivations was considerable, owing to the choking up of drainage channels and the disturbance of the levels of the country."¹⁸ The focus of this earthquake was not far from Shillong and in course of a few minutes all masonry buildings were over-thrown. The destruction was almost as complete in Gauhati and several large fissures were made in the alluvial soil, sand and water were belched forth, and the beds of the rivers were silted up. Great alterations were made in the level of the country ; extensive tracts of land subsided and became uncultivable ; and in many places, roads and railway embankments were utterly destroyed.¹⁹ Due to this earthquake, in the rainy season the headquarters had been transferred to Barnagar on the Manas river.

The next disastrous earthquake that shocked Assam in the evening of the 15th August 1950, was not so violent in Kamrup district though several shocks of high intensity were felt at intervals for two or three days. However, as the effects of this earthquake the rivers carried large quantities of earth and sand in consequence of which the beds of the rivers have raised up than before. Thus erosion in upper Assam and in Palasbari and Tarabari in Kamrup district has become an annual feature. Along with erosion, floods also occur almost in every year in the district of Kamrup because of the large scale effects of this earthquake. The effect of the earthquake of 1950 is distinctly marked in changing the general configuration and drainage of the province. It is the after effect of the earthquake which brought much more calamity to the people of Assam. Most of the tributaries of the Brahmaputra have changed their course. The flood level of the Brahmaputra has also been raised due to the silting of the existing river beds.

A close study of the earthquakes in Assam indicates that Assam is one of the most unstable regions in India. It is also worth mentioning here that the intensity of vibration due to earthquake is more prominent in the

18. B. C. Allan : District Gazetteer, Kamrup, 1905, p. 15.

19. E. A. Gait : A History of Assam (Revised Edition) p. 403.

alluvial areas in contrast with hard crystalline rock. Again, the vibration is not equally propagated through the different rocks of the alluvium. Possibly it is due to the differences in compactness of the individual members of the alluvium.

(e) **Flora or Botany :** (i) Botanically the forests of Kamrup district may broadly be divided in three main categories, viz., 1. Reserved forests, 2. Unclassed State Forests and 3. Private forests.

Reserved forests may be divided into the following major types (a) Khasi Hills *Sal* type, (b) Kamrup alluvial *Sal* type, (c) Evergreen type, (d) Mixed deciduous type, (e) Savannah type (covered with low vegetation) and (f) Secondary Moist bamboo brake.

(a) Khasi Hills *Sal* type or the Wet Hill *Sal* Forests is subdivided into two sub-types (1) Out-Type Khasi Hills sub-type :— This sub-type occurs more or less at an elevation of 500' to 2000' feet in the upper slopes and ridges. The *Sal* forests so found in these tracts are of poor quality. Common associates of *Sal* (*Shorea robusta*) are *Makria* (*Schima Wallichii*) and less common are *Haldu* (*Adina cardifolia*), *Gomari* (*Gmelina arborea*), *Sida* (*Lagerstroemia parviflora*), *Akshi* (*Dillenia pentagyna*), *Uriam* (*Javanica*) and a few others. *Aporosa roxburghii*, the commonest storey species occurring gregariously and singly with other species are *Kumbhi* (*Careya arborea*), *Premna latifolia* and *Emblica Officinale*. Other good trees are *Sam* (*Artocarpus chaplasha*), *Titasapa* (*Amoora spectabilis*), *Gansaroi* (*Cinnamomum glanduliferum*), *Khokan* (*duabanga sonneratioides*), *Korai* (*Albizia procera*) etc. (2) Khasi Hills Wet (wash) sub-type :— This type occurs from the plains to the elevation of about 300' feet on the foot hills. *Sal* in these areas are comparatively of better quality common associates of which are *Makria*, *Akshi*, *Gohara*, *Sida*, *Kako-bamboo*, *Rohini*, *Udal* etc. Under the dense growth of bamboo, undergrowth is practically nil but *Bata*, grass, *coffea bengalensis*, *alpinia* etc. are also found to occur.

(b) Kamrup alluvial *Sal* type :— The forests under this type are in general, found in numerous tree forms in continuation of the foothills and surrounded by cultivations. Formation of *Taries* and *Julis* in the district of Kamrup are said to be unique in India. *Sal* is found in these tracts associated with *Makria*, *Akshi*, *Kum*, *Sida*, *Gomari*, *Ahoi*, *Simalu*, *Sishu Khoira*, *Sonarua*, and *Kuhir*. In the moister patches *Sum*, *Gansaroi*, *Jora*, *Bonsum*, *Poma*, *Sopa*, *Udal*, *Khokan* etc. are found in association with *Sal*. Bamboo occurs thinly in these patches. Middle canopy consists of mostly suppressed *Sal* with association of semi-ever-green species and deciduous species, commonest of which are *Amlakhi*, *Kuhir*, *Gohara*, *Poma*, and few others.

(c) Evergreen type :— Along the foothills away from the villages free from any biotic factors, the moist deciduous *sal* type has progressed from its pre-climax type of forests, i.e., the evergreen type. They occur in patches also along the perennial streams and in areas cut up by numerous *Julis*. Among the tree species commonly found are *Sum*, *Lali*, *Gansaroi*, *Khokan*, *Sopa* etc. *Kako* and *Jati* bamboos occur in the middle canopy with cane in the underground. *Alpinia allughas* is the common ground cover.

(d) Mixed deciduous forests :— This type occurs, in general as a belt between highland Savannah forest and *Sal* forests in the plains. This comes under semi-evergreen type of forests in the general succession next to the *Sal* type. Typical occurrence in larger tracts are found in *Khanapara* (near Gauhati) and in *Pantan Reserves*. The common species are *Udal*, *Simul*, *Akshi*, *Kum*, *Sida*, *Ahoi*, *Madria*, *Haaldar*, *Kuhir*, *Jamuk*, *Amlakhi*, and few others.

(e) Savannah type :— This type has further been sub-divided into two sub-types according to its age of formation ; (i) Highland Savannah sub-type :— These are situated on the high land *taris* and alluvial flats and subjected to intense uncontrolled fire every year. The main grass here is the coarse bladed (Bata) *Saccharum narenga* with associates i.e. *Imparata urundenacea* (Bata), *Anthistiria gigantia* (Kahbon), *Apluda varia* and *Andropogon nardus*. Various tree-species are also found in subland struggling for their life, some amongst these are *Kum*, *Amlakhi*, *Dudhi*, *Bogori* etc. and creepers are completely absent as they cannot stand fire. (ii) Low land Savannah sub-type :— This type is the recent formation on alluvial soil specially on clayey and wet land subjected to floods during rains. *Saccharum pracerum* is the dominant grass in this type. Where the soil is a bit sandy on the river banks *Anthistiria gigantia* and *Erianthus elephantinus* are the gregarious species. In marshy area *Phragmites roxburghii* (nal) are commonly found.

(f) Secondary moist bamboo brake :— Small bamboo brakes occur in the *Khanapara*, *Gorbhanga* and *Pantan Reserves* on the drier aspects in the middle slopes. *Kako* bamboo and *Dollo* bamboo are commonly found in this group of moist bamboo brakes.

In addition to these, medicinal plants like *Rouwolfia serpentina* (*Sarpagandha*), *Ocimum sanctum*, *Tinospora cardifolia*, *Alpinia allughas*, *Amlakhi* and many others are found in the forests of the district. The roots of *Rouwolfia serpentina*, an evergreen undershrub, are said to be a reputed cure

for snake-bite. Its leaves and roots are used medicinally as febrifuge and tonic and as an anthelmintic and also in dysentery. It is reported to be a specific for insanity.

In this context, it may, however, be mentioned that the Eastern Circle Botanical Survey of India conducted two surveys upto 1961 in Kamrup district. One of these surveys was in the reserved forests areas of Rani, Jarasal, Kulsi, and Garbhanga in south Kamrup and the other was in the Mathanguri Game Sanctuary and surrounding areas of north Kamrup. These surveys studied the vegetations and floristic composition in the forests areas under surveys. The observations made in the surveys revealed some interesting features as follows :—

Vegetation :—The general vegetation of the south Kamrup as seen in the reserved forests of Rani, Jarasal, Kulsi, Garbhanga etc. is different from that of the neighbouring Khasi and Jaintia Hills and is characterised by the tropical moist and semi-evergreen forest with *Sal* as the dominant species. On the areas bordering Khasi hills *Dendrocalamus hamiltoniana*, a species of bamboo is the main component of the vegetation and extends over kilometres in all directions and is broken up here and there by *sal* forests. The vegetation of the Mathanguri section in the north Kamrup with sixteen kilometres of the border from Bhutan is a tropical grassland formation where in a few scattered patches of deciduous forests are also found. But these forests sharply contrast with the luxuriant growth of evergreen forests on the foot hills of Bhutan and areas lying to its north.

Government forest policy :—The Government owned forests of the district are under the administrative control of the Divisional Forest Officer(s) who works as agent of the Chief Conservator of Forests, Assam. Government forest policies are being carried out by the said officer with the help of a huge subordinate staff. So far the *sal* forests in the district are concerned, efforts are being made to improve the existing stock silviculturally and to attain a normal forest in due course. Miscellaneous forests and other forests of poor value are being replaced as per Govt. forest policy by creating plantations of more valuable species, such as Teak, *Sal*, *Ajhar* etc.

Regeneration is also an important aspect of the forest policy of the government. Cultivation of forest crops consists of regeneration namely, renewal of forest crop after the standing old crop is removed by natural or artificial means; and the tending, that is carrying-on operations from time to time for the benefit of the growing crop during its

lifetime. Regeneration covers operations on the crop itself and on competing vegetation by weeding, cleaning, thinning, and even improving felling; also pruning, climber cutting, and girding of unwanted growth. Incidentally it may be mentioned here that regeneration is also necessary in teak plantation and the forest of Kamrup district is noted for its teak plantation. The district contains the oldest Teak plantation in the state and one of the oldest in India, at Kulsi, the plantation having been created as early as in 1872. The growth of Teak plantation in the district has been found to be excellent and the Forest Department has been creating such plantations annually. Regeneration is also being carried out in *Sal* and other similar plantations of the district.

Besides, as per forest policy of the Government, the forest Department is trying to conserve forests for the maintenance of climatic balance and to provide protection from erosion. In pursuance of that policy vast forest areas have been declared as reserved in different parts of the district. Thus, under the provisions of the first and second five year plans, about 600 acres of Teak plantation and 165 acres of Simul plantation were created in the North Kamrup Forest Division. In respect of *Sal* forests, efforts are being made to improve the existing stock silviculturally and to attain a normal forest in due course. It is reported that miscellaneous forests and other forests of poor value are being gradually replaced by creating plantations of more valuable species, such as Teak, *Sal*, *Ajhar* etc.

Most of the continuous belts of forest in the district are constituted into different reserved forests for scientific management except for a few break ups, where cultivation of Tea Estates are extended right up to the Bhutan territory. The *Khas* or unclassed state forests in the district have already vanished due to the pressure of agriculture and the like.

Accordingly, these forests are managed with the object of (1) improving the existing area to enhance the capital value and to attain a more regular type of forests by the establishment of artificial and natural regeneration of more valuable species suited to the locality; (2) ensuring maximum sustained annual yield of the important marketable species in order to meet the demand of firewood, timber, etc for the country's need as well as for specific industries like match and *kath* manufacturing.

The general effect of the above policy on the flora of the district has been gradual replacement of the vast grass land with the valuable forest of species like *Bonsum*, *Gomari*, *Makria*, *Sal*, *Sopa*, *Khoir*, *Simul*, etc. Such a policy is assisting nature in the establishment of a climax type of

forests, suited to the climatic and soil condition of the locality by way of introducing or increasing the percentage of the above species, besides indirectly contributing towards flood-control.

Besides, due to the high pressure and demand on land, the unclassified state forest areas are being gradually brought under cultivation even by destroying well stocked forest areas. Moreover, to meet the high demand for timber, valuable trees such as *Sal*, *Makria* etc. are being disposed of by the owners of the private forests and in course of time these areas are likely to be completely open from forests.

(f) **Fauna** : The vast forest reserves of Kamrup district with their natural pastures provide an ideal meeting place for all types of herbivorous animals and their predators, insects and birds, fishes and reptiles of both hills and plains type. Thus the virgin forests of the district, specially the forests of the North Kamrup extending from the Bhutan hills to Mathanguri provide the maximum varieties of fauna and are ideal for any student of Zoology.

The main factors adversely effecting wild-life in the northern parts of the district are (a) drastic reduction in habitats (b) poaching and (c) extension of grazing for domestic cattle in some specific locations. Due to the rapid increase in human population and consequent expansion for cultivation there is a heavy pressure on land, and whatever cover was available outside the Reserved Forests have been totally eliminated. Even some of the Reserved Forests and proposed Reserved Forests have already been thrown open for settlement. There have been rampant encroachments and destruction of cover in some of the Reserved Forests. Unless this trend of destruction of habitat is stopped, the prospect of preservation of wild-life in the area is rather gloomy.

There was comparative safety for wild-life in the Reserved Forests in the past under the provisions of the Assam Forest Regulation, but these were not found to be adequate for dealing with incidents outside the Reserved Forests. It was also felt that the penal provisions under the above regulation was not acting as an adequate deterrent for offences involving wild-life. Therefore, the Indian Wild-life (protection) Act, 1972, was adopted for application in Assam during 1975, but implementation of enforcement of this Act has not made sufficient progress yet. With full enforcement of provisions of the later Act, it is hoped that the wild-life in Assam will get a fair deal.

Kamrup is very rich in fauna with wide varieties of species. Some of the noteworthy species are mentioned below :—

Mammals :— One-horned Rhinoceros, Asian Elephant, Water Buffaloes, Tiger, Bison, Leopard, Deer, (Sambar, Swamp, spotted, Hog, Barking) Boars, Sloth Bear, Pigmy Hog, Hispid Hare, common Hare, Clouded Leopard, Black Leopard, Falids (Jungle Cat, Water Caat, Golden Cat), Jackal, Fox, Squirrels (Common stripped, Malayan giant, flying), Pangolin, Mathon.

Reptiles :— *Ghorials*, Monitor Lizard, Songui, Mati-gui, Pani-gui, Tortoise (*Kacho*, *Dura*) King Cobra, Common Cobra, Python, Vocal Lizard, and different varieties of snakes.

Aves fauna :— (a) **Migratory :—** Brahmini ducks, Pintado, Common-goose, Basheaded-goose, Brown Palicans.

(b) **Local Migratory :—** Keol, White Palicans, Himalayan Whisling Thrush, Rock Thrush, Tit, Yellow Breasted Wagtail.

(c) **Local :—**(i) **Hill Species :—** Great Himalayan Barbet, Red Strut, White-capped Red Strut, Greater Racket-tail Drongo, Hill Mayna, Falconate, Greater Imoralled Dove, Wall Creeper, Green Magpie.

(ii) **Plain species :—** Lesser Racket tail Drongo, Assam Drongo, Great Indian Hornbeel, Pied Hornbeel, Black Hornbeel, Imperial/Green Pегion, Spotted/Ringed Lesser Imoralled Dove, Rufus Turtle, Golden beaked/Green Pied, Lesser Wood Packer, Greater-adjutant / Lesser-adjutant / Black-nacked/white-nacked/Black Stork, Sank/Indian Task, San Martin, Ringtailed fishing Eagle, Falcon, Common/white-checked/Black-crested/yellow Bulbul, Rose-ringed/Red-breasted Parakeet, Magpie, Robin, Black/Brahmini Kite, Baya, Munia, Sunbird, Scarlet Minivet, Tree Pie, Fly-catcher, Swamp/Black Partridge, Jungle Fowl, Greater/Lesser

Crow Pheasant, Bengal-floricane, Tailor birds, Jungle/Village/House Crow, Nightjar, Common Cuckoo Owllet, Spotted/Hawk Owl, Indian-roller, Black-headed Oriole, Common/Jungle/Black/Pied Mayna, Common/King Vulture, Nuthatch, Bee-eater, Fork-tail, Peacock, Quail, Lapwing, Plover.

- (iii) Aquatic : Greater/Lesser Cormorants, White breasted/Lesser/Pied Kingfisher, Greater/Lesser Brown/Cattle Egret, Pond/Night/Grey Heron, Pheasant tail/Indian Jacana, Darter, Water Hen, Greater/Lesser Whistling Teals, Cotton/Common Teals, Moorhen, River-Turn, Black Barbet/Lesser Turn, Snipe, Pied Wagtail, Spotbeels. Crane, Rail, Quail, Shrike, Lark, Pitta, Kingfishers, Heron, Ibis, Koel, Parakeet etc.*

Names of rare types of fauna found in the Forests of Kamrup district and preserved in the State Zoo are given below :—

1. Pigmy Hog
2. Royal Bengal Tiger
3. Binturong.
4. Golden Langur
5. Hispid Hare.

The herbivorous animals of the district are mainly found in Savannah type of Forests where fodder grass and natural water are available. The carnivorous ones i.e., Royal Bengal tiger etc. are living side by side to get their easy prey like deer etc. The Golden Langur and other common monkeys are found in forests comparatively of higher altitude where different kinds of fruits and edible leaves etc. of trees are available to them all through the year. Himalayan Rubythroat also is available in Kamrup district.

Manas Sanctuary is an ideal habitat for varieties of fauna usually found in the district.

Manas Wild Life Sanctuary : Nesting against the Himalayan foot hills of Bhutan, 110 miles (176 kms) north-west from Gauhati lying in North Kamrup is the Manas wild life Sanctuary comprising 105 square miles of dense forest growth. The scenery here is of superb magnificence, especially where the sparkling waters of Manas river sweep through the Bhutan ravines and spill into the plains of Assam forming three rivers—the Manas, the Hakua, and the Beki.

Like the Kaziranga sanctuary, there is an abundance of wild life within Manas. The rhino population is small; there are swamp deer, Sambors and a large population of hog deer and only a few Chital, but there is a fair number of Gaur (Mathon), wild buffaloes, wild boar, and elephants. Manas is a virtual paradise for the animal lovers and bird watchers. Due to the thick forest growth and few openings, wild life of Manas is not as easily viewed as at Kaziranga but this is amply compensated by the scenery and the thrills experienced in locating animals.

On the west bank of the Manas river near the Bhutan border there is usually a colony of beautiful, rare apes known as Golden Langurs. The common capped langurs are to be found on the east side of the river. The rivers abound with fish, and fishing for Mahseer and Bokar starts in November every year. Details about the Manas sanctuary are given in connections with National Park and sanctuary.

Elephants, tigers, leopards, bears, rhinoceros, buffaloes, deer of many varieties, pigmy hogs, monkeys, wild dogs, hyaenas, rabbits, wild pigs, porcupines, otters, pangolins, peacock, butterflies etc. are the wild animals common in Kamrup found specially in the north of the district, which abounds with animal life of all kinds. Swamp deer, which was common in this region has become extremely rare and perhaps white deer, which was reported to exist in Kahitema reserve has become extinct. But amongst the rarest varieties, Rhinoceros, Pigmy Hogs, and Golden Langur are worth mentioning.

Fishery and fishes found in the district : This district contains quite a good number of fisheries and in 1905, their number was about 145. But almost all the important fisheries of the district are located in Barpeta and Nalbari sub-divisions. Some of the important fishery *mahals* are the Brahmaputra, the Chaukhowa, Bhelengi river, Chalchali etc. These *bils* earn a lot of revenues to the Government every year.

As reported by B.C. Allen in 1905 in the District Gazetteer of Kamrup (Page 21), there were altogether 56 *bils* in Gauhati sub-division while number of *bils* in Barpeta Sub-division was 55. Of these *bils*,

* Source :—Conservator of Forests, Assam, Gauhati.

Dipar *bil* was the biggest in Gauhati sub-division while Jalua, Kukurmara, Tanpaia, Katakholi, Asuchi and Bar *bil* were some other important *bils* sold as Fisheries. The list of fisheries of the 3 sub-divisions of Kamrup district sold in auction at present in the seventies of the Twentieth century is furnished below :—

Statement showing the names of Registered Fisheries of Gauhati Sub-Division.

Sl. No.	Name of Govt. Registered Fishery	Name of Circle	Area (approximate)
1.	No. 1 (a) 2 Upper part of Brahmaputra fishery	Gauhati+Sonapur	98712 B-0 K
2.	" 3A Lower part of Brahmaputra	Palasbari	15277 B-1 K-7 B.
3.	" 3B Lower part of Brahmaputra fishery and 13 Rupa Jaljali Khola-bandha.	Gauhati Chaygaon	{ 4000 B-0-0 700 B-0-0 4700 B-0-0
4.	" 3C Lower part of the Brahmaputra	Kamalpur	5000 B.
5.	" 4,5,7,8 Kerijan Madankuri Chesanadi group fishery.	Hajo	802 B-4 K-7 L
6.	" 11 Barhalanadi	Gauhati	492 B-3 K-12L
7.	" 12 Jiakalahi fifty	Chaygaon	372 B.
8.	" 19 Sarechajan fifty	Chaygaon	162 B-3K-15 L
9.	" 19 Bondajan fifty	Gauhati	924 B-1K-0L
10.	" 20 Bildora bil fifty	Palasbari	320 B-OK-9L
11.	" 22 Hatikhunda Tapamara	Chaygaon	400 B.
12.	" 23, 24, & Hiragata Rowmari Dighali etc.	Hajo, Kamalpur	173 B-4K-1 L
13.	" 26 Landila fifty	Chaygaon	250 B-0-K-OL
14.	" 27 Barbaha nodi fifty	Chaygaon	300 B-0-K-OL
15.	" 34 Sathisala fifty	Chaygaon	1369 B-4-K-7L
16.	" 39 Madankuri fifty	Kamalpur	156 B-4K-19L
17.	" 43 Khamranga Khamarangajan	Sonapur	538 B-OK-OL

Sl. No.	Name of Govt. Registered Fisheries	Name of Circle	Area (approximate)
18.	No. 48 Kharkhari fifty	Chaygaon	400 B.
19.	" 47 Hekara	Chaygaon	250 B.
20.	" 58 Keribeel buttatijan	Hajo	342 B-13K-2L
21.	" 59 Jambari Bihapara	Chaygaon	1500 B.
22.	" 62 Garijan bil	Hajo	4074 B-4K-10L
23.	" 3D Lower part Brahmaputra	Kamalpur	4000 B-OK-OL
24.	" 65 Kalahi fishery	Chaygaon	1455 B-OK-6L
25.	" 21 Dipar bil (Transferred to Fishery Department)	Palasbari	Not available.
26.	" 38 Ghorajan (Transferred to Fishery Deptt.)	Kamalpur	N.A.
27.	" Silgurijan bil	Kamalpur	49 B-1K-2L
28.	" 77 Panikhathi bil	Hajo	194 B-2K-2L
29.	" Tulury Rewmari	Kamalpur	49 B-OK-OL

Sl.	Name of Fisheries of Nalbari Sub-division.	Particulars
1.	9 No. Bardipalias Bhathiajan	
2.	37 No. Barbil	
3.	40 No. Pakowa	
4.	42 No. Duramara Batamara & Mora Chaukhowa now under Fisheries Development Corporation, Assam.	Uttarbarkshetri Mauza area 836 Bs. 2 K.
5.	50, 51, 52 No. Jamsali, Sarubil & Batua	
6.	46 No. Howlighat	
7.	54 No. Dhaneri	
8.	73 No. Kamakhya	
9.	61 No. Manukhaiti	
10.	93 No. Baralibil	Newly Registered -do-
11.	NN 60. Jahajan (1)	-do-
12.	67 No. Batamari	-do-
13.	81 No. Amoni	-do-
14.	83 No. Jahajan (2)	-do-
15.	86 No. Barpathar	-do-
16.	91 No. Sukekuchi	-do-

Name of Fisheries of Barpeta Sub-division :

1. No. 1 Chaulkhowa River (Block I) It covers 3 mauzas Saru-
2. 2 Chaulkhowa River (Block II) kshetri Area Chenga and
3. No. 4 Chaulkhowa River (Block IV) 1000Bs Nowgong.
4. No. 5/6 Bhenagi River (Block II)
5. No. 7 Bhelengi River (Block III)
6. No. 8 Nakhandia River
7. No. 11 Manas River (Block I)
8. No. 12 Manas River (Block II)
9. No. 13 Pahumara Nadi (Block I)
10. No. 15 Kaldia Nadi (Block I)
11. No. 17 Bai-River.
12. No. 19 Dhulidhumarkur Nadi with Jan.
13. No. 20 Balasuti Nadi.
14. No. 22 Kharsutha Nadi.
15. No. 23 Chilochi Bil.
16. No. 25 Katakhal Bil.
17. No. 26 Fingua Bil.
18. No. 28 Barkana Bil.
19. No. 31 Garlirjan.
20. No. 38 Singra Bil.
21. No. 39 Bherabarbila.
22. No. 43 Baria Bil.
23. No. 45 Bahua Bil with Tabha.
24. No. 47 Daurasuti Bil.
25. No. 49 Kukurmara.
26. No. 56 Bamunkutni with Bhalaguri Jan.
27. No. 59 Chala Bil.
28. No. 64 Barghopa Bil.
29. No. 70 Chagmara Bil.
30. No. 75 Roumari Bil.
31. No. 79 Chataja Bil.
32. No. 80 Kukuarjan.
33. No. 81 Mandia Kur.
34. No. 85 Palarpamkur.

Besides these, the Department of Fishery also owns a number of *bils* and other fisheries in the district. But this Department is mainly concerned with the supply of seedlings to the individuals and other co-operative farms and the general improvement of pisciculture in connection with the renovation and reclamation of old tanks and *bils*. Details

about the seedlings distributed by the department, the methods of catching fish and other particulars are discussed in chapter IV, Agriculture and Irrigation.

Fishes :— All kinds of fishes common in Assam such as *Rou*, *Gagal*, *Chital*, *Mirka*, *Gorai*, *Sal*, *Kawai*, etc., are found in all the rivulets, rivers, streams, pond, and *bils*, of Kamrup. All varieties of Carps thrive very well in this district. A list of fishes are appended in chapter IV.

Elephant-hunting :

There are two elephant hunting seasons viz., *Season Sikar* and *Gazali Sikar*. *Season Sikar* is from 1st of October to 31st March of every year and *Gazali Sikar* is from middle of May or first of June and to the middle or last part of July according to the time when new sprouting of grass starts in the jungle. The lease is valid only for one season.

There are three types of elephant catching viz., *Mela-Sikar*, *Kheda Sikar* and *Pitfall* system. In Assam proper including Kamrup, the most common and prevalent system is *Mela Sikar*.

Mela Sikar system is an unique system of elephant hunting. This system is more popular in Kamrup district and the Assamese people can claim monopoly in the expertise. This system is said to have been introduced by Swargadeo Purandar Singha in Assam.

Kheda Sikar is a system borrowed from Burma and Senderson popularised this system in Assam. This system is known only by Syam, Tai and other Mangolian tribes of Assam. Two sorts of stockades are used in *Kheda Sikar* (1) *Pung garh* and (2) *Dandi garh*. *Pung garhs* are generally executed on full moon or new moon day as animals generally come to *Pung* i.e., salt lake beds at that time. The second stockade i.e., *Dandi garh* is very risky as on getting scent of hunters through air at which elephants are the most expert animal, the elephant herd can change tract i.e., *Dandi*, and the whole operation may fail.

Pitfall system is the most primitive system of elephant catching in which big deep pits covered with leaves and dry grasses are made and unsuspecting elephant falls there and lay helpless being unable to move. This system is very dangerous as it may result in total loss of the captured elephant. This system is no longer in use in Assam forest.

Destruction of habitat of the wild life concerned in general.

The large Whistling Teal *Dendrocygna bicolor* (Vieillot) is getting scarce. It has found its asylum in some parts of the district in the Dipor Bil near Gauhati and also in the swamps of the Aie river valley near Bijni.

The Bengal Florican (*Eupodotis bengalensis* Gmelin), a decimating species, has found its resort in and around the Manas sanctuary in the district.

There are reports of fatality from snake-bites and also mauling by tiger on frequent occasions.

Roughly, Ducks and Goose (Anatidae); Pheasants and Quails (Phasianidae); Cranes (Gruidae); Rails and Coots (Rallidae); Florican (Otidae); Plover, Sandpiper, Snipe (Charadriidae); Painted Snipe (Rostratulidae); Doves and Pigeons (Columbidae) are classed as 'Game Birds' which are hunted for their flesh.

Under the present status of the wild life in Assam, the term 'Game Bird' should be kept frozen until a favourable and desired shape of the wild life is obtained.

The strict vigilance of the Assam State Forest Department and also the efforts of the 'Project Tiger' during the recent years have helped preservation of wild life in general.

The tribal people around their villages and also the *mazdoors* in and around tea-gardens who are mostly labourers emmigrated from outside the state, have been hunting wild life without much restrictions. A large toll of wild life have thereby fallen prey to their practice.

In the urbanised areas and also in places of industrial set up, the wild life has practically dwindled. But in Manas Sanctuary and also in reserve and protected forests, the wild life is protected.

A water bird sanctuary of *Dipor Bil* for Large Whistling Teal has been suggested by Newsletter. Especially where the sparkling waters of Manas river sweep through the Bhutan ravines and spill into the plains of Assam forming three rivers - the Manas, the Hakua, and the Beki, another water-bird sanctuary can be created.

Like the Kaziranga Sanctuary, there is an abundance of wild life within Manas though the rhino population is small. There are swamp deer, *Sambari* and large population of hog deer and only a few *Chital*, but there is a fair number of Gaur (*mathon*), wild buffaloes, wild boar, and elephants.

The mortality amongst wild life is still mainly due to human interference especially by the poachers entering and camping right inside the forests and killing ruthlessly anything approaching within their range. The rhinoceros, because of their peculiar habits and habitats, had been an easy pray to these poachers trading illegally with the horns and was about to be extinct from the north Kamrup forest regions. But recently after the adoption of strict measurers, poaching of rhinos has been restricted and their numbers have increased gradually.

The only other cause of mortality amongst the wild animals are the wild dogs which come down from the Bhutan hills and create havoc especially amongst the deer population.

The fishes in Manas in the north of the district have been to some extent affected by the crocodiles and others. Recently it has been observed that their population has increased dangerously. Cormorants also take a good toll visiting in thousands in a flock but this is seasonal and perhaps not so harmful.

National Park and Sanctuaries : No national park is located in the Kamrup district. Manas wild life sanctuary is located in the northern part of the district and it is world-famous for its scenic beauty. The Manas wild-life sanctuary has been in the "Manas Tiger Reserve" under "Project Tiger" Scheme (international effort under World Wild Life Funds) under operation from 1972-73 and the sanctuary area treated as "Core area" of the project stretches from Sankosh on the west to Dhansiri on the east. The present tiger population in the core area are as follows :—

1975 .. Census	.. 45 nos.
1976 .. ,,	.. 51 ,,

The sanctuary area is open to visitors and annually a good number of visitors of both India and Foreign countries visit Manas sanctuary. There are accommodation of 20 visitors at Mothanguri inside the sanctuary for the present, but there are perpetual demands for increase of

accommodation. The following are the figures of Revenue realised from the visitors in Manas sanctuary.

1975-76	.. Rs. 36,557.25 p.
1976-77	.. Rs. 48,027.50 p.

'Game Laws' and measures for the preservation of wild life : There are various laws and measures for the preservation of wild life. General protection to the wild life in the forest areas of the district has been provided by the rules framed under the Assam forest Act of 1896, which, besides prohibiting wanton destruction of wild life and giving full protection to certain species of fauna, regulates the shooting of birds, animals and reptiles by the issue of licences after dividing the available shooting areas into class I and class II shooting blocks. The class I block is more restricted because of higher concentration of wild life. The elephant shooting is controlled under a separate licence.

With the extensive virgin forests of Bhutan in the north and the river Manas with its enumerable branches flowing through the middle, the Manas Wild Life Sanctuary is perhaps one of the most important and beautiful sanctuaries in India if not in Asia, with an area of 266.23 square miles (about 625 square km). extending for about 64 kilometer east—west along the uninhabited foot hills of Bhutan containing magnificent virgin forests. This well known sanctuary is comprised of two reserved forests viz. North Kamrup in the east of Manas, and Manas Reserve on the west. Thus, shooting, hunting or trapping in a Sanctuary is absolutely prohibited except under special licences by the Conservators of Forests to approved sports men for the exclusive purpose of hunting and killing carnivorous animals.

The forest Manual of 1947 also provides rules according to which killing and capture of wild animals and birds are prohibited during the closed season. Under sections 34(2)(f) and 35(2) of Assam Forest Regulations (VII) of 1891, no Rhinoceros shall be killed in the Unclassed State Forest except with the previous sanction of the State Government. There are also provisions for the protection of fish. Under sections 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 absolutely prohibited.

There are also certain laws in regard to shooting implements. Use of rifles of bore less than 309 for shooting big game is prohibited. Cartridges loaded with shot larger than No. 4 is not to be carried in reserved forests.

Climate : The climate of this district which is similar to that of other districts of central Assam is characterised by plentiful rains and a cold foggy winter. The cold season is from November to February and this is followed by the pre-monsoon season of thunderstorms from March to May. The period from June to about the beginning of October is the south-west monsoon. October and the 1st part of November constitute the post-monsoon season.

Rain fall :— Records of rainfall in the district are available for twenty stations for periods ranging from 13 to 92 years. The details of the rainfall at these stations and for the district as a whole are given in tables 1 and 2 in the Appendix of the chapter. The average annual rainfall in the district is 2,135.7 mm. In the central portion of the district which forms the Brahmaputra valley, the rainfall is comparatively low. But as we approach the hills on either side of the valley, the rainfall gradually increased. About 65 per cent of the annual rainfall is received during the monsoon season, June being generally the rainiest month. The variation in the rainfall from year to year is small. During the forty-eight year period from 1901 to 1948, the highest rainfall amounting to 124 per cent of the normal occurred in 1934 while 1908 was the year with the lowest rainfall which amounted to 76 per cent of the normal. There were 3 years when the rainfall was less than 80 per cent of the normal and no two of them were consecutive. However, considering individual stations, rainfall less than 80 per cent of the normal in two consecutive years have occurred at a few of the stations. From table 2 it will be seen that in 29 years out of 48, the rainfall in the district was between 1900 and 2400 mm.

On an average there are about 96 rainy days (days with rainfall of 2.5 mm or more) in a year. This number varies from 77 at Ramgaon to 115 at Barduar.

The maximum rainfall in 24 hours recorded at any station in the district was 417.0 mm on June 20, 1934 at Barduar.

Temperature :— The three meteorological observatories in the district are at Gauhati, Borjhar (Gauhati) and Rangia. Standard Normals (1931-60) for temperature and humidity are listed in table 3 for Gauhati. Period averages based on records from 1951-60 are included in table 3A, for Borjhar (Gauhati) Aerodrome. Table 3B for Rangia is based on records from 1956 to 1967. The description to follow is based on the records of Gauhati, which may be taken as fairly representative of the conditions in the district.

There is gradual fall in day and night temperature from October onwards. The cold season sets in towards the end of November. January is the coldest month of the year with mean daily temperature at 11-0°C and the mean daily maximum temperature at 24-0°C.

Temperatures begin to rise steadily in the beginning of March and the highest maximum temperature is reached towards the end of April or beginning of May, when temperatures may rise above 40°C on individual days and it continues to vary between very high temperature followed by rain till August. But, because of thunderstorm activity during April and May, the mean daily maximum temperature remains below 32° and as such there is no summer season in the district as in the neighbouring districts.

The monsoon season is the period with highest mean day and night temperatures. For August, the mean daily maximum temperature is 32-2°C and the mean daily minimum temperature is 25-8°C. With the high moisture content in the air, the weather is very unpleasant and often oppressive, especially in between spells of rain. With the withdrawal of the south-west monsoon by about the second week of October, the weather gradually becomes less unpleasant.

The highest maximum temperature recorded at Gauhati was 41-1°C on May 1, 1960 and the lowest minimum temperature was 5-0°C on 1931 Dec. 18, 1925 January 24 and 1920 February 13.

Humidity :- The atmosphere is highly humid throughout the year. During the months of January to April relative humidities are comparatively less being only 50 to 65 per cent.

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

Winds :- Winds are generally light except for short spells during thunderstorms in the period from March to May when they are stronger. Winds from northeasterly directions are more common throughout the year. In the pre-monsoon period of March to May, northeasterly directions are more common, though winds from North and East directions are also common. In the monsoon months winds are variable, but, north-easterlies remain common in the mornings. In the evenings winds are much more variable with north-east and south-west, the favoured directions.

In the post-monsoon and winter seasons, from October to February, north-easterlies are predominant in the mornings. Mostly wind is calm in the evenings but north-easterlies are more common whenever light wind blows.

Special Weather phenomena :- Cyclonic storms and depressions which move into Assam seldom reach close enough to this district to affect the weather. Thunderstorms are frequent in the period March to September. The thunderstorms in the period March to May are similar to the north-western of Bengal and are sometimes violent. Some of these thunderstorms are accompanied with occasional hail. Fog is very frequent in the post-monsoon and winter seasons.

Tables 3,4, and 5 give the temperature and humidity, mean wind speed and frequency of special weather phenomena respectively for Gauhati. Table 3-A and 3-B give temperature and humidity for Borjhar (Gauhati) Aerodrome and Rangia respectively in the Appendix.

**TABLE
NORMALS AND EXTREMES**

Station	No. of years of date	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun	Jul
Gauhati	49 a	9.9	25.7	53.1	148.8	253.5	317.5	292.9
	b	1.0	2.3	4.1	10.1	14.0	15.1	14.9
Mandakata	50 a	14.0	23.9	53.1	176.8	278.1	328.4	325.4
	b	1.2	2.3	4.3	10.8	14.2	15.0	14.6
Kamulpur	50 a	13.2	31.5	57.1	172.2	288.5	338.1	300.5
	b	1.2	2.1	3.9	10.5	13.9	13.8	12.9
Rangiya	50 a	12.7	23.6	64.3	193.3	330.7	395.5	335.8
	b	1.2	2.2	4.4	11.2	15.6	15.5	14.7
Nalbari	48 a	13.7	28.5	66.3	202.9	443.7	448.4	411.0
	b	1.0	2.4	4.0	10.8	16.7	16.8	15.0
Hajo	50 a	11.4	26.7	63.5	191.5	323.3	385.1	331.7
	b	1.1	2.0	4.1	10.6	14.5	15.0	13.4
Kani	50 a	10.4	28.5	50.5	151.9	255.0	371.6	380.5
	b	1.1	2.4	4.0	10.0	14.3	17.0	17.8
Palashari	50 a	9.9	24.1	54.1	164.9	270.3	338.3	331.7
	b	1.1	2.1	4.1	10.5	14.1	15.7	15.2
Barduar	49 a	11.9	28.5	55.1	159.3	301.2	492.8	536.2
	b	1.1	2.3	3.9	9.9	14.6	19.3	21.6
Chhaygaon	50 a	9.7	27.2	58.9	182.9	305.1	412.5	372.9
	b	0.9	1.9	3.7	10.1	14.7	16.6	16.9
Boko	50 a	10.7	29.7	66.5	182.6	304.5	435.6	423.4
	b	0.7	2.0	3.4	9.1	14.3	16.6	17.8
Amchhang (Sonapur)	50 a	12.7	27.7	62.0	155.7	259.1	373.4	379.0
	b	1.1	2.3	4.5	10.2	14.2	17.1	18.1
Barpeta	50 a	8.6	28.2	57.7	201.9	391.7	500.1	409.2
	b	0.9	2.0	3.9	10.7	16.0	16.3	15.1
Patacharkuchi (Bajali)	50 a	11.4	21.1	60.5	178.1	391.7	544.6	399.0
	b	0.8	2.0	3.6	9.9	15.1	15.9	14.1
Doonimi	21 a	14.0	27.9	68.8	215.4	270.9	700.0	453.9
	b	1.4	2.5	4.9	10.5	16.8	19.2	15.7
Kamrup (Farai)	13 a	12.2	29.2	76.2	192.3	501.1	586.0	495.1
	b	0.9	2.0	4.6	11.0	16.0	17.1	16.7
Rangaon	15 a	11.2	17.3	44.2	243.1	224.0	413.3	402.6
	b	0.9	2.0	2.9	10.2	10.7	14.7	12.9
Tamulpur	15 a	17.8	36.8	91.7	283.5	301.7	407.7	439.9
	b	1.1	2.3	4.8	13.5	13.1	14.5	12.6
Kufi	14 a	7.4	27.9	61.5	162.1	224.3	380.5	371.3
	b	0.6	2.1	4.2	9.9	13.6	17.8	19.0
Kamrup (District)	a	11.8	27.6	16.4	187.9	331.4	446.6	392.1
	b	1.0	2.2	4.1	10.5	14.7	16.3	15.7

Note : a - Normal rainfall in M.M.

b - Average Number of rainy days.

**-I.
OF RAINFALL**

Aug	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Annual	Highest annual rainfall as % of normal & year	Lowest annual rainfall as % of normal & year	Heaviest rainfall in 24 hours Amount (mm)	Date
263.7	176.3	75.7	13.5	3.6	1634.2	127	64	245.1	1956 Jun 5
13.0	9.5	4.4	1.2	0.4	90.0	(1934)	(1944)		
282.2	181.6	79.3	14.0	7.4	1764.2	169	71	262.9	1904 Aug 1
12.9	9.7	4.6	1.2	0.6	91.4	(1904)	(1935)		
267.2	186.4	77.5	13.5	3.8	1749.5	146	55	152.4	1898 Jul 29
11.0	8.9	4.3	0.9	0.3	83.7	(1915)	(1944)		
272.8	207.5	89.9	17.5	6.1	1949.7	136	74	143.8	1959 Jul 25
13.0	10.5	5.0	1.4	0.6	95.3	(1915)	(1933)		
311.4	243.8	114.8	16.0	7.6	2348.1	156	70	215.9	1928 Aug 10
12.6	11.5	5.6	1.3	0.6	97.9	(1934)	(1939)		
279.7	194.6	76.5	14.2	4.8	1903.0	162	61	218.4	1941 May 7
11.4	8.9	4.3	0.9	0.4	86.6	(1934)	(1908)		
320.8	192.8	85.9	13.5	4.6	1866.0	140	73	201.7	1906 Jun 23
16.1	11.2	5.2	1.2	0.4	100.7	(1937)	(1908)		
276.3	181.9	72.6	12.7	4.3	1741.1	139	68	1.1	1912 Aug 17
12.7	9.5	4.4	1.0	0.9	90.9	(1934)	(1944)		
476.5	292.3	115.1	23.1	3.8	2495.8	167	64	417.0	1934 Jun 20
19.9	14.6	6.1	1.4	0.4	115.1	(1931)	(1916)		
323.9	200.1	102.9	17.0	2.5	2015.6	172	66	198.1	1909 Jun 11
14.3	10.2	4.8	1.3	0.3	95.7	(1911)	(1908)		
326.4	224.5	117.1	17.3	3.3	2141.6	135	71	241.3	1946 Jun 14
14.9	11.0	5.3	0.9	0.4	96.4	(1912)	(1916)		
358.7	225.0	89.1	17.8	3.6	1963.8	208	68	251.9	1956 Jun 5
16.4	11.1	4.7	1.3	0.4	101.4	(1931)	(1938)		
303.8	249.7	117.3	13.2	4.8	2286.2	148	60	248.2	1918 Aug 9
12.0	11.1	5.2	1.0	0.4	94.6	(1915)	(1950)		
340.4	283.0	117.1	14.0	9.4	2370.3	177	62	406.4	1889 Jan 22
11.2	10.6	4.7	0.9	0.5	89.3	(1909)	(1939)		
413.0	402.1	123.5	23.6	7.6	2923.7	123	67	229.6	1944 May 25
14.8	14.3	6.1	2.7	1.0	109.9	(1932)	(1937)		
360.9	314.2	139.2	12.7	4.8	2723.9	136	71	212.1	1926 Jul 30
13.8	14.3	6.8	0.7	0.8	104.7	(1921)	(1922)		
242.3	150.6	81.8	18.8	3.6	1852.8	126	46	206.3	1913 Jul 8
10.1	7.5	3.4	1.1	0.3	76.7	(1913)	(1901)		
321.3	204.5	80.8	16.8	14.2	2216.7	137	62	228.6	1913 Aug 7
10.1	8.8	3.6	0.8	0.6	85.8	(1913)	(1906)		
369.1	197.1	85.9	20.1	4.8	1912.0	117	68	168.4	1882 Oct 6
18.0	12.5	5.2	1.5	0.6	105.0	(1902)	(1908)		
324.8	232.8	97.3	16.3	5.7	2135.7	124	76		
13.6	10.9	4.9	1.2	0.5	95.6	(1934)	(1908)		

TABLE - 2

Frequency of Annual Rainfall in the District.

(Date 1901-1950)

Range in mm.	No of years	Range in mm.	No of years
1601-1700	.. 3	2101-2200	.. 7
1701-1800	.. 3	2201-2300	.. 2
1801-1900	.. 6	2301-2400	.. 5
1901-2000	.. 8	2401-2500	.. 4
2001-2100	.. 7	2501-2600	.. 2
		2601-2700	.. 1

Date available for 48 years only.

TABLE - 3(A)

Normals of Temperature and Relative Humidity

(GAUHATI)

MONTH	Mean Daily Maximum Temperature		Mean Daily Minimum Temperature		Highest Maximum ever recorded		Lowest Minimum recorded		Relative Humidity	
	°C	°C	°C	°C	°C	°C	°C	°C	0830	1730*
JANUARY	..	24.0	11.0	28.4	1958	Jan 7	5.1	1960	Jan 20	86 74
FEBRUARY	..	26.3	12.8	32.2	1964	Feb 21	5.3	1968	Feb 3	73 58
MARCH	..	30.2	16.5	37.4	1966	Mar 30	9.5	1965	Mar 3	66 53
APRIL	..	31.6	20.3	39.5	1960	Apr 30	10.3	1968	Apr 1	68 57
MAY	..	31.0	22.7	40.3	1960	May 1	17.2	1955	May 1	79 72
JUNE	..	31.5	24.7	36.6	1969	Jun 1	21.1	1955	Jun 4	84 80
JULY	..	32.1	25.8	36.7	1973	Jul 10	21.9	1958	Jul 6	85 81
AUGUST	..	32.2	25.8	36.3	1973	Aug 25	22.3	1966	Aug 25	85 82
SEPTEMBER	..	32.1	25.2	35.9	1957	Sep 5	21.2	1959	Sep 8	83 84
OCTOBER	..	30.5	22.0	34.4	1955	Oct 15	15.2	1957	Oct 28	83 85
NOVEMBER	..	27.7	16.9	32.5	1957	Nov 3	10.0	1965	Nov 22	83 85
DECEMBER	..	24.9	12.5	30.9	1957	Dec 18	4.9	1961	Dec 28	86 83
ANNUAL	..	29.5	19.7							80 75

*Hours I.S.T.

Note :-Normals of temperature based on Date upto 1951 to 1960 Extremes of temperature on all available date upto 1974.

TABLE-3(B)
Period Averages of Temperature and Relative Humidity.
(RANGIA)

Month				Mean Daily		Mean Daily	Highest		Lowest	Minimum	Relative
				Maximum	Minimum		Maximum	Minimum			
Temperature											
				°C	°C	°C	°C	°C	°C	Date	8030 1730*
JANUARY	..	..	..	24.9	10.3	28.4	1966 Jan 26	5.3	1964 Jan 1	14,26	79 71
FEBRUARY	..	..	..	26.5	12.7	32.3	1963 Feb 28	7.1	1968 Feb 12		72 61
MARCH	..	..	..	30.2	15.7	36.1	1966 Mar 28	10.0	1965 Mar 3		66 57
APRIL	..	..	..	31.9	19.7	38.4	1960 Apr 30	12.1	1968 Apr 1		70 61
MAY	..	..	..	31.1	21.7	39.5	1960 May 5	16.9	1963 May 14,26		82 73
JUNE	..	..	..	31.8	23.9	37.7	1973 Jun 7	20.5	1969 Jun 18		82 78
JULY	..	..	..	33.1	25.1	37.3	1962 Jul 15	21.9	1960 Jul 9		83 77
AUGUST	..	..	..	32.8	25.1	37.2	1960 Aug 23	21.6	1966 Aug 26		84 78
SEPTEMBER	..	..	..	32.6	24.4	36.8	1964 Sep 27	19.9	1960 Sep 16		80 79
OCTOBER	..	..	..	31.1	21.6	35.1	1959 Oct 13	17.0	1966 Oct 29		78 78
NOVEMBER	..	..	..	28.4	16.0	34.5	1959 Nov 1	10.1	1965 Nov 22		75 77
DECEMBER	..	..	..	25.5	12.5	29.5	1963 Dec 13	7.5	1964 Dec 15,21		81 76
							1968 Dec 13				
							1971 Dec 13				
ANNUAL	..	..	..	30.0	19.1						78 72

*Hours I.S.T.

Note : Average of temperature data based on data for period 1956-67. Extremes of temperature data based on all available data upto 1974.

TABLE-4
Mean Wind Speed in Km/hr.
(GAUHATI)

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May.	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Annual
2.5	3.1	4.0	4.5	4.1	3.5	2.9	3.2	3.0	2.9	2.4	2.4	3.2

GENERAL

TABLE-5
Special Weather Phenomena
(GAUHATI)

*MEAN No. of days with	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual	
Thunder	..	0.1	1.1	3	8	9	5	5	6	4	1.5	0.2	0.1	43
Hail	..	0	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.9
Dust-Storm	..	0	0.3	1.5	1.2	0	0	0	0.1	0	0.1	0	0	3
Squall	..	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fog	..	9	2	0.2	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	2	9	15	37

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

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY

(A) PRE-HISTORY OF KAMRUP :

Though history of the human race begins with the stone age, no definite evidence has been discovered uptill now about the stone-age people of Assam. Some caves in Khasi and Jaintia Hills (Meghalaya),¹ Karbi Anglong² and North Cachar³ with traces of rudimentary paintings and carvings⁴ were discovered and some caves in the hills of Kamrup and Goalpara particularly in Jogighopa and Suryya Pahar in the district of Goalpara are noticed, but these have not been properly studied and explored yet.

Of the earlier Neoliths, there is very meagre evidence. But some specimen of the later Neolithic period have been discovered and these are supposed to be made by the speakers of the Mon-Khmer speech which began some time in 25 B.C. or a little earlier. According to J. P. Mills, the Negritos - the earliest inhabitants of Assam left behind them numerous stone celts which were probably the blades of their digging sticks.⁵ Some of the specimens preserved in the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, are mainly of 3 types - (1) long, narrow and triangular (2) more or less rectangular and (3) the shouldered type. Of the shouldered types, one is found at Kanarpara (Cachar) and one at Vishwanath (Darrang). Theobald remarked that two more of that very type stone-celts were discovered at Singbhum (Bihar). According to La Toache and Smith, these neoliths were used by stone-age men of Assam for slaying animals.⁶ But Gait explains non-availability of neoliths and other stone-age evidences in Assam as follows, "the Brahmaputra Valley is an alluvial country and the impetuous, snow-fed river, which debouch from the Himalayas, find so little resistance in its friable soil that they are constantly carving out new channels and cutting away their banks, consequently no buildings erected in

their neighbourhood can be expected to remain for more than a limited time."⁷

This will probably explain why the ruins of the structures belonging to the ancient kingdom of present Assam discovered so far, have been found only on hillocks and no stone structure of *Pragjyotishadhipatis* has yet been discovered in the Brahmaputra plains.

For the purpose of neolithic-culture study, Dr. A. H. Dani has divided Assam into two zones - viz., Sadiya Frontier and Brahmaputra Valley. The neolithic culture in the Brahmaputra Valley zone suggests a blend of cultural features predominant in the surrounding hills and plateaus to the south. The neoliths discovered in Darrang were found by Mr. W. Parry. The majority of them are made of sandstone and barring one of gneiss and one of porphyrite, the rest are in quartzite, slate, and decomposed volcanic ash-rock as described by Coggin Brown. Of the sand-stone neoliths there are grooved hammer stones made of quartzite. Coggin Brown described the stone tools found so far in Assam, as celts and those are made of gneiss or porphyrite. The grooved hammer stone is peculiar to the Brahmaputra Valley as no such other neoliths has been discovered in the other parts of Assam. B. K. Kakati opines that according to morphological and linguistic evidence the earliest migrated race to Assam is the Austro-Asiatics. They at first lived in the Brahmaputra Valley but were forced later on to take shelter in the hills. It is certain that they are the pre-Dravidian Neolithic aborigines who are now represented by the Mon-Khasis and Syntengs of Assam akin to Mundas of Chota-Nagpur.

The next wave of migration to this country brings the Dravidians whose history is as old as the Austro-Asiatic if not older. They were a cultured people belonging to the chalicolithic age, who in the remote past inhabited Northern India supplanting the Austric races. K. L. Barua asserts that the cult of *Linga* and *Yoni* which is now admitted to be of pre-Aryan Dravidian origin and represents the Saivism form of religion, is the most ancient living faith in the world, and that this is the oldest cult of Kamarupa represented by the temple of Goddess Kamakhya.

The Mongoloid people migrated to this country from their original home in Western China which was the vast beehive of Mongoloid races and people in the earliest times. To quote S. K. Chatterjee; 'Different branches of the great Sino-Tibetan speaking people which had their nidus near the head-waters of the Yang-Tsze-Kiang and the Hoang-Ho

1. Hutton : *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal* (NS), p. 341.

2. R. M. Nath : *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, VII, pp. 19-23.

3. Ursule Graham Bower : *Naga Path*, pp. 121-129

4. Mills : *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society* Vol. I, No. I, pp. 3-6.

5. Ibid, p. 4.

6. P. C. Choudhury : *The History of Civilisation of the people of Assam to the Twelfth Century A. D.* Gauhati, 1959, pp. 55-57.

7. A. Gait : *A History of Assam*, Reprint, 1967, p. 21.

rivers, to the West of Chins pushed South and West probably from 2000 B.C. onwards, and tribes of these infiltrated into India mostly along the Western course of the Brahmaputra.”⁸

The process of influx of various races across the borders went on through successive waves, and in course of time, different cultures mingled so thoroughly in the composite Assamese culture that it became very difficult to distinguish one from the other. It presents a picture of complete assimilation and synthesis.

Thus, the Dravidian, the Mongoloid, and the Aryan races were the original inhabitants of the plains of Assam. The interfusion of the first two races evolved a type, which aptly called the Mongolo-Dravidian. The Mongoloid influence is predominant in the Brahmaputra Valley. It has been called “the reservoir of Kirata or Mongoloid people in India.”

Ancient History of Kamrup :

From the geographical account and the scanty socio-economic description of Assam found in ‘Periplus of the Erythrean Sea’, it appears that the Kiratas who were called the *Kirrhadao* and the *Sertas* by the author of ‘Periplus’ were living in the hilly areas of Assam. Dionysims, Acliau and Ctesias give account of a hill tribe of Assam who are according to scholars, identical with Kiratas or Kacharis or Bodos of Assam and use of dyed silk and lac were prevalent amongst them.⁹

The earliest mentioned king of Kamrupa as per the legend mentioned above was a non-Aryan named, *Mahiranga Danava*. The Mairanga Parbat situating in Beltola on the seventh mile (11.2 kilometer) of the Gauhati-Shillong road still testifies to his name. His real name might have been “Mairanga” and Mahiranga may be Sanskritised form of Mairanga. Mairanga is a Bodo name. The race of people who inhabited this country in the most ancient times were known as Kiratas and Mlechchas.

According to the earliest available literary document where the name Kamrupa is found mentioned is *Attriya* and *Gopatha Brahmins*. Pragjyotishpur, later on which came to be known as Gauhati, found mention in the *Adi* and *Kishkindhya Kanda* of Ramayana which according

8. S. K. Chatterjee : *The Place of Assam in the History of Civilization of India*, University of Gauhati, 1970, p. 9
9. P. C. Choudhury : *History of the People of Assam to the Twelfth Century A. D.* Gauhati, 1969 p.

to Macdomes was written before 200 B.C., as a city founded by Amurataraja, one of the four sons the of great king Kusa; and later on built by Naraka in the Varaha mountain. The dynasty of Naraka also is known as Varaha or *Bhowma*.

In earlier literatures like Mahabharata, Ramayana, and Puranas, Kamrupa kingdom was mentioned as Pragjyotishpura. “In classical sanskrit literature both Pragjyotisa and Kamrupa occur as alternative names of the country. Kalidasa refers to it by both the designations (Raghu : Canto IV.83)¹⁰

The following passages from the Mother Goddess Kamakhya explain the historical and etymological background of the name Pragjyotishpura.

“The Kalika Purana suggests a mythological derivation of the formation Prag-Jyotisha (39/126) :- Formerly Brahma staying here created star so the city is called Pragjyotish Pura..... From the varied toponymical epithet of Bhagadutta, Pragjyotisha seems to be connected with topographical features of the land..... The Bhagavata Purana (10/59-2-3), makes pointed mention of the topographical peculiarities of the locality. *Pragjyotisha Puram yayau/giridurgaih sastradurgair jalagnyaniladurgamam*. (Krishna mounted on Garuda went to Pragjyotishpura, inaccessible by reason of hill fortifications, arms fortification, waters, fires and winds.)

“Subject to usual reservations about the accuracy of etymology based merely on sound and sense, the component elements of the word Pragjyotisa may be equated to the the following Austric formations ; *Pau*, hill, H93 ; *ger*, *gerbu*, *garbu*, hill, H 87 (b) ; *ma-jub*, *men jo*, high, tall, F 29 ; *be-ti*, *be-tig*, long, L 130 (a) *tic* (Santali) to stretch, elongate ; also *Pagar* (Mundari), an elevated ridge with a drain on one side ; *Pagar* (santali) a water channel.

“The topographical features of Prag-jyotisa as described in the Puranas would correspond to a formation like *Pagar-juh (jo)-tic* (c—ch)—a region of extensive high hills.”¹¹

Legends, connected with political history, however, dates back to pre-Naraka time.

The first mentioned *Mlechcha* king Mairanga’s descendants were Hatakasura, Sambarasura, and Ratnasura. Then came Ghatakasura who

10. B. K. Kakati : *The Mother Goddess Kamakhya*, 3rd impression, 1967 p.1.
11. Ibid pp-5-6.

is described as the ruler of the Kiratas. He was overthrown by Naraka-sura who founded a new dynasty known as Bhowma or Varaha dynasty. The legend goes that Naraka was born of *Prithivi* (Earth) by God Vishnu, who in his incarnation as great Boar (*Baraha Avatar*) lifted her (*Prithivi*) from the deluge with his tusks and took her as his consort. It is for this reason, Naraka is called Bhowma (born of Earth) and on account of his supposed Divine origin all dynasties ruling in ancient Kamarupa claimed their descent from Naraka - the son of Varaha and call themselves Bhowma. Whatever his origin might have been, it is stated that Naraka was brought up by the king of *Videha*, and when he grew up he became a great warrior and conquered Pragjyotisha by overthrowing the Mlechcha king Ghataka. Naraka drove away the Kiratas to the country near the sea coast and settled the Aryans in his country. This was perhaps the earliest settlement of Aryans in Assam.

Naraka built a fort in a new place secluded on all sides by hills and it is said that this strong-hold was inaccessible even to Gods. There is still a village known as *Narakasuragaon* about three miles (4.8 km.) to the south of Gauhati. Naraka was a worshipper of Kamakhya. He was well versed in the Vedas and devoted to the duties of a twice-born (*Dvija*) i.e. Aryan.

But he came under the evil influence of *Daiya* or *Asura* king named Bana, ruler of Sonitpur, and subsequently reverted to a worshipper of the *Linga*. Not only this, he ill-treated Aryans and ceased to worship the Aryan Gods. Story goes that he even proposed to marry the Mother Goddess Kamakhya. The Goddess appeared to consent to the proposal on condition of construction by Naraka, during the course of a single night, a temple, a tank, and a road from the foothills to the top. All this were nearly completed when the goddess made a cock crow before the usual hour. Thus, Naraka's proposal came to naught and thus did the Goddess invite Sree Krishna to come and put an end to this atrocious king. Accordingly Shree Krishna defeated and killed Naraka in a fight and placed Naraka's son Bhagadatta on the throne of Pragjyotisha.

In the Mahabharata, Bhagadatta is described as a warrior king, not inferior to Sakra (Indra) in battle. In the great battle of Kurukshetra Bhagadatta sided with Durjyodhana with large arms and fell fighting in the battle with Arjuna. It is stated that during this battle, the army of Kalinga followed the lead of Bhagadatta and this proves that the latter was an important General of the Durjyodhana confederacy. Kamrupadhipati Bhagadatta's daughter Bhanumati was married to the Kaurava king Durjyodhana.

Bhagadatta was succeeded by his son (according to some, his brother) Vajradatta. It is not known who were the successors of Vajradatta but it is stated in the Nidhanpur copper-plate inscription of Bhaskarvarman who ruled over Kamarupa from his capital at (Pragjyotishpur) Gauhati in the first half of the Seventh Century A.D., 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. The approximate reigning period of Pushyavarman is 380-400 A.D.

Recorded history of Assam is available only from the time of Varman dynasty (355-650 A.D.) of which Bhaskarvarman was the most outstanding. The first epigraphic mention of Kamarupa is found in the Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudragupta where Kamarupadhipati has been referred to as a *Pratyanta Nripati* along-with Samatata, Nepal, Kartripura and Dabaka paying all kinds of tributes to the Gupta monarch.¹² Kamarupa was a submissive friendly kingdom of the Gupta Empire.

The modern name 'Kamrup' is the anglicised form of Kamarupa which constituted much bigger area in ancient times. The story goes that Kamadeva, the God of Love, was demolished to ashes by the fiery glances of Lord Siva, in the little island of Umananda which is also known as Bhasmachal. Kamadeva regained his form (*rupa*) here and that is why the name Kamrup or 'Kamarupa' is chosen for this place (formerly for the whole state and now for the district alone). According to Dr. B. K. Kakati Pragjyotisha was rechristened as Kamarupa in exaltation of the new cult of Kamakhya Devi.

(b) POLITICAL HISTORY :

(From 4th Century to Muslim invasions)

Geographical extent of Pragjyotisha—Kamarupa :

From the reference in the epics, Pargiter concluded that at the time of the Mahabharata war the kingdom of Pragjyotisha included the greater part of modern Assam, and the Bengal districts of Jalpaiguri, Koch Behar, Rangpur, Bogra, Mymansingha, Dacca, Trippera, part of Patna, and probably a part of eastern Nepal. According to B.C. Law, Pragjyotisha comprised the whole of North Bengal proper. It appears from the Buddhist records and Greek accounts of the 4th century B.C. that the southern boundary of Pragjyotisha was the *Lohita Sagara*, the western

12. *Fleets Corpus Inscriptionous Indicarum* Vol. III, p. 8

boundary was the river Kausika, and the northern boundary was the Bhutan hill and part of Nepal. From the accounts of travels of Yuan Chung it has been surmised that **Kamarupa** of his description included portions of Bihar, portions of Northern and Eastern Bengal, and nearly the whole of modern Assam. Some portions of Bengal were under **Kamarupa** from the time of Bhaskara to the time of Harshadeva.¹³ In the classical Sanskrit literature, the names Pragjyotisha and Kamrupa occur side by side, as in Kalidas's *Raghuvamsa*. The **Kamarupa** kings preferred to style themselves as Lords of Pragjyotisha down to the 12th century. When the Muslims came to Bengal in the beginning of the 13th century A.D. the country to the east of Karotoya was called *Kamrud* or *Kamru*. Later on Kamarupa and Kamata were referred to as synonymous terms by the Muslim historians. The Koch kings rose into power in the beginning of the 16th century and **Kamarupa** of the Kamata kings was their kingdom. This kingdom had to face the two-pronged pressure of the Muslim power of Bengal on the west and the Ahom power on the east. Thus the Koch kingdom could not survive long and the Ahoms inevitably came into conflict with the Muhammedans. During the 16th and 17th centuries the portion of Kamrupa between the Karotoya and the Manas was worsted by the Muslims and annexed to Bengal. According to K. L. Barua the Ahom kingdom to the east of the Manas came to be known as Assam and since then the name **Kamarupa** has been restricted to the present district of **Kamarupa**.

Varman dynasty :

While Pushyavarman was the founder of the family and thirteen kings of the line ruled Kamarupa from the fourth to the mid-seventh century A.D., Bhaskaravarman was undoubtedly the most illustrious king of the dynasty. In the Nidhanpur Copper Inscription issued by Bhaskaravarman and discovered at Pancha Khanda Pargana of Sylhet (now in Bangladesh), names of eleven kings preceding Bhaskaravarman in the line have been mentioned. There Naraka has been stated to be the first king of Suryya dynasty who was followed by his son Bhagadatta and grandson Vajradatta. It is further mentioned in the grant that Pusyavarman, the founder of the Varman dynasty then followed the line with intervention of 3000 years in between. Samudra Varman was the son of Pusyavarman and the name of his wife was Dutta Devi. From this, some wants to contend that similarity of names occurred due to Gupta influence as **Samudra Gupta** was the 2nd ruler and **Datta Devi** was the wife of **Samudra Gupta**.

13. P. L. Paul : *Early History of Bengal*, pp. 29-32.

As per narratives found in Nidhanpur Grant of Bhaskaravarman, Bhaskara Varman was the twelfth in line and his brother was Supratis-thita. P. C. Choudhury, surmised as follows, "If we allow for each prince an average of 25 years, Pusyavarman's accession may reasonably be placed in about A.D. 355".¹⁴ Some of the predecessors of Bhaskaravarman, namely, famous Mahendravarman, Bhutivarman, and Sthitavarman were credited with the performance of the *Aswamedha* Sacrifice. Celebration of the horse sacrifice testified to the rising fortunes of **Kamarupa** which, however, suffered a temporary decline during Sushitavarman's (Bhaskara's father) reign, until the glory of the kingdom was revived by Bhaskaravarman.

'Rajtarangini', a book of 12th century and written by Kalhana, mentions a Kamarupa princess Amritprabha who was given in marriage to Megha-Vahana, a Kashmir prince in an open *Sayambara*. This Amritprabha is believed to be the daughter of Balavarmana-grandson of Pusyavarmana. 'Rajtarangini' relates that Amritprabha built a *Boudha-Vihar* called '*Lo-stupa*' through the preceptor of her father who came with her to Kashmir. Ou-Kung and M.A. Stein also support the historicity of this event. During the reign of Kalyana Varman, the son of Bala-Varman, the neighbouring kingdoms of Davaka, Kapili, and Samatata were absorbed into the Empire of Kamarupadhipati, who also sent a diplomatic mission to China. Mahendra Varman, grandson of Kalyanvarman expanded his empire to South East Bengal upto the sea by shaking off the last vestiges of the Gupta influence in **Kamarupa**.¹⁵

Bhaskaravarman (594-650 A.D.) was a friend and ally of king Harsha of Kanauj. Yuan Chung, the illustrious Chinese traveller, came to Assam in A.D. 642-43 at the invitation of the Kamarupa king. The pilgrim, in his 'Si-Yu-Ki', gave an account of Bhaskaravarman's association with Harsha, the extent of Kamarupa, the size of the capital city, the land and her people, the economic conditions and resources, the character of the people and their achievements, the accomplishments of the reigning king, relation between North India and Eastern India, and Sino-Assamese relations in the background of Sino-Indian relations. That there was an abundance of agricultural crops and material prosperity of **Kamarupa** during the period is evidenced further by the list of presents Bhaskara sent to Harsha through Yuan Chung, as enumerated in the *Harshacharita* of Bana. **Kamarupa** became a noted centre of learning, and royal patronage stimulated interests in the fine arts. The king tolerated men of all

14. P. C. Choudhury : *The History of Civilization of the People of Assam*, Gauhati, 1959, p. 147.

15. Ibid, p. 150-154.

religious sects and the benign atmosphere attracted people from outside. Kamarupa had intimate contacts with Mithila and Magadha and large parts of Eastern India came under the cultural orbits of Kamarupa. Bhaskara Varmana died in about 650 A.D. and having died a bachelor, his kingdom passed over to a dynasty known as Salastambha dynasty after the name of its founder Salastambha who claims descent from Naraka.

Salastambha family :

It is found that in some of the grants issued by Kamarupa kings and discovered in Assam, a family of Madhava is mentioned to have ruled Kamarupa after the Varmanas. But actually, it is established that, it was the family of Salastambha which followed Varmanas. In the words of Dr. P. C. Choudhury, 'there appears to be little difficulty in their identification with the rulers of the line of Salastambha, who established himself after Bhaskara. The manner by which Madhava, a foreigner came to Kamarupa and became king, almost tallies with the description given in the Bargaon Grant Epigraph relating to the rise of Salastambha.'

The Salastambha dynasty also assumed a common ancestry with the Bhowma, Bhuma-Naraka or the Varman kings whom it supplanted. Though there were twenty-one kings in the Salastambha family, names of only fifteen kings have so far been found. During the period of this dynasty the capital city was located near the modern town of Tezpur. The sixth king of the dynasty, Harsadeva was the most famous, being credited with the overlordship of Gauda, Odra, Kalinga (Orissa), Kossala, and other lands. The Pasupati epigraph of the Nepal king Jayadeva II mentions Sri Harsadeva, whose daughter Rajyamati was married to the Nepal king Jayadeva II, as 'the noble descendant of Bhagadatta's royal line'. His rule is placed between 725—750 A.D.

Sri Harsadeva, in his new bid for supremacy conquered Odra, Kalinga, and Kosala and during his advances in the southern India, at Karnataka, he had an encounter with the army of Kirtivarman II, the western Chalukya prince and was defeated. P. C. Choudhury, from chronological point of view, contends that the ruler of Kanauj mentioned in 'Gaudavaho' of Vakpati and 'Rajtarangini' of Kalhana, is Yosovarmana and the lord of Gauda said to be killed by Yosovarmana, was Sri Harsha

16. Ibid, p. 133.

of Kamrupa, though in fact, Yosovarmana took Sri Harsha a prisoner to Kanauja where he was killed by Lalitaditya after the overthrow of Yosovarmana.¹⁷

The narrative of the war between Harsadeva - Yosovarmana, which took place in the 8th century and found mention in Vakpati's 'Gaudavaho', also is found to be the same with the description of the battle between Vikramaditya-Subahu given in the contents of Bargaon Grant.

Pralambha the great-grandson of Sri Harsadeva was contemporary of Gopala, the first Pala king of Gauda. Harijjara was the son of Pralambha and during his time the capital of Kamarupa was shifted to Haruppeswara near Tezpur. Harijjara was a very powerful king as is evident from his own Tezpur rock-inscription, apart from the Copper Plate Inscription of Vanamala and Nowgong inscription of Balavarmana - successors of Harijjara.

Pala dynasty :

Probably, Brahmapala was an ambitious warrior who took refuge in Kamarupa during the invasion of Vanga, Gauda, and Rarha by the Candellas and Kalasuris and eventually caught hold of the throne of Kamarupa after the death of Tyaga Singha, the childless king of Salastambha dynasty. There is a saying that, the leading people of Kamrupa who elected Brahmapala, the king of Kamarupa, did so after being convinced that Brahmapala is a descendant of Bhowma dynasty who ruled Kamarupa from the time of Naraka, Bhagadatta, Pushyavarman, and their descendants. This tradition also was mentioned in the Bargaon Copper Inscription of Ratnapala (1010-1040 A.D.) who was the son and successor of Brahmapala. This, however, refers to the Hindu practice of tracing the origin of one prominent person to the powerful Hindu Gods like Suryya, Chandra and Indra. It may also be so called for their association with *Bhumi*, i.e. land, indicating ownership of country. It seems 'Pala' was a popular designation adopted by the rulers of the north-eastern India of that time and the title 'Pala' is an abbreviation of the Sanskrit term, 'Palaka', which means 'protector' i.e. the ruler or an administrator.

Brahmapala ruled Kamarupa between 990 A.D. to 1010 A.D. and abdicated in favour of his son Ratnapala (1010 A.D. - 1040 A.D.) Ratnapala was succeeded by his illustrious grandson Indrapala (1040-1065 A.D.) who was left orphan by his father Purandara Pala at very young age.

17. Ibid, pp. 215-224.

Two Pala kings, Gopala (A.D. 1065-1080) and Harshapala (1088 A.D. - 1095 A.D.) intervened between Indrapala and Dharmapala (1095 A.D. - 1120 A.D.) who was followed by Jayapala (1120 A.D. - 1130 A.D.) with whom Pala dynasty's rule over Kamarupa ended. From the Subhankarapataka¹⁸ grant of Dharmapala and the Silimpur grant of Jayapala, it is known that these kings of Kamarupa had their kingdom extended upto North Bengal (Pundravardhana i.e. Gauda).¹⁹

Jayapala Dev, the son of Dharmapala, who is identified by P. C. Choudhury with Ramchandra mentioned in Rama Carita of Sandhyakaranandi,²⁰ ruled some time between 1120-1130 A.D. During his reign Kamarupa was attacked by Mayana, the general of Ramapala, the Pala king of Bengal and as a result of the war, the *Kamarupadhipati* lost his possession over the eastern parts of Bengal. The Bengal king placed Tingyadeva as his vassal in that part. Later when Tingyadeva rebelled; Ramapala's son Kumarpala, who then ruled Gauda, sent Vaidyadeva to suppress him. Vaidyadeva not only suppressed Tingyadeva, he also declared his independence in 1138 A.D. and assumed the title '*Maharajadhiraja Parameswara-Paramabhattaraka*' and later, won over Kamarupa from Jayapala in 1138 A.D.

Though there is no definite account of Kamarupa and its kings for the few decades following Vaidyadeva, from the Tezpur grant of Vallabha Deva we found that Rayari Deva was the grand-father of Vallabha Deva and that he had an encounter with Vijaya Sena of Bengal. According to P.C. Choudhury, Rayarideva was probably a feudatory of Vaidyadeva in Darrang area.

Vaidyadeva, however, tolerated Pala kings of Bengal during the short reign of Kumarapala and his son Gopala III; but thereafter he asserted his independence. So it is evident that at about the same time, owing to the weakness of Pala kings of Gauda, the Sena king of Bengal, Sri Vijaya Sena conquered the whole of Gauda and became the immediate neighbour of Kamarupa. In the Deopara Inscription issued by Vijaya Sena (1125-1157 A.D.) reference is made to an event wherein Vijaya Sena had an encounter with *Kamarupadhipa*. In the opinion of P.C. Choudhury, Rayarideva who claimed to be a descendent of Bhaskarvarman, helped Vaidyadeva who was then occupying the throne of Kamarupa and had an encounter with Vijaya Sena, the immediate neighbour of Kamarupa.

18. P. N. Bhattacharyya: *Kamarupa Sashanavali*, p. 167.

19. P. N. Bhattacharyya: *Journal of the Assam Research Society*, Vol. III, pp. 21-23.

20. P. C. Choudhury: *the History of Civilisation of the People of Assam*, p. 271.

In the war Vaidyadeva was killed but in the hands of Rayarideva, Vijayasena experienced reverse, as indicated in the Tezpur grant and then Rayarideva established himself as an independent king of Kamarupa.²¹ Rayarideva was succeeded by Udayakarna and there after Vallabhadeva became the king of Kamrupa in the 9th decades of the 12th century. The Tezpur grant of Vallabha Deva was issued in 1185 A.D. Lakshmana Sena the son of Vallabhasena (1175-1205 A.D.) who ascended throne at a very late years (because, as described in *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, when Md. I-Bakhtier invaded Bengal in 1202 A.D., Lakshman Sena was already an old king), invaded Kamarupa during the time of Vallabhadeva and defeated him - but his son Viswasundaradeva immediately recovered and established his kingdom.

Minhaj, in his book *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, described the king of Kamarupa who annihilated the entire army of Md-i-Bakhtier, simply as, 'Rae of Kamrud'. According to Sri Wolsley Haig (Cambridge History of India Vol. III) the same very king who defeated Bakhtier also defeated Sultan Hisamuddin alias Giashuddin Iwaz-Khilji in 1226 A.D. and was ultimately thrown away by Nasiruddin son of Ilutmish in 1228 A.D.²²

According to Gachthal inscription of Nowgong which was issued in 1227 A.D. Viswasundaradeva ordered repair of Siva temple damaged by the *Mlechhas*. According to N.K. Bhattasali - these Mlechhas were Muslims who accompanied Giashuddin.²³ Kanaibarashi Rock Inscription calls the Kamarupa king who defeated Bakhtier in 1205 A.D. - 'Prithu' or 'Bartu'. So it is evident that Viswasundaradeva is the very Kamarupa king who was popularly known as Kamrupa king, 'Prithu' or Bartu mentioned in the *Guru Charita*, a local chronicle prepared after Sri Sankardeva, the Vaishnava preceptor of Assam. In different historical accounts of Kamarupa, Prithu was described as a very powerful king who defeated Muslims in a number of wars; and he also has been described as, 'Jalpeswara' who built a Siva temple at Jalpeswar in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal.²⁴ J. C. Ghose however says that the temple was rebuilt by Prithu.²⁵ Capital of Prithu or Bartu was said to be at Jalpaiguri by some historians. Probably Bartu had also a secondary capital site and fort at Jalpaiguri and his title Jalpeswar also supports this contention. There is a tradition prevalent amongst the people of Jalpaiguri that king

21. Ibid, p. 273-275.

22. Ibid, p. 276.

23. K. L. Barua; *Early History of Kamarupa*, 1966, ed. pp. 138-49.

24. N. N. Acharyya; *The History of Medieval, Assam*, pp. 135-147.

25. *The Journal of Assam Research Society*, Vol IV, No. 1, 1936, p. 14.

Prithu while finally faced defeat in the hands of Nasiruddin, jumped into the tank situating near his site at Jalpaiguri in order to save dishonour.²⁶ So, beyond all doubt, it is Prithu or Viswasundardeva who, in 1228 A.D., was defeated by Nasiruddin, the son of Iltutmish.

Kamata Rajya : Viswasundaradeva was followed by his son Sandhya who was established by Nasiruddin as a tributary king and there after at the death of Nasiruddin, Sandhya threw over his allegiance to the Muslim who were weakened by Hindu uprising in the south-east Bengal ; and came to rule Kamarupa. The Bhuyan chiefs of Kamarupa also joined with Sandhya who brought the whole region upto Karotoya and also a part of the area beyond, under his supervision and assumed the title 'Gaudeswar.' He was followed by his son Sindhu and there after his grandson, Rupnarayan.²⁷ From a narrative found in the *Gurucharita* written by Ramcharan Thakur, it is found that Sandhya was a very powerful king and he not only thwarted the invasion of Kamarupa by Malik Yuzbeg alias Sultan Mughis-ud-din²⁸ in 1254-55 A.D. but also, in order to have a strong foothold against Muslims, destroyed his entire army.

According to *Tabaquat-i-Nasiri*, in 1254-55 A.D. Malik Yuzbeg determined to march upon Kamarupa sent a huge army across Bagmati i.e., Karotoya. He crossed Karotoya near Ghoraghat in the Rangpur district of present Bangladesh and marched through Goalpara along the northern bank of the Brahmaputra and took the city of Kamrup giving a temporary set back to Kamarupa king, Sandhya. But the trained soldiers of Sandhya surrounded the Turkish army from all sides compelling Yuzbeg to retreat through a mountain-pass in a bid to escape by a shortest route *via* Jalpaiguri and Koch Behar (the area down the river beyond Goalpara being under the Hindu rule) ; and annihilated the entire army and the family of Yuzbeg.²⁹ Thereafter, in 1255 A.D. he strategically shifted his capital to Kamatapur against Muslim invasion,³⁰ and assumed the title, Kamateswara. During the reign of Sandhya, the Bhuyan chiefs of Kamarupa became most powerful and well-organised and appeared as a barricade to foreign powers in the west of Kamarupa.

26. K. L. Barua ; *Journal of Assam Research Society*, Vol. III, No. 2, 1935, p. 51 and J. A. Vas ; *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteer Rangpur*, 1911, p. 19

27. N. N. Acharyya ; *The History of Medieval Assam*, p. 144-53.

28. K. L. Barua ; *Early History of Kamarupa*, p. 165.

29. N. N. Acharyya ; *The History of Medieval Assam*, p. 146.

30. K. L. Barua ; *Early History of Kamarupa*, 1966, p. 163 and N. N. Acharyya ; *The History of Medieval Assam* pp. 154.

Sandhya was succeeded by his son Sindhu Rai in 1260 A.D. It was during his time, that Kamatapur was attacked by the Ahom king, Sukapha the great. As Sindhu was busy in resisting Muslim invasion on the west, he did not like to involve himself in an antagonism with the Ahom king, so he made friendship with Sukapha on condition of tribute.³¹ Sindhu Rai was succeeded by his son Rup Narayan.³² The last king of his line was Singhadhwaja who lost his kingdom to his minister, Pratapadhwaja in about 1305-25 A.D. Pratapadhwaja shifted his capital to Jalpeswara at Jalpaiguri and called it Gauda, due to, probably, Kamarupa's ancient connection with Barendra Gaud of Bengal. He ruled upto 1325 A.D. Pratapadhwaja has been referred to as Manik Chandra in the traditions prevalent at Koch Behar.

Jitari :

According to the *Gurucharita* of Ramcharan Thakur, Pratapadhwaja was a Kayastha. The son of Pratapadhwaja was Durlabhanarayana. But a rival prince Dharmapala, probably a relation of Sandhya, was set on the throne of Kamarupa at Kamarupanagara or Panduanagara by Jitari, the son of Sanatana, who was the ruler of Karna Suvarna. Jitari was a Buddhist. Dharmapala was the adopted son of Jitari. Dharmapala was also mentioned as Dharmanarayan in some chronicles. As the Kacharis became powerful at that time and extended the boundary of their kingdom upto the western boundary of Kamrupa (district), Dharmanarayan shifted his capital from Kamarupanagara to Dimla in Karnasuvarna (present Rangpur district) and assumed the title 'Gaudeswara'. This alarmed Durlabha Narayan who got involved in war with Dharmapala. Dharmapala *alias* Dharma Narayan ruled from 1325 A.D. to 1330 A.D. in the eastern part of Kamata. He temporarily assumed the title of Kamateswara after the death of Pratapadhwaja, the father of Durlabha Narayan, with an attempt to capture the entire kingdom of Kamatapur which also included Gauda. But Durlabha Narayana resisted the attack and a long war ensued as a result of which some of the Bhuyan chiefs ventured to declare independence. One of such Bhuyans was Prusottama of Central Kamrup who issued the Routkuchi grant donating the village near present Nalbari to a Brahmin called Dharmakanta in 1329 A.D.³³ The war between Dharmapala and Durlabha Narayana subsequently ended in a treaty and as a result Durlabha Narayana sent seven families of Kayastha Bhuyan

31. N. N. Acharyya ; *The History of Medieval Assam*, p. 152.

32. K. L. Barua ; *Early History of Kamarupa*, p. 162.

33. *Ibid*, p. 166.

and seven families of Brahmins to Dharmapala who probably set them in the eastern part of Kamarupa to rule and squad against the Kacharis. In the *Gurucharita* of Ramcharan Thakur it is mentioned that after the treaty with Durlabha Narayana, Dharmapala went upstream by boat and was received by his son, Tamradhwaja at Ghoraghat. Durlabha Narayana retained the southern part of Kamatapur which included Rangpur and Mymensingh while Dharma Narayana obtained the north-eastern part of the kingdom including Kamrup and assumed the title, Kameswara. But Dharmapala was killed by Durlabha Narayana through treachery and later Durlabha Narayana took hold of Kamrup-Kamata and assumed the titles, Kameswar and Kamateswar. Saopulai - the son of Ahom king Sukhangpha by Rajani, a sister of Durlabha Narayana, revolted against his half brother Sukhrangpha and took shelter of Durlabha Narayana who advanced against Ahoms and after a treaty with the Ahom king went back after establishing Saopulai in Charing (1340 A.D.). The Line of Durlabha Narayana ended with his son Indranarayana who was succeeded by Durlabhendra alias Sucharu chandra. Hence-forward the kings, ruling Kamatapur was known as the Chandras. Some say the Chandras have some connection with the Palas of Kamata, and some says none.³⁴

From *Alamgir-nama* written by a Mohammedan Historian named Mirza Muhammed Kazim, we learn that at about 1337 A.D., when Durlabh Narayana was engaged with the Ahoms over Saopulai, the Delhi Emperor Muhammed sent 1,00,000 horsemen well-equipped with arms towards Assam probably in a bid to march upto Tibet.³⁵ This incident has been mentioned in the *Alamgirnama* as, Tugloque's expedition against Kamarupa. Durlabha Narayana was a great warrior and also a lover of literature. Kavi Hem Saraswati, Kaviratna Saraswati and Haribar Vipra were three eminent Assamese writers of the time patronised by Durlabha Narayana. Durlabha Narayana died in 1350 A.D. and his son Indra Narayana succeeded him. According to some historians, Indra Narayana was succeeded by Durlabhendra, who was probably known as Sucharuchandra. According to some others Indra Narayana was usurped by some other warrior. Thereafter, in Koch Behar a new dynasty of Chandras came up, while in the eastern part of old Kamatapur, Arimatta, the son of Pratap Singh alias Bhalukpung, came to rule. Pratap

34. D. D. Majumdar : *West Bengal District Gazetteer-Koch Behar*, 1977 p. 28.
35. N. N. Acharyya : *The History of Medieval Assam*, p. 160-61.

Singha was also known as Ram Chandra. It indicates that both these lines also may belong to the same family.

Save and except the *Darrang Raj Vamshavali* and chronicles like the *Gurucharita*, no other concrete account of the kings following the Pala dynasty is found available uptill now. But it is evident that from the middle part of thirteen century A.D. - empire of Kamarupa shrunk to form a small state of Kamatapur towards the middle part of the fourteenth century thereafter to get lost into a number of small Bhuyan kingdoms.

From the traditions prevalent in the Dafla Hill in the sojourn of N. Lakhimpur about the refugee king of Hita Rokp³⁶ or Ita Nagar, it can be gathered that Arimatta and his successors belonging to Jitari dynasty ruled in the north bank of the Brahmaputra and that their kingdom extended upto the present Kamrup district while the area between the Barnadi and the Karatoya was being ruled by the Khen dynasty. Probably both the lines of Arimatta and the Khens belonged to the same family and related to the Pala dynasty of Kamarupa, and later were known as *Bar Bara Bhuyans* and *Saru Bara Bhuyans*. According to the *Kamarupa Buranji* also Arimatta belongs to the family of Dharmapal known to be of Jitari dynasty.

Pratap Singh alias Ram Chandra who is also popularly known as Bhalukpung, was a very powerful king and he defeated Gadadhar, the second son of Siromani Bhuyan Chandibar while Gadadhar was ruling on the north bank from his site at Rowta in Darrang. His son Arimatta becomes a legendary name due to his involvement in a war where he killed his father unknowingly.

Khen dynasty :

According to K. L. Barua, the usurper who threw over Indra Narayana was no other than Arimatta alias Gajanka who was once contested by Fingua, a member of the family of Durlabha Narayana. At last Fingua was vanquished and slain³⁷. The same account is also found in Wade's Account compiled in 1800 A.D. Line of Arimatta ended with Mriganka who died childless in about 1440 A.D. and a new line of kings called Khen dynasty established by Niladhwaja came into being with their capital site at Kamatapur and "in Kamarupa proper Bhuyan chiefs were established at various places. It is true that these chiefs owed only

36. *The Journal of the Assam Research Society*, Vol. VIII, No. 2, pp. 43-49—the article 'Ruins of Mayapur' by Sri Dwarika Nath Das.
37. K. L. Barua : *Early History of Kamarupa*, Gauhati, 1966, p. 170.

nominal allegiance to the Kamata king and that they often fought against one another - but when a foreign foe appeared, they combined, and offered united resistance."³⁸

The last king of Khen dynasty was Nilambar, who was over thrown by Hussen Shah in 1498 A.D. Nilambar was a powerful king and extended his rule eastward to Barnadi and upto Karatoya on the west and his kingdom 'include a part of Kamarupa, the whole of Rangpura as far as Ghoraghat to the south where he built a fort, and a part of *Matsya-Desha* or Eastern Bengal..... He laid out a magnificent road from Kamatapur to Ghoraghat, much of which is still in good preservation and forms part of the main road between Koch Behar, Rangpur and Bogra'.³⁹ He "also included within his dominions the north-eastern part of the tract which had previously belonged to the Mohammedan rulers of Bengal."⁴⁰ Hussen Shah had to play trick and capture Nilambara through treachery. After sacking Kamatapur, Hussen Shah remained satisfied with its eastern boundary at Barnadi and left his son Danial at Hajo as a governor of the newly conquered country. From the inscription of Malda, it appears that he left Kamarupa at about 1500 A.D.

Mohammedan invasions :

The first Mohammedan army to enter Kamarupa was led by Bakh-tier in 1205-06 A.D. and the event has thus been described in the North Gauhati Kanai Barasi Stone Inscription : "on the thirteenth of *Chaitra* in the *Saka* era 1127, the Turks coming into Kamarupa were destroyed." The destination of the invaders was perhaps beyond Kamarupa. But it went through this land against the advice of the king and while it retreated, the Kamarupa king Prithu inflicted severe defeat upon the invaders.⁴¹ The second invasion in 1226 A.D. was led by Sultan Ghiasuddin Iwaz - who is said to have advanced as far as Sadiya. But in the end, he was defeated by Prithu and driven back to Gaud. Ghiasuddin was ultimately overthrown by Nasiruddin, son of Iltutmish, in 1228, and it was he who overthrew Prithu in that year. Nasiruddin retired from Kamarupa on promise of an annual tribute which, however, was stopped after some time by Sandhya, the son of Prithu or Bartu. The third invasion was led by Ikhtiaruddin Yuzbeg Tughril Khan in 1256-57 A.D. For

38. Ibid, p. 159.

39. J. A. Vas : *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteer, Rangpur*, 1911, p. 23.

40. E. A. Gait : *History of Assam*, p. 45.

41. E. A. Gait : *A History of Assam* pp. 37-38 and

J. A. Vas : *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteer Rangpur*, 1911, p. 24.

a time Tughril war successful and he erected a mosque in Hajo in commemoration of his victories. But when the rains set in and disease overtook the invaders, the Sultan and his soldiers were defeated and killed by the Assamese under the able guidance of Sandhya. Only a few could return to Bengal to tell of the catastrophe of the army. The next invasion was led by Sikandar Shah in 1357 A.D. during the reign of Kamataraj, but it also met with the fate of earlier invasion. For a period of about 200 years beginning practically from the third Muslim invasion, Kamarupa, excepting certain maruading campaigns, was free from serious foreign invasions till the end of the fifteenth century.

From a Persian manuscript said to have written in 1633 A.D., one Shah Ismail Ghaji was sent in an expedition against Kameswar and that he 'after performing feats of Supernatural valour succeeded in obtaining his submission to Mohammedan power' at about 1470-74 A.D.⁴² Next Mohammedan expedition took place in 1497 A.D. wherein Hussain Shah of Gaud defeated Nilambar, the Kamataraj.

Turbak marched up to Kaliabar in 1506 A.D. and defeated the Ahom troops there. But in his second invasion of Assam he was defeated and killed in a bloody battle on the Bhareli in 1532 A.D. Twenty-one years later Kala Pahar, a Hindu apostate made a maruading expedition into the valley, and in his fanatical zeal for the propagation of his new religion, made a expedition into Kamarupa and made attempts to demolish the temples at Kamakhya and Hajo, and no attempt was made for its permanent annexation to the Mughal Empire.

Bara-Bhuyans :

During the thirteenth century, while the Chutia kings ruled the country on the east of the Subansiri and Dima and the Kachari kingdom was flourishing in Central Assam on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, towards the west of the Kacharis and of the Chutias on the north, the petty chiefs called Bhuyans held sway over the territory. Though the boundary between the tract ruled by these chiefs and the kingdom of Kamarupa altered from time to time, their rule was confined to the areas between Kamrup and Darrang on the North bank and Nowgong and and Kamrupa on the south bank of the Brahmaputra. A powerful prince might bring many of them under his control, but they regained their independence under weak princes. Gait mentions that these chiefs were remembered in Assamese legends as the *Bara-Bhuyans*, a title which was

42. Ibid, p. 24.

formerly supposed to indicate a connection with the aboriginal tribe of the same designation in Chota-Nagpur. Dr. Wise, however, differed and held, in connection with Eastern Bengal where formerly there was a group of chiefs of the same title, that the word *Bhuyan* is a Sanskrit equivalent of the Persian word '*Zamindar*' and had no connection with caste. However, it was not clear why the number *Bara* (twelve) was always associated with them, both in Bengal and Assam. Whenever they were enumerated, twelve persons were always mentioned but the actual numbers varied. It was the practice in Eastern India for kings to appoint twelve advisors or governors. Naranarayana had twelve ministers of State, twelve *Dolois* were in charge of the hilly portion of the Jaintia *Raja* and there were twelve State Councillors in Nepal. The number thus became connected in the minds of the people with all dignitaries ranking next to a *Raja* and so came to be used in purely conventional sense.⁴³

There were various stories about the *Bara Bhuyans*, which often refer to entirely different groups of chiefs and they are to a great extent mere legends. The Bhuyans who dominated north of the Brahmaputra and west of Chutia kingdom, during the time of entrance of the Ahoms into Assam, had their territory extending from Subansiri in the east to the Barnadi in the west. Another branch of the *Bara-Bhuyans* occupied certain areas of Nowgong district.⁴⁴

According to one tradition, the Bhuyans are the descendants of Samudra, an usurper and a minister of king Arimatta. Samudra was succeeded by his son Monohar and his daughter Lakshmi, who gained by the love of the Sun God, two sons, Santanu and Samanta. Santanu and his descendants migrated to Rampur in the district of Nowgong and Samanta remained at Lakhimpur. Afterwards, Rajdhar, one of Santanu's descendants settled at Bardowa of Nowgong district. His son was Kusumbar, the father of the great religious reformer, Sankardeva.⁴⁵ There is however, no documentary evidence to link Rajdhar, Kusumbar, and Sankardeva with Samudra.

The *Guru-Charita* and the *Sankar Charita* on the other hand give another version of the origin of *Bara Bhuyans* of Nowgong. According to this account, after the war between Durlabha Narayana, (Gaudeswar) and Dharma Narayana (who styled himself as Kamateswar or Kameswar), a treaty was executed between the two kings and after the peace was

settled, Durlabha Narayana sent seven families of Brahmins and seven families of Kayasthas to Dharma Narayana who settled them on the frontier as wardens of the marches. According to the *Guru Charita* of Ram Charan Thakur, names of Gaudeswar and Kameswar were the same. From the narratives it appears that Kamateswar and Kameswar were the same person. Kamateswar or Kameswar settled the Kayastha Chandibar, the Siromani Bhuyan at Lengamaguri.⁴⁶ The ablest of these seven Kayastha families was Chandibar who subsequently became their leader. Their headquarters were at Paimaguri. Once the Bhutias raided their territory and carried off many people including Rajdhar the son of Chandibar. Chandibar and other Bhuyans pursued the raiders and compelled them to release the captives. Chandibar subsequently settled at Bardowa in Nowgong where his great grandson Sankardeva was born.⁴⁷

In his book '*Bar Bhuyar Samu Buranji*' (a short history of the *Bara Bhuyan*) Nakul Chandra Bhuyan mentions that after the death of Parikshit, the son of third Pandava, his son Janmejaya became the king of Hastinapur. On his death his three brothers and four sons quarrelled for the kingdom and subsequently divided it into seven divisions. The east division comprising the Kamarupa kingdom was given to Bikramaditya, the fourth son of Janmejaya. After Bikramaditya, Jitari or Dharma-pala a relation of Bikramaditya of Kashmir, became the king of Kamarupa. During his time, some Kshatriya families were brought from Kanyakubja or Kanauj. Dharmapala selected the most illustrious one among the Kshatriya families and appointed him as the Commander-in-Chief and Prime Minister. It is said that he was the ancestor of the *Bara-Bhuyans*. Samudra a son of this Prime Minister became the king of the whole domain of Arimatta. His kingdom expanded from the river Barnadi on the west to the border of Chutia kingdom in the east, to the Dafla Hills on the north and to the border of Kachari kingdom to the south. It is said that Samudra administered the kingdom defeating all his rivals with his *bhuja* or arms. Since then his descendants came to be known as Bhuyans. Santanu and Samanta were two sons of his grand-daughter Lakshmi who begot them by a prince named Surya, a scion of Arimatta, who came to Lakshmi's palace and the latter accepted him as her husband.⁴⁸ Santanu and his twelve sons migrated to Rampur in Nowgong district and their descendants came to be known as *Bar Bara Bhuyans*.

43. E. A. Gait : *History of Assam*, pp. 39—49.

44. S. N. Rajkumar ; *Chutiya, Bhuyan and Matak Rajya*, pp. 42—52.

45. K. L. Barua ; *Early History of Kamarupa*, Gauhati, 1966, p. 186.

46. Ram Charan Thakur : *Guru Charita* ; 3rd edi. 529 Sankarabda, p. 16, lines 9—12 and 16—19.

47. E. A. Gait : *A History of Assam*, Calcutta, 1967, pp. 40-41.

48. N. C. Bhuyan : *Bara Bhuyar Chamu Buranji*, Jorhat, 1946. ¶

Samanta remained at Lakhimpur and from him sprang the branch of *Saru Bara Bhuyans*.

This account supports the narratives of the *Gurucharita* in two points - i.e. (1) import of some Bhuyans from Gaud during the time of Dharmapala connected with Jitari and (2) the leader of the party being ancestor of the *Bara-Bhuyans*. So it appears that this part of the story connected with the *Bara-Bhuyans* only is acceptable from the point of history.

Harinarayan Dutta Baruah has given a different account of the origin of the *Bara-Bhuyans*. According to him the petty chieftains were known as "Bhowmik" during the time of Pala kings. Their domain was called "Bhuma". The word "Bhuyan" thus came from the term "Bhuma". This view is supported by the fact that Chandibar who came from Kanauj became Bhowmik under the king Durlabha Narayana of Gaud. Subsequently he came to be known as *Siromani Bhuyan*. The term *Bara-Bhuyan* does not indicate exactly twelve persons. This numeral, as observed by H. N. Dutta Barua, was vaguely used to indicate an indefinite number.⁴⁹ The king of Gaud conferred the title Bhuyan on seven Brahmins and seven Kayasthas who settled in his kingdom. These fourteen Bhuyans were subsequently known as *Bara-Bhuyan*. They came to the kingdom of Kamata during the time of Durlabha Narayana and became regional rulers, but lost no time to declare independence when the sceptre passed into the hands of a weaker ruler. This account may be applicable in case of the Bhuyans of the south bank. The same author has also observed that when Biswa Sinha occupied the western part of Kamrup, some of the Bhuyans migrated to the east and settled in Darrang district and North Lakhimpur area. We find a similar account in the *Asom Buranji* written by Padmanath Gohain Barua. According to him, twelve Kayastha families and seven Brahmin families left Kanauj following the invasion of Kanauj by Sahabuddin. They came to Gaud and then to Kamata kingdom where king Durlabha Narayana provided for their shelter. Chandibar Bhuyan was made the administrator of the eastern region. All these families were known as Bhuyans.

According to Sarbananda Rajkumar, the *Bara Bhuyans* were petty rulers who set up numerous kingdoms on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, extending from the Subansiri in the east down to the Barnadi in the west.⁵⁰ The other branch of the *Bara Bhuyan* ruled over certain areas which now form part of Nowgong district, on the south of the Brahmaputra.

49. H. N. Dutta Barua : *Prachin Kamrupiya Kayastha Samajar Itibrittta*, 1941, p. 33.

50. S. Rajkumar : *Chutiya, Bhuyan, aru Matak Rajya*, pp. 42—52.

In the west, the boundary between the tract ruled by the Bhuyans and the kingdom of Kamrupa varied from time to time. Many of the Bhuyans ruled simultaneously over different areas of the tract on the north of the Brahmaputra.

The *Guru Charita* written some 50 years after the expiry of Srimanta Sankar Deva, by Ramcharan Thakur who is also a Bhuyan, gives account of Chandibar, Gadadhar, Sankaradeva, and other Bhuyans' encounter with the Bhutias, Kacharis, Koches and Ahoms. During these periods they mainly moved in between Darrang, Nowgong or Kamrup.

The *Bhuyan* were held in high esteem in those days as is evident from the royal patronage they received at various times. Shri Sankardeva, the great saint-poet of Assam who stepped up the epoch making *Neo-Vaishnavism* movement in Assam, was a member of a *Bara Bhuyan* family. Ahom king Suhungmung *alias* Dihingia Raja occupied some of the territories of the *Bara Bhuyans* on the north bank in the year 1505 A.D. From this time, some of the articles commonly used by the *Bara Bhuyans* constituted part and parcel of the Ahom apparel.

Koch Kings :

The Bhuyan chiefs who were undoubtedly the feudal barons of the later Kamarupa rather Kamatapur kings, combined against the common foe, attacked Danial's garrison at Hajo and destroyed it in between A.D. 1500-1506. There after for about a decade or more there was not a common king for Kamatapur in ancient Kamrupa empire and the petty Bhuyan chiefs were ruling their respective small territories.

In 1515 A.D. Bishu or Viswanath, a man of non-usual enterprise and courage took advantage of small Bhuyan principalities and strifes amongst them and forced his way to the front. He defeated the Bhuyan of Ouguri and Luki but was repulsed by the Bhuyan of Phulguri. But later on Bishu took advantage of the Bhuyan's soldiers being engaged in a festival and caught the Bhuyan unprepared and killed him. There after he subdued the Bhuyan chiefs of Bijni and other places - and also defeated a confederacy of Bhuyan chiefs headed by the Bhuyan of Kamapur. Then he claimed the territory upto Gauhati by defeating the Bhuyan of Pandu and later on turned his attention to the Bhuyan's of northern Kamrupa - and then brought the entire country from Karotoya to Barnadi under his sway by defeating Narayan Gomotha Bhuyan, Gandhabar Bhuyan of Baushi and their confederatories.

According to Darrang *Rajbangshavali* written by Suryyakhari Daivajna, both the Bara Bhuyan and the Saru Bhuyan who were subdued by Bishu or Viswasingha were Brahmins. Bhuyan of Ouguri was also a Brahmin, and Charu alias Chuti Bhuyan was a *Daibajna*.⁵¹ In the *Guru Charita* it is found that Narayan Gomotha and other Bhuyans of North Kamrup who were subdued by the first Koch King were, Kayasthas.⁵²

Viswa Singha, the founder of the Koch Kingdom is said to have been born of Hira (the wife of one Haria Mandal) by Siva, who assuming the form of her husband induced her to admit embraces. Viswa Singha subdued the petty princes surrounding his territory, founded a magnificent city in Koch Behar, and reduced his state to order. The whole population was divided up into different corps under officers of increasing dignity, a Thakuria being appointed over 20 coolies, a Saikia over every 100, a Hazri over 1,000, an Umra over 3,000 and a Nawab over 66,000. He took a census of his subjects and found that the number capable of bearing arms was 5,225,000 a figure which suggests that an extra cypher must in some way have crept into the total reported to the king. He is said to have marched against the Ahoms, but to have abandoned the expedition owing to the collapse of his commissariat. But the Ahom version, which states that he was defeated and made a tributary, seems a more probable explanation of the failure of the expedition. Another exploit credited to this prince is the re-discovery of Kamakhya. He visited the hill Nilachal where he was shown a mound which was said to contain a deity. The prayers he offered were at once granted, and he accordingly had the mound explored when the ruins of the old temple at once came to light.⁵³

A new temple was then erected, a gold coin placed between each brick, and Brahmins were brought from Kanouj and other places to perform the sacred rites.

Viswa Singha died after a reign of 25 years and was succeeded in 1534 A.D. by his son Malla Deva, who assumed the name of Nara Narayana. The reign of this prince represents the zenith of the Koch power, and his armies, which were led by his brother Sukladhwaj or Silarai, met with almost unvarying success. He, after vanquishing the small estates of the

51. K. L. Barua : *Earlp History of Kamarupa* ; p. 190.

52. H. N. Dutta Barua : *Prachin Kamarupiya Kayastha Samajar Itibritta*.

53. This account of the Koches has for the most part been taken from an interesting paper on the Koch kings of Kamarupa by Mr. E. A. Gait, C. S. published in J.A.S.B. Vol LXII. Part I, No. 4, 1893. The entire extract relating to Koch kings has been reproduced from old Gazetteer by B. C. Allen (pp. 23—27).

Bhuyans in Kamarupa, attacked the Ahoms ; but, mindful of his father's failure, commenced his operations by building a great military road along the north bank of the Brahmaputra and constructing tanks at regular intervals along it. The work was entrusted to his brother Gohain Kamala, and the road, much of which still in existence, bears the name of Gohain Kamala *Ali* to the present day. Nara Narayan entered the Ahom capital Gargaon (modern Nazira), and did not leave it till he received the submission of the Ahom king. The Kachari Raja and the Raja of Manipur were then reduced to the position of feudatory chiefs, and the kings of Jaintia, *Tippera*, Cachar and Sylhet were conquered and slain. Further successes were obtained over the rulers of Khairam and Dimuria, but the tide of fortune turned when an attack was made on the kingdom of Gaud. The Koch army was routed and Silarai himself was made prisoner. Nara Narayan would not, however, accept this defeat as final, and a few years later joined with the Emperor Akbar in a second attack upon the Pasha of Gaud. This enterprise was crowned with success, and Gaud was divided between the Emperor of Delhi and the Koch king. Shortly before this expedition Nara Narayan had restored the famous temple at Kamakhya, which had been injured by the Muhammedan invader Kala Pahar in 1553 A.D.

Decline of Koch kingdom, Raghu Rai, 1581—1603 A.D.

Within the space of two generations, the Koch kingdom had attained an extraordinary height of prosperity and power ; but its decline and fall also were as rapid as its rise. For a long time Nara Narayan had no male offspring, and Silarai's son, Raghu Rai, was regarded as his heir. When this boy was approaching manhood, one of his uncle's wives gave birth to a son called Lakshmi Narayan ; and Raghu Rai, realising that he had now no hope of succeeding to the throne, withdrew from the capital to Barnagar in the Barpeta subdivision of Kamrup. Nara Narayan endeavoured to compel him to return, but his soldiers were defeated and the

king weakly resolved to divide his kingdom.⁵⁴ The territory east of the Sankosh was made over to Raghu Rai, while Lakshmi Narayan received the part that lay west of that river. Raghu Rai continued to reside at Barnagar, and seems to have been much devoted to religious exercises. In 1583 A.D., he restored the temple of Hajo in Kamrup, which had been injured by Kala Pahar and endowed it with grants of land.

Parikshit, 1603—1613 A.D.

Raghu Rai was succeeded by his son Parikshit in 1603 A.D. This prince mounted cannon at Pandunath to the west of the Kamakhya hill and built a town at North Gauhati whose fortifications can still be traced for many kilometres even at the present day. He then had the misfortune to provoke the cupidity of the Muhammedans, who were determined to annex Koch Hajo, as Parikshit's dominions were called, as they had already succeeded in establishing their supremacy over Lakshmi Narayan's kingdom of Koch Bihar.⁵⁵ A strong force was sent up the valley under Mukarram Khan. Fort Dhuburi was garrisoned by an army of 500 horse and 10,000 foot, but it was captured after four week's siege; and a naval engagement, which took place in the Gangadhar river, was equally disastrous to the Koch king. Parikshit was driven across the Manas into Kamrup and there surrendered to the enemy, but his brother Baldeo declined to abandon the unequal struggle and fled to the Ahom for assistance.

According to the *Gurulila* composed by one Ramrai—a disciple of

54. According to Buchanan Hamilton, the kingdom was founded by Hajo, father of Hira and Grand-father of Viswa Singha, and divided by Viswa Singha, who allotted the portion on the east of the Sankoch to Sukladwaj or Silarai, and that on the west of the river to Nara Narayan. On general grounds, however, this account seems to be less probable than that given in the body of the text.

55. An interesting account of the wars between the Muhammedans and Ahoms will be found in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol XLI, part-1 No.1 1872.

— Damodardev,⁵⁶—Parikshit Narayan had his capital in Bijohnagar on the bank of river Gadadhar⁵⁷ and that Parikshit Narayan and Lakshminarayan were contemporaries of Damodardeva. Parikshit was the grand son of Sukladhwaja i.e. Chilarai and his kingdom extended upto Sonkosh and included Kamarupa, and Lakhinarayana was the son of Malladeva or Nara Narayan.⁵⁸ Parikshit Narayan attacked the kingdom of Lakshminarayan who sought help from Muslims. The Muslims attacked Bijohnagar and captured Parikshit Narayan. Dharmanarayan was said to be the brother of Parikshit while the son of Dharmanarayan was Mahendra Narayana. Both of them were said to be the rulers of Kamarupa—while Chandra Narayana, son of Parikshit Narayan confined his rule to Darrang.

Kamarup under the Ahoms :

The district of Kamrup came under the undisputed possession of the Ahoms in 1682, although it felt their triumphant marches and occupation one and half century earlier.

The Ahoms, a Tai people who had entered the eastern part of the Brahmaputra valley in the early part of the thirteenth century, after occupying the greater portion of upper Assam during the reign of Siu-hum-mong, commonly known as *Dihingya Raja*, marched down the valley in pursuit of the retreating Muslim army and reached as far as the Karotoya river where they reclined their victorious arms. In order to commemorate their victory, a masonry temple was erected on its bank. Learning the mighty powers of the Ahoms, the Gauda ruler preferred for an alliance by sending his daughter to Siu-hum-mong along with the transfer of five districts including Kamrup as dowry.

Having received this disquieting news, Biswa Singha, the first Koch ruler, in order to have a trial of strength, came and attacked the Ahom

56. *Gurulila*, 1963, p. 40.

57. *Ibid*, p. 67

58. *Ibid*, p. 131.

army but was badly defeated. On his submission to the Ahom ruler, General Chan-Kham, the Ahom commander, with the consent of his lord, transferred all the five districts received as dowry from the ruler of Gauda to Biswa Singha. Biswa Singha revived the worship of Kamakhya. He was, however, not happy with the tributary status of the Ahoms, but all his attempts to shake off that position were in vain. After his death, his son and successor Nara Narayan successfully invaded the Ahom kingdom with a large force which compelled the Ahom king to conclude a treaty by which Kamrup was left in possession of the Koch king. Naranarayan rebuilt the temple of Kamakhya at the Nilachala Hill.

Towards the close of Nara Narayan's reign, the Koch kingdom was partitioned, the Kamrup portion of the kingdom which came to be known as Koch Hajo, was given to Raghudeb, the son of Sukladhwaj alias Chilarai. Raghudeb rebuilt the Hayagriba temple at Hajo and built another at Pandu. His son Parikshit who became king of Koch Hajo, built his capital at North Guwahati which is known as Parikshit Nagar. But soon a strong Mughal army assisted by his cousin Lakshmi Narayan of Koch Behar, invaded Koch Hajo. Finding his position helpless Parikshit surrendered, and he was taken as captive to Delhi. Following this his dominions, as far as the Bar Nadi were annexed to the Mughal empire. From 1616 Hajo became the headquarters of the Mughal garrison.

The Mughal occupation of Kamrup was considered a serious threat to the Ahom kingdom. Consequently a period of almost regular warfare ensued between the Ahoms and the Mughals for the next several decades with varying fortunes on both sides, and Kamrup changed hands several times between them. Sometime in 1617, while Kamrup was under the Mughals that the Mughal fiscal organization was introduced in the district in the form of *sarkar*, *pargana*, *taluk*, and appointed officers known as *Choudhuri*, *Patwari*, *Talukdar* and the like.

The treaty of 1639 which brought the first phase of the Ahom-Mu-

gnal armed conflict to a close, major portion of Kamrup passed into the hands of the Mughals as it fixed the Barnadi on the north bank and the Asurar Ali on the south bank as the boundary between the Ahom and Mughal dominions. Guwahati became the headquarters of the Mughal Nawabs till about 1658.

Jayadhwajsingha, who succeeded to the Ahom throne in 1648, took advantage of the confusion caused by the war of succession following the death of Shah Jahan, to oust the Koch army of Prana Narayan of Koch Behar under Bhavanath Karji who temporarily occupied Kamrup by defeating the Mughal garrison. Kamrup thus came under the Ahoms who raised fortifications at several places to prevent any further Mughal invasion.

Mir Jumla, who was made the governor of Bengal in 1660, in vain demanded the restoration of the whole territory newly acquired by the Ahoms. The Ahom king's reply was that the provinces in question were obtained by him not from the Mughals but by expelling the Koch army. This led Mir Jumla to advance against Assam both by land and water with a large army which included among others some Europeans as mercenaries. Unable to withstand the pressure, the Ahom army gradually retreated from their strongholds at Hatichala, Baritala and Jugighopa, and came to Guwahati. Guwahati also fell to the enemy, and the Ahom army retreated to Chamdhara where too the Ahoms faced defeat.

The Mughal army advanced to Garhgaon after defeating the Ahom army in several engagements. After several months, a treaty was concluded between the Ahoms and the Mughals in January, 1663 A.D. In accordance with the terms of the treaty, the Mughal invaders returned but Kamrup was retained by them.

From 1662 A.D. Kamrup again experienced Mughal rule, and Guwahati became the headquarters of the Mughal Thanadars. But early in 1667, Sayid Firoz Khan, the Thanadar at Guwahati sent a strongly worded letter pressing for the remaining portion of the war indemnity.⁵⁹

59. E.A. Gait : A History of Assam. Reprint, 1967, p. 156.

This had infuriated the reigning Ahom king Chakradhwajsingh, who in consultation with the nobles and commanders decided to launch war against the Mughals. Accordingly a large army was despatched under Lachit⁶⁰ Barphukan to expel the Mughals from Kamrup. After a siege of two months, Guwahati and Pandu were retaken. Two stone inscriptions near the Manikarneswar temple at North Guwahati record the construction of earthen rampart at North Guwahati in *Saka* 1589 by the Ahoms.

On receiving the news of the loss of Kamrup to Assam, Emperor Aurangzeb sent Raja Ram Singh of Rajput fame to win over Kamrup. A huge army consisting of infantry and cavalry with archers and musketeers accompanied him. In the meantime, anticipating a determined effort to recover the lost territory by the Mughals, the Ahoms made elaborate preparations to face the enemy. Hostilities thus renewed and fighting took at several places at North Guwahati-Pandu, Saraighat, Alaboi, Dalibari, Pacharia, Agiathuri and Hajo. Under the disciplined leadership of Lachit Barphukan, the Ahom army succeeded in foiling all efforts of the enemy to recapture Guwahati.

The conflict continued for four years, barring an interval of a few months following Ram Singha's offer of a negotiated settlement. The forces under Ram Singha had extended their grip over Hajo. When several overtures for a treaty failed to bring any result, Ram Singha resolved upon attacking Guwahati with a large cavalry which he transported across the Brahmaputra by boats.

The size of the Mughal cavalry and naval forces created some amount of consternation in the Assam camp, but Lachit Barphukan with his indomitable spirit inspired the soldiers to fight to the last. With grim determination they fought against the Mughals compelling them to retreat bag and baggage. This was the famous Battle of Saraighat. The Mughals suffered a crushing defeat and Raja Ram Singha had to leave Hajo in 1671 for Rangamati on his way to Decca as a fatigued and frustrated

60. Ibid.

man. It may be mentioned that in the war operations against the Mughals, the hill tribes like the Garos, and the *Rajahs* of Jayantia and Rani assisted the Ahoms with their contingents. Kamrup once again came under the Ahoms and Guwahati became the headquarters of the *Barphukan*.

During the period of instability following the death of Suklanpha *alias* Ramdhwajsingha which continued for nearly 8 years at least five kings were deposed one after another by powerful and unscrupulous ministers in a bid to gain political supremacy in the state. Guwahati was given back to the Mughals by treasonable activities of ambitious Barphukan Laluksola. Kamrup once again passed into the hands of the Mughals. But the accession of Gadadharsingha, who became king in 1681, a strong army was despatched to oust Nawab Mansur Khan and his forces from Guwahati. A bloody contest ensued at Itakhuli (present Guwahati) in which the Mughals lost their ground, and Nawab Mansur Khan fled to Rangamati. With this, the last trace of Mughal power in Kamrup was erased and henceforth the Manas river on the north bank and the Nagarbera Hills on the south bank were accepted as the western limits of the Ahom kingdom, of which Kamrup formed an integral part.

For the future protection of the country, the Ahom established a military station at Guwahati with considerable number of military officers and contingents. But the Mughal fiscal divisions such as *pargana*, *taluk* with corresponding revenue officials under the titles *Choudhuri*, *Patwari*, *Talukdar* were retained. All the *Rajas* and chiefs and chieftains of Kamrup acknowledged their allegiance to the Ahom king and volunteered to join the royal force with men and materials when occasion so demanded. Several dependent *Rajahs* and chiefs lived with the border of the present district of Kamrup. They were—Dimarua, Beltola, Rani, Barduar, Naduar, Pantonia, Marupuria, Bholgoiya, Panboria, Lalung, Dhing, Gorkhia, Mayong, Boko-jai, Luki, Bongonya, Choigonya, Bogia.⁶¹ Besides, the *Raja* of Darrang was also placed under the jurisdiction of the *Barphukan* at Guwahati.

61. R.M. Lahiri : The Annexation of Assam. 1975, p. 4 F. N. 10.

A detailed survey was conducted with the aid of surveyors brought from Koch Behar. Large endowments of land were made to several families including that of Chandkuchia Barua and Kamarkuchia Barua, who sheltered Gadadhar Shingha during the time when he was hiding in Lower Assam before he became king. He also made grants of land to the temple of Umananda.

During the reign of his son and successor Rudrasingha, the rich traditions of Kamrup were revived at least in so far as it was connected with the ancient culture. He caused a survey of the ancient sacred sites in and around Guwahati. In 1713, the monarch left Rangpur, the new capital of Assam, for Kamrup and encamped on the west bank of the Barnadi at a place called Rajabhar in North Guwahati with the object of annexing the part of the country as far as the Karotoya river, which in former times formed a part of the ancient Kamrupa kingdom. Goodwill missions were sent to several *Rajahs* and *jamindars* of Bengal and Tripura. But soon the king fell ill and in spite of extravagant offerings of animals and gold to the gods and goddesses, his illness proved fatal and the king passed away at his camp in North Guwahati in 1714. Over the site where Rudrasingha died a temple by the present name of Rudreswar was erected by his second son Pramattasingha.

Rudrasingha's eldest son Sivasingha succeeded him in 1714. He abandoned the proposed invasion of Bengal, but continued the regular land surveys in the district, the records of which had been mentioned in a form of register called *pera kakat*. He put Krishnaram Bhattacharya, a Brahmin scholar priest from Nadia of Bengal in charge of the Kamakhya temple and had him settled at Nilachala hill from which fact he came to be known as *Parvatiya Gossain*. During his reign several temples had been built in Kamrup which include Kameswar, Kamaleswar and Siddheswar at Nilachala, Falgutsava *dole* at Janardana and at Dirgheswari, and made arrangements for the worship of the gods and goddesses in the temples. He also granted land and *paiks* to the priests of Kamakhya, Ugratara, Pandunath, Kurmamadhava, Umananda and several other religious institutions including satra. He also strengthened the defensive

preparations of Guwahati by raising two ramparts around it and a big moat at Rangmahal.

During the reign of Pramattasingha (1744-51) who succeeded Sivasingha besides conducting a census of Kamrup, he made certain grants to priests and constructed the temple of Rudreswar at North Guwahati. Amratkeswar at Nilachala, and Sukreswar at Guwahati, excavated the Durga *Sarobar* at Nilachala.

Rajeswarsingha who succeeded his elder brother Pramattasingha in 1751, paid a royal visit to Guwahati in 1756 and stayed there for some months when he received usual presents and compliments of the feudatories and frontier chiefs and distributed liberal royal patronage to various sections of people. In 1759 the Natmandir at Kamakhya was built.

During the reign of his youngest brother Lakshmisingha, Kamrup also received religious patronage. Several temples were built and the priests and religious preachers received munificent grants of land and men for their maintenance.

But the reign of Gaurinath Singha, Kamrup witnessed a period of serious trouble. Unable to withstand the pressure of the Moamarias in Upper Assam, the king fled away to Guwahati, but here too the situation did not remain peaceful, rather serious troubles started brewing. A leader named Bairagi seized the power at Guwahati.

In the meantime taking advantage of the failure of the Ahom government in restoring peace and order in the kingdom, Krishna Narayan, a prince of the Darrang *Rajah* family revolted against the Ahom king and demanded the restoration of Kamrup to him which he claimed to have belonged to his family before it was occupied by the Ahoms. For this purpose he imported a number of *Barkendazes* or mercenary soldiers from Bengal. At the same time, two brothers, Haradatta Choudhury and Bira-datta Choudhury of Jikeri near Rangiya rose against the Barphukan at Guwahati. With the help of the East India Company's army under Captain Thomas Welsh sent by Lord Cornwallis, the disturbances in Kamrup was temporarily controlled.

But on the accession of Kamaleswarsingha in 1795, the rebels organised a serious rising aided by the armies of Koch Behar and Darrang. The standard of revolt was also supported by the Hindustani and Panjabi refugees. Inspired by the whole hearted co-operation of the people of North Kamrup, Haradatta declared himself independent. Soon he was betrayed by a section of his own followers which brought his life to an end. Many of his followers fled away and took shelter in the foothills of Bhutan.

Kamaleswar Singha was followed by his brother Chandra Kanta Singha seated on the throne through the influence of the Prime Minister Purnananda Buragohain. He reigned for 16 years in the midst of trouble and turmoil. As he was a mere boy, the Government was controlled by the Buragohain. Badan Chandra of equal rank and dignity held the position of Barphukan in Lower Assam and had his permanent head-quarters at Guwahati. Jealousy between the Buragohain and the Barphukan assumed serious proportion. A conspiracy against the Bura Gohain was unearthed and as a result, Purnananda resolved upon dismissing Badan Chandra from Barphukanship. Getting scent of this Badan Chandra decided to approach the English East India Company with whose help the Ahom Government previously put down the Moamaria rebellion. On being refused of any assistance from them, Badan Barphukan who in the meantime gained friendship of an agent of the Burmese Government during his stay in Calcutta, proceeded to Amarapura, the Burmese Capital, where he placed his grievances before the Burmese king, Badawpaya.

The Burmese king readily acceded to his request and despatched an army to settle the quarrel. The invading horde made their first appearance in Assam towards the end of 1816. With their arrival, when the Buragohain died, Chandra Kanta was retained and Badan Chandra was made Mantri Phukan.

But soon Badan Chandra Barphukan was brutally murdered and Chandra Kanta was deposed to Taratali and Purandar Singh was declared King. Exasperated at this horrible news, the Burmese made a second invasion and Chandra Kanta was reinstated only, however, to be deposed.

by the Burmese the same year. The throne was given to Jogeswar Singha by the King of Burma. Jogeswar Singha who had been set up by the Burmese was the king only in name ; and the actual power was wielded by the Burmese **Commander** Mingimaha Tilwa. Piyali, a son of Badan Chandra, was appointed at first Barbarua and then Barphukan.

So, Assam virtually passed to the Burmese till March 1824 when the persistent wrath of the Burmese and their encroachments on the British frontier led to the Anglo-Burmese War. On declaration of war against Ava on 5th March 1824, Mr. David Scott, Political Agent to the Governor General, North East Frontier of Bengal and Civil Commissioner of Rangpur, arranged to despatch British troops from Goalpara to Kamrup and Nowgong.⁶² A British force, while on advance towards Kaliabor, held a *Durbar* at Gauhati in which the Assamese were assured that the British force was not coming there for the "thirst of conquest" but to drive away the Burmese, the common enemy of both the countries. The Burmese were driven out of the country and a treaty was concluded at Yandaboo on the February 24, 1826. By virtue of one of the articles of the treaty, the East India Company became the sole master of the province of Assam. So, almost after six centuries of continued reign, the independence of the Ahoms vanished within about two years.

During the transition period between 1824 to 1826, the civil administration of Kamrup was entrusted to David Scott with the title of Governor-General's Agent on the North-Eastern Frontier. Mr. Robinson says, "Hitherto the affairs of the province had been conducted on much the same systems that previously prevailed before the conquest. The officers in charge of lower and upper exercised a general superintendence and more specially devoted their attention to fiscal business. Assam whilst the criminal and civil duties were performed by Councils of the Assamese gentry under the name of Panchayat of which there were two or three in each division of the province, appeals lying from the court of one Panchayat to that of the next superior court and finally to the court of the Commissioner".⁶³

In judicial cases the executive officers were both magistrates and judges trying the accused with the assistance of the *Panchayat* but referring all heinous offences accompanied with their opinions to Mr. Scott for his final judgement.

62. H. K. Barpujari : *Problem of the Hill Tribes* : North East Frontier, Vol. I, 1970, p. 27

63. Robinson : *A Descriptive Account of Assam*, Reprint, 1975 : page-208

The revenue affairs were carried on just in the same manner as they existed before the conquest.

The next historical event with which the district was connected is the Bhutan war of 1864, which was the natural sequel to the indignities offered to the envoy, who had been sent to adjust the differences outstanding between that country and the Government of India. At the time when the British entered upon the administration of the district they found the Bhutias in possession of the country lying at the foot of the Bhutan Hills, i.e., the *duars* of Bijni, Chapakhamar, Chapaguri,, Baska, and Ghaukalla. The Bhutias were allowed by the British to remain in occupation of the *duars* till 1841; but in that year the *duars* of Kamrup and Mangaldai were annexed by the Company, and an annual payment of Rs. 10,000 was offered as compensation to the Bhutan State. On the outbreak of war it was decided that operations should be undertaken against the whole length of the Bhutan frontier. In December 1864, a column, under the command of Colonel Campbell, marched northwards from Gauhati to attack the Bhutia post at Dewangiri. The main body advanced with considerable circumspection, and while they were still reconstructing the pass, news arrived that Dewangiri had been captured by Captain Macdonald with fifty native policemen. The resistance offered had not been of a very serious character, and the British loss consisted of one policeman killed and five wounded. A garrison of six companies of native infantry and two mountain howitzers of the Eurasian Battery was quartered in the village, and it was thought that they would have no difficulty in repelling any attack that might be made upon them.

The Bhutias had, however, returned in considerable force. About 5 A.M. on January 30th. the camp was suddenly rushed, and, though the enemy was driven off with some loss, they continued to assume an exceedingly aggressive attitude. British loss on this occasion was, one British officer killed and one wounded, and four sepoy killed and thirty-one wounded. Four days later, the Bhutias threw up a stockade within five hundred yards of the camp, and managed to cut off the principal source of water supply. They also succeeded in occupying the mouth of the Darranga pass and on February 4th Colonel Campbell decided to evacuate the post, and to make his way by another route to the plains. A retreat by night through mountainous and jungly country is not an easy operation to perform, and a certain want of steadiness was shown on this occasion. Some of the wounded were left behind, the guns were abandoned and subsequently fell into the possession of the Bhutias, and officers and men lost everything which they possessed. The enemy did

not attempt to pursue the retreating troops, but it was of course impossible to acquiesce in this reverse. A strong force was collected at Kumarikatta, and at the beginning of April the position was retaken without difficulty. Not a single soldier was killed on the British side, but the Bhutias lost over one hundred men; as the native troops, on forcing their way into the stockade, seem to have got out of hand and to have gone to unnecessary lengths in breaking down the resistance offered to them. With the re-capture of Dewangiri, active operations ceased on the Kamrup frontier, and since that date the village has continued to form part of the British territory. Later, after independence, this territory of Dewangiri was transferred to the Bhutan State under an Act of Parliament in 1949.

As per agreement made between the East India Company and Purandar Singha on March 2, 1833 at Gauhati, the latter was installed as the king of Upper Assam on April 28, 1833 on promise of payment of an annual tribute of Rs. 50,000/- to Company Government. Despite the fact that population decreased enormously, in the wake of internal strife and Burmese invasions, this amount was too heavy considering the estimated annual revenue of Rs. 1,20,000/-. Thus imposing deliberately heavy financial liability on the restored government, the Company Government were not slow in discovering maladministration and arrear in tribute with the result that Purandar was deposed in October 1838 and the direct Company rule was re-established in Upper Assam.

David Scott was mainly responsible for working out the principles of administration in both Upper and Lower Assam. While till 1838 only halting measures were adopted in Upper Assam in view of the nominal restoration of Purandar Singha, full British control was established as far as Lower Assam was concerned. The beginnings of British administration in Lower Assam were actually made in 1824-25. The revenue collections increased in each succeeding year reducing the people to dire straits.

The British introduced new methods of revenue administration. While during the Ahom regime, nobles were given control of *khels* or *parganas* where they administered justice and collected revenue in kind or cash, the new system at first placed *parganas* under Chaudhuris who were entrusted with the collection of revenues and administration of justice in petty cases.

The new judicial system introduced by the Company Raj also contributed to the sufferings of the people. Ananda Ram Dhekial

Phukan wrote in 1853. "Under the present judicial system of the province, a party, how trivial so ever may be the nature of his complaint can never obtain relief without submitting to a vexatious and harassing course of procedure, extending from at least six months to an unlimited length of time."^{63A} During the early part of British rule, the Governor-General's Agent had been virtually the judge, magistrate, and the collector of Lower Assam. Naturally enough, maladministration was the result which roused popular feelings against the regime.

The Charter Act of 1833 was a handy instrument of the British colonialists who already began spreading out their financial tentacles to serve the interests of the Empire and colonialism. British capital flowed into Assam for establishing the tea industry and in 1839 the first working tea garden was established. Thus, British political and economic domination were fused leading to complete reduction of Assam to the status of a part of British India. Gradually Assam began to suffer from the same basic evils of foreign domination as other parts of India did, though there was difference in degrees.

1857 and Kamrup-background of the Freedom Movement :

The question of revenue collections dominated the relationship between the Government and the people throughout the 19th century. To the enhancement of land revenue was added an unjust judicial system, deposition of the native regime, introduction of opium in the districts, and imposition of diverse new taxes. While all these roused the discontent of the people, the nobility also joined the opposition camp because of the loss of immunities and privileges. The British Government undoubtedly introduced beneficial measures like abolition of cruel practices such as chopping off ears and noses, abducting young women, engaging forced labour, etc., but the evil far outweighed few good results. Thus, in 1853 Maniram Dewan petitioned Mills: 'Illustrious Sir, We are just now, as it were, in the belly of a tiger.' It was the law of the jungle, as it were, that prevailed in Assam only four years before the out-break of 1857 revolt. Maniram Dewan was responsible for associating Assam with the rebellion of 1857. Being disillusioned with the British he turned a rebel in 1857 when the class-interests of a section of the Indian feudal rulers coincided with the broad national interest against foreign rule.

63A : A J. Moffat Mills : *Report on the Province of Assam*, 1984, Appendix J. p., 119.

As far as Kamrup was concerned, the 2nd Assam Light Infantry, composed of a number of Hindusthani sepoys, was stationed at Gauhati. The Hindusthani soldiers came mainly from Shahabad which was then in the grip of revolt. The 1st Assam Light Infantry located at Dibrugarh showed signs of commotion and some of the sepoys of this regiment established contact with sepoys at Gauhati. Maniram Dewan from Calcutta sent secret letters through rebel couriers to individuals in Assam to win over these sepoys whose brethren in different parts of India fought the British. Rumours relating to the fall of British power in different places caused a great deal of excitement among the hillmen as well. The people at large were in a discontented state, though unorganised. In the meantime the letter of Maniram Dewan addressed to the *Charing Raja* was wrongly delivered to a loyal police officer in July 1857 when the Government received the first authentic information relating to preparation for the revolt. Thus, the Government tightened up security measures and operation of Act XIV, 1857 was extended to Assam to stamp out the rebellion. Three companies of naval brigade consisting of 300 men were sent from Calcutta to Gauhati. A large number of arrests took place. The potential rebels were tried, many were executed while others were deported.

Freedom Movement in the post - 1857 period :

Peasant struggles and the rise of national consciousness

The great rebellion of 1857 was directly responsible for the birth of the national movement in the country.

Direct British rule after the Queen's proclamation changed the form of foreign rule but internal administration changed only for the worse. Thus, popular discontent burst forth against enhancement of land revenue and the imposition of new taxes like stamp duties, licence tax, etc., which reduced the people to great penury. The national movement was baptised in these economic struggles and they found political outlet with the birth of national consciousness.

Assamese sentiment was aroused by the language controversy in the sixties of 19th century arising out of the introduction of Bengali in the schools and courts of Assam in 1837. Assam came under British

domination nearly seventy year after Bengal. The Bengali intelligentsia who had already mastered the English language came to Assam to serve in different administrative services and they acquired position of influence in the professions also. The majority of the Bengali people tried to convince others stating that Assamese was nothing but an off-shoot of the Bengali language. The attitude of the British ruler was also unhelpful. W. Robinson, the Inspector of Schools in Assam held that the language spoken in Assam was essentially the same as Bengali. Economically backward as she was, Assam resented the denial of her rightful status in the field of education. However, the missionaries for their own purpose, were the first to give open expression to the demand for recognition of Assamese as the medium of instruction. They published an Assamese monthly journal *Orunodoi* in 1846. In 1855 Anandaram Dhekial Phukan in his treatise entitled *A few Remarks on the Assamese language* established the distinct character of the Assamese language. In 1868, Bronson published an Anglo-Assamese Dictionary. Feeling the popular temper, Mills in his report had to emphasise the re-introduction of Assamese. Thus the Government ultimately declared Assamese as the medium of instruction in 1873.

Raij Mels

In the sixties of the 19th century a popular organ of power did much for the growth of local and ultimately national consciousness. This was the *Raij-mel* or *mel* or assembly of the people. The original village *panchayat* transacting business on social matters developed into this popular assembly which brought the entire body of the villagers within its fold for deciding and executing matters in common. Under such condition the leading *Gossains*, *Dolois* and influential landowners became the leaders of these *mels*. But it was the people who activated the leaders and it was they who suffered most under an unjust economic system.

Monolithic unity was perhaps the rule with the *mels* for violation of decisions arrived at in common entailed social boycott. The British authority had a moral fear of the authority of the *mels*. The role of the *mels* in connection with the so-called "Assam Riots" reveals the extent of their power in administering a severe jolt to the imperial power. The *mels* were active in districts like Sibsagar, Nowgong, Darrang and Kamrup.

Agrarian uprisings in Kamrup

What the British Government called 'Assam Riots' were actually peasant uprisings directed against further enhancement of land revenue in total disregard of the peoples capacity to pay. The new rulers entailed an enhanced assessment upto 100 per cent in some villages while in others enhancement was of the order as 25-50%. In Kamrup the percentage of increase over the prevalent assessment was 54.48, the highest percentage being in Darrang. People protested variously against such arbitrary assessment. Thus, a series of *Raij-mels* was held to give organised shape to the spontaneous revolt of the people against alien authoritarianism. Popular gatherings in different parts of the district demanded withdrawal of the unjust orders which severely affected the village economy. A no-tax campaign was organised and anybody disobeying *Raijar Hukum* (decision of the People) incurred the penalty of excommunication and social boycott. Huge demonstrations were organised and popular feelings rose high from one end of the district to the other. The movement acquired particular intensity in Rangiya and Lachima. The British called these popular outbursts as 'riots' which they sought to suppress by the steamroller of repression.

Rangiya And Lachima

A series of *Raij-mels* were organised at Rangiya, and the area comprised of the *tahsils* of Patidarrang, Nalbari, Barama, Bajali and the *mouzas* of Upar Barbhag and Sarukhetri wherein non-payment of the enhanced revenue and resistance to forcible attachment of property were decided upon. On 24 December 1893 the demonstrators

attacked the Rangiya *Hat* after which they attended the *mel* held at Bela-gaon near Rangiya. The movement continued and on 30 December more than 3,000 persons assembled at Rangiya and replied to the Governmental show of force by threatening to destroy the *thana*, post office, *tahsil*, *Kutchery* and the *Tahsildar's* house. The Government augmented the military force by requisitioning the services of the principal headmen to serve as special constables. On 6 January 1894, as a sequel to these a number of men were arrested.

This further provoked the people and on 10 January, about 3,000 men from different parts of Rangiya assembled in the fields close to the *Thana* where those earlier arrested had been imprisoned. The Deputy Commissioner McCabe ordered them to disperse. At night when the crowd drew to the *Thana*, men of the 13th Bengal Infantry and armed civil police descended on the people opening fire. In Governmental records there was no mention of deaths due to the firing, but some lives must have been lost, besides those injured.

Such was the tempo of the movement that the Government was compelled to requisition forces of the 13th Bengal Infantry, 44th Gorkha Rifles from Shillong, the military and the frontier police, besides the special constables. The *Tahsil Kutchery* at Rangiya was completely secured and entrenched. Orders were issued for the attachment of all the licensed guns from Rangiya and from disaffected *tahsils* like Nalbari, Barama, and Bajali. Principal headmen and others were forced to act as special constables on pain of arrest and several such arrests took place. Then, by instituting a reign of terror, the Government made a forcible collection of Rs. 60,000/- out of total demand of the first instalment of Rs. 90,000/-.

Suppression of the Rangiya uprising only encouraged the peasants of Nalbari, Barama and Bajali to hold numerous *mels*. Struggles with the alien authority increased the organisational maturity of the people. Thus, the *mel* at Barama appointed their own *Dak* peons to carry orders from one village to another and organised a volunteer corps to resist attachment of property.

On 21 January 1894, a serious uprising took place at Lachima in the Sarukhetri mouza, when the *Mauzadar* accompanied by the *Mandal* and the revenue *Peskar* went for local collections of revenue, a section of the infuriated people assaulted the *Mauzadar* and the *Mandal*. Some seventy-five men were arrested in this connection but when about 3,000 men advanced towards the camp of the Extra Assistant Commissioner, the latter took fright and released the arrested men. By 25 January, fifty-nine of the supposed ring-leaders were arrested and in violation of the rule relating to undertrials they were employed to erect a lock-up for themselves. In the afternoon on the same day a crowd of 6,000 men approached the camp of the Deputy Commissioner and sent a petition protesting against the enhanced revenue and demanding release of those arrested. After some tussle the people retired. Many arrests took place.

But Bajali and Barama still held the *mels* though they could not rise to the stature of Rangiya and Lachima. It was only by establishing a virtual military rule that 'almost the entire land revenue of the district has now been realised', as stated in McCabe's report to the Commissioner, on 22 February 1894. But in the same report he had to acknowledge that "at Rangiya where the riots took place, not a pice of revenue had been collected."

Impact of the rising

The peasant movement of Kamrup had its echo in the Imperial Legislative Council where Rash Behari Ghosh questioned the propriety of realising land revenue by the agency of special constables. The authorities could give only vague replies to pointed questions. Newspapers like *the Bengalee* also focussed popular attention on the subject.

Though the uprisings failed, the lessons were not lost. The *mels* acted as assemblies of 'direct democracy' with no definite membership, permanent office bearers, and formal procedures of transacting business. After making their first debut in economic struggles with incidental political significance, the peasants learnt to organise regular organisations of a wide scope. The various social welfare organisations, formed in different parts of Assam as the result of this growing social and political consciousness, undoubtedly influenced the course of events in the district.

A process of intellectual quickening was also taking place. Re-introduction of Assamese as the medium of instruction widened the scope of education and the *Jonaki Age* in Assamese literature produced a class of men devoted to raising the literary standard. Though the aim of English education was primarily for the purpose of creating a set of clerks to run Government offices, the establishment of Cotton College at Gauhati in 1901 contributed to the spread of higher education. The educated youths in their various ways inaugurated an era of well regulated associations which in the Provincial and all-India background tended to create a political climate in the country in favour of national regeneration and independence.

Freedom Movement (1901-1947)

In 1903, the Assam Association was reorganised* with Manik Chandra Barua as its secretary, Raja Prabhat Narayan Barua as its president and Jagannath Barua as vice-president. Kamala Kanta Bhattacharyya and Radhanath Changkakati, the founder Editor of *Times of Assam*, were some of its members. This Association may be called the first political organisation in Assam through which the nationalist movement in Assam gathered pace.

In the meantime, growing flow of Bengali-*baboos* into Assam transported through British administrative hierarchy created a sense of danger in the minds of the Assamese people and demands for recognition of Assamese language as medium of instruction mounted up. Ananda Ram Dhekial Phukan put forth the demand in a strongly-worded written memorandum. There also grew a strong resentment in popular Assamese mind

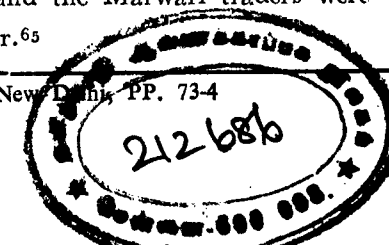
* By 1886 there appeared in the Province a number of popular organisations such as *Tezpur Ryot Sabha*, *Jarhat Sarbajanik Sabha*, the *Shillong Association*, *Nowgong Ryot Sabha* (Association), *Upper Assam Association*, *Sylhet Association*, *Habiganj People Association* and the *Assam Conference*. It is probable that after the suppression of so-called "Assam Riot" of 1893-94, the Government's repressive machinery was used against practically all local associations including the Upper Assam Association resulting in their loss of identity. The beginning of the twentieth century was thus marked by the re-appearance of Assam Association which for the first two decades of the present century served the people of Assam as their representative organisation. It was later to merge with the Assam Provincial Congress, affiliated to the Indian National Congress.

against hold of Bengali *baboos* over government jobs in Assam. As a result, in 1903, by a government resolution, it was declared that without previous sanction of the Chief Commissioner, Assam, no Govt. appointment in Assam were to be offered to any person who were not permanent bonafide residents of Assam. The resolution, however, guarded the interest of other people who had taken Assam as their permanent home. With the effort of Fuller, the then Chief Commissioner of Assam, in 1903, Assamese language was recognised as a separate independent language by the Calcutta University.⁶⁴

The first representative to the Provincial Council constituted under the Councils Act of 1892, for the new Eastern Bengal and Assam Legislative Council, was Manik Chandra Barua of Gauhati, who was the secretary to Assam Association and the representative from Assam Local Boards. In his maiden speech in the Council he declared that tagging of Assam with East Bengal was a mistake, as, though on the basis of population strength Assam's contribution to the revenue of the new province of East Bengal and Assam should have been 10% ; in fact revenue contribution from Assam was 33½% of the total and that means this tagging had inflicted heavier burden on Assam with much lesser benefit in terms of development.

The Swadeshi movement of 1905 also made an impact in Assam. At Gauhati, in 1905, an attempt was made by Ambika Giri Roy Choudhury and Govinda Lahiri to organise the local students in *Swadeshi* spirit. A group of Assamese students volunteered to work as labourers in Railway Stations and steamer *ghats* and to donate their earnings to the common fund organised for *Swadeshi* cause. *Pandas* of Kamakhya ceased to use beet sugar and Liverpool salt and the Marwari traders were induced to indent *Swadeshi* salt and sugar.⁶⁵

64. A. Guha : *Planters Raj to Swaraj*, 1977, New Delhi, PP. 73-4
65. *Ibid.* PP. 76-7.



However, after a prolonged political movement partition of Bengal was annulled on 12 December 1911 by a Royal Declaration and Assam was reverted again to a Chief Commissioner's Province. Sylhet was, however, kept tagged to Assam with ulterior political motive. In November 1912, the first Assam Legislative Council was created with 13 nominated and 12 elected members with the Chief Commissioner as its Chairman. The first representative from Kamrup as Local Board representative to the Council was Tarun Ram Phookan. The Provincial Council had no power to control budget of the province, though the representatives were allowed to criticise it. The budget, in fact, was an estimate from which the Government could at any time depart. No nation building programme could be undertaken by the Council due to the prevalent rigidity of financial system. The Chief Commissioner, after the second election of 1916, put off elections to the Council twice on the plea of anticipated reforms. So, in 1919, Tarun Ram Phookan and Radha Govinda Das (Sylhet) resigned on the ground of futility of the Council. Phari Dhar Chaliha also resigned in protest against a derogatory remark made against him from the Chairman. All these gave impetus to the freedom movement.

A demand for full provincial status for Assam was being voiced by Assam Association for a very long time and expected the aspiration to be materialised through proposed Constitutional Reforms of 1918. But due to objection from the Chief Commissioner, Assam, and the Surma Valley ITA, the status was denied to Assam. A deputation from Assam Association, headed by Nabin Chandra Bardaloi was sent to London by Assam Association to represent Assam's case before the Selbourne Committee of the House of Lords. As a result of the meeting Assam acquired the status of a full fledged Governor's Province under the Government of India Act 1919.

Under the leadership of Gandhiji* a non-cooperation movement was initiated in 1920. In Assam the political struggle was initiated by a

The foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 marks the beginning of a new era in the national movement of India. Though till 1921 there was in Assam no separate organisation of the Indian National Congress, representatives from Assam used to attend the Sessions of the Congress since its inception and took active parts in its deliberations. It is also to be mentioned here that before the establishment of Assam Provincial Congress Committee in 1921, most of the popular organisations in Assam maintained contact with other political organisations outside Assam which were poised to take an all-India character,

Khilafat meeting convened by the leaders at Gauhati on 10 March 1920. Chandra Nath Sarma, a young lawyer from Tezpur proved to be the main force in steering the Non-co-operation Movement in Assam through tactful inducement of the moderate elders like N.C. Bardaloi. A special Session of Assam Association was held on 11 October 1920, and chalked out the programme of Non-co-operation Movement in Assam which was to be in three parts —(1) boycott of the sale of excisable goods, (2) active promotion of hand-spun cloths and other *Swadeshi goods*, and (3) boycott of election to Provincial Council. As a response to the cause of Non-co-operation, Kaliram Barman of Gauhati withdrew nomination paper after scrutiny and Kumudram Bora, an already elected member to Council, resigned. The students of Sonaram High School demanded conversion of the School into a National School.

After adoption of Non-co-operation resolution at Nagpur Congress, movement started in full swing in Assam. Within a single fortnight in February 1921, more than 30 mass meetings were held in Kamrup alone. On 10 April 1921, the Provincial Khilafat Committee was formed at Gauhati and in the same month Gauhati Municipality withdrew its proposed civic address to the Governor. From January 1921, the students of Cotton College joined the movement *en masse* and abstained from classes. Half of the school-students of Kamrup were out of their classes for months as some of them dedicated to spread the *Swaraj* call.

As there was no separate provincial committee for Assam till 1920, N.C. Bardaloi was elected AICC member in Nagpur Congress Session from Bengal quota. There, the principle of linguistic province was adopted for future Congress Organisations and this necessitated constitution of Assam Provincial Congress Committee. The Committee was soon formed at Gauhati with Kuladhar Chaliha as president and Nabin Chandra Bardaloi as general secretary.

In August 1921 Mahatma Gandhi visited Gauhati and other towns of Assam. His visit infused the Assamese mass with tremendous inspiration. Non-co-operation movement went on in full swing and from November 1921, large-scale arrests of political leaders and workers started.

In Boko of Kamrup district peasants refused to pay land-revenue to British agents. A number of police and government officials resigned from the government services. *Saptahik Asamiya*, a weekly published from Gauhati was prosecuted for defamation of a British officer for publishing a report on defilement of Sundaridiya Satra at Barpeta by Captain Calvert in course of his operation. Jails were filled with non-co-operators. The British government exerted its full strength to suppress the movement by use of arms, and finally succeeded in quelling the agitation. On 12 February 1922, by a special resolution at Bardoli, the Indian National Congress called off the mass Civil Disobedience Movement.

At the end of May 1922, Omco Kumar Das attended AICC meeting and related the story of severe repression going on in Assam. Mahatma Gandhi and AICC then sent a two-member committee of Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya to study the situation in Assam. They came to Assam and visited several places including Boko and were deeply impressed at the extent of sufferings faced by the people for the cause of the Freedom Movement.

As a result of the movement, the British Government in Assam agreed to introduce measures for gradual decline of opium consumption in Assam. This was the most important achievement so far Assam was concerned.

Sudden calling off of mass Non-cooperation Movement by Congress prompted formation of All India Swarajya Party on 1 January 1923, for fighting reforms from within the Legislative Council, and in July 1923 Tarun Ram Phookan founded the Assam branch of Swarajya party with headquarters at Gauhati. In 1923 a sizeable number of seats of Assam Legislative Council were captured by the Swarajists while Tarun Ram Phookan himself was elected to the Indian Legislative Assembly. The Assam Legislative Council succeeded in cutting down the salary of Ministers from Rs. 3500/- p.m. to Rs. 1500/- p.m. and the Opium Prohibition Act also was passed on 3 March 1925.

In December 1926, the 41st Session of Indian National Congress was held at Gauhati-Pandu under the presidentship of S. Srinivas Iyengar.

Gandhiji and all other leaders took part in its deliberations. It was a grand success.

In December 1929, due to failure of the British Govt. to issue full Dominion Status to India, the Congress decided to launch Civil Disobedience Movement through resignation of membership from Legislature and non-payment of taxes and also to observe 26 January 1930 as the Independence Day for India. In response to this call, in Assam too, the First Independence Day was observed on 26 January 1930 with full enthusiasm. But there was a difference of opinion as to whether Assam's economic, cultural and linguistic interest would be in jeopardy if the Assamese members of Legislature who were so far guarding the interest of the Assamese people in the state, resigned. As a result of this, the Congress-Swarajists resigned their offices in the Provincial Congress. The situation was saved by Bishnu Ram Medhi, a devout Congress man and a very prominent member of Gauhati Bar, who volunteered to shoulder the responsibility of the Congress presidentship in Assam. So in April, 1930 after *Dandiyatra*, Bishnuram Medhi helped by Hem Chandra Barua, Dr. Bhubaneswar Barua, Omco Kumar Das, Siddhinath Sarma, Lakshidhar Sarma and others conducted the movement very successfully. Chandra Prova Saikiani and Durgaprova Bora took up picketing in front of Cotton College, Gauhati. This movement got spontaneous support from the rural mass. Streams of innumerable *Satyagrahis* faced *lathi* charge, arrests and other tortures and went to jail. Leaders were arrested. After arrest of Bishnuram Medhi, Jadav Prasad Chaliha, a staunch Congressite came to accept the presidentship of Assam Congress. There was a general student unrest in protest of a Govt. circular issued by Cunningham, D.P.I., Assam demanding from the students and guardians an undertaking for abstaining from joining politics. Some public High Schools like Kamrup Academy, Barpeta Bidyapith, etc, in Kamrup district were established by the nationalists. The movement dragged on till May 1934.

A general election throughout the country under the Govt. of India Act, 1935 was held in February 1937. The results confirmed the Congress popularity among the masses. In Assam, it became the biggest single majority party by capturing 33 seats out of 108 seats. The Congress failing to gain absolute majority in the House decided to sit in the opposition. This decision was taken by the Assam Provincial Congress Committee in a meeting held at Barpeta on 14 March 1937.⁶⁶ Md. Saadullah formed a coalition party with the help of European, tribal and other

66. *Political History of Assam*, Vol-II, Govt. of Assam, 1978, pp. 336-37.

non-tribal groups and made the claim to form the Government. The Governor accordingly invited him to form the Government. The coalition ministry of Saadullah had to face a torrid time as it had met a number of reverses at the hands of combined opposition. To save the position, Saadullah decided to join the Muslim League party with a view to obtaining the support of the Muslim League and other Muslim Independents. To materialise this scheme, Saadullah submitted his resignation and re-constituted his second Coalition Government on 5 February 1938. This time also his Government was not placed on a firm saddle. Facing a no-confidence motion tabled by the combined opposition groups, Saadullah decided to quit voluntarily on 13 September 1938.

The Congress party under the leadership of G.N. Bardoloi with the support of the Tribal League decided to form the next Coalition Government. With the help and guidance of Subhas Chandra Bose, the Congress president, Bardoloi formed the Congress Coalition ministry on 20 September 1938.

The Bardoloi ministry was successful in enjoying more autonomy than its predecessor--Saadullah ministry. The parliamentary system of Government was proved to be a success despite many initial set backs and short-comings. The Congress ministry took the initiative in settling the long-drawn Digboi AOC strike. In the same way the party could claim credit for enacting the Agricultural Income Tax Bill despite facing stiff opposition from the European tea-planters bloc.⁶⁷

Meanwhile, the Second World War started in September 1939 and India was dragged into the fray against Germany by the British Government without even having semblance of consultation/confabulation with Indian public opinion leaders. The nationalist opinion felt humiliated. The Congress ministries functioning in various Provinces were asked to resign in protest by the Congress high command. Accordingly, Bardoloi submitted his resignation on 15 November 1939. Third time, Saadullah formed a coalition ministry on 17 November 1939 and pledged its full support to the British war effort. Saadullah contributed rupees one lakh from the State exchequer to the war fund. Under his leadership a vigorous fund collection drive was made throughout the province. The Congress party in Assam opposed these moves and criticised the Government for using force and coercive methods to exact money from the public.

The Congress under the leadership of Gandhiji decided to move on with its own constructive programme and at the same time to make all preparations for future *Satyagraha*. *Satyagrahis* were enrolled in large numbers and trained at various centres. In October 1940, Gandhiji

67. *Ibid*, pp. 360-1.

gave the call for Individual Civil Disobedience campaign on the basis of a slogan that it is wrong to help the British war effort, with men and money. The only worthy effort is to resist all wars with non-violent resistance. The Assam Congress leaders started offering *Satyagraha* from December 1940. G.N. Bardoloi offered *Satyagraha* at Gauhati on 11 December 1940 and suffered one year's imprisonment. Almost all the top-ranking Congress leaders of Kamrup district offered *satyagraha* and courted imprisonment. As per decision of the Congress high command Individual *satyagraha* was suspended in December 1941. G.N. Bardoloi and his colleagues decided to re-enter the Assembly to resume their parliamentary activities as per decision of the Congress Working Committee. The presence of Congress members in the Assembly caused a lot of inconvenience to Saadullah and his Government. An ugly situation developed when Cotton College students staged protest demonstration against holding of an exhibition inside the College premises for collection of War fund. This led to a students' procession on 6 December 1941 where in police resorted to a ruthless assault on the unarmed students. Forty students were wounded and more than two hundred suffered minor injuries. In protest, Gauhati observed a *hartal* on 7 December 1941. Protest meetings were held elsewhere in Assam and the Government action was thoroughly condemned. As a precautionary measure the Government closed down the educational institutions for three weeks. The incident also made its echo in the Assam Assembly. Rohini Kumar Choudhury, minister-in-charge, Education left Saadullah Government in protest against mishandling of the Gauhati incident by the Government. Finding no alternative, Saadullah submitted his resignation on 12 December 1941. Saadullah's resignation caused an impasse in the Government as no one was prepared to form an alternative Government. The Government by a proclamation took over the administration of the Province under Section 93 of the Government of India Act, 1935.⁶⁸

Saadullah, during his third stint in the administration, mainly introduced the land development scheme with a view to providing land to land hungry peasants mostly coming from Eastern Bengal. As a sequel to opening up of grazing reserves and waste lands, a continuous process of influx of outsiders took place and almost all vacant lands (about one lakh *Bighas* of land) were grabbed by the Muslim immigrants. With a view to giving protection to indigenous agriculturists, the Government

68. *Ibid*, Vol.-III, pp 25, 41-44.

in 1920 introduced the Line System. But this was always treated by the Muslim League and other Muslim political groups as unwanted hindrance in the natural inflow of human migration. The Assam *Samrakshini Sabha* under the leadership of Ambikagiri Roy Choudhury strongly opposed the settlement of immigrants in Assam and viewed it as a menace to Assamese race and culture. Saadullah's Government was very unpopular particularly to the local people on two accounts—his land development scheme and Census policy of 1941. Immediately on his exit from the Government, the Governor assuming full power scrapped the land development scheme of the previous Government.⁶⁹

Meanwhile a part of the war theatre also shifted to the Assam front and subsequently the socio-economic and political situation of the Province further deteriorated. Besides, hundreds of Indian origin war-evacuees from Burma entered into the Province. Relief camps sprang up at various points. The Congress *Santi Senas* also came forward to offer help and assistance to the war ravaged people. The British Government also made an attempt to win over Indian nationalist opinion by sending Cripps Mission to India in March 1942. Cripps proposals were far from satisfactory from the nationalist point of view and as such were rejected outright by the Congress. Gandhiji's thinking immediately after this *faux-pass*, gradually moved towards a mass action plan for launching a countrywide Civil disobedience campaign. The All India Congress Committee met in Bombay on 7 August 1942 and passed the Quit India resolution as initiated by Gandhiji. The British Government moved swiftly and on 9 August arrested all the top-ranking Congress leaders including Gandhiji and his wife and detained them in various prisons. The whole Congress organization was declared unlawful. The Assam Congress leaders were also arrested almost simultaneously with the all India leaders. The *Santi Sena* organization which was actively involved in the rural areas was also declared unlawful. Meetings, *hartal*, processions, etc., were prohibited. Large scale press censorship was imposed. The Government's repressive measures proved counter-productive as a spontaneous mass movement swept over the whole country. Although the movement was launched initially as a non-violent civil disobedience movement it lapsed into wide spread violence and terrorist activities varying in intensity occurred from place to place. In Assam also Government buildings were attacked and communication-systems were disrupted at various places. Military supply lines were dislocated. Post and telegraph buildings, police stations, rail-

69. *Ibid*, Vol-III, pp. 261-65.

way stations, inspection bungalows, school buildings, etc, could not escape people's wrath. An aerodrome at Sapna near Sorbhog was raided and military stores, post office, police station were destroyed and set ablaze by the local people. Police resorted to firing on 25 September at three places—Jalah, Rehabari and Nityananda, killing Madan Chandra Barman, a student and Rautaram Boro and injuring eight persons seriously. A military train was derailed in between Panikhaiti and Panbari station on 24 November 1942 killing the driver, fireman and four other military personnel. Another serious derailment took place near Rangiya on 9 March 1943 due to sabotage. Hemchandra Barua, a prominent Congress leader, who was not arrested earlier due to his illness, now tried to organize and lead the underground resistance movement from Gauhati. This movement took a serious turn in the Bajali-Nalbari-Tihu region. The movement was also intensified in Barpeta, Jalah, Pattacharkuchi and Tarabari areas. At Bajali a *Panchayat* was formed to run the local administration. A vigorous no-tax campaign was also launched particularly in the Nalbari-Tihu circles. The college and school students and other village youths took leadership in organizing demonstrations, sabotages and other agitational activities locally at Gauhati, Palasbari, Chhaygaon, Boko, Barpeta and Bajali areas. Government repression was equally at its highest point. Collective fines were imposed. Police and armed troops carried out relentless raids in the whole of North Kamrup, Sorbhog, Nalbari and Tihu areas.⁷⁰

As the Government was found to be most unresponsive, Gandhiji resorted to a 21-day's fasting commencing from 9 February 1943 within the four walls of the prison. He successfully completed the fast on 3 March 1943. The Government released Gandhiji on 6 May 1944. From mid-1945, the Government of Assam also started releasing political prisoners in a phased manner. Since, May 1945 the war also took a favourable turn for the Allied Powers. There was a transition of power in Britain too. The Labour Party under Attlee formed the Government there. General Elections to the central and provincial Assemblies in India were soon held and Congress emerged victorious in majority provinces. In Assam, it captured 58 seats out of 108 seats. Under the leadership of G. N. Bardoloi, the second Congress ministry was installed on 11 February 1946.

With a view to granting full self-Government in India the Cabinet Mission came to India on 23 March 1946 and started discussions with

70. *Ibid*, vol-III, pp. 54-133

Indian political leaders. The Cabinet Mission proposed a constitution making process and a three-tier administrative set up in the centre, the groups and the provinces. Assam particularly felt much agitated on the issue of grouping clause which wanted to tag the province with Bengal in section C to frame the group and provincial constitutions. Assam under the leadership of G.N. Bardoloi vehemently opposed the grouping system. Gauhati became the nerve centre of the anti-grouping agitation. The student community and *Asam Jatiya Maha Sabha* under the leadership of A.G. Roy Choudhury carried out a relentless battle against the grouping system. Demonstrations, *hartals*, protest meetings were held almost in all the towns of the Brahmaputra valley. At this crucial hour, Gandhiji came forward and lent his moral support to the Assam Congress leaders who were emboldened to oppose the grouping system at the highest forum. Facing stiff opposition from Assam, the Congress had to modify its stand *vis-a-vis* the grouping system. This ultimately resulted into rejection of the plan by the Muslim League. The Viceroy then moved ahead in forming an interim Government, in which initially the League declined to participate. Instead, the League decided to enter into a direct confrontation with Congress by giving a call for direct action to achieve Pakistan.⁷¹ This resulted into a communal frenzy where in thousands of people in Bengal and Bihar perished. The political situation in the country had gone from bad to worse. A new Governor General Lord Mountbatten took over the reins of administration in New Delhi. The new Viceroy immediately realised that the grouping system was not workable, instead he devised the partition scheme to satisfy the League's demand for Pakistan. Finally, the British Government accorded its approval to the Mountbatten plan to which the Congress and the League also gave their consent. As a sequel to these developments two independent dominions—India and Pakistan emerged in the world map on 15 August, 1947.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS IN KAMRUP DISTRICT :

Architecture : The district is associated with a glorious past and hence it is rich in its archaeological remains, particularly of the early or pre-Ahom period. Its headquarters Gauhati, which was known as "Pragjyotishpur" in times of the Epics, is a place of antiquarian interest. The Dighali tank and quite a few remains such as sculptures, chiselled stones, old bricks, and pottery scattered within this town are the chief existing mementos of old city of "Pragjyotishpur". Local tradition says that the *Swayambara* of Bhanumati, the daughter of Bhagadatta, was held with pomp and ceremony on the bank of the Dighali tank. The few chiselled stones, that are still lying on the eastern bank of the tank, are components of probably a medieval stone temple.

71. Ibid, Vol-III, pp. 321-497.

On the northern side of the Vishnu Janardana temple, on the Sukreswara hillock, there is a row of five carvings on rock facing the Brahmaputra. The Principal image of the row is that of Vishnu Janardana and flanked on the right by Suryya and Ganesh and on the left by Durga and another figure too-mutilated to admit of its identification with precision. The Principal image is huge in size and very rich in jewellery. The rock-cut images have been preserved by the Archaeological Survey of India under the 'Ancient Monuments and Archaeological sites and Remains Act. These sculptures can be assigned to C. 11th century A.D. from the stylistic point of view

The image of Suryya and those of the ten incarnations of Vishnu, in the Urvasi, a small stone island situating in the middle of the Brahmaputra near Umananda are another set of fine carvings on rock. The rock-cut image of Mahisamardini Durga on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra near Railway waterworks, Gauhati, is an interesting image of the mother goddess, in view of the fact that it has eighteen hands,—a rare manifestation of the goddess. Another important image that has been removed to the Assam State Museum, Gauhati, from that place is that of Nataraja (Lord Siva). The Lord Siva, holding different attributes with his ten hands is seen dancing in full vigour and graced over his vehicle Nandi who is looking up to his master with wonder. This is a piece of another best specimen of Assamese sculptures. Amongst the beautiful pieces of sculptures that have been found in Gauhati are those of Mahesa aspect of Siva and Narasingha *Avatar*. These are now decorating the sculptural gallery of the Assam State Museum, Gauhati. These images date back to C. 10th century A.D.

A beautiful image of *Anantasayee* Vishnu has been enshrined in the Aswakanta temple, on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, just opposite to Sukreswara hillock reportedly brought over from Nepal. The exact date of the image cannot be determined. This image may be dated to 11th century A.D. There are quite a few beautiful sculptures all over the Kamakhya Hills. The Archaeological Survey of India has preserved rock-cut images of Mahabhairaba, Ganesha, and a doorlintel containing temple motifs on its western slope of the Hill. A stone gateway with pointed arch and the wall decorated with heraldic looking lions and full bloom lotuses has also been preserved by the Archaeological Survey of India. These were found near about the image of Ganesh and the door-lintel designs on the western foot path of the hill.

Late K. N. Dikshit says, the stone gateway leading to the top of the hill from the west probably dates from the time of Nara Narayana,

the Koch king who repaired the Kamakhya temple. (vide Archaeological Survey of India Annual Report, 1923-24.)

A visitor will also find a few sculptures of artistic merit on the walls of the temple itself. Amongst them, the sculptures depicting mother and the child and Benugopal invite the attention of the visitors. An image of Bhubaneswari and Agni, and a female figure with artistic pose have been removed to the Assam State Museum, Gauhati, from Kamakhya Hills.

The date of the sculptures of Kamakhya Hills, ranges from 6th to 17th century A. D.

There are quite a few rock-cut images of Ganesha near about Gauhati. Among them, one at Ganesguri on the way to Vasishta, and another near Jorabat on the way to Shillong, are worth mentioning. These are enshrined in temples and regularly worshipped.

Ruins at a place locally called Madan Kamadev Parbat, Charali, in the north bank of the Brahmaputra, about fourteen miles from Gauhati, are still in existence. A few sculptures are lying scattered there. The Principal image of Madan Kamadev is still worshipped by the people of the locality. In fact this image is not of Madan-Rati or as the local people call it Madan Kamadev, but is an *Umatungamurti* with a humped bull noticeable at the feet of the Lord. The ruins in question belong to 11th/12th century.

Inscription : There were more than thirty-five stone inscriptions throughout the district of Kamrup, some of which have been irretrievably lost due to the ravages of time and human vandalism, belong to the late medieval period of Assam, issued by the Koch and principally by the **Ahom Kings**. The earliest of them is the Umachal rock Inscription of Surendravarman near Umachal Asram in the Kamakhya Hills. The inscription is in a very good condition. It records the erection of a cave temple by the illustrious Maharajadhiraj Surendravarman, for the most worshipful Balabhadra Swamin. Surendravarman belonged to the 5th century. Another important stone inscription is the Kanai Barasi Rock Inscription at Raja Duar, North Gauhati. It records that on the thirteenth of Chaitra, in the year Saka 1127 corresponding to 1205 A.D., the Turks coming into Kamarupa, were destroyed. Rai Bahadur K. L. Barua says that this was the first Mohammadan host to enter Kamarupa led by Mohammad, son of Bukhtiyar, in the year 1205-06 A.D. The Duargorila rock inscription, at the foot of the Kamakhya Hills, near Maligaon, is a protected monument. The inscription records the erection of a Stone gateway (pucca) in Saka 1654 during the reign of Siva Singha. The most important copper plate inscription is the "Doobi" Copper Plate Inscription of Kumar Bhaskarvarman of the early seventh century A. D. It was

discovered in the village Doobi near Pathsala Railway Station in the Barpeta Sub-division. The inscription records initial victory of the two young princes Bhaskaravarman and his brother Supratisthitavarman over the king of Gaud (North Bengal), independent of any other source of help. It is now preserved in the Assam State Museum, Gauhati.

Generally every temple in Kamarup has one or more stone inscriptions attached to it. It was the custom of the Ahom Kings to put an inscribed slate of stone to each temple bearing an eulogy of the kings, by whose orders the temples were constructed. Such inscriptions are dated with Saka.

The Ahom kings granted lands to the temples (*devalayas* and *satra*) the pirs for their maintenance. Such land grants had been recorded in the copper plate charters.

Recent Ambari finds indicates that extensive excavation of Gauhati and nearby sites is sure to bring many old and worthy facts on Kamarupa into light.

TEMPLE :

There are no less than thirty three temples in Kamrup supported by grants of revenue free or *nisf-khiraj* land in addition to the smaller temples on the Nilachal and six temples in other parts of the district which have no regular endowments. The names of these temples, the mauzas in which they are situated, the area of their land grants, and their founders and the date of their foundation where known, will be found in a statement appended to the old Gazetteer. The two oldest and by far the wealthiest and the most important are the temples of Kamakhya and (Madhab temple) of Hajo.

Kamakhya : Kamakhya is known as a *Pitha*, i.e. a holy seat or resort of the mother goddess in which she is represented to be constantly living in some form together with a Bhairava i.e. a form of her husband Siva. The *Saktas* hold that Devi or Sati or Parvati, wife of Siva went uninvited to a sacrifice organised by her father and to which were invited all the gods and goddesses except Siva and his wife Sati. She was insulted by her father and so intense was her grief that she breathed her last then and there. Siva on hearing this flew into a terrible rage, destroyed the sacrifice and then in his inconsolable grief took his beloved consort's body on the shoulders and began to wander in a mad dance

(*tandava*). Vishnu with a view to freeing Siva from his infatuation followed Siva unobserved and cut the Sati's dead body in pieces by his discus (*chakra*). The places where the fifty—one pieces of Sati's dead body fell are considered to have become *pithas*. It is believed that the genital organ of Sati fell on the Nilachal hill near Gauhati, where she came to be worshipped as Kamakhya. The temple is said to have been first created by Naraka of the epic age. In course of time the temple disappeared and had sank into oblivion. Viswasingha, the first Koch king however had the fortune to rediscover the holy spot by accident. He built a temple on the hill but it was shortly afterwards destroyed by the Mahammedan fanatic Kala Pahar. In 1565 A. D. the temple was rebuilt by Naranarayan, the illustrious Koch king and since then it is decorating the hill. Late R. D. Banerjee, a reputed archaeologist, gives a vivid description of the temple in the Archaeological Survey of India Annual Report, 1924-25, as follows :—

"The down part of the Sanctum of the temple is in good preservation. Here we find dados of the Khajuraho or the Central Indian type, consisting of sunken panels alternating with pilasters and below them the plinth mouldings of an older temple of the same type as that discovered at Tezpur. The images and architectural fragments belonging to the Koch temple lie scattered on all sides of the main temple at Kamakhya and can be recognised by the crude outline of the human figure. While the plinth of the *mandapa* of the main temple at Kamakhya has become covered by the levelling up of the court-yard, the plinth mouldings of the sanctum can be seen inside as hollow pit lined with stone. We can thus see three successive stages of buildings on this site."

A paved causeway, which, as the tradition say, was constructed by Naraka, thousands of years ago, rises from the Trunk Road to the spur on which the temple stands. The path is steep and the boulders have been worn to a slippery smoothness by the feet of generations of pilgrims. A motorable pitch-road running in a serpentine way down from the foot of the hill up to the temple has been constructed by the Government of Assam in 1957 and hardship in climbing the hill has thus been eliminated.

Hayagriva Madhava Devālaya : Hajo is situated 26 kilometres and 23 kilometre to the north-west of Gauhati and Amingaon station respectively. All the shrines here are located on hills. The most important of the temples, the Hayagriva Madhava temple, stands on the summit of a low hill called Maniparbat (Manikut-parbat) and is approa-

ched by a long flight of steps. It is said to have been originally built by Aurba Rishi (Sage Aurba) and was rebuilt by Koch king Raghudeva in 1583 A. D. after it was destroyed by Mahammedans. It is built of stone and is attached with a pillared hall in front. There are two other images of Madhava, one image of Basudeva and one image of Garuda on the either side of the main idol. The outside walls of the temple are decorated with sculptures of Hindu gods and goddesses. The elephant figure at the basement is the special feature of the temple. There are three inscriptions of the Ahom period inside the temple. It is rather difficult to identify the image in shrine with precision. Col. Dalton has described the image as follows :—

"The Brahmans call the object of worship Madhava, the Buddhist call it Mahamuni, the Great Sage. It is, in fact, simply a colossal image of Buddha in stone (vide J. A. S. B. 1855 LVVI p.8)." Even till this day, this temple is visited by Buddhists from Tibet and Bhutan, who regard it as a holy place of pilgrimage. The following quotation from Dr. Waddel's book "Lamaism" may be of interest to the readers.

"In regard to the site of Buddha's death, the Lamas have placed it in Assam. In conversation, some years ago, with Lamas and Lay-Buddhists at Darjeeling I was surprised to hear that Assam contained a most holy place of Buddhist pilgrimage called "Tsam-Ch-Dum" which, it is alleged, next to the great temple at Buddha-Gaya, was the most holy spot a Buddhist visits. Assam is usually regarded as being far beyond the limits of the Buddhist Holy Land and the Chinese Pilgrims, Fahian and Hiuen Tsang in the fifth and seventh centuries to whom we are mainly indebted for our knowledge of ancient Buddhist geography, only do not mention any holy site in Assam, but Hiuen Tsang, who visited Gauhati at the invitation of the king of Kamrup, positively notes the absence of Buddhist building in Assam."

Kedarnath Temple : Hajo area is full of temples. There is a Siya temple in Kedar Parbat which is also known as Madanachal. On the eastern side of the path leading to Kedar from Madhav, there is Ganeswar Devalaya. At its *agnikon* there is Gokarna Parbat near which situates a tank called *Apunarbhava*. There are some caves in that hillock and one of the cave is called *Swargadwara*. The tradition goes that whoever takes bath in the tank, avoids rebirth.

Kedarnath : It is also a stone temple. The object of worship is a *Sivalinga* of rough new stone. There is a stone inscription inside

the temple which records that the thorough repairs to the structure were done by Tarun Bar Phukan during the reign of the Ahom king Rajeswar Singha. Huge crowd assemble here on the Siva Ratri every year.

The Kamaleswar, Kameswar and Ganesh temples which situate in the nearby areas, are more recent than the Madhav and Kedarnath temples.

Powa Mecca :

The Powa Mecca Mosque stands on the highest of the hills in the neighbourhood of Hajo. A Persian stone inscription is attached to the wall of the mosque which records that the mosque was built by Mir Lutfullah Shiraz, 72 in 1067 Hijri during the reign of Emperor Shahjahan. There is a stone tomb of Ghiasuddin in front of the mosque. It is said that it has one fourth sanctity of Mecca and hence it is known as *Powa-Mecca*. It came under Ancient Monument Preservation Act now superseded by the "Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act." Hajo is, therefore, a meeting place of pilgrims professing Hindu, Buddhist and Mohammedan religions.

In and around Gauhati, there are quite a few temples and they are built after the usual Ahom pattern and consist of a dome enclosing the shrine. The materials used are then bricks and the dome is generally adorned with stone base relief let into the wall. The temples are more or less in a ruinous condition. There are two such temples on the west of the hill on which the Bungalow of the Deputy Commissioner stand. The presiding deity of the *Janardana* temple is Vishnu Janardana, which is the prototype but smaller in size of the rock-cut image of Vishnu Janardana already mentioned. The image is in a very good state of preservation.

There is one Siva temple on the pea-cock island of *Umananda*, which is in the middle of the Brahmaputra. The temple was constructed under the orders of Godadhar Singha in Saka 1616-corresponding to 1694 A.D.

Ugratara : In the Uzanbazar area, about a furlong to the east of the Dighalipukhuri, is the temple of Goddess *Ugratara* another form of Goddess Durga, and a pair of tanks (*Jor Pukhuri*) attached to it. The temple was built in Saka 1647, corresponding to 1725 A. D. under orders of Siva Singha. The stone slab inscription, attached to the tanks records that the tanks were dug under order of his Queen Phuleswari.

72. Mir Lutfullah of Shiraz is mentioned in the Alamgirnama as the Faujdar of Kamrup and Hajo in A. H. 1068 (vide J.A.B.N. 1, 1872, p. 13).

Navagraha Devalaya : Another temple is *Navagraha*, located on Chitrachal hill on the eastern side of Gauhati. In *Kalika Purana* this place has been mentioned as the study centre of Astrology. The temple was rebuilt in 1752 A. D. by the Ahom king Rajeswar Singha. The temple suffered a heavy damage during the famous earthquake of 1897. At about 1 furlong south from the temple down below there was a nine-sided tank called *Silpukhuri* constructed by the same king. The tank now became round. Recently the temple construction committee has constructed a new temple on the old plinth after the original structure and architecture and the tank below has been renovated by the Gauhati Municipality. Here the object of worship are nine planets (*Navagraha*). Each planet is represented by a Linga on Yoni-pith and draped with cloth and adorned with flowers by the priests. In *Kalika Purana* it is stated that here (*Pragjyotishpur*) Brahma first created the planets. The temple of *Navagraha* bears eloquent testimony to this. Even to this day, *Navagraha* has been the centre of astrological studies.

A little to the east of *Navagraha* on the Kanwachal hill, a few Siva lingas on *Yoni piths* and some ancient relics of chiselled stones and bricks, have been recently unearthed in the process of levelling the top of the hill for constructing houses by the Government of Assam (P.W.D. Department). The antiquity of these *piths* and *lingams* has not yet been established. Among the Siva *lingas*, there is a group of eight Siva *lingas* on *Yoni Piths* placed in a circular manner. These eight Siva *lingas* may represent *Astamurtis* i.e. eight different aspects of Lord Siva.

Basisthasrama :

About thirteen kilometer south of Gauhati is the temple *Basistha* on the slope of the Sandhyachal hill. The temple which reportedly contains the foot-prints of Basistha Muni was constructed by the Ahom king Sir Rajeswar Singha in the year 1764 A. D. corresponding to the Saka era 1686. At about a furlong towards the west of *Basisthasrama*, there is a huge stone called *Arundhati*, wife of sage *Basistha*. The popular belief is that anybody, if ardently expresses an extent wish in the place and plants a stick in memoriam, gets the wish fulfilled.

Sukreswar Devalaya : The huge *lingam* worshipped in this temple is said to have been established by Sukracharyya. However the temple was constructed by the Ahom king Rajeswar Singha. In Kamrup *Buranji*, the hillock has been described as *Hasti Parbat*. According to some scholars this hillock is the very hillock mentioned as *Hastachal* in *Yogini Tantra*. This temple is one of the two temples situated on the west of the present bungalow of the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup.

Bhubaneswari Mandir. Situated in the Brahma Parbat peak above Kamakhya, temple of Kamakhya was rebuilt in 1566 by the Koch Raja Naranarayan. Different temples attached to the main temple of Goddess Kamakhya were constructed by the Ahom kings Rajeswar Singha, Gaurinath Singha and Pramatta Singha. Different sculptures, said to have been carved in different periods from 8th to 17th century A. D., are to be found on the body of the temple.

Urvasi Kunda : There are images of the Sun God, Vishnu and his ten incarnations near the *Kunda* (tank). There are some curious symbols engraved in four statges, the meaning or significance of which could not be deciphered. During the British regime the *Kunda* was filled up and a white tall pillar with white steps were constructed there to serve the purpose of a light house for steamers plying in the Brahmaputra.

Pandunath As per tradition, Vishnu during his Varaha incarnation killed two demons called Madhu and Kaitava here by using his thigh as an altar. An allaged thighmark on a stone left by Vishnu at that place is being worshipped as Pandunath. There are five stone images reportedly of the five Pandavas in the temple. The temple was probably built by Raghudeva, the Koch king. This temple situates on the north-western side of the Kamakhya hill.

Chatrakar Devalaya On a small hillock situated on the south of Uzanbazar steamerghat, stands the temple of Mangalchandi. The image is built of *Astadhatu*. According to Kamrup *Buranji* the hillock is called Dwitiya Madanachal while the Yogini Tantra called it Chatrakargiri. The temple was built by Kamaleswar Singha in 1795. The peculiarity of the temple is that the walls of the temple were seven to eight feet thick made of native bricks set layer by layer.

Manikarneswar : Situated on *Manisaila* at Rajaduar of North Gauhati, there is a tank called Manikarna near the Siva temple constructed by Rajeswar Singha in 1677 Saka on this hillock. The tank has been eroded by the Brahmaputra. The temple is called Manikarneswar. The sight of the temple with the great swirling river beneath rushing away during the monsoon becomes breathtakingly beautiful. It can be developed into a very good tourist spot.

Ashwaklanta Temple : On the north bank of the Brahmaputra the two temples stand on a rocky promontory called *Aswaklanta* Hill. The temples were built during the reign of Siva Singha and dedicated to *Udana*. The one below belongs to the *Kurma* incarnation of Vishnu and the

temple above contains the Vishnu image in sleeping posture on *Ananta-Naga Saja* - which is supposed to be the only image of Vishnu of this kind so far discovered in the north-east area. The story goes that the presiding deity of the temple, Krishna, halted here with Rukmini on his way back from Kaundil Nagar (modern Sadiya) to Dwarka, and the holes, now visible on the slopes of the rock, are said to have been made by his horses' hooves.

Bilweswar Devalaya : Situated in Belsor village near Nalbari. *Billashree* had been mentioned in the *Yogini Tantra*. The original temple was built during the pre-Ahom period. Subsequently during the reign of King Lakshmi Singha the temple was rebuilt in A.D. 1777-78.

Parihareswar Devalaya : The Siva temple at Dubi in Bajali *Pargana* was constructed by Siva Singha in 1662 Saka era. As per tradition the original *lingam* was on a hillock called *Durbalgiri* which went under water at the spot. The present temple was constructed on the rocks of the once sunk hillock. Rani Phuleswari - the queen *Regalia* of Sivasingha established one image of Goddess Durga there and introduced worship of the Goddess through *Devdasi* dance.

Godanta : On the north of Aswaklanta, there are four small hillocks. On the fourth hillock there is a Siva temple. Near the temple towards Aswaklanta there is a natural water reservoir called *Sita kunda*. In between *Sitakunda* and Aswaklanta there is a stream called *Sontandhara*. The tradition goes that barren women also can have children by bathing in that stream.

Pingaleswar Temple :

To the North-East of the temple of Madan Kamdeva about fourteen miles away from Guwahati at Hastachal we find the Pingaleswar temple of Lord Shiva, the date of establishment still unknown. Now only the remnants of the temple prevail. The old remains of the temple is now being preserved by the Department of State Archaeology. On its base a new temple has been erected by the people.

On the east of Gopeswar, south-west of Pingaleswar and at about 22 kms. north from Gauhati, there is a hillock called Madana Kamadev Parbat. There lies the ruins of a number of temples. Some of the ruins contain images of Siva and his various aspects, *Surya* and erotic figures besides the principal images of Uma-Moheswara. Some call this principal image *Madan-Rati*, while others call them *Umalingam*, i.e. Siva and Uma in embrace.

Other temples lying scattered in the district are (1) Gopeswar, (2) Bhringeswar (3) Dharieswar (4) Siddheswar (5) Agni Baneswar (6) Bagheswari (7) Godadhar-Madhab and Jagannath-Narad temple of

Girikachal (8) Madhab Temple of Chandra parbat, and (9) Sahasrasnan Siva temple at Indra parbat.

Besides these temples, there are innumerable *Thans*, *Satras*, *Kirtanghars* and *Namghars* in the district. The *Thans* of Bodo-Kachari's are generally called *Bura-Burir than* where *Baathubrai* (Siva) and *Kham-Maikha* (Kamakhya or Parbati) are worshipped.

Other historically important places :

Barnagar which was formerly the capital of the Koch king Balin narayan and Parikshit Narayan is situated about three miles (five Kilometer) south of Sarbhog Railway Station in Barpeta Sub-division. The site is even now covered with fruit trees and tanks indicating human habitation.

Hawli about seven miles north of Barpeta is another place of historical and archaeological interest. It was the capital of Chandi Barua, a Chieftain of the locality during the last part of the Ahom rule. A few interesting bell-metal utensils said to have belonged to Chandi Barua, have been recently discovered in a pit near the Hatkhola of Howli. These are now preserved in the Assam State Museum Gauhati.

The *Baidargarh* or *Phinguagarh* near Betna, in Rangiya Circle, is another important antiquity. It is a square enclosure or fort surrounded by embankments each of which is some 7 (seven) kilometre in length. It is said to have been the capital of king Arimatta and constructed by **Baidvadeva**.

There are many ramparts of the Ahom period near about Gauhati and North Gauhati. Amongst them the *Momai Katagarh* about three miles west of Gauhati is associated with the glory of the famous battle of Saraighat. Here Lachit Barphukan the Governor of Lower Assam and the Commander in Chief of the Ahom Army killed his uncle for dereliction of duty on the battlefield. There is a *Silsako* in North Gauhati which joins *Rangmahal* and *Rajaduar* - the two important royal sites of Ahom administration situated in the area.

The **Gohain Kamala Ali** which was constructed by the Koch King Naranarayan, still serves as the high road through the North Kamrup.

Barpeta is the headquarter town of Barpeta Sub-division, in the district of Kamrup. It is the centre of the *Mahapurusa Dharma* promulgated by Sri Sankardev in the fifteenth century. Its *Kirtanghar* (the congregational prayer hall) which is about 120 cubics in length and 30 cubits in breadth is

the biggest *Kirtanghar* in Assam. The *Kirtanghar* has been re-constructed with marble stones and cement concrete on the foundation of the old one. There are two temples inside the compound of the *Satra* (Vaishnava monastery). The one which is called "*Math*" belongs to Ahom period. The other one with seven steps around is modern. The imposing gate of the compound of the *Satra* is highly ornamental and quite modern. Some more details of this *Satra* will be found in the People Chapter.

Near Barpeta situates *Patbausi Satra* where Sri Sankardeva stationed and continued his religious discourses. Another important *Satra* near Barpeta is *Sundaridiya Satra* from where Sri Madhav Dev, the prime disciple of Sri Sankardev conducted his religious activities. The wooden gates and walls decorated with motifs made of brass are subjects of interesting study for students of religion and arts.

Names of the *Thans*, *Dorgah*, *Churches* and *Satras* of Kamrup are as follows :—*

Thans :

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Rajadhip of Barnagar. | 17. Bhogeswar Gosair Than of Uluwa gaon. |
| 2. Garakhia Than of Barnagar. | 18. Kali Than of Dhopguri. |
| 3. Telania Gosain Than of Barnagar. | 19. Kamakhya Than of Kshetri. |
| 4. Joypal Than of Bahjani Mauza. | 20. Sadasiva Than of Dhopguri. |
| 5. Kali Than of Balilecha. | 21. Gonesh Mondir of Kshetri hillock. |
| 6. Buraburir Than and <i>Bhangara</i> Than of Uper Barbhag. | 22. Pita-matar Than of Batiapara-goan, Mirza. |
| 7. Buragosair Than of Kardaitalagaon - Nalbari. | 23. Barkaiya Than of Batiapara. |
| 8. Jagannath Than of Kotalkuchi. | 24. Dudhkuwari Than of Palasbari. |
| 9. Basudev Than of Balikaria. | 25. Laheswari and Dharieswari Than of Bamundi. |
| 10. Gangapukhuri Than of Barkuriha. | 26. Phalamurar Than of Mirza. |
| 11. Kadamtoli Than of Kamarkuchi. | 27. Dakhalabma Gosair than of new Palashbari. |
| 12. Dhamdhama Than of Jurikona. | 28. Nakkati <i>olias</i> Nizeswari than of Mirza. |
| 13. Gopal Than of Budrukuchi and Gopal Than of Chandkuchi. | 29. Satir Than of Rajapukhuri. |
| 14. Kharjhanar Than of Nalbari. | 30. Lankeswar Than of Jalukbari. |
| 15. Maharudra Buragosair Than of Arangmur. | 31. Rangamatir Than of Palashbar. |
| 16. Bhatuki Garakhia Gosair Than of Bajali. | 32. Bhuti Rajar Than, Kujideo, Bajali. |

Satras :

- | |
|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Barkuariha Saru Bura Ata Sachang. |
| 2. Satsangi Alga satra of Barkuriha. |

* *Pabitra Asom* by Assam Sahitya Sabha, 2nd Edition, 1969, pp 224-301.

3. Barpeta satra.
4. Ganak kuchi satra.
5. Sundardia satra.
6. Na-satra
7. Patbausi satra.
8. Jania satra.
9. Sunpora bheti satra.
10. Kumarkuchi than
11. Baradi satra.
12. Guagacha satra.
13. Bamuna satra.
14. Malcha satra.
15. Keotkuchi satra.
16. Anandapur satra.
17. Kanora satra.
18. Bhawamipur satra.
19. Kaljar satra.
20. Karsana satra.
21. Bamakhata satra.
22. Akaya satra.
23. Kaljirapara satra.
24. Gobindapur satra.
25. Pata satra.
26. Haripur satra.
27. Bhalukir satra.
28. Palashartal satra.
29. Kotalkuchi Kirtanghar.
30. Agnisala satra.
31. Ananta Gosair satra.
32. Abhaypuria satra.
33. Auni Atia satra.
34. Amranga satra.
35. Amrikhowa satra.
36. Urpot satra.
37. Ulubari satra.
38. Era satra.
39. Kachua satra.
40. Katora satra.
41. Konora satra
42. Kapla satra.
43. Singara satra.
44. Kahara satra.
45. Karakuchi satra.
46. Kawaimari Satra.
47. Gopalpur satra
48. Kurobaha satra.
49. Kulbil satra
50. Kendukuchi Khudia satra.
51. Kaihati satra.
52. Khatiamari satra
53. Khona satra.
54. Khidirpukhuri satra.
55. Khutabari satra.
56. Khudia satra.
57. Gajia satra.
58. Garaimari satra.
59. Guimara satra.
60. Gualhati satra.
61. Gomura satra.
62. Ghilajhari satra.
63. Chapatol satra.
64. Chamaria satra.
65. Samarkuchi-Batakuchi satra.
66. Chapathuri satra.
67. Sila satra.
68. Jatiyajaji satra.
69. Jagra satra.
70. Jarbaradi satra.
71. Jowardi satra.
72. Jharabari satra.
73. Takobari satra.
74. Tangara satra.
75. Thakurpara satra.
76. Trilochan satra.
77. Dadhi satra.
78. Damdoma Satra.
79. Dakhin Singara satra.
80. Damodardham satra.
81. Damalchoch satra.
82. Dari satra.
83. Dihing satra.
84. Dighalkuchi satra.

85. Dhuparguri satra.
86. Na-satra-Sarukshetri.
87. Nanara satra.
88. Na-para satra.
89. Naptipara satra.
90. Na-bari satra.
91. Namati satra.
92. Nahati satra.
93. Nahira satra.
94. Nilpur satra.
95. Palla satra.
96. Palashguri satra.
97. Palashbari satra.
98. Paikankuchi satra.
99. Palowa satra.
100. Peerala satra.
101. Pukhuripar satra.
102. Potani satra.
103. Pomora satra.
104. Porabhorai satra.
105. Bongsar satra.
106. ~~Balakuchi~~ satra.
107. Baniakuchi satra.
108. Bargomura satra.
109. Belguri satra.
110. Jamlai satra.
111. Barphulguri satra.
112. Barbari satra.
113. Barbhitha satra.
114. Kurhimari satra.
115. Balakuchi satra.
116. Bahari satra.
117. Badesila satra.
118. Banderi satra.
119. Bamundi satra.
120. Bavanghati satra.
121. Balikaria satra.
122. Balilecha satra
123. Bali satra.
124. Bahbari satra.
125. Byahkuchi satra.
126. Bihampur satra.
127. Buna satra.
128. Burka satra.
129. Burakia satra.
130. Bezkuchi satra.
131. Betbari satra.
132. Beltola satra.
133. Bainakuchi satra.
134. Bhalukghata satra.
135. Manpur satra.
136. Maniari satra.
137. Monohorar than satra.
138. Marhata satra.
139. Malcha satra.
140. Maneri satra.
141. Malibari satra.
142. Muhati satra.
143. Medhipara satra.
144. Moura satra.
145. Rajapukhuri satra.
146. Roumari satra.
147. Lachima satra.
148. Lachi Bishnupur satra.
149. Lengta satra.
150. Loch satra.
151. Sikarhati satra.
152. Singara satra.
153. Silpota satra.
154. Sishur satra.
155. Subha satra.
156. Soalkuchi satra.
157. Soalkuchi Barsatra.
158. Srihati satra.
159. Syamrai satra.
160. Soalkuchi Srihati satra.
161. Jaji satra.
162. Saruphulguri satra.
163. Sidhpur satra.
164. Sitara satra.
165. Sonatali satra.
166. Sor satra.

167. Haridev satra.	Satsangi (Sachang) Maths :
168. Hari pur satra	1. Nandagaon Math.
169. Hatimura satra.	2. Karakuchi Math.
170. Habiya satra.	3. Khatabari Gobindapur Math.
171. Haldhibari satra.	4. Chenga Math.
172. Haligaon satra.	5. Jalimura Math.
173. Hahdia satra.	6. Pakowa Satsangi Math.
174. Haldha satra.	7. Sukaikuchi Math.
175. Heremda satra.	8. Bhadra Ramkanu Math.
176. Kshetri satra.	9. Marowa Math.
177. Ulubari satra.	10. Madhapur Math.
178. Allibari satra.	11. Kshudra Makhibaha Math.
179. Majdia satra.	12. Bar Makhibaha Math.
180. Rampur satra.	13. Laopara Math.
181. Nalbari satra.	14. Noapara Math.
182. Rangia satra.	15. Ramdia Math.
183. Samradwar satra.	16. Bherbheri Math.
194. Sahan satra.	17. Arara Math.
185. Sandheli gaon satra.	18. Sarihatoli Math.
186. Narayanpur satra.	19. Bamundi Math.
	20. Tiyamara Math.

Some of the above satras subsequently shifted their sites and re-established with new name. In Kamrup, the *Satsangi* Maths or *Sachangs* were organised by the followers of Sri Damodar Dev, one of the prime disciples of Sri Sankardeva. These *Sachangs* were centres of religious discourse in olden days. Now-a-days their function is almost the same with that of *Namghar*.

Buddha Temple

Though Madhava Temple of Hajo is considered as a Buddha-Pilgrimage by the Bhutias, there had been in Kamrup district no Buddha Temple till 1955 in which year a hut-type Buddha Temple had been established at Pandu by the Pandu Buddhist Association. The said Temple was replaced by an Assam-Type one in the year 1958 and the latter's place was occupied in 1979 by a concrete temple in which a huge Buddha Murti (statue) has been installed.

Mosques and Dargahs :

Besides Powa Mecca of Hajo, a number of Mosques and Dargahs are situated in different places of the district. Some such old sites are mentioned below.

Sijubari Dargah- situates near Beltola hat.

Garigaon Dargah --It is said to be the tomb of Hajarat Jalaluddin Tabraji.

Bhella Dargah :--The Dargah was established by Sayed Sahnur Dewan Fakir. Ahom King Chandra Kanta Singh donated 100 Bs. of Lakhiraj land for maintenance of this Dargah. It is in Bhella Pargana of Barpeta Sub-division.

Dhamdhama Dargah :--Constructed by Peer Minauddin of Dhamdhama. According to some, this is the first mosque of Kamrup.

There are mosques in Tengabari, Piyalikhata, Mirtola, Dhakpara and Bathan villages of Kamalpur area. There were *pairyal* land donated by the Mughals to these mosques.

Patrapur mosque :--Near Pingaleswar temple of Karara mouza, sometime back a Quran and one image of Siva were discovered from under earth. Patrapur mosque was constructed to establish the Quran while in the Pingaleswar temple, the deity was established.

There is another *Dargah* on the bank of Bharalu river at Ulubari in Gauhati.

Churches : The oldest church established in this district is Christ church situating in the Church field of Gauhati. The next one is the American Baptist Mission's church which situates just opposite the Police Station at Panbazar, Gauhati. Recently one Sacvred Heart Church has been established by the Shillong-Gauhati Road ; Dispur.

BS.=Bighas

CHAPTER - III

PEOPLE

A. Population :

Total population - male and female : Kamrup is one of the most densely populated districts in the Brahmaputra valley with 289 persons per square kilometre. The population in the district, according to 1971 Census, is 2,854,183 of which 1,510,149 are male and 1,344,034 are female. The Thana-wise population distribution in three sub-divisions of the district of Kamrup is given below.¹

Sub-division	Thana	Males	Females	Totals.
Barpeta	—	508,184	463,553	971,737
	Sarbhog	109,916	99,857	209,773
	Pathacharkuchi.	87,781	79,924	167,705
	Barpeta	179,830	160,710	340,040
	Tarabari	35,061	67,103	67,103
	Baghbar	96,096	91,020	187,116
Nalbari	—	363,891	335,923	699,814
	Barama	103,005	95,753	198,758
	Nalbari	188,673	175,131	363,804
	Tamulpur	72,213	65,039	137,252
Gauhati	—	638,074	544,558	1,182,632
	Rangia	84,645	75,467	160,112
	Hajo	68,164	61,832	129,996
	Palashbari	74,618	66,572	141,190
	Kamalpur	75,560	68,995	144,555
	Boko	81,177	76,103	157,280
	Chaygaon	56,071	51,231	107,302
	Jalukbari	37,522	29,601	67,123
	Gauhati	160,317	114,757	275,074

1. 1971 Census, Assam District Census Handbook, Kamrup District.

Of this population, 2,98,090 are scheduled tribes and 1,64,762 are scheduled castes in the whole of the district.

In table I below area in square kilometre, density of population per square kilometre, total population by rural and urban breakup, number of towns and number of inhabited and uninhabited villages in the district of Kamrup, as in 1971 Census, are shown. The figures given in the table clearly indicate the primordially rural nature of the inhabitants of the district of Kamrup. Out of 28,54,183 total individuals, 25,18,028 persons (13,15,618 males and 12,03,400 females) or 88.6 per cent live in rural areas and the remaining 3,35,156 persons (1,94,521 males and 1,40,634 females) or 11.74 per cent live in urban areas. Population density per square kilometre in the urban areas is 3,467 as against 258 in the rural areas. The density rate is found to be quite high in urban areas.

TABLE - 1

Distribution of population between urban and rural areas in the district of Kamrup—1971²

	Area in Square km.	Population per Square km.	Number of villages Inhabited	Uninhabited
Rural	9,766.2	258	3,144	200
Urban	96.8	3,467	—	—
Total	9,863.0	289	3,144	200

	Number of towns	Male	Population Female	Total
Rural	—	1,315,628	1,203,400	2,519,028
Urban	17	194,521	140,634	335,155
Total	17	1,510,149	1,344,034	2,854,183

Density of Population : As against the single town of Gauhati with a population above 5,000 of 1871 in the district of Kamrup, at present there are seventeen towns distributed in three subdivisions as per 1971 Census. All these towns have developed out of nuclei of original villages where administrative centres were located and which places had better facilities for water and road transport. According to the Census report

2. Census of India, 1971, Series -3 Assam, Part II - A, p. 30-31.

of 1911, Kamrup was the most densely populated district in the Brahmaputra valley, its density figure being 173 persons per square mile area.

In 1971, the density of population in the district came to 289 per square kilometre. On subdivisional basis in 1911, there were 227 persons per square mile in Gauhati sub-division, while number of people inhabiting per square mile area in Barpeta sub-division was 114. In Table-2 of page 127 distribution of population and density of population per square kilometre as per 1971 Census arranged according to sub-divisions with rural and urban break-up are shown. If the density figures in the three sub-divisions are compared, it is found that in urban areas of Barpeta sub-division, the density figure per square kilometre is the highest consisting of 3,892 individuals, and the lowest in Nalbari sub-division, comprising only 1,360 individuals. The individuals per square kilometre in the urban areas of Gauhati sub-division is 3,718. On the other hand population density in rural areas of Nalbari sub-division is the highest, consisting of 340 persons per square kilometre distributed in 815 villages and the lowest in the Gauhati sub-division with 205 persons per square kilometre distributed in 1,299 villages. In Barpeta sub-division, there are 1,030 inhabited villages with 275 persons per square kilometre.

Though the density of population in a village is 258 per kilometre in the average, in certain thickly populated villages like Sualkuchi, Sarthebari, Belsor, Gondhia, Chamata etc., the density approximates that of the urban areas, if only the areas of house settlement is taken into consideration. A revenue village includes the agricultural land also; but in common parlance, an Assamese village site includes the arable land around it. The rural settlement areas of this district are marked by homesteads around which arecanut, palms, coconut, betelvine groves, banana plants, bamboo bushes and various other trees mostly for basic house-hold need, fuel-wood, and occasionally for timber, are grown.

In Gauhati sub-division, urban population comprises 250,636 persons distributed in 27 urban areas, in Barpeta sub-division 6,728 persons are distributed in 9 urban areas and in Nalbari sub-division 15,792 persons inhabit in 3 urban areas. The difference in population density per square kilometre in the three sub-divisions may be due to larger number of urban areas in Gauhati sub-division and inclusion of three more urban areas in 1971 Census in Barpeta sub-division.

TABLE - 2

Density of Population in different subdivisions of Kamrup--1971.³

	Area in Popula- 2 km.	Popula- tion 2 km.	Number of vill- ages Inha- bited	Un- inhabited	Number of Towns	Number of occu- pied resi- dential houses	Number of house- holds	Persons	Population	
									Males	Females
Barpeta										
Rural	3,289.6	275	1,030	51	—	139,354	139,800	903,009	470,222	432,787
Urban	17.7	—	—	—	6	10,237	10,237	68,728	37,962	30,766
Total	3,307.3	294	1,030	51	6	149,601	150,037	971,737	508,184	463,553
Nalbari										
Rural	2,011.2	340	815	33	—	110,628	110,716	684,022	354,257	329,765
Urban	11.6	1,360	—	—	2	3,344	3,356	15,792	9,634	6,158
Total	2,022.8	346	815	33	2	113,972	114,072	699,814	363,891	335,923
Gauhati										
Rural	4,558.4	204	1,299	116	—	147,006	147,268	931,997	491,149	440,848
Urban	67.5	3,718	—	—	9	47,700	47,803	250,635	146,925	103,710
Total	4,625.9	256	1,299	116	9	174,706	195,071	1,182,632	638,074	544,558
Kamrup District										
Rural	9,766.2	258	3,144	200	—	396,998	397,784	2,519,028	315,628	1,203,400
Urban	96.8	3,467	—	—	17	61,281	61,396	335,155	194,521	140,634
Total	9,863.0	289	3,144	200	17	458,279	459,180	2,854,183	1,510,149	1,344,034

³ Census of India 1971, Series-3, Assam, Part II A. P. 30 - 34.

There is a general trend that the density rate in urban areas is more than in the rural areas in all sub-divisions.

There are 3,144 inhabited and 200 uninhabited villages in the district of Kamrup according to 1971 census. The district has a total number of 4,59,180 households, of which 3,97,784 are distributed in the rural areas and 61,396 in the urban areas. Of these households, there are 4,58,279 occupied residential houses 3,96,998 of which are in the rural areas and 61,281 are in the urban areas.

In this district, there are 2,267 houseless persons (1,621 males and 646 females). These houseless persons include such individuals as the beggars, sadhus, nomads, mendicants, vagrants etc. and also those persons who ply boats on rivers. Of these houseless persons, 1,383 persons (868 males and 515 females) are found in the rural areas of Barpeta sub-division. The number of seasonal labourers recruited from outside Assam, the porters working in the railway platforms, rickshawpullers, thelapullers and pony cart drivers who shift from place to place and spend nights in marketsheds and shop verandas are, however, not included in the figure. In Gauhati sub-division, there are 688 such persons (589 males and 99 females) distributed in rural (466 persons) and urban (222 persons) areas. The remaining 196 persons (164 males and 32 females) are found in Nalbari sub-division.

There are 8,724 persons (7,651 males and 1,073 females) who are inmates of various institutions like hostels, boarding houses, hotels, sanatoria, jails, asylum, hospitals etc. according to 1971 census.

Table 3, next page, shows the number of villages classified according to population strength, which indicates that villages with a population below 200 are as many as 489. Such small villages are inhabited mostly by migrants, tribal or non-tribal, who rehabilitate in the forest covered areas or marshy land. They do so under pressure of population or when they go out in search of more fertile lands in uninhabited localities.

TABLE-3
Villages classified by population - 1971 Census.

	Less than 200				200 - 499				500 - 999				1,000 - 1,999			
	No. of villages	Males	Females	No. of villages	Males	Females	No. of villages	Males	Females	No. of villages	Males	Females	No. of villages	Males	Females	
Kamrup district	489	25,033	21,281	775	140,883	128,181	1,025	390,774	358,791	678	483,891	445,855				
Barpeta subdivision	106	5,238	4,454	217	40,957	37,473	369	143,602	132,228	288	201,754	187,369				
Nalbari subdivision	85	4,604	3,873	208	37,189	34,035	305	114,491	105,713	157	108,611	101,916				
Gauhati subdivision	298	15,191	12,954	350	62,737	56,673	351	132,681	120,850	233	173,526	156,571				
	Between 2,000-4,999		Between 5,000-9,999		Total number of Inhabited Villages				Total rural population							
	No. of villages	Males	Females	No. of villages	Males	Females	No. of villages	Males	Females	No. of villages	Males	Females	No. of villages	Males	Females	Total
Kamrup dist.	169	250,913	227,451	8	24,134	21,840	3,144	1,315,628	1,203,400	2,519,028						
Barpeta Sub. Dv.	47	70,048	63,238	3	8,623	8,025	10,300	4,470,222	4,32,787	9,05,009						
Nalbari Sub. Dv.	58	83,498	78,412	2	5,864	5,816	815	354,257	329,765	684,022						
Gauhati Sub. Dv.	64	97,967	85,801	3	9,647	7,999	1,299	491,149	440,848	931,997						

Table 4 gives the towns in the district of Kamrup with population and in table 5, the towns in the district of Kamrup indicating changes from one class to another during the period 1901 to 1971 have been shown. It is seen that Gauhati is the only class I town in Assam with 1,23,783 persons in 1971. This town as per 1871-72 Census Report had a population of 11,492 showing a very little increase upto 1901. It was however, pointed out by the Superintendent of Census operation in Assam in page 15 of the Census Report, 1911, that reliance on population figure can be put only from 1891 Census. So the figure given by 1901 Census only can be safely relied upon from all practical purposes. In 1901, Gauhati was a class IV town with only 11,661 persons. With the gradual increase of the number of persons, this town was raised to class III town in 1931. In that year the total population of Gauhati was 21,797 which increased to 29,598 in 1941 and remained in the category of class III town. Between 1951 and 1961, there occurred a sudden rise of population to 100,707 (130.90 per cent) and the status of the town was raised from class III to I. During the last ten years between 1961 and 1971, population of Gauhati increased to 1,23,783 i.e., by 22.91 per cent.

Of the remaining towns, Amingaon, Barpeta Road, Kamakhya, Pandu, North Gauhati, Sarthebari, Suakuchi, Rangia, and Tihu were treated as towns for the first time in 1961 Census and these continued as towns in 1971 also. Howli, Niz-Hajo, Pathsala, and Sarbhog were treated as towns for the first time in 1971. Palasbari and Nalbari are towns since 1921 and 1941 respectively. Barpeta was a class V town in 1901 and the town was raised to class III in 1951.

As mentioned above, Gauhati is the only class I town in the district with population of more than one lakh. There is no other town in the district with population of more than thirty thousand. Barpeta is the only town in the district, having more than twentyfivethousand population.

TABLE-4

[illegible]

Table : 5

I	—	Population of	100,000 & above
II	—	" "	50,000 - 99,999
III	—	" "	20,000 - 49,999
IV	—	" "	1,000 - 19,999
V	—	" "	5,000 - 9,999
VI	—	" "	less than - 5,000

Movements of towns from one class to another during 1901-1971

Towns	1971	1961	1951	1941	1931	1921	1911	1901
Gauhati (M)	I	I	III	III	III	IV	IV	IV
Pandu	III	III	—	—	—	—	—	—
Barpeta	III	III	III	IV	IV	IV	IV	V
Barpeta Road	IV	V	—	—	—	—	—	—
Soalkuchi	IV	IV	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nalbari (M)	IV	V	VI	VI	—	—	—	—
Niz Hajo	V	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rangia (M)	V	VI	—	—	—	—	—	—
Howli	V	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
North Gauhati (T.C.)	V	V	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sarthebari (T.C.)	V	V	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kamakhya (T.C.)	V	VI	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sarbhog (T.C.)	V	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pathsala (T.C.)	V	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Amingaon	VI	V	—	—	—	—	—	—
Palasbari (M)	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	VI	—	—
Tihu (T. C.)	VI	VI	—	—	—	—	—	—

Growth of population : The population in the district of Kamrup was 5,90,010 in 1901. There was a 13.3 per cent increase over this population figure in 1911 and out of this, 10.4 per cent were natural growth, the rest being the result of immigration of people from other parts of the country. J. McSwinnery, Superintendent of Census Operation, 1911 in Assam, hoped "the great improvement in communications effected by the extension of the Eastern Bengla State Railway to Gauhati is likely to lead to a further growth in populations",⁴ and this hope is found to have materialised as is evident from increasing flow of continued immigration of people from the erstwhile East Bengal in the subsequent decades. During the last seventy years, i.e., between 1901 and 1971, the population of Kamrup has increased almost five times, total number of population variation being 2,854,183 in 1971 Census. In table 6, the population variation in Kamrup since 1901 to 1971 is shown.

Table - 6.

Decadal variation of population in the district of Kamrup since 1901.⁴

Year	Persons	Decade variation	Percentage decade variation	Males	Females
1901	590,010	—	—	293,272	296,738
1911	666,646	78,636	13.33	339,797	328,849
1921	763,751	94,925	14.20	397,736	365,835
1931	976,746	+ 213,175	+ 27.92	513,345	463,401
1941	1,264,200	+ 287,454	+ 29.43	673,403	590,797
1951	1,490,392	+ 226,192	+ 17.49	799,391	691,001
1961	2,062,572	+ 572,180	+ 38.30	1,109,608	952,964
1971	2,854,183	+ 791,611	+ 39.38	1,510,149	1,344,03

It is apparent from the columns on decade variation and percentage decade variation of the table that the increase in population between 1901 and 1921 is gradual (78,626 or 13.33 per cent between 1901 and 1911 and 94,925 or 14.20 per cent between 1911 and 1921). The number is raised almost twice between 1921 and 1931 (2,13,175, or 27.92 per cent). The increase is only 2,26,192 or 17.89 per cent between 1941 and 1951 as against 2,87,454 or 29.43 per cent between 1931 and 1941. The number is again increased to more than twice (5,72,180 or 38.29 per cent) between 1951 and 1961. The increase between 1961 and 1971 is 7,91,611 or 38.38 per cent.

4. Census of India 1911, Vol. III, Assam, Part-I Report, Shillong, p. 20,

TABLE - 7

Towns and urban agglomeration classified by population in 1971 with variation since 1901.

	year	Area in Km.	Persons	Decade variation	Percentage decade variation	Males	Females
Gauhati Urban Agglomeration	1901		11,661	—	—	7,772	3,889
	1911		12,481	+	7.03	8,138	4,343
	1921		16,480	+	32.04	10,786	5,694
	1931		21,797	+	32.26	14,506	7,291
	1941		29,598	+	35.79	18,883	10,715
	1951		43,615	+	47.36	27,990	15,625
	1961	23.31	136,239	+	212.37	88,882	47,357
	1971	43.82	200,377	+	47.08	119,740	80,637
	1901		11,661	—	—	7,772	3,889
	1911		12,481	+	7.03	8,138	4,343
Gauhati City	1921		16,480	+	32.04	10,786	5,694
	1931		21,797	+	32.26	14,506	7,291
	1941		29,598	+	35.79	18,883	10,715
	1951		43,615	+	47.35	27,990	15,625
	1961	14.24	100,707	+	130.90	67,278	33,429
	1971	14.24	123,783	+	22.91	75,583	48,200

PEOPLE

Table—7 (Contd.)

Outgrowths	year	Area in Km ²	Persons	Decade variation	Percentage of decade variation	Males	Females
New Gauhati Rly. Coly.	1971	2.00	6,148	—	—	3,574	2,574
Bamunimaidam	1971	1.91	3,371	—	—	2,203	1,168
Japorigog (Part)	1971	1.75	2,792	—	—	1,824	968
Noonmati	1971	1.90	2,723	—	—	1,729	994
Ulubari	1971	1.97	2,657	—	—	1,577	1,080
Refnary Colony	1971	1.44	2,189	—	—	1,163	1,026
Dispur	1971	0.70	1,725	—	—	1,153	572
Maligaon N. C.	1971	0.72	394	—	—	217	177
Ranchahill Grant	1971	0.88	244	—	—	150	94
B. Pandu	1961	.48	31,173	—	—	18,983	12,190
	1971	4.61	28,876	+	24.72	21,154	17,722
Outgrowths							
Gauhati University, Uttar Jaluk- bari & Pachim Jalukabri	1971	7.18	6,527	—	—	4,352	2,175
Maligaon	1971	0.40	1,171	—	—	700	471
Sadilapur	1971	1.17	1,162	—	—	640	522
Garpandu Kumarpara	1971	0.36	218	—	—	123	95
C. Kamakhya	1961	2.59	4,359	—	—	2,621	1,738
	1971	2.59	6,397	+	46.75	3,598	2,799

In table 7, towns and urban agglomeration in the district, classified by population according to 1971 census with variation since 1901 have been shown. In the district of Kamrup, there is one agglomeration with Gauhati Corporation and its outgrowths, Pandu town with its outgrowths, and Kamakhya town. In Gauhati Urban Agglomeration, there are 2,00,377 persons (199,740 males and 80,637 females) of which 1,23,783 persons (75,583 males and 48,200 females) live in Gauhati city itself. The population increase in the city from 1911 to 1941 is gradual (3,999 or 32.04 per cent between 1911 to 1921; 5,317 or 32.26 per cent between 1921 and 1931; and 7,801 or 35.79 per cent between 1931 and 1941). Between 1941 and 1951, the number of individuals had increased almost twice (14,017 or 47.36 per cent). There is a sudden rise of population after 1951 and increase is found to be almost four times (57,092 or 130.90 per cent) in 1961. The increase in the last ten years i.e., between 1961 and 1971 is 23,076 or 22.91 per cent.

The rapid increase of population in Gauhati can be attributed to the growth expansion of urban agglomeration with Gauhati Corporation with its outgrowths i.e., Pandu town and Kamakhya town. The quick rise in the rate of population density in Gauhati may also be due to the fact that it is an economic centre as well as transit centre for North-East India with rapid growth of industries. Besides, it is the hub of cultural activities of the State where the largest number of educational institutions are located. The establishment of the Gauhati Oil Refinery and its ancillary industries, Railway Headquarters at Maligaon, coupled with the location of the temporary State capital at Dispur have accentuated the growth of urban population.

Drift towards town : A phenomenal growth of towns and city of Gauhati, after the last World War, is a significant factor in the changing socio-cultural life of the State. It is true that due to certain urban facilities including educational, medical, and job opportunities, the people want to live permanently in the towns. It is also a fact that the rural areas, at one time noted for abundance of food materials, no longer enjoy that privilege; while in contrast, due to regular supply of food materials in the cities by the administrative agencies, the urban population are in better position.

It is significant to note that the educated youths of this district, as in elsewhere, are not satisfied with the rural environment. They are very keen to move to the urban areas not only in search of jobs but also for fun of living in the towns. The towns and cities have plenty

of amenities which attract the educated village people from surrounding areas. In 1961, 16,889 males and 7,462 females came to the urban area of Kamrup from the rural areas of the district while 5,983 males and 3,105 females came from other districts of the state. It is seen that in the case of migrants from rural areas to urban areas within the district, males outnumbered the females to a great extent. This proves that migration to urban areas from rural areas occurs mainly in search of job and employment opportunities.

Immigration and Emigration : As reported by B. C. Allen, in 1901, "the proportion of immigrants is lower in Kamrup than in any other district in the Plains of Assam, and in 1901 foreigners formed less than 3% of the total population. The total number was 14,152 of whom 8,139 came from Bengal..... The tea industry is not of much importance in Kamrup, the gardens are largely worked with local labour and barely one-fourth of these Bengalis were censused on plantations. Other immigrants were Nepalese (1,559) who have settled down as graziers and in some cases as cultivators, the **Kayas** or merchants from Rajputana (997) who are found in large number in Gauhati, and Bhutias, most of whom are temporary visitors who came down to trade in the cold weather, though there is one Bhutia village at Dewangiri which contains some seventeen houses. There are also a considerable number of native of the United Province of Agra and Oudh (1,579), who work as carters, artisans and **coolies**. A large proportion of these up-country men were censused in Gauhati town."⁵

In the three subsequent decades, the figure of immigration into Kamrup increased stupendously. Almost the entire immigrant population in 1911 and 1931 were from Bengal. Mr. Mullan reports that the number of Bengal-born people found in Kamrup during the decades ending in 1911, 1921, and 1931 were 4 millions, 44 millions and 134 millions respectively while emigration to Bengal in 1921 and 1931 were 68,802 and 63,416 respectively.⁶

In comparatively recent years, rapid growth of improved communication system coupled with mobility of occupation and spread of higher as well as technical education among the population have encouraged emigration to other districts of the State as well as to other parts of the country. It may be noted in this context that a poignant pressure of population increase in this district, as indicated by the census figures, compelled a section of the educated entrepreneur and even the unskilled

5, B. C. Allen : *Assam District Gazetteers Kamrup*, p. 70-71,

6, *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. III, Assam Part-I Report, P. 50-54,

labour to migrate to other districts of the State. Certain other factors also may be mentioned in respect of the emigration from erstwhile East Bengal and Nepal. Between 1941 to 1958, partition of India caused heavy exodus of erstwhile East Bengal refugee influx into Assam which resulted in tremendous swelling of Assam's population. Fertile terrains of the Brahmaputra Valley allured the hardy fortune hunters and industrious cultivators from Bengal, Bihar, and Nepal in great number and they added to the population strength of Assam. Provision for collection of **Tauji Bahir** revenues from unsettled occupiers acted as some sort of protection to the non-settlement holders and encouraged encroachment on government land from outside the State very often. The flood affected indigenous people could not cope with the increasingly felt intolerable condition created by the floods, whereas, the immigrants from erstwhile East Bengal could easily cope with such situations. That is why all the **char** areas are found to be populated by such immigrants from outside the State and most of the hilly tracts, grazing grounds and fallow lands in forest areas are under exploration by the immigrants from Nepal.

Migration from rural areas to rural areas and from rural areas to urban areas is a common feature in Assam. The table below indicates the trend of people within the district, as revealed by 1961 Census.⁷

		Rural to Rural		Rural to Urban	
Duration of residence		Male	Female	Male	Female
Less than	1 Year	5,567	5,137	2,658	559
	1—5	28,713	40,595	6,177	2,018
	6—10	16,965	38,800	2,599	1,390
	11—15	15,104	41,989	1,898	1,346
	16—over	33,814	87,973	3,083	1,754

The number of females far exceeds that of male in the migration from rural to rural areas which is occasioned by marriages because according to custom, females have to move to the homes of their husbands after marriage.

Heavy immigration and emigration of population in Kamrup district suggests that this district has become the halting place for the exodus of population from Goalpara and Cachar. The following table shows the figures of inter-district migration from 1921 to 1961 to and from Kamrup district, as revealed by 1961 Census.⁸ No figure

7. *Census of India*, 1961, Vol. III, Assam, Part-I-A. p. 126

8. *Ibid*, p. 130

of immigration and emigration is available for 1971. But population figure indicates that the number of immigrants in 1971 exceeded considerably their number of the preceding Censuses as the result of opening up of East Pakistan border during the Bangladesh Liberation War.

Statement showing inter-district migration to total Population of Kamrup - 1921-61.

Year	Density per Sq. mile	Percentage of inter district immigration to total population	Percentage of inter district emigration to total population
1921	200	0.77	1.66
1951	391	1.64	1.77
1961	541	2.21	3.79

It is usually seen that the floating labour population in the urban areas of this district, as in elsewhere, are supplied mainly by non-indigenous population such as Biharis, Urias, Telegus, Nepalis, Bengalis and others migrating from outside the state. The indigenous people, specially the unskilled ones appear to be generally less hard working than those who come from outside the State. Besides, the indigenous population still suffer from a complex which stands on the way of their earning as day labourers in the Public Works Department or other constructional activities. Again, the business community everywhere generally consists of people other than indigenous one. It is needless to state that the flourishing businessmen, hailing from different parts of India, live in the urban areas with their families. Moreover, the technical institutions and the Government establishments attract educated persons from other parts of the country. The rickshaw pullers, the hackney carriage drivers, the taxi and truck drivers and also persons carrying some occupational trades like washerman, cobblers, *dhobis*, scavengers, etc. are mostly non-indigenous ones. Due to economic pressure

many of the indigenous people have come forward to work as daily labour, porter, rickshaw-puller, etc. It is still, however, a fact that they are less hardy and are unable to work in some professions such as weight lifting, lorry driving, deep water fishing, etc. Besides, their lack of commercial sense leaves petty trade in urban areas mainly to non-indigenous people.

The graziers in Assam are mostly from the Nepali community, members of which have migrated either from Nepal or from other areas

of their settlement. Moreover, the tea gardens of this district are almost wholly dependent on labour coming from outside the State. Besides, innumerable beggars find their way to this district to earn living as professional beggars.

Displaced Persons: On the top of all these, the partition of India in 1947 released an unprecedented influx of immigrants to Assam. As a matter of fact, immigration of surplus population of undivided Bengal started immigrating into Assam towards the later part of 1920. According to Mr. Vaghaiwala and Mr. Pakyntine—Census Superintendents for 1951 and 1961 Censuses respectively, the fertile soil in Assam and a propaganda to the effect that plenty of fallow lands were available in Assam, induced the landless and enterprising population from East Bengal to migrate to Assam.

Sex Ratio : Number of females per thousand males in the district of Kamrup from 1901 to 1971 is furnished below :—

1971	1961	1951	1941	1931	1921	1911	1901
890	859	864	877	903	920	968	1,012

It is seen that there is a gradual decline of female over male since 1901 to 1961 but increase between 1961 and 1971. In the context of ratio, it may be noted that the growth of industries and urban centres attracted males, primarily for employment from different parts of the State as well as from other parts of India to this district. Some of them were floating types without provision for adequate housing to keep a family. In due course, housing problems were provisionally met with the expansion of urban centres resulting in immigration of female population to the place of work of their husbands. This explains the gradual decrease of females from 1901 to 1961 but increase between 1961 and 1971. Again the increase of female sex over male also may be due to emigration of male population of this district in search of job opportunities and business excursions to other districts of the State or outside the State. Percentage of such emigration is, however, very negligible.

(B) Language and dialects :

Assamese is the predominant language of the district of Kamrup. Out of the total population of 28,54,183 in the district, 21,88,506 persons (11,49,304 males and 10,39,202 females) speak Assamese as their mother tongue according to the 1971 Census. 3,52,210 (1,84,853 males and 1,67,357 females) persons of the total popula-

tion have returned Bengali as their mother tongue and 77,998 persons (53,186 males and 24,912 females) of the total population are Hindi speakers. Most of the Bengali and Hindi speaking persons are emigrants to this region from other districts and also from other parts of north India, particularly from Bengal and Bihar. The total number of Assamese, Bengali and Hindi speakers and also total number of persons belonging to other linguistic groups are furnished in table 8. It should be noted that the city of Gauhati is a cosmopolitan one where speakers of diverse linguistic groups are observed. The educational institutions, the office establishments and business concerns attract people from all over the country, besides some foreign nationals.

In table 9, total number of persons who speak different languages in the district of Kamrup according to 1961 Census, and also six major mother tongue groups as per 1971 Census, have been shown. It is seen that there were 77,724 speakers of Bodo/Boro and 7,313 speakers of Kachari including Sonowal in 1961; and in 1971, the number of Bodos increased to 1,39,761. Numerically other populations belonging to different linguistic groups in the district were Garo (19,759), Karbi (6,952), Santali (6,977) and Nepali (15,680). In 1971 number of Nepali-speaking people increased to 42,642 while Garos and Karbis were reduced to 14,373 and 5,239 respectively. The speakers of Assamese as well Bengali and Hindi have increased in 1971 over those of 1961 Census.

TABLE—8

Population classified according to mother tongue in the district of Kamrup - as per 1971 Census

	Males	Females	Total
Assamese	11,49,304	10,39,202	21,88,506
Bengali	1,84,853	1,67,357	3,52,210
Gujrati	107	82	189
Hindi	53,186	24,812	77,998
Kannada	21	8	29
Kashmiri	8	3	11
Malayalam	750	522	1,272
Marathi	187	151	338
Oriya	1,560	1,030	2,590
Punjabi	1,405	1,031	2,436
Sindhi	86	65	151
Tamil	283	227	510
Telegu	1,260	1,435	2,695
Urdu	177	323	500

Source : Census of India, Part II-c (I) Social and Cultural Tables, 1971 Census.

TABLE—9

Principal Languages of Kamrup :**1961 Census.**

Languages	Males	Females	Total
Assamese	883,824	782,170	1,665,994
Bengali	110,341	93,301	203,642
Bodo/Boro	40,698	37,026	77,724
Garó	5,378	5,381	10,759
Hindi	35,223	12,023	47,246
Kachari	3,157	4,056	7,213
Karbi	4,117	2,835	6,952
Nepali	9,452	6,228	15,680
Santali	3,409	3,568	6,977

1971 Census.

Mother tongue	Number	percentage to total population.
Assamese	21,88,506	76.68
Bengali	3,52,210	12.34
Hindi	77,998	2.73
Bodo/Boro	1,39,761	4.90
Nepali/Gorkhali	42,642	1.49
Karbi	5,239	0.18
Garó	14,373	0.49

Source : Census of India, Assam 1961, Vol. III Part IA. Page 221. and Census of India, Assam, 1971, Part 1-A, General report, page 91.

Here Principal language is meant to indicate the language spoken by at least 5,000 people in the district of Kamrup.

It may be noted that only those languages which are spoken by at least 5,000 persons in the district only have been included in table 9.

Though, there are 43,603 Rabha people in this district, only 1,089 individuals have returned Rabha as their mother tongue according to 1961 Census. There were 1,266 Khasis, 548 Deuris, 125 Mizos, 1,879 Lalung (Tiwa) in the district of Kamrup in 1961. Of these communities only

781 Lalung (Tiwa), 1,089 Rabha, 9 Deuri and all the Khasi and Mizo persons have returned as speakers of their respective mother tongues. The remaining persons have returned Assamese as their mother tongue.

It is worth mentioning that the tribal groups mentioned here, speak their respective dialect in their conversation among themselves and among the members of the same ethnic group. Outside their home environment, however, they speak Assamese.

In table 10, the distribution per thousand speakers of the major mother tongues who speak one or more subsidiary languages in 1961 Census has been shown. As per the table Assamese is the most predominant language for 8,201 people per every ten thousand, while Bengali is spoken by 1,002 persons per ten thousand persons in the district. Besides Bengali, there are other nonindigenous languages e.g., Hindi with 233 speakers, Nepali with 77 speakers and Oriya with 10 speakers per ten thousand persons. Among the indigenous tribal languages and dialects, Bodo/Boro has been returned with the highest frequency. It is spoken by 383 persons per ten thousand individuals. Karbi is spoken by 34 persons, and Garó by 53 persons per ten thousand individuals.

(c) Bilingualism : (According to 1961 Census) :

Out of 16,65,994 Assamese speakers, 1,18,769 are bilingual or multilingual. The three important subsidiary languages spoken by them are Bengali with 62,038, English with 42,578 and Hindi with 14,159 speakers.

Out of 2,03,643 Bengali speakers, 1,10,895 speak Assamese, while another 12,492 and 3,877 persons can speak English and Hindi respectively.

Out of 47,246 persons who have returned Hindi as their mother tongue, 26,760 persons speak Assamese, 1,888 can speak English, and 1,360 persons can speak Hindi.

Out of 77,724 Bodo/Boro speakers, 65,391 can speak Assamese, 1,842 can speak Hindi, and 56 can speak English.

Out of 15,680 Nepali speaking persons 11,468, 1,154 and 216 persons have returned Assamese, Hindi and English respectively as their subsidiary languages.

There are 10,759 Garó speaking individuals. Other subsidiary languages spoken by them are Assamese 3,743, English 374 and Hindi 59 persons.

Out of 6,952 Karbis in the district, 5,917 have returned as Assamese, 18 as English and 2 as Hindi speakers.

Out of 1,268 persons who have returned Khasi as their mother tongue, 298, 190 and 96 persons can speak Hindi, Assamese and English respectively.

TABLE—10

Distribution per 10,000 speakers of the major mother tongues in the district of Kamrup who speak one or more subsidiary languages as in 1961 :

Mother tongue	2nd known language	3rd known language	4th known language
Assamese	Bengali	English	Hindi
a) 1,665,994	62,038	42,572	14,159
b) 8,201	6,223	5,585	1,192
Bengali	Assamese	English	Hindi
a) 203,642	110,895	12,492	3,877
b) 1,002	8,714	981	305
Hindi	Assamese	English	Bengali
a) 47,246	26,760	1,888	1,306
b) 233	8,934	630	436
Khasi	Hindi	Assamese	English
a) 1,268	298	190	96
b) 6	5,103	3,253	1,644
Garo	Assamese	English	Hindi
a) 10,759	3,743	374	59
b) 53	8,963	896	141
Bodo/Boro	Assamese	Hindi	English
a) 77,7244	63,397	1,842	56
b) 383	9,718	274	8
Lushi/Mizo	Hindi	English	Assamese
a) 123	45	23	18
b) 1	5,233	2,674	2,093
Nepali	Assamese	Hindi	English
a) 15,680	11,468	1,154	216
b) 77	8,933	899	168
Karbi	Assamese	English	Hindi
a) 6,952	5,917	18	2
b) 34	9,966	30	4
Oriya	Assamese	Bengali	Hindi
a) 2,019	471	109	78
b) 10	7,158	1,657	1,185

Note : a) denotes absolute figures returned.

b) denotes the above as proportion of 10,000.

Census of India 1961 Vol. III part I A. page. 224.

No bilingualism statistics of 1971 is available to us, so it could not be furnished.

As mentioned earlier, the tribesmen in the district speak Assamese in their dealings with the local population. In the weekly market places which are frequently visited by the tribal inhabitants to dispose of their agricultural or horticultural products or collected wild vegetables, they speak non-tribal dialect or language, according to the need of the situation. They manage to carry on the transactions in Assamese, Bengali or Hindi according to the exigencies arising out of the business deal.

Assamese is a Magadhan speech. Coming from the regions of Videha-Magadha, it entered Kamarupa or Western Assam, where the speech was first described as Assamese. Sir G.A. Grierson felt that Magadhi was the common source of all the eastern dialects. According to him, it developed into Northern Bengali and Assamese in the North-East, into Oriya in the south and into Bengali in the area between the two. The standard Assamese and especially its dialects preserve a good number of important phonological and morphological points of agreement among the Magadhan languages. The earliest reference to the Assamese language is found in the remarks of the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang (7th century). The copper plate inscriptions of Kamarupa (from between 6/7th and 12th centuries) record the Kamarupa Prakrit and date the antiquity of the Assamese language to a very remote period of history.

It is worthwhile to note that although the Brahmaputra valley from Sadiya to Dhuburi and its surroundings is the area where Assamese language flourishes, originally it was also used by the Kachari Kings of Cachar who with their people migrated from the Brahmaputra valley. It has a long history of its growth and development as a distinct language of North Eastern India. It is one of the languages recognised by the Constitution. Assamese language has been enriched by loan vocabulary from the innumerable tribal dialects spoken by the tribal folks in and around the Brahmaputra valley. The Tai settlers who established the Ahom Kingdom in Assam, assimilated themselves with the local society and people whose language they adopted, and Assamese became the language of the Ahom Court. Royal patronage and zeal of the religious reformers encouraged and developed written Assamese literature which has a hoary past compared to that of the other north-eastern languages. Till the advent of the British, all the migrants to Assam assimilated themselves with the local language and culture of Assam. The language spoken in Jalpaiguri, Koch Bihar and Rongpur was called Northern Bengali

by Grierson and had been classified into **Bahe** and **Rajbangshi** dialects. These areas once formed a part of ancient Kamrupa or Kamata and these two dialects have more affinity with Assamese and the dialects of Goalpara, Kamrup and Mangaldai Sub-division than with the northern and eastern Bengali dialects of Hoogly and Dacca.

There are other indigenous languages in the district of Kamrup spoken by the tribal populations. Most of the tribesmen of the district of Kamrup belong to the Bodo linguistic group of the Tibeto-Chinese family according to the Linguistic Survey of India. These tribes include Boro/Kachari, Garo, Tiwa, Rabha etc. The Karbis have been classed as intermediate between the Boros and the western Nagas by the Linguistic Survey of India. But some eminent linguists of India have classed them with those tribes having connecting link between the Nagas and the Kuki clans. Few Khasi families who live in the border area of this district speak Mon-Khmer branch of language of the Austric family.

The indigenous plains tribesmen of Assam, particularly the Boro/Kacharis have in recent years become very much conscious about their ethnic identity. They are trying to re-establish their traditional manners and customs and also their language. During the 1961 Census, number of speakers of Boro was 77,724 persons over that of 28,152 speakers in 1951 Census. This tremendous increase of the Boro speakers over ten years is a clear indication that they tried to rediscover their ethnic and linguistic identity. In case of other tribes like Garo, Karbi, Tiwa etc. there is marked increase in the number of speakers of these dialects in 1961 Census in comparison to that of 1951 Census.

Differences in dialects within the same linguistic Groups :

In the district of Kamrup, there is noticeable difference between written and spoken language. The written language is the standard Assamese, whereas there are regional dialectical variations. In the sub-division of Barpeta, **Barpetia** dialect dominates and converges with the sub-dialect in Bajali area. **Nalbaria** dialect, on the other hand, overlaps with the sub-dialect of Baihata-Chariali area. On the southern bank of the Brahmaputra, **Palasbaria** dialect spreads upto Chaigaon—Boko area, whereas in the area beyond Gauhati to the east the sub-dialect inclines to be more in conformity with the language spoken around Jagiroad area. The city of Gauhati has developed a dialect of its own because of varied composition in its population, the language of Gauhati in general differs from the language of Upper Assam

in pronunciation and in word formation. The town of north Gauhati is an island, linguistically speaking, in the midst of **Kamrupi** dialect. The language of this area has been standard Assamese as in the past it constituted an integral part of Ahom administration.

The geographical barriers created by the river Brahmaputra and other big tributaries in this district stood on the way of direct and easy contact among the people of this district till the thirties. Hence, regional dialects sprang up in the areas mentioned above. The **Barpetia** dialect developed around the town of Barpeta and other villages around it which enjoyed near isolation till a network of road system connected these villages with its neighbourhood. The administrative centres located at Barpeta helped the growth and spread of the local dialect among the people who had to maintain contact not only because of the administrative centre being located at Barpeta, but also because there were several *Satras* or monasteries which became the hub of cultural activities on religious festive occasions. The villagers came to the town of Barpeta, both for the purpose of purchasing consumer's commodity just as they needed to dispose of their surplus goods in the market place at Barpeta.

Nalbari developed as an administrative and business centre in the early twenties. Nalbari area being a thickly populated one had no other business centre to cater to the needs of the villagers. Commercial communities established their business houses here and through these shopping centres the local dialect spread and survived, although educationally this area is comparatively more advanced.

Palasbari is also developed as a centre for business, particularly timber business and as an administrative centre. The language of the south bank is dominated by the Palasbari variety of **Kamrupi** dialect and this merges with the local sub-dialect developed around Boko.

The Bodo-Kachari group of people speak Bodo language. It had been observed that there are slight variations in the spoken dialect among the Bodos of north and the south bank. Again there are slight differences in their dialect according to the locality. The **Barpetia Kacharis** speak a dialect which is understood by the Kacharis of Barama area but there are variations in pronunciation and word formation. The Rabhas of the south bank speak the Rabha dialect no doubt, but their speech differs from that of the north bank. The *Pati* Rabhas have nearly forgotten their own dialect. Particularly the younger generation cannot speak the dialect. The Garo speakers are continuing to speak Garo language

but in their day-to-day contact with the rest of the people they use Assamese. The Karbis again use their dialect amongst themselves, but outside they freely speak in Assamese. The Karbi dialect of the district differs slightly in their vocabulary from the ones spoken in the Karbi Anglong district. The Lalungs also speak their dialect but outside their home environment they speak in Assamese.

It is interesting to note that tribal ethno-cultural groups pick up a dialect of the area of which they are inhabitants.

Script :

The Assamese script is an independent script of Eastern India. Its origin is Brahmi and its developed form, the Gupta script. The Assamese script has developed and acquired the modern form gradually through the letters in the stone and copper plate inscriptions available continuously from the fifth to the nineteenth century and its tradition has been maintained in the Assamese and Sanskrit manuscripts. The Assamese script maintains some relationship with the Bengali, Oriya and the Maitheli scripts. This relationship is continuing from the early period. From this relationship it may be said that the origin of the Eastern Indian Scripts is the Kamrupi script.

(d) Religion and Caste :

Two dominant, religious communities in the district of Kamrup are the Hindus and the Muslims. Besides, there are followers of Christianity, Jainism, Sikhism, Buddhism and other religious groups in the city of Gauhati and in other towns and villages. Among the tribesmen, some are followers of animism.

As stated earlier, the total population in the district of Kamrup according to 1971 Census rose to 2,854,183 individuals (15,10,149 males and 13,44,034 females). Of those, there were 19,96,640 Hindus (10,61,799 males and 9,34,841 females). They constituted 69.96 per cent of the total population of the district. The Muslims formed the next predominating group with 8,25,657 individuals (4,31,482 males and 3,94,175 females) and constituted 28.93 per cent of the district population. The Christians numbered 13,125 males and 12,000 females, totalling 25,125 or 0.88 per cent of the population. The Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists numbered 2,957 (males 1,673, females 1,284); 2,570 (males 1,388, females 1,182); 1,234 (males 682, females 552); their percentages being 0.11, 0.09 and 0.04 respectively. There were 2,98,090 individuals belonging to the scheduled tribes community, of these individuals there were 1,51,264 males and 1,46,826 females. The percentage of tribal population to total population in this district was 10.44 in 1971.

TABLE - 11

Scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population in rural and urban areas of Kamrup in 1971.

		Scheduled Castes			Scheduled Tribes		
		P.	M.	F.	P.	M.	F.
Kamrup District	T	164,762	86,270	78,492	298,090	151,264	146,826
	R	138,729	72,449	66,280	294,995	149,487	145,508
	U	26,033	13,821	12,212	3,095	1,777	1,318
Barpeta Sub-division	T	51,452	27,001	24,451	77,451	39,163	38,288
	R	44,867	23,506	21,361	77,115	38,953	38,162
	U	6,585	3,495	3,090	336	210	126
Nalbari Sub-division	T	33,272	17,465	15,807	102,403	51,691	50,712
	R	31,917	16,725	15,192	102,325	51,644	50,681
	U	1,355	740	615	78	47	31
Gauhati Sub-division	T	80,038	41,804	38,234	118,236	60,410	57,826
	R	61,945	32,211	29,727	115,555	58,890	56,665
	U	18,093	9,586	8,507	2,681	1,520	1,161

The followings are the percentage and decade variations of scheduled castes and Tribes in the district as per 1971 census.

Table -11:-A

Population of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, percentage of total population and percentage decade variation - 1971 *

Total S/C 1971	Total S/T 1971	P.C. of S/C to total population	P.C. of S/T to total population	P.C. increase of S/C dur- ing 1961-71	P.C. increase of S/T dur- ing 1961-71
164,762	298,090	5.77	10.44	39.26	34.04

* District Census Handbook, Kamrup District, 1971 Part X-A and Part X-B. pp. 270-271.

TABLE—12

Distribution of religious communities in the rural and urban areas of Kamrup in 1971.

	Hindu		Muslim		Christian		Jain		Shikh		Buddhist	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Rural	886,413	807,925	416,180	383,592	11,831	10,787	444	458	295	252	465	386
%	52.40	47.60	52.04	47.96	52.31	47.69	49.22	50.78	53.93	46.07	54.64	45.36
Urban	175,386	126,916	15,302	10,583	1,294	1,213	1,229	826	1,093	930	217	166
%	58.02	41.98	59.12	40.88	51.62	48.38	59.81	40.19	54.03	45.97	56.66	43.34
Total	1,061,799	934,841	431,482	394,175	13,125	12,000	1,673	1,284	1,388	1,182	682	552
%	53.18	46.82	52.26	47.74	52.24	47.76	56.58	43.42	54.01	45.99	55.27	44.73

Census of India 1971 Series 3- Assam, part II -C (i) Social and Cultural Tables p. 4-5.

The caste hierarchy among the Hindus of Kamrup is mainly two fold Brahmin and non-Brahmin. This dichotomy, however, vanishes as soon as socio-ritual matters are taken into consideration.

Brahmins : Among the Brahmins, there are two sub-castes, namely, the *Gossains* or the caste of Preceptors, *Purohits* or the priestly Brahmins. Popularly a higher rank is given to that section of the Brahmins who are not professional priests. It is worthwhile to note that the high caste Brahmins also are not debarred from resorting to agricultural practices except ploughing. Further, the Brahmins desist from carrying loads hung from two ends of a carrying pole. Intermarriage among the Brahmins irrespective of the sub-castes is yet to gain ground in the rural community. Among the educated and urban communities on the other hand, free intermarriage takes place among the two upper sub-castes.

The Brahmins are distinguished from the rest by the observance of the *Dasha-Sanskaras* or ten rites of an individual according to the Vedic ritual systems. The *Kshatriyas* and *Baislyas* are also theoretically treated as *Dwijas* or twice born ones. But performances of the Vedic rites are not compulsory on their part. The Vedic rites are performed by the traditional Brahmin priests, who are expected to be well versed in the Vedic lore.

In this context, it may be noted that in recent times, a perceptible socio-religious movement in respect of avoiding services of a Brahmin Priest is slowly gaining ground among the non-Brahmins. The publication of the processes of rituals and the Vedic verses, as also spread of education among the masses have enabled the non-Brahmins to perform the rituals without the assistance of the traditional Brahmin priests.

Suryya Bipra or Daibagya or Ganak : This is a community which performs all the *Jalakarmas* pertaining to the Brahmins and also follow the same social behaviour and customs observed by a Brahmin but are not accepted to the same rank of the Brahmins in an Assamese society. They are known as *Daibagyas* or *Ganaks* in the State and they call themselves *Suryya Bipras*. Their caste occupation is study and practice of astrology. In Kamrup, there is a famous village of Astrologers. It is situated within Nalbari sub-division of the district. The name of the village is Gandhia. In every old populous village of Kamrup, there invariably

lives a few families of *Daibagyas*. Like the *Brahmins* and *Kayasthas*, they also do not plough or carry loads on poles. Numerical strength of the community in the district is lower than that of the *Brahmins*. They are also known as *Graha-Bipras*.

Kayasthas : The Non-Brahmins include a variety of castes and sub-castes. The *Kayasthas* rank the highest among the non-Brahmin castes. They do not touch the plough and intermarriage with other castes is not encouraged. They stand in between the *Brahmins* and the rest of the caste hierarchy. Like the *Brahmins*, they are also not debarred from practising agriculture except ploughing. The *Mahantas* or *Adhikaris* of certain monasteries of Kamrup belong to this caste. They also have Vaishnavite disciples. Incidentally, the *Satra* system played a very significant role in the socio-ritual life of the people till the last forties. Now their impact has visibly diminished.

The *Kayasthas* of Kamrup are said to be the descendants of the *Bara-Bhuyans* imported by Dharmapal from Gaud. There are also another section of high caste non-Brahmins in Kamrup, who claim themselves as *Kayasthas* and *Kshatriyas*. Generally intermarriages between these two sections are not socially accepted by the former section.

Kalitas : It is worthwhile to note that a *Kshatriya* caste or a warrior people as understood in the rest of the country is missing in this part of our land, perhaps because of the fact that Ahom kings insisted on the villager being a cultivator as well as a warrior according to the demands of the situation. The traditional *Kshatriya Varna* of the rest of India is represented by the *Kalitas* in this region. The *Kalitas* are quite numerous in this district. Their primary occupation is agriculture. In the caste hierarchy, their position is next to the *Kayasthas*. According to some historians, the *Kalitas* are the earliest Aryans migrating to and ruling Assam.

The traditional caste occupations as such are nearly absent except among the *Kumars*, the *Hiras*, the *Kaibartas* and the *Sonaris* in this district. But the occupational mobility is such that they can take up any profession they like except becoming priests. Fishing as a trade was not taken in the past by any one other than the *Kaibartas*. There is no caste council in this district as in the rest of India to take objections to their following an occupation other than their own. The Profession of a *Kahar* (bell-metal smith), the *Komar* (blacksmith) can be

taken up by any of the non-Brahmin castes mentioned above. Another remarkable fact of the caste system in this district is that agricultural practice is considered to be a noble one. The scheduled caste communities raise their status by taking to farming habits either through ownership of land by becoming share-croppers or by giving up their traditional occupations.

The *Vaishyas* of this district are not comparable to the *Banias* or the commercial community of northern India. They include *Sauds*, *Suri* etc. Almost all of the *Vaishyas* are agriculturists.

Another caste known as *Kewat* or *Keot* has two sub-divisions, namely, the *Haloi Keot* and the *Jaloi Keot*. The former are agriculturists by profession whereas the latter traditionally subsisted on fishing profession. There are also a few functional sub-castes of the *Keots* like *Mali Keot*, *Teli Keot*, etc. As among the *Kalitas* there are *Kumar Kalita*, *Mali Kalita*, *Nai Kalita*, *Bez Kalita*, etc.

It is to be noted that the caste mobility is somewhat peculiar to this region where caste restrictions are somewhat relaxed. A purely tribal inhabitant can rise step by step to the caste of a *Kshatriya* after adoption of Hinduism.

All branches of smithy are operated by any of the above mentioned non-Brahmin high castes without any social condemnation. Likewise, weaving is pursued by every Brahmin and non-Brahmin woman of Assam with pride.

The caste community known as the *Koch* or *Rajbanshi* embraces groups in different stages of cleanliness after sanskritisation. It is a common phenomenon to observe that most of the tribal groups in this district, surrounded by their Hindu neighbours, prefer to sanskritise their traditional ways of life in order to gradually merge with the surrounding population. The *Bodo-Kacharis*, the *Rabhas*, the *Karbis* and the *Tiwa* (Lalung) raise themselves to a level of acceptance by their neighbours by being admitted as *Pani Koch*, *Saru Koch*, etc. The degrees of their sanskritisation determine the level of their caste status. They can raise themselves to the status of *Kshatriyas* beyond which they do not aspire to rise. According to their economic condition and social relation, such persons can marry girls of poorer high caste people and establish kinship relation with higher castes.

In the context of sanskritisation, it is remarkable to note that the lower castes raise themselves to a higher status by accepting the Brahmin priests and the religious preceptors in their socio-cultural life. While doing so, such non-converts enter into a system where involution automatically comes in when they consider another group of new entrants to Hinduism to be lower than themselves in the caste hierarchy. The process continues until the new-converts raise themselves to the status of *Kshatriyas* at which stage they can put on the sacred thread. As the process of sanskritisation goes ahead in all parts of this district, another process of sanskritisation of rejecting the Brahmin priests and the preceptors has started since long. The *Brahmo-dharma*, largely practised by the Bodo Kacharis of Kamrup and Goalpara districts rejects authority of the Brahmin priests or preceptors while they voluntarily accept the reformed or adopted Vedic rites in their communal life. The processes of Vedic rites are accepted, even the *Mantras* are also accepted but they perform the rites themselves without the intervention of the professional Brahmin priest. Another section of the Bodo Kacharis has sanskritised themselves by entering into the caste hierarchy by calling themselves *Saraniyas*, a sub-caste of the Koch. In due course, the *Saraniyas* become Koch or Rajbanshi, ultimately to become *Kshatriyas*.

The process of sanskritisation of the tribal groups covers the *Rabhas*, the *Karbhis* and the *Tiwas*. They also like the Bodo-Kacharis, voluntarily enter into the caste hierarchy by giving up their traditional modes of habits in order to fall in line with the norm of the surrounding caste ridden society. Incidentally, it may be noted that Hinduism is indeed a congress of faiths. The tribesmen who enter into the Hindu fold give up their habits of drinking country liquor and rearing pigs in order to conform to the practices of the neighbouring Hindus. It has been observed, however, that the tribesmen themselves claim to be Hindus, although they rear pigs and drink country liquor. No one raises any objection to their claim. As a matter of fact, there is so much laxity in Hinduism that anybody who gives up the habit of beef-eating can easily pass as a Hindu. It may also be noted that the neophytes visit the places of pilgrimage and temple sites with animal offerings. It is a common sight to see the tribesmen and women offering sacrifices on the *Durga Puja* or *Kali puja* occasion. They, however, refrain from offering hens or pigs, which are not acceptable to the Brahmin priests, but offer goats, ducks, pigeons, and fish.

Caste hierarchy, in Assam in general and Kamrup in particular, is somewhat amorphous, in the sense that no clear cut line of demarcation

can be drawn between some castes below the Brahmins, Kayasthas and Kalitas. However, there exists a line of demarcation between the general castes and the scheduled ones. Inter-marriage between members of the scheduled castes and non-scheduled ones is rare, although it takes place occasionally. Untouchability as such is rarely observed except on ritual occasions. Temple entrance is free for all irrespective of caste affiliations. Brahmins serve the scheduled caste population on ritual occasions but they do not accept food prepared by them.

TABLE—13

Names of the scheduled castes and their numerical break-up in the district of Kamrup in 1961.

Name of Scheduled Castes	Persons	Males	Females
1. Bansphor	27	21	6
2. Bhuinmali or Mali	3,013	1,733	1,280
3. Brittil Bania or Bania	6,467	3,296	3,171
4. Dhupi or Dhobi	1,988	1,247	741
5. Dugla or Dholi	99	45	54
6. Hira	7,796	3,719	4,007
7. Jalkeot	147	89	58
8. Jhalo, Malo or Jhalo-Malo	2,743	1,400	1,343
9. Kaibartta or Jaliya	19,044	9,834	9,210
10. Mahara	9	4	5
11. Mehtar or Bhangi	111	67	44
12. Muchi or Rishi	2,905	1,699	1,206
13. Namasudra	48,034	26,404	21,630
14. Patni	718	388	330
15. Sutradhar	6,826	3,563	3,263
Total	99,927	53,509	46,418

Census of India 1961 Vol. III Part V - A, p. 152.

The above list of scheduled castes as presented in the 1961 Census Report does not really reflect the true nature of the Assamese society. Most of the scheduled castes mentioned therein are immigrants from outside. The members of the castes like washerman (*Dhobi*), cobblers (*Muchi*), the scavengers (*Mehtor*) etc. in modern society are immigrants from outside the State. Although they form a part of local Assamese society, even in the rural areas, where they live somewhat aloof from the socio-cultural life of the villagers, they really do not constitute an essential limb of the society in its socio-cultural aspects. Their services are utilised but they are not considered an integral part of the local social complex.

Scheduled castes like the *Kaibartas* and *Namasudras*, *Hiras* and *Haris*, have improved a lot after the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930). Untouchability as understood in the rest of the country is unknown in this part.

It is to be noted that the caste system in this district is comparatively much less rigid than in the districts of Nowgong and Sibsagar, although caste system in Assam is definitely less vigorously observed than in the rest of our country.

Till the thirties, certain castes followed their traditional occupation besides agriculture. As stated earlier, agricultural profession is considered to be one of the noblest ones. Hence many of the professional castes gave up their traditional occupation and merged with the peasant community whenever they could manage to possess arable lands. The *Jajmani* system formerly practised by the *Mukhis* (supplier of lime), the *Dhobis*, the *Napits*, the *Kumars*, the *Hiras*, the *Haris* (*Sonaris*), etc. is no longer in vogue as it used to be before the thirties.

The social reformation movement initiated by Bapuji and accelerated by widespread education in this district, besides giving occupational mobility, diminished the stringent pattern of behaviour expected from the high caste people. In the matter of inter-dining and inter-caste marriages, the rural people observe it on ritual occasions, but on public occasion no such restriction is observed. In the urban areas, caste restrictions have disappeared altogether except in the matter of marriage alliances. The secular trend observed in the urban areas has gradually

penetrated into the rural areas too. Inter-caste marriages are on the increase not only in the towns, but also in the villages.

Tribes. : In this district, there are four principal tribal groups, namely, the *Bodo-Kacharis*, the *Rabhas*, the *Karbis* and the *Tiwas*. Of these groups, the *Bodo-Kachari* group happens to be the largest, closely followed by the *Rabhas*. Table No. 14 below shows the numerical break-up of the tribal people in Kamrup district. There are sprinklings of Garo and Khasi families in the border areas. Of these tribal groups, the *Bodo-Kacharis* and the *Karbis* are patrilineal and patrilocal in their mode of descent and residence respectively. The *Rabhas*, the *Tiwas*, the Garo and the *Khasis* follow matrilineal descent and uxorilocal residence after marriage.

TABLE—14

Names and numerical break-up of scheduled tribes in the district of Kamrup as per 1961 census :

Name of Scheduled Tribe	Persons	Males	Females
1. Boro-Boro Kachari	123,025	63,293	59,732
2. Deori	537	247	290
3. Hojai	150	100	50
4. Kachari including Sonowal	51,552	26,611	24,941
5. Lalung	1,877	966	911
6. Miri	276	190	86
7. Rabha	43,603	21,977	21,626
TOTAL	221,020	113,384	107,636

Census of India 1961, Vol. III Part V-A, p. 180.

These tribal groups are recognised by our constitution and they enjoy all the facilities and privileges enjoined in the constitution. It may however, be noted that these ethno-cultural groups do not conform to the ideal pattern of tribal groups of anthropological conceptions. The tribes mentioned above constitute an integral part in the State. They are in direct contact not only with their neighbours and the rest of the State and country but also they are in touch with rest of the world with improved means of communication as well as through money market. As such, they are in contact with the rest of the world instead of forming isolated groups as originally conceived by the social scientists.

Besides being in contact, direct or indirect, with the rest of the world, most of them are bilingual or even trilingual. Many of them are educated and hold responsible administrative posts. They are also participants in the regional and national life, where they play a significant role in contrast to what happened during the Pre-British and British times. In brief, they are full participants in modern life and all amenities are open to them as to any other Indian citizen.

Generally speaking, the younger generation of tribesmen of this district has shown keen interest in educating their children both male and female; but female education is yet to gain popularity.

Class : The society in Kamrup is not categorically divided into classes as in the industrialised societies. Nevertheless, incipient classes can be observed in three different levels. Of these the economic level gets the upper hand in popular thinking. According to this category, the villagers themselves divide into two categories, viz., the class of wealthy people irrespective of their caste or religion, the other class is categorised as the poor people irrespective of their affiliation to a particular caste or creed. On the social level again the class of farmers are distinguished from that of the non-cultivators who earn their livelihood by means other than farming, although in Assamese society the farmers occupy a respectable position in contrast to the phenomena observed elsewhere. The third category of incipient class is observed on the basis of learning in and dedication to religious faiths. Amongst the Hindus, the custodians of religions are given a higher status than those who fall outside this category. Among the Muslims likewise, the *Mollas* and *Kazis* etc. are given a higher rank, although theoretically Islam does not believe in making distinction between individuals. Among the followers of Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Christianity, similar higher ranks are given to those who are religious leaders dedicated to their respective faiths and experienced in the rituals.

General structure : Generally speaking, social structures of each community in the district of Kamrup have differences depending on tribe, religion and locality, although the basic structure of all these communities is alike all over the district. It is remarkable to note that till recently the *Satra* system of Assam played a significant role in the sustenance in the traditional social structure of Assamese villages. Likewise the Mosque played a dominant role in maintaining the socio-religious order in the Muslim villages. It continues to be so even now although the inter-village socio-economic relations appear to be much more liberal than in the recent past. Some of the Bodo-Kacharis and Rabhas of this district

have their own magico-ritual intermediaries, but there are groups of these tribes who have voluntarily accepted Hinduism and religious preceptors along with Brahmins in order to gradually raise their social status to that of a Kshatriya in due course.

It is worth mentioning in respect of social structure that in Assam a village rather than a caste is the basis of social structure in contrast to the rest of India. It should be noted that unicast villages are rather rare in this district. Multicast village pattern is the norm. The social division may include members of more than one caste. It may cross-cut sectarian religious divisions also. Occasional outbursts of sectarian rivalries hardly disturb the total permanent social structure.

Religious Beliefs : The district of Kamrup is the abode of followers of several religions and religious sects. Here, there are a number of Hindu temple sites, *Masjid*, Church, *Dargahs*, *Gurudwara*, Jain temples, etc. Religions, in general, prescribe systems of beliefs and practices. These also prescribe customs and manners which should regulate the life of the followers. These embody codes of conduct for the followers. In fact, the mode of life and work in a traditional society was very much circumscribed by the tenets of the religion among its followers. Religion of an individual is scientifically considered to be a matter of individual choice. But in practice, life of the individuals in a group of people is much modelled by its religion.

There are three main sectors among the Hindus, namely, the *Saivites*, or the worshippers of *Siva*, the *Saktas* or the worshippers of the goddess *Durga*, and the *Vaisnavites* or the worshippers of *Vishnu* or *Krishna*.

Saktism and Saivism : The cult of Mother Goddess *Kamakhyā* or *Sakti* has very ancient history about its practice in Assam. The archaeological remains discovered in different parts of the district indicate the prevalence of the *Sakti* cult side by side with that of the *Vishnu* and *Siva* cult. Discovery of the *Surija* images along with the images of *Siva*, *Durga* and other deities indicates the prevalence of such cults among the inhabitants of the State. In the pre-mediaeval period, however, the cult of *Siva* appeared to have a wide support among the autochthons of the land. It is interesting to note that a widespread nature of the cult of the *Phallus* worship is evidenced by the discovery of *Siva lingas* from all parts of the State. As a matter of fact, worship of *Durga* alone without prayers for *Siva*, her consort, is not practised.

perhaps, *Siva* worship without prayers for *Durga* is impossible. They two go together representing the creative principle in nature. The Mother Goddess is the fountain source of power, that is, *Sakti*. The *Siva* worship symbolises ritual devotions to the creative male principle and to the strength of auspiciousness. Gopeswar temple may be mentioned as a *Saivite* temple of importance. All the temple sites in Assam include the images of *Siva*, *Vishnu* and *Sakti*, the three principal deities. It also clearly indicates a spirit of religious tolerance and forbearance practised by their followers.

In the context of the spread of *Sakticult*, it is appropriate to mention the temple site of Mother Goddess *Kamakhyā*, located atop Nilachal near Gauhati. It is one of the *Mahapithas* of India. The *Tantrik* school of religious believers considers *Kamakhyā* to be a centre of *Tantrik* cult in north east India.

The temple priests or *Pandas* of *Kamakhyā* have their clients spread over all parts of the country. As such, the *Kamakhyā* temple stands as a solid manifestation of integration of the people of this area with the rest of the country. As a matter of fact, unity among the different sections of Hindus irrespective of caste affiliation is reflected by their common faith in the numerous temple sites distributed all over this region.

Vaisnavism : It is known from various literary and archaeological evidences that the worship of *Vishnu* and his incarnations was prevalent in Kamrup from very early times. In ancient Kamarupa, worship of *Vishnu* was connected with sacrifice of animals and the worship was based on certain *Tantrika* rites. The Great Saint Sri Sankardeva reformed the earlier Vaisnavism in the 15th century and professed a cult of *Bhakti* (devotion) and this Neo-Vaisnavism of Sri Sankardeva differed from earlier Vaisnavism which was based on *Tantrika* rites. Sri Sankardeva and his close disciple Sri Madhabdeva resisted the sacrifice of animals or bloodshed in the worship of *Vishnu*. This principle of Neo-Vaisnavism is to worship only *Vishnu* or *Krishna* (*Ek Sarana Dharma*). They do not believe that the worship of innumerable Gods and Goddesses is essential for earning religious virtues.

These noted religious reformers brought about a renaissance not only in the field of religion through their preachings but also they were the pioneers in the field of socio-cultural reforms in Assam. They preached *Ek Sarana Dharma*, which embraced all its devotees irrespective of caste or creed. Amongst his famous disciples some were drawn from tribal and non-tribal groups. In fact, *Ek Sarana Dharma* was a movement directed against the rigid caste system and ethnic origin in respect of following a faith. All sections of the inhabitants of the Assamese society included not only the exterior castes and tribal groups but also persons professing other religions. All were equally welcomed to embrace this *Ek Sarana Dharma*. In a caste ridden society, marked by differential treatment shown towards the so-called backward communities, this *Ek Sarana Dharma*, which does not believe so much in varied rituals as prescribed by the *Vedas* and *Sashtras*, attracted the unsophisticated sections of the people. They could read the religious scriptures written in the peoples' own language. A predominance of the Brahmin priests, because of their exclusive command over Sanskrit, needed for the details of religious ceremonies, was shattered by the religious literatures written in Assamese by Sri Sankardeva and Sri Madhabdeva as well as their disciples. The secrets of religions no longer remained a monopoly of the Sanskrit scholars only. These two eminent religious reformers along with Sri Damodardeva and Sri Harideva two principal Brahmin followers of Sri Sankardeva, were pioneers in establishing monasteries or *Satras* all over Assam to preach Vaisnavism among the masses.

The notable event of the 15th century religious reformatory movement is that it also received royal patronage. Mass acceptance of Vaisnavism is reflected in the socio-cultural life of the population among whom the *Namghar* or the prayer house played a pivotal role. The keepers of the *Satras* were both Brahmins and high caste non-Brahmins known as *Mahantas*. In the socio-ritual life of the villagers all over Assam, the *Satras* and their keepers had domineering influence. The disciples of a *Satradhikar* were considered to be the members of the same social group. If a number of disciples received *Sarana* or *Guru Nam* (Initiation) from the same preceptor, they became *Hari Bhakat*. Thenceforward they were treated as belonging to a ritual brotherhood. All the disciples of a *Satradhikar*, moreover, had a community of interest in the welfare of the *Satra* of which they were disciples.

Broadly speaking, the *Satras* of Assam can be divided into two categories. Followers of one of these, identified as *Mahapurusiya Dharma*, are devotees of *Vishnu* no doubt, but the disciples reject idol worship as

such and *Shastric* worship as preached by the Brahmin priests. They are opposed to *Sakti* or *Saiva* cult. Further, they believe that *Vishnu* and his various manifestations can be propitiated successfully by offering the humblest of offerings and saying of prayers (*Nam Kirtan*). The other category is represented by the followers of Sri Damodardeva and Sri Harideva, who later renounced some of Sankardeva's tenets and established two distinct sects known after their respective names. The *Satras* established by them and their followers are known as *Bamuniya Satras*. Although this school also is wholly Vaisnavite in nature, they do not reject the *Shastric* rites for propitiation of the supreme deity, namely *Vishnu*.

Ek Sarana Dharma, as preached by Sri Sankardeva and Sri Madhabdeva gained ground, particularly, among the converts from animism.

It is also a fact that certain religious leaders and new religious movements have spread in this district in recent years as observed in the spread of ideals of *Arya Samaj*, *Ramkrishna Mission*. Side by side with these reformatory religions flourish the influence of sooth-sayers and Shamans also. In spite of spread of scientific knowledge both the urban and rural population continue their superstitious beliefs and rituals thereby revealing deeply an evergreen tradition.

Tribal religion : Tribal religion is based on belief in supernatural being and powers. A characteristic of tribal religion, which distinguishes it from developed religions of the world, is that, it is polytheistic in nature and conception. It is not that idea of the supreme God is totally absent among the followers of tribal religion which has often been designated by the popularly known term Animism. A characteristic common to all tribal religion is that the tribesmen believe in the existence of a number of supernatural beings or deities which are again conceived to be of two categories, one set is represented by the benevolent deities who too need to be propitiated in order to keep them pleased. The other set is conceived of as beings who are normally malevolent and therefore demand propitiation on occasions. It has been observed that benevolent deities are propitiated calendrically. Malevolent deities, on the other hand, are not only offered offerings along with the benevolent deities but also rituals are held whenever it is discovered by divination that certain maladies are due to incurrence of their displeasures. Their belief in the efficacies

of magico-religious rituals encourages them to take recourse to the same as soon as they feel for their performances. Their belief in animal sacrifices and offerings of food for the spirits is marked by frequent performances of rituals most often by the householders themselves, and on special occasions by the professional ones. It is remarkable to note that every tribal householder is expected to know as to how to divine the causes of pleasure or displeasure as well as the ways of performing the rituals connected with the same. Offerings of eggs, chickens, fowls, pigs, etc., are very common among them. Domestic animals in tribal society are never killed for home or public consumptions without offering as sacrifices.

Another characteristic of tribal religion is that they combine a code of morality and philosophy about life in the total system of their religious beliefs and practices. They not only believe in the existence of supernatural being whose pleasure or displeasure causes disease and death but also believe in the existence of soul after death and in the future well being of the soul, commensurate with the virtues earned during lifetime. Their notion about religious merit and sin can generally be seen reflected in their day-do-day life among their fellow-beings. They strongly believe that pleasure given to the fellow-beings means pleasure offered to the supernatural beings. Hence on all important occasions there is an arrangement for a communal feast, which externally serves the purpose of attaining solidarity among the social groups while spiritually it means worship of deities who are constantly observing the welfare or otherwise of the people over whose destiny they preside. To them pleasure caused to the fellow-beings is nothing sort of propitiating the deities. Their moral code is not distinguishable from their attitude towards the well-being of the society of which the individuals are only a part. On all private and public occasions prayers are sung for the welfare of the members of the individual family, their clan, their bigger lineage group and their village community as a whole. Praying for individual or public welfare means praying for the blessings of God for a good harvest, a good live-stock, plenty of food materials including fruits, roots, tubers, insects, etc. They are strong believers in the blessings from the supernatural deities for the welfare of nature of which they are only a part. It is because of this belief that they are observed to have worshipped the objects of nature like the hill tops, the rivers, the streamlets, the trees, the animals and plants, etc.

Totemism among them was in full play till recently. But in modern times totemistic worships and beliefs are somewhat obsolescent. Some

of them still refrain from eating or doing injury to certain animals and plants under the belief that their clan originated from such objects of nature or that same were very helpful to their remotest ancestors whose descendants they claim to be. Their code of conduct is not separable from their systems of beliefs and practices. Their pattern of behaviour in their respective society as well as towards their neighbours is modelled on and by their belief system. Automatic punishment is believed to follow any infringement of social code. It is an instrument for their social control. Atonement ceremonies are there to regain the original status after breach of the taboos.

Tribal Gods : The general remarks noted above may not be applicable in cases of those tribal groups which have been assimilated with other religious groups. The followers of Brahma religion, for example, have given up their faith in *Bathou Dharma*, which is animistic in conception and characterises the traditional Bodo-Kachari group. The worship of *Siju* plant represents the central theme of *Bathou* religion. Along with the worship of *Bathou* deities like *Aku Mainong*, *Sali Mainong*, *Ae Aileng*, *Agra*, *Saji*, *Sang Bharali*, *Rajputra*, *Alir Mura*, *Gangar Barai*, *Gangar Bori*, *Baghrajia*, *Kamakhya*, etc. are ritually worshipped by sacrificing animals. *Bathou* worship is a lengthy process which is performed at night although the initiatory rites are started on the previous evening. On the third morning it terminates with a communal feast. Then prayers are sung through the Bodo dialect and the worship is associated with the dances known as *Kherai*. A Shamanistic dancer participates in its performance and the Shamaness foretells the future of the community during the moments of her dance. Devotees come with offerings for the Shamaness who predicts the future, well-being, or otherwise of the devotees. The Shamaness also prescribes remedial measure for the maladies which afflict an individual. The *Kherai* dance is accompanied by drums, flutes, etc. The followers of *Bathou* religion also claim themselves to be Hindus and they invariably use *Tulsi* leaves in the performance of all the rituals.

The *Brahma Dharma* was introduced among the Bodo-Kacharis by Kali Charan Gurudev during the thirties. It was accepted by the more enlightened sections and soon it spread in the district of Goalpara and Kamrup. The spread of this sectarian religion appears to be in protest against a low status given to the tribal entrants in the caste hierarchy of the Hindu system of social organisation. It is a well known fact that a section of the Bodo-Kacharis got assimilated into the surrounding society of the Hindus by Sanskritising their ways of life and gradually raising

themselves to the status of Rajbanshis or Kshatriyas. But while doing so the new entrants submitted themselves to the services to be rendered by the *Varna* Brahmins and the religious preceptors. *Brahma Dharma*, on the other hand, in embracing Hinduism, rejects the idea of being socially controlled by the religious preachers and Brahmin priests. *Brahma Dharma* believes in the equality of status for all individuals. It firmly rejects the idea of superior or inferior castes. On the contrary, they strongly believe in the efficacy of the *Vedic* rites. This sectarian religion is founded on the worship of the supreme deity, the *Brahma*, whose propitiation can lead to the emancipation of the devotees from the miseries of the world. It prescribes *Homa* sacrifices according to the *Shastric* injunction. The *Hymns* for the performance of the rites are generally in Sanskrit but remodelled in the Bodo dialect. The sacrifices are offered by a Brahmin among them, who is invested with a sacred thread.

Social Life : The social life of the inhabitants of Kamrup is as varied as the ethnic composition of its people. Different groups of people professing different faiths live here but whatever might be their religious affiliation, they belong either to patrilineal or to matrilineal families. The different groups of the Rabhas, the Garos, the Tiwas and some Khasi families who live in this district, follow matrilineal rules so far as their descent, inheritance, and successions are concerned and matrilocal residence after marriage. The rest of the population follow patrilineal rules of descent, inheritance, and succession. In the matters of residence, these groups bring their wives to the husband's parental home or village.

The prevailing type of family among the inhabitants of this district today is nuclear family as against joint family system before the 1930's. The landed properties tied the family together to live jointly ; as the society, till recently, was basically an agricultural community. It was a prestige to live in a joint family. It added prestige to the family tradition by living jointly in a community where respect was shown to a larger joint family both for its manpower and for economic strength. The diversification of opportunities and the spread of modern education and its consequent development of individual attitude among the members of a family, coupled with scarcity of cultivable land, have brought about disintegration in the joint family system. The Land Ceiling Act coupled with job opportunities and a growing development of individualistic ideas among the married couples have tended to break the joint family into nuclear ones.

In the traditional tribal organisation simple biological family was the rule which continues to be followed in principle even now. But in

the affluent peasant families of the Bodo <—Kacharis and Karbis, joint family system is followed as against their traditional norm of living separately after marriage. A son is preferred-issue in the patrilineal groups just as a daughter is in the matrilineal groups. Among these two groups, sonless parents adopt a son-in-law as an inheritor, although traditionally, only the male agnates could inherit properties. With the rising value of wet lands and along with change of the value system, the son in a matrilineal society also are occasionally given a share of the parental landed properties with the expressed approval of the clan to which they belong.

Property and Inheritance : Inheritance of property and succession to the authority within the household go together in Assamese Hindu society. Properties may be of two categories, viz., *Sthabor* (Landed or immovable) and *Asthabor* (movable) properties. Spiritual or incorporeal properties are not considered to be worthwhile, although the magical formulae are transmitted within the family from father to son and mother-in-law to daughter-in-law in a virilocal and patrilineal society. The conception of inheritance of properties in Assamese society is based on the system known as *Dayabhaga* of Hindu Code of law. According to this code, the sons can inherit from the father after his death and not during his life time.

The women enjoy sole authority over her *Stridhana*, i. e., property given by her father at the time of her wedding ceremony as well as that part of money or any form of property which she earns by extra labour, besides performing her normal duties. In her lifetime, she can transmit some of these properties either to her daughters or to her daughters-in-law as she likes. Her husband can have no right over the disposal of these types of *Stridhana*. <—The ornaments and clothings used by a woman given her by the husband cannot be claimed by the latter as she obtains through marriage an exclusive right over these properties.

In the matrilineal and uxorilocal societies like those of the Rabhas, the Tiwas, the Khasis and the Garos, the principle of inheritance of the properties follows the line of the females of the family. The women are the rightful owners of the properties in contrast to what happens in the patrilineal and virilocal society. The husband has no right over the wife's properties. He does not inherit from his mother. A son works for his mother and sisters when he goes nearly empty handed to live with his wife and her people. The daughters in such a society inherit the maternal properties equally, but a lion's share of property including the living hut is inherited by the youngest or any one who lives with the parents with her husband and children. In such a case, the house and the household properties generally go to the daughter who looks after the ageing parents

till their death. She is also responsible for meeting the expenses of all the rituals held on honour of the ancestors or for the general welfare of the members of a family. Other daughters do not claim a share of the household properties but they inherit the wet land including some utensils, clothings and ornaments given by the parents at the wedding ceremony. Those couples, who have no daughters to inherit their property after their death, are in the habit of adopting a daughter from their *mahari* or clan. This adopted daughter becomes the inheritress of the family and maintains the properties of the family unit. According to the strict principles of matrilineal inheritance and succession to authority, the daughters alone enjoy that privilege. The selected daughter wields authority in the household after the death of the mother. Her husband has no authority, in principle, to dispose of any article or property without her authority or permission. In practice, however, the husband is not only the manager of the family and family property but also wields indirect pressure on the *mahari* through his wife. In principle, the *mahari* brothers should exercise power and authority in the management of the family affairs in preference to the husband. This may happen in case the marriage takes place within the same village. Generally speaking, no serious clash of interest takes place between the wife-giving and wife-receiving groups although the wife receivers merge for all practical purposes with the groups of the wives.

In the context of inheritance of properties in matrilineal and matrilocal groups certain changes have taken place in recent decades. These matrilineal societies which are no longer *jhumers* but practise wet cultivation in the plain areas of this district, have under the compulsion of circumstances partially change their traditional system of transmission of properties and authorities exclusively to the daughters. According to strict traditional custom, daughter alone could inherit the properties and the sister's son could succeed to the office of the mother's brother. Along with the change of the habit from the hilly areas to the plain areas and along with the adoption of plough cultivation by the erstwhile *jhumers*, the notions of ownership of properties have gradually changed to individual ownership instead of communal ownership as in the *jhuming* areas. Preparation of a wet land by reclaiming the forest covered waste land need a lot of hard work and continuous attention for the areas so brought under cultivation. Cultivators develop a permanent interest in such plots of wet paddy lands. What with the ideas borrowed from the neighbouring patrilineal societies and what with their adoption of permanent cultivation instead of shifting from plot to plot and year after year, they like to retain permanent ownership of such plots. On the top of all these changes,

the son more than the daughter proves to be more reliable for maintenance in old age of the parents. It is under such circumstances that some matrilineal families have switched over to transmission of wet landed properties to the sons also without wholly depriving the daughters.

The *Pati Rabhas* of the district have not only managed to nearly forget their traditional dialect and religion but also have adopted new methods of patrilineally transmitting properties to the sons in preference to the daughters. The wealthy parents, who have bigger plots of wet lands, may give a share of the wet lands to the daughter or daughters. Uxorilocal residence is nearly absent among them except in cases where the son-in-law is adopted as an inheritor of the family in the absence of a son to inherit. The adopted son-in-law lives with the parents-in-law. Thenceforward it becomes the duty of a son-in-law to look after the aged parents-in-law and inherit the properties, movable and immovable, after their death.

Matrilineal Garos are traditionally in the habit of transmitting their properties to the *Nokna* or the inheritress-elect who becomes the sole proprietress of the family property after the death of her parents. Her husband is known as *Nokrom* who hails from the clan of her father. The *Nokrom* becomes the manager of the properties and assumes the office of the father-in-law who is his mother's brother in accordance with the norms of the traditional Garo society. Other daughters of the family move away from the parental home and live separately.

Marriage : Marriage is a universal way of controlling the sex life of individuals. The institution of marriage has both social and religious sanctions. Till the last thirties, marriage was universal in Assamese society as well as tribal society. The physically handicapped alone remained outside the marital union.

Monogamy any Polygamy : In modern times, in Assamese Hindu society, monogamy appears to be the general rule, although there are certain exceptions. Polygamy included both polygyny and polyandry. Polygamy is a legal prohibition in recent times but infringement of the law is observed in some cases. Grounds for doing so are often advanced as ill health or barrenness of the wife. Among the followers of Islam on the other hand polygamy is permissible and as such some wealthy villagers marry and maintain more than one wife at a time. Polyandry is singularly absent in Assamese non-tribal and tribal society. Occasional aberrations in sex behaviour are rather rare. Such cases of irregularities are decided by the villagers themselves. Extra marital privileges outside

the union are never socially recognised whether it be the male or the female. Chastity among the maidens is very well recognised by all sections of the populations in this district.

In matrilineal Rabha, Garo, and Lalung society; monogamy is the rule. Polygamy is not tolerated. In Boro-Kachari and Karbi society, on the other hand, polygamy is permissible according to tribal tradition. But in practice only the wealthy persons take recourse to this course of action to enhance their prestige. In fact, plural wives add to the economic prosperity of such a family. It is worthwhile to underline the facts that in tribal society the womenfolk are the most hard-working set of peasants.

Traditional Restrictions on Marriage Alliances :

Negotiations about marriage depend on certain factors. One of these is that groom and the bride must not belong to the same clan among groups which believe in the clan organisation and practise clan exogamy. Among the Hindus, clan exogamy is practised by those who have this organisation. Marriage between persons of a common ancestral descent called *gotra* is not prevalent among the higher castes. The lower castes have no well-demarcated clan organisation. The followers of the *Kasyapa gotra*, whether one belongs to a Brahmin or non-Brahmin caste can inter-marry within the same *gotra*. Among the tribal society clan-exogamy is strictly observed except among the traditional Bodo-Kacharis who formerly practised clan endogamy. Among the followers of Islam, the rule of exogamy except family exogamy is not observed. Kin marriage, both on paternal and maternal sides is permissible among them. Cross-cousin marriage is practised by the tribal groups. Among the Hindus, cross-cousin marriage is a strict taboo.

In the caste-ridden Hindu society, marriage was arranged within the same sub-castes or castes. It was a rule to approve isogamous marriages only. This traditional rule continues to be followed by an orthodox section in respect of the caste only overriding sub-caste affiliations. In modern times, due to the spread of liberal ideas and the spread of democracy and education, strict isogamous rules are not always observed. Inter-caste marriages are not rare phenomena even in rural areas.

Now-a-days, marriage within the sub-castes of the same caste group is freely practised. Among the educated non-Brahmins also inter-caste marriage is not looked down upon as it happened to be before some thirty or forty years back. Inter marriage between scheduled and non-

scheduled castes are still rare although exceptions are observed. Inter marriage between Brahmin and non-Brahmin is also observed occasionally. Widow re-marriage among the Brahmins and Kayasthas has not been accepted as among the non-Brahmins but no serious objections are raised if Brahmin widows remarry and are generally tolerated.

Dowry: Dowry as understood in the rest of India was not in vogue in the district of Kamrup. But the dowry (*Barpan*) system prevalent amongst the Bengali immigrants has tempted some of the ambitious young men and their parents to accept dowry in the form of *Joutuk* which is the customary present of the parents and the guardians of the bride offered publicly at the time of marriage. There is keen contest among the brides' parents to negotiate with the best available groom who has a better prospect in the employment market. Some well-to-do families start paying the educational expenses of the would be grooms along with valuable ornaments, furnitures and cloths for the bride. Although this has gained clandestine acceptance, it has, however, not yet been given social recognition. Grooms from good families shun dowry, but do not reject '*Joutuk*' on the traditional basis which varies depending on the economic condition of the bride's family. This has been becoming a social menace gradually under the pressure of false sense of prestige.

Marriage Customs: Marriage customs are not uniform among all the ethno-cultural groups of this district. In a high caste Assamese Hindu family, pre-puberty marriage was the rule till the twenties, but now it is very rare. Post-puberty marriage among all sections has received popular acceptance. It was a custom formerly to approach an astrologer to ascertain the compatibility of the horoscopes of the bride and the groom. This was the first step. Among those who do not have birth horoscope, this step is not formally observed. Nonetheless, some people are in the habit of approaching the astrologer to ascertain the compatibility of the proposed union on the basis of the names of the individuals involved.

The next step continues to involve the services of the go-between in the traditional way but there is no official go-between as in Bengali society. In a traditional Assamese village with agricultural background, the groom's party had to enter into the negotiations first. This step is called *Koinadhara*. In some other cases, specially the Brahmin Kayasthas, first approach is made from the side of the bride and this custom seems to be gaining ground among affluent families.

The third step involves a visit by the groom's party to the house of the bride. The preliminary to this step is called *Koina Sowa*. It is reciprocated

by the other party also. A party of middle men including the close relatives of the bride or grooms visits the opposite party. In the third step, the parties enter into preliminary settlement of the negotiation, prior to which each party tries to collect detailed informations about the qualification and virtues of the party concerned. Then follows step called *Sendur Pindhowa* or *Angathi Pindhowa*. In this step, the bride is formally visited by a party from the groom's family and on this occasion public announcement is made by putting a vermilion mark on the forehead of the bride by the groom's female relatives. In the urban areas, it is known as the ring ceremony where a ring is presented formally and ceremonially. In certain cases, the bride's party reciprocates this step by visiting the house of the groom by offering some dress. After this step till the finalisation of the marriage, occasional presents of food materials, fruits, and *Bihuans*, etc., on festive occasions follow from both sides.

Next step involves presentation of the bridal dress, ornaments, and cosmetics for the bride. This is a formal occasion which is popularly known as '*Joron Diya*' or '*Telor Bhar*'. This is an important ritual after which the negotiations can break only in rare cases when also the society imposes penalty on the defaulting party. Formerly, negotiations become finalised on the previous step, but in modern times this step is omitted to overlap with the fourth step.

The final stage takes place in the midst of rituals and festivities in the house of the bride.

Traditionally in a Hindu marriage, a Brahmin priest had to perform a *Homa-rite* on the night of the wedding ceremony. During the day time the fathers of both the parties used to perform *Sradha* rite where oblations were offered to the deceased ancestors. This process is followed by many even now, but in certain cases the rituals to be performed by the Brahmin priests are avoided, specially by the orthodox Vaisnavites following the *Nam Dharma*. Instead, prayer songs are recited.

According to traditions among the Brahmins each individual has to pass through ten reformatory institutions (*Dasa sanskar*) of which marriage is one.

The marriage ceremony of the followers of Islam is much different from those of the Hindus. Negotiations may be initiated by either party. There is technically no bride-price but an agreement (*moharana*) must precede the finalisation of the rituals by a *Kazi* or religious preacher, which stipulates payment of money according to the demand of the bride from the end of the groom. This is to be done even in writing in presence of witnesses. A party of negotiators on the wedding night which takes place in the bride's household proceeds to ask the bride about her demands in the presence of the *Kazi* who recites passages from the *Koran* and binds both the parties to the stipulated agreement. Any infringement of the agreement by the groom may lead to institution of a court case by the aggrieved party. This document is held valid by the law courts. On this occasion sweets are offered by the groom's party to those who are present on the occasion. The bride's consent is essential before finalisation of the marriage ritual.

Marriage among the tribal groups has two parts, viz., the civil and the ritual part as among the Hindus and Muslims. They, however, have different methods of acquiring a mate. Among the Hindus and Muslims marriage by negotiation is the rule rather than an exception, although love marriage are not unknown. In the tribal society, marriage by negotiation is prestigious, but it involves a lot of expenses. Other types of marriage like marriage by elopement, marriage by capture, marriage by intrusion, etc., on the contrary, are less expensive. Hence the latter types are more popular because of economic hardship of the grooms concerned. Moreover, bride prices are demanded by the parents of girls. The more accomplished the bride is, the higher the bride price demanded by the parents. It must be noted here that free movement of adolescent girls is the practice among the tribesmen. They do not observe '*purdah*' and they move about freely in the course of their usual domestic and agricultural activities. This enables the adolescent boys and girls to make their own choices. In exogamous tribal society, both the parties involved in a union do not generally like to involve in incestuous relations. Each adult boy or girl knows as to whom they can marry. Incestuous relations are not generally tolerated. In Karbi society, in particular, the groom is required to affiliate to another clan in case the

partners to such relations refuse to be separated. Irregular types of marriages like elopement or capture are later on regularised by making the payments demanded by the bride's party. Incestuous relations were in the past never tolerated and excommunication followed. In modern times, however, the younger generation is inclined to overlook such social aberrations. In Bodo-Kachari society, clan endogamy was a rule in the past but now-a-days marriage outside the clan is permissible. Among the Bodo-Kacharis and the Karbis, kinship is basically agnatic although complementary filiation is well recognised. The Rabhas and the Tiwas follow uterine descent rules and they also recognise complementary filiation. All the tribal groups except the Bodo-Kacharis are exogamous in matrimonial matters. Among the tribals, endogamy is generally followed no doubt, but there is no clamour against inter-tribal marriage among these groups. In fact, inter-marriage among the tribal groups, namely, Bodo-Kachari, Karbi, Rabha and Tiwa is not a taboo.

Loosening of the hold of old Ideas : It is a fact that societies and cultures are dynamic in character. No society or culture ever remains static. Societies in Assam including the tribal groups are changing over the ages. In recent times, multiple socio-cultural factors have brought about changes in the pattern of culture and society in Assam. It is needless to say that spread of education right from the preliminary learning to higher education, intensive grip of the administrative machinery, multiplication of means of communication added by trade, intensified contact with the socio-political leaders, and social reformers, import of ideas through migration into the area, etc., have deeply influenced the traditional society and culture in Assam. Westernised education, spread of scientific ideas and thoughts, liberal attitude preached by the national leaders but simultaneously with a regenerated faith in the cultural heritage of the society have obviously led to re-examination of the so-called conservative ideas of the older generations. The generation gap was not very much marked in a purely peasant society, where generation after generation aspired only to live and die as peasant, but this is felt more powerfully in the modern Assamese society with occupational mobility allowing departure from the age-old notions of following the occupation of the parents.

Age at Marriage : The age at marriage of the adolescent girls and boys are on the higher side than what it happened to be in the 1930's. This is mainly due to the spread of education and economic consideration. The boys and girls in the urban areas, and now-a-days even in rural areas, prefer to marry only when they think they will be

capable of economically maintaining themselves independent of the support from their parents or guardians. Educated town girls do not like to take the risk of entering into the wedlock without adequate educational preparation for holding a job in case of emergency arising out of ill health or accidental demise of the husband. The educated boys also feel that educated bride will be able to add to the family earning and thus maintain a more comfortable life.

The recent legislation on the marriageable age of boys and girls has raised it to 21 and 18 respectively. There is also a growing popular feeling in the society that boys and girls should marry a bit later than what their parents did. Parent no longer desires to impose on a non-earning groom the responsibility of maintaining a family without being sure about a regular source of earning. The traditional dependence on economic resources coming out of the landed properties no longer holds good in the existing circumstances.

Number Civil Marriages : Contracting a marriage according to the traditional norms registration in a civil court is not required. Divorces were very rare. Now that divorce is legally permissible, educated couples, in the urban areas particularly, prefer to occasionally get their wedding ceremony registered in a civil court besides publicly performing the marriage ceremony according to the prevailing customs.

The number of civil marriages recorded in the office of the Registrars may not be indicative of the number of civil marriage that take place in the rural areas where a man and a woman live together through mutual consent as husband and wife along with their progeny being tacitly approved by the society around them.

Some civil marriages are performed at the temple site at Kamakhya sometimes to give it a colour of ritual marriage making the Mother Goddess *Kamakhya* a standing witness of the union so arranged quite frequently to avoid cost of full observance of all the rituals. But the essential rites of Hindu marriage like *Homa* and *saptapadi* are always performed there. Such cases are hardly recorded in the civil register in a law court. Incidence of such marriage at Kamakhya are on increase as a result of increasing economic hardship of the people in general.

Marriages of Widow : Marriage of widow is widely practised without any restriction whatsoever among the non-Brahmins excepting the Kayasthas. Among the Brahmins and Kayasthas it was a great taboo in spite

of the fact that pre-puberty marriage was the rule among them till the thirties when the chances of widowhood was comparatively more. As the education spread and as the superstitious beliefs and practices lost their pristine intensity, the notion of remarrying the widow agitated the mind of educated and thoughtful parents who were concerned about the helpless condition of the widows.

Widow marriage among the tribesmen is widely practised in spite of a superstitious belief that a widow or a widower may again lose the partner owing to the evil influences which caused the earlier misfortune. Among the Muslims too, widow marriage in form of *nikah* is prevalent.

Divorce : A marriage ceremony which is performed after due negotiations and according to the customary rituals hardly end in a separation between the couple so united. It is popularly believed that if accidentally there is a separation it is due to the provisions made by the unseen forces. Incompatibility occasionally creates rift between the husband and the wife which is often due more to the interference by the members of the husband's joint family or by undue influences from the wife's family. If the rift becomes unbridgable it is occasionally referred to the villagers and if the attempts of the villagers to bring about an understanding fail, a separation is decreed by the village council. Compensations are demanded by the divorced wife if the custody of the male and female issues are sought by the husband. In spite of the acceptance of the rare occurrence of the divorce among the non-Brahmin Assamese villagers, a popular belief that a married couple should remain united until and unless the cold hands of death snatch one of them away still continues to be respected.

Divorce is not difficult to be affected in more primitive tribal groups. Compensation is demanded only when the divorced woman has no possibility of easily getting remarried or if she has no adult son to support her.

Divorce as such is not traditionally permissible among the members of the higher castes. Once married the married ones must remain faithful to each other throughout life and it would continue, according to traditional beliefs, even after death. But such a belief hallowed by tradition and kept alive by the stories of *Satees* or chaste womanhood dissuade some people from taking recourse to an extreme step of divorcing each other. Quite often estranged couple find it undignified to go to court to seek divorce and the wife, who is mostly the aggrieved one, is taken

back by the parental relations for living with them. Until the passage of the recent Act prohibiting polygamy, the husbands were free to remarry. Neither party, however, is looked upon with respect in such cases of separation although it is tolerated.

Therefore, although divorce has a legal sanction, and dissatisfied couple after long deliberation with their relatives may go to the law for a legal decree, it is yet to be popular though it has gained a halting acceptance in the urban areas.

Status of Women : In the socio-cultural life of the people of the district, women enjoy a respected status. Womenfolk work hard and perform their feminine duties with sincerity and devotion. The kinship-ties are still strong in the rural areas in contrast to what is observed in the urban localities. The love and affection displayed by the member of a family compensate for any frustration faced by some women. Destitute women, theoretically speaking, are there who may not have enough landed properties or other near relatives capable of supporting them economically. They may occasionally turn out beggars, as begging is popularly not considered to be an act of sin. A very dependable source of income for the destitute woman is her skilfulness in weaving and spinning. Moreover, in the peak period of agricultural season, service from additional female labour is essential. The destitute women in a village fill up this gap for mutual benefit. In an affluent village, the villagers take pride in gainfully employing a destitute woman in their own village without ever she being required to go outside it. But the pressure of population and economic hardship faced by the rural population has indeed adversely effected on the dependence of the destitute women on the liberal gifts and attitudes of the villagers. Under such circumstances frustrated women might occasionally take recourse living by their wits or adopt unacceptable methods of earning a living.

State sponsored and voluntary agencies have undertaken some work for destitute women. Such institutions offer training in various womanly trades such as spinning, weaving, etc., so that the women could earn their own living honestly. Life for such women, even those who are trained, is still a hard one and the relief activities have not yet touched even the fringe of the problem.

Drinking : Country liquor or illicitly distilled liquor, wine, etc. are never recognised as a socially approved habit of the Hindu Assamese people.

Nevertheless, Assamese society also embraces the tribal groups which have been assimilated over the ages. It is a well-known fact that the habit of drinking *laopani* or *Apong* (rice beer) is a normal practice in the traditional tribal society. It is a customary practice in tribal society to offer a drop of liquor on the mouth of the newly born baby just as it is an age old custom to offer liquor not only to the dying persons. Besides, a primary requisite in all the tribal rituals is rice beer just as flowers and *tulsi* leaves are essential for a Hindu ritual. In a traditional tribal society, therefore, moderate drinking habit is never considered as an ignoble one. The liquor prohibition rules are, however, equally applicable to all sections of people of this district, irrespective of their ethnic origin. According to the tenets of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, etc., drinking is a sinful act. In spite of such a religious injunction many are observed to be under the influence of alcohol. The working class of tea garden also accepts liquor as in the tribal groups. It may be out of place to observe that in the urban areas which are declared to be dry areas bootleggers reportedly flourish well. Consumption of spirit-liquor and alcohol is becoming a habit rather customary with a certain section of the society due probably to the misconceived notions about the western elites. The elite society of business and professions does not necessarily look upon moderate drinking as evils. In this, there is a basic similarity of approach of the elites to that of the tribal people whose rice beer, if properly produced and consumed in moderate quantities, is not harmful to health.

Gambling : There is a tradition among the Marwari community, members of which are found in all the important centres of trade and commerce, to play games of cards, etc. at stakes on the occasion of the *Dawali*. There is another tradition among the Hindus that chess playing on the night of *Laksmi Puja* is a virtuous act. These traditions continue to be observed. Gambling as such is a new thing for Assamese tribal and non-tribal people who were only accustomed to non-financial stakes and prizes. Gambling with money is now spreading from ritual occasions to daily routine for many urban and rural people although it has not yet become a menace.

Home life : Home life in a village is slightly different from the home life as it is observed in the urban centres. Normally, in a agriculturist rural family, all the members contribute towards raising the crop. Agricultural activities, therefore, keep the householders busy throughout the day. The school going children or college going students also contribute their mite whenever needed by their parents and guardians. They keep domestic animals, birds, bee and rear silkworm. The poorer sections of the cultivators can hardly afford to engage servants or day labourers. The rich farmers, however, employ servants and day-labourers whenever they need assistance from outside. Occasional assistance is rendered by the members of the kin group and may be by the neighbours as well on a reciprocal basis. This is in contrast to what happens in the urban situations. There, the principal occupation of a householder is to earn money by service or trade. Unlike the rural inhabitants, they have generally no other occupations to keep themselves engaged in works other than what is demanded by their disposal in contrast to what falls to the lot of village woman. This difference in the type of home life is accentuated by the types of dwellings that each of these two categories has. The village folk have plenty of open space and open air to move about in contrast to the limited space for a town dwelling home life. The village community is homogeneous in character and hence people can freely and frankly mix with each other besides helping each other in times of necessity. The composite nature of urban area needs no special mention. Heterogeneity of the urban areas may stand as a buttress against free association, frank discussion, and reciprocal help in times of necessity. Such is the perspective on which home life should be viewed. But it can be safely said that in a common Assamese town or village, home-life of an Assamese is peaceful and happy.

Types of dwelling : The dwelling huts in the non-tribal Assamese villages are not much different from the thatched huts among the plains tribal populations. In fact, the communities of peasants whether they are followers of Hinduism, Islam or Christianity share certain common features in respect of their areas of settlement. A village site is selected near a perennial source of water supply. Besides, the habitat is selected in a locality which is normally above the flood level. The paddy fields,

the fountain source of their economic life, surrounds the village site. The cluster of houses in a Assamese village is marked by groves of bamboo plants, banana, areca-nut, pan-vines, fruit trees and other trees for fruits, fuel-wood, and timber. Moreover, a village is characterised by a centrally located place of worship or a prayer house or a *namghar* or *masjid* or a church according to the faith of its inhabitants. A village may be a multicasite or a multi-community village. Several villages, according to degrees of affluence may have a common prayer house, *masjid* or church. In fact, general affluence of village is indicated by the comparative richness of structure of the community house which formerly was the hub of the communal life of the community concerned. In modern times, on the other hand, a library or a club house or a school is characteristic of most of the villagers.

Another remarkable feature of an Assamese village as hinted earlier is the prayer house by the side of which is dug a tank (*pukhuri*) for the purpose of drawing drinking water. In very recent times, introduction of tube wells in the villages has led to a neglect of the maintenance of the village tank. The villagers used water of this tank for purposes of daily bath and washing of clothes. A feature of an Assamese Hindu family is that a private prayer house is built to the east of the compound. Here an idol of a deity or a *Thapana* is maintained for the purposes of daily or occasional worship. Each courtyard is marked by the plantation of a *tulsi* plant near which an earthen lamp is lit on ritual occasions and during the whole month of *Kartika* in the autumn season.

The housetype among all communities of the peasants is a rectangular shaped earthen plinth basement on which stands a hut supported by bamboo or wooden posts. Normally houses have two roofs which incline from the ridge pole to the eaves rather sharply because of heavy rainfall in this area. The roofs are thatched with 'son' grass which lasts for five to eight years depending on the quality of the thatch and the nature of thickness of the thatches. The materials for constructions mostly consist of bamboo. Cane is used where necessary and whoever can provide for it. The walls are made of reed or split bamboo. In a typical Assamese house there are no windows except the two or three doors for entrance and exit, which also serve the purpose of letting in air and light. In a house with two roofs, the area between the two eaves and the ridge pole serves the purpose of letting out the smoke of the hearth which traditionally was kept burning during day and night and fed by husks and chaffs.

In modern times, windows are occasionally provided for the benefit of the school going children, who read near it. In the living hut, inside walls are erected to separate the living room from the rest, where the fire place is maintained. This house is called *Barghar* while the kitchen is called *Randhanighar* or *Pag-ghar*. The place where rice is cooked in general is separate in an orthodox Hindu household and is known as '*Akhol*' or '*Haihal*'. In a well-to-do family, the kitchen is built separately just as a barn for storing paddy called *Bhoral* and a cow-shed called *gohalighar* for the cattle are built round a rectangular courtyard. They keep another shed called *Dhekkhal* for keeping the husking paddle usually attached to the kitchen house or near the *Bhoral*. In a fairly well-to-do family, another house towards the front of the house site faces the entrance room. This is the *Choraghar* or parlour wherein sitting arrangements are there for visitors. A part of this house is also used as a reading room for the school-going children. The old respectable families of Kamrup also maintain a shed at the entrance by the road-side. This shed is called *Batchora*. The economic standard of an Assamese family is generally indicated by the structure and the number of the houses of a family. In a very poor family, there may be only one house in case they do not have enough grain to store and herds of cattle to be protected against rain and storm. The projecting verandah called *Pirali* or *Kathi* may serve the purpose of sitting arrangement for the occasional visitors. The question of having a separate house for a husking paddle (*Dheki*) may not arise in case of very poor families who depend on the liberal attitudes of their neighbours who possess the husking paddle.

The plinths of the houses are daily plastered with mud and cow-dung. The courtyard, too, is occasionally mud-plastered. It is one of the primary duties of the womenfolk to sweep the houses and the courtyard every morning and evening. The walls of the houses are rarely decorated and flower garden are raised by those families which ritually worship the family deities regularly. Each family compound is, however, marked by the existence of one or two frames for a weaving loom depending on the number of women in the family.

After the last World War particularly, and mainly due to the scarcity of thatch in the rural areas, well-to-do persons have taken to corrugated iron sheet roof. Corrugated iron sheet roofed house built on timber structure is a distinctive mark of affluency in the rural areas. As a matter of fact, the barn and the prayer house, are roofed with tin depending on the affluency of the family. Cement plastered houses are marks of respect-

ability and aristocracy in the rural areas. Besides, introduction of electricity has added prestige to the affluent ones. The ring wells are less popular now-a-days. Instead, tube wells have earned popularity among the villagers. Indeed, near disappearance of Malaria and epidemics in the rural areas particularly may be attributed to this apparent change in the habit of drawing water.

Furniture and Decoration : Furnishing in the households in this district are rather limited in nature. In a typical Assamese village and particularly among the poorer section, furnitures and fixtures are very much limited. Normally, they sit on the floor without any wooden seat. A visitor, however, is shown respect according to the rank and status by offering a wooden stool with low usually rectangular pedestal (*Pira*), a well decorated bamboo mat (*dhari*) and ordinary bamboo mat, a mat made out of dried stock of banana leaves or sugar canes (*kath*) after being pressed in a machine. For the purposes of sleeping a bamboo structure is prepared in the sleeping room. *Barpira* is offered to a respected visitor. *Barpira*, made of timber, wooden *Khat*, and *Palenge*, are used as bedstead in middle class families. There is a number of gadgets, viz., *Pera*, *Jopa*, *Duli*, *Khang*, *Sikiya*, *Chang*, etc., devised for purposes of storing and preserving the furniture, utensils, household articles, etc., in and around the house. The utensils consist of the cooking utensils, the storage utensils, the utensils used or needed for purposes of drinking and taking meals, some of which may be metallic, some others are pottery works; still others may be made out of readily available objects of nature like bamboo, pumpkin, gourd, etc. Cane and basketry works play an important part in the preparation of vessels or containers. Since a majority of the inhabitants of this district are agriculturists and since nine out of ten persons in this district depend directly or indirectly on agriculture and horticulture, people generally find it more convenient and useful to depend on bamboo made articles, furniture, and fixtures. Timber made furniture are also used in the rural areas and are becoming more popular. Wooden bedsteads, stools, benches, chairs, tables, almirahs, etc., are quite often seen in the affluent households of rural areas. A respectable visitor is welcomed to sit on a wooden furniture, if necessary, by borrowing it from a neighbouring family. Betel-nut and leaf or *Tamol-pan* is offered on a *Bota* or a *Sarai* made of bell-metal or brass. Kettle used for preparation of the tea has replaced the earthen pot supplied by the local potters only recently. The cooking vessels too, in a common household in Kamrup district, till recently consisted of pottery works which had to be demolished on certain ritual occasions like birth and death of an individual in a lineage group and on certain ritual occasions. Such cooking vessels are

rarely used today. The metallic ones have replaced the traditional pottery works. Expensive metallic utensils made of bell-metal, brass, and copper are the pride of ancient and affluent families of Kamrup. These utensils are transferred from generation to generations. Some of these utensils are *Kahi*, *Ban-Kahi*, *Thal*, *Bati*, *Banbati*, *Lota*, *Ghati*, *Dagdagi*, *Saria*, *Khare* or *Kharahi*, *Saru*, *Hari*, *Thali*, *Bota*, *Tema-Bota*, *Sarai*, etc., of different sizes and design. Now-a-days these metallic utensils are commonly used by all the affluent families. The poorer ones remain content by using cheap enamel made utensils. Still poorer people use banana leaves and the like for day to day use just as all sections of people use banana leaves or banana sheaths for taking meals on ritual and festive occasions when a good many people have to be entertained. The bell-metal utensils made at Sarthebari in this district are well known for their artistic excellence and durability. The brass utensils and vessels made at Hajo are likewise widely known for artistic excellence and specially for durability. Such utensils have a great demand all over Assam. In respect of valuable properties of a family, the metallic utensils are given third priority in popular estimation. First comes the landed property followed by gold and silver ornaments.

Certain other heirlooms in a family consists of highly valued silk cloth and articles made of elephant tusks besides the above mentioned articles. Incidentally, it may be noted that Barpeta *Satra* within this district is well known for very artistically made ivory articles.

It will not be out of place to note here that the spread of western education and liberal assimilation of western ideals have encouraged use of furniture and fixtures made after the western model. It may be remarked that modern furniture have spread like wild fire into the remotest corner of the district thereby boosting up the trade of the furniture-making carpenters.

Like the western models of furniture, ceramic (china clay) crockery, glass-wares and stainless steel utensils have intruded into the kitchen and dining room among the middle and higher class citizens.

Dress and Ornaments : By observing the pattern of dress donned by an educated young man or an officer can hardly be distinguished from a person in any part of the western world. But in the course of their normal activities at home the same person may not avoid donning a traditional dress under home environment. He puts on a *dhuti* or *dhuti* which

is called '*suriya*' or *gamcha* either mill-made or prepared in the family loom. He also puts on an *eri chadar*, locally made out of Eri silk in the winter season. He puts on a *banyan* over his body to keep warm at home. Besides these typical pieces of dress at home, an elderly person may like to have another piece used as a turban for his head but the same piece of cloth can be used for multifarious purposes such as a handkerchief or a towel or as a container or bound of smaller articles, particularly for some pieces of betel-nut, *bidi* and a match box. On ceremonial and festive occasions a male's dress consists of a *dhuti* or *dhuti*, a shirt or *kurta* over a *banyan* and a *chadar* hung from his shoulders. To this may be added a turban which he dons only on festive occasions. But when he is working in the paddy field his turban is of a different variety as indicated above. The turban may be replaced by a basketry work of broad beamed sun-hat called *Japi* during the rains or by *gamocha* wrapped round the head when the sun is too hot. It is appropriate to mention here that a *lungi* or a *pyjama* has gained wide currency as a male dress in all areas of the district in recent years particularly among the younger generation. These two pieces of dress, however, are traditionally associated with the followers of Islam. Since these pieces are more handy and economically more viable, the same have been popularly accepted all over the area irrespective of religion, caste or linguistic affiliation.

A typical Assamese dress, for a female is represented by three pieces namely, a *mekhela*, a *chadar* and a *riha*. A blouse is a recent addition to these three typical Assamese females dress and *riha* is being left out except on ceremonial occasion. Females in some parts of this district put on only two pieces, the *mekhela* and a *chadar* besides a blouse. On festive occasions, however, a longer piece known as *aguran* is donned by the rural womenfolk to beautifully cover the fine features of their physique. But in order to observe *pardah* while facing elderly persons they, however, wear still another piece over these known as '*oroni*' or *Barkapor*. This piece of cloth, a substitute for *pardah* has nearly disappeared even from the rural areas where free movement by the womenfolk is, now-a-days, tolerated and encouraged. But this *Barkapor* is instead being used as a warm wrapper by both the sexes during winter.

In their daily life and in their normal course of duty, elderly womenfolk put on two pieces of dress, one is *mekhela* tucked over the breast instead of tucking on the waist, as in usual course when three pieces are put on. Very elderly women put on only one such piece. They avoid putting on '*telas*' or '*araihatia*' which is generally used as *orani* as a mark of respect for the elders and *pardah* in presence of male relatives. This

telas or *araihatia* is in fact nothing but a *chadar* to cover the upper part of the body around the waist and shoulder. Others invariably use these two pieces, *mekhela* and *telas*.

Another piece of female dress in Kamrup is known as *patni*, the ends of which are kept open without stitching the two ends together as in the case of *mekhela*. Elderly women alone use this kind of female dress. The red coloured and striped piece of cloth with open ends is known as *ghonjuri* which also is gradually going out in modern Assamese society. This piece of cloth was used by *Kamrupi* women working in the kitchen.

Although *mekhela*, *chadar*, and *riha*, constitute a typical Assamese female dress praised all around as one of the exquisitely beautiful female dresses of Indian womanhood, is not much popular among a section of women and girls. The young girls and women, mostly in urban areas, prefer to put on *sari* compared to *mekhela-chadar*. There was time when Assamese womenfolk could be easily marked out by their typical female dress. But, now-a-days, the Assamese girls and women freely use all sorts of western gowns, *pyjama-kurta*, *lungi-kamij*, shirt-pant, maxie, kaftan and *sari*.

Assamese womenfolk are very skilful in weaving dresses in their fabrics. Each woman is expected to be expert in weaving and spinning. Village womenfolk weave cloths for themselves as well as for other members of the family. It is generally expected that the women of the family will snatch away some time in the midst of their busy schedule to weave clothes for themselves and their children, husbands, in-laws, etc. In this district, as in the rest of Assam, an accomplished bride must also be skilful in weaving and spinning. Spinning in modern times, however, has receded to the background, its place being taken by the mill-made yarn. In a rural society love, affection, and devotion of women towards their near and dear ones are indicated by transforming the same into woven fabric presented to their kith and kin.

It is needless to say that the bridal dress as well as groom's dress are distinct ones. The bridal dress consists of silken cloths preferably made of *pat* silk or muga silk. The bridal dress of *pat* silk, gorgeously designed and embroidered by golden thread is quite costly. The cost of such dress varies according to the quality of the cloths and the design of the embroidery. The groom also puts on a silken *dhoti* or a finely made cotton one along with a silk *punjabi-kurta*, a *chadar* and a turban.

Ornaments : Ornaments appear to be a speciality for womenfolk. The young girls, particularly in the post-puberty stage, like to adorn their blossoming fine features with added lustre of the gold or silver ornaments. Ornaments of Assamese women are of various types worn on the forehead (*sithipati*, *lalatika*) just below the hair, nose (*nakphul*), earlobe (*kanphul*, *keru*, *sona* or *kundal*), neck (*har*, *moni* or a flat necklace called *galpata*), arm (*angada* or *baju*), wrist (*kankana*, *kharu*, *muthi*, *muthikharu*, *gam kharu*), feet (*bharikhharu* or *nepur*), toes (*bhariangathi*), fingers (*angathi*), etc. Womenfolk, now-a-days, do not like to overburden themselves with heavy weight of ornaments worn on from forehead to the ankle. Most of these ornaments are worn by the brides on their marriage day only. Generally, an Assamese woman and young girl put on ornaments only on ear-lobe, neck, wrist and finger. An Assamese married woman cannot think of going without ornament and vermilion mark on the forehead. A widow normally does not wear any of these.

Natural objects like flowers and leaves of *jetuka*, *barhamthuri* are used as decorative materials. The leaves of *jetuka* are used for beautifying nails, fingers and palm; and those of *barhamthuri* for beautifying lips. In rural areas, formerly the womenfolk took pride in beautifully colouring their teeth jet black. The habit is nearly obsolete in modern times except in most interior pockets.

The Assamese womenfolk dress their hair regularly after a morning bath and keep them in a bun on the posterior of their crown. To be sure, a long tress of hair is a crowning glory for the ladies. Formerly no other cosmetics excepting hair oil and vermilion were used. Vermilion is used for *Tilaka* on forehead by both married and unmarried Hindu women but an additional red line is drawn along the centre-parting of the hair by married women only. Use of vermilion on forehead and head indicates married status of a Hindu woman. The widows are prohibited from using vermilion.

Food : The staple food of the inhabitants of this district consists of rice, *dal* (for the affluent) and vegetables. Several items of food are the characteristic of the inhabitants of this district. Particularly '*Khar*', an alkaline preparation for example, is a very favourite curry in the rural areas. Similarly '*Gaj tenga*' and '*Kharisa*' prepared out of tender bamboo shoots are favourite dishes besides '*Kahudi* or '*Kahunli*' or '*Kahligura*', '*Kharali*', etc. A dish prepared out of '*outenga*' '*thekera tenga*', lemon and various types of citron fruits is liked by the common people.

It should also be noted that a number of wild vegetables are collected for preparing menu. Leaves of wild edible fern *dhekiā*, *kalmou*, *lai-jabari*, *pachala*, (young shoot of banana), *betgaj* (young shoot of cane), *helanchi*, *titaphul*, are much liked by the rural population. Certain leaves of vegetables and also some varieties of citreous fruits are preserved for the summer season by drying these in the sun. These dried fruits are called *Suthi*. Over the trolleys in the oven are kept green vegetables or fruits for preservation.

One notable feature of the Assamese people of this district is that a good quantity of liquid curry type preparation, *dāl* or *tenga* (citreous preparation) or gravy of a curry with fish, besides dried and fried articles are taken along with boiled rice. Fish is very much in demand as an article of food. Dried fish is not a favourite one, although a section of the population preserve dried fish for days of scarcity. Certain other food preparations are characteristic of local people, such as fish baked in green banana leaf, specially the varieties without scale and made of fish bones, as well as smaller varieties of fish. Fish and meat are not, tabooed articles of food for the high castes in Assam.

The inhabitants of Kamrup as in the rest of Assam are non-vegetarian by habit. The high castes also are non-vegetarian, but chicken, pork and beef are not allowed although now-a-days chicken has become a common food item in urban Hindu families. The widows live strictly on vegetarian diet. The strict followers of the Vaisnavite religion, refrain from taking meat and egg. The restriction goes as far as prohibition of domestication of house pigeons, ducks, hens, etc.

Milk of cows, goats, and buffaloes ; and various milk products like curd, *ghae*, cream, sweets, etc., are liked by all. After the last Great War, tea-drinking habit has gained popularity even in the remotest villages. The villagers, even children, drink tea both in the morning and the evening.

The peasant folk enjoy two heavy meals a day, one in the noon and other in the evening. In the morning, they take some light foods, which generally consist of boiled rice kept overnight either in water or dry (*Panta* or *Jakra*).

Wheat, before the last war was taken as a tiffin and it was considered as a luxury by the poorer people. Under the stress of scarcity of

food materials, our people have developed a habit of eating wheat and wheat products as well.

A traditional tiffin for entertaining guests and visitors consisted of a kind of par-boiled rice known as "*boka chaul*" or "*komal chaul*" mixed with curd, ripe banana, and molasses. On the festive occasions, it is customary to take curd and "*chira*" or curd and *boka chaul* mixed with ripe banana and molasses or sugar.

Certain cakes made of rice powder and varieties of sweets preparations like *larus*, *pithas*, etc., are prepared on festive occasions for home consumption as well as for entertaining the visitors. The *Bihu* festivals except the *Kangali Bihu* are the occasions when such sweet preparations are in great demand.

Now-a-days, all types of north and south Indian dishes are gaining popularity in the urban centres, wherefrom these percolate to the small towns and then to the villages.

Customary Amusements and Festivities :

Except on special occasions amusement outside the family is normally a man's prerogative. The womenfolk, however, go out to witness rural function such as plays based on Vaisnavite levels or mythological stories. Occasional film shows is a new development as is the modern dramas. *Bihu*, and of late *Durga Puja*, are two major festive occasions for urban and rural areas alike.

The institutions held on account of the life cycles of the individuals such as birth rite are occasions for amusement not only by the members of the family but also by the kin group and the villagers of the neighbourhood. This occasion is observed by the parent or the head of the family by distributing salt and fish among the friends and relations on both sides of the parents. Next is the *Namakaran* in which the new-born baby is ritually given a name. *Annaprasana* or *Bhatmukhatdiya* which is the ritual eating of solid food by the new born child becomes an occasion for great rejoicing where besides the members of the kin group, neighbours too are invited and entertained with their best home-made snacks. '*Churakaran*' likewise, particularly among the high caste, is another religious occasion which also has a social connotation. In this context, it may also be observed that singing and playing on musical instruments

are additional amusements for the participants. The womenfolk, particularly take a remarkable share in the proceedings of such ceremonies. Among the high castes again 'Upanayana' ceremony or the initiation rite is an important occasion both from religious and social angles (for amusement and merry-making). On the attainment of puberty by girls, a ceremony known as 'Dhueni' or 'Toloni Biya' is celebrated with great fun and amusement. This occasion is exclusively meant for the womenfolk, it is a taboo for males to participate in it. Again ceremonial entertainments, arranged for a pregnant lady on the fifth, seventh or ninth month of conception, are great occasions for amusement by the womenfolk. On such occasions friends and relatives are entertained.

Wedding ceremony is an important joyous occasion for men, women and children of the kin group as well as the villagers as a whole. Of all the ceremonies connected with the life cycle of an individual, this is the most remarkable one which entails a lot of expenditure as in the case of a mortuary rite.

The wedding ceremony spreads over two to five days starting with the 'Joron', the wedding proper and 'Dara Kainar patat bhat diya' or 'Khoba khubuni' which terminates the happy wedding ceremony. Another rite after the wedding ceremony is known as 'hathachuani' or 'pagdiyani' on which occasion the newly married bride ceremonially and ritually is allowed to cook food for the elders and offers food prepared by her to the elders and other members. Among a section of our village population this ritual ceremony is preceded by a *saran-bhojan* rite where a religious preceptor offers religious instructions to the married couple. From this day onward the married couple become full fledged and respectable members of the society. Henceforward they can freely participate on all ritual occasions and serve as distributors of cooked food. Full status of an individual is subject to the performance of this rite in a village community. *Puhon Biya* or *Pungsaban*, is a ceremony which has to be observed by a couple to signify consummation of the marriage. The *Upanayana* of a Brahmin child cannot be held unless *Pungsaban* has been performed when the husband and the wife are made to go through an abbreviated version of the marriage. This is very joyous occasion for the relatives and friends specially the womenfolk.

Besides these, there are some other festive occasions like *Na-khowa* and *Sandah-khunda* which are enjoyed by the village-societies of Kamrup with great rejoice. *Na-khowa* is connected with harvesting of new *Sali*

crop while *Sandah-khunda* is an occasion of cereal-making observed by the village women.

Death in a family is a solemn occasion which mortifies the mourners and their kith and kin. Death of a young person is greatly mourned and the rites are performed in equally great solemnity. On the other hand, if a person dies at a ripe old age the rituals connected with it serve as another great occasion for festivities and rituals. It can be generally stated that all ritual occasions serve as occasions for get-together and amusement as well, particularly for the younger generations. Mortuary rites for aged persons in wealthy families are performed with great pomp and grandeur. A lot is spent both on rituals and on feasts. Such occasions serve the purpose of maintaining solidarity within the kin group and the local village group. Sympathy for the mourners and co-operation in making the arrangements for such happenings mark the rural life. The villagers unhesitatingly come-forward to offer their service without payment of any kind. But this help and co-operation is reciprocal in spirit and content. Spontaneous co-operation and assistance both in money and material in the typical rural areas become self evident on the crisis period in an individual's lifelike marriage and death. Weal or woe in a family is equally shared by the villagers. The kin groups play a dominant role on such matters no doubt, but the villagers also share it with no less eagerness and sincerity.

Communal Life : Group life in this district is primarily based on the village, the hamlet, the caste group, the kin group, the prayer house, etc. Communal life becomes evident whenever it embraces individuals belonging to different social categories but meeting for a common objective of enjoying the benefits of a ritual performance, a festival or an annually held village festival. Showing of common goal is much marked on such occasions. It is remarkable to observe here that communal life in Kamrup overrides the barriers of caste or creed. All the two main *Bihu* festivals, viz., *Bohag* or *Rangali*, *Magha* or *Bhogali*, in particular, are observed on a common ground. In *Magh Bihu*, the village people form sub-groups on age and caste basis and have friendly competitions. The rituals involved in the *Bihu* festivities do not debar persons of different religions to collectively join the festivities. The rituals, however minor, might be performed in the individual families. The *Bhatheli Utsav*, for example, observed in the second half of April and first part of May in different villages of central Kamrup on the north bank, attracts people from all faiths. The *Bhaona* or *Jatra* performances performed on the occasions of calendrical village performances are also equally enjoyed by per-

sons of all the religions. Another feature of the villages in Kamrup is that the villages are multicaste ones and sometimes multi-religious ones. A village has a personality of its own. It embraces persons affiliated to different faiths and belonging to various ethno-cultural groups. In spite of such a composite nature, a village stands as one unit not only for the purpose of administration but also for the purposes of collectively enjoying the festivities instituted by the village. The distinctions of castes or creed are no bar against participation in the festivities organised by the village or by another neighbouring village. The *Durga Puja* festival, the *Dowl Utsav*, the *Ras-Yatra*, the *Bihu* festival, the *Muharrum*, the *Id-uz-zuha*, and the Christmas, are some of the important occasions when people enjoy the festivities irrespective of religious affiliation. The ritual parts of such festivities are the concern of the particular religious group but the festivities are open to all. Death anniversaries of the great reformers like Sri Sankardev, Sri Madhavdev, Sri Gopal Ata, Sri Damodardev and Sri Horidev are performed by the followers of that particular sect no doubt, but the festivities occasioned by such a popular institution is always open to all. In boat races held on such occasions at Barpeta and Sualkuchi, the competitors from all the major religious creeds like Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, or Animism join freely.

Amongst the Bodos ; *Kherai*, *Habajanai*, *Bugrumba*, *Maigainai*, *Mekham-gadan zanai* (*Na-Khowa*) and *Natpuja* are observed as community festivals. *Kherai* and *Bugrumba* have become popular with non-tribals of the district also.

The communal life of this district may be better understood with reference to the *Gaon-sabhas* (village festivals) held during the months of January and February. This is a period after the harvest during which the peasantfolk in order to recreate as well as to offer their prayer to the deities who, in popular beliefs, are the sole agents for human weal or woe. The *Sabhas* at Sarthebari, Makhibaha, Jagara, Bajali, etc., are well known throughout the district. These festive occasions provide opportunities for the inhabitants of the respective areas to come in direct contact in the course of recreation themselves while witnessing performances of *Dhuliyas*, *Khuliyas*, *Ojapali*, *Jatra*, *Obhinoy*, etc. The caste system or religious affiliations is no bar against attending such festive occasions. In fact, fairs and festivals of this district provide opportunities for all sections of people including women and children to freely enjoy the festivities. It is well known that regular theatrical or cinema performances are rarely held in the rural areas. The rural folk, therefore, take advantage of such occasional opportunities. The city of Gauhati and other towns of this district provide

facilities for recreational activities through cinema halls, theatre halls and public halls. In towns, *Id-mehfils* and *Id-sports* are enjoyed by all sections of people irrespective of faith. So also, X-mas Eve funs and X-mas festivities are also joined in and observed by all sections of people without any restriction and communal feeling.

Pilgrim Centres : As indicated earlier, the district of Kamrup is very well known for the temple sites, shrines, *satras*, mosques, churches, etc. These are the centres of devotional attraction. The followers of respective religion visit these places, particularly in the months of January-February after the harvest. The famous temples distributed in the district of Kamrup are Madhab, Kedar, Kamakhya, Bhuvanewari, Umananda, Ugratara, Chatrakar, Kanwachal, Bhringeswar, Sukleswar, Nabagraha, Aswa Klanta, Basistha, Gopeswar, Lankeswar-Dham, etc. A notable religious centre of the three eminent religions, viz, Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism is located at Hajo, where the followers of three religions assemble for devotional prayers on respective ritual occasions. The Hindus visit the temple of Hayagriva Madhava and Kedar, the Muslims visit Poa-Mocca and the Buddhists visit the aforesaid Hayagriva Madhava temple considering it to be a holy place for *Mahamuni*, i.e., Buddha.

The temple sites at Gauhati, particularly the Kamakhya temple attracts pilgrims from all over India as numerous temples and shrines all over the district become agog with pilgrims in the dry months of January and February. The festivities observed in these sites also become occasions for devotees for offering their devotional prayers and sacrifices.

The *Ambubashi mela* and *Deodhai* dance at Kamakhya, Hajo, and *Debadashi* dance in Hajo Madhab *Devalaya* and Dubi Harupeswara *Devalaya* attract pilgrims from all sections of the population irrespective of sectarian affiliation. Now-a-days, however, *Debadashi Nritya* has discontinued, and the *Deodhai* at Kamakhya seems to have lost its lustre.

There are numerous *satras* throughout the district. The most famous of these are at Barpeta, Patbausi, Auniati, North Gauhati, Sundaridia, Chamaria, Ganak-Kuchi, Na-Satra, Baradi, etc. Other small *satras* are branched off from the main *satras* in course of time. These *satras* attract pilgrims not only from the surrounding areas but also from different parts of Assam. Barpeta *Kirtan Ghar* is as famous as the *satras* of the Majuli area. These two centres play pivotal role, besides other *satras* of Assam in disseminating *Vaisnavite* religion among its followers. These are also pilgrim centres.

The temples and the shrines are linked with the ritual and cultural life of the peasantry. The peasant folk firmly believe that their destinies are controlled by certain supernatural power and deities, and such thought influences all Hindus. The deities presiding over the local shrines or temples are their guardian deities who are constantly looked after loyally. Any pleasure or displeasure caused to them is reflected in their peasant life. They, therefore, pay their homage to the presiding deities when the musical drums are beaten during the midday and in the evening when the vespers are offered. A ploughman, while ploughing, stops for a while as soon as he hears the drum beat and mentally offers homage for a moment before touching the plough again. All passers-by pay their ovations to the presiding deities whenever they pass by the front of the shrine or temple gate. The peasants also are in the habit of making offerings described as *Naibedya* which consists of cereals, fruits, rice, salt, and ginger arranged usually on plantain leaves and barks and special utensils such as *Sarai*, *Bota*, etc. Mustard oil earthen lamp and incense burning form an integral part of these offerings which are occasionally observed at homes. It is popularly believed that any malady visiting a family can be well removed by offering some *Naibedya* along with oil-lamp, flower, and incenses, etc., or by offering animal sacrifices. Quite often, the people cannot make the offerings immediately, but they promise to do so in their earliest convenience which can be an auspicious day fixed for special offerings. On the ritual *puja* occasions one can see a number of sacrificial offerings being brought by the devotees. The *Kali puja*, the *Durga puja*, the *Basanti puja*, the *Bishahari puja*, *Maroi puja*, etc., attract a number of such offerings. Some people are in the habit of animal offerings annually, while others do so occasionally.

Communal Dances : The *Bihus* of Assam are regional festivals par excellence. In Kamrup district till 1930's, the Bihu dances, was not so well known in the rural areas except in the towns of Gauhati and North Gauhati. Of the three *Bihus*—*Kongali Bihu*, *Bhogali Bihu*, and *Rongali Bihu*, the *Rongali Bihu* is observed with *Bihu songs* accompanied by *Bihu* dance.

The Kacharis, Rabhas, Tiwas, etc., also observe the *Bihu* as much as the Assamese speaking Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. The tribal inhabitants who have their traditional songs and dances celebrate the *Bihu* festivities with hilarity and mirth. In such dances young boys and girls, as well as the married men and women sing and dance to-

gether. This continues to make the people happy during the seasonal festivities. Community dances amongst the Bodo-Kacharis are *Kherui*, *Bagrumba* and *Maigainai* dance. In the case of tribal inhabitants, dancing and singing are associated with the life cycle also, particularly the wedding ceremony. But among the Karbis, dancing and singing are associated with the death ritual known as *Chomankan*.

There are certain special occasions on which the womenfolk exclusively participate in ritual dances held on occasions like *Nandotsav* and *Aila Puja*. There are special occasions, when prayer songs are communally sung by the womenfolk. On these occasions specially trained young girls dance in tune with the prayer songs and *Tel* (cymbals), *Kartal*, and *Benu*. Such dancing is occasional and it is performed by professional dancers only. In this context, it is appropriate to mention that in the temples of Hayagriva Madhava and Harupeswara temple at Dubi, there were professional female dancers. This dancing profession survives only in the stage, in modern times, just as *Natua Nach* has also survived in the stage only. *Ojapali* dances are still popular in the rural areas. The *Deodha Nach* at Kamakhya, Sualkuchi, Pacharia, Gerua, Tetelia, Rangamati, etc., is famous. Such shamanistic dancers attract visitors from all sections of the society and from different parts of the region. In these dances, instruments used are *Dhol* and *Doba* (a big drum) and sometimes cymbals. *Bihu* dances are performed, now-a-days, not only in the urban areas but also in the villages. The communal characters of the *Bihu* dances have somewhat been overshadowed by the professional *Bihu* dancers who are invited to show their artistic talents on the stages prepared for celebrating the Bihu festival in urban and rural centres. The same *Bihu* dances, however, retain their communal character among the tribal inhabitants of this district. *Hussari* dances are performed by parties of singers and dancers during the *Rongali Bihu* week. There is another occasion known as *Moh-kheda* festival when the young and children dance like wild bears around their leader who is dressed like a bear.

Communal Games : Of the communal games, the following deserve mention, *Natikhel*, *Luka-bhaku*, *Kani-muni*, *Hou-khel* (Kabadi), *Bontya Hou*, *Dhop khel*, *Banta* or *Tang guti* or *Bhata guti*, *Mal-juj*, and the newly introduced Football, Volleyball, Badminton, etc. These are all outdoor games with two contesting parties. There are some other indoor

games in which two parties or two individuals may be involved. Of such games, *Kori khel*, *Pakha khel*, *Bagh-bol*, *Guti khel*, *Ghila khel*, *Daura jap*, *Daria*, *Mongal patka*, etc., deserve mention.

Spread of education, including the rural areas, has encouraged a diffusion of the western type of games in the rural life. Football and Volleyball, for example, have spread even to the remotest areas. The games encouraged through High School Tournaments have gained popularity as against the traditional games which have automatically receded to the background. Traditional *Hou khel*, for example, was nearly forgotten until introduction of Kabadi in the tournaments when public contest has regained its popularity. *Bontya Hou* (*Bondi Hou*) has been eclipsed by modern Kabadi, whereas the traditional game was very popular formerly. The village elders used to witness the game and serve as umpires.

That games of western model have been widely accepted particularly through the agencies of village clubs. It is not out of place to mention here that even wrestling (*Mal-juj*) was publicly supported through the institution of *Bhatheli* festival where a *Malbari* has to be pulled out by a rival village to prove their superiority in the matter of physical strength of their young men. *Dhop-khel* also encourages competition between two parties in the skill of passing on the target balls without being intercepted by the rival parties. The traditional games are somewhat in disrepute in contrast to the high prestige attached to the newly introduced ones. Regular Football competition between the neighbouring villages is becoming very common.

There are certain local games in which the rural population take great pleasure and interest. Hunting of wild games and community fishing are some of these. Organised hunting by the villagers was a regular feature for hunting deer, wild boars, tigers and other animals when there were dense forests in some areas. Absence of such forests now-a-days has nearly put an end to the hunting sports by the villagers.

For organised hunting big hunting nets were spread around a forest which was guarded by young men equipped with sharp spears and clubs. Another group of hunters drove the games towards the net by beating drums or gongs, etc., and with the help of hunting dogs. The game was shared by the villagers in common although the largest share went to the

lucky hunter who speared the game first and the owner or owners of the hunting net. In some villages, it is a practice to use *Bar Jal* in big rivers by a group of villagers. A big net cannot be properly handled without the co-operation of a number of villagers. For such purposes people go out to a long distance where they camp for 3 or 4 days continuously during *Ahin*, *Kati*, and *Aghon* (September to December). One group relieves another in a relayed fishing excursion.

In modern times, depletion of fauna has compelled giving up communal hunting.

Sports activities in this district have been boosted up by the multiplying number of sports clubs in the urban areas, colleges and schools together with the establishment of Nehru Stadium at Gauhati where national and international games are played. Wrestling is also a popular game witnessed by all sections of people. Professional sportsmen and women are yet to make a dent in our sports activities.

Recreation Clubs and Associations : Recreation activities in the rural areas traditionally centred round a public place maintained for public gathering, holding of meetings or *panchayats* and for playing games by the village youths. Swimming and boat rowing are not popularly accepted as recreational or sporting activities in the rural areas. Swimming to the villagers is a dire necessity in the context of floods or water-logged areas or rivers, etc., where they have to take their bath or which they have to cross in the course of their agricultural activities. Likewise rowing boats or pulling rafts are essential for purposes of transport and inter village communication. Hence, every villager, man or woman, particularly in the water-logged areas are expected to be skilful in both of these activities.

The connotation of recreational activities carries different sense in the context of urban rural situation. In the urban situation, increased multiplication of places for sports, play grounds, the parks and zoological or botanical gardens provide opportunities for recreation and rest. The rural inhabitants derive pleasure from visiting a distant place, meeting friends and relatives outside the village as well as on paying homage to the deities whose blessings are essential for his physical well being and material prosperity.

Besides, as in the other parts of the country, in this district too, the villagers take off sometime from their busy life, meet their neighbours or other villagers in the village common ground or public place where there are big trees serving as large canopies to shelter tired villagers dur-

ing the hot summer days. This place, in Kamrup, is a village *Namghar* for Hindu people and *Masjid* for the Muslims. Here again they take firm decisions on serious matters affecting the whole village in respect of agricultural activities or constructing a road or rebuilding a school or library house or repairing of a prayer house. Educated young boys play indoor games like card playing, carrom, ludo, snake and ladder, etc., inside the club house or inside the library. In the traditional wall-less thatched-roofed village *Namghar*, which is encircled by a number of shade trees, where free and cool wind blows during the mid summer days ; after the day's hardwork, the villagers may choose to meet for listening to religious books like *Kirtan*, *Nam Ghosa*, *Bhagavat*, etc., read by the village *Pathak* or any person who is adept in reading religious scriptures. Else the villagers may meet in individual houses where prayer songs (*Nam Kirtan*) are arranged by the householders. During the summer or autumn prayer songs are arranged alternately in each family. The months of May-June are the period when epidemics spread in rural areas. To ward off such an incidence some villagers arrange *Pal Nam*. In the months of September-November, prayer songs are arranged by every family in the evening. The village womenfolk gather together in the village prayer house to say prayers. These *Nams* are called *Bhada-Ahin Mahiya Nam*.

The *Khel* system of Assamese village is well known. Each *Khel* normally has one prayer house or a club. In very recent years, youth clubs have made their appearances and have become popular. As a result the *Namghar*, Mosque, etc., are being used more for religious functions and festivities.

The district has 3 Rotary Clubs and 3 Lions Clubs which are local branches of international clubs. These Organisations render services for the welfare of the country. Their health care programmes are popularly appreciated. There are other local service organisations, such as Child Welfare, Red Cross, Service-cum-Cultural organisation etc. Almost each growth centre has one or more of such organisations, or has branches of State/District bodies. There are also a number of Ladies Clubs both in urban and semi-urban areas. These clubs encourage habits of taking at least sometime off from their very busy schedule of domestic life and works. Normally they meet once a week in a common place where they exchange views on current matters including socio-cultural and politico-economic life of the people. Besides, they also arrange for talks, discussions, or demonstrations of the skillfulness in arts, weaving, spinning, etc.

CHAPTER IV.

AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION.

(A) LAND RECLAMATION AND UTILISATION :

Kamrup is basically an agricultural district and this is the chief occupation of the rural population. According to 1971 Census, of 25,19,028 rural population living in 3,144 inhabited villages of Kamrup, cultivators and agricultural labourers constituted 69.75 (61.88% + 7.97%) per cent¹. This shows that in Kamrup, as in other districts of the State, the agricultural population predominates over the industrial population. The people in the villages mainly depend upon agriculture, which is the principal source of income.

In 1975-76, the total geographical area of the district according to professional survey was 986 thousand hectares of which, 69 thousand hectares were used for non-agricultural purposes and 70 thousand hectares were barren and unculturable land, and net area sown was 486 thousand hectares. *

The report of the Agricultural Census 1970-71, conducted by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics of the Government of Assam at the instance of the Food and Agricultural Organisation (F.A.O) of United Nations reveals that in Assam, only 19.20 lakhs acres of land in the plains districts and 0.44 lakhs acres in the two hills districts are under crop and operational holdings. The average size of operational holdings for the state is only 1.47 hectares or roughly 11 *bighas*. More than half of the total holdings (57.04%) have area below one hectare but this vast number of small holdings account for less than one-fifth of the total operated land. The table below shows the number of operational holdings, total area operated and average size of holdings in Kamrup district during 1970-71. *

District	Number of operational holdings	Total area operated (in hectare)	Average size of holdings (in hectare)
Kamrup	3,87,413	5,28,709	1.36

1. *District Census Handbook, Kamrup, 1971.*
2. *Statistical Handbook, Assam, 1978, p. 8A-85.*
3. *Economic Survey of Assam, 1975-76* by the Deptt. of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Gauhati, p. 14-5.

In this context, it may, however, be noted that the average size of holdings in Kamrup district is lower than that of the four other Assam districts, namely Dibrugarh, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur and Cachar where average sizes of holdings in the districts are 1.95 ; 1.83 ; 1.69 and 1.47 hectares respectively. In Dibrugarh and Sibsagar districts, large holdings exist mainly due to tea Estates.

The table below shows the land utilisation statistics in the district in 1968-69 and 1975-76 respectively. ⁴

(Area in hectares)

In 1968-69- it was :—

1. Forest.	2,84,722	hectare
2. Permanent pastures & other grazing land.	35,448	"
3. Land under Miscellaneous trees, crops & grasses included in net area.	28,068	"
4. Fallow lands.	46,465	"
5. Net area sown.	4,32,150	"
6. Area sown more than once.	1,49,842	"

In 1975-76-it became :—

1. Forest.	217	thousand	hectares
2. Permanent pastures and other grazing land.	62	"	"
3. Land under miscellaneous trees and grass.	44	"	"
4. Fallow land.	33	"	"
5. Net area sown.	486	"	"
6. Area sown more than once.	164	"	"

1. Cultivable Waste : At the beginning of the current century not less than 52 per cent of the total area of Kamrup district was classi-

4. *Statistical Handbook of Assam*, 1973, pp. 20-24. and *Statistical Handbook of Assam*, 1978, pp 84-85.

fied as unsettled and culturable waste. The term culturable waste, however, meant that a large proportion of this area was probably unfit for permanent habitation or continuous cultivation. The bulk of this waste land was found at that time in the Barpeta Sub-division, and in some *Tahsils* of Gauhati sub-division, namely, Barama, Chaygaon, Gauhati, Hajo, Nalbari, Palasbari, Patidarang, Rangia and Tamulpur. Waste land was also found in *mauzas* like Bagai or Bogi, Bangaon, Boko and Kharija Boko, Chamaria (Pub and Pashim) and Luki-Bekeli. In 1903-04, total unsettled area in Kamrup district was 2,527 square miles.⁵ The pressure on the soil at that time was low and the cultivators could exercise some amount of discrimination in their choice of land. For nearly a century after the discovery of tea in Assam in the early part of the nineteenth century it was the policy of the Government to encourage opening out of the sparsely populated tracts of the State by offer of land on specially favourable terms.

In every district there were, for many years, large areas of unclassified and uncultivated land much of which, while unsuitable for cultivation of transplanted rice, was eminently suitable for the cultivation of tea. For many years, therefore, there was no competition between the ordinary cultivators and those who sought land for the growth of tea. The Special Waste Land Rules were enforced with effect from 6th March, 1838, to encourage the investors to take up lands for special cultivation, such as tea, coffee etc. On 23rd October 1854, the old Assam Rules were enforced to provide more opportunity to the investors for special cultivations in the unsettled lands. These rules were amended from time to time, considering the demand and availability of large blocks of waste land. These and other rules framed for encouragement of tea industry were very attractive in some districts of the state. Accordingly in Kamrup district the first tea garden was started in 1854. After 41 years, in 1895, an area of 4,953 acres of land was under actual cultivation of tea in the district.⁶ With the growth of tea industry, more areas of cultivable waste lands were taken up for tea cultivation.

During the third decade of the present century the increasing scarcity of land suitable for the growth of tea in the state, its increasing value, and the entry of the indigenous small capitalists into competition with European planters along with tendency to misuse the special cultivation

5. B. C. Allen; *District Gazetteer*, Kamrup 1905, p. 268

6. *The Assam Land Revenue Manual*, Vol. I, Eight Edition, Introduction, pp. XXXVI-XXXVIII.

lease provision led to a complete reconsideration of the position with the result that special farms were no longer offered to the applicants as grants for special cultivation. On the other hand with the growth of population, the pressure on land was steadily increasing. It was found, later on, that large areas of the tea grants were lying unutilised while the number of landless cultivators were ever increasing. In order to make available these unutilised waste lands to the landless cultivators for growing crops, the Assam Land (Requisition and Acquisition) Act, 1948 was enacted. The Act provided for requisitioning and acquiring surplus waste lands of grants-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 had other objectives in view, in practice it was found more useful for the purpose of acquiring surplus lands fit for cultivation and allotting these to the landless, flood-affected, and displaced persons.

Large tracts of lands lying fallow have been reclaimed by manual labour for ordinary cultivation during the last few decades. The immigrants who settled in the riverine areas of the district, made a significant contribution in this regard. Mention may be made here to the fact that the immigrants from Eastern Bengal (now Bangladesh) came to Assam mainly as settlers on agricultural land.⁷ The Census Report of 1911, mentioned for the first time the movement of immigrants from East Bengal to Assam's waste lands. The settlers from Bengal began to flow to the *char* lands (i.e. lands formed by the deposits of alluvium from rivers) in Goalpara district first. After 1911, these new settlers spread beyond Goalpara district to other parts of the Brahmaputra Valley. Thus, Mr. Mullan rightly observed in the Census Report, 1931, that 'Where there is waste thither flock the *Mymensinghias*.'⁸ The immigrant farm settlers and their descendants now form a considerable proportion of the total population in Goalpara, Kamrup, Nowgong and Darrang districts. The following statement shows the increase of the area under ordinary cultivation during the period from 1912-13 to 1951-52 in Assam.

Year	Area under ordinary cultivation (in hectares)
1912-13	542,199
1917-18	608,573
1927-28	783,174
1944-45	1,072,783
1950-51	1,092,906

7. P. C. Goswami : *The Economic Development of Assam* 1961, pp.22-24

8. Mullan : *Census of India, 1931, Vol. III, Assam, part I Report*, p. 51

The expansion of the area under cultivation (gross) is an important feature of land settlement during the decade ending in 1961.

So the Government decided to conduct a survey in 1963-64 to ascertain the actual extent, location, and possibility of utilisation of cultivable waste in the plains districts of Assam. According to this survey the position of cultivable waste land in the district of Kamrup was as follows :—⁹.

**The position of cultivable waste land in the district of Kamrup.
1963-64**

Sl. No.	Category of land	Revenue Circle						Nal-bari
		Gauhati	Palas-bari	Chhay-gaon	Hajo	Kamal-pur	Rangia	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	No. of Blocks Measuring 15 <i>bighas</i> more.	20	3	16	11	20	62	—
2.	Total area of land	1170	169	746	3564	2993	4538	—
3.	Area not suitable for reclamation.	—	151	118	2923	65	796	—
4.	Area available after reclamation by manual labour	—	208	—	—	—	—	—
5.	Area available after reclamation by mechanised process	170	—	—	—	1496	1715	—
6.	Area available for immediate settlement	—	18	—	46	1432	514	—
7.	Area under encroachment	—	—	420	595	—	1513	—

9. *Assam Land Revenue Manual*, 1968, p. 468.

Sl. No.	Category of land	Tihu	Tamulpur	Barpeta	Baghbar	Bajali	Barnagar
1		9	10	11	12	13	14
1.	No. of Blocks Measuring 15 <i>bighas</i> more	—	28	71	189	3	17
2.	Total area of land	—	3927	2062	22012	123	804
3.	Area not suitable for reclamation	—	1742	—	22146	1087	408
4.	Area available after reclamation by manual labour	—	—	—	—	15	—
5.	Area available after reclamation by mechanised process	—	1473	—	—	—	—
6.	Area available for immediate settlement	—	350	—	—	—	160
7.	Area under encroachment	—	362	2062	350	—	236

Cultivable waste land which was 17 thousand hectares in 1968-69 came down to 15 thousand hectares in 1975-76.

Cultivable waste land is settled by the Government in accordance with the Settlement Rules framed under the Assam Land Revenue Regulation. The land settlement policy was reformulated by the State Government in 1968. It was decided that the cultivable waste land would be settled only with the actual tillers of the land on the basis of the family and the families will be provided with two *bighas* of land as house sites. In case of blocks of land of 100 *bighas* or more, settlement will be given on the *Gramsabha* basis. No person having land above 10 *bighas* will get fresh allotment by virtue of membership of a co-operative society. Some other measures enunciated in this policy relate to eviction of the

encroachers, settlement of waste lands through the Land Settlement Advisory Committee, preservation of the duly constituted Village Grazing Grounds, and prohibition on the transfer of land from the agriculturists to the non-agriculturists.

The Land Settlement Policy of 1968 had to be modified from time to time to suit the circumstances, and conditions prevailing at a particular time. The twin objectives of making further changes in the above policy were — (1) to optimise the State Income and (2) to provide land to the landless people for their homestead as well as agricultural purposes. In accordance with the preliminary report of the Land Settlement Implementation Advisory Committee submitted in August 1969, the Government undertook a survey through Panchayats to enumerate landless agriculturists. The survey revealed preponderance of landless people and small farm owners having five *bighas* of land or less. The Government there after reformulated the policy of settling Government waste land. The broad features of the 'Land Policy' 1972 are as follows :—

Settlement of Government agricultural lands for ordinary cultivation will henceforward be not given on individual basis. The Goan Panchayats will prepare the list of landless cultivators who are eligible to get settlement. All available Government land suitable for cultivation will be amalgamated and allotted to Corporation and Co-operatives formed by eligible landless cultivators of the villages concerned.

Agricultural Farming Corporation : The scheme of Agricultural Farming Corporation has been in operation in Assam since 1973-74. The main object of the scheme is to ensure management of land and its proper use by the tillers of the soil by settling the actual landless agricultural farmers in Government and surplus land that may be available as a result of the enforcement of the Land Ceiling Acts. The scheme aims at setting up of Agricultural Farming Corporation in each sub-division of the state and upto 1975-76, twelve Farming Corporations had been set-up. These corporations till 1975-76 have made provision for settlement of about 2,300 farmer families. The farmers are also to be provided with bank loans for purchase of agricultural inputs. There is however no Farming Corporation set up by the State government in Kamrup district. There is only one state Farm run by the Central Govt. in the district and it situates in Koklabari of Barpeta sub-division.

The Small Farmers Development Agency and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers' Agencies are also functioning in the state. They aim at the economic upliftment of the weaker sections of the

farming community consisting of small and marginal farmers and labourers. In Assam, four such agencies in the districts of Kamrup, Goalpara, Nowgong, and Karbi Anglong have been set-up.

Reclamation of forests etc : The reclamation of forest land for agricultural purposes was taken up by the Agricultural Department in the district in 1953-54. For this purpose heavy equipments such, as bulldozers were procured. Prior to 1953-54 ploughing and harrowing were done in the areas of Kumarikata, Howli, Ulubari, Barama, Soukuchi, Barpeta etc. with light tractors. In 1953-54, the Subankhata Professional Grazing Reserve in North Kamrup was taken up in separate scheme for settlement of indigenous cultivators. The scheme was completed in 1955-56 after reclaiming 8,098 *bighas* of land which were duly allotted to settlers. Except the above scheme no other scheme for reclamation of swamp for Agricultural purposes has been taken up by the Agricultural Deptt. (Agricultural Engineering Section), but some *Patta* lands were reclaimed by the cultivators themselves by taking help of irrigation schemes of the Agricultural Department, where there were no irrigation facilities.

IRRIGATION :

(1) **Irrigation Facilities :** The cultivators of the district mostly depend upon rainfall for the cultivation of the major crop i.e. *Sali* paddy. No irrigation is usually done in *Ahu* cultivation and irrigation in *Sali* paddy cultivation is resorted to only when there is prevalence of drought for a considerable period. But this does not signify that the practices of irrigation were not known to the cultivators in the past. In fact, the cultivators resort to indigenous methods of irrigation, such as lifting of water by means of *Lahoni* (Swing basket) and with similar other instruments and this practice is more or less still being continued. The old Gazetteer of Kamrup also gives a good description of the indigenous methods of constructing irrigation projects by quoting from the writings of Mr. Bate, the then Settlement Officer.

It has, however, been observed that irrigational efforts are centred mainly with regard to paddy cultivation. The Statistical Abstract of Assam 1960-61, contains a statement where it has been shown that all the total irrigated area of the district covering 345,508 acres in 1957-58, were devoted to the cultivation of rice. The source-wise distribution of the total irrigated area for the same year was Government canals 129,913 acres ; private canals 32,238 acres ; tanks 6,157 acres and from other sources 177,200 acres.

Rivers and *bils* generally serve as sources of irrigation. Canal and lift irrigation are both practised and for lift irrigation, apart from various indigenous manual devices, diesel pumping sets of 5 H.P. to 15 H.P. capacity play an important role specially in the cultivation of *Boro* paddy. Cultivation of *Boro* paddy with the help of power pumps has gained popularity in Panbari and Khetri within Dimoria C.D. Block, Hajo, and Nalbari areas. In Barpeta sub-division attempts have been made to introduce *Boro* paddy cultivation in low-lying areas. Further, there is a proposal under consideration of the state Government for installing some big pumping plants (100 to 300 H.P.) preferably power-driven in addition to about 300 pumping sets (10 to 15 H.P.) already working for lift-irrigation in different parts of the State. In the district of Kamrup about 30 sets of 10/12 H.P. pumping sets are utilised every year for *Boro* paddy irrigation.

During the period from 1950 to 1968, eight numbers of deep tube Wells have been installed by the state Government. These deep tube wells have been installed in areas where there are no perennial sources of water from which water can conveniently be tapped for irrigation. Most of these tube wells are successfully working for irrigation of *Boro*, *Ahu*, and *Sali* cultivation. In addition to these tube wells, Government of India have taken up the work of installing tube wells in the state and they have already successfully completed boring of tube wells in Kamrup District. The World Bank has undertaken to install 2,200 shallow tube wells in the Barpeta sub-division under the Benor schemes. But, because as per Ground Water Survey report, the northern and southern parts of Kamrup are not suitable for installation of shallow-tube wells, the government has proposed to construct tanks, *bunds* and *dongs* in these areas.

Minor Irrigation : It may be mentioned here that the State Government launched Grow More Food Campaign and started the minor irrigation schemes under the Department of Agriculture in all the districts since 1942-43 with a view to stepping up the food production in the country. The major and medium Irrigation Projects have been entrusted to the P. W. D. (E & D) Department while the minor irrigation works costing upto Rs. 10,000 have been entrusted to the Agriculture Department.

The main object of the Minor Irrigation Scheme is to increase the yield of the old areas and to open up new areas for cultivation. The average additional yield from these projects are being ascertained by the Department of Economics & Statistics every year by conducting crop-cutting experiments.

For the improvement of land, the following minor irrigation works are generally undertaken in the district :—

- 1) Embankment which is locally known as *Mathauri* is constructed to prevent flood water from the streams which damage the neighbouring crops.
- 2) *Bunds* (dams) across the streams or dead rivers to divert water to the paddy fields.
- 3) Channels (locally known as *jan* or *dong*) to divert water of streams or dead rivers to the fields for irrigation.
- 4) Drainage channels to drain out excess water from the low-lying areas to water-logged pockets.
- 5) Channels to carry silts from the rivers to the fields for silt deposits.
- 6) Sluice gate to control water level in the fields.
- 7) Contour *bunds* to check soil erosion.

A statement showing the total number of Minor Irrigation projects executed since the inception of the scheme in Kamrup district with areas benefited by the projects and the additional yield obtained is appended below.

Statement showing area benefited and additional yield in Kamrup through minor irrigation scheme from 1942 to 1968-69.

Year	Nos. of projects	Area benefited (in acres)	Additional yield (in tonnes)
1942-43	5	2,701	270.10
1943-44	25	15,017	1,501.10
1944-45	34	13,941	1,394.10
1945-46	32	10,278	1,027.80
1946-47	16	9,912	999.20
1947-48	35	13,240	1,324.00
1948-49	54	33,380	3,563.53
1949-50	66	27,673	3,746.33
1950-51	60	37,048	9,773.20
1951-52	75	23,348	3,832.10
1952-53	121	58,472	6,059.30
1953-54	81	33,254	3,902.03
1954-55	88	29,833	3,873.65
1955-56	193	46,638	5,491.75
1956-57	93	26,012	2,954.36
1957-58(61)	80	20,796	2,241.03
1958-59	92	18,938	1,893.08
1959-60	62	14,370	1,672.14
1960-61	52	9,970	951.01
1961-62	65	15,851	1,057.64
1962-66	300	36,846	1,842.30
196 -67	147	31,387	1,569.30
1967-68	100	23,802	1,190.10
1968-69	43	17,361	1,160.95

Source: Department of Irrigation, Assam, Gauhati.

In the last few years a number of important irrigation schemes have been executed in the district to provide better irrigational facilities to the farmers. Kalmoni, Kopili and Singra Irrigation Schemes in Gauhati Sub-division, Buradiya, Uttar Kuchi, and Sukla in Nalbari Sub-division and Bhumki, Kumbira, Goroimari, and Moradiya in Barpeta sub-division are some of the important Irrigation scheme of Kamrup district. Besides, quite a good number of lift irrigation schemes and deep tubewell schemes have been implemented in different parts of the district. In addition to above, one major and a number of medium irrigation schemes have been proposed for implementation during the 6th plan in the district. The following list shows the name of the irrigation schemes and area covered under Kharif and Rabi crops in each scheme in the district.

List of Irrigation Scheme in Kamrup District. (Area in acres) :

Name of Schemes	Civil Sub-division in which the scheme situates	Area benefited upto 1978-79		
		Kharif	Rabi	Total
1	2	3	4	5
1. Kalmoni I.S	Gauhati	500.00	17.00	517.00
2. Kopili I.S	Gauhati	775.00	20.00	795.00
3. Singra I.S	Gauhati	700.00	50.00	750.00
4. Gauhati ELIS	Gauhati	1.00	175.00	176.00
5. Dhuhi ELIS	Gauhati	8.00	33.00	41.00
6. Kamalpur ELIS	Gauhati	18.00	168.00	196.00
7. Rangia ELIS	Gauhati	14.00	29.00	43.00
8. Deojora ELIS	Gauhati	—	125.00	125.00
9. Maloibari ELIS	Gauhati	—	231.00	131.00
10. Sonapur ELIS	Gauhati	—	30.00	30.00
11. Singimari ELIS	Gauhati	—	4.00	4.00
12. Kallongpar ELIS	Gauhati	—	1.00	1.00
13. Provd. 1/F to Meshguri from river Motonga	Gauhati	—	8.00	8.00
14. Provd. 1/F to Joyanti-pur from Borolia	Gauhati	—	80.00	80.00

Source : Department of Irrigation, Assam.

	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Buradiya I.S	Nalbari	200.00	200.00	400.00
16.	Uttar Kuchi I.S	Nalbari	1909.00	20.00	1929.00
17.	Sukla I.S	Nalbari	—	2750.00	2750.00
18.	Morapagladiya ELIS Ph - II.	Nalbari	3.00	—	3.00
19.	Bhalukdonga Bengna- bari ELIS	Nalbari	4.00	18.00	22.00
20.	Banekuchi ELIS	Nalbari	1.00	7.00	8.00
21.	Nalbari ELIS	Nalbari	2.00	31.00	33.00
22.	Lakshminadi ELIS	Nalbari	200.00	200.00	400.00
23.	Baharghat EILS	Nalbari	—	30.00	30.00
24.	Balilecha ELIS	Nalbari	—	18.00	18.00
25.	Provd. 1/F to Dushutimukh	Nalbari	—	12.00	12.00
26.	Deojhora ELIS	Nalbari	—	2.00	2.00
27.	Dimila ELIS	Nalbari	—	2.00	2.00
28.	Bamakhata DTW	Nalbari	—	2.00	2.00
29.	Mukalmua DTW	Nalbari	—	19.00	19.00
30.	Haripur	Nalbari	—	3.00	3.00
31.	Mugkuchi DTW	Nalbari	—	3.00	3.00
32.	Barama DTW	Nalbari	—	1.00	1.00
33.	Nathkuchi DTW	Nalbari	—	2.00	2.00
34.	Bhumki I.S	Barpeta	600.00	201.00	801.00
35.	Kumbhira I.S	Barpeta	200.00	—	200.00
36.	Goroimari I.S	Barpeta	33.00	27.00	60.00
37.	Moradiya I.S	Barpeta	282.00	77.00	359.00
38.	Muguria LIS	Barpeta	7.00	26.00	33.00
39.	Pohumara ELIS	Barpeta	33.00	23.00	56.00
40.	Bajali ELIS	Barpeta	32.00	15.00	47.00
41.	Barpeta ELIS	Barpeta	16.00	44.00	60.00
42.	Namati LIS	Barpeta	52.00	45.00	97.00
43.	Mondiya LIS	Barpeta	1.00	30.00	31.00
44.	Mondiya Extn.	Barpeta	—	11.00	11.00
45.	Patbousi ELIS	Barpeta	—	39.00	39.00
46.	Bajali EXTN. ELIS	Barpeta	—	5.00	5.00
47.	Shorbhog LIS	Barpeta	—	11.00	11.00

Abbreviation—I.S.—Irrigation Scheme.

I.F.—Irrigation Facility.

E.L.I.S.—Electrically lift Irrigation. Scheme.

D.T.W.—Deep Tube well.

T.W.—Tube well.

Names of Major and Medium Schemes proposed to be taken up in the sixth plan period are :

1.	Pagladiya I.S	..	..	..	Major
2.	Chandubi I.S	..	..	..	Medium
3.	Improvement & Augmentation of Uttarkuchi scheme on river Pagladiya I.S	..	..	..	
4.	Puthimari I.S	..	..	..	Medium
5.	Improvement of Sukla I.S	..	..	..	Medium
6.	Pahumara I.S	..	..	..	Medium
7.	Rupahi I.S	..	..	..	Medium
8.	Borolia I.S.	..	..	..	Medium

Mention may be made here that the Barolia Irrigation Scheme in north Kamrup (medium) has been approved by the Government of India at a cost of Rs. 677.50 Lakhs. The clearance for this scheme has been given by the Central Water Commission and it falls under the North Kamrup Investigation Division (Irrigation), Rangia. The irrigation facilities as meant for the farmers for the cultivated lands will cover the (a) gross commanded areas of 31,400 acres, (b) cultivated commanded areas of 24,000 acres and (c) net irrigable areas of 22,000 acres with the head-works at Kachukata village near Tamulpur in North Kamrup within the tribal areas.

(ii) **Protective bunds against floods** : Protective *bunds* against flood waters and water hyacinth are being done by the E & D division of the Government of Assam. The said department has constructed quite a good number of embankments and bunds to save agricultural crops from flood water and water hyacinth in different parts of the district. Protective bunds are also necessary against soil erosion as such erosions have taken place in the bank of the Brahmaputra, at Tarabari and silting of coarse sands has taken place on the bank of the Beki river, as a result of which, about 10,000 *bighas* of land have become uncultivable. Such protective bunds have also been constructed at Simina in Palasbari Revenue Circle and in many places in the north bank of the district.

(iii) **Water Potential etc.** : Apart from rainfall, the river Brahmaputra and its tributaries are the main sources of water supply from which irrigational facilities can be provided in the district. But its potential has not yet been properly utilised for irrigation purposes. However, in certain areas, especially in the Barpeta sub-division, water potentials have been

harnessed for irrigating fields through minor irrigation projects and as a result of providing irrigation facilities, 50% of the Jute Crop of the subdivision is getting benefit.

(c) *AGRICULTURE INCLUDING HORTICULTURE* :

(i) **Soil** : The soil of the district may be classified into two parts (a) rich alluvium of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries in the plains and (b) red lateritic soil of the hilly tracts. The district has three distinct belts of land on either side of the river. Next to the river lies its low, sandy, and undulating flood plain less than 150 feet above the sea level. The soil of the district varies from pure sand near the Brahmaputra to clayey loam so stiff as to be utterly unfit for cultivation. The following accounts of the classification of soil recorded in the old District Gazetteer of Kamrup and reproduced below also holds good even today. "The land best suited for the growth of rice is a clay loam *atalatiya*, the most fertile variety of which is called *bherbheria*, and is particularly deep and soft. *Bherbheria* land is found at the lowest part of the rice basins, and is enriched by the drainage from the village site. *Nohbaliya* is composed of fine sand and loam and is well adopted for the growth of crops which have to be sown before the soil is moistened with the rain, as, even when dry, it does not take very hard.¹⁰

The Statement below gives an analysis of the soil of Kamrup district.¹¹

Texture/type of soil	Acidity/PH Value	Availability of Nitrogen (N) %	Availability of phosphate Acid P ₂ O ₅ (%)	Availability of potash K ₂ O (%)
1	2	3	4	5
Sandy to clayey loam	New alluvium PH. 7.3 (W.E) 6.0 (KN 03) old alluvium - PH 6.0 (W.E.) 4.8 (KN 03)	0.119	0.007	0.024

Besides, in the *char* areas or *chapories* where the low undulating areas remain under water practically throughout the rains, the water supply is unregulated and excessive. In the village *pathars* (fields) the higher lands are double-cropped with *Ahu* and *Sali* and the slightly lower

ones with *Ahu* and mustard. On lands that are still lower, *Ahu* and *Bao* are sown together, minimising, thereby the risk of a total failure of paddy crops, only on the lowest levels *Bao* is sown.

The soil of the *Rupit mahal* is generally clayey and such land is above the level of inundation. Lands around the homesteads are surrounded by orchards well stocked with bamboos, areca-nut, palms, pan creepers, fruit trees and fuel trees. They are meant to be used for the homesteads and their ordinary cultivations are vegetables, sugarcane, rice seedlings, pulse, *til*, (Sesamum), mustard etc. Paddy is chiefly grown in the village *pathar* which is usually lower than homestead land. In localities where there is much pressure on land, *Ahu* is grown as a first crop ever in lands which are subsequently transplanted with *Sali*.

The submontane area is but an upward continuation of the *Rupit Mahal*. Towards higher up there is an increasing preponderance of jungle over cultivation. In these areas proportion of high land increases and though the soil remains clayey, the dearth of water looms large as an obstacle to successful paddy cultivation. The general slope of the land being steeper, the surface water is more quickly drained away leaving even the lower levels at times uncertain of adequate supply. This great drawback in many places is surmounted by resorting to irrigation.

(ii) **Crops** : Like other plains districts of Assam, Kamrup is also a rice growing district. Besides the three main classes of paddy, namely, *Ahu*, *Sali*, and *Bao*, the crops ordinarily met with in the fields of the district are pulse, mustard, sugarcane, jute, and potato. Other important crops grown in the fields are *Matikala* (Blackgram), *Til* (Sesame), *Dhori* (Coriandar), Onion, Tobacco, *Narikela* (Coconut), Orange, (*Sumithra* or *Santara*), Pineapple (*Ananas*) and *Kal* (Banana). In addition to the above crops, Arahara, *Jalakiya* (Chillies), *Mitha Ahu* (Sweet potato), summer and winter vegetables are also grown to a great extent depending upon suitability of soil to such crops. The homesteads of the people specially of Assamese section contain an assortment of useful and valuable trees such as bamboos, areca-nut and coconut, palms, pan creepers, mango, jack fruits, some varieties of citrus plants, and banana.

10. B. C. Allen : *District Gazetteer of Kamrup*, 1905, pp.-31.

11. *Agricultural Guide book*, Assam, 1975-76 p. 99.

The statement below shows the area under foodgrain in the district of certain specific years since 1951-52 to 1975-76.

Year	Area (in thousand hectares)
1951-52	415
1955-56	411
1960-61	424
1965-66	445
1966-67	434
1967-68	448
1968-69	467
1969-70	471
1970-71	472
1974-75	491
1975-76	525

Rice is the principal food crop extensively grown in the district and it occupied about 4,51,900 hectares including autumn, spring, and winter rice in 1974-75. North Kamrup is highly suitable for the cultivation of paddy.

Varieties of rice Broadly, rice (*Dhan*) can be classified into three varieties, namely *Salidhan*, *Ahudhan*, and *Baodhan*. *Salidhan* is first sown in nurseries (*Kothiatoli*) which are generally situated near the homstead. It is a rabi crop. Three different systems are in vogue in this district for the sowing of this seed. Sometimes it is sown on high land which is ploughed up till it is reduced to a fine tilth but has not actually been puddled, but more usually is sown on a bed of mud. When the land lies low and is exposed to flood, a third course is adopted which consists of a cultivation of the other two, the seeds being first sown on a dry bed (*dhuliya*), transplanted into a puddle nursery and finally moved once more to the field in which it finally grows and reach maturity. Plants which have been treated in this way, a *Joa Kathiya* as they are called, are said to be unusually strong and to be less likely to suffer from too prolonged submersion. The ploughing of these seedling beds begins towards the middle of March, and the seed is sown about a month later. Area under *Sali*-crop in Kamrup district from 1955-56 to 1968-69 increased from 252 thousand hectares to 256 thousand hectare only. Fate of *Sali* paddy in Kamrup district always depends on timely rain beginning from May to August, as, unless the rain soaks into the high land and makes it soft and ready for plough and mud puddle; *sali* paddy cannot be transplanted.

The different kinds of *Salidhan* fall under two main divisions, *lahi* and *Bar*. *Lahi* ripens earlier than *Bar*, and though the former grain is of a finer quality, the yield is comparatively smaller. It is planted on the higher field which dry up first at the conclusion of the rains and are thus unfit for *Bar*. In 1972-73 in the district of Kamrup 277,000 hectares of land were under *sali* paddy which remained almost static upto date. *Komal Saul*, *Sali Boro* etc. are some other different varieties of *sali* crops.

Ahu : *Ahu* is the earliest of all classes of paddy. It is sown relatively on higher area as its water requirement is the least among all the cultivated paddies. Preparation of land for this paddy starts from January and the seeds are sown in the months of March and April. In some areas where *Ahu* is grown in the same field after harvesting of mustard, pulses or other rabi crops, preparation of land becomes easy. For *Ahu* commonly five or six ploughing followed by harrowing, are practiced. The clods are broken up by a wooden mallet (*Dolimari*). A high seed rate of 30 to 40 kilograms per acre is commonly used. This is done to keep down the weeds through thick sowing. Weeds are a common menace to the *Ahu* crop and as such in *Ahutoli* 2 or 3 weedings are essential. When the plants are about six inches high and catch the wind, harrowing is done with indigenous spike-tooth harrow (*Bindha*) to remove the weeds and thin out the crops. The crop becomes ready for harvest in June and July.

The crop is, however, a precarious one and is liable to be destroyed by a sudden rise of the river. The plants can live under water for as much as a week. But if, after this time, the floods do not retire, they are permanently destroyed. The same field is seldom cropped for more than three years in succession. The weeds, which were unable to find a lodging under the dense growth of *ikra* (*saccharum arundinaceum*), *khagari*, and *nal* with which the land in its natural state is covered, soon spring up when the reeds are burned. After the third year it is less trouble to burn fresh jungle than to clear the old fields of weeds, and by a change of site the peasant gets the further advantage of the manure of ashes for his next year's crop.

Bao paddy is suitable for low-lying areas. Seeds are usually sown in April/May and the crop is harvested in November-December. This *baodhan* is sown broadcast in flooded tracts and the longest stemmed varieties, such as the *Pani Kekoa*, will thrive in as much as ten feet of water provided that the floods rise gradually and do not drown the crop when

the roots are young and small. In the district of Kamrup *bae dhan* is largely grown in the Hajo area, where it covers nearly half the total area cropped with rice. Other important areas where it is commonly grown are Patidarrang, Palasbari, Rangiya, Nalbari, and Chayagaon. It is sometimes sown with *ahu* the earlier crop being reaped before the *bae* is ripened.

Boro paddy was introduced in the district only after the attainment of Independence. This paddy is also grown in low-lying areas where there exists at least one or two feet of water during December and January. It can also be grown successfully on slightly higher areas under irrigation. Seedling of this paddy to be raised like that of *sali* paddy. After ploughing, the seedlings are transplanted during the last part of November and harvesting is done in the month of March-April.

The grain is usually stored as it is brought from the field in an out house called *bhorai*, which, unlike the houses of the villages, is raised on the posts well-above the level of the ground. When it is required for use, the sheaves are untied and spread over the courtyard. Cattle are then driven round and round over the heap of grain and straw, till the ears are finally separated from the stalk. The grain is next passed through the sieve called *chalon* and placed in a flat bamboo tray called *Kula*. It is then jerked into the air and allowed to fall slowly to the ground till gradually the chaff is carried off. After thrashing, the paddy is stored in huge drums called *Mer* or *Duli*. They are made of split bamboo and the outer surface is plastered over with clay and cowdung.

The statement below shows the Area, Average yield and production of total rice in the district during the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd five-year plans (total rice includes winter, Autumn, and spring rice.)¹²

	First plan 1955-56	Second plan 1960-61	Third plan 1965-66	1966-67
A.	3,80,868	3,91,231	4,01,530	4,02,425
Ay.	810	740	697	671
P.	3,03,633	2,84,559	2,75,723	2,69,968

Note : Abbreviation — A—area, in hectars. AY—Average yeild in kg per hectare, P.—Production in tonne.

12. *Agricultural Guide Book*, 1968-69 p. 64.

Wheat : In the field of Rabi crops the cultivation of wheat is becoming popular in Assam. In Kamrup, it has been cultivated in extensive areas. In recent years wheat is being produced at Ramdiya, Hajo, Nalbari, Bhabanipur, Barpeta, and Kalgachia. In 1974, wheat was cultivated in 3,333 hectares of flood-devastated area under Nalbari sub-division and 2,133 quintals of wheat seeds were distributed among the farmers. The local Agriculture and Irrigation officials believed that the Rabi crops can change the entire topography of the flood affected areas of Nalbari provided the farmers put in a little bit of extra labour. The picture is repeated every year.¹³

Similarly wheats were produced in the highly flood-affected areas of Hajo Development Block over an estimated area of 2,463 hectares where 2,463 quintals of seeds were distributed. Near Ramdiya also over 3,000 *bighas* on land in Lah Halogaon village were under production of wheat in 1974. It is assumed that better input plus irrigation facilities can help the farmers immensely in raising crops in the flood-free season. There is also a Joint Farming Co-operative Society at Doornisaki, about 48 kilometres from Gauhati where wheat was produced in 79 *bighas* of land in 1973. Mention may be made here that most of the Co-operative Farming Societies of Assam have been set-up in pilot and non pilot project areas and almost all such societies have received financial assistance from government. In the state level also, a Co-operative Farm Advisory Board consisting of official and non-officials has been set up which review periodically the progress in this regard and recommends necessary measures for improvement. Study tours of the office bearers of Co-operative Farming Society are also being organised.

(iii) **Other crops** : Mustard is also an important crop grown in the district. It is usually grown in conjunction with *Ahu* on riparian flats. The jungle is cut down in February and March. If the land cannot be prepared in time for summer rice it is allowed to rot upon the ground, what remains is burnt in October, the stumps are dug out and the land is ploughed over four or five times. The seed is sown from the end of October to the beginning of November. The crop is ready to be pulled out from the fields about the middle of February. It is generally left to dry for a few days and then thrashed either in the field in a place prepared for the purpose or near the homestead. *Chapori* land from which the *ahu* crop has been taken, is generally used when the floods

13. *Assam Information*, January, February, March '75, p. 34-35.

subside either for pulse or mustard. Mustard is extensively grown in the Hajo, Boko, Rangiya, Barama and Bijni *mouzas* and the Barpeta *Chaporis*.

The total area under mustard in the district in 1975-76 was 30,360 hectares and its production in the said year was 173 tonnes.

Pulse : Pulse is also grown on the alluvial flats of the Brahmaputra in conjunction with summer rice and mustard. But more usually the crop is grown in the land on which rice seedlings, early rice, and sugarcane are grown. For the cultivation of this crop only two or three ploughings are required, and those are of the very lightest character, and if the ground is naturally clear of jungle, the seeds are sown on the river flats as soon as the floods subside. In 1975-76 the total area under pulse in Kamrup district was 25,210 hectares and its production was 391 tonnes. *Kalamah* (*lathyrus sativus*) is also scattered broadcast amongst the rice staple, or between the *Sali* plants. But usually the seed is sown in September and the crop becomes ready for harvesting in the month of January. The plants are pulled up by the roots, left for a few days in the field to dry, and are then collected at the convenience of the cultivators. The seeds are thrashed out by cattle as well as by man armed with a stout bamboo. *Kalamah* (grain/pulse) is a cheap pulse, but as it has a large yield it is fairly widely sown. The other important pulses grown in the Kamrup district are *matimah* (Black gram), *magumah* (green gram), *Lecheramah* (cowpea), and *masurmah* (lens esculumta); the last variety is grown in conjunction with mustard. The principal pulse producing areas are Palasbari, Rangiya and Patidarang *mouzas*.

Jute : Among the fibre crops jute, (*morapat*) is also grown in the district. It does fairly on rich soil where the supply of water is not excessive. The lands have to be prepared well after ploughing and harrowing. Seeds are broadcast commencing from the end of February to May. The seed is sown on fairly high land and the plants are cut in August and September, stripped of their leaves tied in bundles and left to rot in pools of water from seven to twelve days. When ready, a handful of stem is taken up, broken up, broken in the middle, and beaten to and fro in the water, till the inner part drops out and only the fibre remains. The bundles of fibre are then dried and are ready for use.

Due to modern economic importance, the cultivation of Jute has increased considerably. Cultivators are now getting good return in cash from this cash crop. Government is also offering jute loan to the culti-

vators. Rotting tanks are also subsidised by the Government at 50% in jute growing areas. The following figures show the area and production of jute cultivation in the district from 1971-72 to 1975-76.

(Area in hectare, production in bales of 180 kg.)

	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76
Area	35,000	28,600	35,000	27,200	26,360
Production	2,52,194	1,78,909	2,88,167	2,25,052	2,44,284

The National Council of Applied Economic Research, New Delhi, in its report 'Techno-Economic Survey of Assam', has also remarked on the preponderance of jute cultivation in the lower valley districts in the following words: 'There is a heavy concentration of Jute cultivation in the lower valley districts of Goalpara, Kamrup, and Nowgong which account for 86% of Assam's total jute acreage'. But certain common diseases like Red-rot, Wilt-collar Rot, Smut Mosaic, Top-rot and Leaf-spots do a lot of damage to the crop unless they are prevented by remedial measures.

Besides, for the development of jute there are four jute package blocks in Kamrup district. Name, location, and area covered by the Blocks are as follows.

District	Sub-division	Name	Area under jute
Kamrup	Barpeta	1. Bhabanipur	9,100 acres.
		2. Barpeta	7,420 "
		3. Mandia	7,500 "
	Nalbari	4. Borkhetri Bongsor	3,870 "

The following statement shows in details the area (in hectares), production (in tonnes), and average yield (in kg. per hectare) of the principal crops in Kamrup district for the years from 1965-66 to 1975-76.

Rice					
1965-66	A.	4,12,130	1967-68	A.	4,18,851
	P.	2,82,289		P.	3,01,765
	Ay.	678		Ay.	732
1966-67	A.	4,11,622	1968-69	A.	4,37,275
	P.	2,74,654		P.	3,44,616
	Ay.	678		Ay.	801

1969-70	A.	4,36,587	1973-74	A.	4,51,900
	P.	3,12,677		P.	3,67,492
	Ay.	727		Ay.	825
1970-71	A.	4,33,281	1974-75	A.	4,40,640
	P.	3,56,527		P.	3,4,979
	Ay.	836		Ay.	799
1971-72	A.	4,34,000	1975-76	A.	4,78,070
	P.	3,09,269		P.	3,81,731
	Ay.	723		Ay.	811
1972-73	A.	4,60,100			
	P.	4,21,349			
	Ay.	929			

Wheat

1965-66	A.	1,921	1970-71	A.	5,000	1973-74	A.	13,500
	P.	1,614		P.	4,000		P.	11,340
	Ay.	840		Ay.	800		Ay.	840
1967-68	A.	2,061	1971-72	A.	14,500	1974-75	A.	15,680
	P.	1,731		P.	17,545		P.	22,105
	Ay.	840		Ay.	1,210		Ay.	1,347
1968-69	A.	1,960	1972-73	A.	38,500	1975-76	A.	26,520
	P.	1,646		P.	38,924		P.	19,584
	Ay.	840		Ay.	1,031		Ay.	1,185
1969-70	A.	2,367						
	P.	2,718						
	Ay.	800						

Pulses (for seven selected years only) :

1965-66	A.	20,067	1969-70	A.	29,705	1971-72	A.	20,250
	P.	10,867		P.	9,603		P.	N.A.
	Ay.	415		Ay.	322		Ay.	323
1972-73	A.	31,700	1973-74	A.	30,940	1974-75	A.	28,110
	P.	12,968		P.	11,015		P.	11,021
	Ay.	N.A.		Ay.	356		Ay.	392
1975-76	A.	25,210						
	P.	9,866						
	Ay.	391						

N.A. Not Available

Jute (for six selected year only)

production in bales of 180 kg.

1966-67	A.	32,205	1971-72	A.	35,000	1974-75	A.	27,200
	P.	2,01,997		P.	2,52,194		P.	2,25,052
	Ay.	1,129		Ay.	1,297		Ay.	1,490
1968-69	A.	29,313	1973-74	A.	35,000	1975-76	A.	26,360
	P.	2,82,056		P.	2,88,167		P.	2,44,284
	Ay.	1,732		Ay.	1,482		Ay.	1,688

Sugarcane

1966-67	A.	4,285	1971-72	A.	4,300	1974-75	A.	5,000
	P.	13,726		P.	16,842		P.	17,984
	Ay.	31,160		Ay.	44,008		Ay.	36,775
1968-69	A.	4,517	1973-74	A.	4,970	1975-76	A.	4,850
	P.	11,040		P.	15,512		P.	23,280
	Ay.	22,779		Ay.	32,924		Ay.	46,066

Rape and Mustard

1966-67	A.	29,472	1971-72	A.	33,000	1974-75	A.	29,340
	P.	6,631		P.	12,473		P.	5,723
	Ay.	225		Ay.	381		Ay.	195
1968-69	A.	28,726	1973-74	A.	32,700	1975-76	A.	30,360
	P.	6,578		P.	10,693		P.	5,257
	Ay.	229		Ay.	327		Ay.	173

Abbreviation : A.—Area under cultivation in hectares

P.—Production in tonnes.

Ay.—Average yield per hectare in kilogram.

Source : Department of Agriculture, Assam.

Sugarcane : Sugarcane (*saccharum officinarum*) which is called *Kuhlar* in Assamese is also one of the old crops grown in the district. It is grown in a high land near the village. The crops is propagated from

the tops of best canes, which are cut off at harvest-time and kept in shady place. The tops contain nodes and from each node comes out one or two canes. Four local varieties of cane are recognised. The *mag*, a white, which is long enough, 7 to 10 feet high, and soft juicy in texture. The *tehi* is shorter, harder, and thinner; and the canes are of a deep red or even purple colour. There are two varieties of *pura*: the purple or indigenous and the white or *Bangali*. The later is larger and more juicy, but its sucrose content is less. The *mahala* is a hard and thin variety which yield comparatively little juice and generally is planted round the edges of the field. In Kamrup, all local varieties of crops, are called *Deshi* while the hybrids are called *Bangali* or *Bideshi*.

The land for the production of sugarcane is hoed till it is reduced to a fine tilth and the tops are planted in trenches between April and June. The area is fenced with split bamboo and a stout hedge of *Arahar* is raised, to protect the crop from jackals and other animals. While the crop is growing it is continually hoed and weeded. Usually two or three times earthing is done. Earth from the ridges is hoed down and gathered round the new shoots in the trench with lanes which becomes a ridge and the area in between the two rows of canes becomes a furrow. Harvesting starts from January to April. Since sugarcane is an exhausting crop, the need for maintaining organic matter and nitrogen content in the soil at a high level is to be borne in mind. The soil is to be enriched with farmyard manure, compost or bulky organic manures. The area under sugarcane in Kamrup district in 1965-66 was 4,708 hectare but in 1975-76 its area was raised up to 4,850 hectares in the district. The crop is usually destroyed by certain pests like Termites and Red Ants, Stem Borer, Early Shoot Borer and Top Shoot-borer, Mearly-bug and White-fly, Leaf-hopper and White-borer. To control the pests, the Department of Agriculture provides control measures by supplying various medicines.

Preparation of Gur or Molasses: The indigenous form of press is generally used for the extraction of the juice from sugarcane. It consists of two wooden rollers fixed side by side in a trough hollowed out of a heavy block of wood. Now-a-days, the cultivators generally do not use wooden roller as it is gradually being replaced by crushing machines (*Kuhiyar sal*), which is made of iron largely on the model of the wooden rollers. Gur makers prefer iron crushing machines for better crushing capacity than the wooden rollers. In 1975-76 the production of Gur from sugarcane in Kamrup district was 23,280 tonnes. A complete account on the process of Gur preparation is available in the Old Gazetteer of Kamrup and hence, it is not reproduced here.

Banana: One of the most valuable garden crops of the district is the Banana (*Musa Sapientum*) known as *Kal* in Assam. Though as many as ten varieties of this crop are grown, most important are those locally known as *Monohar*, *Chenichampa*, *Malbhog*, *Bhimkol* or *Athia*, *Purakol* or *Kaskol*, *Sonda* and *Jahaji*. *Purakol* is used as vegetable which represents *Musa-paradisiana* and should correctly be called a plantain but not banana. The *Jahaji* is the dwarf variety of banana which represents botanically '*Musacovandish*'. Its larger varieties are locally called *Digjoy* and *Padmakal*. Of the table varieties *Jahaji*, *Malbhog*, *Chenichampa*, *Sonda*, and *Monohar* are by far the best quality of fruit. These, however, are very extracting for the soil, requiring cultural and manural practices and get degenerated unless proper care is taken. The other varieties comparatively can stand some amount of negligence in field treatments. The *Bhimkal* is in a way, very outstanding, being of the high order and having the biggest size. *Athia* or *Bhimkal* is commonly used as infant and baby food by the Assamese people. The plant is so outstanding that it can tolerate maltreatment even in inferior lands for years.

Propagation of Banana is done vegetatively by employing suckers which arise at the base of this plants from the underground rhizomes. The suckers, possessing long narrow leaves are removed with a bit of the rhizomes from the mother plant and are planted in holes prepared in the field. The size of the holes usually varies according to the varieties. Generally holes are of 18 inches wide and 18 inches deep and are manured with cowdung and ash. Young plants take from 18 months to 2 years to flower. When the hanging terminated, the bud of the fruit bunch is removed.

The whole plant from leaf to root is used for different purposes by the Assamese People. The terminating bud (*Kaldil*) is used as vegetable, the leaves and sheath are used as substitute for dishes, and from the sheath tumblers (*Khol*) are made for immediate use as utensils. The plant in general is used for decorating gates etc., in different ceremonies. The *Kalakhar*, the indigenous alkali preparation is commonly used for preparation of certain dishes among the Assamese. The banana plant and corns are sliced down and dries in the sun; when completely dries, they are burnt and the ash is used as *Kalakhar*. *Kalakhar* is used for preparation of *Kharanipani*, etc. Banana fibre has not yet been popularly used in Assam as it is done in the industrially advanced areas of the country. However, new Cottage and small industries are being envisaged by the Khadi and Village Industries Board, Assam on basis of banana fibre.

Arecanut (Areca Catechu) : It is grown almost as universally as the banana and with bamboo farms, and is one of the great trinity of trees with which the houses of the Assamese in the villages are usually surrounded. The plantation is hoed up, and kept clear of weeds and the trees are most liberally manured with cowdung. The *pan* (betelvine) is frequently trained up their stem, and the leaf and nut, which are invariably eaten in conjunction thus grow side by side. Though the exact area covered by arecanut trees and pan vine is not known, yet it is presumed that they occupy an important place in every Assamese household.

Tobacco : Tobacco is also grown in the majority of the household orchards or *Baris* 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 in the field which are reduced to fine tilth, and protected from the sun. The bed is lightly hoed 2-3 times. 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 2 months later. If required for chewing they are either dried in shade or pressed into hollow bamboo (*chunga*) and allowed to ferment. When the tobacco is destined for a pipe, leaves are piled in heaps till they ferment, then cut into pieces and mixed with molasses, when it is ready for the *hookah*. Commercial tobacco production is yet restricted and not popular.

(iv) **Garden crops :** Among other garden crops grown in the district, mention may be made of pineapple, orange, mango, jack fruit, litchi, guava, Assam lemon, etc. Except orange, which is an important fruit grown in the Sonapur area of Gauhati sub-division, the other garden crops mentioned above are grown more or less in all the parts of the district. Cultivators are generally of the habit of growing a few trees of each type in their garden mainly for home consumption.

Vegetables : The common vegetables grown are spinach, *Lai*, Pumpkins, *Bhendi*, *Sojina*, *Marisa*, *Gajar* (carrot), Beat, Beans, Gourds, Cucumber, Radish, *Lafa*, *Suka*, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Tomato, onion, *Jati Lao* (Bottle Gourd), *Bengena* (Brinjal), *Amila* (Papaya) *Komora* (White gourd), *Bhol* (Smooth Gourd), *Jika* (Ridge gourd), *Rongalao* (Red pumpkin), *Tita Kerela* (Bitter gourd), *Bangi/Siral* (Musk melon), etc. Different kinds of Brinjals, potatoes and sweet potatoes are also grown in different parts of the district.

Research Stations and Food Preservation. It may be mentioned here that for the development of horticultural crops, research on pineapple and banana is being conducted at *Kahikuchi* farm.

Besides the fruit research station of Kahikuchi there are two Regional Research Stations located at the same station where research on Coconut and Arecanut are being conducted. The former is under the technical control of the Indian Central Coconut Committee and the latter is under the administrative and financial control of the Indian Arecanut Committee. The Research Station at Kahikuchi also does vegetable researches. The Kahikuchi research station is under the administrative control of the Assam Agricultural University.

The Agriculture Department is responsible for execution of technological programme of fruit preservation in the state, whose technical head is the ~~Joint Director Food Preservation~~ with his headquarters at Gauhati. The ~~Fruit Joint~~ Director has under him Laboratory facilities at Ulubari, Gauhati, where there is also training facilities for fruit preservation. Similar centres for training have been started in 12 other towns and one at Dispur primarily to disseminate knowledge and know-hows of fruit preservation. The ~~Joint~~ ~~Director~~ has also facilities for running short training demonstrations in places where there is public demand. The Ulubari unit also markets limited quantity of canned and bottled fruit preserves. There is one Co-operative Fruit Canning unit at Howly in Barpeta Sub-division run by Howly Marketing Co-operative Society. Another unit is 'Frutos' a privately owned industry at Gauhati based primarily on pineapple from Meghalaya and citrus products from Sonapur-Dimaria Block area. The private as well as Government-run units are, however, finding it difficult to compete with national marketeers.

Fruit Technological Laboratory, Gauhati, Assam (under the Govt. of Assam) : The Fruit Technological Laboratory at Gauhati was started in June, 1949. Here squashes are prepared from orange, pineapple and

lemon and jams are made from pineapple, plum and pear. Other products of the factory included Jellies, Marmalade, Mango chutney etc.

The development programme on the horticultural crops are carried through a well distributed chain of Nurseries spread all over the state and the extension work has now been placed under the District Agricultural Officers who are assisted by the staff maintained at Blocks to carry out the extension programme.

The nurseries located in the district of Kamrup are given below with the details of activities in each nursery.

(1) Fruit Nursery at Ulubari (Gauhati) : The Nursery propagated all commercial varieties of fruits, spices, arecanut and coconut and sales at subsidised rates. The Nursery also caters to the needs of ornamental trees, shrubs and flowering plants and vegetable seedlings which are also sold to the public. The inter-crops which are grown in this Nursery are mostly seasonal vegetables and are also available for sale.

(ii) Model Orchard at Kahikuchi : This unit represents the progeny orchard which consists of different varieties of Mango, Arecanut, Coconut, Sopeta, Citrus, Auacado and progeny plants are propagated to be issued to different Nurseries in the state to serve as mother plants.

Besides the above, Nurseries at Subankhata (Nikashi), Barbarijhar (Barpeta), and Koklabari (Jalah) have also been started to propagate and stock all types of planting materials for raising horticultural crops for meeting the local demands of the north bank of this district. The nursery at Subankhata was established in 1954-55 while the Koklabari Nursery covering an area of 10 acres was started in 1960-61. The other nursery at Barbarijhar was established in 1957-58.

(v) PROGRESS OF SCIENTIFIC AGRICULTURE

Agricultural implements : The cultivators of the district are common with that of other parts of the country in their adherence yet to old type of implements such as wooden plough, (*nangal*), harrow (*moi*), mallet (*dolimari*), hoes (*Kodal*), wooden rake (*bindha*) etc., which have elaborately been described in the old Gazetteer of the district. Recently the utility of improved implements and the necessity of introducing them to our agriculturists was most keenly felt to keep pace with scientific agriculture and hence a scheme for manufacture and distribution of improved implements was put into execution under Agricultural Engineering Section of Agriculture Department with headquarters at Gauhati.

Initially some improved types of essential implements such as Mould Board plough, paddy weeder, seed drill, wheat hoe etc., were procured from outside the state to find their suitability under local conditions. They were, however, found to be heavy for our small sized bullocks and subsequently designs of Mould Board plough, paddy weeder and garden tools were made to suit local conditions and are being manufactured in the Central Agricultural workshop at Gauhati. These implements are being distributed throughout the State and steps have also been taken to get them manufactured in other parts of the state. The implements which have been accepted by the cultivators and are being manufactured by the Central Agricultural workshops are (1) Light Mould Board ploughs, (ii) paddy weeders, (iii) garden tools like pronged cultivators, weeder's Rakes, Khurpies etc.

The demand for improved agricultural implements are increasing and for catering to the need of the state some local firms have been encouraged to import suitable agricultural implements and plant protection equipments. Efforts are also being made to encourage small local manufacturers to take up manufacturing of improved implements. In the district of Kamrup, the Mould Board plough designed and manufactured by the Agricultural Engineering Section is becoming popular.

Another implement is rake which is useful for garden and nursery. The implement with twelve teeth can conveniently work in collecting weeds between lines of plants and in breaking clods in fields. The teeth are 3-6 inches long and are made of M.S. Rods.

The pronged cultivator is a very handy implement used for inter-culture of vegetable gardens and jute fields where the line sowing is practised. The three prongs are made of M.S. Rods and the width of operation per stroke is 4 inches.

Another useful and handy garden implement is hand hoe, the spikes at the top of the blade of which provide a very efficient way of loosening soil and breaking clods. It is very light and can be handled even by children. The blade can also be sharpened by the village blacksmithy.

Government have also taken up the distribution of some hand dusters and sprayers to the cultivators on subsidised rates through Assam Industrial Development Corporation and Goan Panchayat level Co-operatives to encourage the cultivators to purchase plant protection equipments for their use.

Tractors are used for clearing or reclaiming heavy jungles for cultivation. In the district some fallow Government lands have been distributed to the landless cultivators where cultivation is being done on co-operative basis mainly with the help of tractors. Bank assistance is available to farmers for purchase of more costlier equipment in the form of longer term basis.

The part played by the Agricultural Engineering section of the Department of Agriculture, Assam, is also noteworthy. This unit hires out departmental tractors and power-pumps to cultivators through the Sub-divisional Agricultural Engineers placed at Gauhati and Nalbari. The strength of tractors, power pumps (diesel), Electric pumps sets, deep tube-wells etc, placed at the disposal of the sub-divisional Agricultural Engineers, Gauhati and Nalbari in 1975-76 is as follows.

	Tractors		Power pumps		Deep tubewell
	Bulldozer	Tractors	Disel	Electric	
Gauhati	2	20	30	11	1
Nalbari	—	11	60	—	2

In the year 1966-67, the department of agriculture distributed one bulldozer, 21 tractors for general purpose, 20 power pumps, 4 deep tube wells & 10 power tillers among the cultivators of the district.

The Assam Agro-Industries Development Corporation Ltd., has been sponsored by the Government of Assam during the year 1967-68. The authorised capital of the company is rupees two crores divided into two lakhs equity shares of rupees one hundred each. The main object of the Corporation is to purchase or otherwise acquire all agricultural produce and pre-requisites such as fertilizers, pesticides, plant protection equipments, lime, and agricultural engineering equipments like tractors, power pumps, harvesters, combers etc. The Corporation also stores, transports, distributes, supplies, sells or otherwise disposes of all the agricultural pre-requisites to the agriculturists of the State. The Corporation has since taken over the stocks of fertilizers from the Agriculture Department.

The Corporation is now distributing fertilizers to the agriculturists and also helping some tea gardens in procuring their requirements from the existing stock of the Corporation. The Corporation proposes to distribute all agricultural inputs like fertilizers, pesticides, small equipments etc., through network of retail depots throughout the state. For this purpose the Corporation is going ahead with the appointment of the retail agents. About one hundred such retail agents are now functioning in the State. The Corporation has also undertaken the task of issuing tractors, power pumps, power tillers etc., under the hire-purchase system. The Corporation proposes to expand its activities on various directions in the coming years, such as, taking over of the fruit production factories and their operation, manufacturing of poultry feeds and cattle feeds, starting of engineering workshop and operating repair service of the machineries etc., besides marketing of fertilizers, pesticides and agricultural machineries. The Assam Agro-Industries Development Corporation is the distributor for all implements and tools and has its branches all over Assam and also operates in Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura where such Corporations have not set up branches. The Corporation has started a central workshop at Khanapara where repairing of agricultural machineries and training to technical personnel are taken up. Besides the Corporation has set up ten Custom Service Centres in different parts of Assam including one at Howly in Kamrup for hiring out tractors, power tillers, pump-sets etc., by the farmers locally. In addition to that the Corporation provides training facilities for the diploma holders in Mechanical Engineering, I. T. I. passed personnels, and practical training for the farmers. In order to provide self employment opportunities to unemployed Engineering Graduates and diploma holders, the Corporation adopts a scheme as sponsored by the Government of India by way of setting up Agro-service centres for imparting training to the selected entrepreneurs. The head office of the Corporation is located at Zoo Road, Gauhati.

Seeds and Manure : Prior to the launching of five year plan programme there were practically no seed farms in the district. Only during the period of first and second five year plans, 17 seed farms have been started in the district. The Economic Botanical section of the Agriculture Department after intensive research has certified some kinds of seeds such as *Swarnasali*, *Latisali*, *Prasadbhong*, *Keer sali*, *Laodumra*, *Badshahog*, *Handigu sali* etc. The certified seeds of *Ahu* paddy are *Rangadaria*, *Kasalot* and *Kaimurali*. There are also some recommended varieties of *Domi Ahu* and *Boro* paddy. All these varieties have already been tried and now multiplied in the cultivators' field for extension. The Department of Agriculture is now supplying nucleus seeds tested and re-

commended by the research laboratories of Assam, the Agriculture University, and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research to the cultivators through the above 17 seed farms with a view to stepping up food production.

It is, however, a fact that the seed farms are all in their growing stages and they will take some time to meet the raising demands for better seeds in the district. These seed farms are also serving as demonstration centres and infusing a sense of scientific method of cultivation in the minds of the cultivators of the district. These seed farms are located at (1) Chamata, (2) Kahikuchi, (3) Mukalmua, (4) Gerua, (5) Jajikona, (6) Dimoria, (7) Damurigaon, (8) Sakhati, (9) Tamulpur, (10) Dhamdhama, (11) Sathamou, (12) Lakhopur, (13) Namati, (14) Nakuchi, (15) Bargaon, (16) Tulsibari, (17) Amranga, (18) North Gauhati, (19) Bamnigaon, (20) Mandia, (21) Chenga, (22) Barbarijhar, (23) Pathsala, (24) Sarbhog, (25) Jalah, (26) Patbaushi and (27) Barpeta. Except the North Gauhati and Barpeta Seed Farms all the farms were established during the period 1956-60. North Gauhati, Seed Farms was established in 1966-67, while Barpeta Seed Farm was established in 1950-51. But Corporation has failed to make all these farms successful due to various reasons and later on handed over some of these farms to the Agriculture Department of Assam.

While some of the above seed farms are producing paddy, *Matikalai*, *Mug*, Mustard etc., a separate seed farm for quality jute seeds is being maintained at Barpeta. In this particular farm only jute seeds are produced and distributed to the cultivators on cash payment through the Anchalik Panchayats. The seeds produced in the farm are still inadequate. To meet the demand of specific programme of jute seeds, multiplication are being taken up in other seed farms also.

It may be mentioned here that nucleus and quality seeds are playing a vital role in food production drive which itself increased the paddy yield varying from 10% to 25% of the total production. Other nucleus seeds also give better yield more or less than that of paddy.

The following varieties of quality seeds are getting more popular amongst the cultivators of the district :

- (i) *Sali paddy* : *Swarna sali*, *Prasadbhog* and *Lati sali*.
- (ii) *Ahu paddy* : *Rangadaria* and *Kaimurali* (one new transplanted variety, namely, '*Dular*' has been gaining popularity among the growers).
- (iii) *Baro paddy* : *Khaya* and *Tupa Baro*.
- (iv) *Mustard*—M-27, *Mustard* 18.
- (v) *Matikalai*—M.K. 27.

Seedlings Seedlings of various crops are usually distributed by the Horticultural section of the Agriculture Department. Grafts and plants are supplied from Ulubari Nursery, to different places after getting requisition from the centres. The plants and grafts thus supplied are distributed by the local Agriculture staff or the Community Development Block staff. Quick growing fruits like Banana, pineapples etc., are also supplied to supplement the grow more food drive. The Horticultural Section of the Agriculture Department has been able to introduce a late variety of orange namely *Valencia*, and it is expected that this will meet the demand of late variety of orange in the long run.

Manure : The old Gazetteer's remark "manure is seldom used except for sugarcane, garden crops, and very occasionally for mustard" is only partially correct in these days. Cultivators have now taken up the use of (1) Rural compost, (2) Town compost, (3) Farmyard manure, (4) Bone meal, (5) Oil cake, (6) Green manure over and above the use of chemical fertilizers such as Ammonium Sulphate, Superphosphate, mixed fertilizers, Sodium Nitrate, Urea Calcium, Ammonium Nitrate, Sulphate of Potash and Muriate of Potash.

(1) **Rural Compost** : This manure is widely used by the cultivators as it is easy to prepare in the household near the cowshed. The rural compost gives the best response to crops and as such it is the popular manure practised by the cultivators of the district.

(2) **Town compost** : For the preparation of this compost Government has adopted scheme with the close collaboration of the local Municipal Boards. This manure is prepared with the night soil and town refuse.

(4) **Bone meal** : Bone meal was also being used by the cultivators and gave good response for high yield of crops. This manure has high organic value. But due to discontinuation of bone-meal operation in the district, no bone meal is now available for use.

(4) **Oil cake** : Oil cake gives good response to crops in growth. This is a nitrogenous organic fertilizer. The Department of Agriculture used to distribute it sometime back to the cultivators.

(5) **Green manure** To meet the increasing demands of the cultivators for more fertilizers, Government originally undertook the manure scheme to fertilise the land with green manure in the field itself and it continued for a few years. The use of green

manure makes the land rich in Nitrogen. Green manure has become now a habit with the cultivators of the district.

Further, the Department of Agriculture has distributed fertilizers such as Ammonium Sulphate, Super. Phosphate, Muriate of Potash, Urea, and mixed fertilizers. These fertilizers have enormously increased the yield of the crops. Mixed fertilizer gives the best response in the field. Supply of free chemical fertilizer has now been stopped and willing farmers purchase fertilizers from market.

The statement below shows the quantity of fertilizers distributed in the district since 1966-67 to 1970-71 (in kg.) and from 1971-72 to 1975-76. (in metric tonnes).

Year	Name of fertilizers	quantity distributed.
1966-67	Superphosphate	3,83,781 Kg.
	Ammonium Sulphate	2,70,673 "
	Muriate Potash	25,159 "
	Urea.	7,200 "
1967-68	(Same list as above)	2,24,113 "
		2,08,690 "
		64,902 "
		1,37,800 "
1968-69	Superphosphate	87,723 "
	Ammonium Sulphate	5,904 "
	Muriate of Potash	80,433 "
	Urea	20,183 "
1969-70	(same list as above)	35,848 "
		15,137 "
		4,896 "
		57,394 "
1970-71	do	28,176 "
		2,089 "
		52,682 "
		11,004 "

Figures from 1971-72 to 1975-76 are in metric tonnes ¹⁴

1971-72	N.	900	1974-75	N.	318.55
	P.	200		P.	29.80
	K.	150		K.	99.21
1972-73	N.	1400	1975-76	N.	160.5

14. Department of Agriculture, Government of Assam, Dispur.

1972-73	P.	350	1975-76	P.	34.3
	K.	200		K.	33.9
	N.	541.15.			
1973-74	P.	52.64.			
	K.	85.20.			

Agricultural diseases and pests : Plant diseases and insect pests have been known to occur and cause losses from time immemorial. In these days of grow more food, plant protection has been receiving the considered attention of Government and people. Now, the cultivators may have adequate information from the Agriculture Department which can enable them to reduce their loss from plant diseases, insect pests, weeds, rat, and the depredations of other animals which feed on the crops. In fact, cultivators have become more acquainted with plant protection measures, and they are adopting both traditional and chemical control measures to protect the crops from diseases and pests. The All India Radio also provides regular information to the cultivators about the plant protection measures to be taken to get the better yield.

There is now greater awareness about diseases and pests. Govt. have an effective machinery to deal with large scale pest attacks and epidemic disease incidence. The C.D. Blocks have pest control equipments given to them and Gaon Panchayat level co-operatives also give equipments on nominal hire charge. Preventive steps are, however, still inadequate and awareness is limited to commercial crop growers only.

At present four main classes of plant protection measures are adopted on field. These are (1) Chemical control, (2) Disease free seeds, (3) Resistant immune varieties, are (4) Sanitary and quarantine measures.

The rice bug epidemic in North Kamrup in 1959 caused a severe damage to *Ahu* crops costing about 40% of the yield. In order to control the rice bug (*Gandhi*) air crafts were used to spray pesticides on the infested plants in Hajo Development Block by the Agriculture Department of Assam. This operation was sponsored by the Government of India. During 1960-61 cricket appeared in the Jute and *Ahu* crops of Barpeta sub-division damaging the crop to a great extent and the pest was controlled by applying pesticide like B. H. C. 10% bait. Moreover, locusts have also made their appearance here and there in recent years though no damage has so far been reported but strict vigilance together with active measures not to allow them to settle or leave their eggs in

the jungles had to be undertaken by the Agriculture Department in collaboration with the Gauhati Unit of the Central Plant Protection Station of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Government of India. This station also operates for other North Eastern States.

Among the important diseases of economic crops the followings are usually prevalent in this district :

(1) Paddy : (a) Brown spot - (*Helminthosporium oryzae*) (b) Stem-rot (*Sclerotium oryzae catt*) (c) Elongation and foot rot (*Fusarium moniliforme*).

(2) Potato : Early Blight and late Blight. Cultivation of potato has become very popular among the growers throughout the district, particularly in Hajo, Hahara and Bamundi areas, but the crop has to face great set-back due to the attack of late blight disease. The disease appeared in epidemic form and practically destroyed the entire potato crops of the whole district in 1963 and 1966.

(3) Citrus : Like other citrus growing areas, Kamrup district has also faced with the severe menace of Die-back disease. As a result of this large loss of citrus plants have taken place and many orchards of this important plant have been completely destroyed in Sonapur and Burnihat areas. A team of experts headed by Dr. Kapoor of Poona Virus Research Laboratory who visited Assam to investigate the cause of this disease has described the causal organism to be varicose disease. Other than *Die-back*, *Citrus Gummosis*, *Canker* and *Wither-tip* are also very common diseases of the citrus plants.

(4) Sugarcane : (a) Red rot (*Colletotrichum falcatumert*)
(b) Wilt (*Cephalosporium saccharum*)
(c) Mosaic virus.

Other diseases are :

Brinjal : (i) Epilachma Beetle
(ii) Stem borer
(iii) Fruit borer
Citrus : (i) Laman caterpillar
(ii) Green bug
(iii) Citrus moth
(iv) Scale insect
(v) Trunk borer
(vi) Shoot borer

Jute : (i) Hairy caterpillar
(ii) Stemlooper
(iii) Mittes
(iv) Cricket
Mango : (i) Moth borer
(ii) Stem borer
(iii) Weevil
Mustard : (i) Aphids
(ii) Cabbage Caterpillar
Paddy : (i) Swarming caterpillar
(ii) Army worm
(iii) Hispa
(iv) Stem borer
(v) Case worm
(vi) Rice bug.
Potato : (i) Tuber moth
(ii) Tobacco Caterpillar
Pulse : (i) Hairy Caterpillar
(ii) Green caterpillar
(iii) Ahar pad butterfly
(iv) Weevils.
Sugarcane : (i) Leap hopper
(ii) Top borer
(iii) Stem borer
Tobacco : (i) Tobacco Caterpillar
(ii) Stem borer
(iii) Gram Caterpillar
(iv) Stem cutting
(v) Thrips
Tomato : (i) Gram Caterpillar
(ii) Wilt.

Formerly, small bug called *Gandhi* which injures the rice plant by feeding on the stems and sucking all the sap from the young grains, was naturally driven away by high winds and rain. Good results were also obtained by lighting fires of vegetables refuge windward. Sometimes the insects were also collected by smearing winnowing fan with some glutinous substance and brushing it over the ears of grain, when many of the bugs would be found adhering to the fan. This remedy was tried in the morning or late afternoon, as the insects did not feed in the heat of the

day. The *Charaha* is a tiny beetle, which eats away the outer surface of the leaves and stalks, and thus effects the out turn of the crops. It attacks the small plants in the nursery. Smoking in the fields produce good results, but had to be continued for some days till the beetles would go away. The *Mowa* is another small insect which attacks the crop at any stage and breeds enormously within a very short time and damage the whole patch of crop. Indigenous remedy against *Mowa* pest is ash spread over the field and the crop. Among other traditional measures light traps and bonfires were made in the cultivated fields at night to destroy the adult insects. The outer skins of various fruits such as *citrus grandis* were cut into thin pieces and scattered in the pest affected areas, so that the insects were repelled by the pungent and disagreeable smell of such skins. The barks of some indigenous jungle trees and herbs were also used similarly for repelling the insect pests. The dry shoots of bamboo trees and dry twigs of jungle plants are kept standing on the cultivated fields at short distances so that the carnivorous birds may sit on these and eat away the destructive insects. The cultivators in ancient time also practised ploughing the cultivated fields or burning the stubbles and thus making most of the larvae or resting pupas exposed to birds etc. or destroyed. The insect affected fields were very often used to be flooded to destroy the insects whenever the water was available. The cultivators also handpicked the destructive insects and then killed them by crushing or drowning in water. The rotten fishes, crabs etc., were put in the pest affected fields possibly with a view to driving away the insect by the bad odour emitted out of such things. Some of the cultivators in ancient times were rather superstitious and thought that appearance of these destructive insects was a sign that God was annoyed with them. Such cultivators used to worship God in the belief that destructive insects would disappear from the cultivated fields when he would be pleased with them.

Activities of the Agriculture Department and other agencies to secure the use of scientific method of cultivation :

This Department is taking many schemes to step up the food production drive by applying scientific methods of cultivation. For agricultural purposes the district is divided into two parts i.e. the Gauhati Agricultural District and the Barpeta Agricultural District. The Gauhati Agricultural District is divided into two sub-divisions (agri) : Gauhati and Rangia. Similarly the Barpeta Agricultural District is divided into three sub-divisions (agri). namely Barpeta, Nalbari, and Pathsala. Thus in Kamrup district there are two District Agricultural Officers, one at Gauhati and the other at Barpeta. They

are assisted in their works by Sub-divisional Agricultural Officers, Agricultural Inspectors, Assistant Inspectors and Demonstrators. Besides an Agricultural Extension Officer is posted in every Community Development Block for intensive development works. The post of the Agricultural Demonstrator is now connected with *Gram Sevaks* and in each Development Block there are about 10 *Gram Sevaks* to impart practical demonstrations to the cultivators in the fields.

The District Agricultural Officers are invested with over-all responsibilities for implementation of various schemes in connection with the improvement of agriculture on scientific lines. Almost in every year new schemes are introduced through which the cultivators are benefited and also can learn the technique of scientific methods of cultivation.

Moreover, the Department has now better means of treating pests and diseases in the fields and in storage to save large improved seeds for higher yield, better methods of fertilising fields, better information about cultivation practices like seed rates, best time of sowing, improved methods of preparing seed beds etc. In fact, the Department of Agriculture at the district level is now trying to implement the schemes in scientific way. This district is mainly dependent on paddy crop, so every effort has been taken to step up the food production drive.

The Government have also launched a state-wide programme for increasing food production where the basic unit will be a field with Field Management Committee whose members will be limited to the field only. Among others, the main object, *inter alia* of the Field Management Committee will be to improve the particular field with modern technical guidance from the staff of the Agriculture Department. The District Agriculture Office tries its best to channelise activities in a planned way through the Field Management Committees. At present all agricultural activities of the Department are being channelised through these Committees. These Committees are the principal agencies for assisting the development of agriculture in matters of production. The Department contacts cultivators through these Committees and not individually. The committee members are now being trained on various improved methods of agriculture by holding seminars in different subdivisions and Development Blocks.

Besides, in order to acquaint the ordinary farmers with the scientific methods of cultivation, the Department of Agriculture, Assam, produced in 1956-66 agricultural documentary films (16 mm.) on (1) improved paddy cultivation (*Ashar Rengani*) and (2) Taichung. A similar documen-

tary film was produced on jute cultivation in 1967-68. Documentaries also were produced on sugarcane, maize and wheat.

Crop competition scheme is also introduced among the cultivators to encourage them to win the prize of Rs. 100/- which is awarded district-wise. There is also one prize of Rs. 10/- for each unit who stands first out of 20 competitors. Every *Gram Sevak* encourages the members of the Field Management Committee to enlist as many as competitors in order to enthruse them to undertake improved methods of cultivation and to bring out high yield of crop per acre.

Testing Laboratories : One Soil Survey Laboratory and one Seed Testing Laboratory are located within Ulubari Agricultural campus at Gauhati. There is one Agricultural Training School at Khanapara where Gram Sevaks and students (Agricultural) are trained in improved scientific method of agriculture every year. Further the members of the field management Committees are trained in seminars in all subjects by the Departmental specialists. There is also one mobile soil testing laboratory in the district. It renders spot-help to the cultivators. In the model farms located at Chamata and Kahikuchi, the farmers are provided with training on intensive farming.

Every year, the Agriculture Department holds some exhibitions in different places of the district to exhibit the best products and also conducts educational and scientific programme along with such exhibitions.

(f) **State Assistance to Agriculture and connected subjects :** Cultivators of the district due to their shortage of finance are often unable to make permanent improvement in their lands. To improve the lands of the agriculturists, agricultural loans are liberally advanced on long term basis. The state government used to grant *taccavi* loans to the agriculturists under the two well known Acts, viz.—The Land Improvement Loans Act-XIX of 1893, and Agriculturists' Loans Act (XXX of 1884) through the Revenue Department. The Former was mainly concerned with long term finance and the latter with short-term accommodation. Till recently the Assam Co-operative Central Land Mortgage Bank also provide long term loans to the cultivators. In the district of Kamrup there are two branches of this bank, one at Gauhati and the other at Nalbari. The overwhelming majority of loans advanced by the Land Mortgage Banks in the country were issued for repayment of prior debts and redemption of mortgage of lands.

Now a -days Pragjyotish Goanlia Bank ; Small, Marginal and Agricultural Labourers Agency, and Goan Panchayat-level Co-operatives with assistance from Bank with whom they are attached are acting as agencies for advancement of different categories of loans to the rural population connected with agriculture and allied activities. In Kamrup district there is one composite agency project and it is now known as the Small and Marginal Farmers' Development Agency. The Deputy Commissioner is the Chairman of the District Agency with the Project Officer as Member-Secretary. All financial assistance of the project will come directly to the Agency as the grant from the Government of India to be utilised as subsidies and in the maintenance of Agency staff. The small farmers, marginal farmers and the agricultural labourers will get assistance in respect of fertilizers and pesticides as also agricultural implements from the Agro-Industries Development Corporation. In 1976-77, the Agency had spent Rs. 20,000/- as input subsidy on seeds, fertilisers, and pesticides on paddy and wheat grown by marginal farmers with bank loans in the district. This subsidy benefited 100 paddy growers and 66 wheat growers. The demand for agriculture implements like paddy weeder, sprayer, duster, seeddrill etc., has shown an increase since 1972-76 period and subsidies on improved implements which was Rs. 7,000/- during 1972-74, rose to the value of Rs. 17,000/- in 1976-77. As for soil conservation, in 1976-77 the Agency took up the Soil Conservation Schemes in Tihu-Barama Block with an estimated cost of Rs. 77,000/- out of which the first phase of work was already completed with the cost of Rs. 27,000/- in 1976-77.

There are six custom service centres established with 50% Agency subsidy at the following places : (1) Gerua (2) Nalbari (3) Singimari (4) Rangia (5) Sarupeta and (6) Baska. The other half of the establishment cost of these service centres are borne by either the State Government, Assam, or by the Agro-Industries Development Corporation. The farmers can hire pump sets and tractors from these service centres.

As for irrigation facility, the Agency besides providing pump sets also advances subsidy and loan for excavation of community tanks, *bunds*, and *dongs* to the needy areas. During 1976-77, the Agency advanced altogether Rs. 1,50,000/- as subsidy for Custom Service Centres.

Storage facility to individual marginal farmers and marketing facility in regulated markets are also advanced by this Agency. Storage bins supplied by the Agro-Industries Development Corporation, Gauhati, can be procured by the individual farmers on subsidy from the Agency. In Kamrup, the only regulated market is at Howly.

The following statement shows the amount of *Taccavi* loan issued since 1959 up to 1963 under the Acts in the Gauhati Sub-division :

1. The Agriculturists loans Act xii of 1884.	year	2. Rehabilitation loan issued during the period of 1959-1963.
Rs. 7,61,206.00	1959	Rs. 34,350.00
Rs. 51,500.00	1960	Rs. 33,500.00
Rs. 17,740.00	1961	Rs. 1,89,350.00
Rs. 4,48,000.00	1962	Rs. 2,59,350.00
Rs. 1,28,835.00	1963	—

In addition to these, Government also assists the cultivators in the following ways : (1) advances 50% subsidies for original Minor Irrigation project and 40% to repair project till 1964-65, (2) issue of pesticides and equipments at 50% concessions to the cultivators, (3) 50% help for construction of rotting tanks, (4) issue of plants and grafts at nominal rates, and (5) supply of improved implements in concessional rate. The departmental scheme has now been discontinued and loans for such purposes are now being advanced through the Small and Marginal Farmers Development Agency, Scheduled Banks, Assam Apex Co-operative Bank and Gaolia Banks.

For seasonal agriculture operation, short term loans are issued. Medium and long term loans are given for purchasing cattle and effecting permanent improvements. Loans and subsidies are made available to the needy cultivators in their bad times, so that the borrower can easily repay the amount to the Government after good harvest in time. Most of these loans are advanced through G. P. level Co-operative Societies, Scheduled Banks and Small and Marginal Farmers Development Agency. In 1975, the Commercial Scheduled Banks issued Rs. 31,298.00 as loan for agricultural purposes in the district of Kamrup. As a part of Assam Agricultural Development Project, with the aid of World Bank loan, the Government of Assam undertook to implement an Agricultural Field Supervision Scheme in Assam from 1977. Main aspects of the scheme are : (1) reorganisation and strengthening of Agricultural Extension Services, (2) establishment of Field Trial Stations and strengthening of research section of Assam Agricultural University for formulating management practices, (3) ground water

development and (4) project maintaining and evaluation. Of these the two are under the purview of the Department of Agriculture, the third one is under the Department of Irrigation and the last one is to be under an independent body at the state level. This scheme is popularly known as Banor Scheme as it was being enunciated by Dr. Daniel Banor, World Bank Extension Specialist. In Kamrup district, Barpeta sub-division has been covered by this scheme.

Under this scheme, adoption of labour intensive practices such as time-sowing, pre-germination of seeds, weeding, and raising of seed beds are being initiated. Success of the scheme depends mostly on careful selection of Competent farmers who can readily understand the implication of suggested technique and practices and try to learn through periodic discussions and demonstrations.

(d) **Animal Husbandry :**

(i) **Fodder Crops :** The necessity of adequate fodder crops to feed the cattle population need not be over emphasised. The Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary initiated Fodder Development Scheme towards the middle of the Second Five Year Plan and the scheme was put in charge of a Fodder Development Officer. The purpose of Fodder Development Scheme was to demonstrate the cultivation of fodder crops in scientific manner so as to meet the growing demand of feeds and fodder in the state. It may be noted that the cattle population of Assam in general is mainly dependent on grazing lands, but most of the grazing areas are covered with shrubs, bushes and other wild plants and consequently there is less output of grass than actually required. Besides, gradually almost all the grazing reserves have come under indiscriminate encroachment causing loss to the cattle breeders. In the District of Kamrup there are three Village Grazing Reserves of which two are in the Gauhati Sub-division and the other in Barpeta Sub-division. In 1977, fodder crops covered an areas of 181.30 hectares of land in the district.

Besides, there are also two centres for demonstration of fodder and hay making in the district. These centres are located at Barbari, Borjhar and Sonapur.

(ii) **Dairy Farming :** The Dairy Development Scheme in Assam was sanctioned during 1960-61 and it was implemented during February, 1961. The scheme conducted surveying of milk pockets and milk shed areas in Kamrup along with some other selected areas of Assam. The object of

and as such the producers supply the eggs to the market. The Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary is now arranging cold storage facilities at Gauhati to keep the eggs fresh for a longer time. There is an intensive Eggs and Poultry Production-cum Marketing Centre at Khanapara. The Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department adopts a number of schemes like expansion of duck and poultry farms, manufacture of poultry feed and marketing of eggs on commercial line, poultry development in plains tribal areas, scheme for co-ordinated poultry breeding programme, research and training facilities and applied nutrition programme for the benefit of the people.

Research and Training facilities : The interested farmers and selected breeders under different schemes are taken up for two courses of training, one for seven days and other for 21 days in a number of Centres in Assam including one at Khanapara near Dispur in Kamrup district. The trainers are trained by the departmental poultry experts.

Under the Gauhati town milk supply scheme, chilling plants have been installed at Jagiroad (capacity of 6,000 litres), Sipajhar (2,000 litres) and Boko (capacity of 1,000 litres). The 18 lakh Central Dairy Project under the Gauhati scheme is located at Khanapara. This Central Dairy with the maximum capacity to handle 20,000 litres of milk daily is equipped with modern equipments for pasteurisation, bottling etc., of milk besides manufacture of some other milk products as and when occasion arises. From this project pasteurised bottled milk is supplied to the general public of greater Gauhati. There is another dairy unit established at Barpeta. A few small scale private dairy farms are also opening in and around Gauhati city.

(iii) Poultry farms : There are 12 numbers of Government poultry farms in Assam including a Central Hatchery at Khanapara in Kamrup district. Besides, Central Chick Rearing Farms are there at Hajo and Birubari. There is also a Duck Farm at Hajo. A Poultry and Duck Unit has also been opened in Government Livestock Development Farm at Barpeta. Private Commercial Poultry farms are also in the district and most of such farms supply a substantial quantity of eggs to Gauhati city market where the demand for egg is basically big.

Usually poultry keeping is practised by the people as a subsidiary occupation in the past. But now-a-days, due to the efforts made by the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department, people are becoming more poultry conscious and are adopting modern methods of poultry keeping. But in the rural areas, there is no scientific method of storage for eggs

Applied Nutrition Programme : The purpose of the Applied Nutrition Programme is to generate the supply of protective food to the rural people, specially the school-going children and the expectant mothers. Under the scheme there are two patterns of poultry family supply ; (1) of individual unit consisting of 20 birds to individual and (2) village unit consisting of 100 birds. Usually the units are to supply 50% of the eggs produced at free of cost to the school-going children and the expectant mothers. In Kamrup district, the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary officers looks after the poultry programme of the district assisted by the Assistant Poultry Development Officer posted locally. Intensive Eggs and Poultry Production cum-Marketing Centres are managed by the Project Officers with the help of their technical staff. For the supply of balanced poultry feed, there is one feed mill attached to Khanapara farm. Besides, the Research Officer under the Co-ordinated Poultry Breeding Programme held the charge of family selection programme at Khanapara.

The statement below shows the number of birds on the government poultry farms in Kamrup district for the year 1970-71.¹⁵

Name offarms	W. L. H.		R. I. R.		Austrolosp		Hyline	
	Hen	Total	Hen	Total	Hen	Total	Hen	Total
1. Birubari	596	8,064	427	5,190	253	2,602	—	—
2. Z.C.C.R. farm(A) Khanapara.	2,065	7,870	1,103	6,508	164	1,155	393	803
3. Hajo	228	424	47	121	61	67	—	—
15. Livestock Census Assam, 1972, by nary, Assam, Gauhati, p. 46.			Directorate of		Animal Husbandry and Veteri-			

Piggery : There is a Pig Breeding Unit at Khanapara under the department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary, where pedigreed Yorkshire and Hampshire pigs are kept to grade up the local stock. At present, Yorkshire breed of pigs have been introduced in fairly large numbers.

According to the Livestock Census, 1977, there were altogether 50,943 pigs in the district out of which 24,117 were male and 26,826 female. The said census showed that about 50,224 pigs were reared in the rural areas of the district.

Measures to improve breeds : In the programme for the improvement of the qualities of breeds and to secure greater output, greater emphasis has been given for grading up of local stock, with sires of well defined breeds, selective breeding of the local stock, and cross-breeding with exotic breeds of potential value. The chief object, however, was to evolve a general utility type suitable for the state. Sindhi, Hariana and cross breed (Jersey and Fresian type) of cattle were introduced on zonal basis in the state. Accordingly, three breeding zones, namely Hariana zone, Sindhi zone and cross-breed zone have been demarcated in Assam. The district of Kamrup along with Goalpara and part of Nowgong falls under the cross breeding zone.

All the breeds thrived well and the graded stock fared well in their milk yield but for drought purpose Sindhi did not suit the local condition.

As stated elsewhere, there are two cattle breeding farms in Kamrup district, one at Barpeta and the other at Khanapara. Besides these, artificial insemination breeding work through the Key Village and the Hill Cattle Development schemes is in operation in Kamrup.

Under the Key Village Scheme, four Key Village Blocks with six village Sub-centres under each Block at Barpeta, Nalbari, Dhamdhama and Hajo have been established since the beginning of the scheme, each having 1,00 to 6,000 breedable cow. Although breeding through artificial insemination forms the basis of the scheme, the entire aspects of improved animal husbandry, that is, care, management, feeding, prevention and control of diseases, providing marketing facilities etc., also fall under the scheme.

The Centrally sponsored "The Hill Cattle Development Scheme" was set up with its headquarters at Gauhati under the third Five-year Plan,

Under this scheme a Central Bull Depot at Gauhati, and three Sub-centres at Changsari, Khetri and Palasbari with subsidiary centres under each sub-centre at Rampur, Maniari, Tinali, Panitola, Rajaduar, Tetelia and Amchang have been established. The scheme also caters to the needs of semen for Artificial Insemination to Manipur and Tripura.

A Key Village Extension centre at Rani has also been set up to provide breeding facilities through natural service.

It may be pointed out that artificial insemination work has since been abolished in the C. D. Blocks and the bulls purchased out of the block funds are distributed free of cost to the selected allottees. Action is taken to start artificial insemination in the selected dispensaries for the key village scheme. A key village is an area selected for cattle improvement on a package basis by facilitating breeding, feeding and management. Under the scheme there are Rural Artificial Insemination Centres, Urban Artificial Insemination Centres, Extension Centres and Semen Collection Centres. Inservice Training Centre imparts training on artificial insemination to the Veterinary Assistant Surgeon and Stockman. Key Village centres are usually attached to certain selected blocks under the Community Development programme. In this district eight Blocks have been selected for key village centres and equal number of key village sub-centres in each block have also been opened.

Cross Breeding Scheme : Originally the scheme was sponsored by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research in 1955 and had been continued upto 1967-68. The scheme envisaged the upgrading of local breeds through artificial insemination with exotic bull's semen. But later on, for lack of response from the people, the scheme was abandoned and in its place breeding bulls were issued for natural services to serve the purpose of the scheme. Since 1968-69, the scheme was envisaged with intensive Cattle Development Project and operational works were guided by the Intensive Cattle Development Project Scheme.

Goushalas : There are five recognised *Goushalas* in Kamrup district and the breeds maintained in the *Goushalas* are mainly Hariana, Sindhi, Jersey, Cross Breed and improved local cattle. The *Goushalas* in the district are (i) Sree Gauhati *Goushala*, Gauhati, (ii) Nilachal *Goushala*, Gauhati (iii) Sree Sariahtoli *Goushala*, Nalbari, (iv) Sree Basistha *Goushala*, Khanapara and (v) Gerua Gram Sabha *Goushala*, Gerua, Kamrup.

Cattle fairs : The notable cattle fair in the district is Darronga *mela* in Tamulpur Mauza and other weekly cattle fairs of some importance

are (1) Nagarbera, (2) Boko, (3) Gumi, (4) Chaygaon, (5) Rangiya, (6) Goreswar, (7) Nagrijuli, (8) Howli, and (9) Tarabari.

The cattle gates in the District boundary and main cattle routes are as follows :

Cattle gates	Cattle routes
1. Kahikuchi	1) North Trunk Road.
2. Rani	2) Darronga-Tamulpur via Dhamdhama-Nalbari road.
3. Hahim	3) Darronga--Rangiya-North Gauhati road.
4. Raja para	4) Daodhara-Pathsala road.
5. Dhupdhara	5) Subankhata-Massalpur and Tihu road in the north.
6. Roha	6) South Trunk road.
7. Darrang	7) Hahim-Boko road.
8. Dumnichaki	8) Rajapara-Palasbari road
9. Deodhara	9) Gauhati-Shillong road in the south.
10. Subankhata	

(vii) Animal Diseases and Veterinary Hospital : The Cattle diseases which generally occur in the district are Rinderpest, Hemorrhagic Septicaemia, Black quarter, Anthrax, Ranikhet, Foot and Mouth diseases, Rabies, etc. Other parasitic diseases such as liver fluks, worms etc., are also occur amongst the cattle population in the district. Amongst fowls Ranikhet is the most virulent form of disease. The Rinderpest Eradiction scheme is also functioning in the state since 1957.

For the preventive and curative aspects of these diseases a number of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Institutions are functioning in the state. In April, 1972, in Kamrup district, there were 3 Veterinary Hospitals, 39 Veterinary Dispensaries, one key Village Centre, 76 I.C.D.P. Centres, 3 poultry farms and one Veterinary Education Centre.

The names and locations of Veterinary Hospitals and Dispensaries according to sub-division are as follows :

Gauhati sub-division :

<i>Names</i>	<i>Location</i>
1) Veterinary Hospital	Gauhati
2) " "	Hajo

3) Veterinary Dispensary	Rargia
4) " "	Karara
5) " "	Palasbari
6) " "	Rani
7) Veterinary Dispensary	Chargari
8) " "	Lahorighat
9) " "	Maloibari
10) " "	Kamalpur
11) " "	Bezara
12) " "	Boko-Borgaon
13) " "	Demoria
14) " "	Chaygaon
15) " "	Chamaria
16) Mobile veterinary "	Gauhati

Barpeta Sub-division

1) Veterinary Hospital	Barpeta
2) Veterinary Dispensary	Sarthebari
3) " "	Nogaon
4) " "	Chenga
5) Veterinary Hospital	Barpeta Road
6) " "	Ganakkuchi
7) " "	Bhawanipur
8) " "	Patacharkuchi
9) Veterinary Dispensary	Bzghmara
10) " "	Kalgachia
11) " "	Soudartari
12) " "	Sarbhog
13) " "	Barmachari
14) " "	Chenga Block
15) " "	Barpeta Block
16) " "	Bhawanipur Block
17) " "	Gobaradhana Block
18) " "	Jalah Block
19) " "	Bajali Block
20) " "	Ruposi block
21) Veterinary Dispensary	Mandia Block
22) " "	Bamakhata Block

Nalbari Sub-division :

1)	Veterinary Hospital	Nalbari
2)	" "	Morowa
3)	" "	Jagara
4)	" "	Dharampur
5)	Veterinary Dispensary	Masalpur
6)	" "	Mukalmua
7)	" "	Deharkuchi
8)	" "	Ghagrapar
9)	" "	Tamulpur
10)	" "	Barama
11)	" "	Tihu
12)	" "	Pub-Nalbari Block
13)	" "	Barimakha
14)	" "	Dhamdhama
15)	" "	Bartala.

The statement below shows the trend of livestock population in Kamrup district during the period 1945 to 1972.¹⁶

Type of Livestock	1945	1951	1956	1961	1966	1971
A. Cattle population	10,86,164	12,03,400	12,26,688	13,43,227	12,95,243	11,81,003
B. Buffalo population	51,363	56,336	53,591	50,292	46,942	39,288
C. Sheep population	4,459	3,997	10,539	14,625	19,547	19,541
D. Goat population	1,22,972	1,47,281	2,04,895	3,00,188	3,00,529	2,64,171
E. Poultry		10,65,611	13,58,939	17,45,252	15,58,424	17,06,490

College of Veterinary Science, Khanapara : The Assam Veterinary College was re-designated as the college of Veterinary Science soon it was taken over by the Assam Agricultural University in 1969-70. The college imparts both theoretical and practical education for the degree

16. *Livestock Census*, Assam, 1972, p. 62-66.

of Bachelor of Veterinary Science (B. V. Sc.) The course is of five-years duration. Post-graduate classes for degree of M. V. Sc. have been started in seven subjects namely (1) Veterinary Preventive Medicine (2) Animal Physiology (3) Animal Gynecology (4) Animal Nutrition, (5) Dairy Husbandry (6) Pathology and (7) Parasitology.

The Associate Director of Research of the Faculty was entrusted with the study of Co-ordination of various research activities in the field of animal production and their diseases. A number of schemes initiated by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research are in operation in the college. These are,—(a) The All-India Co-ordinated Research project on Slaughter House by-product (b) The All-India Co-ordinated Research project on goat and (c) The All-India Co-ordinated Research project on pig. Another scheme on Epidemiology of 'foot and mouth' diseases has been sanctioned for the college.

The Dean of Faculty, Veterinary Science, Assam Agricultural University, Khanapara, is the head of the institution. The teaching staff consisted of thirteen Professors, twenty-one lecturers and twenty-five Assistant lecturers, fifteen laboratory Assistants, one Curator, one librarian and one Artist in the college.

Live Stock farm, Barpeta : With the help of Australian Government, an important project has been started at the Barpeta Live Stock farm for production of pure breed Jersey cattle.

E. PISCICULTURE AND FISHERIES :

Fish is important for a balanced nutritional diet. It contains protein for growth, and health promoting agents viz., Vitamins 'A' and 'D', Calcium and Phosphorous. But the supply of fish in the market is inadequate. The bulk of the fish sold in the market comes from big fisheries. Fishing is, however, not confined only to these fisheries. Large number of people irrespective of caste and creed collect fish from rivulets and other water logged areas. At the beginning of this century, only *Nadiyals* monopolised in fishing on a commercial scale, but now-a-days, fishing is an expanding industry where both public and private enterprises participate. In Kamrup, fisheries are running both under Revenue Department as well as under the Department of Fishery. Currently the fishery *mahals* are under the disposal of the fishery co-operatives formed for the purpose of sale of fish products in the district. The Dipar *bil*, near Jalukbari, was given in 1976 to a co-operative of the people who had taken fishing for livelihood. Previously fishery *mahals* were put on auction sale to private parties by the govern-

ment. When fishery-mahals were sold on auction, there was keen competition among the mahalders. The contenders usually offered huge amounts in a bid to secure the lease for profitable fishery. Only fresh fish is sold in the market. No industry of canned fish has yet sprung up in the district.

The total number of Revenue fisheries (now under co-operatives) in the district in 1965 was 118, out of which 79 were in the Barpeta Sub-division and 39 in Gauhati Sub-division. After the creation of the 3rd civil sub-division at Nalbari in the year 1966, a number of new fisheries were registered in the Gauhati sub-division. The most valuable fishery mahals are the Brahmaputra, the Chaulkhowa and the Bhelengi rivers. Certain *bils* like Jahna, Kukurmara, Janparia etc., are also among the important *bil* fisheries in the district.¹⁷

In order to promote Pisciculture, the Department of Fisheries was established in the district during the Five-Year Plan period with its headquarters at Gauhati. Its main objective was to increase fish production and to demonstrate scientific methods of pisciculture seeds under planned projection. Thus emphasis was laid on the reclamation of old tanks and *bils* during the First and Second Plan periods. Among the schemes implemented by the Department during the first two Plans mention may be made of renovation of old and ancient tanks, seed collection and distribution, including breeding operation, conservation, etc.

The Department of Fisheries in the district is headed by one Superintendent of Fisheries assisted by three officers, two Fishery Supervisors and six Fishery Demonstrators. The duty of the field staff consists of construction and management of fish farms and collection and distribution of fish seeds, enquiry of application of fishery loan, renovation of ancient tanks, survey of water areas of the district as well as the improvement of natural fisheries and giving necessary help and advice to the private pisciculturists. The Department is at present concentrating its work in induced breeding. The activities of the Department have also been extended to C. D. Blocks of the district. The office of the Directorate of Fisheries of the state is also located at Gauhati.

Among the ancient tanks renovated by the Department for the purpose of pisciculture mention may be made of (1) Jorpukhuri East, (2) Jorpukhuri West, (3) Manik Choudhury Tank, (4) Nagputa Tank, (5) Dighalipukhuri, (6) Rajapukhuri, (7) Karara, (8) Karigaon *Than* (9) Bargaon and (10) Bardadhi.

17. Assam Information, January, 1975, p. 12.

Names of the fish nursery, rearing and stacking tanks maintained or subsidised by the Department of Fishery, Assam, as found in Kamrup during 1976—77 are furnished below.¹⁸

Name of the subdivision and fish project.	Nursery		Rearing		Stacking tanks	
	Number	Area in acre	Number	Area in acre	Number	Area in acre.
Gauhati :						
1. Ulubari Fish Seed Farm.	15	0.46	4	2.13	2	2.13
2. Dighali Pukhuri.	—	—	—	—	1	10.00
3. Nagputa.	—	—	—	—	1	1.00
4. Tokobari Tank.	—	—	—	—	1	10.33
5. Rajapukhuri Farm.	4	0.46	2	0.93	1	29.00
6. Jharubari Fish Farm.	16	0.93	—	—	—	—
7. Karara Fish Seed Farm.	9	0.66	—	—	—	—
8. Hajo Seed Farm.	1	0.20	—	—	1	3.00
Nalbari :						
1. Namati Nursery.	20	1.60	2	0.33	1	—
2. Arara Fish Farm.	11	0.66	2	0.2	1	4.00
3. Pub-Nalbari Dv. Block.	7	0.60	—	—	—	—
4. Baska Dv. Block.	17	1.60	2	0.60	—	—
5. Barigog Barbhag.	12	0.73	—	—	—	—
6. Tihu Barama.	15	1.40	—	—	—	—
7. Rangia Fish Farm.	13	2.43	3	0.80	1	4.00
8. Pachim Nalbari.	2	0.06	1	0.33	—	—
9. Kaldia Fish Farm.	9	0.06	—	—	—	—
Barpeta :						
1. Jalah Fish Farm.	2	0.06	2	0.13	—	—
2. Keotcuchi Fish Farm.	4	.33	—	—	—	—
3. Majargaon Fish Farm.	5	0.40	2	0.26	—	—
4. Sarbhog <i>bil</i> .	10	.55	2	—	—	—
5. Rupsi Seed Farm.	2	—	2	—	—	—

18. Statistical Abstract of Assam, 1978, by Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Assam, p. 125.

The seed collection which yielded five per cent of major carps were replaced by induced breeding schemes to meet the necessary demands. Prior to these schemes, seeds were imported from Calcutta. Further, to encourage the private pisciculturists, loans were sanctioned for undertaking fish farming.

The following statement shows the achievement of the reclamation scheme during the first two Plans in the district.

	First Plan	Second Plan
1) Water area reclaimed	237 acres	3,833 acres
2) Fish seed produced	348,213 Nos.	1,881,224 Nos.
3) Marketable fish produced	42 mounds	458 mounds

A list of different varieties of fishes found in the district is furnished below :—

Scientific names.		Local names.
Labeo rohita	—	Rou
Labeo calbasu	—	Mali
Labeo genus	—	Kurhi
Labeo bata	—	Bhangan
Labeo panpanguisia	—	Nara
Labeo angra	—	Anka-nara
Catla catla	—	Bahu, Bhakua
Cirrhina reba	—	Lachim
Cirrhina mrigula	—	Mirika
Barbus sarana	—	Senee
Barbus tor	—	Pithia

Murrels

Ophiocephalus marulius	—	Sal
" Straitus	—	Sol
" Punctutus	—	Gorai
" Cachual	—	Sengeli
" Stewarti	—	Senga
" amphibious	—	Barsenga

Cat-fish

Wallago attu	—	Barali
Mystus Oar	—	Bheu
" Cavious	—	Gagal
" Tengra	—	Singra
Clarius magur	—	Magur
Heteropneustes fossilis	—	Singee
Callichrous bima coulatus	—	Pabha
Entropichathys vacha	—	Bosa
Pangasius pangasius	—	Pungo
Silonoa Silonlia	—	Kos
Rita rita	—	Ritha
Bagarius bagarius	—	Gorua

Miscellaneous

Narbus stigma	—	Puthi
" Ticto	—	Senduria Puthi
Natopterus natopterus	—	Kanduli
" Chitala	—	Chital
Hilsa ilsha	—	Illisa
Anabsas tesudeneus	—	Kaoi
Tricogaster faciatus	—	Khalihana
Tricogaster chuna	—	Bheseli
Nandus nandus	—	Gedgedi
Classogohious giurias	—	Patimutra
Gudusia chapra	—	Karati
Rashra elenga	—	Eleng
Mastacembalus armatus	—	Bami
Mastacembalus pancalius	—	Tura
Ambassis nama, ranga	—	Chanda
Amblypharanygodon mola	—	Moa
(Esmas) Rashora donricus	—	Dorikana
Yenonotodon cancila	—	Kakila
Chela bacila	—	Chelkana
Laubucca laubuca	—	Laupatia, Bahpatia
Batia dario	—	Batia
Amphipneus cuchia	—	Kuchia
Barilius bola	—	Bariala

Fishing implements : The most important implements used in fishing are nets. Among the nets are (1) *Ghokota* (2) *Khewali* (3) *Langi* and (4) *Parangi*. The functions of these nets are already described in the old Gazetteer of Kamrup as such they are not repeated here. Besides, there are various kinds of fishing contraptions prepared out of cane and bamboo. A brief description of some of the other fishing implements widely used like *polo*, *jakai*, *khalai*, *dori*, *chepa*, *jhuli*, *hogra* etc., is given below.

Polo : Resembles a gigantic wine glass with a short stem made of wicker work. *Polo* is used for fishing in shallow water. *Juluki* is a small fishing implement identical with the *polo* and is made out of small bamboo strips fastened with fine and flexible cane slips. The *jakai* is a species of wicker work shovel which is either dragged along the bottom or placed on the water bed to catch the small fishes which take refuge in it when the weed is trampled. *Khalai* is also prepared with bamboo strips. It is woven in the shape of an earthen *Kalasi*—a pitcher. This is used for temporary keeping of fishes during hand-net fishing. *Chepa* is woven in a roundish fashion made out of bamboo rods with jute strings or soft cane strips. A bamboo made valve locally known as *per* and *kal* is fitted in the middle of the *chepa* to allow the fishes to enter inside with no scope of going out. *Dari* is commonly used by the fishermen in the rural areas. A '*dari*' is generally rectangular in shape. This fishing implement is prepared out of small bamboo strips woven with flexible cane slips. All these implements mentioned above are usually used in catching fishes in shallow water. In addition to these, there are some other implements made of bamboo and cane and are used for catching fishes in deep water. These are locally known as *gui*, *jhuli*, *dingaru*, *thupa*, *hogra*, etc.

Recently a State Fishery Development Corporation has been set up with headquarters at Gauhati to execute promotional work on fisheries. Besides, a scheme has been drawn up for setting up a Fish Farmer's Development Agency for intensive pisciculture in selected areas adopting modern techniques with a view to increase fish production, better marketing facilities and increase of employment.¹⁹

In 1972, the total number of members involved in fisheries in Kamrup district was 87,379 of which 11,256 were male, 23,387 female and 52,736 children.²⁰ But the standard of life of the fishermen is not much satisfactory. The main source of income of the fishermen is from

19. Governor's Budget Speech, Assam, 1974-75.

20. Livestock Census, Assam, 1972, p. 180.

fishing under different leases and different co-operative societies. Their income depends on the catch they obtained from their fisheries. They have also various problems such as lack of adequate fund for purchasing fishing equipments. The Government has taken steps for improving socio-economic condition of the fisherman. The Government is issuing subsidy to the fishery co-operative societies and to the individual fisherman. The common fishes found in the natural fisheries of Kamrup are : *Puthi*, *Mowa*, *Selakoni*, *Bhangan*, *Garoi*, *Sol*, *Magur*, *Singi*, *Kawoi*, *Borali*, *Nara*, *Cheniputhis*, *Bhetbheti*, *Pabha*, *Bahpatia*, *Kanduli*, *Rou*, *Mirika*, *Bhakua*, etc. The most tasteful variety of carp called *Silgharia Rou* is found in the Maras area of the district.

F. FORESTRY :

The forests of Assam can be broadly classified into two types : (1) evergreen and (2) deciduous. The former type of forests occur in the tracts of higher rainfall and are found mostly in the Upper Assam districts i.e., Lakhimpur and Sibsagar, and in Cachar district in the Barak Valley. The deciduous forests occur mostly in the Lower Assam districts and the most important timber tree in these forests is *Sal*. In the riverain tracts along the northern foot hills of Goalpara and Kamrup districts, valuable forests of *Sissu*, *Simalu* or *Simul*, and *Khoir* are found. The forest wealths occupy an important place in the economy of the district. In 1973-74, the reserved forest covered an area of 112,723 hectares, of which, 40,497 hectares were in Barpeta sub-division, 8,217 in Nalbari sub-division and 64,009 hectares in Gauhati sub-division.²¹

There are marked differences in the floristic composition of the forests of the South Kamrup and North Kamrup Divisions. The figures of areas occupied by different forest types (classification based on *Revised Survey of Forest Types of India* by Champion and Seth), in the areas that have been examined and sampled for the purpose of management under Working Plan, are furnished below :—

Western Assam Wild Life Division :

Khoir-Sisoo Forests	312 hectares.
Moist mixed Deciduous	5,833 "
Savannah	313 "
Other types including riverbeds, plantation/ regeneration, etc.	2,927 "

21. Statistical Hand Book, Assam, 1976, p. 114.

North Kamrup Division :

Khoir-Sisoo Forests	355	hectares.
Moist Mixed Deciduous Forests	8,986	"
Savannah	1,099	"
Bhabar Semi-evergreen	196	"
Other types including riverbeds, plantation/ regeneration, etc.	3,945	"

South Kamrup Division :

Eastern Hill Sal Forests, Khasi Hills Sal	10,025	hectares.
Moist Plains Sal Forests, Kamrup Sal	10,092	"
Moist Mixed Deciduous Forests (with scattered Sal)	31,567	"
Wet Miscellaneous formation	2,502	"
Moist Sal Savannah	432	"
Other types	9,286	"

A large area of 27,052 hectares in Wild life Sanctuary are not examined and classified by the Forest Department since no operation of trees and other forest produce is practised there.

From the above figures it would be evident that whereas *Sal*, one of the important naturally durable timber species of India, predominates the southern areas of the district, it is not available extensively in the northern part. Again Khoir-Sisoo Forests, occurring as coloniser formations in fresh riverain accretions in the northern parts of the district, are totally absent from the southern areas. When not influenced by biotic or other factors, the forests in the district ultimately tend towards climax evergreen formations, represented by pure *Mesua* (Nahor) Forests.

At present there are about 56 Reserve Forests in Kamrup district, the names of which are as follows :

1. Manas	11. Joypur
2. Panbari	12. Nampather
3. Kuklung	13. Bordova
4. Deodhara	14. Gizang
5. Batabari	15. Mugakhal
6. Subonkhata	16. Sursuria
7. Mara Pagladia	17. Kharkhari
8. Darrangia	18. Garubandha
9. Koklabari	19. Tarabari
10. Borjuli	20. Gharaputa

21. Khatkhati	39. Borduar
22. Khukri	40. Mayang Hill
23. Dumpara	41. Mataikhar
24. Simlahill	42. Kowasing
25. Dudhkhuri	43. Garasal
26. Luki	44. Rani
27. Singra	45. Matiata
28. Moman	46. Garbhanga
29. Dimali	47. Hajo
30. Khatajuli	48. Sildhar
31. Malaghat	49. Agiathuri
32. Gohsingarung	50. Khanapara
33. Jarikhuri	51. Fatasil
34. Dhaniagaon	52. Amchang
35. Milmila	53. Silapahar
36. Choygaon	54. Gondhmow Hill
37. Kulsi	55. North Kamrup
38. Pantan	56. Kahitama.

The unclassed State forest has not been given proper importance and its area has also dwindled from 2,036 square miles or 5273.2 sq. km. in 1902-03 to 1,227 square miles or 3177.92 sq. km. in 1961-62. Unclassed state forests are simply unsettled lands at the disposal of Forest Department with or without trees. The forests are situated on both banks of the Brahmaputra and with the exception of a 5.18 square kilometres isolated patches among villages, occur mainly as strips of about 10-15 miles or 16.09 to 24.31 kilometres along the Bhutan Himalayas from the Manas river on the west to the Barnadi on the east. On the south bank of the Brahmaputra, forests occupy the ridges, foot hills and high land projections of these hills into the plains of the outlying ranges of the Khasi Hills.

Importance of Forestry in the economy of the district : There are a number of important forest-based industries in the district. Forest-based industries so far functioning in the district are of the following type :—

(i) Sawn Timber : *Sal*, *Sisui*, *Simul*, *Khoir*, etc., are some of the important species commonly used in the district for construction of houses, wooden bridges and various types of furniture. Most of the timbers produced in the district are required to feed saw mills, ply-

wood factories and for the purposes of railway sleepers and also for match factory. In 1972-73, 29,878 cubic metres and 46,772 cubic metres of timber were produced by the North Kamrup and South Kamrup Forest Division respectively.²³

Out-turn of timber and fire-wood in the 3 forest divisions of Kamrup district reported for 1976-77 is as follows.²⁴

Forest Division.	Timber in rough log (Cubic metre)	Timber in rough poles (running metre)	Fuel (Cubic metre).
1. North Kamrup	15,765	236	8,578
2. South Kamrup	32,901	—	45,680
3. Western Assam Wildlife-Barpeta Road.	1,558	—	—

In calculating fuels, non-permit holder's individual collections have not been shown.

Wooden containers, mainly boxes are produced from the plywood needed for various industries. Low grade timbers are mainly used in the plywood factories in Assam and one such factory is functioning at Ulubari, Gauhati.

Another major use of timber in Assam is in the production of railway sleepers. *Sal* is considered to be the best tree for the production of railway sleepers. As *Sal* is one of the principal species of timber in Kamrup, its contribution of sleepers to the Indian Railways is immense.

The Match Factory at Dhuburi also gets large quantity of wood for match splints from the forests of Kamrup. *Simul*, and other similar soft woods are needed by the match industry.

In fact, the importance of forestry over the economy of the district cannot be overemphasised. The existence of the cultivators which constitute about 79% of the total population would be at stake had there been no forests along the foot hills to check the torrential rain waters coming from

23. *Statistical Handbook, Assam, 1976, p. 116.*

24. *Ibid, 1980, p. 121.*

the Bhutan Hills charged with heavy sand, gravels and boulders making the whole country on the north of the Brahmaputra unproductive and barren. For this purpose, the state Flood Control Department had advocated afforestation upto a minimum depth of a kilometre all along the foot hills as a measure of flood control as the existing forests are far below this requirement in certain places.

Besides, with the conversion of all unclassified state forests into cultivable lands, the people of the district feel the necessity of more forests to fulfill their requirements of firewood, house building timbers, agricultural implements, etc. Thus, in appreciating the necessity of forests for its scientific management, exploitation, and development; a Working Plan was prescribed for fifteen years from 1957-58 to 1971-72 after a through study and inspection of the forests.

G. FLOODS, FAMINES AND DROUGHT :

Famine is unknown in the history of Kamrup. Droughts affect the district from time to time, but the extent of damage caused by droughts is not considerable in comparison with those caused by flood and erosion. Like other plains districts of the Brahmaputra Valley, the district of Kamrup is also a flood-hit area. In the recent years, it has become a menacing problem. Every year large areas are inundated and considerable tracts of riverain land are swallowed up by erosion. Floods and erosion together take a heavy toll in terms of life and property besides causing colossal damage to standing crops.

The incidence of floods and erosion is rooted in the typical and physiological features and meteorological conditions obtaining in this part of the country. Encircled by hills in almost all sides, the districts of the Brahmaputra Valley are traversed by the river Brahmaputra. The tributaries of the Brahmaputra on both banks have considerable hill catchments. Meteorologically Assam experiences copious rainfall ranging from 190 cm. to 700 cm. annually, more than 80% of the precipitation being concentrated in the four months from June to September. The heavy water and silt discharges occurring in upper region of the rivers during the peak monsoon 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 of the plains region. Moreover, the large scale denudation of forests in the hill areas giving, as it does, a further momentum to the peak discharges, has certainly contributed towards aggravation of the flood situation in Assam over the past years. Presence of an adequate forest cover with a wider

forest-belt along the northern fringe of the district would have mitigated the problems of flood and drought in Kamrup district to a great extent. The present belt damaged and reduced due to unplanned settlement of land along the northern boundary, has been proved to be quite inadequate for the purpose of acting as an effective brace for the run off and as a regulator of peak-flow. Another factor adding a new dimension and greater severity to the problem is the great earthquake of 1950. Due to this earthquake there have been extensive hill slides in the catchments of the Brahmaputra and the north-eastern tributaries. The beds of the rivers have silted up in varying degrees and a number of rivers changed their courses.

The statements below show the extent of flood damages in the whole district in 1967 and also in the Sub-divisions during 1977-1978.²⁵

TABLE—(A)
Flood damages in Kamrup in 1967

Total area affected (in sq. Kms).	Cropped area affected (in lakhs hectares)	No. of houses damaged	Population affected (in thousand)	Human lives lost (number)
4,800	1,02	26,486	725	12

TABLE—(B)
Flood damages in Kamrup district in 1977-78

	Area (thousand hectares)		Total value damages			
	Total affected.		Cropped.		Rs. lakh.	
	1977	1978	1977	1978	1977	1978
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	60.27	9.00	98.61	7.30	833.96	54.85

Flood damages of Barpeta and Nalbari Sub-Divisions are given in the Tables C and D below.

25. *Economic Survey of Assam*, 1979, p. 38.

TABLE—'C'

Barpeta Subdivision in 1978.

Area affected in lakhs hectare.	Population affected in lakh	Damage to crops		Damage to houses		Total damage to crops, house & public utilities.	Rescue & relief operation done including expenditure.
		Area in hectare.	Value in Rs.	Nos.	Value Rs. in lakh		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
0.00445	.05107	0.0044	284,200/-	16	Rs. 0.176	301,800/-	Atta, rice cash dole distributed & expenditure incurred Rs. 30,000/- approximately.

Source : Barpeta Civil Sub-division Office, Barpeta.

TABLE—'D'
Nalbari Sub-division during 1977 and 1978.

Year	Nature of Calamities	Name of the area	Area affected in Hectares	Population affected	Extent of damage in term of Rs.	No. of human life lost	(1) Public institution damaged—159 Nos. value Rs. 2,38,500/-
1977	Flood	153 No. of Villages of the Sub-division.	11,653	55,857	Rs. 1,80,000.00	..	Religious institution damaged—30 Nos. value Rs. 20,100.00
	Cyclone		2,462.33	863	Rs. 3,81,590.00	1	
1978	Flood	Nalbari Sub-division	0.0334 L.H.	0.3140 lakh	Rs. 15,00,000.00	..	
	Cyclone	Nalbari Circle Tihu Circle other than Baska Mouza 8 Villages of Baska Mouza		2001 125 669	Rs. 3,56,650.00	2	

Source : S. D. O., Nalbari.

Although flood affected all the plain districts and a part of Karbi Anglong district of the State during 1977, the impact was more severely felt in the districts of Goalpara and Kamrup. The total cropped 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 was nearly 15 thousand in Goalpara district and more than 26 thousand in Kamrup district.²⁶

A marked change of weather has been gradually noticed to which the people of the district are not accustomed. Extensive damage of forests and wide-spread encroachment on hilly lands of the district have been considered to be the causes of the unpredictable behaviour of the weather in the district.

In 1977, unprecedented continuous and heavy rain and cyclone caused very extensive damage in all the 3 sub-divisions of the district. Most of the public institutions including schools, library and Namghars were damaged beyond repair. Thousands of cultivators belonging to Patbaushi, Bhabaripur, Jalah, Baska, Kshetri, Pantan and Boko area became homeless. Total loss in terms of money in all the 3 Sub-divisions of Kamrup district has been calculated at about 10 (ten) lakhs. Extensive damage occurred to the crops. This was followed by severe drought of 1979.

Erosion is also no less important a problem for the plains districts of Assam. Every year large blocks of areas are eroded by the currents of the rivers. In 1974, a large number of erosion affected people of the Gauhati sub-division had to be sheltered in relief camps at a huge cost. A considerable area in Palasbari circle was eroded by the river in that year.

Flood Warning System : In order to enable the district authorities to take timely steps, a system has been evolved to transmit flood warning messages. So far as the heavy floods of the Brahmaputra are concerned, the flood warning messages were relayed previously through the office of the Flood Control Department from Shigtre, Chusuri Tsela Daxang stations via Darjeeling to the Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur. At present flood warning signals are transmitted to the Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur, from some stations at the upper reaches of the Brahmaputra. The Deputy

26. *Economic Survey of Assam, 1974-75, p. 14.*

Commissioner, Lakhimpur, in his turn, informs other Deputy Commissioners and Sub-divisional Officers of the Brahmaputra Valley. The time lag in flood in the Brahmaputra between various stations from Dibrugarh are as follows :

	Distance from Dibrugarh		Time of flood travel.	
			Minimum	Maximum
North Lakhimpur	96.56 Kilometres		9 hours	1 day
Sibsagar	96.56	"	9 "	1 "
Jorhat	121.27	"	15 "	2 "
Tezpur	331.52	"	34 "	3 "
Gauhati	189.24	"	51 "	4 "
Goalpara	624.42	"	64 "	6 "
Barpeta	595.45	"	61 "	6 "
Dhuburi	714.54	"	74 "	7 "

On receipt of this flood warning message, the Deputy Commissioners and the Subdivisional Officers take precautionary measures to meet the situation arising out of the flood.

Relief Operations : As soon as water from rivers in spate starts to submerge the low-lying areas, the relief operations are started with full vigour. These measures include evacuation of people and cattle whenever necessary to safer places and providing them with food and shelter till the flood recedes, and distribution of gratuitous relief in those flood affected areas where evacuation is not necessary. At times the flood level rises very rapidly and the swirling currents make it extremely risky to move from one place to another. Very often the villages appear to be isolated islands accessible only by boats. In some **char** areas the roofs of houses are swept by the water. Unless evacuation is done in a planned manner, the incidence of loss of human life under such circumstances may be very high. The evacuation and distribution of gratuitous relief are supplemented by other measures such as rehabilitation of the erosion effected people, execution of test relief schemes so that the people of the flood affected areas secure some amount of purchasing power, inoculation of human beings as well as cattle to prevent outbreak of epidemic, disinfecting the flood affected areas, distribution of seeds or seedlings by the Agriculture Department to the farmers of the flood affected areas, where

crops have been damaged, issue of agricultural loans and rehabilitation loans to the flood affected people, issue of grants for repairing school buildings or other public buildings, roads and bridges damaged by the flood, remission of land revenue in the worst affected areas, and issue of educational loans or grants to help students of the flood affected areas. These are short term measures. The long term measures comprise of construction of dykes, dams, culverts, sluice gates, etc., for regulating courses of the rivers. Thus a concerted effort is made by several departments to mitigate the miseries of the flood affected people. In steering the relief operations the district and the sub-divisional authorities secure complete co-operation from other departments of the Government as well as from the local public. At times, Sub-divisional or District Flood Relief Committees comprising both of official and non-official members are formed to devise means for providing adequate relief to the flood affected people.

Apart from evacuation of people and cattle whenever necessary, the immediate relief made available to the flood affected people is the gratuitous relief. Relief parties visit the villages and distribute foodgrains, pulses, salt and mustard oil at a given scale. Other commodities distributed include medicine, clothings and fodder for the cattle. The relief parties move mostly by country boats and carry with them the stock of foodgrains, etc., for distribution. Fair price shops are opened at various places to sell rice or paddy to the flood affected people at a reduced rate : the difference with the normal rate is subsidised by the Government.

Flood Control Measures : The problem of flood in the Brahmaputra valley is so big and complex that its complete control is very difficult one though not an impossible task. Due to heavy rainfall and fluvial nature of the catchment areas of the rivers, the problems of flood control are bigger and far more complicated in Assam than that in any other part of the country.

In this context, it may, however, be noted that prior to 1951-52, the need for flood control works was not so much felt as in the years that followed. In fact, the real beginning in the flood control work was made since the first Five-year Plan. Extensive protection works in the shape of construction of dykes and embankments covering a length of more than three thousand kilometres along the Brahmaputra and its tributaries were made during the two decades of planning. In addition to above, during the period, about eight hundred kilometers of drainage channels were dug in different low lying areas of the State. It may also be cited here that the protection works done during the first two Plans

were of emergency and adhoc nature. From the 3rd plan onwards, emphasis was shifted in favour of consolidation of existing structures in addition to new schemes wherever necessary. The Third Plan works envisaged the raising and strengthening of the existing embankments, construction of new embankments in unprotected reaches, provision of sluiceways for drainage and irrigation, construction of raised platforms, town protection, river training, etc. Besides, for long term solution of the problem, the possibilities of construction of one or two reservoir detention basins within the Fourth Plan period were being explored.

In recent years, the Government of India has paid increasing attention to the problems arising out of frequent floods and erosion in Assam. The Brahmaputra Flood Control Board has already been set up by the Central Government to solve the problem. It was decided that the Board would exercise overall control over the flood protection schemes in the Assam Valley including provision of funds. The Brahmaputra Flood Control Commission, a subsidiary organisation under the State Government was responsible for execution of the projects as per direction of the Board.

It is important to mention here that in recent years all the flood control works of the Brahmaputra Valley have been taken in the central plan and is being financed from Central Loan Assistance. The amount fixed by the Government of India for this purpose was Rs. 4.89 crores for the year 1975-76.²⁷

CHAPTER V

INDUSTRIES

(A) OLD-INDUSTRY :

Industries in Ancient days and Mediaeval Times : The present district of Kamrup, being a part of the ancient kingdom of Kamarupa was noted for many old-time industries. In the pre-British period when there were independent rulers in Assam, a number of old-time industries especially cottage industries, got the patronage from the kings and nobles and naturally the propagation of such industries constituted one of the important features of the cultural life of the Assamese people. Self-sufficiency had been the key-note of Assam's economy in early mediaeval time, and various cottage industries formed, therefore, an inalienable part of the culture. To a large number of people, these cottage industries had been, as it were, a way of life rather than mere source of living. Jean Baptiste Tavernier, Baron of Auborne, who came to India from France in the forties of the seventeenth century describes Assam thus : "This kingdom of Assam is one of the best centres in Asia, it produces all that is necessary to the life of men and there is no need to go for anything to the neighbouring states. There are mines of gold, silver, steel, lead and iron and much Silk but it is coarse."¹ Mr. E. A. Gait in his *A History of Assam* has stated that the industry was highly developed in the Ahom period. There are references to weavers, spinners, goldsmith, potters and workers in ivory, bamboo, wood, hides and cane in several accounts. According to Muhammadan historians the people were very skilful in weaving of embroidered silk clothes. They made their boxes, trays, stools and chairs by carving them out of a single block of wood. According to records, Momai Tamuli Barbarua, a minister of king Pratap Singh, made it compulsory for every adult able-bodied female to spin a certain quantity of yarn every evening.²

"The art of Sericulture and the rearing of cocoons for the manufacture of various silk cloths were known to the Assamese as early as the *Ramayana* and the *Artha sastra*. The *Periplus* refers to both raw and manufactured silk which were from Thina or Assam"³.

1. Tavernier : *Travels in India*, Vol. 11. (the 1st Indian Edition—translated by V. Ball), 1977, p. 220.
2. E. A. Gait ; *A History of Assam*. Reprint of 3rd Revised edition, 1967, 271
3. P. Choudhury : *History of Civilisation of the People of Assam to the Twelfth Century A. D.*, Gauhati, 1959, p. 364.

27. *Economic Survey of Assam, 1975-76*, p. 22.

The *muga* has varieties like the *Campa*, the cocoon which are fed on *Campa* (*Michelia Campaka*) tree, and the *mejankari* or *adakari*—feeding on *majankari* and *adakari* plants.

Dyeing also was a very ancient industry of Assam or Kamarupa. In dyeing fabrics and cabinets the Assamese people used mainly *majathi* (*Rubia mujisa*), indigo, *mejankari* and lac. Essence making also is an old industry of Kamarupa. *Agar attar* was extracted from *Agar*, while incenses were made from gums extracted from *Sal* trees. *Majathi* was used to dye fabrics into scarlet, coffee-brown or mauve, indigo was used to blacken, *majankari* to golden the fabrics while *lac* was used to make the fabric red.⁴ Besides, these gun and gun-power also are believed to have been manufactured in Assam.⁵

Bana mentioned in *Harsa Carita* that Bhaskara sent *Ksauma* cloths (*Ksaumoni*) white as the autumn's moonlight to Harsa. This cloth is said to be made of finest of the cotton fabrics. Besides *Ksauma*, Bhaskara sent *Dukula* and *Patorna* clothes to Harsa. According to scholars *Dukula* is *muga* and *Patorna* is *pat*. Use of dye also was very ancient in Assam. The *Periplus*, the *Arthasastra* etc. and writers like Qazim and Tavenier mentioned about the manufacturing and use of dye in ancient Assam. Megasthenes, Yuan Chang, Tavenier, the *Periplus*, and the *Arthasastra* also mentioned about manufacture of gold in Assam and its export. As Taylor writes, the merchandise collected by the western non-Indian traders from Assam consisted of skin (hides), iron, aloe, musk, rhino's horn etc.⁶

During the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries Assam traded with Bhutan through the *Duars* (*Duar* meaning gate) situating on the northern border of Kamrup and Darrang. Through these *Duars* Assam merchants sold rice, coarse-silk (probably *Endi*), iron, lac, skins, and buffalo horns etc.⁷ There was a *chowky* (check post) called Assam *Chowky* situated at the mouth of the Manas river. All imports and exports to and from Assam had to pass through this Assam *chowky*. Exports from Assam chiefly consisted of muga silk, stick lac, *majathi*, elephant's tusks, cotton, copper, mustard and bellmetal vessels.

In ancient Assam, salt was manufactured from rock-salts, salt beds called *pung*, banana-peels and plantain trees. According to Tavenier,

4. S. K. Bhuyan : *Anglo-Assamese Relations*, 1949, p. 53.
5. J. B. Tavernier : *Travels in India*, Vol. 11, p. 217.
6. P. C. Chaudhury : *The History of Civilization of the people of Assam to the Twelfth Century A. D.* Gauhati, 1959, p. 373.
7. S. K. Bhuyan : *Anglo-Assamese Relations*, 1949, Introduction, p.35.

salt was also manufactured from ashes of some water-plants collected, dried and burnt.⁸

The other principal old-time industries in the district were weaving in country looms, pottery, black-smithy, bell-metal, brass-metal, gold-smithy, village carpentry, bamboo and cane works, spinning of *Endi*, *Muga*, and Mulberry silk; vegetable dying, wood carving, hand pounding of rice, manufacture of ivory products, etc.

Some of the age-old Industries are described in greater details below :

(1) **Weaving** : Assam enjoyed a high reputation and early traditions in manufacturing cotton clothes required for her use. Cotton weaving was and still is one of the most common industries in Assam. In fact, weaving in Assam is characterised by its distinctiveness, and although most of the products are of purely utility purposes, some of them which are used for certain occasions, are of exquisite beauty of durable quality, delicate weave, dainty designs and delightful colours. The beautiful handloom fabrics show the creative genius of traditional individual weavers. The tradition, that the skill in the art of weaving and spinning is always held to be one of the highest attainments of an Assamese woman, can be traced to this idea of skill in spinning and weaving. When a proposal of marriage is made, first question asked related to the girl's proficiency in *bowa-kata* i.e., whether she was skilled in spinning and weaving. During the rule of the Ahoms, elaborate arrangements were made for keeping in the Royal Store sufficient quantity of clothes of different varieties for presentation to foreign courts and dignitaries.⁹ Indeed weaving in ancient Assam had its own reputation. "War-like cloth", observed J. P. Wade, "is made in the following manner, at midnight the cotton is ginned pressed into rollers, spun into thread, manufactured into cloth and worn by warriors in the morning." In similar references it is also found that until the beginning of the present century the whole of the cloth requirements of every Assamese family were secured from the family handloom.¹⁰ With the increasing competitions from mill-made cloth, the family handlooms now supply only special varieties of cloth for women and for social and religious purposes. Rural women however, still depend primarily on home-made cloths woven from mill-made yarns. As handloom cloths cater mainly for the family needs and as domestic demand is more or less met by the people themselves from family looms, there is very little

8. Travenier : *Travels in India—the first Indian Edition*, 1977, Vol. 11, p22.
9. E. A. Gait ; *A History of Assam*, Revised Edition, 1967, p. 272.
10. P. C. Goswami ; *Economic Development of Assam*, 1963, p.166.

trade therein. The Weaving Department of the State Government, Apex Weaver's Society and some voluntary agencies are trying to help the weavers by organising co-operatives and by supplying yarns, fly shuttle looms, marketing facilities etc. Average annual number of looms distributed in Kamrup district by the Department of Sericulture and Weaving is 410. There are 4 Weaving Training Institutes, 14 Weaver's Extension Service units and 2 Handloom Production centres in Kamrup, besides the 2 centres of Bahjani and Rampur—run by Assam Khadi and Village Industries Board, where weavers are imparted training in improved technique of modern weaving. ¹¹ The Weaving Institute at Gauhati is also training students in various new designs and processes. Recently, in Development Block areas, a number of three-months' training course in modern-weaving, are being organised through local Mahila Samitees. As per 1961 census, there were 1,500 fly-shuttles and 1,34,000 traditional looms in Kamrup,—total textile establishments being 1,25,000.

Weaving process : The old type of the loom is gradually being replaced by fly-shuttle looms supplied by the Weaving Department of the Government of Assam and through efforts of voluntary agencies ; but domestic looms are primarily of the old type. The number of weaving looms in the district will be sufficiently high ; and within Gauhati, North Gauhati, Maligaon and Pandu areas there were in 1967 about 190 weaving looms, and most of them were fly-shuttle looms. In this connection it may also be noted that to help the individual weavers in 1960-61 there were as many as 240 Weaving Co-operative Societies in the district. It was stated that these Co-operative Societies supply yarns to the weavers at controlled rates. Of late, fly-shuttle looms are also being supplied in the rural areas from the respective Development Blocks of the district through their Co-operative Extension Officers.

Employment in looms : It may however, be noted that the employment in looms is a part-time employment and as such its output is generally low in Assam. According to a survey on handloom industry conducted by the Gauhati University, except in Manipur and some tribal areas, most of the looms of this industry in North-East India remain idle almost the whole of the year. The Census Report of Assam and the Department of Economic and Statistics of the Govt. of Assam reveal that there were 5.5 lakh looms in Assam in 1975 outside the co-operative fold and these looms provided part-time and whole-time employment to nearly 6 lakh of people. As per the Annual Report of the Assam Khadi and

11. *Statistical Handbook, Assam*, 1978, p. 104-6 and *Annual Report, Assam Khadi & Village Industries Board*, 1976-77.

Village Industries Board, in 1976-77, there were about 53,252 weavers working in 6 Khadi Production Centres run by the Board in the district of Kamrup. In 1961 however, total persons employed as weavers in Kamrup were 1,06,4261 of which 446 were engaged in silk weaving and 424 engaged in Khadi weaving. ¹² To remove the marketing difficulties of this important traditional industry of Assam, Government in the recent years has started Sales Emporiums and other similar agencies in different parts of the district. They are, (1) the Assam Government Marketing Corporation and (2) the N. E. Handloom and Handicraft Development Corporation (under All-India Handloom Board) who have opened fashionable Sales Emporium in Gauhati and in other important cities in India. Besides, a number of well-organised Co-operative Societies and factories have come forward to solve the marketing problems by opening up their own selling centres at Gauhati, Nalbari, Barpeta, Sualkuchi, and in some other important places of Kamrup district. Important finished products of the handloom weaving are different varieties of *mekhela* such as *Uka* (Plain) *mekhela*, *Patar* (Silk) *mekhela*, *Mugar mekhala*, *Mugabania* (silk muga) *mekhela*. *Phulbahar* (with designs) *mekhela*. *Chadar*. *Riha*, (Breast cloth), *Pashra* (wrapper), *Borkapor* (Cotton blanket), *Churia* or *dhoti*, *Cheleng* (Scarf), *Gamosa* etc. Besides there are a number of tribal weaving products in the district and these include *Dakmonda* (used as sari by Garo women), *Nengeta* (used by Garo male), *Pini* (*mekhela*), *Pachelin* (Chadar), *Khanjari* (wrap), *Dakhona* (Bodo women's garment), *Righu*, *Rijimphai*, *Haraimin* (all used by Kachari women), *Rimchow* (p'ain cotton chadar used by male Kachari), etc. ¹³.

(2) **Pottery :** The pottery industry is also an old cottage industry of the district. From the record of the old Gazetteer of Kamrup it is found that in the past this industry was primarily in the hands of *Kumars*, a functioning section of the *Kalitas* and *Hiras*, both of whom are indigenous Assamese. They carried on their manufactures on their own account and in their own houses. But now-a-days this trade is primarily in the hands of the non-Assamese i.e., Rais from Bangladesh, East U.P. and Biharis. This industry is also suffering from shortage of capital and good clay as well as from competition of ceramic products and other durable substitutes like enamel and aluminium utensils for which the consumers has a preference. At the same time, the artisans in the industry hardly have made an attempt to adopt measures to meet the consumers' changed taste regarding shape, design, and quality. For the local pottery, this is more or

12. *Census of India*, 1961, Vol. 111, Assam, Part-I-A, *General Report*, p. 323-4.

13. *Census of India*, 1961, Vol. 111, Assam Part-VII-A, *Selected Handicrafts of Assam* p. 9-10.

less a part-time job of the agriculturists but there are many landless non-agriculturists who depend on making and selling of earthenware for their livelihood. The principal articles manufactured are *Kalah*, *Hari* or *Mataka*, *Basan* or *Kahi*, *Lota*, *Bati*, *Soru*, *Patsoru*, *Dhakoni* or *Sara* (cover), *Gamla*, *Tema*, *Badna*, *Dhupdani*, (incense-stand), *Tekeli*, *Chilim* (cove shaped tobacco pipe), *chaki*, (earthen lamps), *Fuldani* (flower vase), *Tub*, *Dhol*, *Nagra*, earthen rings, *Gilas*, *Bati*, *Ghat*, etc. In 1961, the total potter population in the district was 2,233 out of which 771 were males and the rest females.

There is one pottery training Centre at Gauhati where necessary training is imparted to the workers on pottery. In 1961, there were five pottery Co-operatives in Kamrup district with 210 workers. Of late, the State Government through the Industries Department and the Khadi and Village Industries Board have offered technical and financial help to the Potters' Co-operative Societies and individual potters for construction of improved kilns, supply of plaster moulds, replacement of potter's wheel by the mechanised wheel etc.

(3) **Oil-Ghani and hand pounding of rice** : The village oil-ghani and hand pounding of rice are also old-time industries but their importance now-a-days has been reduced due to competition from oil-exPELLER and rice mills respectively where production does not entail hard physical labour. The main disadvantage of hand pounding units is that they cannot compete with mills in regard to bulk of supply and price of the product. Out-moded technique of production is the main trouble with the oil-ghani leading to wastage of oil seed. There are 10 power driven oil Ghanis in the district of Kamrup operating in the Model Ghani centres run by the Assam Khadi and Village Industries Board at Barama and Hengrabari. Some of the voluntary agencies in the district also have established power and manual Ghanis and are selling quality products at a good margin. One of such agencies is working in Kumrikata Gramdan village Centre near Tamulpur.

(4) **Bell-metal industry** : The bell-metal industry is declining in its importance because, *inter alia*, of heavy investment of working capital which is needed by the manufacturer on account of the high cost of raw materials. This being beyond the financial capacity of the artisans, the situation lends itself to the exploitation of the artisans by the merchants and traders. Outmoded production technique, stale designs and cheaper substitutes are some of the other important reasons for its decline. Attempts to help the industry have rarely touched the real tests of the problem.

Sarthebari and Hajo are the most important centres of this industry in Kamrup district and in the State as a whole. In Sarthebari, there are a large number of bell-metal smiths who are completely dependent on bell-metal industry for the maintenance of their families. As per 1961 Census Report, there were 6 rural and 4 urban bell-metal and brass-making industry centres working in Kamrup district and that these industries were giving employment to a large number of persons.

Hajo is the centre of this traditional handicraft of rare artistic design having more than 300 artisan families with about 2,000 people completely dependent on this handicraft for their livelihood. In 1968, a team of specialists of the Small Industries Institute of the Government of India surveyed the possibilities of development and modernisation of the brass utensils manufacturing industry at Hajo. The Director of the team undertook the responsibility of arranging the following help to the artisans, (1) procurement of brass sheets by the government for supplying to the artisans on a non-profit rate, (2) supply of machines on hire-purchase basis within three months and (3) training for use of machine and the like. It is stated that the artisans use nearly 280 quintals of scrap available for collection, and the finance required amounted to more than one and a half lakh. It is also stated that two re-rolling mills running in the private sector at Gauhati are squeezing all profit out of their labours. Further, it is complained that a group of merchants of Fancy Bazar is monopolising the whole trade to their ruination.¹⁴

The industry is also facing crisis due to the competition from cheaper aluminium products manufactured in Assam and outside. This industry can only thrive if an artisans' Co-operative is supplied with raw-materials directly from government pool of raw-material on subsidised rate and loans are realised through collection of finished product by the Marketing Corporation of the State—provided artisan training also is made compulsory to the persons actually engaged in the industry as artisan.

(5) **Blacksmithy** : Black-smithy is another important household industry not only in Kamrup district but throughout Assam. It is invariably a hereditary occupation except for some immigrants from outside the State. The son works as an apprentice and receives training under his father and the skill is thus carried down from generation to generation.

In Kamrup, as in other plains districts of Assam, the ironsmith is known by the term 'Kamar'—one of the main professional caste-groups (*Nabasaka*) of the country.

14. *The Assam Tribune*, dated 8th January, 1968.

Commonly the blacksmiths of Kamrup work with their indigenous instruments and tools in their own poorly maintained hearths. The tools are - (1) *Bhatti* (furance), (2) *Nia* (anvil), (3) *Haturi* (hammer), (4) *Cheni* (Chisels), (5) *Chimta* (tongs), and (6) *Rath* (files).

The *Kamars* do not like to be designated as such but prefer to continue to retain their old caste status which they claim to be descended from Viswakarma.¹⁵ The finished products of this traditional industry include (1) *Dao* (chopper) (2) *Khurpi* (spud), (3) *Kuthar* (axe), (4) *Kodal* (spade), (5) *Kanchi* (sickle), (6) *Katari* (knife), (7) *Bathi* or *Maida* (fish knife), (8) *Kalam Katari* (pruning knife), (9) *Phal* (ploughshare), etc. Besides these, a few articles like *hakota dao* (hooked blade), pruning saw, weeding fork, shovel, etc., are manufactured by local artisans. But this important traditional industry mostly depends upon local market and as such there is not much scope for their expansion. One can find this industry functioning almost in all the urban areas of the district within the greater Gauhati areas there were about 51 numbers of this industry in 1967.¹⁶ The Small Industries Service Institute (SISI), Gauhati, had advocated various measures for the promotion and development of this industry in the rural areas and had offered training for improving their skill. This cottage industry is mainly concentrated at Barpeta, Barpeta-Road, and Ramdia (Hajo Block). In 1961, 806 persons were engaged in this industry in Kamrup district. Of late, a few Co-operative Societies have been organised in order to help this hereditary industry of Assam.

(6) **Goldsmithy and Jewellery trade** : This is also an important trade in the district. This trade is mainly concentrated at Barpeta and Hajo. In the greater Gauhati area, in 1967, there were about 76 numbers of this trade, but it is stated that goldsmithy is in difficulty as the materials of this industry are precious metal of considerable value. This trade operates also in the rural areas of the district. According to one survey, in 10 Community Development Blocks covering about 50% of the area of the district, about 222 persons were engaged in the trade. As per 1961 census, there were 157 gold-smiths in Kamrup district. Out of them 60 gold-smiths were working in the urban and 97 persons were working in the rural areas.

(7) **Ivory Industry** : Ivory industry exists primarily in the Barpeta Sub-division of Kamrup district. Barpeta is the only town in Assam where ivory workshops are located. They are, (1) Assam Ivory works (established

before 1922), (2) Radhanath Ivory works (established in 1926) and (3) the Ivory Works. This industry manufactures very attractive ivory products such as comb, *sarai*, icons, etc. But the industry is in decline because of scarcity and also high cost of raw-materials, limited demand owing to costliness of such products and dearth of skill because of keeping the skill at a close preservice. There is a class of professional artisans of the industry at Barpeta. However, no census and enquiry on this industry in Assam has ever been made due probably to the insignificant part it plays in the local economy. Unless measures are taken now, this trade is likely to vanish within the next decade.

(8) **Carpentry** : This industry is seen functioning both on cottage and on small-scale basis. In Kamrup, like other plains districts of the State, the traditional carpenters who have been the important elements in a village society belong to the *Barhoi* and *Sutar* or *Sutradhar* community and there is mention of this caste in the *Vedas*. Since time immemorial, their forefathers from whom the mantle has fallen on them, have been working on wood. Mainstay for carpenters are house building, manufacturing of carts and cart wheels, plough, looms, furnitures, icons and boats.

Wood carving was a popular art with artisans on carpentry trade. They produced artistic *Paleng* (large bedstead), *Salpira* (low bedstead) *Borpira* (low stool for respectable persons), *Koroni* (flower vessel), *Thagi* (book rest) for prayer house, *Singhasan* and *Thapana* (place for keeping deities and religious books), etc. All agricultural implements such as plough hands, weaving equipments, etc., were produced locally. The finer sense of artistic beauty among the wood workers can also be seen in the manufacture of minor weaving implements like *mako*, *karhoni*, *durpati*, *nasuni*, *Jatar*, etc., which were generally ornamented with the carving of parrots, peacocks, fish and one headed dragon *magars*, monkeys and other floral designs. Barpeta is well-known for her decorated wood boats, *Namghar*-walls, door designs and *Singhasans* carved by the traditional *Sutradharas*. The preparation of wooden sandals from the block of wood is also noticed among the rural carpenters. In almost all the plains districts of Assam, the rural people use sandals of wood instead of leather. Although this industry is found in different parts of Kamrup, yet it is mainly concentrated in greater Gauhati, North Gauhati, Barpeta, Nalbari, Barpeta-Road, Rangia areas and in Rani Community Dev. Block. In the rural areas, most of the craftsmen carry on this industry as a subsidiary occupation. This industry provided employment opportunities to 4,247 persons in the district as per the census of 1961. But this industry like the others of the group, is suffering from lack of modern know-how and inability to stand compe-

15. Census of India, 1961, Vol. 111 Part-VII, Assam, *Selected Handicrafts of Assam*.

16. Survey conducted by the District Statistical Officer, Gauhati.

tition from outsiders producing less durable but more superficially attractive designed products. It may, however, be mentioned here that besides the ordinary carpentry workers, there are large number of skilled workers who work as house-builders and furnitures-makers on daily wage or contract basis. In 1971, the number of carpenters, however, increased with number of furnitures-houses. The carpenters of North Gauhati are particularly well-known for their proficiency in building construction, and weaving-implements making.

All the artisans of this industry do not possess the required up-to-date skill and designs to attract the customers for their products. They require finance for equipment, working capital and factory sheds as well as knowledge about improved technique and marketing outlet for their finished products. It is necessary that common service facilities in work-shops should be provided at the concentration pockets and raw-materials depots be attached to the common service work-shops. The Assam Government Marketing Corporation could find out markets for the products of the artisans and also suggest the lines of manufacture. With a view to encourage and develop woodworks and carpentry, the Directorate of Industries of the Govt. of Assam and some agencies of the Central Government have adopted various schemes. Financial, technical and other facilities are being given in deserving cases. Skilled carpenters are advanced with loans on easy terms and conditions. Training facilities are being provided to the desirous carpenters on modern techniques of production. A few co-operative societies on carpentry have been organised for the betterment of rural artisans. The Assam Khadi and Industries Board is also financing and patronising a few carpentry workshops which are engaged in the manufacture of looms and their accessories, bee-boxes, *ambar-charkha*, etc. Training facilities on carpentry and woodworks are available in the Cottage Industries Training Institute, Kalapahar, and also in the Industrial Training Institute, Rehabari, Gauhati.

(9) **Cane and Bamboo Works** : "The making of bamboo and cane products is perhaps the most universal of all the crafts practised by a large number of artisans scattered throughout the State. It is practised as a household industry and no mechanical device is used. Cane and bamboo products have a wide range of purposes and are extensively used in every household. This industry has carved for itself an important place among the handicrafts of the State. It provides part-time employment to the cultivators in their spare time and full-time employment to the few highly skilled artisans who produce only fine decorative baskets, furnitures and mats on a commercial basis". The above observation of the

Census Report, 1961, holds good in the district of Kamrup where people are extensively connected in this traditional craft without any restriction on caste or community. Due to the availability of bamboo and cane in Assam, the industries based on these resources are becoming more popular in different parts of the State. Most of the bamboo and cane articles can be produced both on cottage and small scale basis. It may be mentioned here that the Japanese experts' team who visited Assam in 1955-56 made recommendations for the establishment of bamboo mills in addition to cane mills and furniture mills to exploit forest resources of Assam in the small scale industries sector. There is now one such mill at Gauhati.

The manufacture of *Japi*, a kind of indigenous hat produced from bamboos and palm tree leaves, is also an important cottage industry in the district. The palm leaves used for the manufacture of *Japi* are locally known as *Tokow pat*. But a *fulam japi* (decorated bamboo umbrella) needs in addition to palm leaves coloured wool, cotton, dyed yarn and mica. Many other varieties of *Japis* such as *halua japi*, *pitha japi*, *sorudoiya japi*, *bordoiya japi*, *cap japi*, etc., are produced in the district of Kamrup, Nowgong, Darrang, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh. Nalbari is the most important centre of this industry in the district and the finished products are mainly purchased by the tea gardens in upper Assam and also by the local cultivators. Ornamented pieces of *japi* are used as drawing-room decoration and has a very promising all-India and export market. In the past, *fulam japis* were used as headgears for the females of noble families.

Now-a-days this industry is practised both as cottage and small scale-industries. When it is practised as a household industry no mechanical device is used. Cane and bamboo products have a wide range of purposes and are extensively used in every household. The advantages of the *japi* are many for the open air workers like the cultivators, cart-drivers, rickshaw pullers, stone-breakers, road-workers and tea garden workers. It is also much cheaper than the umbrella and the price of an ordinary *japi* does not exceed eight rupees at present.

Some of the cane and bamboo products manufactured for use in domestic purposes are *Chalani* (sieve), *Kula* (winnowing fan), *Kharahi* (small basket), *Dukula* (medium size basket), *Tukri* (rough and stardy basket), *Dala* (bamboo tray), *Duli* or *Tali* (big basket), *Don* (medium measure), *Dhol* (big measure), etc. In addition to those, fishing imple-

ments like *polo*, *jakoi*, *khaloi*, *dari*, *chepa*, *julki*, *hogra*, etc., are also extensively made from bamboo and cane in the rural areas of the district. As regards the sale of products, it has been noticed that they are only confined in the local markets and occasionally to markets within the State. Currently the State Government emporiums are trying to popularise a few artistic and decorative cane and bamboo products outside the State.

Although it is not possible to enlist the innumerable cottage industries which are scattered throughout the district, yet the statement below shows their importance from the point of employment opportunity provided by these industries and the volume of productions by those industries ¹⁷.

Trade-wise breakup, investment pattern, and location information, on 10 Community Development Blocks area covering about 50% of the area of the district during the first half of the sixties is given below as per Census Report, 1961.

The employment position in different trades in 1961 also may be had from the following tables,¹⁸ based on datas from 10 out of 14 blocks in the district.

TABLE 1.

Trades	No. of persons having employment	
	Full-time	Part-time
Weaving	3,490	37,864
Net making	342	1,460
Cane & Bamboo works	50	4,541
Tailoring	195	15
Carpentry	640	221
Blacksmithy	105	70
Pottery	422	217
Brass & Bell-metal works	26	8
Sericulture	—	640
R. C. C. Ring making	—	10
Ghani	18	42
Goldsmithy	216	6

17. Report on the Dev. Potentialities of Small Scale Industries in the Kamrup District in Assam.

18. Ibid.

TABLE 11.

Trades	No. of persons engaged	Investment in Rs.		Annual volume of production in Rs.
		Equipment	working capital	
Blacksmithy	300	40,500	38,000	1,20,922
Carpentry	851	1,42,450	1,31,130	15,37,300
Pottery	639	22,795	49,940	3,47,080
Brass and bell-metal utensil works.	34	31,000	5,250	48,100
Goldsmithy	222	34,900	1,05,000	3,62,880
Tailoring	210	34,500	53,800	3,12,080
Cane and bamboo works	4,591	4,330	94,530	1,17,900
Net making	1,782	33,535	47,430	4,46,300
Weaving	41,324	6,31,540	5,41,690	21,80,3000

Concentration of different cottage industries may be seen from the following. ¹⁹

Name of Industry.	Place of concentration.
Blacksmithy	1) Barpeta, (2) Barpeta Road, (3) Ramdia (Hajo Block).
Carpentry	1) Barpeta, (2) Nalbari, (3) Barpeta Road, (4) Rangiya, (5) Rani Community Development Block.
Pottery	1) Sundaridia village in the Barpeta Community Development Block, (2) Dabak Sonmaguri village within Hajo C. D. Block, etc.
Brass and bellmetal utensil	1) Sualkuchi, (2) Sarthebari, (3) Barpeta Road, (4) Hajo.
Goldsmithy	1) Barpeta, (2) Hajo.
Tailoring	1) Barpeta, (2) Borkhetri Bongsor Development Block.
Cane and bamboo works	1) Borkhetri Bongsor Development Block, (2) Nalbari Development Blocks.

19. Report on the Dev. Potentialities of Small Scale Industries in the Kamrup District in Assam.

Net making	1) Hajo, (2) Borkhetri Bongsor Development Block.
Weaving	1) Hajo, (2) Barpeta, (3) Rani C. D. Block, (4) Borkhetri Bongsor Dev. Block, (5) Sualkuchi, (6) Barama, (7) Bahjani, (8) Chamata.

Training facilities for most of the crafts are available in Kamrup district. The Cottage Industries Training Institute located at Kalapahar, Gauhati (estd. in 1954), provides training facilities for carpentry and wood-works, blacksmithy, cane and bamboo works, potteries, leather craft, toy and doll making, nail making and a host of others. The Industrial Training Institute located at Rehabari, Gauhati, also offers facilities for training in blacksmithy.

(10) **Sericulture** : Among the most important old-time industries, mention may be made of Sericulture. By and large, this industry occupies a very important place in the rural economy of Assam. It is a traditional and age-old industry extensively practised in Kamrup district. This industry, next to agriculture, is practised during agricultural off-season and provides subsidiary and full-time employment to large number of people in the district. In the *History of Assam*, it has been mentioned that Assam enjoyed a high reputation as producer of fine texture silk. The Muhammadan historians noticed that the silk of Assam were excellent and resembled those of China. Tavernir writes of Assam silk as 'produced on trees' and adds that 'the stuffs made of them were very brilliant'. They manufactured three principal varieties of silk, called *Pat*, *Endi* and *Muga*.

The first variety is the finest and the costliest quality. *Endi* has the coarsest look and is generally used both by the poor and the rich. The best variety, *Muga*, is a stouter and more durable fabric than the *Pat* but coarser and with a golden gloss. Assam silk specially *Muga* was very much in demand in Europe and it formed a staple trade of East-India Company during the 18th and the early 19th centuries.

Muga silk is unique in the world and produced only in Assam. The worms generally feed on 'Som' tree leaves and breed only when they are on the trees. Hence rearing of *Muga* worms entails watching the 'Som' trees day and night during the breeding season, to prevent the killing of the worms by birds and other insects. The south-western portion of Kamrup

is the important centre of production of *Muga* in the district.²⁰ *Muga* culture is practised in every district of Assam valley, though it has disappeared from certain parts where once it was prolific. In the past *Pat* rearing was exclusively undertaken by a particular caste known as Jogi or *Katoni*. But now-a-days the culture of *Eri* and *Muga* has been taken up and practised by other sections of the people in their off-time.

B. C. Allen, in his old Gazetteer of Kamrup speaks about the rearing of *Muga* as follows. 'Five different broods are distinguished by vernacular names, but in Kamrup, the only broods commonly reared are the *Katia*

in October-November, and the *Jethua* in the spring. The complete cycle of the insect lasts from 54 to 81 days, the bulk of which is occupied by the life of the worm. When the moths hatch out, the females are at once attached to straws which are hung up inside the house, and are visited by the males who are allowed to remain at liberty. Each female produces about 250 eggs, which are kept in a dark place, and when the worms appear, they are at once transferred to the *Som* tree. A band of straw or plantain leaves is fastened round the trunk to prevent them from descending, and during the night they take shelter under the leaves. Constant vigilance is, however, required to keep off crows, kites, owls, large bats, and other pests which prey upon the worm, and hail and heavy rain not unfrequently do damage. When fully grown the worm is about 5 inches long and nearly as thick as the forefinger.²¹ It is green in colour with a brown and bright gold bases are dotted about the surface of the body. The worms require about twenty-five to forty days to attain maturity. Usually the worms are regarded to have attained maturity as soon as they cease to take their food and begin to descend the tree. Besides, the mature body of the worm gives a peculiar sound of slightly tapped. At this stage the worms are transferred to bamboo basket filled with dried plaintain or other leaves where they begin to spin. In the basket it takes about a week for complete formation of the cocoons. In Kamrup, *Muga* silk is chiefly manufactured for home use, and very little is produced for sale. The principal centres of cultivation are Dimaria, Beltola, Panbari, Rani, Barduar, Chaygaon, Pantan, Upper Barbhag, and Patidarang.²² The silk is reeled from the cocoon, 250 of which yield one oz. of thread. From the business point of view the rearing of *Muga* has its own import-

20. P. C. Goswami : *Economic Development of Assam*, p. 167.

21. B. C. Allen : *DISTRICT GAZETTEER of KAMRUP*, 1905, p. 157.

22. *Ibid*, pp. 157-8.

ance in the Kamrup district. To quote in the words of an expert 'the selling of *Muga* cocoons for seed by itself is a big business.' The tribal people of South Kamrup and Goalpara are the chief suppliers of seed cocoons, but unacquainted with the art of reeling.....

The Marwari community is doing good business in *Muga* yarn and fabric, but it is the traders from Sualkuchi who control the market. As reeling and weaving are their monopoly business, cocoon collection is their main trade, which the Marwaris are reluctant to do. Marketing of silk fabric has not presented difficulties on account of local demand.

The bulk of the cocoons used for reeling is obtained from the autumn crop, which is by far the best crop in the year, because the cocoons produced in this season are considerably richer in silk.

In Assam, as a whole about 10,000 families are engaged in silk-culture. Reeling cocoons are sold during 1977-78 at price ranging from Rs. 15 to 25 per kg., while raw silk was sold at Rs. 200-300.00 per kg. The market for cocoons is not organised while raw silk has a ready market at Sualkuchi. The State Government Marketing Corporation provides market for silk fabrics.

Endi : *Endi* worms (*attacus ricini*) derives its name from the *Eri* or Castor Oil plant on which it is usually fed. Sub-montane areas of the Assam plains, practically South Kamrup, North Kamrup and Raha area (the last one in the Nowgong district) are the important centres of manufacture. It has also been noticed that Rampur and Sualkuchi specialise in the production of *Eri* and *Muga* cloths respectively and enjoy a wide reputation in this particular branch of cottage industry. In short, the *Eri* culture is widespread in Assam, the moist climate of which is conducive to its development. Besides, with the association of the traditional weaving industry, the *Eri* culture is a great incentive almost to every household.

The following account also shows that *Endi* and *Muga* are not found in other parts of India. Assam has practically monopoly in the production of *Eri* silk. Except Bihar which produces a little quantity, *Eri* production is confined to Assam. The present production is about 2.50 lakh kgs. yearly and there is scope for improving and increasing the production. The *Eri* cut cocoons are mostly used in hand spinning. The Spun Silk Mill in Assam which is the second mill in India was established at Jagiroad in Nowgong district in the public sector for utilising the

waste cocoons. But it is said that the Mill's consumption of local *Eri* cocoons is only about 10% of its requirements and the balance 90% mulberry waste is imported from Mysore, West Bengal and Kashmir. At present the consumption of *Eri* has gone upto 40% and the Mill has taken steps to utilise maximum quantity of *Eri* and reduce the import of mulberry silk waste from outside.

Unlike *Muga* worms, *Eri* worms are reared indoors. It is multi-voltine and completes four to six cycles in a year. *Eri* worm feeds mainly on leaves of *Era* (*Ricinus communis*) from which the name is derived. Other leaves used as food of the *Eri* worms include *Kessuru* (*Hetero-Panax fragrans*), cassava (*Manico utilisissima*), papaw (*carica papaya*), *champa* (*plumeria acutifolia*) and *Barkessuru* (*Ailanthus*). But among the different plants used as feed, the castor is the best of all.

This important traditional cottage industry is found almost in all the rural areas of Assam. In Kamrup it is more common in the tribal areas of the district such as Boko, Rampur, Tamulpur etc. The most useful garment made of *Eri* silk is the *Barkapor*, a large sheet sometimes as much as 20 feet by 5 feet which is folded and used as a wrap in the cold weather. The *Endi* cloth produced in Assam is warm, durable and easily washable. The cloth is generally used as a wrapper during winter. Nalbari, Tamulpur, and Palasbari are some of the most important centres for the production of *Eri* cloth in Kamrup district.

Eri silk is known as the silk of the poor. The beautiful *Eri* fabric which is known for its durability is a regular winter wrapper for the Assamese people. Its demand outside Assam is also quite large. Bhutan and Tibet are the principal buyers of *Eri* fabric from Kamrup.

Silk : The district of Kamrup is reputed for the production of *pat* silk which is the finest and the costliest variety out of the three. It is also said that the major portion of non-mulberry silk produced in India comes from Assam alone. Sualkuchi in Kamrup district is the most important centre of this industry. Sualkuchi is undoubtedly the most famous silk fabric producing centre not only in Kamrup district but also in the entire N.E. region. Silk weaving is not uncommon in other parts of Assam, but Sualkuchi claims a technique, quality, and reputation of its own which are unique in so far as *Muga* and *Pat* silk fabrics are concerned.

Although the origin of silk weaving at Sualkuchi is still obscure, there is no doubt about its antiquity. During the olden days, the industry

was patronised mainly by the nobilities and the ruling kings of Assam, and the types of fabrics produced were beautifully decorated with designs and were very costly being designed specially to meet the individual needs and tastes of the well-to-do. This industry at Sualkuchi could not thrive well during the British regime as the latter did not take any interest for the progress of this industry in the State.

However, after independence due to the efforts of the State Sericulture and Weaving Department, the All India Handloom Board and the All-India Silk Board, sericulture and the weaving industry as a whole has received a new lease of life and has begun to make good progress. Concentrated and vigorous activities have been carried out in the development of sericulture and weaving industries in the state since the inception of these agencies. Voluntary agencies have also played their part in this regard.

In spite of many odds, the sericulture and weaving industries at Sualkuchi are functioning well with the help of Co-operative Societies organised in that town with the object of silk spinning and weaving. The names of the registered societies are (1) the Assam Co-operative Silk House Ltd. (ii) the Assam Co-operative *Resham Samabay Pratisthan* (3) *Madhya Sualkuchi Resham Samabay Samity* Ltd. (4) Sualkuchi-Bhatipara Muga Spinner's and Weaver's Co-operative Society (5) the Sualkuchi Muga Spinners and Weavers Co-operative society (6) the Bamun Sualkuchi Silk *Samity* Ltd. (7) the Purba Sualkuchi *Resham Samity* Ltd. and (8) the Sualkuchi *Pat-Muga Palupoha Samabay Samity* Ltd. Though a good number of co-operative societies are functioning at Sualkuchi, the vast majority of weavers numbering about 1000 (as in 1961) are still working outside the co-operative fold. Some of them are working on wage basis in local weaving factories while the others work individually ²³.

In this context it may however be noted that the weavers who work under the co-operative fold collect *Muga* cocoons or *Pat-Muga* from their respective societies, and in case of *Muga* cocoons, they themselves spin the yarn and weave the particular cloth as ordered by the societies. After delivery of the finished products to the societies they are paid specified rates on different cloths. Most of the weavers of this group work in their own houses. The other group of weavers work in some factories within the town itself. They are provided with looms in the factory and the raw materials are also supplied by the owners. The workers are paid on wage basis. The last group of weavers who work neither under

23. *Selected Handicrafts of Assam—1961 census.*

the Co-operative fold nor in factories, are the individual weavers. They continue their business and sell their finished products to the local merchants.

The silk fabrics produced at Sualkuchi are unique in the sense that these are not common with those of fabrics manufactured in other parts of India. Major portion of the finished products of the silk industry of Sualkuchi are sold through the sales depots run by different Co-operative societies and *Khadi Bhandars* located in Gauhati, Shillong, Tezpur, Jorhat, Nowgong, Dibrugarh, Sualkuchi etc. Besides, sales centres are also there within and outside the state sponsored by the All-India Khadi and Village Industries Commission, the Government Emporia and the State Marketing Corporation. A good quantity of silk products are being exported to foreign countries in different numbers.

The Chief products are (1) *Mekhela*, (2) *Chadar*, (3) *Riha*, (4) *Dhara*, (5) *Jainsem* (6) *Shirting* (7) blouse pieces, and (8) *Sari*. *Muga Sari* is becoming more popular in the markets of other states of the country. The products of this industry are demanded elsewhere because of their delicate designs, quality and durability. Large quantity of *Pat* and *Muga sari* is exported to west Bengal from Sualkuchi silk industry.

In realising the importance of this industry, the Sericulture and Weaving Department and other agencies such as the Co-operative Department, the All-India Handloom Board etc. are advancing grants and loans to the Co-operative Societies and to the individual artisans dealing with the sericultural works. Improved tools and accessories are also being provided by the Sericulture and Weaving Department at subsidised rates. With regard to technical assistance, the All-India Handloom Board is taking a keen interest to find out ways and means for improvement of the existing designs and products to suit the varied tastes of the different sections of consumers.

(11) **Industries of recent growth** : In the recent years quite a good number of cottage industries, small scale industries, medium scale industries, and large-scale industries have grown up both in public and private sectors in the different parts of the district. The following account shows the number of various kinds of industries functioning in 1967 in greater Gauhati area (including North Gauhati, Maligaon and Pandu).

These were Pottery (13), Image making (6), Printing Presses (36), Weaving (190), Bakery (15), Shoe making (32), Photo framing and printing (18), Saw Mills (8), Flour Mills (4), Cane and Bamboo works (19),

(19), Rice Mills (9), Umbrella making (2), Bus body making (7), Rickshaw-body making (7), Bell-metal works (5), Trunk and Bucket Factory, (9), Dyeing industry (6), Brush making (1), Steel Furniture making (1), Brass smithy (15), Soap Factory (3) Tailoring (12), Drum (water reservoir) making (2), Chemical industry (2), Well Ring making (1), Tyre Retreading (3), Distilled water and Battery production (2), Electrical equipments making (1), Agricultural implements (1) Camphor making (1) Glass and plaster dressing industry (1), Confectionary (1), Bungle making (1), Spice grinder (1), Oil making (1), Rope making (1) Silicate Sodium factory (1), Gunny Bag making (2), Gun manufacturing (1), Structural manufacturing (2), Book binding (19), Musical instruments making (5), Rubber stamp making (3), Slate making (1), Indigo and vermillion making (1), Tile making (1), Bidi making (3), Tin smithy (14), Carpentry (85), Blacksmithy (51), Gold and Silver smithy (76) etc.

In the last few years number of these industries has increased considerably and various kinds of new industries are coming up in the district more particularly within Gauhati and its adjacent areas. These are Flour and Atta mills, additional units of oil and rice mills, Bakery, Tailoring, modern furniture and cabinet making, Soap and Phenyle making, Trunk and Bucket Factories, Saw Mills, Wire fence making, Nutsbolts and nail making, Tea-chest fitting, Brass rolling mill, Bone meal manufacture, Tannery and leather works, Umbrella and umbrella handle making, Electroplating, Welding, Automobile Repairing, Dyeing with chemicals, Hosiery, Plywood factory, Small-scale iron foundaries, Printing presses, introduction of Fly-shuttle, Jaquard and power looms, Knitting and Embroidery works, Brick and Tiles making, Doll and Toymaking, manufacture of Steel furniture and Fencing equipment and Jute mill for the manufacture of rope, *Sutli* etc.

It has also been noticed that among the largest number of small-scale industries found to have been established in the district in the recent years are Carpentry, (furniture and cart making), Chemical and allied (including soap, ink, phenyle, cosmetics, rugs, sodium, silicate, straw board, battery, acids etc.), Saw mills, General engineering (trunks, buckets, drums, weights, tube wells, ridgings etc.), Blacksmithy, Bricks, Bakery, Grill-making etc.

B. POWER.

Sources of Power : Despite her enormous hydro-electric power potential, Assam has hardly made any progress in power development on a scale commensurate with the possibilities. Prior to the first plan, there were only seven small undertakings with an installed

capacity of 3,362 K.W. supplying power chiefly to urban centres. In addition, there were a few private generating stations worked by the railways, collieries and oil fields with an installed capacity of 2,903 K.W.²⁴ It is thus evident that in 1951 the total power capacity was 6,265 KW (excluding private generating stations of tea estates) which was miserably low compared to that of other major States, each with an installed capacity of over 100 MW. However, during the first three years of the Second Plan and by 1957 the generating capacity was 17,500 K.W. In spite of this growth, Assam's share in power in 1957 was just about 0.4 per cent of India's total. The period from 1955 to 1958 saw a substantial expansion in Assam's (including present day Meghalaya) power output from 9.8 million KWH to 18.07 million KWH consequent upon the construction of the Umtru Hydel Plant.

"Thus, prior to the first plan, two-thirds of the total electricity output were generated from oil plants. During the First Plan, the output from oil plants increased from 4.4 million KWH to 7.3 million KWH. Thereafter the expansion was on the hydel side.

It is also a fact that earlier to 1955 Assam was backward in power consumption. Power was consumed for household, commercial, industrial and public lighting purposes. In spite of that the consumption for industrial purposes was very meagre and from 1955 to 1958 industrial consumption doubled from 1.3 million KWH to 2.8 million KWH in the wake of installation of the united hydel plant. As hydel power is cheaper than power from diesel oil plant, Assam's future industrial progress depends to a great extent upon the development of hydel plant.

In the district of Kamrup, the demand for power is steadily increasing due to the establishment of various industries in the Gauhati-Pandu areas. The Umtru hydel system is the main source for the availability of power supply in the district. Power for the growth of various industries in the district will also be available from the Kopili Project after its completion. For power supply, Gauhati is connected with Umtru (Barapani), by high tension transmission line. But since January 1975, the Umiyam power Installation has been transferred to the newly formed Meghalaya State Electricity Board. The agreement provides for maximum generation from this integrated system in co-ordination with the Chandrapur Thermal Station in Kamrup district. Respective shares of power for the two states during the next 7 years or till a new project is developed, have also been agreed upon. It has also been possible to reach agreement about tariff, electricity duty, co-ordination and other relevant matters.

24. Techno-Economic Survey of Assam, N.C.A.A.E. pp. 113

24A. Ibid, p. 114

Further, the North-Eastern Council has approved implementation of the Kopili Hydel Project at an estimated cost of about Rs. 69 crores. This major project will greatly help in meeting the region's developing power needs within the shortest possible time.

So far as the sources of power supply in the district of Kamrup is concerned, it mainly depends upon the hydel side. The construction of the Umtru Hydel Plant now in Meghalaya was a mile-stone for supply of cheap power needed for domestic and industrial consumption in the district.

Power supply in the district is, however still inadequate to meet the growing demands of domestic and industrial consumption. Electricity, gas, oil, fuels, coal and wood are the main sources of energy of the industries. In Kamrup there is no local production of coal which comes from outside the district, mainly from Meghalaya and Upper Assam coal fields. Position in 1961 regarding number of factories using different sources of power can be seen from the statement given below.²⁵ The statement is based on the data collected during the census of 1961 and all manufacturing establishments of different sizes in all trades have been covered by the statement. The position has changed very considerably and is being incorporated here for purposes of comparison and to indicate the trend. As per Central Water and Power Commission Survey, in 1956-57 power load generated in the district of Kamrup was 1,450 KW. This increased to 7,650 KW; 12,550 KW; and 17000 KW respectively in 1960-61, 1965-66, and 1970-71.

Statement (Rural, areas)

Kind of fuel	Total No. of factories	No. of factories by size of employment		
		1-5	above 5	
1	2	3	4	5
Electricity	17	—	5	12
Liquid Fuel	45	3	25	17
Coal and Wood	204	67	113	24
Others	55	14	23	18
No. power	103	39	51	13
Total :	424	123	217	84

25. Report on the Development Potentialities of Small Scale Industries in Kamrup District in Assam, Government of India, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Small Industries Service Institute, Assam, Gauhati.

Urban Areas

Kind of fuel	Total No. of factories	No. of factories by size of employment		
		1	1-5	above 6
Electricity	92	3	38	54
Liquid fuel	58	2	24	26
Coal and wood	131	17	81	23
Others	84	11	46	27
No. power	214	32	139	43
Total :	579	65	328	173

The Assam State Electricity Board has been entrusted with the overall development of power in the state. Electricity in the district of Kamrup is mainly supplied by the State Electricity Board, Assam, and in the district it is available in all urban centres and notified areas as well as in some of the rural growth centres and villages. Previously electricity at Barpeta was supplied by a private company. This was subsequently taken over by the State Electricity Board, which removed the long felt need of power supply. In 1962, electricity was within the reach of only 11% of the factories of the district and the liquid fuel such as diesel oil, kerosene oil etc., was used by more than 10% of the factories whereas now it is available to a much larger section of people for domestic, industrial and agricultural use. Compared to 1961, power consumption in the district is increasing considerably, more particularly in the city of Gauhati. The number of connections are 11,998 domestic, 260 industrial, and 251 commercial.²⁶

The statement below shows the names of the electricity stations, sub-stations, installed capacity (kwtt), electricity generated (kwtt), electricity sold by the Assam State Electricity Board in Kamrup district for the year ending 31st March, 1966.²⁷

26. Industrial Development Potential Survey of Selected Towns of India. P. 63

27. Source : Office of the Commercial Officer Assam State Electricity Board, Gauhati.

KAMRUP DISTRICT GAZETTEER

Year ending 31st March 1966

Dist. & A.S.E.B. Stations and sub-stations	Installed capacity KWH	Electricity Generated KWH	Electricity sold KWH	Revenue assessed (in Rs.)
Gauhati	5,064	41,465	301,54,889	64,29,335.44
Gauhati Thermal	12.5 MW	413,228	Nil	Nil
Nalbari	400 KW	517,528	327,229	10,9,724.92
Sualkuchi	100	50,666	104,689	31,824.77
Barpeta	150	235,700	214,276	7,8791.02
Hajo	—	—	373,345	10,432.92
Sonapur	—	—	31,338	44,362.84
Khetri	—	—	355	1,751.89

Rural Electrification Scheme : Under the Rural Electricity Scheme for the State of Assam, the State Electricity Board has electrified upto 31st March, 1979, 481 villages in Kamrup district. The following statement provides the number of villages electrified Thana-wise upto the 31st March, 1979, in the district.

District	Thana	No. of villages electrified
Kamrup	Gauhati	42
"	Rangia	49
"	Tamulpur	17
"	Boko	10
"	Hajo	30
"	Kamalpur	67
"	Barama	15
"	Sorbhog	30
"	Palasbari	49
"	Jalukbari	4
"	Barpeta	53
"	Patacharkuchi	39
"	Nalbari	50
"	Tarabori	11
"	Baghor	3
"	Chhaygaon	12

Total No. of Villages

481 (four hundred eightyone)

Medium industrial power supply is available to all industrial power consumers with maximum demands from 50 KW to below 15 KW. In respect of small and cottage industries this tariff is available to (i) industrial loads below 15 KW for 3 phase, 400 volts, 50 cycles A. C. supply ; (ii) Agriculturists for load with a demand not exceeding 15 KW ; (iii) Bonafide cottage industries using electric motor or such other appliances.

Coal : Coal is also an important source of power for the industries for which the Assistant Coal Controller, Govt. of India, Gauhati, is the sanctioning authority. An industrialist may apply for coal through the State Coal controller which office is held by the Director of Industries, Assam, ex-officio.

The State Coal Controller is the recommending authority for this important item, but the process of getting coal is often quite long and this causes some inconveniences. But the major problem is that the entire supply of coal coming from the mines in Assam does not suit all industrial use because of its high sulphur content. Kamrup however has no coal deposit of its own.

Power and Industrial Development : Availability of cheap power is the most important pre-requisite for industrial development. Due to the high power tariff in Assam it was proposed in the Industrial policy (1948) to give relief to suitable local small industries in respect of power tariff by means of a subsidy. Government have also accepted in principle the necessity of making power available at the consumer's factory site provided it is located within the jurisdiction of an electric supply company or the Assam State Electricity Board where the site is selected in consultation with the Industries Department.

The immediate power requirement for industries is sought to be met through additional oil field generator capacity as an interim measure particularly in Gauhati and such other areas where industrial power load is increasing rapidly. Work has been taken in hand for two power projects which when completed is expected to supply cheap and adequate power to most of the industries in the Brahmaputra Valley. The Umtru (Barapani) Hydel Project provides power to the industries in the K & J Hills, Kamrup, Nowgong, Goalpara, Cachar and part of Darrang districts.

The first Five-Year Plan could achieve little towards breaking away from industrial stagnation. Government industrial policy during that period was held out mainly to the private sector by providing various

infrastructural facilities favourable to their growth, but actual progress was insignificant. Reasons for the slow development are many such as difficulties of transport and communication, Geographical isolation, troubled frontiers and above all the lack of capital. While capital formations inside Assam is utterly inadequate, capital from outside is unreasonably shy. A start was made in the Second Plan for improving the transport system of the State and supply of electrical energy, but this fell far short of need. The Industrial policies of 1955 and 1948 could achieve little to place Assam on a sound footing in the industrial map of the country.

(c) INDUSTRIES AND MANUFACTURERS OF THE DISTRICT :

(i) Large Scale Industries :

Gauhati Refinery : It is situated at Noonmati, 5 kms. east of the old Gauhati town. This refinery has been set up in the public sector in collaboration with Rumania. The construction work of the refinery started in 1959 and was completed before the scheduled date. The preliminary work for the construction of the Refinery started earlier in October 1959 and the first consignment of Rumanian Cargo came to the site in March, 1960. The schedule of construction was so planned that maximum practical attainments could be realised keeping in view the difficulties that were to be faced during construction of the plant.

For nearly twenty-two months the refinery site was the scene of intensive activities. A very big quantity of equipment and materials of the order of 40,000 tonnes from as far as Rumania and also from farthest corner of India had to be transported through ocean, road, river, rail and even by air. On the 1st January 1962, the refinery was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister Late Nehru, and from this date it has started its production. Gauhati refinery is the first public sector refinery in India.

This refinery, like the refinery at Barauni in Bihar refines the crude oil found at Naharkatia, Hoogrija and Moran in Upper Assam. The crude oil from Naharkatia comes through 16" pipe line to Gauhati Oil India Limited area covering a distance of 400 km. From Gauhati the pipe line diameter is reduced and goes to Barauni. This pipe line is capable of transporting 2.75 million tonnes of crude oil a year upto Gauhati. In all (from Naharkatia to Barauni), there are 9 pumping and 17 Repeater Stations. The pipe line is highly automatised and it has up-to-date telecommunication, telemetering and tele-control equipments. But with more pumping stations the pipe line can carry upto 4.00 million tonnes per year

in its second leg. A crude conditioning plant to facilitate the pumping of the Naharkatia crude has also been set up at Duliajan in Upper Assam at a cost of Rupees two crores. The Oil and Natural Gas Commission also supplies crude oil to the refinery from the newly found Rudrasagar oil field through the same pipe line. A product pipe line has recently been installed from Gauhati to Siliguri to sell the products outside Assam.

The Indian Refineries Ltd. (Refinery Division) Gauhati, are engaged in processing 0.75 million metric tonnes of crude oil per year. The table below shows some of the present pattern of production of petroleum products in the refinery and the amounts likely to be produced after expansion for which, however, no plan has been taken uptill now.

Item	Present production (in tonnes)	Production after expansion (in tonnes).
Gasoline (Motor Spirit)	1,60,000	2,94,600
Superior and inferior Kerosines and Jet fuel.	1,64,000	2,40,500
Two varieties of diesel oil (High or low speed).	gallons 1,84,000	2,69,800
Petroleum coke	39,000	57,200
Aromax	36,000	52,800
Refinery gas and losses	54,000	79,200
L. P. G.	5,000	7,000
	to 7,000	to 10,000
Furnace oil/T.D.O.	—	1,13,000 tonnes.

The refinery products are distributed by a sister organisation IOC (Marketing Division) which has a District Office at Gauhati.

The Refinery should be able to support a number of ancillary and subsidiary units, both by way of supplying stock items and others that would process further their products. Noonmati Refinery has helped the growth of Carbon Industry in Gauhati such as India Carbon Limited, Assam Carbon Products, etc., and also other smaller units which supply requirements of the Refinery such as acid, oxygen, etc.

Other Units :

In addition to the Gauhati Refinery, a number of large and medium scale industries have also been established in the district including a few

promoted by the Assam Industrial Development Corporation Ltd., and the Assam Small Industries Development Corporation, both of which are Government of Assam sponsored bodies.

AIDC : The Assam Industrial Development Corporation Ltd., was incorporated on 21st April, 1966 mainly to promote and establish large scale industries in the State of Assam based on local raw materials like Natural Gas, Petroleum, Jute, Sugarcane, Limestone, Coal, Bomboo etc. Its main objectives are to promote, establish, execute, develop and vitalise major and medium industrial projects in Assam and also to encourage small or medium individual industrial units by training young and unemployed prospective entrepreneurs..

The Corporation was incorporated with an authorised share capital of Rs. 5.00 crores, during 1974. The entire share capital has been subscribed by Govt. of Assam.

The Registered office of the Corporation is located at Gauhati in the district of Kamrup.

Projects promoted by the Assam Industrial Development Corporation in the district :

FERTICHEM LTD.; Narengi, Gauhati : The plant with a daily capacity of 200 tonnes of NPK fertilizer was commissioned on 15th September 1974, at Narangi, near Gauhati. Total capital investment in the project has been Rs. 7.00 lakhs. The main raw materials are as follows :

1. Urea.
2. Ammonium Sulphate.
3. Muriate of Potash.
4. Single Superphosphate.
5. Di-ammonium Phosphate.
6. Dolomite.

Urea and Ammonium Sulphate have been obtained from FCI Namrup, Phosphates from AIA (Chemical Unit) Chandrapur where as Muriate of Potash is being imported.

About 100 persons are presently employed in the Company. The manufacturing process involves mixing the desired grades of fertilizer, and then granulated in a granulator. After granules are formed they are then dried, cooled and packed. For marketing, the fertilizers are distributed

through Gaon Panchayats, Co-operative Societies and through appointed agents.

The Assam Industrial Development Corporation has also undertaken the following three industries for revitalisation :

(a) **Assam Conductors and Tubes Ltd., Gauhati :** This project at the initiative of the A. I. D. C was commissioned in the 1st half of 1973. The plant has a capacity of producing 100 tonnes of AAC/ACSR per month using aluminium wire. The manufacturing process involves drawing of the wires in the drawing machine and then stranded in the stranding machine to get the necessary grade of conductors. All the products of the factory are being consumed by the Assam State Electricity Board. Due to the heavy demand of conductors for 'Rural Electrification Scheme', it is now proposed to expand the unit by 50%.

(b) **Chemical Unit of Associated Industries (Assam) Ltd., Chandrapur :** The Assam Industrial Development Corporation Ltd., is the authorised controller of the Associated Industries Ltd., (Chemical Unit), Chandrapur. The product pattern of the unit is as follows :

- 1) Sulphuric Acid — 50 tonnes per day.
- 2) Liquid Sulphur — 50 tonnes per day.
- 3) Super Phosphate — 300 tonnes per day.
- 4) Mixed fertilizer.

The main raw materials for the unit are Sulphur and Rock Phosphate—both are imported from outside. Rock Phosphate is mainly imported from Udaipur in Rajasthan. The production of Sulphuric acid and Super Phosphate was started in the unit in February/March, 1975.

Salient features of Manufacturing processes :

1. **Sulphuric Acid :** The sulphur is first melted and then burnt in the burner to produce sulphur-di-oxide. It is then passed through a converter where SO₂ is converted to sulphur-trioxide (SO₃). SO₃ is then absorbed with diluted acid to get 98% sulphuric acid.

2. **Liquid SO₂ :** SO₂ produced in the above process cleaned, dried and compressed after removing the moisture. It is then chilled in a refrigerator to get the liquid SO₂.

3. **Super Phosphate :** The Rock Phosphate is first grinded and then added into sulphuric acid in a reactor and cooled in the Carbate Cooler. The product is then cured and bagged.

Marketing : Most of the sulphuric acid produced is being consumed in the production of super phosphate and mixed fertilizer. The Liquid SO₂ will be used by Gauhati Refinery in the Kerosine treatment unit. The super phosphate produced is being marketed in the North-Eastern Region including Bihar and West Bengal.

(c) Assam Glass Industries Ltd., Kalapahar, Gauhati : The management of this Glass factory was handed over to the Assam Industrial Development Corporation on 19.2.75 as the unit turned sick which was earlier managed by the Assam and Meghalaya State Mineral Development Corporation. The plant has a capacity of producing 5 tonnes of glass wares per day.

The raw materials needed by this unit are (i) Silica (ii) Soda ash (iii) Borax, (iv) Arsenic oxide, (v) Felspar and (vi) Broken glass. Except the last two items mentioned above, most of the raw materials are imported from outside the State.

The main products of the factory are (i) Glass, (ii) Bottles, (iii) Jars, (iv) Chimney, (v) Tumbler etc.

Currently due to heavy increase in the price of oil required for firing the furnace, the factory is expanded to a capacity of 10 tonnes per day by replacing the oil fired furnace by a coal fired furnace. Expansion work was started on April, 1976 and the new furnace was fired on 16-10-75 and commercial production work started by Nov. 1976.

The products of the factory are being marketed in the North-Eastern region of the country and at present 230 persons are employed in the factory at its various capacities.

New projects undertaken and proposed : Besides, the Assam Industrial Development Corporation has proposed and undertaken a number of new industries for Kamrup district. These are (1) Spinning Mills (Textile Complex-undertaking) (2) a Jute Mill at Barpeta and (3) a Sugar Mill in the district (proposed). For the Jute and Sugar Mill the A.I.D.C. has obtained Letters of Indent from the Central Government.

(i) Spinning Mills (Textile Complex) : A Spinning Mill with a capacity of 25,000 spindles is proposed to be set up in the district of Kamrup. Techno-economic feasibility report was prepared through M/S Birla Consultant (p) Ltd. Capital investment in the project would be Rupees six crores. 410 persons will be employed when the project comes into stream.

(ii) Alum Plant (proposed) : Preliminary activities for setting up an alum plant near Chandrapur, Gauhati under the self employment scheme of Govt. of Assam is in progress. The plant will have a capacity of 25 tonnes and capital investment would be Rs. 20 lakhs. 65 persons will be provided employment in the plant.

(iii) Scooter Project : Application for industrial licence for setting up a scooter factory near Gauhati has been made to the Govt. of India. The capacity envisaged to be 30,000 scooter per annum. The capital investment would be Rs. 4.10 crores. This will provide employment to 550 persons in various categories.

The Assam Small Industries Development Corporation : The contributions made by the Assam Small Industries Development Corporation Ltd., for the development of small scale industries in the State are noteworthy. The said corporation was established on 27th. March, 1962 with an authorised share capital of rupees one crore divided into one lakh equity shares of Rs. 100 each entirely owned by the Govt. of Assam, with a view to promote, establish, and set up small industries in the State. Besides the said Corporation has been running a number of raw material depots at Gauhati, Tinsukia, Badarpur and other places for supply of raw materials to small scale industrialists. In the district of Kamrup the corporation is running the Assam Ayurvedic Products Industry at Bamunimaidam.

Assam Ayurvedic Products, Gauhati : The production and sale of standard Ayurvedic medicine like *Arista*, *Churna*, *Bhasma*, *Mritasanjivani* etc., are making significant progress in this unit. Diagnostic implant studies has been carried out by two reputed experts and by implementing their recommendation the unit has been able to improve itself in the fields of both production and marketing. As a result, the products of this unit are held in high regard by all people. The unit earned a net profit of Rs. 16,000 during 1974-75 against a heavy loss of Rs. 1.42 lakhs during 1973-74. This unit has given employment to 38 persons. In addition to above, the following industries are getting financial and other aids from the Assam Small Industries Development Corporation in Kamrup district. These are (1) Plastic unit ; (2) Nilachal Soap factory ; (3) Nail Making Unit ; (4) Bamboo and Cane Mills and (5) C. I. Sheet Factory (all in Gauhati).

Hire-Purchase Scheme of the Corporation : The Hire-Purchase Scheme of the Corporation has become very popular among the entrepreneurs of the state. Under this scheme the Corporation provides

machinery and other equipments on easy hire-purchase terms upto a value of Rs. 1 lakh. Till October 1976, the Corporation has supplied machineries of Rs. 31 lakhs to 121 educated unemployed for setting up small industries. Thus the scheme has resulted in outcoming of various types of small scale industrial units ranging from small spices grinding unit (*Randhani products*), set up by a group of lady entrepreneurs in Gauhati to complicated engineering units like tea machinery manufacturing units set up by Engineering graduates at Jorhat. This scheme of the Corporation has enabled the units to give employment to more than 600 persons. So far in the district of Kamrup, 43 small scale industrial units have been benefitted under the scheme of the Corporation.

In addition to above, the Assam Small Industries Development Corporation has implemented a number of schemes like seed-money, loan, equity participation, training, special employment scheme, opening of raw material depots, promotional activities, looms units, consultancy, ancillary development etc.²⁸

The Small Industries Service Institute of the Govt. of India has been operating at Gauhati for quite sometime past. This institute gives service to small industries on all aspects of an industrial scheme right from the preparation of feasibility study to the description and science of machinery making prospect. The Directorate of Industries also does similar service through the district offices. The district administrative set up is being reorganised for giving technical assistance to industrialists.

District Industries Centre, Kamrup : The establishment of the District Industries Centre at Gauhati in January 1979 is a right step for the development of small scale and cottage industries in both urban and rural areas of the district. Since its establishment in January, 1979, the Centre, upto February, 1980, has registered 498 industrial units in Kamrup district out of which 133 units are functioning and the rest 365 will start their works soon. Assistance from banks and other financial institutions becomes easier for the industries so registered through the District Industries Centre. So far the said centre has recommended one hundred and eleven industrial units as eligible to get assistance from banks and out of which 94 industrial units have obtained bank assistance amounting to Rs.75,90,132/- upto November, 1979.

The registered industries under the District Industries Centre in Kamrup district are located at Gauhati, Tamulpur, Amingaon, Maligaon,

28. Source : Managing Director, Assam Small Industries Development Corporation Ltd., Gauhati.

Nalbari, Palasbari, Baihata, Soalkuchi, Dalibari, Barpeta, Nowgong (near Barpeta), Barpeta Road, Patachakuchi, Sarupeta, Pathsala, Baharihat, Kumarikata, Chandrapur, Mirza, Howli, Boko etc. Most of the small scale industries so far established in the district have produced things of our daily life. Industries registered under the District Industries Centre, Gauhati, include biscuit and bread factories, wheat mills, furniture marts, retreading of motor tyre, printing presses, saw-mills, cart wheels making factories, *Dhup* sticks making factories, potteries, painting and embroidery of cloth, carpentary works, bus and truck body making factory, chalk pencil making units, wire net making units, grill making for doors and windows, spices milling units, ivory works, plastic works, mechanical accessories for domestic light fittings, stitching works etc. Besides, a number of cottage industries like weaving, bell-metal works, bamboo and cane works etc, where special skill is required assistance has been obtained from the said centre. For the training of artisans the District Industries Centre has maintained training centres at Baghmara, Dhamdhama (Nalbari) and Rangia.

The statement below shows the type-wise number of registered factories in Kamrup district in 1974, 1975 and 1976. (year-wise).²⁹

	1974		1975		1976	
	Govt.	Non-Govt.	Govt.	Non-Govt.	Govt.	Non-Govt.
1. Manufacture of food products.	3	102	3	102	3	103
2. Manufacture of Beverages etc.	—	1	—	1	—	1
3. Manufacture of Cotton textile.	2	1	2	1	2	1
4. Manufacture of Jute, Hemp & Mesta, textiles.	—	1	—	1	—	1
5. Manufacture of textile products etc.	—	4	—	4	—	4
6. Manufacture of wood and wood-products, furniture etc.	1	66	1	76	1	75

7. Manufacture of paper and paper-products and printing, publishing and allied industries.	1	7	1	7	1	8
8. Manufacture of leather and leather fur products (except repair).	—	1	—	1	—	—
9. Manufacture of rubber, plastic, petroleum and coals products.	3	3	3	4	4	4
10. Manufacture of Chemical and Chemical products.	3	6	3	6	3	6
11. Manufacture of non-Metallic Mineral products	—	7	—	7	—	8
12. Basic Metal and Allys Industries.	—	20	—	12	—	20
13. Manufacture of Metal products except Machinery and transport equipments.	1	11	1	11	1	11
14. Manufacture of machinery, machine tools and parts except electrical machinery.	4	9	4	9	4	9
15. Manufacture of electrical Machinery etc.	1	1	1	1	1	1
16. Manufacture of transport equipments and parts.	1	2	1	2	2	1
17. Electricity.	3	—	3	—	2	—
18. Gas and Steam.	—	2	—	—	—	2
19. Education, Scientific and Research Services.	3	—	3	—	3	—
20. Repair services.	4	10	4	10	4	10

29. Source : *Statistical Abstract, Assam, 1978* by, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Assam, Gauhati. p. 183-85,

In the budget estimate for 1979-80 an amount of Rs. 2,16,510/- has been earmarked under this centre for expenditure in connection with industrial training, study tour, loan to small industrialists, supply of modern equipments, loan to handicrafts etc.

Private Industries :

(1) M/S India Carbon Limited Noonmati : This is a private enterprise in large scale with Govt. share capital participation. This industrial enterprise is manufacturing calcined petroleum coke. It has gone into production by the latter part of 1962. Its capacity is 30,000 tonnes per year. The Government has participated to the extent of Rs. 10,00,000 with India Carbon Limited of which the authorised capital is Rs. 1.50 crores and paid up capital is of Rs. 49,96,925/-

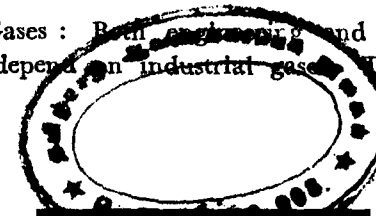
The registered office of the Company is at Noonmati, Gauhati. The India Carbon at Noonmati gets the original raw petroleum coke supplies from the Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., and the Assam Oil Company Ltd., Digboi which are generally carried on by railways.

(ii) The Everest Industries Corporation, Gauhati : This cycle factory is running in the private sector at Gauhati and it produced complete cycles by about 60,000 numbers per year. This large scale industry is owned by some Marwari gentlemen and is located at Kalapahar.

(iii) Biswanath Brass Rolling Works, Gauhati : This large Scale industry is now running in the private sector. It was started in 1954, with the co-operation and assistance of the Government of Assam. It manufactures mainly sheets, circles of brass, bell-metal and copper. The installed capacity of this rolling mill is 1,500 tonnes per year. This factory has been helping the brass and bell-metal industries in Assam, and about 10,000 such artisans all over the State have been depending upon the manufacturing products of this industry.

(iv) Siotia Metal Industries, Gauhati : This private factory was established in the year of 1962. The factory has got a fixed capital of Rs. 1,50,000/- and a working capital of Rs. 5,00,000/- It manufactures brass sheets, brass circles, bell-metal sheets, blocks, Gun-metal items, alloys and castings etc. The factory caters to the need of more than 20,000 local artisans engaged in the manufacture of brass and bell-metal industries throughout the State.

(v) Industrial Gases : Both engineering and chemical industries in one way or other depend on industrial gases. The chief gases are



Oxygen, Acetylene, Nitrous oxide, Carbon di-oxide etc. In Assam there are 2 units - one to produce Oxygen Gas, and the other for Acetylene. The unit to produce Oxygen (i.e. Messrs. Industrial Gases Limited, Gauhati) with a capacity of 17.3 million cubic feet - is already in production.

(vi) India Gas Company : For proper and gainful utilisation of the waste refinery gas of the Noonmati Refinery as cheap domestic fuel gas, a scheme was sponsored in 1961 by some local entrepreneurs for manufacture of L. P. G. and the matter was taken up with the Central Government through the State Government to approve the plan, for setting up a Gas plant attached to the Noonmati Refinery in the Private Sector.

Accordingly the India Gas Company was formed in 1963 and after much ground work and high level contacts, it was duly approved and recommended by the State Government to the distributors of L. P. Gas to be made available from the public sector Noonmati Refinery. The India Oil Corporation Ltd., in pursuance of the State Government recommendation has also agreed to consider appointment of the India Gas Company as their distributors for L. P. Gas in Assam.³⁰

(vii) Steels Worth Private Limited, Gauhati : The Gauhati branch of the Steels Worth Private Limited was established in 1960. It mainly deals with mild steels, heavy and light structural sections, sheets and plates, and doors and windows. Its main productions are jeep trailers, G. I. Sheets, water tanks, hospital beds and bed-side lockers, wheel-barrows, M. G. and B. G. Clamps, low desk steel frames, P. S. over head tank and storage tanks, river gates (sluice gates), control tower for aviation, electric towers, all types of steel doors and windows, manufacture of agricultural implements like M. B. Plough Brackets etc.

This enterprise is recognised and registered by Defence, Railways, State Government, Nagaland, C. P. W. D., Indian Oil Corporation, P. H. E., A. S. E. B., P. W. D. and other parties.

Total capital investments of the industry are (i) Machinery Rs. 4,17,620/- (ii) Land and building Rs. 3,30,067/- (iii) Others Rs. 1,57,818/-.

(ix) The Assam Tanneries Limited, Gauhati : The Assam Tanneries Ltd., was established in 1940 by a handful of local industrialists to

manufacture leather and leather goods. In 1961, the Government of Assam having recognised the importance of the only leather manufacturing industry of the State, came forward to pull up the industry from its decaying condition by contributing to 51% of its subscribed share capital. This marked the beginning of fresh chapter in the life of the Company to revive its business with a nucleus working capital of Rs. 51,302,81/-. Further, with the assistance of the Directorate of Industries, Assam and the Small Industries Service Institute, Gauhati, the Company marched forward with good progress.

The item of leather which the company is manufacturing now, has gained popularity and has got heavy demand in local markets. The Department of Industries, Government of Assam takes keen interest in raising the status of the Company to a full-fledged modern mechanised tannery and sought the assistance of the Development Commissioner, Small Scale Industries, New Delhi. The above authority has submitted a comprehensive scheme for manufacture of following articles of leather, in addition to the existing items of manufacture viz., (i) chrome shoe upper leather, (ii) Chrome lining leather, (iii) Chrome suede leather, (iv) Chamois leather, (v) Campress sole leather from buffalo hides, (vi) Harness leather from cow hides and (vii) Kattai leather from buffalo calf skins.

(x) The Assam Co-operative Bell-metal Utensils, Sarthebari : The bell-metal utensils making industry in Assam is getting maximum benefit from this Co-operative Society. Because of this age-old industry, Sarthebari has become a house hold name not only in Kamrup district but also in the whole State of Assam.

(xi) The Assam Engineering Works (Pvt) Ltd., Gauhati : The Company was established in 1916 when no technical personnel and equipments were easily available. It rendered unique service to the people who were connected with any kind of machinery which gradually increased in number as soon as the motor vehicles began to play in large number and other mills and plants multiplied in such sectors as Rice and Oil Mills, Tea Estates, Road and River Transport etc. In 1929 a cast iron moulding factory was established. This engineering industry has manufactured a good number of machines for the weaving institutes of Assam. In 1959, it was converted into a Private Limited Company.

(xii) Kiran Industries, Gauhati : This industry in the small scale sector was established at Gauhati in 1961. It is stated that this industry

is pioneer in the manufacturing of mould board ploughs in Assam. Its main lines of production are steel sluice gates for flood control, steel furniture, agricultural implements etc.

(xiii) Jajodia Engineering Works : This industrial enterprise mainly manufactures all types of steel and hospital furniture for house, office, clubs, institutions, canteens, library, defence, hospital etc. Electro-plating and Galvanising are also special features of this industry.

(xiv) Pheros and Company Private Limited, Gauhati : This industry possesses a fully mechanical and well-planned factory at Industrial Estate, Gauhati, equipped with some of the latest type of imported machinery. Their range of products included barbed wire, wire fencings, wire nettings, wire meshes, welded wire fabric, nails, staples, standard wire and complete range of fencing materials and light steel structures.

(xv) Ajit Saria Industries, Gauhati : The Ajit Saria Industries was established at Gauhati in the year 1958 and at first it was started with the work of nail making, the first of its kind in the State. At the time of the Chinese Aggression in 1962, the services of the industry were placed at the disposal of the Industries Department of the State Government for manufacture of defence items as were ordered for. The factory has by now grown into a full-fledged one and the items of manufacture are (1) Steel wire, wire nails, barbed wire and wire nets etc., (2) Tea chest metal fittings and containers. (3) Electrical conduct pipes, (4) Electrical copper conductor in copper wire, and electrical coppers strips (5) bolt, rivets hooks, and (6) defence items.

(xvi) The Frontier Engineering Motor Works, Gauhati : This industrial enterprise mainly manufactures Jeep Trailors, Tabular Structures for building and godowns, Steel furniture of all kinds, collapsible gates, compound gates, river sluice gates, steel doors and windows, Steel tanks for water reservoirs, railway window, grills etc.

(xvii) Bagrodia Metal Industries, Gauhati : The industry is manufacturing brass wires, silican gas, welding rods ; manganese, bronze, copper coated aluminium, super solicen, copper coated gas-welding rods etc. The normal capacity of production is 1000 kg. per day.

(xviii) Manufacture of Transport Equipments : At present there is one automobile (leaf spring) in the district of Kamrup in the Small industries Sector. Except this there is no unit in Assam for the production of automobiles, locomotives, wagons, motor cycles and coaches.

(xix) Textile Plant (Large Scale Sector) : This large scale Textile plant is owned by the Associated Industries (Assam) Limited. The Government of Assam has also participated in the share-capital of this industry. This industry is located at Chandrapur, Kamrup district, and production was started from 15-12-62. This is a public Limited Company.

It has a capacity of 3,000 kgs of yarn per day to run three shifts on the basis of running 12 frames on 22's and 12 frames on 40's on 10,560 spindles installed. To manufacture yarn the company imports raw cotton from outside Assam i.e. Hariyana, Punjab, Bombay, Andhra Pradesh etc. The textile plant's investment capital is Rs. 70,51,897 and it employed about 361 persons on 30.11.67. The products of the plant are disposed at Assam, West Bengal, Tripura and Manipur.

(xx) Assam Silicate, Glass and Chemical Works : It is the manufacturer and distributor of best quality Sodium Silicate, Glass and other chemicals. Its factory is located at Fatasil, Gauhati.

(xxi) The Assam Hard Board Ltd., Gauhati : It is an important forest-based industry in the district. The Hard Board factory has been installed near Gauhati by M/S Hard Board Ltd. The capacity of this plant is 50 tonnes a day. This plant has utilised the tops and branches of felled trees left in the forests and poles of firewood species. The estimated requirement of these raw materials is 30,000 tons annually. The Government of Assam is a participant in the share capital of this forest-based industry and upto 1963-64 an amount of Rs. 5,00,000/- was invested in the industry.³⁰ Its authorised capital is Rs. 1 (one) crore. The State Government has taken share participation of an amount of Rs. 5 lakhs till January 1965.

Industrial Estate at Gauhati : The programme of the establishment of the Industrial Estate in recent years is regarded as landmark for the development of various kinds of industries, specially small scale industries in the country. The functioning of the Industrial Estate at Gauhati since 1956-57, has given great encouragement to the industrialists in the district by providing integrated initial facilities like land, cheap power and water, factory-shed, railway siding, road and canteen, hospital and post office facilities which normally a small industrialist cannot provide.

The idea of establishing Industrial Estates in India as a measure of development of small scale industries in the country was adopted by the Small Scale Industries Development Board at meeting held in January 1955.

The programme attracted wide attention and there were demands from all States for more and more Industrial Estates. The main objective of the Industrial Estate, is to encourage the growth of small scale industries by providing common services and other facilities as stated earlier. Being located near one another, small units are better able to use goods and services of one another so that they become inter-dependent and complementary to one another. It was also felt that the Estate would be a useful measure to relieve existing congestion in industrial areas, especially in big towns and stimulate the growth of small industries in and around new townships and major industrial plants. The Industrial Estates are also used as an instrument to achieve decentralised industrial development in small towns and semi-urban areas and also to provide the growth of ancilliary industries.

Consequently, emphasis has been laid, since the beginning of the Second Five-Year Plan, on the establishment of Industrial Estates in smaller towns and semi-urban areas. In short, the Industrial Estates programme is a promotional measure for decentralised development of industries. Industrial Estates have been used in developing countries like India to accelerate the growth of medium and small scale industries to strengthen the economic base of urban camps.

The Industrial Estate located at Bamunimaidam, Gauhati, was started during 1956-57 for which the Government of India sanctioned a loan of Rs. 25.50 lakhs during the 2nd Plan period. Its establishment at Gauhati is also a step towards the industrial development of the district, where 52 sheds have been constructed and allotted to different industrialists and almost all of them have gone into production.

The names of some of the important industries functioning in the Industrial Estate at Gauhati are given below :—

They are- (1) Barua Industries, (2) Assam Canvas Craft Industries, (3) The Steel products, (4) Bhawani Cables industry, (5) Indrajit Chaliha and Company, (6) Pheros and Company Limited, (7) Assam Conductors and Tubes Private Limited, (8) Nilgiri Enterprises, (9) Modern Metal Moulders (i) M/S Iron Product etc. Besides Fruit canning, manufacture of railway fittings, Tea Chest fittings, battery works and preparation of distilled water, wire products, foundry and sheet metal works, handloom weaving and dyeing, leather works, manufacture of umbrella ribs, nut and bolts, nail making, foot wear, absorbent cotton, power loom, furniture making, pulp from paper waste, galvanizing, non-ferrous foundry, canvas

craft, conduit and galvanized pipes, fertiliser unit, etc., have been housed in the Industrial Estate, Gauhati.

The Second Industrial Estate in Kamrup district has been established at Nalbari. There are 14 sheds in the Industrial Estate at Nalbari out of which 11 have been allotted to industries like aluminium, footwear, carpentry, biscuit factory, polythene etc. Most of these industries have gone into production within the Estate. The Government service workshop set-up at Nalbari to render service to the industrialists at nominal charge is likely to provide impetus to the industrialists. In view of the abundance of coconut in Nalbari area there is much scope for a coir product industry at the estate.

The third Industrial Estate in the district has been established at Barpeta. The main industry situated in this estate, besides the Brick-Kilns, is aluminium Industry :

Financial and other assistance to the Industries : Loans are available to the industrialists from (1) Director of Industries, Assam, (2) The Assam Finance Corporation, (3) The State Bank of India, (4) The Assam Co-operative Apex Bank, (5) Industrial Co-operatives consisting mainly of the artisans and to other small industrial units under the State Aid to Industries Act, (6) The Assam Industrial Development Corporation, (7) Industrial Development Bank of India, Gauhati, Regional office, (8) Commercial and specially from Pragjyotish Gaonliia Bank which is jointly sponsored by UBI and SBI, (9) The National Small Industries Corporation (an autonomous Corporation) etc. All these Banks and Offices have their head offices in Gauhati. The National Small Industries Corporation of the Government of India has been implementing a scheme for giving machinery on hire purchase both indigenous and imported to small scale industrialists. As mentioned above, under the State Aid to Industries Act, loans are being disbursed to small and Cottage industries at very low rate of interest. Thus scheme has been further extended to give financial aid to local entrepreneurs for setting up industries specially in Industrial Estates and other industrial areas.

To overcome the difficulties of obtaining raw-materials for small and cottage industries, a central store for raw-materials has been established at Gauhati with a working capital of Rs. 5 lakhs. The Central Stores procure for distribution raw-materials like C.I. Sheets, rods, plain-sheets, black sheets, copper, brass sheets, bell-metal scrapes, canes, bamboo caustic soda etc.

There is also a scheme of the State Government to assist in starting and developing an industry owned by public or Private limited companies by direct participation in share capital of such companies. In the district of Kamrup, the Government has participated in the share capital in the following industries - (1) The Assam Gas Company, (2) The Assam Tanneries Limited, (3) Indian Refineries Limited, (4) M/S Associated Industries (Assam) Limited, (5) M/S Indian Carbon Limited, (6) M/S Assam Hard Board Limited etc.

Training Programme : To cater to the need of skilled and semi-skilled workers, training-cum-production centres have been established at various places with different trades such as Blacksmithy, carpentry, leather works, umbrella making, nail making, soap making etc. Over and above this, the Directorate of Industries has taken up the Apprenticeship and Inplant Training scheme. Under this scheme trainees are also sent for training in reputed firms outside the State.

At present, the district of Kamrup offers scope for technical training of different levels in different lines. These technical institutions are :— (1) The Assam Engineering College, Jalukbari, (2) The Assam Engineering Institute, Chandmari, (3) The Industrial Training Institute, Rehabari, (4) The Cottage Industries Training Institute, Gauhati, (5) The Assam Textile Institute, Ambari, Gauhati, (6) The Foot-Wear Training Institute (located at Industrial Estate, Gauhati, (7) The Central Workshop attached with the Industrial Estate provides training facilities to the industrialists and their representatives. There is a proposal for the establishment of an Industrial Training Institute at Barpeta.

The individual description of these technical institutes, training centres etc., in respect of their admission, capacity, and other related matters are given below :—

1) The Assam Engineering College at Jalukbari admits every year students for degree course in Civil (60 seats) ; Mechanical (60 seats), Electrical (60 seats) and 30 seats in Chemical Engineering.

2) The Assam Engineering Institute, Gauhati, issues certificates to successful students in Civil (120 seats), Mechanical (30 seats), and Electrical (30 seats) Engineering for diploma courses in every year.

3) The Industrial Training Institute was established at Gauhati in 1957 at Rehabari, Gauhati, with the primary object of producing skilled

technicians for the industries. The trades are Draughtsman (civil), Radio Mechanic, Electrician, Plumber, Electrical Wireman, Fitter, Welder, Sheet Metal worker, Carpenter, Blacksmith etc. The training is for 18 months in the institute followed by six months inplant training out-side.

4) The Cottage Industries Training Institute, Kalapahar, Gauhati, has been imparting training in the following trades : Blacksmithy, Carpentry, Cane and Bamboo works, Doll and Toy making, Pottery, Leather works, Electrical wiring, Nail making and Electroplating.

5) The Assam Textile Institute, Gauhati, offers training facilities in diploma course in Textile Technology Certificate course in Weaving and the Artisan course in Handloom weaving are also provided in the institute.

6) The Central Work Shop at Gauhati was established during the 2nd Plan period to give service to the industrialists of Industrial Estate at Gauhati. It is being equipped with heat treatment furnace, modern machine tools and electroplating arrangements. Besides rendering services to the industrialists of Industrial Estate, the Central Work-shop will take up the manufacture of small articles like steel furniture, door handles, surgical instruments, forks and spoons, cycle parts etc. A sum of Rs. 5 lakhs was allotted in the 3rd Plan for completion of the workshop building and purchase of machinery.

(7) The Footwear Training Institute under the Directorate of Industries, Assam ; located in the Industrial Estate, Gauhati, imparts training in the manufacturing of footwears.

(8) The Small Industry Extension Training Institute, Gauhati : For North-East region of the country, this training institute, a Government of India society, has been started at Gauhati.

Besides, workshops are being attached to the Small Industries Service Institute which is established by the Central Government in the vicinity of the Gauhati Industrial Estate for giving training and demonstration in technique and production processes in different industries and also for rendering technical assistance to the small industries, including testing of raw-materials and finished products.

The demonstration sections includes (i) Blacksmithy, (ii) Heat Treatment, (iii) Foundry testing, (iv) Mechanical Testing, (v) Chemical testing, and (vi) Electrical Testing.

At Barpeta, Rangiya and Dhamdhama there are training cum-production centres in Blacksmithy, Soap making, watch repairing, Umbrella handle making and Carpentry. There are also a few such centres in the Community Block areas of the district.

Marketing facilities: To help the industrilists in solving their market problems for their finished products, Government has also adopted measures in the recent years. One of such important measures is the formation of the Assam Government Marketing Corporation. This was formed with the object to take up the marketing of cottage and handicraft industries products on purely commercial lines by taking over the existing emporium run by the Industries Department as an welfare scheme. In the district of Kamrup, there are Government Emporium at Gauhati, Barpeta, Pathsala, Nalbari, Sualkuchi for assisting in the marketing of products. These emporium have been quite a relief to the small industrialists, especially the handloom and handicraft industries. The Sarthebari Bell-metal Co-operative has greatly been benefitted by this scheme.

The Corporation also has been trying to improve the quality of cane and bamboo products and the design of handloom industry of the state in order to create market facility for the benefit of indigenous artians.

This Corporation is established with an authorised capital of Rs. 50.00 lakhs, and upto 1963-64, the State Government has participated with an amount of Rs. 21,20,000/- to the Corporation.

Small Industries Development Corporation : This Corporation was set up during the 3rd Five Year Plan period with a view to promote, establish, undertake and exercise industrial projects etc. Upto January 1965, the government had participated with a sum of Rs. 20.50 lakhs in share capital of the Corporation.

Other existing industries : Among other existing industries of the district, mention may be made of Rice mills, Oil mills, Flour mill etc, which are running in private sector. The following list provides the names and addresses of some of the mills functioning in the district.³¹

(A) Manufacture of Grain Mill Products :

- 1) Goenka Flour Mill, Gauhati.
- 2) Assam Flour Mill, Gauhati.
- 3) Ajit Saria Flour Mill, Fatasil, Gauhati.
- 4) Sankar Flour Mill, Gauhati.
- 5) M/S Kamrup Flour Mill, Gauhati.
- 6) M/S Gauhati Roller Flour Mills.

31. Source ; Directorate of Industries, Assam.

(B) Rice Mills :

1. Joy Narayan Gordhandas Rice Mills, Nalbari.
2. Bhagawati Rice Mills, Pathsala.
3. Doga Rice Mill, Tihu.
4. Uma Rice Mill, Changsari.
5. Srimanta Mills, Gauhati.
6. Gauhati Mills, Gauhati.
7. Himatsingka Mills, Athgaon, Gauhati.
8. Bharatia Rice Mills, Nalbari.
9. Lahiri Rice Mills, Gauhati.
10. Sagarmal Ghasiram Rice Mill No. 1 Rangia.
11. Sagarmal Gasiram Rice Mill No. 2 Rangia.
12. Ganapatrai Mungilal Rice Mills, Gauhati.
13. Prahladrai Sitaram Rice Mills, Khetri.
14. Bijoy Laxmi Rice Mills, Rangia.
15. Ganapatrai Mungilal Rice Mills, Tihu.
16. G. R. Rice Mills, Pathsala.
17. S. O. Rice Mills, Strand Road, Gauhati.
18. N.G. Rice Mill, Gauhati.
19. K.J. Rice Mill, Pathsala.
20. Bijli Mills, Gauhati.
21. M.J. Rice and Flour Mills, Gauhati.
22. R. B. Mills Ltd., Barpeta Road.
23. Ganga Flour and Rice Mills, Ulubari, Gauhati.
24. Dulani Rice Mill, Ulubari, Gauhati.
25. Sarupeta Rice Mill, Sarupeta.
26. D. M. Rice Mill, Ulubari, Gauhati.
27. Annapurna Rice Mill, Ulubari, Gauhati.
28. Podder Rice Mill, Barpeta Road.
29. Biswanath Rice Mill, Barpeta Road.
30. L. R. Rice Mill, Nalbari.
31. Mahalaxmi Rice Mill, Gauhati.
32. D. M. Rice Mill, Barpeta.
33. Ajitsaria Rice Mills, Fatasil, Gauhati.
34. M. K. Industries, Gauhati.
35. R. K. Rice Mill, Tihu.

(C) Manufacture of edible oils (other than Hydrogenated oil)

1. Radha Kisan Oil Mill, Gauhati.
2. Sree Dhanuka Oil Mill, Gauhati.
3. K. D. Dutta Oil Mill, Barpeta Road.

4. Gopal Oil Mill, Barpeta Road.
5. Ganesh Oil Mill, Barpeta Road.
6. Shri Govinda Oil Mill, Barpeta Road.
7. Srimanta Oil Mills, Gauhati.

A list of Small Industries functioning in Kamrup district as on 31.3.75 is furnished in Appendix 'A' at the end of the chapter.

Tea Industry : The tea industry in Kamrup district does not carry much importance in comparison with other tea districts of Assam Valley viz, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, Darrang etc. There are only fourteen tea gardens in the district according to the Tea Statistics, 1973-74. But most of these tea gardens are small and their areas are below 200 hectares. Their complete account with regards to manufacturing process etc., are available in the District Gazetteer of Lakhimpur, Sibsagar, Darrang etc., as such they are not reproduced here. The factories in the district are (i) Menaka T.E. Factory (ii) Choonsali T.E. factory (iii) Barduar T.E. factory (iv) Rani T.E. factory (v) Fatemabad T.E. factory (vi) Sonapur T.E. factory (vii) Doomni T.E. factory (viii) Ramsahill T.E. factory, (x) Basista T.E. factory and (xi) Nagrijuli T.E. Factory.

The Statement below shows the total number of estates, area, and production of tea in the district of Kamrup.³²

District.	No. of estate	Area in hectares	Production in kg.
Kamrup	14	2,720.02	2,824.069

Gauhati Tea Auction Centre : The most notable event for the tea industry of Assam was the commissioning of the Tea Auction Centre at Gauhati, at the initiative of the Government of Assam, on the 25th September, 1970. Upto the first week of April, 1971, 12 fortnightly auctions have been held. Offering have been mainly of the type required for the domestic markets; but of late exporters too have shown interest in Gauhati offerings. The planters of Assam will derive a number of benefits from the Gauhati auction centre as the Calcutta centre which used to handle nearly 4 million chests of tea annually was becoming somewhat unwieldy, especially during the heavy cropping season. Apart from making a saving in freight charges, the planters in Assam can also save payment of the West Bengal

32. Tea Statistics. 1973-74 p. 12

entry tax which works out to some 14 paise per kg. Charges of damage and pilferage of tea in transit would be less in the case of consignments to Gauhati. The buyers would get the advantage of exemption from sales tax and facilities for a quick inland transport by rail, while for teas meant for export, the railway and the Kandla port authorities have offered special facilities like quick allotment of wagons and warehousing. Besides, the port charges at Kandla are lower than they are in Calcutta.

Plywood Industry : In spite of the demand for tea chests, the history of plywood industry in Assam dates back only from 1951-52. The plywood industry however expanded rapidly and by 1956-57 there were 17 factories consuming approximately 22 million cubic feet of timber manufacturing two million tea chests which were 50 per cent short of the total demand. This shortage was made up by importing chests made in Calcutta mostly from timber imported from Assam. If the plywood industry of Assam could be permitted to fill the entire need for tea chests in the state not only would the employment in the state increase by 50,000 workers but the revenue of the Forest Department would also increase by nearly Rs. 40 lakhs. ³³

However, during the second and 3rd Five-year plan periods a few more factories were coming up in Assam and by 1963-64 the total number of factories came to 19. The State Forest Department has undertaken the supply of plywood logs to these factories according to the annual availability of timbers from the forests as per working plans prescriptions. A part of the requirements of plywood logs is drawn from the adjoining Arunachal Pradesh forests. Assam forest is yielding about 20 lakh cubic feet and the balance is being drawn from Arunachal Pradesh forests.

The Assam Plywood Ltd., Ulubari, Gauhati, is the only such factory in the district. Most of the plywood factories of Assam are located in Dibrugarh district of upper Assam.

Saw-Mills : Among other forest-based industries saw-mills also occupy a most important place in the sphere of industries in Assam. In the recent past the saw-mills industry has been almost eliminated by machine sawing. At present there are about 180 saw-mills in the State and all are in private sector. In Kamrup, there are about 30 saw-mills in different areas. But most of them are located in the Gauhati sub-division. They are in, area-wise, Maligaon area 4 nos., Kamakhya area 3 nos., Athgaon 1, Pandu-2, Palasbari-4, Gauhati-6 and Kumarpara-1. The outturn of these mills can meet the demands for local constructional works, railway sleepers, defence supply and to other industrial areas outside the State.

33. Techno-Economic Survey of Assam, NCAER, p. 91,

(d) Industrial Potentialities and Plan for Future Development :

The district has immense industrial potential. Kamrup covers an area of 9,863.0 Kilometres and is inhabited by 28,54,183 lakhs of people according to 1971 census, of which about 80% are agriculturists. Although, it is not profitable on the part of 80% people of the district to stick to agriculture alone, they have been obliged to do so for want of suitable substitute as means of livelihood. A considerable proportion of these people can be diverted to industries for their economic upliftment as the pressure of land in this district specially in Nalbari, Rangiya, and Barpeta is very hard.

The forest wealth of the district occupies an important place but the vast forest resources remain yet untapped for profitable industrial purpose. The main use to which they are put as yet is extraction of timber for construction purposes and fire wood. Bamboo, **Sal, Hallong, Hollock, Simul, Titasopa, Makai** and **Chom** are the species which can be exploited for industrial use. ³⁴

Private industry should be encouraged to set up seasoning, treating and joiner mills but it has to be assured of public and government support.

It is therefore suggested that there is possibility for the establishment of 3 large integrated saw-mills equipped with facilities for proper seasoning and preservation of timber and joinery in the district.

Timber Seasoning : A good demand exists for wooden furniture in the district. The N.F. Railway itself indicated its requirement to be considerable. While the existing furniture making units have been doing good business, a vast scope remains for expansion. It is observed that poor craftsmanship and use of unseasoned timber in the making of furniture stand in the way of quality. Craftmanship would have to be improved if the industry has to improve its position. It is important that one or two timber seasoning plants may be set up in the district. ³⁵

Leather and leather foot-wear : It is stated that the district is moderately rich in hides and skins. The Assam Tanneries, a Government of Assam undertaking, started its production and no special encouragement need be given to start any new unit for tanning. A few cobblers at Palasbari are also tanning some quantity of hides and skins. But manufacture of foot-wear and other leather goods for Police Department, Postal Depart-

34. Rorests of Assam, by the Chief Conservator of Forests, Assam.

35. Report on the Development Potentialities of Small scale industries of Kamrup district in Assam.

ment, Cash bags, Portfolio bags, Travelling bags, Light suit-cases may be encouraged.

Rice bran oil : In Kamrup district a concentration of rice mills exists. Manufacture of rice bran oil has a good scope. One unit of moderate size required concentration of at least 5 to 6 rice mills within a radius of 16 kilometres from the bran oil plant. This concentration is necessary for economy in transporting brans from rice mills to the oil manufacturing plant. Moreover, the bran should be processed within a few hours from its coming out from the rice mill before the chemical properties in the bran get deteriorated.

Fruit Preservation : The district is rich in supply of oranges, pine apples, etc. which can also be brought from the adjoining districts. One unit may be encouraged in the district for preserving fruits.

Soap Industry : Since caustic soda and selicate of soda are abundantly found in Gauhati, there is great scope for the further expansion and development of the existing soap industries at Gauhati.

Jute Industry : Since Jute is the principal cash crop of the district, there is good prospect for a jute mill.

Mechanised brick kiln : The demand for bricks is increasing in the district by leaps and bounds due to heavy house building activities in and around Gauhati. The establishment of the Indian Refinery at Gauhati, erection of the Brahmaputra Bridge, and normal developmental activities consequent to the execution of plan projects have greatly influenced the demand for bricks. The shifting of the state capital to Dispur (Gauhati) has also increased the demand for more bricks in the city. But the existing brick kilns are stated to have suffered from dearth of skilled labour. In view of the increasing demand for bricks and the dearth of skilled labour it is suggested that a few units with mechanical process may be put-up for manufacture of brick kilns.

Hollow bricks : Though a few units exist for manufacture of hollow-bricks, still there is scope for new units because of the increasing demand for bricks. The cost of fuel is quite high for burning ordinary bricks. In that respect manufacture of hollow-bricks enjoy a privileged position. Moreover, the cost of manufacture of hollow bricks compares favourably with that of ordinary bricks. The hollow-bricks can be made near the site of a proposed structure.

Concrete Posts : There is a good scope for making concrete posts. Big consumers are P.W.D. and the State Electricity Board. Since the Government happens to be a big buyer for this item the industry is expected to be in a privileged position particularly in view of the state store-purchase facilities offered by the Government of Assam.

Paints : At present no unit in this line exists in the district. The demand for different types of paint is big enough to feed some units. Basic raw materials such as linseed oil is available in the district of Kamrup as well as throughout the state.

Tin Container making : In view of the prospectiveness of different industries in the district in the State, manufacture of tin containers appears to have been of considerable importance. The prospective fruit preservation units and the paint industry and the like, would depend on the tin containers for packing their final products.

Drums, Cans and Containers : The carrying of empty drums, cans and containers places a great strain on the transport system as they occupy a large volume in the available capacity. Though it is not possible to know the actual demand of the containers yet from the excellent prospects for the fruit canning industry itself, it is felt that there can be a large unit in Assam to manufacture about 1,000 tonnes of drums and containers.

Reclaimed Rubber : At present old rubber tyres are thrown away in Assam. These tyres might be collected and old rubber could be reclaimed from them. All rubber factories consumed reclaimed rubber to mix up with new rubber. The industry would be quite profitable. The job also does not require a technical skill of high degree. Gauhati may be the suitable place for location.

Surgical Dressings : There is a good scope for surgical dressings manufacture in Assam. One or two units may take up manufacture at Gauhati. At present absorbent cotton cannot be economically produced but bandages could be easily manufactured and it would be pushed in the market.

Umbrella Ribs : The umbrella ribs are not manufactured in Assam. A good demand exists for umbrellas because of heavy rainfall. A unit may be encouraged to take up manufacture of umbrella ribs.

Ceramics : The basic raw materials is China clay which is available in the Garo Hills. But considering other economic factors like relative

position about availability of technical, financial, management, transport and marketing facilities, it is suggested that the factory may be set up near Gauhati. The clay may however, be washed in the Garo Hills to reduce the cost of transport for raw materials. The Govt. of Assam has already started imparting training in ceramics at Gauhati in the Cottage Industries Training Institute.

Enamel Ware : The demand for this type of product is increasing day by day in Assam. Judging from the number of hospitals in Assam and the need for ware, it was suggested in the Techno-Economic Survey that there would be a unit in Assam for manufacturing about 50,000 numbers of enamel-ware per annum. There is a unit at Gauhati which is engaged in the production of this item but its capacity is not known. In view of the higher target now specified for coming years for the country, it is suggested that the existing unit in the State should increase its production and also a large unit for manufacturing about 1.5 million pieces per annum be established.

Among other industries, which can be started in the district of Kamrup are (1) Chalk, Crayon (2) Mirrors, (3) Plastic Articles and Toy, (4) Plastic Rain coats, (5) Sports goods, (6) Containers for liquified petroleum gas (would be available from the Indian Refinery, Gauhati) (7), Stoves and Burners for burning L.G.P. etc.

N.F. Railway is also a big customer for a large number of items (Stores requirements) which could be manufactured on small scale basis. The Railway authority has agreed to patronise the local manufacturers for development of small scale industries. The Railway issues weekly stores bulletins on the facilities provided by the railways which the industrialists may avail of. A list of items which the N.F. Railway occasionally buys and which can be manufactured on small scale basis is furnished below :

(a) Hardware items—Bolts, Nuts, Rivets, Washers (Square and round), wire, nails, screws, iron and mild steel, split pins, bath tubs, fire and water buckets, pans, iron mortar, latrine pans etc.

(b) Tin Smithy items : Lamps of all sorts and their spare parts, viz hand signal lamps, hurricane lamp, points of trap, indicator lamps, signal lamps etc., cans and measures of all sorts of oil feeder.

(c) Aluminium and Brass wares : Utensils, mugs (aluminium), *degchi* (aluminium with lid), *lotah* (brass) etc.

(d) Mechanical fittings : Hose pipe clips, door locking devices, reservation label holders, handle of carriage door, face plates for axle boxes, alarm signal communication chain etc.

- (e) Castings : (i) Iron—Brake blocks, fire bars, piston rings, ruller-stands etc., and other cast iron signalling items.
- (ii) Bronze—Bearing brasses, canes, liners, boiler mountings.
- (f) Wooden items : Wooden handles of all sorts, furniture of all description, blocks, boards etc.
- (g) Personal requirements : Holdalls, tents, bags, terpoulins etc.
- (h) Leather goods : Below smith, dust shield, cash bags, shoes, chap-pals etc.

The Central Fuel Research Institute, Dhanbad, has evolved a technique for economic use of Indian coal for manufacture of calcium carbide. The suitable composition was made by blending Assam Coal, petroleum coke, and wood charcoal. Besides the above material, lime also is required. All these above materials are available in and around the district of Kamrup. Survey Committee recommends putting up of this unit near Gauhati. ³⁶

Petroleum coke (calcined) would be available from the local sources. This would constitute the main raw materials both for the manufacture of carbons and carbon brushes.

For the manufacture of these basic materials raw materials would be available from the Refinery wastes.

The district as a whole and Gauhati in particular will continue to have heavy industrial concentration because of the excellent geographical positions, and power and transport facilities of the area.

In the Industrial programme for Assam it is stated that the whole Petro-Chemical family of industries is yet at a debating stage. Even the known items like Caustic soda and Calcium Carbide have not evoke any interest among investors. Only one oxygen and Acetylene unit went into production at Gauhati in 1962. The National Council's recommendations for Sillimanite is under active consideration of the Department of Industries. Assam should in fact utilise this rare, high grade refractory materials, synthetic rubber and synthetic fiber available in the State. In fact, the establishment of the Noonmati Refinery has prepared the ground for setting up various allied industries as mentioned above.

In addition to above, the industrial potentiality for the city of Gauhati alone is also immense. The physical setting of Gauhati also provides possibilities for the establishment of a number of industries. Gauhati urban

³⁶ Report on the Development Potentialities of Small Scale Industries of Kamrup district in Assam.

agglomeration comprises Gauhati Municipal Area, New Gauhati Railway Colony, Bamunimaidan, Japarigog, Noonmati, Ulubari, Refinery colony, Dispur, Maligaon, non-cadastral Ramchahill Grant, Pandu Town, Gauhati University, Maligaon, Sadilapur, Garpandu, Kumarpura and Kamakhya (T.C). It is the premier city of Assam and is linked by rail, road, air and water. The city has a very advantageous location from the point of view of water transportation as it is situated on the bank of the river Brahmaputra. But there is no distinct industrial area at Gauhati. Most of the existing industrial areas are scattered all over the city, in the midst of residential and business areas. The types of the industries existing in the town are rice mills, flour mills, oil mills, saw mills, soap factory, Plywood factory etc.

It has been mentioned above that there is no transportation problem for the city. With the establishment of the Gauhati University in 1948, various technical institutions have also been established. There is no dearth of skilled and unskilled labour. Besides this, there is a big oil refinery. Potentialities exist for the development of the following industries in and around Gauhati. (i) Tea, (ii) Wooden electrical accessories (iii) Trucks and bus body-building (iv) Mechanised carpentry (v) Leather Tanning, (iv) Leather foot-wear (vii) Bone meal (viii) Fruit preservation etc.

Employers Association : There are only a few Employers' Associations in the district of Kamrup. The most important associations are (i) Assam Manufacture's Associations (ii) All-India Manufacture's Association, Lower Assam Branch, (iii) Assam Rice and Oil Mill owners' Associations (vi) Assam Chamber of Inter-State Carriers (v) Gauhati chamber of commerce (vi) Kamrup Truck Owners' Association and (vii) Bus Owners' Association. The tea industry is covered by the Assam Tea Planters Association.

Trade Union : In Kamrup, Trade Union activities are predominant. The workers of almost all factories and industrial establishments are organised as trade unions. About 40 such Unions are functioning in the district which are mainly concentrated in Gauhati. Most of these are affiliated to one of the first two of the 4 All-India bodies of Worker's Union viz Indian National Trade Union Congress and All-India Trade Union Congress. However, there are a few exceptions which claim to be independent of any affiliation to such bodies. The Worker's Trade Unions are organised on crafts or industry basis. The Kamrup Mill **Mazdoor Sangha**, is a Trade Union registered under the Indian Trade Union Act and enrolls workers as members in rice, oil, flour and foundaries industries in the district. The worker's union handling Labour Union, Motor Driver's Union etc., are on craft-basis. The Kamrup Mill **Mazdoor Sangha** is one of the oldest Trade Unions in the district.

The following are the names of some of the Trade Unions functioning in the district.

1. State Transport Worker's Association, Ulubari, Gauhati.
2. R.S.N. & I.G.N. Rly. Co. Ltd. Worker's Union, Gauhati.
3. Assam Transhipment Worker's Union Gauhati.
4. N.F. Railway Handling Labour Union, Amingaon.
5. N.F. Railway Mazdoor Union, P.O. Pandu.
6. Ramdhenu Press Workers Union, Gauhati.
7. New-Press Worker's Union, Gauhati.
8. Assam Tribune Employee's Union, Gauhati.
9. Kamrup Mill Mazdoor Sangha, Gauhati.
10. Assam State Electric Supply Worker's Union, Gauhati.
11. Assam State Electricity Employee's Union, Gauhati.
12. Refinery Worker's Union, Noonmati, Gauhati.
13. Tata Oil Mills and Associated Co.s Employees Union, Gauhati.
14. B.O.C. Pipe Line Worker's Union, Uzanbazar, Gauhati.
15. Assam Petroleum Worker's Union, Gauhati.
16. North Kamrup P.W.D. Mazdoor Union, Nalbari.
17. Glaxo Laboratories Employee's Association, Gauhati.
18. Gauhati Municipal **Karmi** Sangha, Gauhati.
19. Kamrup Construction Worker's Union, Amingaon.
20. Hume Pipe Line Worker's Union, Amingaon.
21. Imperial Tobacco Company Employee's Union, Gauhati.
22. Assam Khadi Board Worker's Union, Gauhati.
23. Kamrup Industrial Worker's Union, Gauhati.
24. Motor Mazdoor Union, Gauhati.
25. Assam Chah Mazdoor **Sangha**, Gauhati Branch.

26. Kumar Iron and Steel Limited Worker's Union, Gauhati.
27. Peco Printing Press Karmachari Sangha, Gauhati.
28. Indian Oxygen Employee's Union, Gauhati.
29. Indian National Trade Union Congress, Assam Branch, Gauhati.
30. Steelsworth Worker's Union, Gauhati.
31. Gauhati Shop and Establishment Employee's Association, Gauhati.
32. Everest cycle Factory **Sramik** Union, Gauhati.
33. Gauhati Engineering Worker's Union Gauhati.
34. Akhili Asom Cinema Karmi Sangha, Gauhati.
35. Assam Canvas **Sramik** Union, Gauhati.
36. Gauhati Press Karmachari Sangha.
37. Saikuchi Tat Silpi Sangha.
38. Jahaj **Karmi** Sangha, Gauhati.
39. Ascon Industrial Workers Union, Gauhati.
40. Indian Oil Corporation Mazdoor Union, Gauhati.
41. India Carbon Employees and Labour Union, Gauhati.
42. Associated Industry **Sramik** Union, Chandrapur, Gauhati.
43. Workers Union Chemical Unit, Chandrapur, Gauhati.
44. Assam Cinema Karmi Sangha, Gauhati.

There are also instances where the workers have formed their own Co-operative society. Such Co-operatives managed by the workers are serving very useful purpose for the benefit of the workers and their dependents. One such Co-operative Society is the Co-operative Society of the establishment of the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup. It is running a very profitable Canteen business within the D. C. Court campus in Gauhati.

In the recent years the problem of labour welfare has attracted the attention of both the Govt. as well as the employers. But the scope of industrial labour welfare measures is restricted in the district of Kamrup on account of the big industries being practically nonexistent. Yet the industrialists as per the directions of the State and Central Governments have undertaken various measures in this regard in the district. Further, to see the proper implementation of the various labour Acts, there are a number of officers of the Government of Assam under the Department of Labour at Gauhati, Barpeta and Nalbari. Similar officers are also

there at Gauhati both under the control of the Government of India as well as under the establishments of various private and State share-participated industries. Recently, the Government of Assam has undertaken to construct a building at Kalapahar with a view to give facility to the urban industrial labour force to carry on their welfare activities.

In Gauhati town area, the Employee's State Insurance Scheme has been enforced in admissible factories which insures the workers against illness and disablements. The industrial labour by virtue of this scheme is entitled to free medical facilities and cash benefits. Moreover, Worker's families are also covered under the scheme. In respect of labour welfare in tea industry, however, there has been significant progress. The Plantation Labour Act and Rules have introduced a legal compulsion on tea garden employers to provide various facilities to their labourers. In most of the gardens, education facility is provided by the employers upto lower primary standard. Certain percentage of standard type quarters have to be built annually for the labourers. Drinking water, improved sanitation, recreational facilities, creches with necessary equipments, medical facilities etc, are statutory provisions under the Plantation Labour Act. Social Security measures like Workman's Compensation Act, Assam Maternity Benefit Act, Tea Plantation Employee's Provident Fund Act, etc. are applicable to all factories employing 20 or more workers.

The Factories Act and Rules cover certain occupational hazard. In most factories the workers are allowed free medical treatment and medicine. But the fact remains that all these sundry welfare measures are inadequate to meet the needs of a swelling labour force. The housing accommodation provided by the employers is neither sufficient nor up to the standard. The workers are not able to take full advantage of the house built by the Housing Department either because the rent is too high or the houses are too distant from the factory site. Generally, workers are employed without any medical check-up and there is no regular periodic medical examination. In certain organised industries, workers becoming invalided due to old age and poor health are entitled to compensation on retirement. The welfare services especially medical facilities are better in the tea industry than in others.

The conditions of industrial labour appear to be better than agriculturists. But it is in the lower strata and requires further improvement.

In respect of wage, it is stated that there is more or less uniformity in different concerns of the locality.

In this connection it may also be noted that to deal with the labour welfare matters from the Government side, there is an Assistant Labour Commissioner-cum-Deputy Labour Commissioner in the district level. Under him the labour officer with the assistance of two Labour Inspectors primarily deal with investigation and settlement of industrial disputes. There is one Labour Inspector to implement the Plantation Labour Act in tea gardens. There is also another Inspector to enforce the provisions under Urban Transport Worker's Act. The main duties of these officers are to examine the enforcement of various labour laws and settlement of industrial disputes.

To ensure adequate wage to labourers the Minimum Wages Act has been enforced in Tea Plantations, Rice and Oil Mills, Road and Building Construction, Transport and other industries.

Although the minimum wages in these industries were fixed some years back and conditions had appreciably changed since then, nevertheless, there has been no revision of wages in respect of Rice Mills and Oil Mills. Of course, there was revision of pay scales of the transport (State Transport) industries. There was also revision of pay in respect of tea plantation in 1959. The actual wages in many industries have however, lately shown an upward trend mainly on account of the various projects launched recently. In 1961, the minimum in a number of cases went up from Rs. 2.50 to Rs. 3.50 per day. The minimum of wages of Rice and Oil Mills have not participated in this upward trend, although the workers in these industries gradually came to receive other facilities. Handling labourers engaged by contractors or employers directly have shown better earnings due to Incentive Wage scheme. Their average earnings per day varied from Rs. 3/- to Rs. 4/-. Wages vary widely in the category of skilled workmen. In 1965, a welder received Rs. 6/- to Rs. 13/- per day. Mechanics, fitters, foremen, carpenters, and moulders get wages according to efficiency, value of works in the industry and are paid mostly on monthly basis. Female workers are predominant in tea industry and their earnings are higher than those of male workers during the plucking season.

In 1977, wages of the agricultural labour was brought to the par with the other labour and wage was fixed of Rs. 6/- per day for rural agricultural labour while wage for the urban labour was fixed at Rs. 7/- per day. This rate however went upto Rs. 7/- for rural agricultural labour in 1979 while for urban labour it rose to Rs. 8/- per day. For the carpenters and masons daily wage rates vary according to skill. An expert carpenter and mason receive Rs. 14/- per day while a novice gets Rs. 10/- per day.

APPENDIX--A

Registered Small Scale Industrial Units of Kamrup as on 31.3.75.

Name of Unit	No. of Unit		
	Gauhati	Barpeta	Nalbari
1. Trunk and Suit Case.	10	—	—
2. Canvas, Turpentine, tent, tripal Motor-seat, hood.	6	—	—
3. Bakery	17	24	1
4. Book Binding	7	—	—
5. Mojaic tiles	1	—	—
6. Wooden Furniture, wood work and Carpentry.	36	10	1
7. Candle, Wax work	28	10	—
8. Ready-made garments	28	6	2
9. Packing Box	1	—	—
10. Umbrella	5	—	—
11. Clay modelling	1	—	—
12. Soap, Washing Soap	33	1	1
13. Tyre retreading and vulcanising	7	—	—
14. Chalk	3	1	1
15. Soda making, Sodium Silicate	3	—	—
16. Glass	3	—	—
17. Ridging	2	—	—
18. Polythene, Paper Bag	9	1	—
19. Chemical Works, cosmetics, detergent, saline, ink etc.	16	—	—
20. File board, File cover, envelop, wood board.	8	—	—
21. Mustard Oil, Wood Oil, Coaltar etc.	18	8	—
22. Rubber	2	—	—
23. Fruit making	1	—	—
24. Manure	1	—	—
25. Aluminium, Silver Utensils	12	—	—
26. Repairing, Welding, Painting Electrical repairing of vehicles.	68	9	3
27. Textile	11	46	—

Appendix-B (Contd.)

Name of Unit	No. of Unit		
	Gauhati	Barpeta	Nalbari
28. Printing, Job-printing, Cartoon boxes	49	8	—
29. Saw mills	13	1	—
30. Bricks and tiles	17	2	—
31. Rice mills, Polishing of rice etc.	38	7	—
32. Flour mills, dal, atta etc.	7	—	—
33. Polyester fibre	2	—	—
34. Jute	3	—	—
35. Kit, bag, dol etc.	5	—	—
36. Electrical equipments	6	—	—
37. Dry cleaner, Dyer	6	—	—
38. Bamboo and cane work	5	—	—
39. Steel fabrication	19	—	—
40. Sign board	10	—	—
41. Ayurvedic Products	2	—	—
42. Police uniform	1	—	—
43. Freezer	1	—	—
44. Bidi, tobacco	2	3	—
45. M. S. Round, Flat, Ferrous and non-Ferrous	3	—	—
46. Handicraft	2	—	—
47. Stationery	3	—	—
48. Sewing machine	2	—	—
49. Baby food, Kaju	3	—	—
50. Insulated cable	1	—	—
51. Tailoring	7	—	—
52. Brass, Bell-metal	2	12	—
53. Cattle Food	2	—	—
54. Embroidery & Knitting	8	—	—
55. Stone breaking, Stone bricks, Stone metal	3	—	—
56. Ornaments—Gold & Silver	13	—	—
57. Asbestos sheet, Cement post, R.C.C. ring, R.C.C. Pipes etc.	1	—	—
58. Block, Electrical Blocks, Stamp Pad, Glycerine Oil	6	—	—
59. Iron Fabrication	1	—	—
60. Ice Cream	3	—	—
61. C & Weight etc.	—	—	—
62. Woollen Garments	4	—	—

Appendix-A (Contd.)

Name of Unit	No. of Unit		
	Gauhati	Barpeta	Nalbari
63. Weaving & Sericulture	15	—	2
64. Pottery	4	—	—
65. Agarbati and distilling Plant	3	—	—
66. Dolls & Toys	3	—	—
67. Photo Framing, Printing and advertising, Film and Document Film.	6	—	—
68. Tank, Jeep-tailors	3	—	—
69. Body building of Vehicles	3	—	—
70. Bandage	2	—	—
71. Lozen	23	3	—
72. Steel Barrage, Paddy tracers	1	—	—
73. S. P. Bold	1	—	—
74. All kinds of pipes	2	—	—
75. Iron works, Honkoras Rod, posts, Gate, Grills.	8	2	—
76. Allied Articles	2	—	—
77. P. V. Set	1	—	—
78. Agricultural and Industrial apparatus	9	—	—
79. Vegetable	1	—	—
80. Steel furniture, Gate, Grill, Wire, Re-rolling.	31	1	2
81. Boat	1	—	—
82. Machine Tools	1	—	—
83. Triithor B. E. C.	1	—	—
84. Granite Stone	1	—	—
85. Ivory works, sholdering stick	1	6	—
86. Leather Works	3	2	—
87. Fuel pump Service	—	1	—
88. Processed Salt	1	—	—
89. Silencers, Gun metal	2	—	—
90. Spices	5	—	—
91. Optical	1	—	—
92. Pipette, Burette, Flask, Furnel, Test Tube etc.	1	—	—
93. Battery	2	—	—
94. Meters & Power Equipments	1	—	—
95. Plastic Slate	1	—	—
96. Supary	2	2	—
97. Pesticides & insecticides	1	—	—

Source : Director of Industries, Assam.

SCHEDULE - B

Important industries of Kamrup as in 1976.

1. Indian Refineries Pvt. Ltd., Gauhati Refinery, Noonmati.	1 Gasoline, Kerosine, Diesel Furnace oil, Gas and loose etc.
2. Associated Industries (Assam) (Spinning Units) Under the National Textile Corporation Ltd. Chandrapur.	1 Cotton yarn
3. ASCON, Bamunimaidam	1 A.A.E. & A.C.S.R.
4. Associated Industries (Assam) Ltd., Chandrapur.	3 Chemical products.
5. India Carbon Ltd., Noonmati	1 Calcined petroleum coke.
6. Assam Hard Board, Panikhaiti	1 Hard Board.
7. Everest Cycle Ltd., Kamarpatty, Gauhati.	2 Bicycles etc.
8. Kumar Iron & Steel Co. Ltd., Zoo-Road, Dispur.	1 Re-rolling mills.
9. Industrial Gases Ltd., Noonmati.	1 Gases.
10. Brahmaputra Jute Mfg., Gauhati.	1 Jute twines.
11. Steels Worth Ltd., Gauhati.	3 Steel products etc.
12. Beverage & Food Products Pvt., Ltd., Narengi.	1 Soft Drink.
13. Fertichem Ltd., Gauhati	1 Fertilisers.
14. Assam Carbon Products, Gauhati.	6 Carbon block, copper powder, Carbon brushes, mechanical carbons etc.
15. Flour Mills	4 Wheat products, flour, atta, Suji etc.

16. Mazrani Industry, Gauhati.
17. The Indian Hume Pipe & Co. Ltd., Gauhati, Bamunimaidam.
18. M/S Iron Products, Bamunimaidam, Industrial Estate.
19. Assam Sillimanite Ltd., Refinery Unit of Gauhati.
20. M/S Assam Flour Mills, Gauhati Fancy Bazar.
21. Brahmaputra Pulp & Paper Mills, Tokobari, Gauhati.
22. M/S Synthetic Plastic Co. Ltd., Gauhati. C/o Duncan Bros & Co Ltd., Calcutta.
23. M/s Synthetic Rubber Co. Ltd., Gauhati.
24. Assam Asbestos Ltd., Narengi.,
25. M/s R. B. Industries, Fancy Bazar, Casting products.
26. M/s Hanuman Industries, Fancy Bazar Iron Pipe, C. I. pipes, machine fitting and other casting.

Besides these, there are also some unregistered industries under private enterprises working in all the Sub-divisions of the district.

CHAPTER—VI

BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE

A. BANKING AND FINANCE

1. History of Indigenous Banking :

Modern banking in the district of Kamrup is of recent origin. There was indigenous banking system in various forms before the development of modern banking. The history of indigenous banking in the district is difficult to trace due to the paucity of relevant datas. Nevertheless, it is evident that the origin of indigenous banking lies in the Marwari firms which were established in the wake the start of tea industry in this state. In this connection, the following observations made by the Assam Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee (1929-30) are of particular significance.

“The history of indigenous banks in Assam is shrouded in obscurity. We know that there are Marwari firms which started business in Assam 80 or 90 years ago. From Gaits’ History of Assam, we find that about 1835, a number of enterprising Marwari merchants had established themselves in the province. It was about this time that British rule in the Brahmaputra valley was being consolidated. We think it would be correct to say that the growth of Marwari enterprises was *pari passu* with the development of the tea industry. The Marwaris and the tea planters were the two pioneers in the Assam valley. Tea was first manufactured in Assam in 1847, though not on a commercial scale. In 1853 tea gardens have been started in upper Assam and in the next few years the industry made rapid progress. It does not necessarily follow however that in the early stages of the existence in Assam, the Marwaris were engaged in banking business. The probability is that their business at the beginning was trading pure and simple, and indeed this is the main function that they perform at the present time. Any banking business they transacted is only secondary in business parlance what we may call a ‘side line’. About the nature of this banking business, the report further says that it is practically ‘confined’ to large Marwari firms in some of the towns of the Assam valley who accept deposits and do banking business. Some of them

also issue cheques. It is to be noted that these firms do not invite deposits. Local people, however, do keep deposits at about 6% per annum which are withdrawable at call. People seem to have confidence in these indigenous banks and difficulty is rarely experienced in withdrawing the money when required. It might not be thought that all big Marwari firms receive deposits, though most do. Then again, there are smaller Marwaris in the villages who may occasionally receive deposits, but as a rule they depend for their finance on bigger firms in the towns. Pass books are rarely issued by the indigenous banks though frequently deposit receipts are granted. The accounts of banking business are, however, not kept separate from those of the general trade business which only is prepared. The loans in villages frequently take the form of advances on condition of repayment of principal and interest in the shape of produce. As a rule the Marwari firms would not transact any pure banking business unless they had a surplus not required for trade and business. Their first consideration is trade and not banking. A mixture of trade and business is to be found in cases where an agriculturist required a loan, say for a marriage. Such a loan if granted in cash, would usually be spent in foodstuffs and cloths and the borrower, as a rule has to take the loan in the shape of goods, if the Marwari has then in stock. No information is available as to the amount of capital lying with these indigenous banks for purpose of credit. We believe, it amounts to many times the working capital of the Joint Stock Companies."

Even in Hunter's Statistical Account of Assam published in 1879, we do not find any reference about the functioning of regular banking establishments in the district of Kamrup. However, in the said Statistical Account we find that Marwari merchants were the pioneers of indigenous banking operated in different parts of the district.

Herein below we have quoted a discussion held on the occasion of giving evidence before the Assam Banking Enquiry Committee (1929-30) which at length describes the system of commercial banking transactions in Assam with some reflections on the indigenous banking business carried out at Gauhati more than 30 years ago. However the expressions here do not necessarily belong to the Committee. The first gentleman taking part in the discussion was the partner of Jesras - Tilokchand-Lalchand which has been at Gauhati for 115 years. There is extensive *aratdari* business carried on by the firm.

Only wholesale and not retail business is carried on. Formerly money lending business was large. At present this business is carried

on a limited scale. Money is given to Sualkuchi men who go up the Brahmaputra in boats for mustard seeds. The firm gives the sum varying annually from Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 70,000. Money is lent to them at rates of interest varying from 12 per cent to 18 per cent. The firm has the first claim to buy seeds from them and they would sell to the firm usually an *anna* or $1\frac{1}{2}$ *anna* less per *maund* and the firm would grant some remission in interest claiming say 12 per cent instead of 18 per cent. But interest is never less than 12 per cent.

The *beparis* make an entry in the firm's Bengali Khata for the amount taken by each. They put their signatures on one *anna* stamps. The firm does not generally purchase mustard seeds from them, as it gets seeds from other places. The Sualkuchi men are not often sued for money lent to them and not repaid. The firm does not now purchase mustard seeds for itself to any large extent. But as *aratdar*, it disposes of about 20,000 to 40,000 *maunds* annually.

"The oil mills banking at Gauhati make purchases from the firm. Buyers also come from outside e.g. Dinajpur, Parbatipur etc."

"Agents of European firm such as Messrs Ralli Brothers have not been coming here to purchase seeds for the last 30 years."

"Jute from Mangaldai and Nowgong comes here".

"The Marwari firms here issue *hundis* on Calcutta on receipt of money. Commission is taken at 2 or 3 *annas* per cent."

"For some, 1 *anna* commission is paid. The firm of Tilokchand issues *hundis* annually for 8 to 10 lakhs. *Hundis* are issued on Calcutta."

"Some *hundis* of tea gardens are cashed here."

"All business firms of Gauhati have either got their firms in Calcutta or Agents there. For goods obtained by Gauhati firms from up country, sellers send the bill of loading or Railway receipts to banks with *hundi*. But in case of known firms, bills of loading or Railway receipts are sent here direct and issued from here on Calcutta and sent to the firms from whom goods are obtained. All these *hundis* are cashed in Calcutta."

'Gauhati firms issue' '*Darsani hundis*' of two kinds eg. '*Hundi Jog*' and '*Saha Jog*.' The usual form is '*Hundi Jog*'. If any one wants to have *Saha Jog*, necessary addition is made in the form and the words '*Hundi Jog*' are scored through. But this form is not usually required.

'Hundi Jog' *hudnis* are nominally payable to bearer, but some enquiry is made, if the bearer happens to be unknown, before the payment is made. If payment is made, to the bearer without enquiry no responsibility will rest on the firm making such payment."

The second gentleman taking part in the discussion was a partner of 'Kaluram Sukhlal Firm.' Business of the firm in *Hundi* is 7 or 8 lakhs a year now. *Hundis* are cashed only in Calcutta. When a *hundi* is taken to Calcutta firm by a man, the firm will receive the *hundi*, grant a receipt for it and ask the man to appear next day. The firm will take his address in Calcutta and on the next day will send the *hundi* to the above address and enquire there. "For what amount did you send *hundi* on us yesterday?" If the correct sum is stated in reply, the *hundi* will be left there with direction to take the *hundi* again to the firm and take payment from there.

"Very little deposits from the public are now made in the Marwari shops at Gauhati, but if such deposits are made, Marwaris give interest at 6 per cent."

"The dealings in *hundis* in Gauhati are now about one crore of rupees a year. If there be no demand for *hundis* in Gauhati and no *hundis* are available in Gauhati and if there be a large stock of cash in hand which the firm wants to send to Calcutta, then the amount is taken to Shillong by the firm's private motor service and made deposit there to the Imperial Bank through their firm's agent. The Imperial Bank charges 1 *anna* per hundred if the amount is above Rs. 10,000 and 2 *annas* per hundred if it is below Rs. 10,000 but above Rs. 5,000, for telegraphic transfer to Calcutta. No amount can be remitted in that way if it is below Rs. 6,000. Money is not sent in this way from Gauhati treasury because much trouble is experienced here. Treasury receives chalans for "Ganja" and opium in the first hours. The money is not received before 2 P. M. Then when counting is commenced at about 2 P. M., it is not finished before 4 P. M. There are other troubles too. So the firms prefer to send money by motor to the Imperial Bank, Shillong, for telegraphic transfer or remit the money to Calcutta in currency notes the insurance fee being 2 *annas* per hundred.

"Lending business is now small in the Marwari firms as it is difficult to realise money from borrowers which raises various sorts of objections in court. In execution proceedings such objections are numerous and decretal money is very troublesome to realise".

Alongwith the Marwari firms, the role played by the "*Hati fund*" in the growth of indigenous banking of Barpeta may also be mentioned. It is recorded in the Evidence Report of the Assam Banking Enquiry Committee (1929-30) that in Barpeta there were about 22 *Hatis* of which 3 were main *Hatis*. The local people of Barpeta divided themselves into sections or *Hatis* for the sake of convenience of their religious service. Thus the '*Hati fund*' was originated from the donation of the bridegroom's party on the occasion of marriage. (Now of course with the change of time donations have to be given by the brides party). The amount thus collected was lent out to the members of the *Hati* at the rate of 12% per annum (p. 477).

The *Hati* funds are still operating in Barpeta and thus meeting the local financial requirements of the members of the *Hatis*.

It may be pointed out here that majority of the indigenous bankers of the district combine banking with some form of trade and the capital employed in banking is not distinguished from that employed in trade. Their main business is trade and money lending is only a subsidiary part. With the gradual development of commercial banks and Co-operative banks, they have turned to trade and stopped banking business. Like other parts of the state, the indigenous banking business in the district is negligible.

2. General Credit Facilities Available In The District :

(i) **Agricultural Sector :** The district of Kamrup, as the rest of Assam is predominantly rural as more than 90 per cent of the people of the district live in the rural areas. As a result its economy is primarily agricultural, as about 70 per cent of the people depend upon agricultural operations for their means of livelihood and more than 40 per cent of the income of the district is derived from the agricultural sector. The cultivators of the district in general are economically very poor and average agricultural income is very low, because of low productivity of the district caused by general factors concerning economic, social and institutional characteristics. Of these factors the most crucial are small and fragmented holding, primitive methods of cultivation, uncertainty of weather, regular incidence of floods, lack of sub-sidiary sources of income, lack of propensity to save, extravagance in social ceremonies like marriage, 'shradha' etc. Since sufficient savings are not generated in the rural area, financing the different types of agricultural operations is a great

problem. The agriculturists of the district require different types of agricultural credit and they have to depend upon various agencies for the supply of credit. We will now discuss about the different types of credit the agriculturists require and the relative importance of the various sources of rural credit in the district.

Periodically the cultivators require three types of loans—short term repayable within one year or less, medium-term repayable within 3 years or less and long-term repayable within ten years or less.

The short-term loans are required for current agricultural operations like purchase of seeds, fertilisers, payment of labour etc. The medium-term loans are required for the purchase of bullocks etc. and the long-term loans are required for repayment of old debts and making permanent improvement of the plot of land. It is to be noted that an average cultivator requires mainly short-term loans for his current agricultural operations. This is more true in case of Barpeta sub-division where jute cultivation requires extensive short-term rural finance than any other crop.

The rural credit is supplied by different agencies in the district such as (a) government, (b) co-operatives, (c) relatives, (d) land lords (agricultural money lenders), (f) professional money lenders, (g) traders and commission agents, (h) commercial banks and others. It may be noted that institutional sources of finance like co-operatives, commercial banks, Government etc. have some distinct advantages over the private sources like relatives, money lenders etc., in the matter of rates of interest and other terms and conditions of loans.

It is also a fact that four-fifths of the rural credit are supplied by money-lenders, friends and relatives. The institutional finance in the pre-independence days was practically no-existent. It is also now observed from the available data that institutional sources of credit play relatively an insignificant role in providing necessary finance to agriculturists in the state of Assam and also in the district of Kamrup. In this connection it may be mentioned that the All-India Rural Credit Survey Committee appointed by the Reserve Bank of India made an extensive survey of the system of rural credit in India in 1951-52. The report indicates the relative role played by the different credit agencies in rural finance. In the table below the relevant data are given for All-Assam and the district of Kamrup.

Table 1 : Proportions of amount borrowed from different Agencies by Cultivators (1951-52).

	All-Assam	Kamrup district
1. Average amount borrowed per family from all agencies : (in Rs.)	122	142
2. Proportions of amount borrowed from : (in per cent)		
(a) Government :	6.2	5.6
(b) Co-operatives :	0.5	..
(c) Commercial Banks	..	..
(d) Relatives	65.7	72.5
(e) Agricultural money-lenders	17.6	24.7
(f) Professional money-lenders	7.5	2.1
(g) Traders and Commission Agents	0.9	4.2
(h) Others	1.6	0.7

Source : *All India Rural Credit Survey Vol-111 : The Technical Report*, Bombay, 1956, p. 294.

No recent survey on the subject was conducted in the district and hence no data for the seventies are available. The above table shows the relative insignificance of the institutional agencies of credit in the district of Kamrup as in all over Assam, as the predominant role is played by relatives and money lenders. It may be noted that private agencies cannot be regular and reliable sources of rural credit. Commercial banks also have some definite limitations in providing requisite and timely credit to the agriculturists. For the supply of rural credit, it is the co-operative societies which are best suited. As these are formed among the agriculturists, they have close touch with the members and can easily assess the requirements of credit worthiness of the borrowers.

But the role played by the co-operative in providing loans to the agriculturists of the district at the start of the economic planning was unsatisfactory as will be evident from the data given above. Unfortunately during the five decades of economic planning the progress of the rural co-operative credit movement in the district was very slow and tardy as can be judged by such well-known criteria of number of primary agricultural credit societies per lakh of rural population, number of members

per society, average deposits per society, average working capital per society, average loan per society etc.

Authentic datas regarding the progress of the co-operative movement in the district is not available. However from the All-India Rural Debt and Investment Survey (1961-62) it can be known that the proportion of amount borrowed from co-operatives by the cultivators of the district of Kamrup was 1.7. in the year. Again, from a survey of some selected villages in Kamrup district conducted by prof. K.C. Sarma ("Rural Credit in Assam - case study Nalbari sub-division" a Ph. D. thesis under Gauhati University, 1973) in 1968-69, it is revealed that only about 4 per cent of the borrowings of the cultivators in the surveyed villages were from the co-operatives. If these villages are assumed to represent the district then it is clear that although the significance of co-operatives has registered slight increase over the plan period, they have yet a long way to go to become the major source of rural credit in the district.

(ii) Indebtedness, Rural and Urban and the Extent to which usury is prevalent :

Rural : It is estimated that there are 5,20,000 rural indebted families throughout Assam and it is estimated further that each indebted family requires at least Rs. 2,000/- per year for the agricultural operation. On the basis of this fact the total indebtedness in the state of Assam comes to roughly rupees ten crores in a year. In the district of Kamrup there were 3,64,640 and 4,58,279 houses according to the censuses of 1961 and 1971 respectively and except a few, the families are generally poor. In absence of any official records we may take 4th of this number as indebted families in the district and taking the average of Rs. 2,000/- per family the total indebtedness comes to roughly 6,874 lakhs of rupees and this amount appears to be no exaggeration. About the indebtedness of the urban population there is no definite data. As per 1971 census there were 335,155 urban population in the district and at the rate of average 5 members in a family the total urban family comes to 67,031. If we consider $\frac{1}{4}$ th of them to be indebted with a requirement of annual loan of Rs. 5,000/- per family for various purposes the total annual indebtedness is estimated at Rs. 837,85000. Thus, it is evident that there is considerable burden of indebtedness in the rural section. P.C. Goswami in his "the Economic Development of Assam" states as follows : "Growth of population and stagnation of rural productivity with limitation of employment opportunities are sure to lead to greater indebtedness."

1. P.C. Goswami : *The Economic Development of Assam* 1963. Page 60

As to the prevalence of usury it may be said that though the Assam Money Lending Act was passed long ago, no records are available as to the number of money lenders in the district as no attempt appears to have been made for their registration. Moreover, the provisions of the Money Lenders Act are evaded by unscrupulous money lenders at all stages. The bonds are obtained no doubt, but the terms and conditions and the rate of interest are not written except obtaining thumb impression or signature of the borrowers. Sometimes with a verbal understanding between the lender and the borrower, interest is charged at the rate of one *anna* per rupee per month which means 75% per annum.

This is more true in the case of areas of Barpeta Sub-division where immigrant Muslims require huge amount of money for raising their jute crop. It may be mentioned here that the Chairman of the Barpeta Co-operative Town Bank while giving evidence before the Assam Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee 1929-30 (vol II Evidence, page 476) said that there were about 100 professional money lenders in Barpeta and they were all traders and shop-keepers. About the prevalence of rate of interest, the same gentleman said, - "Among the Assamese the general rate is 2 per cent, in the case of immigrants, money is lent at 1 *anna*, 1½ *anna* and 2 *anna* per rupee per month. I had experience of one case where even 4 *annas* was charged. In Barpeta most of the money is lent to the Mymensing immigrants in the hope of getting a higher profit. A considerable portion of this money had not been realised but it must be said that the immigrants are good payers. They pay when they have money in their hands from a good crop", (page 476).

It was also revealed in the Evidence Report (page 476) that in Gauhati, the Usurious Loans Act of 1918 had limited application. Besides, the local *Mahajans* (indigenous bankers) also played some part in original agricultural finance in the district.

The following observation made in the Economic Survey, Assam, 1975-76 reveals the actual state of affairs in this regard and it also highlights the measures as initiated by the government to overcome the situation.

"Liquidation of rural indebtedness and moratorium on recovery of debts from the landless poor is one of the important items of the 20

point Economic programme. The enactment of the Assam Rural Indebtedness Relief Bill 1975, which has been passed by the Assam Legislative Assembly, may lead to reluctance on the part of the rural money lenders to advance any loan, particularly to the weaker section of the people. Under such circumstances, alternative provisions of loans to these section of people have to be made to cater to their urgent needs. The Gaon Panchayat-level Multipurpose Co-operative Societies may play a pioneering role in this regard. Efforts are being made by the State Government to streamline these Co-operatives so that these societies may accept deposits and provide loans to the needy people."

Urban indebtedness : For want of reliable data the actual position of urban indebtedness in the district is not known. But the sources of urban credit are almost the same as those of the rural credit. Nevertheless, the role played by the credit agencies in both the urban and rural sectors is different. While the *mahajans* or land owners play a significant role in providing loans in the rural areas, the business men 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 transaction is completed on the basis of some entries in their registers usually called "Rokar". Now-a-days the commercial banks also play a very significant part in providing credit to the businessmen and others in the urban areas. Various types of loans are advanced by these banks to industry, trade and commerce. Various sections of the urban people avail the credit facilities extended by these banks. In short, institutional finance has made some headway in the urban areas specially in the period of post-nationalisation of banks.

Private money lenders and financiers : Old and renowned families and highly prominent figure : The role of private money lenders and financiers in the district has been aptly described in the Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of Kamrup district March (1928) which is more or less correct still now, as follows : "Though there are signs of improvement in the condition of the cultivator, he has little surplus and when called upon all on a sudden to undergo substantial expenditure, his only recourse is to the money lender. The usual occasions which lead a man into heavy debt are the purchase of plough cattle and marriage of boys in the family. Cultivators of the poorer class meet such expenses by taking advances and working off the sums by keeping members of their families as 'Bandhas'. Those who are

relatively better-off borrow money on their personal security or on that of their property. The prevailing rate of interest in the Assamese area is 25 per cent per annum. In the case of immigrants of Bengal, however, the money lenders whether Assamese or non-Assamese charge interest at rates which are higher ; the Marwari rate is about 6 *pices* per month i.e. 37½ per cent per annum : the Assamese money lender lends out at an *anna* per rupee per month while the Bengal *Saha* goes upto two *annas* per rupee per month in doubtful or risky cases. One hardly hears of co-operative credit societies in the *mufassal*" (Page 18-19).

It is however to be noted that the dominance of the private money lenders and financiers has gone down to a considerable extent since the emergence of the commercial banking institutions and the co-operative credit societies. In the year 1958-59, there were 37 large sized Agricultural Credit Societies (with 15,826 members) 666 small sized Agricultural Credit Societies (with 17,621 members) and 39 of Non-Agricultural Credit Societies (with 3,227 members) in Kamrup district (as recorded in the Statistical Abstract, 1960-61). These credit societies meet the requirement of substantial portion of agricultural and non-agricultural people of the district.

It is necessary also to mention the role of the Afghan people commonly known as "Kabuliwala" who supply a considerable amount of money to the needy people both in urban and rural areas. In the town of Gauhati, these Afghan people are operating their business since long time back, but in Barpeta town they are hardly to be met with. The popularity of a Kabuliwala's lending was explained by Sri Kamakhya Ram Barua, a pleader and leading citizen of Gauhati while giving evidence before the Assam Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee 1929-30 (Evidence Report Page 483) which reads as follows :

"His rate is 2 *pices* to one *anna* per rupee per month. He mostly lends to the menials and those people who can not borrow money from other lenders". This observation makes it clear that the 'Kabulis' taking advantage of the helplessness of the poor borrower dictate heavy rate of interest which they realise mostly without fail.

As to old and renowned families and highly prominent figures in money lending business some indications have already been given in describing the history of the indigenous banking of the district. Recent information in this respect is not readily available as families undertaking money-lending business are reluctant to class themselves as money lenders.

The District Census Hand Book, 1951 (page 231), stated that in the district, 92 persons (male 81 and female 11) were engaged in money lending, banking and other financial business. After ten years in 1961 the number of money lenders was reduced to 36.

(iii) **Joint Stock Banks :** In Assam, the growth of joint stock commercial banking is of comparatively recent origin and has been tardy. Banking and Credit facilities so far available in the district are inadequate. Though there are branch offices of a number of Joint Stock Banks in the district, their head offices are usually outside the state.

The institution of joint stock banking in the district of Kamrup is of very recent origin. Till about 1934 some loan offices were only functioning in the district. The investment of the loan offices was against landed property and rate of interest was exorbitant. The Gauhati Bank Ltd, the pioneer indigenous commercial bank of the state started in 1926, was also functioning as a loan office till 1935 in the residence of respective Managing Directors.

The following list shows the numbers of joint stock banks operating at present in Kamrup district.

1. Gauhati Bank 2 (RO) Non-Scheduled bank, (Purbanchal Bank).
2. Central Bank of India.
3. Grindlays Bank.
4. Punjab National Bank.
5. State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur.
6. State Bank of India 2(S.P.O) (Two more branches at Nalbari & Jalukbari have been established recently).
7. Union Bank of India.
8. United Bank of India.
9. United Commercial Bank - 2 sub-branches.
10. Allahabad Bank.
11. Canara Bank.
12. District Central Co-operative Bank.
13. Pragjyotish Gaonlia Bank.
14. Indian Bank.
15. Indian Overseas Bank.
16. Punjab and Sird Bank.
17. Vijaya Bank.

18. Bank of Baroda.
19. Bank of India.
20. Dena Bank.
21. Federal Bank.
22. Gauhati Urban Co-operative Bank.
23. Industrial Co-operative Bank.
24. Kamrup District Co-operative Bank.
25. New Bank of India.
26. Reserve Bank of India.
27. Syndicate Bank.

In the following paragraphs some more particulars have been given on the basis of reports furnished by the individual banks.

The Gauhati Bank Ltd., (now merged with Purbanchal Bank) : The Gauhati Bank Ltd., the pioneer indigenous banking institution of Assam was established at Gauhati in the year 1926. Some distinguished personalities of the state like Late Tarun Ram Phookan, Late Gopinath Bordoloi, Late Bishnu Ram Medhi and others worked as prompters of this bank with Late Rohini Kumar Choudhury as the first Managing Director. But it could be established as a full-fledged commercial bank only in the year 1936 with as many as 12 branches in all the districts of the State and one outside at Calcutta.

Thus the Bank continued to function normally accepting deposits and giving credit facilities to its numerous constituents by way of loan, overdraft and cash-credit. The credit facilities were extended mainly against commercial enterprises, business organisations, and government contracts and supplies; but the main credit was given against tea industry and all such investments were based on adequate securities. In the year 1940, the Bank was recognised by the Government of Assam under Rules 426 of Assam Finance Rule and the Bank was brought into the approved list of the Reserve Bank of India and the Government of India also came to treat it as a recognised bank and this bank was also receiving remittance of big amount through Treasury. During the economic crisis of 1950, the Bank has to suspend its business on 20th July, 1950.

Since 1951 however, the bank has again began function under a scheme of arrangement sanctioned by the Honourable High Court of Assam on 18.5.51 and the scheme though modified from time to time, had so far been successfully implemented. Out of the total deposit liabilities of the bank since suspension of its business on 20th July 1950, 100% have been

paid to charitable and philanthropic institutions and 55% to ordinary depositors. The High Court on petition, again sanctioned conversion of 30% of original deposit to share and thus the balance liabilities of the Bank was brought to 15% only. On successful implementation of the scheme, the bank now has been taken over by Purbachal Bank a newly established Bank of India.

The Purbanchal Bank Ltd. : Up to April, 1978 the Purbanchal Bank limited had thirteen branch offices in Kamrup District. These branch offices are located at Gauhati (Ulubari), Silpukhuri, Panbazar, Fancybazar, Kumarpara, Maligaon, Dispur, Azara, Mirza, Nagarbari, Barpeta, Barpeta Road, and Khetri.

The statement below provides the branch-wise transaction of the Bank in the district of Kamrup as on 31.3.75 and 31.3.77.

(Account in lacs of Rs.)

Branches	Year-31.3.75		Year 31.3.77	
	Deposit	Advance	Deposit	Advance
Gauhati (Ulubari)	53.53	41.33	125.58	80.28
Silpukhuri	37.73	20.17	66.36	37.71
Fancybazar	25.39	22.14	33.46	53.71
Dispur	7.20	3.52	19.29	8.98
Maligaon	8.13	6.00	12.01	11.24
Kumarpara	0.31	—	7.95	5.73
Panbazar	—	—	60.10	31.95
Mirza	1.60	0.76	8.63	2.89
Azara	—	—	1.29	0.18
Nagarbari	—	—	1.06	0.23
Barpeta	—	—	0.95	0.73
Khetri	—	—	1.95	0.45
Total	127.89	93.92	338.73	234.09

The Purbanchal Bank's finance to small scale industries, agriculture (direct), agriculture (indirect) farmers and petty traders in Kamrup district as on 31.3.77 stood at Rs. 20.30 ; 49.0 ; 72.2 ; 62.0 and 55.42 (all in lakh) respectively.

United Bank of India Ltd. : There are two branches of the United Bank of India in Gauhati proper. The Fancy Bazar Branch of the Bank was opened as early as on 4th of November, 1934 and the same is one of the oldest banking offices in the state. The other branch was opened at Panbazar on the 23rd. November 1963 under the name of Gauhati Branch of the United Bank of India. Both the branches are independent of each other. The Bank has the most modern three-storeyed building built at a cost of nearly six lakhs at its own premises at Panbazar and the said building is fitted with all modern security arrangements including a safe Deposit Vault with air-conditioning arrangements to extend proper services to the clients of this growing city in the form of security of their valuables. The Panbazar building of the Bank also houses the Zonal office for the Assam circle branches for control of 14 branches of the Bank in the Zone. This bank is now regarded as one of the important financial institutions in the district.

Other branch offices of the bank in the district are located at Baihata Charali, Boko, Bharalumukh, Chaygaon, Kamakhya, Khanapara, Noonmati, North Gauhati, Palasbari, Dispur, Silpukhuri, and Ulubari. All the above branches are under the Regional Office, Gauhati.

The branches of the Bank have heavy advances in industrial and commercial sectors operating within this district. It has functioned very smoothly and has contributed much to the development of industries (including tea-based industry), trade, commerce, general engineering, chemical and insecticides. The agriculture and transport sectors are also covered by this bank, although on a moderate scale. The following statistics indicate the deposit and advance positions of the United Bank of India in the district of Kamrup in the period between 31-3-75 to 31-3-77 (Amount in lacs of Rs.)

District	Deposit		Advance	
	31.3.75	31.3.77	31.3.75	31.3.77
Kamrup	1099.77	1906.62	680.16	181.83

An idea about the Bank's advances to the agriculturists, petty traders and small scale industries in the district can be had from the following data (Amount in lakhs of Rs.)

Date	Agriculture		Petty traders		Small Scale industries	
	31.3.75	31.3.77	31.3.75	31.3.77	31.3.75	31.3.77
Kamrup	4.11	5.27	39.34	63.57	43.25	108.25

The State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur, (Subsidiary of the State Bank of India) : A branch of the State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur was opened at Gauhati in May, 1954. This is the only branch of the above Bank in the State of Assam. The branch is conducting every kind of banking business, except agricultural finance. Its total advances to the medium scale industries in Assam during the period from 31.3.71 to 31.3.77 stood at Rs. 73.79 lakhs. The Bank's advance towards small scale industries is negligible as it is found to be only Rs. 72 lakhs during 1971 to 1977. Its major investment is with trading and individual loan which was Rs. 12,303 lakhs during the period.

The Punjab National Bank Ltd. : A branch of the Punjab National Bank Ltd. was opened in Gauhati in the year 1955. This is the only branch of the Bank in Kamrup District.

Grindlays Bank, Gauhati : Except the Gauhati Office, this Bank has no other branch in Assam. Its contribution for the development of small scale industries, agriculture, and petty traders in the district is not so significant. In 1971, 1975 and 1977, this Bank's advances to small scale industries and petty-traders including farmers and agriculturists were Rs. 30,40,000/-, Rs. 20,90,000/- and Rs. 16,93,000/- for the former class and Rs. 33,000/- Rs. 9,000/- and Rs. 8,000/- for the latter class respectively.

The State Bank of India : The origin of the State Bank of India can be traced back to the year 1806 when the Bank of Bengal was established as the first Presidency Bank. This was followed by the establishment of the Presidency Bank of Bombay 1840 and the Presidency Bank of Madras in 1843. These three Presidency Banks were amalgamated in 1921 to form the Imperial Bank of India. The undertaking was taken over by the Government of India as the State Bank of India constituted on the 1st. July, 1955 under the State Bank of India Act. In the district of Kamrup, the State Bank of India has branches at Gauhati, Barpeta, Nalbari, Dispur and Jalukbari. Recently two branches, one at Sarthebari and the other at Rangia have been opened to offer more banking facilities in the district. The branch offices of the State Bank of India located in the district of Kamrup transact treasury business at Panbazar (Gauhati proper), New Gauhati, Dispur, Barpeta, and Nalbari. Other branch offices of the bank in the district do not transact treasury business but do other development works as initiated by the bank through different schemes. In Assam the State Bank of India has been given the responsibility for overall development of the two Hills districts i.e., Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills.

Union Bank of India Ltd. : The Union Bank of India Limited opened its sole branch in Kamrup district on 13th June 1960. The Bank is receiving deposits from public and financing trade and industry as well. The volume of business of the bank transacted in this district amounted to Rs. 11,48,000/- in the year 1964.

The Central Bank of India Ltd. : The Assam Branch of the Central Bank of India Ltd., was opened in Panbazar, Gauhati on 6th of June 1961. This is the only branch of the above Bank located in the State of Assam. It transacts banking business of every description as per terms laid down by it.

United Commercial Bank Ltd. : There are two branches of this bank in this district. The branch located at Fancy Bazar, Gauhati was opened on 10.9.45 and the other located at Maligaon (Pandu) was opened on 17th June 1960. It may be mentioned here that the Lead Bank Scheme introduced by the Reserve Bank of India in December, 1969 is a co-ordinated scheme for mobilising deposits on a large scale throughout the country. It aims at the setting up of adequate banking facilities in the underbanked districts of the country. It is expected that the scheme will facilitate the expansion of banking facilities through the opening of new offices as well as through functioning of the existing offices in a more intensive manner. In this scheme, the district of Kamrup has been allotted to the United Commercial Bank.

Allahabad Bank Ltd. : Allahabad Bank is one of the leading 'A' class banks of India. This is the oldest Joint Stock Banking Company in India having net work of branches throughout the country. It was establishment in 1865, its working capital exceeds Rs. 100 crores.

The Bank's first branch in Assam was opened on the 29th December, 1947 at Gauhati. The bank has no other branch in this state.

The Gauhati Branch offers all kinds of banking services including Foreign Exchange. During its short span the branch has granted considerable financial assistance to local trade and is likely to extend its assistance to small scale industry and agriculture.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL BANKING :

Commercial banking was at a rudimentary stage prior to 1947 in the state of Assam, including Kamrup. However, there has been a slow but steady progress in banking and other institutional credit system since then. Particularly since the nationalisation of the major banks in 1969, the pace of development of

commercial banking in the district has been quickened. It is encouraging to note that the number of commercial bank offices in the district of Kamrup increased from 20 in 1967 to 23 in 1969, 31 in 1970, and to 39 in 1972. In June 1974 the number of scheduled commercial bank offices in Kamrup increased to 56. The corresponding figure for All-Assam was 178. Thus, the district of Kamrup accounted for a large portion of the commercial bank offices in Assam. Other indications of banking development also show the progress of banking in the district of Kamrup in the recent years. The average population per commercial bank office in the district decreased from 124 thousand in 1967 to 115 thousand in 1969, 88 thousand in 1970 and 79 thousand in 1972. The corresponding figures for All-Assam are 199 thousand, 188 thousand, 134 thousand and 101 thousand showing the comparatively better position of the district in respect of banking development than that of the state as a whole.²

The statement below shows the centre-wise deposits and advances of scheduled commercial banks in the district of Kamrup as in December 1973.³

(Amount in lakhs of rupees)

District centre.	Functioning offices	Reporting offices	Deposits	Advances
1	2	3	4	5
Kamrup	55	54	29,10	17.58
Barpeta road	2	2	25	7
Dispur	4	4	62	4
Gauhati	21	21	23.42	16.58
Maligaon	3	3	1.76	6
Nalbari	2	2	33	17
Others	23	22	2.72	66

It has been further revealed that while the deposits and advances of the scheduled commercial banks in Assam were Rs. 55,15 lakhs and

2. Directorate of Economics and Statistics : *Economic Survey*, Assam, 1970, p.107 and *Ibid*, 1975-76, p. 62.

3. *Banking Statistics, Basic Statistical Returns*, Volume 3, December 1973, p. 39.

Rs. 25,90 lakhs respectively in the year 1972; the corresponding figures in the district of Kamrup in the same years are Rs. 17,98 lakhs and Rs. 11,52 lakhs respectively. Thus the district of Kamrup accounted for about 33 per cent of the deposits and 44 per cent of the advances of the scheduled commercial banks in Assam.

In the table below more data regarding deposits and advances of scheduled commercial banks in the district of Kamrup and All-Assam in the year 1973 are given, :

Distribution of Deposits and Advances of scheduled commercial banks according to population groups

(As on the last Friday of December, 1973.)⁴

(Amount in lakhs of Rupees)

Population groups	Functioning Offices	Reporting Offices	Deposits	Advances
1	2	3	4	5
All-Assam :				
Rural	82	79	10,66	1,74
Semi-urban	66	66	47,49	16,31
Urban	25	25	24,04	16,62
Total	173	170	82,19	34,67
Kamrup :				
Rural—	24	23	3,95	43
Semi-urban—	6	6	1,11	53
Urban—	25	25	24,04	16,62
Total—	55	54	29,10	17,58

The above table shows that about 32 per cent of the commercial bank offices in Assam are concentrated in Kamrup district of Assam. Moreover, the district of Kamrup also accounted for 35 per cent of the total deposits and 50 per cent of the total advances of Assam. Again the amount of deposits per bank office and the amount of advances per bank office are

4. *Ibid*, page 21.

Rs. 54 lakhs and Rs. 33 lakhs respectively in the district of Kamrup, as against Rs. 48 lakhs and Rs. 20 lakhs only for All-Assam. It has further been revealed in the table that although only 9% of the bank office in the semi-urban areas of Assam are working in the district of Kamrup, the district has the privilege of having about 30 per cent of the bank office in the rural areas and remarkably all the bank office in the urban areas of Assam. Thus there is no doubt that although judged by the usual criteria Kamrup may be still backward in banking, the district is advancing slowly with other districts of Assam in respect of banking development.

The scheduled commercial banks have played significant part in giving credit to agriculture and allied activities, industry trade, personal loans and others. The statement below provides the occupation-wise classification of outstanding credit of Scheduled Commercial Banks in Kamrup district as on last Friday of June 1974.⁵

Amount in thousand Rupees		
Number of Functioning Offices	56	
Number of Reporting Offices	55	
OCCUPATION	No. of Accounts	Amounts
	1	2
I. AGRICULTURE AND ALLIED ACTIVITIES.	1,023	259,05
1. Agriculture excluding Plantations	973	68,22
(a) Direct Finance	878	10,31
(b) Indirect Finance	95	57,91
2. Allied Activities.	33	1,77
3. Plantations.	17	189,06
II. INDUSTRY	1,616	930,08
(A) Mining and Quarrying.	3	1,66
(B) Manufacturing Industry.	695	743,85
1. Rice Mills, Flour and Dal Mills.	36	34,97
2. Sugar.	—	—
3. Edible Oils and Vanaspati.	16	16,49
4. Beverage and Tobacco.	5	15,89
5. Textiles.	15	32,84
(a) Cotton Textiles.	3	2,25
(b) Jute Textiles.	5	12,70
(c) Other Textiles.	7	17,89

5. Ibid, June/1974, Vol 4. page 188.

6. Paper, Paper Products and Printing.	48	47,69
7. Leather and Leather Products.	—	—
8. Rubber and Rubber Products.	6	2,02
9. Chemicals and Chemical Products.	39	49,45
(a) Heavy Industrial Chemicals.	—	—
(b) Fertilisers.	1	1,02
(c) Drugs and Pharmaceuticals.	11	20,52
(d) Others.	27	27,91
10. Manufacture of Basic Minerals.	16	271,14
11. Cement.	3	2,89
12. Basic Metal and Metal Products.	49	80,92
(a) Iron and Steel.	23	55,50
(b) Others.	26	25,42
13. Engineering.	18	28,23
(a) Heavy Engineering.	6	4,50
(b) Light Engineering.	12	23,73
14. Vehicles, Vehicle Parts and Transport Equipment	22	16,04
15. Others.	422	145,28
(C) Electricity-Generation, Transmission and Distribution.	1	,13
(D) Construction.	27	33,34
(E) Transport, Storage and Communication.	612	101,27
(F) Personal and Professional Services.	278	49,83
1. Professional Services.	153	6,05
2. Artisans and Craftsmen.	20	6,39
3. Other Services.	105	37,39
III. TRADE	1,465	620,27
1. Whole-sale Trade.	238	463,01
2. Retail Trade.	1,227	157,26
IV. PERSONAL LOANS (INCLUDING CONSUMER DURABLES).	728	45,90
V. ALL OTHERS.	1,443	365,40
TOTAL BANK CREDIT (I+II+III+IV+V).	6,275	2220,70
Of which Small-scale Industry	617	404,42

(V) BANK LOANS TO SMALL SCALE INDUSTRY :

The role of banks in financing small scale industry in the district of Kamrup is far from satisfactory. Commercial banks in general do not provide long-term capital to the industries. In the matter of providing short-term capital also, the small enterprises of the district are ignored by the big commercial banks. This will be evident from the following table giving the sector-wise bank loans in the district of Kamrup in 1973.

Occupation-wise classification of outstanding credit of scheduled commercial banks in the district of Kamrup, as on the last Friday of December 1973 is given below.⁶

(Amount in thousands of Rupees).

Occupation	* Number of accounts	Amount
1. Agriculture & Allied Activities.	1,183	161,39
2. Industry, Small Industry.	1,514	873,23
3. Trade	1,430	451,95
4. Personal Loans	743	53,46
5. All Others	993	328,28
Total :	5,863	1868,31

It is clear in the above table that the small industries sector of Kamrup is a neglected one in the matter of bank loan. Thus in 1973 there were only 577 accounts of small industries out of 5,863 accounts in total, that is, only 9.8 per cent of the total. Moreover, though the number of accounts of small industries form 38 per cent of the total accounts of industries as a whole, small industries received only 22 per cent of the total bank loans in the district in the reference year. This figure constitutes 47 per cent of bank loans to industries.

As regards ratio between the deposit and advances, the Scheduled Commercial banks have made significant progress in recent years in respect of collection of deposits. The following statistics indicate year-wise distribution of deposits of scheduled commercial banks in Kamrup district during the period from 1972 to 1974.⁷ The figures for the first two years relate to December 1972 and 1973 respectively while for 1974, they cover upto June 1974 only.

6. Ibid, December 1973, Vol. 3, page 196.

7. Ibid, 1972, Vol 1. December 1972, page 72 ;

Ibid, 1973, Vol. 3, December 1973, page 85 ; and

Ibid, 1974, Vol 4, June 1974, page 78.

(Amount in lakhs of Rupees)

Year	No. of functioning offices.	Current		Savings		Fixed		Others		Total	
		No. of accounts	Amount	No. of accounts.	Amounts	No. of accounts	Amounts	No. of accounts	Amounts	Accounts	Amounts
1	2		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1972	45	8,974	5,28	57,854	6.84	12,761	8,78	939	95	80,528	21,85
1973	55	14,362	7,97	73,375	8,01	16,630	12,24	1,588	30	1,05,955	28,522
1974	56	13,643	8,44	83,444	9,21	17,527	17,78	4,864	62	1,19,508	36,05

In the subsequent years the scheduled commercial banks have made some headway in the district which is indicated in the following table.

(Rupees in lakhs)

Kamrup	1975				1976		
	No. of offices	Deposits	Advances	No. of offices	Deposits	Advances	
	78	4680	3120	96	6027	4345	

(Source : Economic Survey of Assam. 1978-79. Page 61.)

Under the auspices of the Banking Commission, a survey was conducted by the Department of Economics, Gauhati University in 1970 in order to examine the credit needs and problems of small enterprises in and around the city of Gauhati with particular reference to the extent to which commercial and co-operative banks helped to meet their credit requirements. Since Gauhati is the only major industrial city in the district, the survey gives us a representative picture of the role of commercial banks and co-operative banks in providing finance to small enterprises in the district. The said report indicated that the total working capital of the small enterprises in and around Gauhati in 1970 from institutional sources stood at Rs. 97,13,000/-. The institution-wise total borrowings stood as follows : from commercial banks Rs. 54,69,000 ; co-operatives Rs. 8,68,000/- and from government agencies Rs. 33,76,000/-. As against this, the total borrowings from non-institutional sources are only Rs. 2,46,000. Total liabilities which include sundry credit and all other liabilities in additions to borrowings from institutional and non-institutional sources, stood at Rs. 247,51,000. Of the total 31 per cent are against 9.9 per cent of the non-institutional borrowings and 59 per cent of the sundry credits and other liabilities. Of the total institutional borrowings amounting to Rs. 97,13,000, the borrowings from commercial banks accounts for Rs. 54,69,000 or in other words, 56.5 per cent, those from co-operatives Rs. 8,68,000 or 8.9 per cent and government agencies Rs. 33,76,000 or 34.7 per cent. Of the 185 units in the sample, 74 units have stated that they did not approach any commercial banks or co-operative and 79 units have approached them and got credit.

Since the nationalisation of the 14 major commercial banks in the country several schemes were adopted so that the banking system could play an effective role in rural upliftment. One such scheme is the Rural Bank Scheme through which the commercial banks are expected to supply credit to small farmers and weaker sections and landless agricultural labourers. It has shown noteworthy progress recently in the entire in Sub-division of Nalbari, in Kamrup district.

Another important innovation is the Lead Bank Scheme which was introduced in Kamrup along with other districts. In the North-Eastern region, three big commercial banks were assigned the lead bank responsibilities. Kamrup district was assigned to the United Commercial Bank as mentioned earlier to play the lead role in surveying and developing the banking potential of the district. The lead bank has to bring about the co-ordination of co-operative banks, commercial banks and other financial institutions for intensive development of the district. For various

reasons, the Lead Bank Scheme did not make much of a headway in the district as is also the case in other parts of the country.

As activities of commercial banks generally remain confined to urban and semi-urban areas, in order to attend mainly to liquidation of rural indebtedness the Reserve Bank of India recommended expansion of banking activities to rural area. In pursuance of the recommendation, the Regional Rural Bank Act, 1976 was passed and under this Act the *Pragjyotishpur Goalia Bank* was established in Assam on 8th July 1976, as the 20th Regional Rural Bank of the country. Its head quarter is at Gauhati and its operational area jurisdiction is over Goalpara, Kamrup and Darrang. In 1978, total deposit with the Bank was Rs. 102.8 lakhs, advances were Rs. 68.34 lakhs of which Rs. 48 lakhs were to the agricultural sector.

3. CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT SOCIETIES AND BANKS :

The Co-operative Societies Act, 1904 provided an era of Co-operation in the field of rural credit in Kamrup district as in other plains districts of the state. The object of the above Act was confined to provision of Cheap Credit Societies which were formed under this Act in the district. The main difficulties of the rural societies formed during the period from 1904 to 1912 was the paucity of working capital. In order to expand the area of activity of the co-operatives, the Co-operative Societies Act of 1912 was passed. This Act removed the restrictions on non-credit co-operation and allowed formation of productive and distributive societies, besides the central organisations.

During the period from 1904 to 1912 only Co-operative Credit Societies with unlimited liabilities were organised and registered in small numbers. From 1912 to 1928, Agricultural Credit Societies, Urban Banks, Consumers Stores, and Thrift Societies were organised under Co-operative Societies Act of 1912, Government of India. Since 1929 the credit movement faced a serious crisis owing to world-wide trade depression which continued till the year 1939 and as a result most of the credit societies had to be wound up. From 1939 to 1942 the co-operative movement in the district was virtually at a standstill and the credit movement completely collapsed. Since 1942 owing to rising prices due to World War-II consumers movement was started and a net work of consumers co-operatives stores were organised and registered for supplying controlled commodities to consumers. This consumers movement continued till de-control in the year 1948. As a sequel to de-control most of the stores collapsed.

Then again in the year 1949 owing to imposition of control, the trading co-operatives sprang up. These co-operatives took up monopoly of procuring controlled commodities from production centres mainly textile goods and catered to the needs of the consumers till de-control in the year 1953 and since then the trading co-operatives began to collapse one after another within a year's time. Then again weaver's co-operatives sprang up under the Handloom Development Scheme and a net-work of Weavers Societies were organised and registered in the district. These Weaver's Societies were supplied with looms, accessories and raw materials through a number of Government Emporia and the finished products were in turn sold through these Emporia. This Handloom Development Scheme was implemented through the Weaving and Sericulture Department till the year 1958, but for better management this scheme was transferred to Co-operative Department and the Apex Weavers Co-operative later on.

Again the credit movement was revived in the year 1954 after a rural credit survey of Reserve Bank of India and credit facilities for short-term, medium-term and specially long and medium-term loans made available from Reserve Bank of India channelised through the Assam Co-operative Apex Bank Ltd. The Central Co-operative Banks were newly organised and credit facilities to farmers began through a net-work of Agricultural Credit Societies with un-limited liabilities. Later on, these small societies were not found suitable to cater to the needs of the cultivators as these were not viable. So, under the direction of Government of India large sized Credit Co-operatives with limited liabilities were organised side by side with a Central Co-operative Land Mortgages Bank Ltd. Government participated in its share capital and provided loans and subsidies for construction of godowns etc. The large sized societies continued functioning till introduction of Service Co-operative although these large sized societies are in existence side by side with service and marketing co-operative. From the year 1957 a net-work of service co-operatives had to be organised with a view to have full co-ordination of co-operative and Panchayat Raj and also for better management of co-operatives for giving adequate financial relief to its members. The Land Mortgage Bank has also been developed by affiliating a number of primary banks organised in each sub-division.

From the year 1958 the Marketing Societies began to be helped by Government with loan and subsidies worth Rs. 20,000/-. All these marketing societies are helped by Government with controlled godowns spread over throughout the whole district. The Apex Co-operative Marketing Society had to be organised as a federal unit with head office at Gauhati.

This Apex Marketing Society has been functioning well in supplying consumer goods through co-operative societies and market the produces of mainly paddy and jute through Marketing Societies. This State Trading Scheme for procurement of paddy has been operating through this Apex Marketing Co-operative having monopoly license for procuring paddy through the agency of Marketing and Service Co-operatives.

Co-operative Farming has also been organised under the Pilot and Non-pilot Project Scheme by pulling land of the marginal cultivators and also by obtaining government waste land for those - cultivators who are landless.

Since 1962 the consumers movement had to be revived owing to soaring prices. In each of the municipal ward of Gauhati town one consumer's store has been organised under a co-operative wholesale society. These stores have been given liberal grants and loans by government for their speedy growth and for keeping down the prices.

All the Apex societies were organised and registered at Gauhati.

(i) Co-operative Banks :

The Assam Co-operative Apex Bank Ltd. : The central office of this bank is located at Gauhati. Besides, the bank has its branch offices at Gauhati, Barpeta and Nalbari in Kamrup district. The Assam Co-operative Apex Bank Ltd., was registered on 7th December 1948 with an authorised share capital of Rs. 3½ crores composed of shares of Rs. 10 each. The limit of the authorised share capital was reduced to Rs. 50 lakhs on 6th October, 1955 while the value of the share was raised to Rs. 50/-. By a later amendment of bye-laws the authorised share capital has been increased to Rs. 1 crore made up to 2 lakhs ordinary share of Rs. 50 each.

The Minister-in-charge of Co-operation is the Chairman of the Bank and he exercises general control and supervision over the affairs of the bank. The value of shares held by the State Government in 1962 was Rs. 22,00,000.

As the major partner, the State Government is powerfully represented on the management of the bank. Subject to the control of the Administrative Council and Board of Directors, the Managing Director, who is a state Civil Service personnel, is the Chief Executive of the Bank.

This bank was organised as part of the Rural Development Scheme in which trading was expected to play a significant role. To finance the trading co-operatives the Bank established branches in all the sub-divisional towns of the state. Subsequently the Apex Bank opened its branch offices

at Dispur, Noonmati and Barpeta. At present total number of branches of this Bank in Kamrup is 6.

The object for which the Apex Bank has been established includes financing the co-operative movement of the State. But the Bank's success in attracting deposits has been remarkable considering that the other co-operative institutions have a poor record in the field. The composition of deposits on 30th June, 1961 were as follows :

Nature of deposits	Individuals	Societies
Fixed deposits	39,52,226	5,95,900
Savings Bank	1,07,88,938	18,57,784
Current deposits	2,08,15,693	74,78,788

The position of deposits of the Apex Bank in Kamrup district as on 30.6.71 ; 30.6.75 and 30.6.77 stood at Rs. 401.64, Rs. 1267.11 and Rs. 1751.40 lakhs respectively.

At the initial stage, loan operations of Apex Bank were confined to the financing of the trading co-operatives. Later it took up the business of tea garden finance. After the launching of the Rural Credit Scheme, the Bank has been drawn increasingly into the field of agricultural finance. The advance of the Bank to the individuals and societies consisted of (i) General -- (a) Cash Credit, (b) Over draft, (c) Loans, (ii) Advances to tea -- (a) Cash Credit and (b) Loans (iii) Advances to Marketing societies. (iv) Loan to Primary Societies, (v) Loans to General Banks etc.

At the end of June 1967, the Assam State Co-operative Apex Bank has got 18 offices including the head office and 4,826 members. Its total liabilities and assets were Rs. 1,23,401 thousand and Rs. 1,14,439 thousand respectively.

In respect of rural credit the bank offers short-term, medium-term, special and long-term loans to the agriculturists and others.

The position of issue and recovery of agricultural loans given to the banks during 1968-69 were as follows :

(Rupees in Lakhs) :				
Nature of loan	Total limit sanctioned	Amount issued	Recovery	Out-standing
(i) Short-term	460.30	269.87	163.44	470.95
(ii) Medium-term	Nil	Nil	3.72	3.96
(iii) Special, Medium & Long-term	Nil	Nil	0.05	0.27

In the same year the bank confined to provide financial assistance against pledge of stocks of agricultural produce and consumer goods. It also provided finance to the urban co-operative banks against the guarantee of the State Government. The bank extended financial assistance to the wholesale consumer's co-operative societies in the shape of Cash Credit accommodation against pledge in centrally sponsored schemes and against guarantee of the Govt. of India under the guarantee scheme.

Besides the Bank sanctioned Cash Credit accommodation of Rs. 6.15 lakhs to the Kamrup District Central Co-operative Bank Ltd. for financing the Handloom Weaver's Societies situated in the district of Kamrup in 1968-69.

The Statement below shows the advance at the Apex Bank (including its branches) in Kamrup district during the period between 1971 to 1977 :

(figures in lakhs).

	Agriculture			Non-agriculture		
	1971	1975	1977	1971	1975	1977
Head office (H.O)	—	—	—	349.61	584.43	671.43
Gauhati Branch	40.41	44.49	44.79	36.50	335.00	104.87
Dispur Branch	—	—	—	—	.63	.42
Noonmati Branch	—	—	—	—	.02	.30
Barpeta	37.64	41.45	43.79	3.14	2.26	10.73
Nalbari	15.42	18.90	27.64	1.81	27.35	2.90
Kamrup total —	93.47	104.84	116.22	391.06	954.69	795.65

Co-operative Central Bank : There are two Co-operative Central Banks in the district of Kamrup and they are the Kamrup District Central Bank and the Nalbari Central Bank. At the end of June 1967, the number of offices including head office of these two banks were respectively 2 and 1, number of members were 686 and 188 as against 183 and 306 in the year 1962. At the end of June 1967, the total liabilities of these banks were respectively Rs. 5,226 thousand and Rs. 2,338 thousand and total assets Rs. 4,769 thousand and Rs. 2,136 thousand respectively. In 1975-76, this Bank had 5 offices with 99 individual and 812 primary society members and its liabilities came up to 21,321 thousand. The branches of Kamrup

District Central Co-operative Bank was merged with Assam Co-operative Apex Bank Ltd. on 16-1-79 on recommendation of the Reserve Bank of India.

The Industrial Co-operative Bank Limited : This is the only bank of its kind in Assam and its Head office is located at S.S. Road, Lakh-tokia, Gauhati. The Industrial Co-operative Bank is an Urban Co-operative Bank and comes under the category of non-agricultural credit societies. The Bank does not provide finance to agriculturists, farmers, petty traders, etc. in the agricultural sector. This Bank is meant to finance only medium scale industries. The Bank was established in 1953. The finance by the Industrial Co-operative Bank Ltd., to the small scale industries is limited to Kamrup district only. The relevant figures of loan given by the Bank in the district for three specified years are as follows :

31-3-71	:	Rs. 18,00,000.00
31-3-75	:	Rs. 24,29,606.00
31-3-77	:	Rs. 20,74,414.00

The Assam Co-operative Central Land Mortgage Bank Ltd. : This bank was organised on 14th August 1955 and registered on 2nd September 1955. The said bank was established in Assam according to the recommendations of the Rural Credit Committee. The bank started functioning from the month of March 1957. There were only two primary Land Mortgage banks in the state ; one at Gauhati and the other at Nowgong upto 1968-69. The number of primary Land Mortgage Bank in the state was 16 and all were affiliated to the Central Land Mortgage Bank in 1968-69. Out of 16 primary Land Mortgage Banks 9 banks worked with profit and 7 banks worked with loss

The membership and paid-up share capital of these banks as on 30th June 1960 were as follows :-

	No. of members	paid-up share capital
1. Individual :-		
(a) Regular	886	Rs. 67,250.00
(b) Nominal	10	Rs. 10.00
2. Societies :-		
(a) Primary Land Mortgage Bank	16	Rs. 2,35,310.00
(b) Other Society—	1	Rs. 2,500.00
3. State government—	1	Rs. 9,00,000.00
Total—	914	Rs. 12,05,070.00

The period of loan offered by the bank is generally 12 years repayable in 10 equal instalments commencing from the third year from the date of issue. The rate of interest charged to the ultimate borrower is 6½ per cent and to the primary Land Mortgage bank 4½ per cent.

The Land Mortgage Bank usually advances loan for sinking of wells, digging of canals and irrigation tanks; purchase of oil engines, pump sets, accessories, cost of levelling of land, construction of field channels, reclamation of land, laying of orchard and gardens (horticulture), other joint purposes including pisciculture, purchase of manure, resumption of old debts etc.

The present three primary land mortgage banks working in the district of Kamrup are at Gauhati, North Kamrup and Nalbari. The data regarding the important aspects of these banks for the year 1966-67 as was at the end of June 1967 are given below :-⁸

(Amount in Rs.)

	Gauhati	North Kamrup	Barpeta
1. Number of Societies—	1	1	1
2. Number of members—	1,103	475	545
3. Total liabilities—	5,19,560	1,92,880	1,62,865
4. Total Assets—	5,08,695	1,84,270	1,57,534

But a disquieting feature of the working of the Bank is the accumulation of overdues. Overdue position in the method of re-payment of interest and instalments is evolving from year to year. The North Kamrup Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank, Nalbari, is also an important primary Land Mortgage Bank.

(ii) **Primary Agricultural Credit Societies :** The number of Agricultural Credit Societies in the state of Assam increased from 3,642 in 1967-68 to 3,764 in 1968-69 which covered 71 per cent of the total number of villages. In 1975-76, number of this type of societies in Assam came down to 3,519. But the most discouraging aspect of the credit societies of Assam is that a huge number of such societies worked with loss and only a small number of societies worked with profit.

8. *Statistical Abstract of Assam 1967-68*, Deptt. of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, 1970, page 264-65.

Kamrup is basically an agricultural district where the Agricultural Credit Societies can play very significant part provided they are established on sound footing and work with profit. The statement below provides sub-division-wise number of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies, their members, share capital, working capital, and loans advances during 1968-69 in Kamrup district.

(Rupees in thousand)

(Rupees in thousand)											
	No. of Societies	No. of members	No. of societies	Short term	Medium term	Share capital	Statutory Reserve	Other Reserve	Deposits	Borrowings	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Nalbari	210	16,893	36	632	54	293	9	5	54	1,742	
Gauhati	233	21,414	40	744	2	310	12	5	113	1,910	
Barpeta	301	28,136	53	571	21	289	3	63	36	1,368	

Since 1970, financial condition of these societies worsened gradually. A great number of societies became moribund with increase in working capital, increased amount of issued loan but lesser realisation resulting in huge accumulated outstanding overdues. An attempt was made to revitalise the dormant societies through *Gaonsabha*-wise identification of societies with ultimate amalgamation of weak societies with the strong ones. But the attempt was not successful. So, the Government decided to organise Multi-purpose Co-operative Societies with operational area co-terminous with Gaon Panchayat areas. These Societies are to function as both credit and trade agencies in respect of essential requirement of rural agricultural areas. The Multi-purpose Gaon Panchayat-level Co-operative Societies have been adopted by the Apex Co-operative Bank and other Commercial Banks for financing rural credit. Number of such societies in 1975-76 was 129 with 213,731 individual membership.

Non-Agricultural Credit : In the field of non-agricultural Credit Urban Banks, Salary Earners Societies, Thrift and Credit Societies are functioning in Assam. There were 11 Urban Banks and 264 Thrift and Credit Societies in Assam at the end of June, 1969. Almost all the thrift and credit Societies were organised among the employees in schools and offices. Among the Urban Credit Societies, the Industrial Co-operative Bank Ltd., with its headquarter at Gauhati earned a net profit of Rs. 2,30,483.04 during 1968-69 and declared dividend @ 12½ per cent to its members from its own resources. Another urban bank, namely the Gauhati Co-operative Urban Bank Ltd. earned a net profit of Rs. 4,217.34 during 1968-69.

Multipurpose Co-operative Societies : All Multipurpose Co-operative Societies were originally non-agricultural credit societies. The credit financed by these societies to the members is not intended for agriculture but for other purposes. In 1966-67, there were 46 Multi-purpose Co-operative Societies in Kamrup with 1941 members. The working of all the Multipurpose Co-operative Societies in Assam for the year 1964-65, 1967-68 and 1968-69 indicates that almost all the societies were in moribund condition. In 1966-67 total outstanding short-terms and medium-term loans pending with these Societies were 31,371 and 15.50 rupees respectively. In 1968-69, in the whole state of Assam out of 110 societies only 19 societies worked with profits, 33 societies worked with loss and the remaining 58 societies worked neither with profit nor with loss.

There were various types of co-operative tradings in the state and the same pattern also are prevailing in the district. To co-ordinate the various activities of the primary trading co-operatives and to serve as a wholesale organisation, Central Trading Co-operatives were formed by affiliating the primary trading societies. The Central Trading Co-operatives act as wholesalers of the goods required by their affiliated societies and market their surplus produce. In the year 1958-59, the number of primary stores (primary trading co-operatives) in the district of Kamrup was 169 with 25,438 members.

Besides, most of the Primary Marketing Societies worked as agents either of the Apex Marketing Societies or of the Food Corporation of India in the monopoly procurement of paddy. State government assists the societies with loans and subsidies for construction of godowns. Primary Marketing Societies also deal with consumer's goods and distribution of agricultural requisities.

In respect of Consumer's Co-operative Stores mention may be made here about the Gauhati Wholesale Consumers' Co-operative Store. This is the biggest Wholesale Consumers' Co-operative Store in Kamrup district. In 1967-68 and 1968-69 the value of purchases of this co-operative store stood at Rs. 1,55,35,000 and Rs. 1,26,12,459 respectively. Similarly its value of sale in the said two years stood at Rs. 1,53,25,000 and Rs. 1,31,32,776 respectively. In 1975-76, the value of its purchases rose to Rs. 3,67,38,108 while value of sale stood at Rs. 3,69,62,457 with Govt. sold on outstanding credit of Rs. 3,78,826 and stock of Rs. 13,47,097/-

Departmental Co-operative Consumer's Stores at Gauhati : A special branch of Wholesale Co-operative Consumer's Stores Ltd. under the name and style of Sahayika was established at Gauhati in 1969. The number of

members and paid-up share capital as on 30th June, 1969 stood at Rs. 3,624 (individuals) and Rs. 3.76 lakhs respectively. Out of total paid-up capital the government contributed Rs. 3.25 lakhs. The 'Sahayika' originally opened eleven different departments but subsequently some departments were abolished due to their poor functioning. The finance of the stores was mainly arranged from the Assam Co-operative Apex Bank Ltd. and an amount of Rs. 6.07 lakhs fell due to the bank as on 30th June, 1969. But ultimately due to heavy loss the 'Sahayika' was closed.

There are a few Co-operative departmental stores run by local consumers' co-operatives at Gauhati. To mention a few are—'Sahayogi'—departmental store of Dakhin Sarania Consumers' Co-operative Ltd., 'Kalpataru', a departmental store organised by Assam Co-operative Silk House and a departmental stores of Whole-sale Co-operative Ltd. Paltanbazar with their sales counter at Dispur and a few other places within the city.

In recent years the Co-operative movement has made significant headway by establishing various kinds of Co-operative societies. At present about 29 different types of co-operatives are functioning in Kamrup district. The following consolidated statement shows the list of co-operative societies in Kamrup district (sub-division—wise and type-wise) as on 31.12.80.

Type of Co-operative Societies.	Gauhati	Nalbari	Barpeta	Total
1. GPL Societies	45	38	46	129
2. School & College Coops.	92	63	35	190
3. Marketing Societies.	6	3	6	15
4. Fishery Co-ops.	45	15	63	123
5. Farming Co-ops.	62	32	33	127
6. Canteen Co-ops.	10	1	1	12
7. Consumers Co-ops.	58	8	26	92
8. Weaving Co-ops.	108	86	96	290
9. Multipurpose Co-ops.	22	—	10	32
10. Larger-sized Societies.	6	19	8	33
11. KSSS (Krishak Sahay)	63	220	191	474
12. Gaolia Bank.	69	114	36	219
13. Thrift & Credit Societies.	59	19	16	94
14. Industrial Co-op. Societies.	138	38	40	216
15. Housing Co-op. Societies.	5	—	—	5

Type of Co-operative societies	Gauhati	Nalbari	Barpeta	Total
16. Transport Co-ops.	16	—	—	16
17. Labour Co-ops.	8	—	3	11
18. Cattle & Poultry	6	—	1	7
19. Other Type of Societies.	19	39	24	82
20. Trading Co-op. Societies.	—	28	21	49
21. Paddy Husking Co-op.	—	—	17	17
22. State & District level Coops.	10	—	4	14
23. Wholesale Co-op.	1	1	1	3
24. Processing Society.	—	—	1	1
25. Milk Producing Co-op.	6	7	2	15
26. Bank with Panchayat-Level Multipurpose Society.	2	2	4	8
27. Sugar Mill.	—	1	—	1
28. Jute Mill.	—	—	1	1
29. Statefed.	1	—	—	1
	857	745	687	2,287

Handloom Co-op. Societies : One of the most important aspects of the Co-op. sector in the district of Kamrup is the Weaving Co-op. Societies. This is an indigenous art and every girl and woman of the district has the mastery over it. This type of cottage industry can make the rural economy solvent. But the people are poor and need financial help for making the sector a success. There are 290 Primary Weaving Co-op Societies in the district affiliated to the Assam Apex Weavers & Artisans, Co-op. Federation Ltd. (Artfed). The Govt. have adopted scheme for financial assistance to those societies i.e. **share capital loan scheme** for working capital for purchase of accessories and subsidy both for managerial and working capital. The Govt. have introduced rebate scheme for handloom cloths. The artfed has introduced a Janata Scheme for financing the primary co-operatives both in cash and kind and extended facilities for developing of their products.

4. General and Life Insurance : Leading Companies operating, risks covered, extent of business etc. :

There was no life insurance and other general insurance activities in the district of Kamrup till 1930. The Bhaskar Insurance Company Ltd. established in 1936 was the first to originate in this district with its Head Office at Gauhati. The other companies having their branch or sub-offices

in the district (mainly at Gauhati) to carry on Life and General Insurance were as follows :-

1. Oriental Government Security Life Insurance Co.
2. Hindustan Co-operative Insurance Society.
3. United India.
4. National Indian Life Insurance Co.
5. National Insurance Co.
6. Metropolitan.
7. General Assurance.
8. New Asiatic.
9. Calcutta Insurance.
10. Warden Insurance.
11. New India Assurance Co.
12. Bombay Mutual Life Assurance Society.
13. Prithivi Mutual Provident Co.
14. Asiatic Government Security.
15. Bhaskar Insurance Co. Ltd.
16. Ruby General Insurance Co.

Since the formation of the Life Insurance Corporation, Life Insurance business in India was separated from General Insurances.

(i) Life Insurance : The Gauhati Divisional office of the Life Insurance Corporation is one of the 35 Divisional offices functioning in India. The said Divisional Office at Gauhati is now accommodated in its own magnificent building at Fancy Bazar. The Divisional Office at Gauhati started functioning with effect from 1st of September 1956 under Calcutta Zonal office to cater to the needs of insuring public of Assam, Tripura and Manipur. In addition to 8 (eight) branches and 4 (four) sub-offices in different districts of Assam, there is one branch office at Gauhati and one sub-office at Nalbari. The sub-office at Nalbari was opened on 1st of June 1960 with a view to extend the benefit of insurance to the public residing in the Community Development Blocks. Now-a-days the utility of Life Insurance has spread even to the remotest villages of the district and since the nationalisation of insurance business people are taking more interest in getting their lives insured. To make the Life Insurance business more popular, various development centres in suitable places have been started in different parts of the district and with that end in view, Group Insurance and salary saving scheme have been introduced in a number of institutions and government offices of Kamrup.

The Gauhati Divisional Office issued policies worth Rs. 6 crores in 1957, Rs. 8 crores in 1958 and Rs. 11.7 crores in 1959. There are 162 Field Officers and about 4,000 active Agents working under various branches of this Division.

To increase all-round efficiency of works, a Training Unit for Field Officers of Gauhati Division and Jalpaiguri Division was established at Gauhati in the middle of 1959.

On the administrative side, Junior Officers and Superintendents of this Division are to be deputed to Nagpur for training in the Administrative Training College, Nagpur, set up for the purpose of imparting training to all Junior Officers and Superintendents of the Corporation. Like other Divisional Offices, this office is also equipped with modern machine calculators and computers.

The Gauhati Branch of the Corporation, is one of the major branch offices under the Divisional Office, Gauhati. Its jurisdiction extended to the entire district of Kamrup prior to opening of Nalbari sub-office. The business written by Gauhati branch in 1957, 1958 and 1959 stood as follows : Rs. 1,25,82,750, Rs. 1,61,62,860 and Rs. 2,08,74,175.

The Corporation has Five-Year Plan beginning from the year 1959, a total business of Rs. 428 crores was written in the first year of the plan period. The following statement shows the expanding activities and business potentiality of the Divisional office of Gauhati.

Year	No. of Policies	Total Premium Income	Total payment	Sum Assured
1960	41,238	1,25,31,500.00	8,20,600/-	12,67,53,525/-
1965-66	44,676	3,38,52,500.00	45,88,100/-	18,38,58,292/-
1970-71	38,469	5,41,02,800.00	1,14,07,700/-	25,08,66,500/-
1975-76	66,362	10,72,98,000.00	2,79,14,900/-	55,03,87,950/-
1976-77	63,504	11,86,34,300.00	2,55,92,900/-	52,38,31,700/-

(Source : L. I. C. Divisional Office, Gauhati.)

Now the jurisdiction of the Life Insurance Corporation, Gauhati Division extends to the State of Arunachal, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, and Nagaland. Besides the Divisional office at Gauhati

it has branch offices at Gauhati, Nalbari, and Barpeta. A new Development Centre has also been sanctioned for Dispur.

Life Insurance Corporation's investment in Assam and other State of the region is quite significant. The total investments in Assam as on 31.3.76 in the State Government securities, Land Developments, Bank Debentures, Electricity Board loans and Bonds, State Financial Corporation Bonds and Shares, loan to State Government for Housing Scheme shares and Debentures to companies have been of the order of 46.08 crores of which 9.96 crores have been invested in the year 1975-76.

(ii) General Insurances : 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 (four) 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 General Insurance Co. Ltd. has their Divisional Office at Gauhati to administer areas comprising the State of Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram. There are a number of Agents at other towns of the district.

The Divisional Office of the New India Assurance Company Limited in Assam is located at Kamarpatty Road, Gauhati. The jurisdiction of this Divisional office spreads over as many as eight different States and its activities are confined on State-wise basis. The following Companies have been merged with the New India Assurance Company as per the General Insurance Business Nationalisation Act, 1972. The Companies are - (1) Anand Insurance Co. Ltd. (2) Bhaba Marine Insurance Co. Ltd. (3) Commonwealth Assurance Co. Ltd. (4) Howrah Insurance Co. Ltd. (5) Indian Merchants Marine Insurance Co. Ltd. (6) Indian Ocean Insurance Co. Ltd. (7) Jalanath Insurance Co. Ltd. (8) Kalyan Marine Insurance Ltd. (9) Liberty Insurance Co. Ltd. (10) Mother India Fire and General Insurance Co. Ltd. (11) Motor Owners Insurance Co. Ltd. (12) Narhari Marine Insurance Co. Ltd. (13) Naranji Bhanabhai & Co. Ltd. (14) New Merchants, Insurance Co. Ltd. (15) New Premier

Insurance Co. Ltd. (16) Northern India General Insurance Co. Ltd. (17) Porbandar Insurance Co. Ltd. (18) Prachi Insurance Co. Ltd. (19) Shree Mahasagar Vima Co. Ltd. (20) South India Insurance Co. Ltd. and (21) Vanguard Insurance Co. Ltd. The New India Assurance Company has three branch offices in Gauhati and 158 Agents were working in the district of Kamrup on 31.12.80.

The following are some of the general classification of insurances dealt with by the New India Assurance Company which has 136 and 22 Agents respectively in Gauhati and Barpeta Sub-division.

1. Fire Insurance (Earthquake, Fire and Shock, Storm and Cyclone covers can be extended).
2. Motor Insurance.
3. Burglary Insurance (Business Premises).
4. All Risks Insurance
5. Baggage Insurance.
6. Combined Fire and Theft Insurance.
7. Fidelity Guarantee Insurance.
8. Cattle Insurance.
9. Piggery Insurance.
10. Money-in-Transit Insurance.
11. Personal Accident Insurance.
12. Personal Accident (Aviation) Insurance.
13. Plate Glass Insurance.
14. Public Liability Insurance
15. Workmen's Compensation Insurance
16. Kisan's Pump Set Policy
17. Janata Personal Accident Insurance
18. Multi-Perils Insurance
19. Engineering Insurance.
20. Machinery Breakdown Insurance.
21. Erection Insurance.
22. Boiler Explosion Insurance
23. Contractor's All Risk Insurance.
24. Carrier's Legal Liability Insurance
25. Bullock Cart Insurance.
26. Banker's Indemnity Insurance.

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, machinery breakdown insurance, fidelity guarantee insurance etc.

5. State assistance to industrial development :

Different aspects of state assistance to industrial development of the district have already been elaborated in the chapter on Industry and hence they need not be repeated here. The small Industries Service Institute, Assam, Gauhati in their "Report on the Development Potentialities of Small Scale Industries in Kamrup district in Assam", also discussed the financial aspect of state assistance to industries. Now the industries are being financed and helped by various agencies like (i) the National Small Scale Industries Corporation which supplies machines on the hire-purchase system (ii) the Small Industries Service Institute which helps industries with technical advice, (iii) the Directorate of Industries which gives loans on favourable terms, (iv) the State Bank of India and other Commercial Banks, (v) the Assam Financial Corporation and (vi) the Assam Marketing Corporation which assists in marketing the products of small scale and cottage industries.

Loan upto Rs. 1000/- on personal bond and upto Rs. 2,500/- with one or more sureties are granted by the Assistant Director of Industries at Gauhati. A loan upto Rs. 7,500/- may be granted by the Assistant Director on personal bond or two sureties to political sufferers who need rehabilitation through small industrial enterprise. Loans of Rs. 2,500/- in other cases are granted by the Director of Industries. Loans upto Rs. 50,000/- might be obtained from the Director of Industries to the Small Industrialists including Political Sufferers.

The State Bank of India, Gauhati has a Scheme of granting advances to the Small Scale Industries on liberal terms against pledge of raw materials and finished products. According to this Scheme the State Bank of India on 30th September, 1961 sanctioned Rs. 3,48,000 to the industrialists of the district.

6. Small Savings :

In the matter of mobilisation of small savings the district has made significant progress in the recent years. The following brief statement shows the statistics of small savings by type in Kamrup district during the year 1976-77. (Deposits and withdrawal in '000' Rupees).

Type of savings	No. of Accounts	Deposits	Withdrawal
(a) Post office Savings Bank.	15,308	38,342	33,484
(b) Cumulative Time Deposit.	2,900	2,806	1,831
(c) Post-office (Recurring Deposit)	3,610	1,383	591
(d) Post-office Time Deposit.	1,361	76,576	2,887
(e) National Savings Certificate	N.A.	3,259	25,296

6. Old Coinage System :

Assam is proud of her ancient treasures. She is rich in old sculptures, architectures and stone and copper plate inscriptions. But it is unfortunate that no concrete numismatic evidence of our ancient kings, prior to the Ahom King Suklengmung (1539-1552 A.D.) has yet come to light. The art of melting metals and impressing seals on clay or melted metals was known at least during the time of Bhaskaravarman of the seventh century A.D. as evidenced by his Nalanda Seal and copper-plate inscriptions. Gold and copper could be obtained within the kingdom. So this mighty king must have struck coins of his own. In the Silimpur Stone Slab Inscription of Jayapala (1115-1125 A.D.), the last king of the Brahmapala dynasty of Assam, it is mentioned that the king (Jayapala) offered to make a large gift of gold equal to his own weight (Tulapurusa) to a learned Brahmin Prahasa by name, over and above 900 gold coins. This proves that this Kamrupa king minted coins of gold if not of silver and copper, though unfortunately no such coins have yet been discovered.

The inscription of Ratnapala mentions the existence of copper mine within the kingdom which the king worked with profit. Ratnapala might have issued copper coins. Even then, the popular trade was carried on through barter system and price was generally paid through Cowries.

During the reign of Naranarayan (1540-1587 A.D.), the Koch king of Koch Bihar, Kamrup district was within his empire. Naranarayan struck coins in his own name as early as 1477 Saka, i.e. 1555 A.D. Naranarayan allowed Raghudeva, son of Chilarai, to set up a subordinate kingdom in the area east of the river Sankosh with an understanding that he might strike coins in his uncle's (Naranarayana) name. Soon after the death of Naranarayana, Raghudeva declared his independence and struck coins in his own name in 1588 A.D. Parikshitnarayan, son of Raghudeva, was another Koch king of the eastern Koch kingdom who also struck coins in his name. Thus, there cannot be any doubt that the coins of Naranarayana, Raghudeva and Parikshitnarayan were in circulation in Kamrup district.

land communication system was not feasible here and hence scope of external trade was very much limited. Besides during the Ahom rule, because the Ahoms had to remain very frequently busy with wars with the hill-tribes like Jaintias and Kacharis, they were not very much willing to set up elaborate machinery for controlling small trades. So there was only one *chowki* called Assam *chowky* situated at the mouth of river Manas. One *Duaria Barua* who regulated exports and imports of Assam on behalf of the Assam king was placed there. The traders were never allowed to meddle in politics and no foreign trader was allowed to settle in Assam. There were two out-posts for Assam located at Goalpara on the south and Jugighopa on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, from where Assam goods were despatched to Rangamati and Kandahar *chowky* of Bengal under the Mughal Fauzdar. Trade with Bhutias was managed by barter system through Bhutan *duars*. One such trade centre is still running at Daranga in Tamulpur circle.

Assam's main trade with the outside world was in Salt and Muga. Assam was the biggest purchaser of Bengal Salt while Muga cloth was sold to private merchants by Assamese traders for exportation to Coromandal and Malabar coasts. At first the salt trade was a monopoly in Assam by European traders, later on, with the annexation of Assam, traders from other parts of India came to Assam and established their main business in Gauhati which was the main trade centre of Assam.

In respect of trade and commercial activity of the district of the time, we may refer to the accounts incorporated in the Kamrup District Gazetteer in 1905. It was mentioned in the said Gazetteer that the wealthiest and most important traders in Kamrup were the Marwari merchants. They dominated the entire import trade of the district and the imported commodities consisted of piece goods like clothes and blankets, grain and pulses of various kinds, salt, oil, Ghee, Cement, Corrugated iron, metal utensils and thread from Calcutta., The chief exports of the district were mustard seed, Lac, unhusked rice, hides and timber. Although the Marwaris were the dominating trading community in the district, yet some local people, especially in the Barpeta sub-division were engaged in commercial activities and they purchased mustard crop at Gauhati and Barpeta which were the two most important trading centres in the district. But the Marwaris owned their shops mainly in the urban areas of the district and in the interior places the village shopkeepers maintained their retail shops for salt, oil and similar commodities. The principal trading villages were Palasbari, Nalbari, Hajo and Rangia. A good deal of business was also transacted at the *hats* or markets where the people met on certain days in the week to sell and purchase their products.

However, the above observation hold good about sixty-five years back. But in the recent years developments in the spheres of trade and commerce have gone to such an extent that the district has earned distinction of becoming second to none in the State of Assam. Kamrup, the gate-way district in the State of Assam is now proud of its busy headquarters Gauhati which is more or less a cosmopolitan town turned as such by reason of its alternative location of development potentialities and industrialisation in the wake of independence. Broadly speaking, representative people of all the three classes viz. well-to-do class, the middle class and poorer sections are engaged in different business pursuits suited to their financial capacities. The well-to-do sections are normally engaged in running of oil and rice mills, wholesale business of different kinds, tea industries, and management of factories such as jute bailing, manufacturing of iron and steel products, gas, carbon etc., the middle class in wholesale trade of goods imported into the State of Assam, such as oil, foodstuff, consumer goods and also of goods meant for export outside the state such as jute, tea and some varieties of pulses etc., and the people belonging to the poorer section in retail dealing in essential commodities and other sundry goods. Owing to the rapid development of the country particularly after independence, all the trade centres and village *bazars* have now been connected with land routes linked with railway lines. Now-a-days the transport of commodities both within the district and outside is done by land routes, railway and river ways. An appreciable quantity of goods is now being transported via Gauhati by air as well under the management of different commercial organisations.

Generally raw-jute in the form of packages and bales is exported from Gauhati where it is collected from within the district and also from neighbouring districts to Calcutta firms. There is a newly established Jute Manufacturing Company (1958) in Gauhati which only manufactures twins and export the same to Kanpur, Agra, Delhi, Bombay, Bihar, Indore, Gwalior etc., after meeting demands in Assam. Tea in chests, Assam silk, Endi & Muga Cloths in packets are also exported from Gauhati. The following items are usually imported to the district from outside.

(1) Gunny bags, (2) Cottons cloths & Yarn, (3) Woolen cloth & Yarn, (4) Mustard oil from Alwar, Agra, Bharatpur, Kanpur etc., (5) Mustard seeds from Alwar, Bharatpur, Kherli (Rajasthan), Hissar (Punjab), Mathura, Gorakhpur (U.P) etc., (6) Ground nut, linseed and other vegetable oils, (7) Wheat (8) Pulses (9) Sugar, (10) Salt (11) Rock salt (12) Medicine, (13) Fish (14) Tin milk and baby food, (15) Leather goods, (16) Cement and iron materials, (17) Vehicles and other accessories, (18) Betelnut (19) Electrical goods (20) Vegetable oil and (21) Stationeries.

As to the value of these transactions nothing can precisely be stated as no district-wise statistics are readily available. However, the president of the Kamrup Chamber of Commerce estimates that the total amount of imports in terms of value exceeded Rs. 50 (fifty) crores per annum for the entire district and export as per his estimate roughly stood at Rs. 15 crores annually till 1965 for the whole district. With subsequent expansion of area, population, and activities, this figure has undoubtedly increased manifold by now.

(b) Trade Centre :

Though Gauhati is the headquarters of the trade in the district it does not exhibit any of the urban features mentioned by Christader viz marketing principle, traffic net work or administrative principle which stands on the way of its proper development as commercial and trade centre of national interest. Direct, though slow and difficult connection by rail and by air with Calcutta, some what good road communications connecting Gauhati with Calcutta and other provinces the nearness of river port at Pandu, the location of financial institutions, administration headquarter of the government and other commercial carrying centres have contributed to raise Gauhati to its present position. Gauhati is by far the most important centre of wholesale business not only in the district alone but in the state of Assam, though with proper and planned development it could have been the most important trade centre. Gauhati is followed by Barpeta and Nalbari. The wholesale generally deals in sugar, cement, pulses, oils, salt, iron materials, cotton cloths and ready-made garments and other necessary goods.

As to the total turn over, no statistics are readily available to comment. Although the importance of Gauhati has already been described, it may be added in this connection that the construction of the Saraighat Bridge, the Gauhati Refinery and a host of other industries have aggravated the commercial activities of Gauhati in the recent years.

The other two centres of Barpeta and Nalbari do not compare with Gauhati but considerable transaction of wholesale business operates in Barpeta follows by Nalbari.

Important retail marketing centre are to be found in the following places of the district : Gauhati, Pandu, Amingaon, Baihata, Rangiya, Nalbari, Tihu, Pathsala, Tamulpur, Kumarikata, Goreswar, Boko, Chaygaon, Bijoynagar, Palasbari, Hajo, Sonapur, Kshetri, Digaru, Barpeta Road, Dhupdhara and Beltola.

Fairs, Melas and other rural marketing centres :

Annual Fairs and *Melas* are held on religious and festival occasions in the following places : Barpeta, Jalah, Pathsala, Gauhati, Tamulpur, Rangia, Goreswar, Palasbari, Boko, Chaygaon, and Sonapur. During Rash-purnima big *Melas* are held at Nalbari and Howli. *Melas* are also held at Kamakhya during Ambubachi and at Umananda during Sibaratri. Although the above fairs and *Melas* are not commercially so important, still ready-made garments, fruits, stationery articles, toys, sweets and daily necessities etc., are displayed to attract the vast gatherings.

Two other important Fairs were held at Subankhata and Darranga where trans-frontier trade was carried on. The old Gazetteer describes the above two fairs in the following words—"The sites of these frontier fairs are picturesque enough. Immediately to the north are the rumpled masses of the Bhutan Hills, whose outer ranges, unlike the mountains up Upper Assam, are singularly destitute of forest. The plain is for the most part covered with short turf, dotted over here and there with patches of high grass and an occasional Khair tree. There are no villages in the vicinity but winter grass huts are built for the occupation of the Marwari merchant and the traders from Barpeta who frequent the place. The Bhutias come down in considerable number with lac, wax, chillies, blankets, ponies, donkeys and goats. They sell these things to the traders, and with the proceeds buy cotton thread and cloth, rice, eri cloth and threads and brass vessels. In the latter articles there is a considerable trade, and Morias come from Gauhati to manufacture the large brass cans which the Bhutias use to distil their country spirit. The trade is generally transacted on a cash basis, though the hillmen sometimes barter salt and chillies for rice; the usual rate of exchange is three or four baskets of rice for one of salt, and two of rice for one of chillies. Starting from these centres, the Bhutias travel about the country and traffic with the villagers and the traders in the interior. The big stout men, with their dirty rather insolent looking faces, and their layers of filthy clothings, are a common sight in Kamrup in the cold weather, as they march about the roads with huge baskets of merchandise' on their backs, and strings of shaggy little mules, donkeys, and ponies." (page 182-183).

Darranga Fair :

The importance of the Darranga fair in recent years has gone down due to many reasons. The Sub-Deputy Collector, Tamulpur, who was con-

ducting the fair till recently remarked that from time past the Bhutias and some Tibetans used to come with ponies, horses, mules, chillies, dogs, lacs indigenous medicine, precious stones, cloths etc., and exchanged them for money or for salt, cloths, rice and other commodities. As the time stands, the activities of trade are dwindling. The reasons are heterogenous. Due to internal development activities within Bhutan, many Bhutias have been engaged there. Secondly, due to opening up of direct road communication from Darranga to Rangia, Barpeta and Gauhati the Bhutias either purchase necessary commodities direct from main plain towns or they purchase their requirements within Bhutan whose economy in recent years has gained much momentum with the help of the Government of India.

Tolls in the fair were collected by the Government direct till 1964 sanitation and health was also looked into by the Government. But since 1964, management of the fair has been taken over by the local Panchayat. During the year 1963-64, the collection of tolls amounted to little more than Rs. 5,400.00 (Summerised from S.D.C., Tamulpur's letter No. TC. 13/65/116 dt. 10.3.65).

Subankhata fair :

As to the Subankhata fair the Assistant Settlement Officer, Tihu Circle remarked that now-a-days the fair is not held. Only a weekly market held at Subankhata on Saturday and large number of Bhutias both male and female including children attend the Subankhata weekly market and other weekly market of neighbourhood mainly during the winter months. Their merchandise consists of hill produces such as oranges, chillies, lacs, yoketails, dogs etc., and purchase mainly paddy, grains rice, salts, yarn, dry-fish etc. The Bhutias carry their merchandise either on horse back or in big baskets on their shoulders. The picturesque character of Subankhata attributed to in the old Gazetteer is also no more to be found, but the place locally called "Chowki" situated nearly eight kilometers to the north-east of Subankhata and located in the upper reaches of the river Pagladia commands some panoramic sight.

In addition to these, there are also **Hats** and marketing centres in the different parts of the district and the statement in the appendix gives the list of such **Hats** and markets.

LIST OF HATS AND MARKETS IN THE DISTRICT

Source : Secretary, Anchalik Panchayats.

Sl. No.	Name of <i>Hats</i> and Markets	Place where it is held	Whether Daily/ Bi - Weekly/ Weekly/Fort- nightly.
1	2	3	4
1.	Rangia Bazar	Rangia town	Bi-weekly.
2.	Rangia Station Bazar	Near Rangia Station	Daily.
3.	Dwar Kuchi Bazar	Dwar Kuchi	Bi-weekly.
4.	Deul Kuchi Bazar	Deul Kuchi	—do—
5.	Chechamukh Hat	Bahana Chechamukh	—do—
6.	Solmari Hat	Solmari village	Weekly.
7.	Bhelkar Hat	Bhelkar village	—do—
8.	Kalita Kuchi Market	Kalita Kuchi	Daily.
9.	Soalkuchi Market	Soalkuchi village	—do—
10.	Hajo Market	Hajo village	—do—
11.	Boko Hat	Boko (Borpara)	Weekly.
12.	Hahim Hat	Hahim	—do—
13.	Singra Hat	Singra	—do—
14.	Bondapara Hat	Sakhati	—do—
15.	Gamarimura Hat	Gamarimura	Weekly.
16.	Bamunigaon-Batar Hat	Bamunigaon	—do—
17.	Charakia Hat	Dakuchi	Weekly.
18.	Santipur Hat	Dakuchi	—do—
19.	Jarihat	Pachia	—do—
20.	Sukurbaria Bazar (disputed)	Maligaon	—do—
21.	Dhoptola Bazar	Dharapur	2 days in a week.
22.	Rani Bazar	Rani	Weekly.
23.	Kahikuchi Bazar	Kahikuchi	2 days in a week.
24.	Sukurbari Hat	Sajanpara	Bi-weekly.
25.	Gadhuli Bazar	Azara	Daily (evening).
26.	Pub-Mazirgaon Bazar	Kendu Kuchi	Bi-weekly.
27.	Kshetri Hat	Kshetri Road side	Weekly.
28.	Topatoli Hat	Topatoli	—do—
29.	Kalanpur Hat	Kalanpur Road side	Weekly.
30.	Beltola Hat	Beltola Road side	—do—

Sl. No.	Name of <i>Hats</i> and Markets	Place where it is held	Whether Daily/ Bi-weekly/Wee- kly Fortnightly.
1	2	3	4
31.	Sonapur Hat	Sonapur Road side	Weekly
32.	Satgaon Hat	Satgaon Road side	—do—
33.	Barama Hat	Nizjulki	Bi-weekly.
34.	Barimakha Hat	Barimakha	—do—
35.	Medaghat Hat	Bhalukdanga	—do—
36.	Nadala Hat	Khata Rupia Bathan	—do—
37.	Kaithalkuchi Hat	Kaithalkuchi	—do—
38.	Soulmara Hat	Ghilajari	—do—
39.	Barnadli Hat	Barnadli	—do—
40.	Damodardham Hat	In between Atlighoria and Pandula village.	Bi-weekly.
41.	Bijuli Hat	Koria	—do—
42.	Marowa Hat	In between Barkuriha and Madhapur village	—do—
43.	Kamarkuchi Bazar	Kamarkuchi	daily.
44.	Silgoshanithan Hat	Solmari	Bi-weekly.
45.	Batabari Hat	Kashimpur	—do—
46.	Saplekuchi Hat	Saplekuchi	—do—
47.	Suagpur Hat	Suagpur	—do—
48.	Betgaon Hat	Betgaon	Weekly.
49.	Naokata Hat	Naokata	—do—
50.	Upperkuti Hat	Upperkuti	—do—
51.	Maharipara Hat	Maharipara	—do—
52.	Goreswar Bazar	Goreswar	Bi-weekly.
53.	Kerpabitha Hat	Kerpabitha	Weekly.
54.	Nagriji Hat	Khatarbari	Bi-weekly.
55.	Dongargaon Hat	Dongargaon	Weekly.
56.	Latibari Hat	Latibari	—do—
57.	Gandhibari Hat	Uttar Gandhi Bari	—do—
58.	Tamulpur Hat	Tamulpur	Bi-weekly.
59.	Kumarikata	Kumarikata	Weekly.
60.	Kawli Hat	Kawli	—do—
61.	Barkhata Hat	Barkhata	Weekly.
62.	Khatikuchi Hat	Khatikuchi	Bi-weekly.
63.	Naharbari Hat	Naharbari	—do—
64.	Barajal Hat	Barajal	—do—
65.	Chawmukha Hat	Near Chawmukhaghat	—do—

Sl. No.	Name of <i>Hats</i> and Markets	Place where it is held	Whether Daily/Bi-weekly/Weekly/Fortnightly.
1	2	3	4
66.	Taparpathar Bazar	Taparpathar	Weekly.
67.	Jarsimali New Bazar	Jarsimali	—do—
68.	Champurpara Bazar	Champurpara	—do—
69.	Goraimari Bazar	Goraimari	—do—
70.	Gumi Bazar	Gumi	—do—
71.	Jahirpur Bazar	Jahirpur village	—do—
72.	Chaygaon Bazar	Chaygaon	—do—
73.	Kulsi Bazar	Kulsi village	—do—
74.	Loharghat	Loharghat	—do—
75.	Barihat	Barihat	Bi-weekly.
76.	Jarobari	Jarobari	—do—
77.	Rampur Hat	Rampur	—do—
78.	Simina	Simina	—do—
79.	Batar Hat	Batar Hat	—do—
80.	Kukurmara Hat	Kukurmara	—do—
81.	Barduar Bagan	Barduar Bagan	—do—
82.	Changsari Hat	Changsari village	Bi-weekly.
83.	Baihata	Kokoria village	—do—
84.	Balikuchi Bazar	Balikuchi	Weekly.
85.	Chariali Bazar	Agadala	—do—
86.	Jatiabhangra Bazar	Jatiabhangra	—do—
87.	Haldha Bazar	Haldha	—do—
88.	Mandakata Bazar	Mandakata	—do—
89.	Adalbari Hat	Adalbari	—do—
90.	Barikadanga Hat	Barikadanga	—do—
91.	Dhamdhama Bazar	Niz-dhamdhama	Bi-weekly.
92.	Nikachi Hat	Nikachi	Weekly
93.	Subankhata Hat	Subankhata	—do—
94.	Massalpur Hat	Ambari	—do—
95.	Bhabanipur Hat	Anandapur	—do—
96.	Athabari Hat	Athabari	—do—
97.	Thamana Hat	Thamana	—do—
98.	Naoshali Hat	Ghagapar Village	Bi-weekly.
99.	Jalahghat Hat	Jalah	—do—
100.	Anchali Hat	Anchali village	—do—
101.	Simla Hat	Simla	—do—
102.	Bhalmanuhar Bhitha	Bhalmanuhar Bhitha	—do—
103.	Godhuli Gaon	Godhuli Gaon	—do—

Sl. No.	Name of <i>Hats</i> and Markets	Place where it is held	Whether Daily/Bi-weekly/Weekly/Fortnightly
1	2	3	4
104.	Betbari	Betbari	Bi-weekly
105.	Garh	Pub-Kathalmori	Bi-weekly.
106.	Rupahi	Rupahi village	—do—
107.	Salbari	Salbari	—do—
108.	Arar da Bazar	Patia	—do—
109.	Bhutia Mela	Daodhara	Daily.
110.	Hawali	Hawali	Bi-weekly
111.	Basbari Hat	Basbari	—do—
112.	Kalapani Hat	Kalapani	—do—
113.	Gobardhana Hat	Gobardhana	—do—
114.	Bilasipara Hat	Bilasipara	—do—
115.	Bhakuamari Hat	Bhakuamari	—do—
116.	Bhala Bazar	Kaizarmari	—do—
117.	Gharmara Hat	Bansibari	—do—
118.	Khur dabari	Khurdabari	—do—
119.	Chukrungbari Hat	Chukrungbari	—do—
120.	Bhella Hat	Bhella	Weekly
121.	Chaparbari Hat	Chaparbari	Bi-weekly.
122.	Bagadi Hat	Bagadi	Weekly.
123.	Pithadi Hat	Pithadi	—do—
124.	Kayakuchi Hat	Kayakuchi	Bi-weekly.
125.	Suha Hat	Suhabill Dalani	Weekly.
126.	Helcha Hat	Helcha	—do—
127.	Golibandha Hat	Golibandha	—do—
128.	Mondia Hat	Mondia	—do—
129.	Habidongra Hat	Habidongra	—do—
130.	Alirpam Hat	Aligaonpam	—do—
131.	Kanchanpur Hat	Kanchanpur	—do—
132.	Sorgaon Hat	Sorgaon	—do—
133.	Manikpur Hat	Manikpur	Weekly.
134.	Garala Hat	Garala	—do—
135.	Mayenbari Hat	Mayenbari	Bi-weekly.
136.	Sonabari Hat	Sonabari	—do—
137.	Sikatari Hat	Sikatari	—do—
138.	Patharchali Hat	Patharchali	—do—
139.	Pashim Deoldi Hat	Pashim Deoldi	Weekly.
140.	Baghbar Hat	Baghbar	—do—
141.	Rampara Hat	Rampara Pam	—do—

Sl. No.g	Name of Hats and Markets	Place where it is held	Whether Daily/Bi-weekly/Weekly/Fortnightly.
1	2	3	4
142.	Dala Hat	Dala Gaon	Weekly
143.	Pub-Deoldi Hat	Pub-Deoldi	—do—
144.	Marabaz Hat	Mara Baz	—do—
145.	Kadamtala/Sai-simana	Sai-simana	—do—
146.	Jania Hat	Jania	Weekly
147.	Chunpura Hat	Chunpura	—do—
148.	Kadong Hat	Kadong	—do—
149.	Medhirtari Hat	Medhirtari	—do—
150.	Balukuri Hat	Balukuri	—do—
151.	Alipur Hat	Alipur	—do—
152.	Pathsala Hat	Pathsala	Bi-weekly.
153.	Sarupeta Hat	Sarupeta	—do—
154.	Bhalaguri Hat	Bhalaguri	—do—
155.	Kadamtala Hat	Kadamtala	—do—
156.	Batua Hat	Batua	—do—
157.	Pattacharkuchi Hat	Pattacharkuchi	—do—
158.	Golaghat Hat	Manipur-Anandapur	—do—
159.	Saderi Hat	Saderi	—do—
160.	Tarabari Hat	Tarabari	Weekly.
161.	Balapara Hat	Balapara	—do—
162.	Bahari Hat	Bahari	Weekly.
163.	Kukarpar Hat	Kukarpar	—do—
164.	Chenimari Hat	Balartari	—do—
165.	Raumari Hat	Roumari Pathar	—do—
166.	Damdoma Hat	Damdoma	—do—
167.	Goremari Hat	Goremari	—do—
168.	Bahmura Hat	Bahmura	—do—
169.	Deulipara Hat	Deulipara	—do—
170.	Bhulukabari Hat	Jarabari	—do—
171.	Kayakuchi Hat	Kayakuchi	Bi-weekly.
172.	Kharma Hat	Kharma	—do—
173.	Dhumarkur Hat	Dhumarkur	Bi-weekly.
174.	Majgaon Hat	Majgaon	—do—
175.	Barnibari Hat	Barnibari village	—do—
176.	Mukalmua Hat	Mukalmua village	Weekly.
177.	Peradhara Hat	Peradhara village	—do—
178.	Adabari Hat	Adabari village	Bi-weekly.
179.	Rampur Hat	Rampur village	Weekly.

(c) **Public Distribution System in Assam :** The Public Distribution system in Assam was introduced as a democratic mass base for economic transformation along socialistic line. It was introduced in Assam in 1973 in pursuance of the decision of the Government of India to take over wholesale trade in food grains.

It may also be mentioned here that co-operatives had been assigned the major role in production, procurement and distribution of agricultural produce. Accordingly the Co-operative structure of Assam was reorganised in 1973 in an effective manner to take over the responsibility. For the plains districts of Assam there were 664 Gaon Panchayat Level Multipurpose Co-operative Societies which covered the entire rural population. In the Urban areas of Assam there were 17 Wholesale Consumers Co-operative Societies. At the apex level, Assam Co-operative Marketing and Consumers Federation had been set up by the State Government.

Currently (1980) there are 129 Gaon Panchayat level Multipurpose Co-operative societies in the district of Kamrup and they carry the responsibility of distributing essential commodities in the rural areas. In fact, the whole public distribution system has been streamlined and essential commodities of mass consumption viz., rice, wheat, wheat products, sugar, salt, edible oil, pulses, controlled cloth, yarn and kerosine oil are at present listed for distribution through fair price shops. On an average, every Gaon Panchayat-level Co-operative Society has 20 retail outlets each covering in their respective areas a population of 1000. The Assam State Co-operative Marketing and Consumers Federation, the Food Corporation of India and the National Co-operative Consumers Federation will function as feeder agencies at the state level for supplying commodities to various co-operatives, rural retail outlets, fair price shops etc., for distribution to the consumers.

Besides the induction of Commercial Banks to finance the co-operative sector is an added dimension in the Co-operative Movement of Assam. In order to enable the Co-operative Societies to discharge the function assigned to them effectively, adoption of societies by State Bank of India, Nationalised Commercial Banks and State Co-operative Bank has been introduced and arrangements have been made to obtain working finance from the banks for the distributing functions. With these measures, the business turn-over of these Co-operatives has shown marked improvement and the Public Distribution system has succeeded to some extent in maintaining supplies and also price line.

It may also be mentioned here that for the distribution of rice, wheat, wheat products, sugar, salt, controlled cloth, kerosene etc., there are established agencies to deal with, but the State of Assam has to depend for supplies of several important commodities of mass consumption like mustard oil, vegetable oil, pulse, yarn etc. on sources outside the state. Unless the supplies of these commodities are ensured at fair and steady price by the Government of India, the system will not entirely be free from market manipulation and speculative trade.

(d) Co-operative in Wholesale and Retail Trade :

The Gauhati wholesale Co-operative Society Ltd., and the Nalbari Central Trading Co-operative Ltd., are the two wholesale organisations run on co-operative basis. Besides these, the Assam Co-operative Apex Marketing Society which is a wholesale co-operative is also functioning from Gauhati.

Since 1962 the consumer's stores had to be revived owing to soaring prices and at present in each of the Municipal Ward of Gauhati town, one Consumer's Store has been organised under the Gauhati Wholesale Society. These stores have been given liberal grants and loans by government for their speedy growth and for keeping down the prices.

The State Trading activities are done by the Assam Co-operative Apex Marketing Ltd., which was organised in the year 1956 and registered on 23rd of January 1957 with the main object of stabilising the price structure of foodgrains and other essential commodities. Although the area of operation of the society extends over the entire state, its registered head office is located at Gauhati. Two other branches of the society are functioning at Barpeta and Nalbari in Kamrup district.

The society has been sponsored and financed by the state government to undertake state trading in foodgrains (paddy and rice) a monopoly license to that effect.

Over and above paddy procurement the society is dealing in Rice, Sugar, Cement, M.S. Rod, Dry-fruits, Dry-fish, Amul Butter and Ghee, Mango, Chillies etc. Except in the year 1959-60, the society continued to earn a good net profit in its business.

There were also 16 primary Marketing Societies and 358 service co-operatives in April 1964 in the Kamrup district working in three-tier system as the agents and sub-agents. In addition to paddy procurement some of the primary societies have taken up business of sugar, pulses, dry-fish, betelnut, jute etc.

(d) Fair Price Shops : In order to counteract the upward trend of prices, fair price shops under the supervision of the Supply Department have been opened in various parts of the district and the total number of such shops came to about 300 in August 1964. Besides the fair price shops there are some approved retail shops through which Atta, flour, Sugar etc., are supplied at controlled price. Fair price shops came into existence in the year 1954 when there was control of rice and paddy all over India. Upto the year of 1957 rice was supplied to the fair price shops by Central Government from their Central Department established in some parts of the province.

During the year 1975-76, 2,95,100 quintals of rice, 12,640 quintals of wheat and 1,63,379 quintals of sugar were distributed in Kamrup district through Fair Price Shops, Consumer's Co-operatives, Government Stores etc.

In 1980 about 29 different kinds of Co-operative societies were found functioning in the district. The total number of Co-operative Societies in the three sub-divisions of the district stood at 2,287 as on 31.12.80. Most of the Gaon Panchayat-level Co-operative Societies are doing consumer's as well as credit business. Almost hundred per cent families of the rural areas have been enrolled as members of these societies and they are distributing essential commodities as wholesale dealers to the villagers through about 3500 retail agents appointed by the Managing Committees of the Gaon Panchayat level societies. It may be mentioned here that during the 9 months period between April/80 to December/80, 57 societies have been sent into liquidation for the unsatisfactory financial position and bad working management.

(e) **Merchant and Consumer's association and Labour Organisations and organs for dissemination of trade news :**

(i) Merchant and Consumers' Associations : The Kamrup Chambers of Commerce, Assam Rice Mills Associations, Oil Mills Associations, Assam Interstate Carriers, North-East India Petroleum Dealers Association and Assam Textile Merchant Associations are some of the main merchant associations functioning in the district with their registered office at Gauhati. The objects of these chambers are to promote the interest of the business community in respect of inland and foreign trade, commerce, manufacture, agriculture, shipping, transport, banking, insurance and industry.

There are no Consumers Associations in the sense in which Merchant Associations are functioning. Of course, Consumer's Co-operative Societies are there in the district to have a steady flow of consumer's goods and also to check price-rise and black-marketing. The idea of consumer's co-operative was originated in the Second World War which gave rise to all kinds of difficulties in obtaining the necessities of life.

(ii) Dissemination of trade news : Though there are no organs for dissemination of trade news in the district, the chamber of commerce, the daily news papers and market news bulletins of the All-India Radio supply information on the State of current wholesale and retail prices of commodities. Interested merchants also collect information from Calcutta through telephone or phonogram. The inter district telephone is also helping the business community in exchange of trade news.

(f) **Weights and Measures :**

Old units and adoption of all-India standard : Prior to the introduction of metric system in the State some local units of weights and measures etc. were prevalent in the district of Kamrup. The descriptive accounts of the old units prevalent in the district and their relation with the metric units of all-India Standards are shown below :

A. Weights :		Equivalent with the metric units of all-India Standards
Old units :		
1 ounce	—	28.350 grams
1 pound	—	0.4536 kilograms
1 ton	—	1016.05 kilograms
		or
		1.016 tonnes
1 tola	—	11.664 grams
1 chatak	—	58.32 grams
1 seer	—	0.93831 kilograms
1 mound	—	37.3242 kilograms

Old units		Standard units
B. Length and Capacity measures :		
1 inch	—	0.0254 metre
1 foot	—	0.3048 metre
1 yard	—	0.9144 metre
1 mile	—	1.60934 kilometres.
C. Area measures		
1 sq. inch	—	6.4516 sq. cm.
1 sq. foot	—	0.0929 sq. cm.
1 sq. yard	—	0.8361 sq. cm.
1 sq. mile	—	2.59 sq. km.
D. Land measures :		
1 lessa	—	0.13 centiare
1 katha	—	2.68 centiare
1 bigha	—	13.38 centiare
1 pura (4 bighas)	—	53.51 centiare.

But after the introduction of the metric system of weights and measures all-over the country, the local units became illegal and the standard units of mass and measure came into use. At present there is no such local units of mass and measure in the district of Kamrup.

The indigenous as well as English units of weights and measures as stated above, were not uniform and appeared to be confusing to go side by side with complexities of modern standard. That is why the metric units of weights and measures came to be adopted in Assam with the enactment of the Assam Weights and Measures (Enforcement) Act, 1958. As per decision of the Government, Gauhati Municipal Area was taken as one of the selected areas of the country for first introduction and enforcement of metric system of weights and measures under the said Act. Accordingly metric system of weight was enforced in the Gauhati Municipal area with effect from the 1st October 1958 and the use of metric weight was made compulsory in this area with effect from 1st October 1960. The metric system of weight was introduced in the rest of the area of the district on the 1st April 1960, and it was made compulsory with effect from the 1st of April 1962. The metric capacity measures were introduced and enforced in the Gauhati Municipal Area and the rest of the district with effect from 1st April 1961 and 1st October 1961 respectively and their use was made compulsory just after one year from the date of enforcement. The metric length measures were introduced

throughout the whole of Kamrup district on 1st October 1962. Almost all traders of the district are now using metric system of weights, capacity and length measures.

In Assam, the Assam Weights and Measures (Enforcement) Act was enacted in 1958 and the Rules were framed under the Act in 1960. Subsequently the organisation of Weights and Measures was set up at Shillong with the Director of Agriculture, Assam, as the ex-officio Controller of Weights and Measures in addition to his own duties. A whole-time officer designated as the Controller of Weights and Measures took over charge of the organisation on 8-6-62.

The business of the Weights and Measures has been carried out under the official guidance, control and technical supervision of the Controller of Weights and Measures with his Head office at Gauhati. He is assisted by three Deputy Controllers of Weights and Measures and two Assistant Controllers attached with the Head Office. There is also a Publicity Officer attached with the Controller with regard to publicity and propaganda on metric system of Weights and Measures.

For the proper implementation of the Act, the whole state of Assam has been divided into five zones with an Assistant Controller of Weights and Measures in each zone, who requires to supervise the works of the Inspectors of Weights and Measures.

Under the zonal office of the Assistant Controller of Weights and Measures, Gauhati, there are six offices of the Inspectors of Weights and Measures in both the district of Kamrup and Goalpara. The offices of the Inspector of Weights & Measures in the District of Kamrup are at Gauhati, Nalbari and Barpeta. There are five Inspectors of Weights and Measures at Gauhati, taking into consideration of its industrial importance.

The main business of this Organisation is to introduce metric system of Weights and Measures throughout the state of Assam and within a short period achieved considerable success in bringing about the change—over to the new system in the State.

CHAPTER VII

COMMUNICATIONS

A ANCIENT TIMES.

(a) Old-time trade routes, highways and modes of conveyance :

Ancient Kamarupa had several trade routes with its neighbouring countries. In ancient Kamrupa, "communications were by mountain passes, land and water routes. This is testified by the classical writers beginning with the first century A.D., if not earlier. Water communications were not only by the Brahmaputra, its tributaries, and the Ganges ; but also through the upper courses of the Irrawaddy, Mekong, Menam, Chindwin and other rivers of Burma. Since the time of the intrusion of the oceanic elements into Assam through Burma, both the land and sea routes remained open. Yuan Chwang states that the rulers of Kamarupa had the sea route to China under their protection. ... It was quite possible from the early times ; as the Lauhitya **Sagar**, as evidenced by the classical and Indian sources ; was joined with the Bay of Bengal....

The cultural and commercial contact between ancient Assam and China both by land and sea routes is shown by a number of sources.... The earliest reference to commercial relations between India and China through the Assam-Burma routes is found in the accounts of Chang Kien (200 B.C.). That a king of the Kapili valley in Assam sent an embassy to China, probably through this Assam-Burma route, was also referred to in the **Shung Shu** (A.D. 420-79). Besides the sea routes to China, which were under the control of the Kamarupa rulers, the existence of land routes between the two lands had been also testified by Yuan Chwang, the great Chinese pilgrim.*

*A detailed description of the Assam-Burma routes to China is given in **Kia tan** (8th century A.D.). It describes the route from Tonkin in Southern China through Yunnan, Yunnan-fou and Talifou; going westwards it crossed the Salween at Youngchang, on the west of the river, and then led to Chou-ko-leang to the east of Momein between Shivel.

1. P. C. Choudhury : *The History of Civilisation of the People of Assam to the Twelfth Century A. D.* 1959, p. 379-80.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 380-81.

and Salween. It branched off there, the main route leading through the valley of Shivel and joining Irrawaddy on the South-west; the second route led to the west. From Chou-ko-leang, the main route reached Sili, halfway between Ta-gaung and Mandalay; it passed by Toumin (Pagan) and reached Prome and leading through the mountain of Arakan in the west, it reached Kamarupa. The minor route from Chou-ko-leang led westwards to Teng Ch'ong (Momein) and crossing the mountains, reached Li-Shouei on the Irrawaddy near Bhamo; then crossing the river Magama, it led through the town of Nagansi through the mountains and then reached Kamarupa.³

During the subsequent period a good number of other routes were opened into China through Burma, Bhutan and Tibet. From Assam to China and Afghanistan there were several mountain passes in the north and west. The *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* records that there were not less than thirty-five passes from Ancient Kamarupa to Tibet. Periplus, as early as in the first century A. D., "stated that from Thina or Assam, articles like raw and manufactured silk were brought by land through Bactria to Barygaza or else down the Ganges and then by sea to Limurika on the coast of Malabar."^{3A} This definitely includes both water and land routes which also indicates the trade relations with places like Afghanistan. Here the water routes down the Ganges was definitely referred to the routes by the Brahmaputra and Ganges. Ptolemy also recorded the existence of another route to Assam via Palibothra (Pataliputra). This was definitely through the Brahmaputra and the Ganges. The relations between Kamarupa and the places like Vidcha, Gujrat and Kashmir since time immemorial have been proved by the Epics, Puranas and Rajatarangini. In the Kautily's *Arthashastra* it is found that there were water and land routes between Kamarupa and Magadha. The Kamarupa King Bhaskaravarman's association with the Chinese traveller Yuan Chwang and Harsavardhana, the king of Kanauj of 7th century, indicates something about these routes.

Apart from the regular exchange of envoys from one part of the country to another probably by land route, the exact line of communication is found from the route of Yuan Chwang. When he started for Kamarupa from

Magadha, he came through Campa, Kajangala (Rajmahal) and Pundravardhana, and then, crossing a large river, which was evidently Karatoya, the pilgrim entered Kamarupa. The importance of the water route is also revealed by the accounts. Kumar Bhaskara with the pilgrim went with his followers up the Ganges and met Harsa near Kajangala. The evidence shows that the kingdom had a continuous diplomatic and trading relations with the west by land and water routes not only during the 7th century A.D., but also before and after. The conquest of Gauda, Kosala, Kalinga and other lands during the 8th century A.D. by Harsadeva seems to indicate that there were good roads and water communications for the march of armies. The constant migration of Brahmanas and other people to and from Kamarupa, as shown by the records, also points to the same conclusion.⁴

Mediaeval times : During the reign of the Koch King Narayan (1534-1584 A.D.), the **Gohain Kamal Ali** connecting Koch Bihar in Bengal with Narayanpur in Lakhimpur district was constructed under the supervision of the King's brother Gohain Kamala. This great *Ali* (road) ran across the north bank of Kamrup district and was completed in 1547 A.D.

During the Ahom times, more emphasis was laid on the development of water transport and the Ahoms leaned heavily on their naval strength during wars. The naval achievements of the Assamese attained a high pitch of efficiency under the Ahom rulers. That they possessed an efficient navy is borne out by the reference to their naval engagements, particularly with the Muhammedan invaders. The naval engagement that took place at Saraighat was really memorable. At Saraighat the Assamese warships routed the Moghul fleet. At the end of the contest even the great Ram Singh had to admit the valour and skill of his redoubtable adversaries. "Every Assamese soldier is expert in rowing boats, in shooting arrows, in digging trenches and wielding guns and cannons. I have not seen such specimens of versatility in any other part of India."⁵

Land routes in Lower Assam of which this district forms a part was not as developed as in Upper Assam during the Ahom days. There were only bridle paths connecting villages and maintenance of these paths was the responsibility of the villagers.

3. Ibid, p. 382.

4. Ibid, p. 385-86.

5. Edward Gait : *History of Assam*, p. 253.

There were several other bund roads, of which the most important was called the **Bongal Ali**. It passed through the district of Darrang from North-East to South-West, and joined the Brahmaputra nearly opposite Gauhati. It is believed to have been made by Meer Jumlah, the Moghul invader. One of his standing camps is still observable on the north side of the road and is called the **Bongal Gorh**. The **Bongal Ali** is supposed to have been connected with Gauhati by a bridge of some construction or another across the Brahmaputra; thus opening a free communication with the great **bund** roads. There was a sort of road between Goalpara and Gauhati passable on horseback, but only in the dry weather.

M'Cosh referred to three overland routes from Bengal to Assam. The first was by Murshidabad, Maldah, **Dinajpore, Rungpore, Baugwah** and Goalpara. The second road **via** Dacca, **Dumary, Puculoe, Jumalpore**, Singimari, and Goalpara, was nearly impassable in the rains. The third passed by Sylhet, Cherra, Moplung, **Nunklow, Ranneygadown, Cannymook** and Gauhati.

Immediately after the British annexation of Assam, M'Cosh in 1837 found that the most frequent route from Assam to Calcutta was down the river Brahmaputra **via Jenna** to the Pabha and then to the Ganges and finally to Calcutta through the **Matabanga** or the **Jellingi**. The journey by a large boat took from six to seven weeks from Calcutta to Gauhati.

The old accounts of Assam suggest that most of the travellers used horses, ponies, elephants, bullock-drawn carts, palanquins, country-boat and rafts for their country sojourns. Big boats which carried merchandise, were called **dingas**. The palanquin (**dola**) and the chariot (**rath**) were used by the royal and aristocratic families in early times, but the chariots gradually fell into disuse. The palanquin was a popular mode of conveyance even till the early part of the present century in the district. The horses were used not only by the cavalry, but also by the royal messengers and ordinary travellers. In the villages bullock-carts and buffaloes were used.

(b) Road Transport :

Roads in Modern times : At the time when the British came into possession of Assam, the difficulty of communications proved a most serious obstacle to its development. When A. J. Mills visited Assam in 1853, carts and carriages were negligible, and the roads were few and bad. During the early part of the British administration, the

construction and repair of roads other than great highways were undertaken occasionally. For want of repairs, the roads became nearly impassable in the rainy season. The Public Works Department was established in the year 1868, roads were the concern of the Deputy Commissioner assisted by a Committee. This Department could not function efficiently in the early years of its inception due to the paucity of fund and dearth of technical personnel. The Assam Local Rates Regulation of 1879 provided for the levy of a local rate and the appointment of a committee in each district to control the expenditure on roads. Such committees were replaced in 1882 by Subdivisional Local Boards and Town Committees which were entrusted with the maintenance of all roads within their jurisdiction except a few main lines. In 1887 all communication of provincial interest were transferred to the Public Works Department. The area of operation of this department was further extended when all the projects of repair or construction involving an expenditure of more than Rs.500/- were entrusted to the Public Works Department.

By 1904, the district had some well developed roads. The main artery of communication in the district was the great Trunk Road, which ran along the south bank of the Brahmaputra from Fakirganj opposite Dhuburi to Saikhowa opposite Sadiya. It entered Kamrup from Goalpara at the 48th mile (77.25 km.) and ran northward and eastward till it reached the river Brahmaputra at Palasbari. From Gauhati it turned southwards, and for eleven miles (17.70 km.) was a section of the Gauhati-Shillong road, but it then bent again sharply to the east and entered the Nowgong district near Nakhola.

The only other roads of any importance south of the Brahmaputra were the road which ran eastward from Gauhati to Sonapur, and the roads connecting Barduar with Chaygaon, Palasbari (13 miles i.e., 21.72 km.) and the Trunk Road at a point 9 miles (14.48 km.) from Gauhati (19 miles i.e., 30.59 km.)

The North Trunk Road entered the district from Goalpara at Raha, (Barpeta) and left it at Dumanichaki where the Barnadi forms the boundary between Kamrup and Mangaldai. From North Gauhati three roads ran, to Dumanichaki, to Naokata, and to Nalbari. The section between Hajo and Nalbari was damaged by the earthquake of 1897, and thus became unfit for wheeled traffic in the rain. From Rangia a road ran to Darranga (26 miles i.e., 41.84 km.) and from where was a difficult footpath to the frontier village of Dewangiri, and a rough driving track to Subankhata. From Barama a road ran eastward to the boundary of Mangaldoi, 29

miles (46.67 km.) away, passing Tamulpur. The Chapaguri mauza was tapped by a road which ran from Patacharkuchi to Kakilabari. Most of the minor streams were spanned by bridges, but there were no less than 45 ferries in the district which were still maintained across the larger rivers. With the exception of a section of the trunk road west and south of Gauhati, all of these roads were unmetalled, and were not suitable to carry heavy traffic during rainy season. In 1903-04, there were altogether 547 miles i.e. 880.335 kms. of cart road and tracks maintained either by the Local Boards or the Public Works Department in Kamrup. Road from Gauhati to Shillong, the then administrative capital of the province, via Barnihat and Nangpo (65 miles i.e., 104.61 kms) was completed at the close of 1875-76.⁶

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 feet in length by raising separate loans.⁷ 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 onwards Assam received a substantial amount from the Central Road Fund.

During the second world war, road building activities were stepped up in Assam but being war-oriented such activities were mainly confined to the south bank of the Brahmaputra. 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. Thus till independence, the development of road communication of the district was rather negligible

6. W. W. Hunter : *A Statistical Account of Assam*, Delhi edition, pp. 56-57.

7. P. C. Goswami : *The Economic Development of Assam*, Bombay, 1963, pp. 192-93.

Roads under Public Works Department : After independence, in 1948-49, there were two Divisions namely North Kamrup Division and Lower Assam Division of Public Works Department in Kamrup district. There were only about 8.37 Kilometres of metalled roads, about 214.76 kilometres of gravelled roads, about 278.06 kilometres of natural soil motorable roads, and about 16.90 kilometres of natural soil un-motorable roads under North Kamrup Division and again under Lower Assam Division of Public Works Department, there were about 119.60 kilometres of metalled roads, about 44.33 kilometres of gravelled roads, and about 40 kilometres of natural soil-motorable roads.⁸ These figures indicate the paucity of roads in Kamrup district at that time. Some progress was made during the First Five-Year Plan at the end of which there were about 1,136 kms. of all weather roads, about 370 kms. of fair weather roads giving a total of 1,506 kms. of road under the Public Works Department in Kamrup district.⁹ According to the Census of 1961 the total roads in Kamrup district under Public Works Department stood at 2,100.863 kms. consisting of 126.785 kms. of black topped roads, 1,511.691 kms. of gravelled roads, 429.398 kms. of earth roads and 32.989 kms of bridle paths. The following table indicates further development of roads in Kamrup district under the Public Works Department for the subsequent years :—¹⁰

year	(in kilometres)					
	Black topped surfaced	Metalled	Gravelled	Earthened	Bridle Path	Total
1960-61	265.541	—	1511.164	457.087	33.799	2267.591
1963-64	268.759	—	1628.652	1385.669	—	3283.080
1965-66	331.556	11.265	1892.58	288.068	—	2523.469
1967-68	502	11	1,887	318	—	2,718
1968-69	597	16	1,936	356	—	2,905
1969-70	514.64	5.00	2,016.85	256.94	—	2,793.43
1970-71	583.43	—	2032.53	304.95	—	2,920.91
1974-75	660.67	—	2390.84	545.16	—	3,596.67
1975-76	658	—	2415	520	—	3,593

8. *Statistical Abstract of Assam*, 1951, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, p. 107.

9. *Statistical Abstract of Assam*, 1958, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, Shillong, 1960, p. 384.

10. *Statistical Abstract* 1963. Department of Economics & Statistics, Govt. of Assam, pp. 32.

Statistical Handbook of Assam, Dept. of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, 1962, 1965, pp. 114, 1966, p. 119, 1968, pp. 119, 1969, p. 119, 1971, pp. 107-08, 1976, pp. 194-95, 1878, p. 173.

Of these roads in 1976, in Gauhati, Barpeta and Nalbari Sub-division respectively there were 428 kilometer, 122 kilometer and 108 kilometer surfaced road; 943,601, and 871 kilometers of unsurfaced gravelled road and 123 km. 261 km. and 136 km. earthened road.

Length of National Highway in Kamrup district.¹¹ (in Kilometers)

Year	Length
1960-61	138
1963-64	278
1965-66	224.8
1967-68	234.8
1968-69	234.8
1969-70	234.8
1970-71	234.8
1974-75	294.57

The Nagpur Plan 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 41.60 kilometers of road per 258 sq. kms of area in twenty years period. The total area of Kamrup district according to the 1971 census is 9,863 sq. kms and it had about 2,920.91 kms of road including National Highways under the Public Works Department of the Government of Assam.

The difficulties of construction and maintenance of roads in the district are enormous. The swirling currents of Brahmaputra and its tributaries wash away many bridges and cause extensive damage to the roads. The roads have to be well-raised above the surrounding land to protect them from the flood. The non-availability of suitable materials in the plains for metalling roads entails heavy transportation cost and hampers expeditious execution of the construction works. National Highway No 31 and No 37 together covers above 234.8 kilometres of the district.¹² Total number of bridges on roads under public works department in Kamrup district were 145 as on 31st March, 1974 (excluding National Highways)¹³

11. *Statistical Abstract*, Kamrup district, Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, 1965, pp. 32 and *Statistical Handbook of Assam*. Dept. of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, 1965, p. 116; 1966, p. 120; 1968, p. 120; 1969, p. 120, and 1971, p. 109.
12. *Statistical Handbook, Assam*, 1976 Department of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Assam, p. 109.
13. *Transport Statistics of Assam*, 1974, Transport and Tourism Department, Dispur, Assam, p. 21.

The following table shows the road-wise length of State Highways in Kamrup district as on 31.3.74.¹⁴

Length in Kilometres.

Name of roads	Name of P.W.D. division	Total length	Black topped
Old A.T. Road West	Gauhati Road	10.80	10.80
G.S. Road within Gauhati Municipal Limit.	Gauhati Road	5.17	5.17

The North Trunk Road (west) under Tezpur N.T. Road Mangaldai Road Division of Public Works Department which is 146.40 kms in length also consists of a part of Kamrup district.

The following table will illustrate the total length of road managed by the Public Works Department, Assam, in the three Sub-divisions of Kamrup as it was on 31st March 1977.¹⁵

Sub-division	National Highway	State Highway	Major District road	Other district Road.
1	2	3	4	5
Gauhati	178	81	400	880
Nalbari	38	62	153	896
Barpeta	59	10	208	712

Road length in kilometer per thousand of people and hundred square kilometer area of the three sub-divisions of Kamrup was respectively 109.54 km. and 33.27 km. in Gauhati sub-division, 86.45 km. and 29.90 km. in Barpeta sub-division and 135.82 kilometre and 56.80 kilometre in Nalbari sub-division in 1976-77.

Roads under the Municipalities and Town Committees : Municipalities and Town Committees in the district also have their own roads within their respective municipal areas. While Municipalities have their own trained staff, for construction and maintenance of roads, the town committees can hardly afford to keep engineers in their pay roll. Paucity of fund is also a great obstacle which, these bodies are to overcome before they undertake any extensive scheme of road development.

14. *Transport Statistics of Assam*, 1974, Transport and Tourism Deptt. Dispur, p. 23.
15. *Statistical Hand Book, Assam*, 1980, by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Assam, page 222 and 225.

Local Board and Panchayat roads : Prior to the enforcement of the Assam Panchayat Act 1959, some of the roads of the district were managed by the Local Boards of respective Sub-divisions. Total length of Local Board roads in Kamrup district in 1955-56 was about 1,295.9 kms. out of which 515.2 kms were in Gauhati Sub-division and 780.7 kms in Barpeta subdivision. After implementation of the Assam Panchayat Act, 1959, some of the Local Board roads were taken over by the Public Works Department and the rest were transferred to the *Panchayat*. According to the census of 1961 there were 1,024 village roads in Kamrup district. Since then a substantial amount was earmarked by the *Panchayats* for development of rural communications. Following table shows the progress of roads in different Blocks-cum-*Panchayats* in 1973-74.¹⁶

Achievement of the Development Blocks in the field of village communication in the year 1969-70.

Name of Blocks	New <i>Kutcha</i> roads constructed (kms)	Existing <i>Kutcha</i> roads improved (kms)	Culverts constructed (number)	Culverts repaired (number)
1. Hajo	—	—	—	—
2. Rangia	—	33	16	—
3. Karara	10	16	—	—
4. Kamalpur	—	—	—	—
5. Rampur	1	7	—	—
6. Dimoria	—	14	14	—
7. Chamaria	—	—	—	—
8. Rani	—	—	—	—
9. Chaygaon	2	13	6	—
10. Boko Bongaon	3	16	—	—
11. Tihu Barama	24	18	26	—
12. Baska	—	—	—	—
13. Paschim Nalbari	27	44	80	10
14. Pub Nalbari	48	14	—	3
15. Barkhetri Bongsar	19	4	—	—
16. Tamulpur	3	—	5	—
17. Barigog Bonbhag	50	45	30	15
18. Barpeta	7	1	—	—

16. *Community Development Programme of Assam, 1973-74*, Department of Economics and Statistics, pp. 47-48.

1	2	3	4	5
19. Mandia	6	3	—	—
20. Chenga	—	7	3	1
21. Bajali	2	16	9	—
22. Bhabanipur	20	42	9	—
23. Gobardhana	4	—	—	—
24. Jalah	16	1	—	—
25. Rupsi	10	29	—	—

(ii) **Vehicles and conveyances :** The beasts of burden in the district are bullocks, horses and buffaloes. Carts drawn by the above three species of bovine are to be seen throughout the nook and corner of the district. In the urban areas, horse drawn carts are numerous and as a matter of fact a section of the Bihari *Mazdoors* take it to be their main source of livelihood. Carts drawn by buffaloes or bullocks are generally seen to be numerous in rural areas. Although this means of transport is proved to be time-consuming, yet their importance in local transport system cannot be overemphasised. Other beasts of burden in the district are elephants which are generally used for extracting timber from the forests.

Bicycles have practically brought revolution in the road transport of the district. It is now an important and widely used means of transport equally in urban and rural areas. Rickshaws in urban areas provide the cheapest means of transport. Auto Rickshaws and City Buses are popular and a cheaper means of transport in the urban areas particularly in Gauhati. Taxis are also available in the urban areas but they can only be afforded by the well-to-do.

Neither the tram-way system of transport has ever been developed in Kamrup district nor there is any possibilities in near future. Automobiles as a means of transport was first put to use in about 1928 and since then it is playing a significant role specially in the expanding city of Gauhati and by now it appears that it has superseded all other local means of transport.

The statements below show the number of motor vehicles on road in Kamrup district from 1965 to 1976 and the total number of vehicles registered during 1968 to 1976 in the district.¹⁷

17. *Transport Statistics of Assam, 1973*, Department of Transport and Tourism, Govt. of Assam, Dispur. p. 25-32 ; *Transport Statistics of Assam, 1974*, Departments of Transport and Tourism, Govt. of Assam. Dispur, p. 32-34 ; *Statistical Hand book of Assam, 1976*, Directorate of Economics and Statistics pp. 188-93 ; and *Statistical Hand Book of Assam, 1978*, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, pp. 164-67.

MOTOR VEHICLES ON ROAD BY TYPES IN KAMRUP DISTRICT DURING 1965 TO 1976.

Year	Buses	Private carriers	Public carriers	Motor cycles	Taxi cabs	Motor cars & Jeeps	Tractors	Trailers	Govt. Vehicles	Auto rickshaws	Other	Total
1965	407	1068	1261	348	51	1662	37	156	—	—	—	4,990
1966	455	1052	1334	430	59	1561	40	169	1173	4	—	6,577
1967	599	2646	1816	694	85	3250	129	252	2	—	—	9,473
1968	565	1140	1556	190	84	2290	68	185	1709	5	141	7,933
1969	804	1197	2257	794	85	2489	402	307	1937	2	344	10,668
1970	829	1836	2338	844	87	2675	409	314	1974	46	358	11,110
1971	900	1503	2775	1225	98	2976	485	346	2135	155	424	12,921
1972	617	1802	3405	1448	237	4590	556	375	2335	217	575	16,157
1973	600	718	1191	2051	203	4476	309	251	1571	252	64	11,686
1974	590	680	1005	2120	195	4236	310	269	1601	163	70	11,239
1975	629	761	1303	3030	221	4296	331	287	2241	234	196	13,529
1976	657	745	2501	3150	211	4301	341	290	2411	350	212	15,169

Total number of vehicles registered in Kamrup district during 1968 to 1976
(typewise)

Year	Buses	Private carriers	Public carrier	Motor car & Jeeps	Motor cycles & coo- ters.	Taxis	Tractors	Trailers	Auto- ricks- haws	Govt. Vehi- cles	Other	Total
1968	55	95	131	349	337	16	33	6	2	117	25	1166
1969	106	235	814	429	384	—	26	184	3	131	198	2505
1970	59	175	673	211	393	17	9	44	128	12	81	1802
1971	105	209	501	265	214	18	14	12	83	16	80	1517
1972	20	201	426	295	355	85	25	16	49	1731	72	3275
1973	28	28	231	337	413	94	5	27	27	212	8	1410
1974	23	36	201	436	501	70	11	3	23	237	17	1558
1975	118	39	334	191	766	5	101	2	23	432	281	2292
1976	49	107	954	212	591	8	18	34	43	249	43	2308

(iii) **Public Transport** : On the 16th of January, 1948, the first nationalised Bus services were introduced in this district by nationalising the Gauhati-Nowgong route covering a total distance of 120 kms. Gradually, the Gauhati-Shillong route, Gauhati-Goalpara route, Gauhati Tezpur route and Gauhati-Barpeta route were nationalised on and from 1.1.49, 1.4.52, 1.1.57 and 1.3.63 respectively. Prior to construction of the Brahmaputra bridge, State Transport services in between Tezpur-Gauhati, and Gauhati-Nalbari-Barpeta were started and terminated at North Gauhati.

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 States Road Transport Corporation. The following table shows the important routes on which the Corporation buses originating from Gauhati now ply.

Sl. No.	Description of route	Approx. distance in kms.	No. of daily trip from Gauhati.
1.	Gauhati Tinsukia Super	491	1
2.	Gauhati Tinsukia Ordinary	491	1
3.	Gauhati-Dibrugarh Super Express	443	2 (one day and one night)
4.	Gauhati-Sibsagar Ordinary	364	1
5.	Gauhati-Jorhat Ordinary	308	1
6.	Gauhati-Jorhat Super	308	1 (night super)
7.	Gauhati-Golaghat Ordinary	228	1
8.	Gauhati-Shillong	103	5
9.	Gauhati-Nowgong Ordinary	123	6
10.	Gauhati-Morigaon Ordinary	78	2
11.	Gauhati-Silghat Ordinary	185	1
12.	Gauhati-Diphu Ordinary	271	1
13.	Gauhati-Rangapara Ordinary	174	2
14.	Gauhati-Dhekiajuli Ordinary	137	1
15.	Gauhati-Biswanath Chariali	255	2
16.	Gauhati-Dhemaji Ordinary Express	464	1
17.	Gauhati-North Lakhimpur Super Express	397	2 (one night and one day)

Sl. No.	Description of route	Approx. distance in kms.	No. of daily trip from Gauhati.
18.	Gauhati-Shillong-Silchar Ordinary	345	1 (day super)
19.	Gauhati-Dhuburi	185	3 (one Express)
20.	Gauhati-Kokrajhar Ordinary	236	1
21.	Gauhati-Bongaigaon Ordinary	210	1
22.	Gauhati-Gosaigaon Ordinary	277	1
23.	Gauhati-Barpeta Ordinary (through National Highway)	140	2
24.	Gauhati-Barpeta Ordinary	140	2
25.	Gauhati-Tezpur Super	181	2 (one night Super and one day super)
26.	Gauhati-Tezpur Ordinary	181	3
27.	Gauhati-Goalpara Ordinary	150	2

The present coverage of State Transport Corporation in the district amounts roughly to 217 miles, i.e. 349.13 kms.

The important stations and junctions of State Transport which fall within Kamrup district are as follows :—

Paltan Bazar	}	Gauhati (Main Station)
Machkhowa		
Jhalukbari		
Palasbari	}	In Gauhati-Goalpara route.
Batarhat		
Rampur		
Chaygaon		
Boko		
Baihata Chariali	}	In Gauhati-Barpeta route.
Rangiya		
Nalbari		
Pathsala		
Barpeta		

It may be mentioned here that the State Road Transport Corporation is managing the University Services since the year 1955 and gradually services to Engineering, Medical and Ayurvedic Colleges have also been extended. State Transport Corporation has also introduced a City Bus service in the route from Khanapara to Church field via Dispur, Paltan Bazar, Overbridge. Moreover, Assam and Meghalaya State Transport Corporation has recently introduced regular night services from Gauhati to Tinsukia Gauhati to Dibrugarh, Gauhati to North Lakhimpur and Gauhati to Tezpur.

The object of the corporation is to provide an efficient, economic and comfortable service to the travelling public. Modern type of vehicles, with comfortable seats are provided to avoid congestion or over-loading. The journey hours in long distance routes are reduced by introducing express services. Facilities such as waiting rooms, advance booking and canteens have been extended by the Corporation.

Besides corporation buses, there are privately owned public buses which ply between various important places of the district not covered by the former. *Bazar* buses convey passengers and goods to and from *hats* and thus play a vital part in rural life. Such privately owned buses, however, do not generally compare favourably with Corporation buses in respect of punctuality, comfort and fares. Some important routes covered by such buses are given below :—

Stage Carriage Routes in Kamrup district.

Name of the route	Approx. distance
1. Tarabari-Barpeta-Barpeta Road-Bashbari route	60 Km.
2. Barpeta-Pattacharkuchi-Jalah-Anchali route	51 "
3. Barpeta-Sarupeta-Bhawanipur route	65 "
4. Barpeta-Sorbhog-Burikhamarghat-Kalgachiya-Paihladaha route	75 "
5. Barpeta-Daulasal-Hajo-Gauhati route	169 "
6. Barpeta-Sarthebari-Nalbari-Hajo-Gauhati route amalgamated with Doomni-Nikashi-Tihu-Sarthebari route	300 "
7. Barpeta-Sarthebari-Nalbari-Rangia-Muktapur-Khairabari-Tangla-Harisinga-Odalguri route.	112 "
8. Gauhati-Chessa-Chepti-Rangia-Darranga route amalgamated with Rangia Darranga-Nagrijiuli and Nalbari-Ghagrapar Darranga-Nagrijiuli and Nalbari-Paikarkuchi-Tamulpur-Nagrijiuli route.	112 "

Name of the route	Approx. distance.
9. Gauhati-Kamalpur-Baharghat-Morowa-Damodar-dham-Ghagrapara-Barajol route.	66 Km.
10. Gauhati-Goreswar-Suklaghat extension upto Bezara-Garurkhuti route.	106 "
11. Gauhati-Hajo-Daulasal-Rangia-Nalbari route amalgamated Gauhati-Sualkuchi and Rangia-Eatibari routes.	160 "
12. Gauhati-Muktapur-Kalaigaon-Harisinga-Odalguri route.	64 "
13. Gauhati-Muktapur-Khairabari-Duni-Tangla route.	104 "
14. Darranga-Rangia-Muktapur-Odalguri route.	104 "
15. Tihu-Barama-Subankhata route	49 "
16. Nikashi-Barama-Nalbari-Hajo-Gauhati route.	121 "
17. Barpeta-Sarthebari-Nalbari-Rangia Darranga route.	123 "
18. Barnibari-Belsor-Nalbari-Hajo-Gauhati route.	81 "
19. Subankhata-Khagrabari-Dhamdhama-Nalbari-Hajo-Gauhati route	103 "
20. Tihu-Kaithalkuchi-Chamata-Nalbari route	26 "
21. Doomni-Tihu-Kaithalkuchi-Industrial Estate-Nalbari-Hajo-Gauhati route	104 "
22. Rampur-Tihu-Kaithalkuchi-Industrial Estate-Nalbari-Hajo-Gauhati route	104 "
23. Pakhamara-Singra-Barama-Nalbari-Hajo-Gauhati route	97 "
24. Nalbari-Jagra-Balowa-Mukalmua route	16 "
25. Tihu-Tarabari route extended to Nikashi	39 "
26. Kumrikata-Balowa-Narddi-Chandkuchi-Nalbari-Hajo-Gauhati route	77 "
27. Kumrikata-Balowa-Panigaon via Sanimandal road-Nalbari-Hajo-Gauhati route	77 "
28. Subankhata-Bagapara-Merkuchi-Barama-Nalbari-Hajo-Gauhati route	103 "
29. Tarabari-Belsor-Nalbari-Ghagrapar-Barajhal-Tamulpur-Darranga route	96 "
30. Thuchikata-Bhakatarpukhuri-Pachimchamata-Nalbari-Hajo-Gauhati route	78 "
31. Nagrijiuli-Rangia-Chessa-Gauhati route	

Name of the route	Approx. distance
32. Dongargaon-Nagriuli-Tamulpur-Alliyavitha-Khatikuchi-Jaijabari-Sonamatichuk-Nalbari-Sarthebari-Barpeta route	89 Km.
33. Gauhati-Sonapur-Kalongpar route	43 "
34. Gauhati-Azara-Barihat-Jharobari-Rani-Rajapara route	48 "
35. Gauhati-Guimara route.	N.A.
36. Gauhati-Kulsi route	N.A.
37. Gauhati-Satpur route	N.A.
38. Gauhati-Gumi route	N.A.
39. Gauhati-Boko-Rupnagar route	N.A.
40. Gauhati-Rajapara route	N.A.
41. Gauhati-Bijonagar route	N.A.
42. Darranga-Tamulpur-Alliya-Barajal-Ghagrapar-Nalbari-Sarthebari-Barpera route.	N.A.

Source :-District Transport Office, Ulubari, Gauhati.

List of Contract Carriage Buses : Centre—wise in Kamrup district :

1. Contract carriage (Bazar Bus) for Barpeta centre covering the following *Bazars* : Howli, Barpeta Road, Gobardhana, Bashbari, Ananda-bazar, Salbari bazar, Sorbhog, Kalgachia, Panbari, Sarupeta, Chaparbari, Pathsala, Pattacharkuchi, Sarthebari, Mandia, Kadang, Tarabari, Kararkur, Jania, Baghmara, Jalah, Howli, Anchali, Bhowanipur, Langha, Simla, Manikpur, Dhumarkur.

2. Contract carriage (*Bazars* Bus) for Nalbari centre covering the following *Bazars* : Dhamdhama, Khagrabari, Nalbasti, Tamulpur, Kumrikata, Darranga, Nagriuli, Bijulighat, Barnibari, Mukalmua, Singra, Doomni, Tihu, Subankhata.

3. Contract carriage (Bazar Bus) for Rangia centre covering the following *Bazars* : Goreswar, Changsari, Hajo, Satra Bazar, Dwarkuchi, Chessamukh, Doornichaki Chariali, Balikuchi, Mandakata.

4. Contract carriage (*Bazar* Bus) under Sonapur Sub-Division covering the following main *Bazars* of South Bank of Gauhati East : Sonapur Bazar, Kalongpar, Durrung, Kshetri, Beltola, Moliabari, Neli, Jagiroad, Gauhati, Topatoli.

5. Contract carriage (*Bazar* Bus) for south Bank under South Kamrup Bus Association, Bijonagar, covering the following *bazars* : Azara, Mirza, Palashbari, Bijonagar, Rampur, Boko, Rupnagar, Satpur, Barihat, Jharobari, Batarhat, Rani, Rajapara, Guimara, Gumi, Chaygaon, Bamunigaon, Kukurmara.

(Source : District Transport Office, Ulubari Gauhati.)

There are altogether one hundred and sixty two public carrier companies in the district which provide booking facilities for goods to and from Gauhati. They maintain a fleet of trucks for quick transportation of goods not only within the State but also outside it. Some of the well known Public Carrier Companies are :—Air Transport Corporation, Surekha Air Transport Corporation, Balurghat Transport Corporation, Hindustan Transport Corporation, Assam Hariyana Roadways, Assam-Bihar Roadways, Transport-Service Organisation's Association, Transport Corporation, Assam Bengal Roadways (Private) Ltd., Assam Roadways, Delhi; Assam Roadways, Lower Assam Roadways, Indian Roadlines, Eastern Road Carriers, Shanti Roadways, Central Road Transport of India, East India Transport Agencies, Dooars Transport, etc.

A large number of taxis are mainly found to be concentrated in urban areas and it is more true so far Gauhati is concerned. With the expansion of Gauhati and growth of industries, the taxis are now demanded much more than earlier though the fares are comparatively higher than other means of transport.

No Municipal Corporation or Board of the district manages any forms of transport services. The Municipal Boards however issue licenses to the Rickshaws, etc., plying within respective municipal jurisdiction. It may be added here that of all the urban areas of the district, Gauhati is only provided with private City Bus Services in the following seven different routes.

City Bus routes in Gauhati :

- Route No. 1. Pandu-Noonmati.
- Route No. 2. Bharalumukh-Azara.
- Route No. 3. Bharalu-Basistha.
- Route No. 4. Bharalu-Kahilipara, Assam State Electricity Board.
- Route No. 5. Pandu-Chandrapur and Satgaon.
- Route No. 6. Bharalu-Ganesh Mandir.
- Route No. 7. Church field-Fatasil.

Source : District Transport Office, Ulubari, Gauhati.

This privately owned City-Bus Services are managed by the Gauhati City Transport Association.

ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC BUSES :

The Administration of Motor Vehicles was previously run by the Superintendent of Police in each district under the administrative control of the Inspector General of Police, Assam. Since 1940 onwards, but subsequently towards the close of 1952, this department was separated from police and placed under the Ministry of Transport. Since then, the administration of Motor Vehicles Act are done by the District Transport Officers posted at each district headquarters subject to administrative control of the State Transport Commissioner.

There is one Regional Transport Authority at Gauhati which is a statutory Board consisting of the Deputy Commissioner as its Chairman, the District Transport Officer as the Secretary and some members. The Board sits from time to time and disposes the applications for Contract Carriage, Stage Carriage, Bazar bus, Taxi and Public Carrier. Permits for such vehicles are issued for a period of 3 (three) years.

The District Transport Officer aided by his Staff including the Motor Vehicles 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 (as amended), and Rules framed thereunder. The multifarious functions of the District Transport Officer include registration of vehicles, maintenance of records of transfer of vehicles, issuing driving licences, enforcement, maintenance of the vehicles in proper condition, realisation and assessment of taxes under the Assam Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, 1936, and enforcement of the regular bus services on the routes for which permits are issued. He can suspend or revoke the registration certificate of the vehicles for non-payment of motor vehicle taxes.

There are number of Bus-Associations formed by the bus owners of the district. The list of these associations is given below.

Name of Bus Association :

1. Tarabari - Barpeta - Barpeta Road - Bashbari Bus Association, P. O.—Barpeta.
2. Barpeta - Patacharkuchi - Jalah - Anchali Bus Association, P. O.—Barpeta.
3. Barpeta - Sarupeta - Bhuyapara Bus Association, P.O.—Sarupeta.

4. Barpeta - Sarbhog - Burikhamarghat - Kalgachiya - Patiladaha Bus Association, P. O.—Sarbhog.
5. Barpeta - Daulasal - Hajo - Gauhati Bus Association, P. O.—Barpeta.
6. Barpeta - Sarthebari - Nalbari - Hajo - Gauhati Bus Association, P. O.—Barpeta.
7. Barpeta - Sarthebari - Nalbari - Rangia - Muktapur - Khairabari - Tangla - Harisinga - Udalguri Bus Association, P. O.—Barpeta.
8. Gauhati - Chessa - Chepti - Rangia - Darranga Bus Association P. O.—Rangia.
9. Gauhati - Kamalpur - Baharghat - Morrowa - Damodardham - Ghagrapar - Barajol Bus Association, P. O.—Gauhati.
10. Gauhati - Goreswar - Sukleghat extension upto Bezara - Garurkhuti Bus Association, P. O.—Gauhati.
11. Gauhati—Hajo—Daulasal—Rangia—Nalbari amalgamated with Gauhati—Sualkuchi and Rangia—Latibari Bus Association, P. O. Gauhati.
12. Gauhati—Muktapur—Kalaigaon—Harisinga—Udalguri Bus Association, P. O.—Gauhati.
13. Gauhati—Muktapur—Khairabari—Duni—Tangla Bus Association, P. O.—Gauhati.
14. Darranga - Rangia - Muktapur - Udalguri Bus Association, P. O.—Rangia.
15. Tihu - Barama - Subankhata Bus Association, P. O.—Tihu.
16. Nikashi-Barama-Nalbari-Hajo-Gauhati Bus Association, P.O.-Nalbari.
17. Barpeta - Sarthebari - Nalbari - Rangia - Darranga Bus Association, P. O.—Barpeta.
18. Barnibari - Belsor-Nalbari-Hajo-Gauhati Bus Association, P.O.-Gauhati.
19. Subankhata - Khagrabari - Dhamdhama - Nalbari - Hajo - Gauhati Bus Association, P. O.—Nalbari.
20. Tihu - Kaithalkuchi - Chamata - Nalbari Bus Association, P. O.—Tihu.
21. Doomni - Tihu - Kaithalkuchi - Industrial Estate - Nalbari - Hajo - Gauhati Bus Association, P. O.—Nalbari.

22. Rampur - Tihu - Kaithalkuchi - Industrial Estate - Nalbari - Hajo-Gauhati Bus Association, P. O.—Gauhati.
23. Pakhamara - Singra - Barama - Nalbari - Hajo - Gauhati Bus Association, P. O.—Gauhati.
24. Nalbari - Jagra - Balowa - Mukalmua Bus Association, P. O.—Nalbari.
25. Tihu - Tarabari - Nikashi Bus Association, P. O.—Tihu.
26. Kumrikata - Balowa - Narddi - Chandkuchi - Nalbari - Hajo - Gauhati Bus Association, P. O.—Gauhati.
27. Kumrikata - Balowa - Panigaon via Sanimandal Road - Nalbari - Hajo-Gauhati Bus Association, P. O.—Gauhati.
28. Subankhata - Bagapara - Merkuchi - Barama - Nalbari - Hajo - Gauhati Bus Association, P. O.—Nalbari.
29. Tarabari - Belsor - Nalbari - Ghagrapra - Barajhal - Tamulpur - Darranga Bus Association, P. O.—Nalbari.
30. Thuthikata - Bhakatarpukhuri - Pachimchamata - Nalbari - Hajo - Gauhati Bus Association, P. O.—Gauhati.
31. Nagrijuli - Rangia - Chessa - Gauhati Bus Association, P. O.—Rangia.
32. Dongargaon - Nagrijuli - Tamulpur - Alliyavitha - Khatikuchi - Jaijibari—Sonamatichowk - Nalbari - Sarthebari - Barpeta Bus Association, P. O.—Barpeta.
33. Gauhati - Sonapur - Kalongpar Bus Association, P. O.—Sonapur.
34. Gauhati - Azara - Barihat - Jharobari - Rani - Rajapara Bus Association, P. O.—Bijoy Nagar.
35. South Kamrup Bus Association, P. O.—Bijoy Nagar.
36. Doomni - Nikashi - Tihu - Sarthebari Bus Association amalgamated with Barpeta - Sarthebari - Nalbari - Hajo Bus Association, P. O.—Barpeta.
37. Nalbari - Ghagrapar - Darranga - Nagrijuli Bus Association, P. O.—Nalbari.
38. Nalbari - Paikarkuchi - Tamulpur Bus Association, P. O.—Nalbari.
39. Contract Carriage Bus Association, P. O.—Barpeta.
40. Contract Carriage Bus Association, P. O.—Nalbari.

41. Contract Carriage Bus Association, P. O.—Rangia.
42. Contract Carriage Bus Association, P. O.—Sonapur.
43. North Kamrup Bazar Bus Association, P. O.—Nalbari.
44. Gauhati Transport Association, P. O.—Gauhati-3.

Besides these Bus Associations, there are four Taxi Owners' Associations at Gauhati, Nalbari, Barpeta and Rangia.

(Source :—District Transport office Ulubari, Gauhati.)

Rail Road : In the early part of the present century, the first railways that ran in the district was the Gauhati branch of the Assam—Bengal Railway which ran for a distance of about 52.91 kms. (33½ miles) through the district, eastward to the boundary of Nowgong. There were stations at Panikhaiti, Digaru, and Kshetri, but as this portion of the district consisted to a great extent of hills and marshes, it had not been much affected by opening of the line. In 1905, a line connected with the Eastern Bengal State Railway was constructed from the north bank of the Brahmaputra opposite Pandughat. So by the first decade there was a through Railway communication, not only between Calcutta and Gauhati, but also between Calcutta and Dibrugarh, through the Ganges, and the Brahmaputra still had to be crossed by ferries.

The supplementary Kamrup Gazetteer of R. F. Friel published in 1914 said at page 9, "Kamrup is now intersected throughout by the lines of the Assam-Bengal and Eastern Bengal State Railway systems, which met at Gauhati. The Brahmaputra is crossed by a steam ferry between Pandu and Amingaon and there is also a wagon ferry for goods. From Rangia a branch line runs to Tangla in the Mangaldai Sub-division. The line as has already been indicated, is liable to damage or at least danger from sudden floods and has had a good deal of influence on the cultivation and drainage adjoining it. The opening of the Gauhati extension of the Eastern Bengal State Railway has relieved the steamer companies of the duty of carrying mails and now only one steamer runs daily in either directions."

The metre gauge line Railway system of Assam forms part of the Eastern—Bengal Railway (now renamed as the North—East Frontier Railway). The line was extended from Calcutta to Dhuburi in 1902 and then to Amingaon via Golakganj in 1909-10 after formation of Assam-Bengal Railway in 1892, with its headquarters at Calcutta. The Gauhati—Jumunamukh section of the Railway was opened in 1897 but the line was immediately closed because of the great earthquake of 1897.

To facilitate management of the Assam portion of Railway lines, a new railway system known as the Assam Railway was established with its headquarters at Pandu in 1947. With the regrouping of railways, the Assam Railway was merged with the North-Eastern Railway zone with headquarters at Gorakhpur in April, 1952. Again in January, 1958, the management of the railway lines east of Katihar was separated from the North-Eastern zone, and vested in the newly formed North-East Frontier Railway zone with its headquarters at Pandu and then at Maligaon with expectation to take early action for expansion and improvement of railway services within and into Assam. From that time, the railway lines in Assam are under the management of the North—East Frontier Railway. The Divisional scheme of the organisation was introduced in 1969, dividing the Zone into 4 Divisions.

The North-East Frontier Railway with its headquarters at Maligaon about four miles (6.44 km.) west of Gauhati serves not only the district but the entire state of Assam and parts of Bihar and West Bengal. The railway mileage in Kamrup district is 125 miles or 200 kilometres as per current distance tables of the Railway. The Stations are Sorbhog, Barpeta Road, Guagacha, Sorupeta, Pathsala, Tihu, Kaithalkuchi, Nalbari, Ghograpara, Rangia (Junction), Kendukona, Baihata, Changsari, Pragjyotishpur, Agthori, Jalukbari (Maligaon), Gauhati, Narengi, Panikhaiti, Thakurkuchi, Panbari, Digaru, Tetelia, and Kamrup Kshetri. The stations from Sorbhog to Gauhati as shown above are in between Alipur Duar (Junction)-Gauhati Section; and from Narengi to Kamrup Kshetri are in between Gauhati—Lumding Section of the N. F. Railway. Khandikar and Goreswar are two other stations on the branch line in between Rangia-Rangapara section, in this district. The most important railway stations in this district from the view points of passenger and goods traffic are Gauhati and Rangia junction. The importance of Rangia junction is increasing now from the defence point of view as well. And Gauhati is the first important station in the district with some modern facilities and of considerable commercial transaction. With the abolition of Pandu and Amingaon stations as a result of the construction of the Brahmaputra Bridge, Gauhati station has assumed added importance. A new station (New Gauhati goods shed) had been opened for facilitating the exportation of oil from the first public sector refinery at Noonmati.

The other more or less commercially important stations are Nalbari, Sorbhog, Barpeta Road, Pathsala, Tihu and Kamrup Kshetri.

It may be mentioned here that with the completion of the Brahmaputra rail-cum road bridge, a modern era of developed communication

system has dawned in Assam and North-East India, opening a new horizon of progress and development. The first train with a diesel Locomotive was taken over the Bridge on the 23rd October, 1962. Special traffic was allowed over the Bridge on 27th October, 1962, full goods traffic on 31st October, 1962 and formal opening was done by the then Prime Minister of India, Late Jawaharlal Neheru, on 7th June, 1963. From that day the delay and difficulties of transshipment across the river dating from 1910 were over.

The role of the railway in the economic life of the district, it may be added here, is significant in various ways. As has already been mentioned, the construction of the Brahmaputra Bridge has facilitated in the easy flow of trade and commerce which was so long proved to be one of the major handicaps in the economic development of the region.

Further, with the establishment of the Railway headquarters at Pandu (Maligaon), a great number of people have got appointments in various capacities thereby reducing congestion in other employment markets. This employment market on the other hand has contributed to a great extent to the expansion of banking, trade and commerce of the district.

The National Council of Applied Economic Research in its report 'Techno-economic Survey of Assam', suggested construction of a rail route from Pandu-Darangagiri for a more realistic approach to the economic development of the district. The Government of India has sanctioned the extension of broad-gauge line from Bongaigaon up to Gauhati and its construction has already been started. On the completion of this broad-gauge line, it is sure that the railway will continue to dominate the economic life not only of this district but throughout the Brahmaputra Valley.

(d) **Waterways, Ferries and Bridges :**

(i) **Course of Waterways :—**As has been mentioned elsewhere, the Brahmaputra which runs across the State served as a great highway of trade and commerce in the past when roads and railways were not developed. Large boats were plied in the Brahmaputra. M' Cosh, writing in 1837 stated that, "a large boat took from six to seven weeks to come from Calcutta to Gauhati, though the post which was conveyed in small, canoes rowed by two men who were relieved every fifteen or twenty miles reached Gauhati, in ten days."¹⁷ The journey up the river

17. B. C. Allen : *Assam District Gazetteers*, Kamrup, 1905, p. 173.

from Calcutta to Gauhati continued to be time-consuming till 1848; when Government steamers were deputed to ply between Calcutta and Gauhati, and only in 1853 later, that Dibrugarh was reached by steamer. The up and down journey from Gauhati to Dibrugarh took about 15 days. The country boat could never cover this distance within such a short period. 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 and River Navigation Company with whom they were associated. The daily Mail Steamer Service was started in 1884 on the Brahmaputra between Dhuburi and Dibrugarh as an extension of steamer service between Dhuburi and Jatrapur. Steamer plied daily between Kokilamukh and Amingaon.

The ports of call in Kamrup district were Khalabandha for Barpeta, Palasbari, Sualkuchi and Gauhati itself.

In 1905, two steamers plied between Gauhati and Dhuburi. One, which carried the mails, did not call at any of the intermediate ports and was supposed to do the up journey in twenty hours and the down in eleven hours. The other belonged to the service which ran between Goalundo and Dibrugarh and called at each of the ports mentioned above. Joint Steamer Companies used to run commercial river service between Calcutta and Assam. The river services had their heydays before introduction of the 'Assam Link' in 1950. They continued, however, to carry 80 per cent of the jute and considerable quantities of petroleum products from Assam to Calcutta till they met three major setbacks. Firstly, the earthquake of 1950 caused considerable changes in the course of the Brahmaputra resulting in the deterioration of the navigable channel, particularly in the upper reaches leading to the closure of river services by the Joint Steamer Companies from 1954 onwards. Secondly, the construction of the rail-cum-road bridge known as Saraighat bridge across the Brahmaputra at Paradu in 1962 greatly improved the overland road and railway transport system, and thus it dealt a great blow to the river services. Thirdly, due to Indo-Pak hostilities in 1965, the Inland Steamer Service connecting Assam with the rest of the country through the then East Pakistan (Bangladesh at present) was closed down. Consequently the River Steam Navigation Company went into liquidation and in its place the Government of India set up the Central Inland Water Transport Corporation Limited to resume river services in place of River Steam Navigation Company in 1967. But this Corporation could not make any

headway in Assam mainly because it failed to attract sufficient cargo either from public sector or private sector. Therefore, the Government of India set up a Committee known as the Bhagabati Committee for studying the existing water transport problems of the country and to suggest a phased programme for development. This committee held the view that the river transport being confined within the border of Assam, it would be desirable to maintain the services within Assam waters. It recommended the following Schemes :—

(Rs. in Lakh).

(i) Criss-Cross Service on the river Brahmaputra	Rs. 30.00
(ii) Commercial river service on the Borak	Rs. 9.37
(iii) Subansiri river service	Rs. 5.00

It also recommended construction of a dry dock in Assam at a cost of Rs. 50 Lakhs during the 4th plan period.

In the month of May, 1971, the Government of India sanctioned a sum of Rs. 5 Lakhs for the Subansiri's Scheme but the two other service schemes were under consideration. It may be mentioned here that boats which supplemented steamer services on the Brahmaputra are still used and they still serve the purpose of trade and commerce to some extent in absence of steamer services. In 1971-72, there were about 184 private boats and 54 commercial boats in Kamrup district.¹⁸

Assam set up a Directorate of Inland Water Transport under the Transport Department in 1959, in pursuance of the recommendation of the Gokhle Committee (1959) to look after the development of waterway ferries and for training the Inland Water Transport personnel. The present Directorate is still in its infancy and steps are being taken to strengthen it. It took over six ferries in 1968, five ferries in 1969, and two ferries in 1970, from Public Works Department and Development (Panchayat and Community Development) Department. Some more ferries are under contemplation of being taken over by Inland Water Transport Directorate.

Apart from the Brahmaputra, the other rivers of the district are also used in varying degrees for purpose of trade and commerce. The development of roads has somewhat lessened the importance of river traffic but it still discernible on the Manas, Barnadi, Pagladiya, and the Chaulkhowa rivers. The Manas is navigable by boat throughout the year. The river Barnadi is of considerable value as a trade route, boats of four

18. Source : Transport Department, Govt. of Assam.

tons burden being able to proceed as far as Sonarikhali in the cold weather and right upto Malmura Ghat in the rains and it thus affords an outlet to the rice, mustard and pulse grown in the interior places. During the rains the Pagladiya is navigable by boats of four tons burden as far as Alagjhar. The Chaulkhowa river and most of the other less important rivers of Kamrup district such as (1) the Beki, (2) the Puthimari, (3) the Baralia, (4) the Kolajal, or Kolapari, (5) the Sessa, (6) the Kaldiya, (7) the Pahumara, (8) the Dekadong, (9) the Kulsi, (10) the Singra, (11) the Umtru (Digaru), and (12) the Boko are navigable by small boats during the rainy season and useful for the purpose of trade.

(ii) **Ferries :-**

Formerly the ferry services on rivers enroute Public Works Department roads were under the management of Public Works Department of Assam. In 1959, the number of ferry crossing routes on different rivers were 15 in Gauhati Sub-division and 7 in Barpeta Sub-division. Due to the construction of bridges over many of these rivers during the last two decades, the need for ferry services on those rivers have been greatly reduced. The remaining ones have been transferred to the Directorate of Inland Water Transport Corporation, Assam, on the recommendation of Gokhle Committee. On 31st March 1975, there were three ferry services in the district, namely, Gauhati-North Gauhati, Gauhati-Rajaduar and Gauhati-Kurua on the Brahmaputra river, under the management of the Directorate of Inland Water Transport Corporation, Assam. The following table shows the cargo carried by the Directorate of Inland Water Transport ferries at different points on the bank of the Brahmaputra river in Kamrup district during 1972-73, 1973-74 and 1974-75.¹⁹

(in tonnes)

Name of the ferry	Goods carried by the ferry		
	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
1. Gauhati-North Gauhati	300	545	686
2. Gauhati-Rajaduar	360	872	983
Total	660	1417	1669

19. *Transport Statistics of Assam, 1974*, Transport and Tourism Department, Transport Survey and Planning Cell, Dispur, Assam, p. 54.

There are at present three passenger ferry services in the Brahmaputra from and to Gauhati. The number and weights of the passenger, vehicles, cargo etc., handled by these services during 1978-79 are furnished below : ²⁰

Name of the ferries	Passengers in thou- sands.	Goods in tonnes	Cycles in number	Animals in number
1. Gauhati-North Gauhati	308	235	17,567	325
2. Gauhati-Rajaduar	386	53	31,397	—
3. Gauhati-Kurua	8	7	179	—

Under these three ferry services the water Transport Department maintained followings vessels in 1978-79 :

Kind of vessel.	Gauhati-North Gauhati		Gauhati-Rajaduar		Gauhati-Kurua	
	Number	Capacity	Number	Capacity	Number	Capacity
1. Modern Steel vessels	3	110	3	145	1	15
2. Pantoons	1	50	—	—	—	—
3. Relief boats	—	—	1	3	—	—

(iii) **Bridges :**

By far, the most important rail-cum-road double decker bridge in the district is the Saraighat Bridge over the river Brahmaputra near Pandu. A bridge across the river Brahmaputra has been thought of from 1910

20. *Statistical Hand Book of Assam, 1980*, by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Assam, Gauhati, pages 213—19.

onwards, that is, from the time the railway line was extended to Amingaon. Due to the very limited transport demand, however, passenger and wagon ferry arrangements between Amingaon and Pandu was able to cater to the needs, and the urgency for the building of a bridge was not felt. During World War II, on war transport requirements, the work on a bridge at Amingaon was taken up, but it was shelved again due to doubts cast about the stability of the railway line between Bongaigaon and Amingaon because of the disastrous flood of 1942-43 and other considerations. An alternative site for a bridge avoiding the Bongaigaon-Amingaon reach was also investigated but finally the choice fell on the Amingaon-Pandu site.

The Brahmaputra bridge consists of 10 spans of piers. It carries double metre gauge track of main line standard in the lower deck and a roadway on its upper deck with foot paths on either side. The girders and other details have been designed for conversion to a single line broad gauge main line standard track, if required in future. Sufficient clearance has been provided from the normal high flood level upto the bottom of the girders to permit free navigation.

The wall foundation of the bridge has been taken sufficiently deep to do away with the need for protective pitching around the piers. The bottom of some of the foundations are more than 206' deep. The waterway has been designed for the maximum estimated discharge at the site.

The work on the foundations commenced in January, 1959 with the Hindusthan Construction Co. Ltd. as the contractors and the Braithwaite, Burn & Jessep Construction Co. Ltd. as the fabricators and suppliers of the steel caisson. On the 10th of January 1960, late Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone for the Bridge.

The special features in the design and construction of the Saraighat Bridge had aroused international interest. A team of senior Engineers of the Economic Commission for Asia and Far East comprising representatives of Thailand, Cambodia, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Philippines, New Zealand and U.S.S.R. visited Pandu from November, 26th to 29th, 1960 to study the technique employed in the construction of the Bridge.

The cost of the Brahmaputra Bridge Project under broad break down were as follows :

double track rail-cum road bridge 0.8 mile (1.29 Kms.) in length including road approach viaducts :

General charges	..	6.0	crores
North Bank approach	..	0.7	,,
South Bank approach	..	1.0	,,

A marshalling yard at Narengi and terminal facilities for the passenger traffic at Gauhati and Staff quarters — 2.9 crores

(Summarised from two booklets—"The Brahmaputra Bridge and North East Frontier Railway at a glance" published by the N.F. Railway authority).

Further, there are 57 bridges on the various roads of the Kamrup district. Out of these 57 bridges, 44 bridges are on the National Highway No. 37. Of the total bridges, 33 are reinforced cement concrete bridge and rest are either screw-pile or timber bridges or timber bridges with R.S.J. beams and timber decking. Construction of these bridges had obviated the need for ferry-crossing across many rivers. All such bridges are sufficiently raised above their surrounding so as to be effective even during heavy flood when the adjoining areas are submerged.

(e) **Transport by air :**

The Govt. of India's Civil Airport is located at Barjhar 22.53 kms away from Gauhati. This is the only airport in the district. The Indian Air Lines Corporation and some other commercial agencies use it for transportation of passengers and goods traffic respectively. Air Lines Corporation has its own transport arrangement to carry passengers from and to Gauhati.

(f) **Rope Ways :**

Under the State's Five-Year Plan, provision has been made for a ropeway from Cherapunjee to Shillong in the first phase which will be extended to Pandu (in Kamrup district), but work on this scheme has been suspended due to subsequent rejection of the project.

(g) **Travel and Tourist facilities :**

A tourist bureau at Gauhati has already been established for the benefits of tourists. In the central plan (3rd Five Year), provision was made for a rest house at Gauhati and during the same plan period, a

tourists lodge at Chandubi was proposed to be set up. The construction of the rest house at Gauhati and the tourist lodge has been completed.

At present there are two tourist lodges which are situated at Gauhati and Manas in Kamrup district. There are also three tourists' information offices at Gauhati, Borjhar Air-Port (Gauhati) and Barpeta Road in the district to help the tourists when they are on a visit to the places of tourist interest in Assam. For catering to the needs of tourists, there are a number of good hotels in Gauhati. The Guest House maintained by the National Sports Council of Assam, Gauhati, is undoubtedly a good hotel with all modern amenities. Besides, there are a number of standard hotels, viz. Belle-vue, North East, Nova, Alka, Star, Strand, Ambassador, Mayur, Ambar, Nandan, Broadway, Oberoi, Alanker etc. Besides there are a number of popular hotels like Happy Lodge, Punjab Hotel, Suradevi Hotel, Ananda Lodge etc. Construction of a 5 star international tourist hotel by Tourist Corporation of India recently has been started in Gauhati.

In olden times, **Dharmasalas** set up mainly by Marwari community for pilgrims were of considerable importance. Even now they are to be seen in many localities depending upon the flow of pilgrims. Staying in a **Dharmasala** is free but payment is to be made after the expiry of the scheduled period of free stay which is usually three or four days. There is one such Dharmasala at Kamakhya and two in Fancy bazar area of Gauhati.

There are two Circuit Houses in Kamrup district one at Gauhati and another at Barpeta. There are also two State Guest Houses of Assam Government near Khanapara (Gauhati) which provide accommodation for Ministers and V.I.Ps. Various departments of Government of Assam such as Forest Department, Embankment and Drainage Department, Public Works Department etc. and some public sector undertakings under State Government and Central Government such as Assam Industrial Development Corporation, Oil India Ltd., Assam Seeds and Fertilizer Corporation, Assam Agro-Industrial Development Corporation and Petro-Chemical Complex, Soil Conservation Department etc., have their own Inspection Bungalows or Guest Houses mainly at Gauhati and at different places in the district according to their necessity. Most of these Guest Houses or Inspection Bungalows have two furnished rooms and are provided with crockeries and cooking utensils. There is a Chowkidar in each Inspection Bungalow or Guest House who attends to the needs of visitors. A list of the places having Inspection Bungalows, Rest Houses, Dak-Bungalows and Circuit Houses maintained by the P.W.D. Assam, is given below :-

Inspection Bungalows Rest Houses at

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Sonapur | 17. Barama |
| 2. Chandmari, Gauhati. | 18. Tihu |
| 3. Boko | 19. Kulsi |
| 4. Chaygaon | 20. Nalbari |
| 5. Nagarbera | 21. Mukalmua |
| 6. Hekra | 22. Sarthebari |
| 7. Sontoli | 23. Tarabari |
| 8. Mirza | 24. Patacharkuchi |
| 9. Basistha | 25. Hilapakhri |
| 10. Hazo | 26. Roha |
| 11. Kamalpur | 27. Barpeta Road |
| 12. Rangia | 28. Bhawanipur |
| 13. Naokata | 29. Dumnichowki |
| 14. Tamulpur | 30. Kshetri |
| 15. Masalpur | 31. Subankhata |
| 16. Dhamdhama | |

Dak Bungalows at

- | |
|--|
| 1. Gauhati (combined with Inspection Bungalow) |
| 2. Barpeta -do- -do- |

Circuit Houses at

1. Gauhati
2. Barpeta
3. Nalbari

(h) Post and Telegraph :

In 1875-76, in the entire district there were only 6 Post Offices and subsequently in 1930-40, the number of Post Offices of all grades rose to 28. Expansion of postal facilities continued to be slow and interior places were practically devoid of postal services till the independence. It is only with the planning era that much emphasis was laid on extension of postal facilities even to the remotest areas of the district. In 1961-62, as many as 321 Post Offices were functioning in the district. Out of which 33 Post Offices were provided with telegraph facilities.

Till 1964, Gauhati Head Post Office was the only first class post office of the district. Barpeta Sub post-office was upgraded by 1st July, 1964, to a second class Head Post Office. With this conversion, Kamrup be-

came the first district in having two Head Offices in Assam. Thus in 1964, besides two Head Offices, Kamrup district had six Lower Selection Grade Sub-Offices namely, Maligaon Rly. Head quarters, Pandu, Nalbari, Rangia, Barpeta Road and Sorbhog. Expansion of postal facilities continued and by 31st March, 1969, there were 44 Sub-Post Offices and 115 Branch Post Offices under the Gauhati Head Post Office and 33 Sub-Post-Offices and 227 Branch Post Offices under the Barpeta Head Post Office. Almost all the Sub-Post Offices are provided with telegraph facilities. Savings bank facilities exist in Sub-Post Offices and are provided in many Branch Post Offices. Besides, there are public call facilities in all Sub-Post Offices and most of the Branch Post Offices.

In 1976, there were 22 (twenty-two) telephone exchanges in the Kamrup district at Baihata Charali, Barama, Barpeta Road, Barpeta, Bijoy-nagar, Boko, Borjhar, Darranga, Dispur, Gauhati, Goreswar, Hajo, Howly, Jalukbari, Nalbari, Pathsala, Rangia, Sorbhog, Tarabarihat, Tihu, Tamulpur, and Sonapur. The following table shows the number of telephone exchanges in Kamrup district in 1976 along with their capacity.²¹

Name and Location of Telephone Exchange (1)	Type of Exchange (2)	Present capacity of the Exchange (3)
1. Baihatia Charali	Max-II	25
2. Barama	Max-III	25
3. Barpeta Road	CBNM	200
4. Barpeta Town	CBNM	100
5. Bijoynagar	MAX-III	90/100
6. Boko	MAX-III	25
7. Borjhar	MAX-III	45/50
8. Darranga	MAX-III	25
9. Dispur	MAX-II	600
10. Gauhati!	MAX-I	5100
11. Goreswar	MAX-III	25

21. Data collected from office of the General Manager, N. E. TELECOM, Shillong-793001.

Name and Location of Telephone Exchange (1)	Type of Exchange (2)	Present capacity of the Exchange (3)
12. Hajo	MAX-III	25
13. Howly	MAX-III	25
14. Jhalukbari	MAX-II	400
15. Nalbari	MAX-II	300
16. Pathsala	MAX-II	45/50
17. Rangia	CBNM	100
18. Sorbhog	MAX-III	45/50
19. Tarabarihat	MAX-III	45/50
20. Tihu	MAX-III	45/50
21. Tamulpur	MAX-III	25
22. Sonapur	MAX-III	10

(i) **Radio & Wireless Stations :--**

Broadcasting on a regular basis in Assam, commenced in July, 1948, when Pilot Stations of All India Radio were started at Gauhati and at Shillong. The Shillong-Gauhati Station was inaugurated on the 1st of July, 1948 by the then Governor of Assam late Sir Akbar Hydari. Prior to this, daily programmes in Assamese were being broadcasted from Calcutta Station of All India Radio. In the first year of its inauguration, programmes of music, dramas and talks, in addition to composite programmes for children, women and rural listeners were broadcast. There was also special programme, thrice a week for the Khasi and Jaintia people. On 10th May 1953, a new 10 K.M.W. transmitter was installed at Jalukbari replacing the I. K. W. transmitter previously in use at Gauhati.

This step brought the programmes within the reach of a major part of the Assam Valley. During this period, a new composite programme for the Garo listeners was introduced. A further step in the development of this station was taken on 4th May, 1957, when the Gauhati Studio was shifted from a rented house in Uzanbazar, Gauhati, to All India Radio's own building at Chandmari, Gauhati. This also concided with the installation of a 10 K. W. Short-Wave transmitter, which further increased listening range of Gauhati Station. In January 1958, a second short wave transmitter of 10 K. W. was added. In 1962, a high power

50 M. W. transmitter was installed. The new building houses and modern studios have been fitted with upto-date equipments used in broadcasting. Since 1957, the Gauhati Station of All India Radio broadcasts programmes on two channels. The Gauhati 'A' programmes are carried by the medium wave as well as short wave transmitter. Earlier the second short wave transmitter carried the Gauhati 'B' service which comprised multi-lingual programmes intended for different tribal people, as also programmes in Tibetan and a special programme for Nepali speaking people in Assam. The addition of short wave transmitter practically covered the whole area of the State of Assam, Manipur and Arunachal. Now-a-days the Gauhati 'B' programmes are also carried by medium wave transmitter. For some-time, this station was also broadcasting a special programme for the listeners in Tripura.

The All India Radio of Gauhati Station started with broadcasting programmes for a duration of 40 hours and 15 minutes per week. The duration has now gone upto 130 hours and 45 minutes per week.

At present this station broadcasts programmes of music, dramas, talks and various special audience programmes in Assamese on Gauhati 'A' service. On this channel, music in Hindi, Bodo, Rabha and Bengali are also broadcast. Talks in English and a special programme in Assamese for the people of Arunachal is also broadcast on the Gauhati 'A' channel. Programmes of musics, talks, dramas in Hindi for defence personnel, programmes for youth (Yuva Bani), music for the tribes, like Karbis, Dimasa Kacharis, etc. and a special programme for Nepali speaking people are broadcast on Gauhati 'B' service. Besides, some programmes of music, talks, and dramas of Vividh Bharati are also relayed on the Gauhati 'B' Channel. This channel also carries special programmes for tea garden labourers. It can be stated that practically there is no major tribe in Assam whose music has not been broadcast by this Station. Recording of tribal music are mostly made on the spot in the tribal areas concerned. The Station possesses one of the most valuable collections of tribal music of the area.

In reflecting the culture and achievement of Assamese language and people, the contribution of All India Radio is immense. The establishment of this station has given a fillip to the development of music, drama and literary activities of the State and has presented to the public, quite a number of young writers and artists, who might not have got any recognition but for the medium of All India Radio. For the revival of the old form of dance and music like Bargeet and Ankia Nat, All India Radio Gauhati has done its best and the talks that have been broadcast

from this station have attracted the attention and appreciation of the intelligentsia. A programme for school was started on 18th April, 1960, and programme for the Universities was started from 16th February, 1961. Programmes of this station are very often intercepted and obstructed by more powerful centres of Dacca, Peking and Siliguri. So, for better working, Gauhati needs a much more powerful centre for its contact with the other parts of the country.

Besides the above A. I. R. Station, there are police wireless stations in different parts of the district for maintaining law and order.

APPENDIX -- A

LIST OF POST OFFICES IN KAMRUP DISTRICT :

1. GAUHATI HEAD POST	21. Dabok	E
OFFICE (Ist Class).	22. Dagaon	E
2. Assam Congress ND	23. Karara	
3. Bhattapara-garal S	24. Khudrademow	
4. Damrabil ND & S	25. Loch	
5. Kumarpura ND & S	26. Panitema	
6. New Press ND & S	27. Puthimari	
7. Panikhaiti S	28. Sonewar	
8. Santipur ND & S	29. BAMUNIMAIDAN	
9. Saraniya ND		TSO
10. AMINGAON	30. BARDUAR	
11. ASSAM CIVIL ENGINEER- ING SCHOOL NDTSO	31. BEZARA	
12. ASSAM TRIBUNE	32. Bhomlahati	E
NDTSO	33. Dumunichowki	S
13. ATHGAON E.D.S.O.	34. Halda	
14. AZARA	35. Mandakata	
15. Bangara E	36. Kenduguri	
16. Dharapur S	37. BHARALUMUKH	
17. BAIHATA	(PHONOCUM) ISG TSO	
18. Baihatachari Ali S	38. Dhirenpara	
19. Baruajani	39. BIJOYANAGAR CO	
20. Bihdia E	40. Baniapara	
	41. Batarhat	S

42. Dakhala	
43. Dehaligaon	
44. Futuri	
45. Jharabari	
46. Nahira	
47. Rampur (Palasbari)	
48. Simina	
49. Uparhali	
50. Sarpara	
51. Satpakhali	E
52. BOKO	
53. Bhalukghata	
54. Bhowribhita	E
55. Damalchos	E
56. Gohalkona	S
57. Hahimbazar	
58. Kalatoli	E
59. Malibaribazar	S
60. Mauman Ashram	E
61. Mohtoli	
62. Paschim Samaria	S
63. Singra	
64. Simla Tarabari	
65. CHANDRAPUR	E.D.S.O.
66. CHANGSARI	S.Y.O.
67. Barakanara	
68. CHHAYGAON	CO
69. Ag-gumi	E
70. Alikash	
71. Amtola	
72. Bamunigaon	
73. Jambari	E
74. Jaikur	
75. Kukurmara	
76. Santipur	E
77. Ukium	E
78. CHENIKUTHI	ND
79. DIGARU	
80. Dhupguri	S
81. Malaybari	S
82. Nartap	ES
83. Panbari	S

84. DISPUR	TSO CO
85. Beltola	E
86. Kahilipara	ES
87. FANCYBAZAR	L.S.G. ND
	TSO. CO.
88. GAUHATI AIR PORT	
	TSO CO
89. Gauhati University	L.S.C. TSO
90. GOPINATH NAGAR	
	TSO
91. Binovanagar	S
92. Saukuchi	S
93. HAJO	CO
94. Bagta	
95. Baramboi	S
96. Bhelkurbazar	
97. Dadara	
98. Dampur	S
99. Khetrihardia	
100. Kulhati	S
101. Namparamajarkuri	
102. Ramdia	
103. Raumari	E
104. Saniadi	
105. JALUKBARI	TSO
106. KAMAKHYA	CO
107. KANIHA	E.D.S.O.
108. KHANAPARA	CO
109. KSHETRI	E.D.S.O.
110. LOHARGHAT	E.D.S.O.
111. MALIGAON	RIY. Q.R.S.
	(LSG)
112. MIRZA	
113. Sikarhati	E
114. MUKALMUA	S.O.
115. Adabari	E
117. Batola	
118. Dagapara	
119. Kond Bari	E
120. Lowpara	
121. Loharkuta	

122. Kunjalal Road	
123. NAGARBERA	
	(PHONOCUM)
124. Baghmarachar	
125. Kachumara	E
126. Naitar	E
127. NOONMATI	
	(L.S.G.) TSE
128. Moukhuli	S
129. Narengi	ES
130. NORTH GAUHATI	
131. Dopdar	
132. Rangmahal	ES
133. PALASBARI	P.C.O.
134. Agchia	E
135. Amranga	
136. Kulsiranga	
137. Majirgaon	
138. Maniari Tinali	
139. Rani	
140. PALTANBAZAR	E.S.G. ND
	TSO. CO
141. PANDU	L.S.G. TSO.
142. Dehan Garigaon	
143. Gotanagar	
144. Sadilapur	E
145. PANDU RAIL-	
	WAY COLONY TSO
146. Rehabari	L.S.G.
147. SILPUKHURI	L.SEG. CO.
148. SOALKUCHI	
149. Bamundi	
150. Bangsor	
151. Srihati	E
152. SONAPUR	S.O. CO
153. Gandhinagar	ES
154. Hahara	S
155. Narting	
156. Tepesia	
157. ULUBARI	
	(PHONOCUM) ND TSO

158. UZANBAZAR	
	(PHONOCUM) ND TSO
(a) Bandapara	E in a/c with
	Dhupdhara S.O
(b) Gamerimura	E under Goa ;
(c) Hekra	S para Division.
(d) Uzirchar	E in a/c with
	Goalpara S.O
	under Goal-
	para Division.

Total S.O.S. 44
Total B.O.S. 115

1. BARPETA H.O.	
	(2nd Class) PCO
2. Bangalipara	E
3. Ganakkuchi	E
4. Garembari	E
5. Jania	E
6. Khayakuchibazar	E
7. Khablarbhitha	E
8. Kodang	E
9. Naligaon	
10. Patbausi	S
11. Sarupeta	E
12. Sundaridia	
13. BANAGRAM C.O.	
14. Balowa	
15. Barnaddi	
16. Bagrihati	
17. Gopalthan	E
18. Sandheli	
19. BARAMA C.O.	
20. Barimakha	
21. Barsimlaguri	E
22. Dakhania	E
23. Dhanbil	E
24. Gobradal	E
25. Japadang	E
26. Kharua	E
27. Suradi	

28. BARPETA BAZAR		68. Mugdi	E
	TSO.	69. Pachimkaziagaon	E
29. BARPETA ROAD		70. Pachim Majdia	E
	PCO LSG CO.	71. Peradhara	
30. Bilasiparabazar		72. Rampur (Barpeta)	
31. Gobardhana	S	73. GHOGRAPARA	CO.
32. Kahitema	E	74. Allia	E
33. Kalahbhanga		75. Barajal	S
34. Kampanibazar		76. Khatikuchi	S
35. Katajhar		77. Naukarbhoira	ES
36. Khairabari (KMP)	E	78. GOPALBAZAR	TSO. ND
37. Mainamata		79. GORESWAR	C.O.
38. Majgaon	S	80. Bardangrikuchi	
39. Mairajhar		81. Betna	
40. BELSOR C.O.		82. Gurmow	
41. Gandhia		83. Kerpabhitha	
42. Jagara		84. Maharipara	S
43. Kakaya	S	85. Nawkata	
44. Piplibari	S	86. Ramgaon	
45. Bhella		87. Suagpur	S
46. Bhogarpar	E	88. HOWLY	C.O.
47. Bogodi	S	89. Ambari	S.
48. Garetari		90. Barbala	E
49. Gamafulbari		91. Babaliapara	E
50. Keotkuchi		92. Ghila Jan	E
51. Nagaon	S	93. Jashihatipara	E
52. Palheji		94. Mantupuri	
53. CHAMATA C.O.		95. Sukmanah	E
54. Amoni		96. JALAGHAT	
55. Bari		97. Anchali	
56. Gamerimuri		98. Betbari	E
57. Helecha		99. Golagaon	E
58. Pachimchamata		100. Jalagaon	E
59. Rowmaripathar		101. Kaklabari	
60. Solmara	S	102. KALAG	
61. CHENGA		103. Barleari	
62. Barghopa	E	104. Balibasa	S
63. Bahari		105. Bardigheli	E
64. Chatla	E	106. Bhadra	
65. Chenimari		107. Baridelara	
66. Daulasal	S	108. Guakuchi	E
67. Jatradia	E	109. KAITHALKUCHI	EDSO Co

110. KAMARKUCHI		152. NIZDHAMDHAMA	C.O
111. Athgharia		153. Angardhown	E
112. Arrangmow	E	154. Baganpara	
113. Khatabari (ND) CO	TSO	155. Gerua	E
114. MANDIA		156. Naherbari	E
115. Bagbor	E	157. Nayabasti	
116. Balikuri		158. Nichalamari	
117. Dakhin Pachimdowdi	E	159. Niz-santipur	
118. Dharampur		160. NITYANANDA	
119. Habidangrabazar		161. Akaya	S
120. Nirala		162. Bagmarabazar	S
121. Ramparapam	E	163. Sarumanikpur	E
122. Sitali		164. PATACHARKUCHI	C.O.
123. MOROWA	E	165. Gobindapur	E
124. Arikuchi	E	166. PATHSALA L.S.G.	C.O.
125. Barkuriha		167. Bamakhata	
126. Budrukuchi	E	168. Barbang	S
127. Janijag		169. Dhankamari	E
128. Karia	S	170. Bhetua	E
129. Nizbaligari		171. Bhatantaseri	
130. MUSSALPUR		172. Chaparbaribazar	E
131. Adalbari		173. Galibandha	
132. Ahopa		174. Hastinapur	
133. Charaimari	E	175. Odalguri	
134. Dihira		176. RANGIA L.S.G.	C.O
135. Doomni		177. Bardal	E
136. Medaghat	E	178. Dewkuchi	E
137. Narayanpur		179. Darkuchi	
138. Nikashi		180. Dhopargaon	E
139. Subankhata	E	181. Jamtola	E
140. Thamna		182. Madhukuchi	S
141. NALBARI	PCO LSG	183. Moranjana	
142. Barazara	E	184. Pachimjhargaon	
143. Barkhanajan		185. Rangia R.S.	ND
144. Benekuchi	S	186. Tarani	
145. Chandkuchi		187. Tinali	ND
146. Chengnoi		188. Tinipukhuri	E
147. Hatinamati		189. Tulsibari	E
148. Kendukuchi	E	190. SANEKUCHI	
149. Mugkuchi		191. Barenghatia	
150. Sandhya		192. Chatama	
151. Terechia		193. Dakhingaon	

194. Dhuhi		229. Barkhopa	
195. Gopalpur		230. Chechapani	E
196. Kamrup Borkhala		231. Dangargaon	
197. Lahkarpara		232. Dumuriya	E
198. SARTHEBARI	C.O.	233. Darangapur	
199. Amrikhowa		234. Gandhibari	E
200. Barkapla		235. Kachubari	
201. Byaskuchi		236. Kumrikata	
202. SARUPETA	C.O.	237. Kawli	
203. Anandabazar	ES	238. Latibari	
204. Bholaguri	S	239. Majdia	E
205. Bhowanipur	S	240. Menoka	
206. Salbari	S	241. Nagrijuli	S
207. Sandarbhittha	S	242. Natun Howly	E
208. Sonafuli	E	243. Patkijuli	E
209. SORBHOG	PCO LSG CO.	244. Tebitola	E
210. Amguri		245. Ulubari (Rangia)	E
211. Balagaon	E	246. Zarkona	E
212. Balapet		247. TIHU PCO LSG	Co
213. Bhulkadoba		248. Athiabari	S
214. Chakchaka		249. Bali	E
215. Chakchakabazar		250. Bangaon	E
216. Charcharia		251. Baramchhari	
217. Chukrunghari	E	252. Bhaluki	
218. Kalgachia	ES	253. Digheli	
219. Kamargaon		254. Haribhanga	
220. Suliakata		255. Helama	E
221. TARABARIHAT	C.O.	256. Jalkhana	
222. Chandmama	In account with Abhyapuri S.O. under Goalpara Division.	257. Makhibaha	S
223. Deodi		258. Nathkuchi	E
224. Ishabpur		259. Rampurdekapara	E
225. Langla			
226. Mayanbari		Total S.O.S.	33
227. TAMULPUR	C.O.	Total B.O.S.	227
228. Amayapur			

CO—Combined Office.
E—Experimental
TBO—Town Branch Office.
S—Branch Office vested with
Savings Bank Power.
N.D.—No Delivery Office.

DB—Department Branch Office.
PCO—Public Call Office
RS—Railway Station
*—Cash Office
H.O.—Head Office.
TSO—Town Sub-Office.

CHAPTER VIII

MISCELLANEOUS OCCUPATIONS

A detailed account of the occupational pattern of the district will follow in Chapter IX while some of the principal occupations have already been discussed elsewhere in the book. Those occupations which might have escaped attention or may not get a fuller treatment will, however, be high-lighted in this chapter. The scope of this chapter is limited to discussion of those miscellaneous occupations which in some way influence the economy of the district, such as public administration, learned professions like law, medicine, engineering, education and fine arts ; domestic service and certain other occupations commending to the social milieu in the rural and urban areas. The last category of workers includes barbers, tailors, laundrymen, hoteliers, rickshaw-pullers, hawkers etc.

(a) Public Administration :

According to the 1961 Census, the total number of persons employed in public services in Kamrup district stood at 23,339 persons including 533 females. This figures, however, does not include those employees of the Government, Quasi-Government 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 public service. The following table shows the distribution of persons in various categories of public services as per 1961 census..¹

Sl. No.	Category of Service	Persons employed		
		Male	Female ¹	Total
1.	Police Service	1,766	—	1,766
2.	Central Government Service	4,905	70	4,975
3.	State Government Service	2,523	164	2,687
4.	Quasi-Government Service Municipalities, Local bodies	10,612	299	10,911

1. Census of India, 1961, Assam, District Census Hand book, Kamrup, Gauhati, 1964, p. 264.

The above table, however, does not show the number of persons employed in army, navy and air force under public service. In this Census, public services claimed slightly over one per cent of the total population of the district. The Census of Assam Government Employees, 1964 reveals that State Government Service had 10,760 employees in Kamrup on 31st March of that year. Their number increased to 14,357 in their subsequent census in 1967 when Kamrup district claimed 16.9 per cent of the total State Government employees and occupied the first position in this respect.²

In 1967, Kamrup district had 591 Gazetted, 6,460 non-Gazetted and 7,306 Grade IV State Government employees and of the total 208 were female employees. On 31st March 1973, number of State Government Gazetted officers in Kamrup district rose to 2,018 and that of non-gazetted and 4th Grade employees to 13,643 and 10,582 respectively. Out of the total employees, the women were 1,103. This increase of number was mainly due to the shifting of capital from Shillong to Dispur (Gauhati). This shows that the number of State Government employees is increasing year by year due mainly to implementation of various development plan projects and along with such developments, the number of employees in administrative categories both in State and Central Government services are increasing. The following table shows the total number of administrators and executive officials of Government in different sub-groups,³ working in Kamrup as per 1961 census. This figure includes both gazetted and non-gazetted posts.

Groups	Male	Female	Total	Urban	
				Male	Female
Administrators and Executive officials, Govt. Total :	3,388	26	3,414	665	3
Administrators and Executive officials, Central Govt.	534	1	535	109	—
Administrators and Executive officials, State Govt.	2,495	5	2,500	539	3
Village officials	249	20	269	7	—
Administrators and Executive officials, Govt. N. E. C.	72	—	72	—	—

2. *Census of Assam Government Employees*, 1967, p. 13.

3. *Census of India*, 1961. *Assam District Census Hand Book*, Kamrup, p. 252.

Number of Gazetted officers in Kamrup in 1971 rose to 2,018 from 538 in 1964.

Some of the benefits available to the State Government employees are : (1) General Provident Fund Benefit, (2) Pension and Gratuities after retirement, (3) Joint Family Pensions, Liberalised Family Pension, Commuted Pension, (4) Free Medical treatment for the employee and his family and children, (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 females, (7) Sickness benefit for treatment of some serious diseases, (8) 15 days casual leave plus 2 days special casual leave within a Calendar year, (9) 120 days i.e. 4 months' preparatory leave for retirement with full average Pay at the time of retirement, (10) Provision for a public servant in permanent and temporary employment for going on lien to some other service, (11) Provision for travelling allowance for Government employees going home on either casual or earned leave, once in a period of two years, (12) House Buliding Advance, (13) Conveyance advance for purchasing motor cars, motor cycles, etc., (14) Provision for rent-free quarters and House rent in some departments, (15) Provision for free education to children of the Central Government employees. The working hours in the State Government offices, except in the winter season is for 6-30 hours on week days and a holiday on the 2nd Saturday of every month. The offices of the State Government remain closed usually for thirty-one days a year.

Public Employees' Organisation : In order to safeguard the interests of the Government employees serving under the State Government and Central Government have formed some associations. The organisations of Central Government employees are formed on all-India basis, while those of the State Government employees are formed on all-Assam basis. There are districts units of both these types of organisation in Kamrup district. These organisations endeavour to fulfil their grievances in peaceful manner. Time to time, some of the organisations for non-Gazetted employees also resort to strikes. More notable of these strikes are :

1. The all-India Postal Union's Strike in 1968.
2. All-India Railway Union's Strike in 1967, and
3. All-Assam Ministerial Associations Strikes in 1965, 1966 and 1973.

The following 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 Govt. Service).
3. All-Assam Mandal Kanango Sanmilan.
4. All-Assam Transport Workers' Union.
5. All-Assam Sericultural Officers' Association.
6. All-Assam Mahurir Association.
7. All-Assam Workers' Union, P.W.D. (Kamrup Branch).
8. A. F. S., S. E. S. & S. A. S. for officers of the P. W. D.
9. Abkari Karmachari Sangha.
10. Assam Civil Service (Class -I) Association.
11. Assam Civil Service (Class -II) Association.
12. All-India Postal Union (under Central Govt).
13. Employees Association of Electricity Board (Kamrup Branch).
14. All-Assam Co-operative Officers' Association.

The activities of Gazetted Officers' Association are restricted by the Public Service Rules.

(b) **Learned Profession** : Before independence, the percentage of persons engaged in learned professions such as teaching, medicine and surgery, engineering, legal practice, journalism and different practices of fine arts was very negligible. With the expansion of the educational facilities and the rise in the field of literacy during the last few decades, the district has made considerable progress in this regard.

According to the 1961 Census, the total number of persons engaged in professional, technical and related works in the district of Kamrup was 17,997 including 1,406 females; and of these employees 5,222 were in the urban areas. This category of workers consisted of 228 Civil Engineers ; 320 Surveyors ; 217 Architects, Engineers and Surveyors not elsewhere classified ; 7 Physicists, Chemists and Geologists ; 224 Biologists, Veterinarians and Agronomists ; and other learned groups, like medical practice, legal practice, teachings etc.

Medical workers : The following table shows the number of medical workers under the above category in 1961. 4

	Male	Female	Total	Urban	
				Male	Female
1. Physicians, Surgeons and Dentists	1,523	27	1,550	328	18
(a) Physicians Homeopathic	728	2	730	58	1
(b) Physicians, others	221	3	224	98	2
(c) Physicians, Surgeons and Dentists not elsewhere classified	303	6	309	26	2
2. Nurses, Pharmacists and other Medical & Health Technicians	502	522	1,024	266	194
(a) Nurses	62	345	407	16	145

In the same Census, 3,918 persons have been shown under group-medical and Public Health services in the district. In 1971, the number of Physicians and Surgeons (including Dental and Veterinary Surgeons) was 2,625 which included 55 females. 705 persons including 25 females worked in the urban areas. 1,890 males and 30 females were in the service in the rural areas. The number of Nurses, other medical and health technicians was 1,750 in 1971, out of which 285 males and 315 females were working in urban areas. Ayurvedic practitioners have not been included in the number.

Legal Practice : Prior to the establishment of the Gauhati University in 1948, students from Assam had to study law in the Calcutta or in other Universities outside Assam. Now the two Universities of Gauhati

4. Ibid, pp. 246, 250-51.

and Dibrugarh are turning out law graduates every year. But only a certain percentage of them take up the legal profession. According to the 1961 Census, there were 285 Jurists (all males) in the Kamrup district and of them, 187 were censused in the urban areas. The number of Jurists in the Kamrup district increased to 1,185 persons in 1971. All were male and out of these persons 605 practised in the urban areas of the district. It may be mentioned that Gauhati besides being the seat of the District Courts and other courts, is the seat of the High Court of Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya etc., and as such legal profession in Gauhati is much lucrative and of much value and prestige.

Teachers : In the fields of learned professions teachers play an important role in the district. With the opening of primary, middle and high schools and colleges every year, the number of teachers has been increasing annually. According to the 1961 Census the total number of teachers in this district came to 10,077 consisting of 9,287 males and 790 females. Of them 1,889 males and 365 females served in the urban areas while the rest in the rural areas of the district. The following table shows the number of various categories of teachers as per the Census of 1961.

Kamrup District						
Figures of 1961						
	Male	Female	Total	Urban		
				Male	Female	Total
University teachers	549	26	575	371	25	396
Teachers Secondary Schools.	3,403	246	3,649	633	143	776
Teachers, Middle & Primary Schools	240	304	3,544	148	100	248
Teachers not elsewhere classified.	2,088	205	2,298	730	89	819

But in 1971, the total number of teachers under all categories shown above rose to 18,885 including 1,417 females in the district. Out of these teachers, 2,986 males and 846 females worked in the urban areas and 14,332 males and 571 females in the rural areas.

Engineers : The total number of Architects, Engineers and Technologists and also surveyors in the district was 695 including 10 females in 1971. Of these persons 280 males and 10 females worked in the rural areas and 405 males worked in the urban areas. There was no female person worked in urban areas. The number of Engineering Technicians for the same year was 1,270. Out of which 460 males and 10 females served in the rural areas and 760 males and 40 females worked in the areas of the district.

Other learned professions : In addition to the above, there are other groups of learned professions such as social scientists, artists, writers, painters, decorators, commercial artists, composer and performing artists etc. A table is given below to show the figure under some categories of them as stood in 1971 :--

FIGURES OF 1971

	Rural areas			Urban areas		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1. Social Scientists and related workers	650	560	90	155	115	40
2. Poets, Authors Journalists etc.	20	20	—	155	150	5
3. Sculpters, Painters, Photographers and related workers	90	80	10	205	195	10
4. Composers and performing Artistes	240	210	30	160	145	15
5. Book-keepers, Cashiers and related workers	330	330	—	1,445	1,415	30
6. Physical Scientists	40	40	—	20	20	—
7. Physical Science Technicians	—	—	—	20	20	—
8. Architects, Engineers, Technologists and Surveyors	290	280	10	405	405	—

	Rural areas			Urban areas		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
9. Aircraft and Ship officers	20	20	—	5	5	—
10. Life Scientists	110	110	—	35	35	—
11. Life Science Technicians	60	60	—	15	15	—
12. Scientific Medical and Technical persons.	20	20	—	25	25	—
13. Mathematicians, Statistician and related workers.	20	20	—	45	45	—
14. Economic and related workers.	—	—	—	5	5	—
15. Social Scientists and related workers	650	560	90	155	115	40

Source : Directorate of Census, Assam, Gauhati.

(c) **Domestic and Institutional Services :** The rigidity of the caste system of the old days in relation to its particular occupation has gradually faded away from this present society and it is, we may say, due to the expansion of education in all levels in the society. Now people can take up any profession irrespective of their castes, as a means of livelihood. Some occupational castes of the old days as goldsmiths (*sonaris*), Potters (*kumars*), Blacksmith (*kamars*), Fisherman (*nadiyals*), Silkworms-rearers (*jugis*) etc. are losing their importance as occupational castes due to their diversion towards other occupations like agriculture. This has happened only because of these people belonging to above castes were in every aspect of life looked down in the society where they lived and on the other hand their traditional occupations were not very encouraging.

In 1961, the number of persons engaged in household and institutional services like house-keepers, cooks, maids, bearers, matrons, stewards, butlers, waiters etc., was 16,722, out of whom 1,612 were females. Persons engaged in personal services such as weavers, knitters, spinners, tailors, cutters and furriers, dress and garment makers, leather cutters, lasters and

sewers, jewellers, goldsmiths, tool makers, painters, electricians and repairers, carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers and other construction workers, potters, millers, tobacco preparers, vegetable sellers and the like. These persons, are grouped under craftmen, production process workers and labourers not elsewhere classified in the 1961 census according to which their total number stood at 1,74,474 consisting of 57,299 males and 1,17,175 females.

In 1961, there were 2,117 watchmen, *darwans* and *chowkidars*, 8,696 house-keepers, cooks, maids, butlers, bearers etc., 44, waiters and related workers, 1,534 building caretakers, cleaners, sweepers (including 1,332 females) 1,161 barbers, hairdressers and beauticians, 725 launders and dry cleaners, 58 photographers and cinema operators in the Kamrup district. Among the craftsmen and production process workers in the district in 1961, 1,13,144 were spinners, weavers, knitters, dyers and related workers including 1,10,122 females, 3,407 (including 499 females) tailors, cutters, furriers and related workers, 798 leather-cutters, lasters and sewers, 945 furnacemen, moulders etc., 2,260 instrument makers, 2,102 jewellers and goldsmiths, 3,109 tool makers, welders etc., 404 electricians, 4,876 carpenters, joiners, pattern makers, 1,383 bricklayers, plasterers etc. 2,503 potters, kilnmen, glass and clay formers, 1,927 millers and bakers etc., 94 chemical and related process workers, 41 tobacco preparers and products makers, 1,277 basketry weavers and 37,391 labourers not elsewhere classified. There were 1,450 (including 3 females) luggage carriers, *thela* and cycle-rickshaw pullers in the district.

In 1971, number of persons engaged in household and institutional services in the district however came down to 11,299 due probably to general economic stringencies. Out of these 11,299 persons, 3,050 were in urban areas and 8,249 were in the rural areas. In urban areas 321 females and in rural areas 498 females were in service. The number of persons under different groups is shown below :—

	Figures for 1971					
	Rural			Urban		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1. Hotel and Restaurant Keepers.	930	930	—	390	390	—
2. Cooks, Waiters, Bartenders, and related workers.	519	430	89	900	870	30

3. Housekeepers, matrons, stewards (Domestic and institutional).	70	70	—	—	—	—
4. Maids and other House keeping service workers N.E.C.	6,450	6,081	369	1,169	994	215
5. Building caretakers, sweepers, cleaners, and related workers	240	200	40	431	355	76

Source : Directorate of Census, Assam, Gauhati.

Barbers : Barbers as a professional group are generally and mostly seen in the urban area of the district although a few persons are also seen in certain villages permanently. Moreover, their visit to the villages is not uncommon. It is seen that they accept cash and kind for their service from the villagers. Now-a-days barbers have been establishing their shops in the urban areas, important places and trade centres etc. of the district. Some has opened saloons in the towns in a bigger way and employed workers on payment. The general rate for hair-cutting is Re. 1.00 or Re. 1.25 and for a shave the charge is Re. 0.75 or Re. 0.50 or 0.30. The total number of Barbers, Hair dressers, Beauticians and related workers was 1,400 persons in 1961. There were no female workers under this group. Out of these 280 persons were engaged in the urban areas.

Washermen : The washermen also constitute an important section among those who are engaged in the miscellaneous occupations. Most of the washermen live in the urban areas of the district and therefore the number of washermen lived in the rural areas is very small.

Washing of clothes is usually done on the bank of the rivers, streams ponds etc., while ironing is carried out either in the family houses or in the laundries. Now-a-days the laundries have also been established in the important places and centres of the rural areas. The entire workable members of the washermen family work together and hence they do not generally require any paid hand in their washing and ironing work. The rate of charge for washing cloths varies from 30 paise to 50 paise. But in case of urgent washing the charge becomes higher. Moreover, the rate of charge is very high in case of washing of silk cloths, woollen garments and non-cotton cloths.

In 1971, the Kamrup district had 1,191 persons including 100 female under the occupational group "Laundrymen, Washermen and Dhubies." Out of them 605 males and 100 females worked in the urban areas. Now-a-days in urban areas some dry cleaners shops have been established. In 1971, 400 persons were under the group "Launders, Dry-cleaners and Pressers." Of these people, 160 males were working in the urban areas. There were no female workers under this group. They did drycleaning of woollen garments, washing of silk cloths and other costly cloths besides dying.

Tailors : Under tailoring a considerable section of the population is engaged in the district. The tailoring shops are seen in towns, important places, even at the villages of the district. Most of the reputed tailoring shops are found in the towns only. With the rise of the standard of living of the people there has been an increase in the variety of sartorial makes and designs and as a result of this, the number of tailoring shop is on the increase. In the bigger tailoring shops the proprietors engage paid tailors in their shops. Stitching charges are higher in towns than in the villages. The stitching charge of the cotton trousers, at present is Rs. 12.00 to Rs. 16.00 and of warm trousers varies from Rs. 35.00 to Rs. 50.00. The warm coat charges Rs. 100.00 and more. It is, of course, a fact that there is no uniform rates of tailoring. In 1971, there were 1,800 tailors, dress-makers, sewers, and related workers, in Kamrup district, including 40 females. Out of them 931 males and 20 females worked in the urban areas.

Cobblers : Another occupational group in the district is the cobbler. They have carried out their works on leathers. Many have their shops in the urban areas, while many of them roam in localities in search of works. In 1971, there were 635 including 10 females under the shoemakers and leather goods makers. Out of them, 125 males worked in the urban areas while 510 persons including 10 females worked in the rural areas of the district.

Rickshaw-Pullers : The rickshaw-pullers also constitute a considerable section among the occupational groups. They are found mostly in the urban areas of the district. It is the easiest means of communication in the towns and their suburbs. Now-a-days, along with the increased activities on trade, commerce, industries etc. the demand of rickshaw is also increasing. Further, for marketing purpose, it is generally required by the people. Many office-goers also use this vehicle. To cater to the needs of the people, the number of rickshaw has also been increasing daily. The rates of rickshaw are fixed by the Municipal Boards or Town Committees

concerned. But the rickshaw-pullers charge more price than the fixed rates. The rickshaws are to be registered with the Municipal Boards or Town Committees concerned for the purpose of levying tax. In Gauhati Municipal areas more than 16,000 Rickshaws are running day and night.

There are also other occupational groups under which a large number of people are engaged. A list of some groups and the number of people engaged under each group is appended herewith :--

1971 Figures

	Rural			Urban		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1. Salesmen, shop assistant and related workers.	6,857	6,732	123	1,773	1,759	14
2. Money lenders and power Brokers	—	—	—	20	20	—
3. Sales workers, N.E.C.	780	77	10	—	—	—
4. Hunters and related workers	10	10	—	—	—	—
5. Fishermen and related workers	5,558	5,272	286	1,000	1,000	—
6. Miners, quarry-men, well driller and related workers.	464	414	50	25	15	—
7. Metal processors	110	110	—	—	—	—
8. Wood preparation workers	100	100	—	85	85	—
9. Chemical processors and related workers	250	240	10	85	85	—
10. Spinners, weavers, knitters, dyers and related workers.	5,294	859	4,435	79	55	24
11. Tanners, Fellmongers and Pelt dressers	40	40	—	—	—	—
12. Food and Beverage processors	2,791	2,270	521	685	680	5
13. Tobacco preparers and Tobacco products makers	150	130	20	10	10	—
14. Carpenters, cabinet makers, and related workers	3,577	3,567	10	896	896	—
15. Stone cutters	130	40	90	—	—	—

16. Blacksmith, Tool-makers and machine tool operators	929	929	—	125	125	—
17. Machinery fitters, machine assemblers and precision instrument makers	2,000	1,869	131	1,135	1,135	—
18. Broadcasting station and sound equipment operators and cinema projectionists	20	20	—	65	65	—
19. Plumbers, welders, sheet metal and structural metal preparers and creators	729	719	10	170	170	—
20. Jewellery and precious metal workers and metal engravers (except printing)	1,249	1,239	10	195	195	—
21. Glass formers, potters and related workers	3,937	2,868	1,069	265	255	10
22. Rubber and plasters products makers	40	40	—	20	20	—
23. Paper and paper Board products makers	—	—	—	10	5	5
24. Printing and related workers	560	550	10	75	75	—
25. Painters	300	300	—	60	60	—
26. Bricklayers and other construction workers.	1,265	1,255	10	452	446	6

Source : Directorate of Census, Assam, Gauhati.

CHAPTER IX

ECONOMIC TREND

INTRODUCTION :

The district of Kamrup has been, like others in the State, bundle of rural areas, with only a few towns. In 1971, Kamrup recorded the largest population in Assam both in the rural and the urban sector. It was 28,54,183 in total population figure, of which only 3,35,155 were urban. About population variation the subject has been discussed in detail in Chapter III. Urban population, which constitutes about 11% of the district's total population, is slightly above the State's average of 8%. The rate of urbanization in the district has been fairly rapid, but has little to do with industrialization and much to do with administrative centralization, trade and commerce, and increasing pressure on land. Gauhati as the cultural and administrative centre of the district's three sub-divisions and as also the gateway of the State, has accounted for the major part of the relatively fast rate of urbanization of the district. As per 1971 census, the district has second highest density of population in the State 289 persons per square kms. the first highest being that of Nowgong. It is a straight rise over 1961 which recorded a density of 209 per square kilometre.

The district's contribution to income in 1960-61 was 612.7 millions of rupees, i.e., 17.1% of State income and its per capita income in the year was Rs.302 against State's per capita income of Rs.311.4. Kamrup occupied fourth position in this respect, the highest per capita income in the State being in the tea-district Lakhimpur (undivided) whose total contribution to State's income also was the highest i.e. 639.8 million rupees constituting 17.9% of the State's total income. In that year sectoral percentage distribution of income of the district was 51.9% from agriculture and allied activities, 19.5% from trade and commerce, 14.8% from other mining and manufacturing, 8.7% from other services, 4.6% from public services and only 0.5% from tea industry. Latest district-wise figure is yet not available.

a) **Livelihood pattern :** Prior to 1951, the basis of classification of the population pattern in the country was religion. In 1951 for the first time in India, Census was made on economic classification based on livelihood pattern.

The livelihood pattern in the district as it was in 1951 can be obtained from the following tables :--

1951 Census

Cultivators and their dependents	Agri. labourers and their dependents	Non-cultivating owners & their dependents	Productive on other than cultivation	Commerce	Transport	Other services
11,57,235	19,492	20,821	72,162	74,834	29,514	1,16,334

In 1961, the basis of economic classification of people was further revised and criterion of actual work was introduced. The following table will give an idea of livelihood pattern of population in the district of Kamrup as per actual work in 1961 and 1971.

	1961	1971
Cultivators	.. 5,13,992	4,60,737
Agricultural labourers	.. 29,609	59,332
(a) Mining, quarrying, livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Plantation, Orchard and allied activities	.. 9,675	10,504
(b) Household industries	.. 1,20,178	15,949
(c) Manufacturing other than household industry	.. 15,051	27,381
Trade and Commerce	.. 34,266	50,249
Transport, Storage and communication	.. 20,930	26,181
Construction	.. 5,827	8,453
Other Services	.. 85,057	85,824

The above table clearly indicates that there was a sizeable diversion from cultivation to trades while the fall in household industries was alarmingly sharp during the 1961-71 decade. This indirectly tells of an unhappy decline in the State's productivity.

Though the above tables are not strictly comparable on account of the changes from one Census to another in regard to categories and definitions, as in the case of 'works', certain broad inferences are possible in respect of the livelihood pattern of the people of Kamrup district from it. The number of cultivators has been declining, while that of the agricultural labourers has been going up, thus indicating a trend of increasing misery in the rural areas. The number of agricultural labourers has increased from 19,492 in 1951 to 59,332 in 1971 showing a rise of about three times. However, the agricultural classes as a whole continue all through the decade to be the largest single category, thus confirming the fact that the primary sector, especially agriculture, has been the main crop of livelihood of the people. These classes formed 61.5% of the total workers in 1961 and 69.8% in 1971.

In going to the details of the livelihood pattern we find that in 1951 Census—there were 11,76,717 persons out of the total population of 14,90,392 persons in the district of Kamrup, who depended for livelihood of their own and their dependents on cultivation work. Besides them there were 20,821 non-cultivating persons who depended mainly on yields from land in the form of crop or rent. Of these 11,97,538 persons dependent on land, 9,40,846 persons owned the land wholly or mainly, 2,16,389 persons mainly cultivated the land of their land-owners on contract or as tenant and 19,492 persons were purely landless agriculturists. This broad category of cultivators had besides themselves 3,11,551 males and 3,97,901 females as their non-earning dependents.

In 1951 Census, enumeration of the people was primarily made in 8 economic classes. These were (A) **Cultivators and dependents**—(1) land wholly or mainly owned (2) land wholly or mainly unowned (3) agricultural labour and (4) non-cultivating land owners; (B) **Non-cultivators and dependents**—(5) production other than cultivation (6) commerce (7) transport and (8) other services and miscellaneous sources. The table below will show that a large number of non-earning dependents the working people in the district had to support on the agricultural and industrial sector, as per 1951 census.

Category of workmen		Self supporting persons	Earning dependents	Non-earning dependents
A. Agricultural	(M)	2,49,117	75,799	3,11,551
	(F)	32,788	1,30,592	3,97,901
B. Non-agricultural classes	(M)	79,409	11,274	72,241
	(F)	11,889	21,032	96,999

In 1951, profession other than agriculture included—(1) Non-agricultural production, (2) Commerce, (3) Transport and (4) Other services and miscellaneous sources. But in 1961 classification of the people had been made as per the actual work they do. The same principle of classification was followed in the subsequent census of 1971. In both these censuses, the population was broadly classified into workers and non-workers. But in 1961, the workers were again sub-divided into 9 categories viz., (1) Agricultural labour, (2) Cultivators, (3) Mining, Quarrying, Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Plantations, Orchards and Allied activities, (4) House-hold industry, (5) Manufacturing other than House-hold Industry, (6) Construction, (7) Trade and Commerce, (8) Transport, Storage and Communication and (9) Other Services; while in 1971 Census Mining, Quarrying etc. were separated from Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Plantation, Orchards and allied activities making 10 (ten) categories of workers. The following table is the comparative analysis of 1961 and 1971 as per census figures.

Distribution of population into workers and non-workers of Kamrup district.

Category	1961			1971		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
A. Workers	8,34,585	5,79,468	2,55,117	7,44,610	7,21,431	23,178
Rural	7,43,897	5,00,636	2,43,161	6,40,962	6,23,362	17,600
Urban	90,788	78,832	11,956	1,03,648	98,070	5,578
1. Cultivators	5,13,992	3,88,562	1,25,430	4,60,737	4,56,179	4,658
Rural	5,12,171	3,86,804	1,25,367	4,57,024	4,52,487	4,537
Urban	1,821	1,758	63	3,713	3,692	21

Category	1961			1971		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
2. Agricultural labour	29,609	26,012	3,597	59,332	57,546	1,785
Rural	29,400	25,805	3,595	57,931	56,163	1,768
Urban	209	207	2	1,401	1,383	18
3. Mining (includes figure both Quarrying under items 3 and 4)	9,675	6,951	2,724	780	690	90
Rural	8,819	6,145	2,674	750	661	89
Urban	856	806	50	30	29	1
4. Livestock Forestry Fishing etc.	—	—	—	9,724	8,442	1,282
Rural	—	—	—	8,569	7,314	1,255
Urban	—	—	—	1,155	1,128	27
5. Household industry	1,20,178	7,950	1,12,228	15,949	9,444	6,505
Rural	1,08,866	4,857	1,04,009	10,186	5,133	5,053
Urban	11,312	3,093	8,219	5,763	4,311	1,452
6. Manufacturing other than Household industry	15,051	13,063	1,988	27,381	24,792	2,589
Rural	5,251	4,623	628	15,341	12,976	2,365
Urban	9,800	8,400	1,360	12,040	11,816	224

Category	1961			1971		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
7. Construction	5,827	5,158	669	8,453	8,342	111
Rural	3,450	2,795	655	4,569	4,524	45
Urban	2,377	2,363	14	3,884	3,818	66
8. Trade & Commerce	34,266	33,018	1,248	50,249	49,530	719
Rural	19,935	18,908	1,027	24,190	23,763	427
Urban	14,331	14,110	221	26,059	25,767	292
9. Transport Storage etc.	20,930	20,534	396	26,181	25,653	528
Rural	1,627	1,610	17	7,483	7,445	38
Urban	19,303	18,924	379	18,698	18,208	490
10. Other Services	85,057	78,220	6,837	85,824	80,814	5,010
Rural	54,278	49,089	5,189	54,919	52,896	2,023
Urban	30,779	29,131	1,648	30,905	27,918	2,987
B. Non-workers	12,27,987	5,30,140	6,97,847	21,09,573	7,88,717	13,20,856
Rural	10,99,276	4,72,343	6,26,933	18,78,066	6,92,266	11,85,800
Urban	1,28,711	57,797	70,914	2,31,507	96,451	1,35,056
Total Population :						
Total	20,62,572	11,09,608	9,52,964	28,54,183	15,10,149	13,44,034
Rural	18,43,073	9,72,979	8,70,094	25,19,028	13,15,628	12,034,00
Urban	2,19,499	1,36,629	82,870	3,35,155	1,94,521	1,40,634

The above table shows that though in 1971 there was a total increase of 7,92,000 population over 1961 ; number of non-workers increased by 8,81,586 in 1971 over 1961. This indicates an alarming threat to the economic structure of the district in particular. It can be well presumed that this unbelievable rise in number of dependents in 1971 is due partly to fresh influx of people from foreign countries like Bangladesh (erstwhile East Pakistan) and Nepal ; as immigration of Indian nationals from other parts of the country happens mainly in connection with works like labour, trade, and services.

The following table indicates the sub-divisional occupational pattern of the district as per 1971 census :—

Statement showing Sub-divisionwise occupational pattern of Kamrup—1971 Census.

Category of workers	Barpeta			Gauhati			Nalbari		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
I. Cultivators- Rural	185686	182516	3170	163309	162355	954	111742	111308	434
Urban	183960	180796	3164	161560	160621	939	111504	111070	434
	1726	1720	6	1749	1734	15	238	238	—
II. Agricultural labour.									
T	21777	21251	526	15890	15522	368	21665	20773	892
R	21072	20557	515	15263	14901	362	21596	20705	891
U	705	694	11	627	621	6	69	68	1
III. Livestock Forestry, T	1709	1445	264	5325	4604	721	2690	2393	297
Fishing Hunting, R	1603	1340	263	4313	3614	699	2653	2360	293
Plantation, orchard etc. U	106	105	1	1012	990	22	37	33	4
IV. Mining and									
T	52	52	—	623	547	76	105	91	14
R	50	50	—	596	521	75	104	90	14
U	2	2	—	27	26	1	1	1	—
V. Manufacturing	3896	3277	619	8612	4398	4214	3441	1769	1672
(a) House-hold R	2323	1835	488	4690	1705	2985	3173	1593	1580
Industry. U	1573	1442	131	3922	2693	1229	268	176	92

ECONOMIC TREND									
(b) Other than H. H. I.	T	3545	3472	73	18823	17674	1149	5013	3646
R	2075	2019	56	9061	8113	948	4205	2844	1361
U	1470	1453	17	9762	9561	201	808	802	6
VI. Construction	T	1871	1866	5	4405	4303	102	2177	2173
R	1128	1128	—	1555	1513	42	1886	1883	3
U	743	738	5	2850	2790	60	291	290	1
VII. Trade and Commerce.	T	12775	12647	128	27936	27484	452	9538	9399
R	6319	6216	103	10336	10137	199	7535	7410	139
U	6456	6431	25	17600	17347	352	2003	1989	125
VIII. Transport, Storage.	T	2469	2464	5	21826	21316	510	1886	1873
R	1085	1081	4	15009	4987	22	1389	1377	13
U	1384	1383	1	16817	16329	488	497	496	12
IX. Other Services.	T	15242	14626	616	52701	49086	3615	17881	17102
R	11430	11098	382	27153	25134	1009	16336	15654	779
U	3812	3528	284	25548	22942	2696	1545	1448	682
									97

These figures, besides indicating agriculture as the main source of livelihood of the people of the district, shows the extensive burden the agriculturists has to bear in course of their struggle for existence. As, industrial development in the district can never be very rapid due to ancillary economic and social causes; and also because employment avenues in public sector and government offices are bound to be always restricted and very limited; the only way to lighten the economic burden of the feeders of the nation is extensive and effective support to cottage industries with export bias.

Another revealing trend is the decline in household industry. From 1,20,178 persons working in household industry sector in 1961 the number of persons dependent on this sector came down drastically to 15,949 in 1971. On the other hand, between 1961 and 1971 there has been a jump in employment in trade and commerce, transport and communication, construction etc. Again, the manufacturing sector has shown a declining trend between 1961 and 1971. Thus, there has been very little of diversification of the economy. Agriculture continues to be the main stay. Of industrialization as an avenue of livelihood, there has been very little and there has been a decline even in the traditional industries. Decline of indigenous traditional industries is due to the following causes (1) non-improvement of specialised skills in traditional crafts, (2) non-availability and high price of raw materials (3) want of organised market and (4) want of technical training in use of modern equipments and method of competitive production. The slight spurt in the tertiary sector is due to the fact that the district is a major commercial centre and the gateway of the State as also the administrative centre of the State.

At the end of December 1976, employment in organised sector of economy in Assam was 7.58 lakhs which increased to 7.79 lakhs at the end of March 1977. Employment in private sector increased by 38%, while that in public sector increased only by 9%. As against this, employment situation in public sector industries in Kamrup increased by 8% due to identification of new establishments. According to provisional results of Economic Census 1977, in the three subdivisions of Kamrup, 13,341 rural and 9,258 urban establishments respectively employed 58,995 and 93,866 persons out of which 51,773 and 79,953 were hired in respective areas. Out of this, in 1977, 2382 were working in government registered factories while 4,416 were working in non-government registered factories in the district. This explains the fluid industrial occupational status of this district.

Prices : As prices are expressed in terms of coins accepted as value of a commodity, it is relevant mainly in connection with trade and commerce. Existence of trade between ancient Kamarupa and China by numerous land and sea routes, as mentioned in various ancient historical accounts, indicates that there was surely a standard of value observed at the commercial centres of ancient Kamarupa. But there is no record whatsoever discovered up-till-now to show the earliest use of coin as medium of exchange in Kamarupa. However, there is no doubt too that, as was in the other parts of the globe, the earliest system in trade was the bartering, viz., the exchange of the commodity (live or manufactured) for another commodity. From 'A History of Assam' written by E. Gait, we can learn that exchange of products in Assam was effected through bartering even during the Ahom rule.¹ The next medium of exchange was *Cowries*. Bana's '*Harsa Carita*' mentions that, Bhaskara Varman of Kamrupa sent 'heaps of black and white *cowries*' as presents to Harsha. Tezpur-rock inscription of Harjjara Varmana also mentions value in terms of *cowrie*. The earliest reference to silver coins purported to be used by the people of Assam is found in Arthashastra. These silver coins were known as *Gaulikams*. The gold coins *Kaltis* mentioned in the Periplus, according to P. C. Choudhury, were probably minted by the Kalitas of Assam.² About the use of gold coins in Kamrupa, the first definite mention is found in the Silimpur grant of Jayapala during the first half of the twelve century. But there is no record available for the period preceding the advent of British to indicate price of articles in terms of coins or *cowrie*. The only statement in this regards is found in Silimpur grant where it is mentioned that the Brahmana Prahasa refused to accept a land gift which could have yielded crops valuing 1,000 coins. There also area of the land and quantity of crop were not mentioned. But we can gather from the early eighteenth century traveller Baron Tevernier who mentioned Assam as 'one of the best countries in Asia', that there were abundant essential commodities in Assam indicating cheapness in price within the country.³

From accounts collected of the transaction between Swarg Gaurinath Singha and Captain Welsh, we learn that in 1794, price of a buffalo was Rs. 5/- while that of a cow was Rs. 2/- in Assam.⁴

1. E. Gait : *History of Assam*, 1967 (Reprint), page 277.
2. P. C. Choudhury : *History of Civilization of Assam*, pp. 378—89.
3. J. B. Tavernier : *Travels in India*, translation from French to English by V. Ball and edited by W. Crooke, Vol. II, pp. 220-221 (First Indian Edition, 1977).
4. S. K. Bhuyan : *Anglo-Assamese Relations*, 1949, p. 375.

The Administrative Report of Assam for the year 1874-75 and 1882-83 say that in about 1780 A.D. whole-sale price of salt was Rs. 70/- to 120/- per 100 *maunds*. During the eighties of the eighteenth century the salt from Bengal which originally costed Rs. 7/- to Rs. 12/- for 10 *maunds*, was sold in Assam at a much higher price which ranged from Rs. 2/- to Rs. 4/- per *maund* or Rs. 20/- to Rs. 40/- for 10 *maunds* earning a profit of about 3 times over the cost to the traders. The following table will give an idea of whole-sale price of some export goods from Assam in 1808-09.⁵

Stick lac	—	Rs. 3.50	per <i>maund</i> .
Muga Silk	—	Rs. 174.61	„ „
Muga Cloth	—	Rs. 233.34	„ „
Black pepper	—	Rs. 10.00	„ „
Cotton with seeds	—	Rs. 5.00	„ „
Mustard Seeds	—	Rs. 1.34	„ „
Salt	—	Rs. 5.50	„ „

In 1833 price of stick lac varied between Rs. 3/- to Rs. 5/8/-, while that of mustard seed between Rupee 1/- to -/8/- annas per *maund*, and muga silk varied from 3/8/- to 2/12/- per piece.⁶

(Note :— 1 seer = .925 kg. 1 *maund* = 37 kg.
1 anna = .6 paise 4 annas = 25 paise
3 annas = 19 paise)

From 'A Descriptive Account of Assam' compiled and written by William Robinson, we can learn that in 1840-41 A.D., price of one muga *dhuti* was Rs. 2/1/, and that of *Mekhela*, *Riha*, and *Gamocha* were Rs. 1/6, 2/12/- and -/11/- annas respectively while respective prices for *Endi Mekhela*, *Riha*, and *Gamocha* were -14/-, 1/2/- and -10/- annas throughout Assam.⁷

Prices of rice per *maund* in Kamrup were Rs. 3/- for imported *lahi* (fine variety) and Rs. 2/13/- for *sali* in town market, while it was Re. 1/- for *Ahu* in village market in 1864. In 1865, price of *lahi* rice was 2/12/- while that of coarse rice was Rs. 2/- per *maund* in town market. The price of rice rose to Rs. 5/- for *lahi* and Rs. 3/4/- for coarse per *maund* following the Orissa famine of August, 1866.⁸

5. Ibid, pp. 53-54.

6. H. K. Barpujari : *Assam in the Days of Company*, 1963, p. 245.

7. W. Robinson : *A Descriptive Account of Assam*, Reprint, 1975, p. 232.

8. W. W. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Assam*, Kamrup, p. 48.

The following account of price index given by B. C. Allan in the District Gazetteer of Kamrup (1905) represents the market position of essential cereal in different parts of Kamrup during the first decade of the twentieth century. The average price of rice recorded for each of the four decades ending with 1902, was 17.3 ; 15.5 ; 16 ; and 12.5 *seers* for a rupee. The high average during 1891 to 1901 was largely due to famine in India and several poor harvests in Kamrup. The price obtained by the *rayots* for their surplus produce varied very considerably in different parts of the district. At Rangia, the price paid for ordinary white rice seldom fell below Rs. 2/- per *maund* even at harvest time but in less accessible localities the price was sometimes very low. "In Bajali, unhusked rice sells at about 40 to 45 *seers* for the rupee on the river bank near the trader's boat, but the price falls in direct proportion to the distance from which the boatman have to carry the grain. In some villages, the rate is as low as 60 *seers* a rupee and occasionally even less than this.... Mustard generally brings the *rayot* about Rs. 3/- per *maund*". From the same source we can learn that in 1904 - while salt was available at the same price both in Gauhati and Barpeta (it was 11 *seers* per rupee), rice and *matikalai* were a little dearer at Gauhati being respectively 13 *seers* and 15 *seers* per rupee and 20 *seers* of rice and 16 *seers* of *matikalai* per rupee at Barpeta.⁹

As for the cost of clothings, in 1830, a *dhuti* priced annas -/4/- a piece, while price of a *chadar* was -/8/- annas a piece and a *Barkapor* was available for Rs. 1/-.¹⁰ There was much change in price-index during the following decades till the first World War, though after the first World War, there was no such marked variation in price level.

The following table will show the price variation of three most essential commodities from 1880 to 1920. Prices of food staple available in *seers* per rupee in Gauhati and Barpeta in 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910 and 1920 were as follows :¹¹

Year	Gauhati			Barpeta		
	Common rice	Salt	Mati Kalai	Common rice	Salt	Mati Kalai
1880	13	8	18	—	—	—
1890	20	10	20	21½	10	18
1900	19	10	16	23	9½	20
1910	11½	16	14	13	20	13
1920	5½	10	6½	6½	9	6½

9. B. C. Allen; *District Gazetteer of Kamrup*, 1905, pp. 168-69.

10. H. K. Barpujari : *Assam in the Days of the Company*, 1963, pp. 257-58

11. R. Friel : *Assam District Gazetteer*, Supplement to Vol. IV, Kamrup, 1914, pp. 44-46.

It is noticeable how prices of staple food almost doubled during the first World War period i.e. 1910--1920. Position improved a little later again to deteriorate very worsely.

In Kamrup, just before the 2nd World War, coarse rice was available at Rs. 3/- per *maund* while one coarse *dhuti* priced -/12/- *annas*.

Upward trend of commodity prices with direct effect on rise in cost of living has been noticed since the out-break of Second World War—which caused inflationary result on our national economy. The fluctuations in the price level in Assam is very much pronounced due to rapid growth of population due to immigration, the transport bottleneck, and virtual dependence on outside supply of consumer's goods. Even then till the end of the First Plan, Assam alongwith the rest of the country experienced more or less a stable situation as regards the price trend. But the reverse was noticed during the 2nd plan period which registered an alarmingly rising trend till a lull in 1968 which was a year of bumper crop. In 1969, the wholesale price of food articles fell by 14.9% while prices of the non-food articles rose by 11.5%. Since then the upward trend in price-rise both for food and non-food articles continued unabated. Because both the whole-sale markets of both food and non-food articles are in the hands of the outside merchants, Assam fell victim to a permanent high price-trend ever since. The table below will give an idea of price increase for food and non-food articles in Assam during the 1960-78 period.

Index number of whole-sale prices for
food and non-food articles in Assam.

(Base 1953--100)

Year	Articles		
	Food	Non-food	Other
1961	130.9	144.8	135.4
1965	176.5	176.2	176.5
1970	265.8	218.7	250.1
1971	269.6	221.7	253.6
1974	417.5	294.4	376.6
1975	428.6	291.1	382.9
1976	384.4	296.3	355.3
1977	438.8	350.1	409.3
1978	411.7	364.0	395.8

(Source : Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Assam.)

The table indicates greater tendency for price-rise in food articles than in non-food articles. This upward trend is more pronounced due to Assam's heavy dependence on outside supply of goods including some essential commodities like pulse, sugar, edible oil, mill-cloths, potatoes, onion, garlic etc. and raw materials and construction materials like yarn, cement, steel etc., and transport difficulties like occasional failure of the Railways, Roadways, and Riverways. In 1970, whole-sale price index in Assam rose by 3.1% and by another 1.4% in 1971. The following statement shows the item-wise whole-sale price of essential commodities at Gauhati market on 31st January 1974.

Whole-sale price at Gauhati as on January, 1974.

	Unit	In Rupees
Rice	quintol	190
Masur Dal	"	255
Arahar Dal	"	215
Mug Dal	"	266
Mathikalai	"	150
Green chillies	"	175
Potato	"	75
Onion	"	110
Mustered Oil (Barpeta Road)	100 litres	950
Milk (cow)	100 litres	150
Sugar	quintol	416
Vanaspati	16½ kg.	129

The rising trend of prices witnessed till the earlier part of 1975 halted in the middle part of the year and then showed a declining trend till September 1976. But again from the beginning of 1977, some of the essential commodities in Gauhati market registered an upward trend. Price of rice, the main staple food of the district, however remained almost static due to whole-sale procurement of paddy and wheat by the Govt. of Assam and introduction of public distribution system through Gaon Panchayat, Co-operatives and fair-price shops during 1976-77. On

the other hand prices of edible oil, fish, meat, eggs, pulses, salt and building materials showed a steep rise since the later part of 1977.

Following tables will furnish material on trend of retail price of essential commodities prevailing in important centres of the district during 1973 and 1974.

Prices of selected commodities during November, 1973,
in the Sub-divisional Head-quarters of Kamrup.

	Gauhati	Barpeta	Nalbari
1. Rice per Kg.	2.50	1.85	1.80
2. Atta per kg.	1.08	.95	1.00
3. Medium size bread per piece	.65	.25	.55
4. Matikalai per kg.	1.50	2.00	1.40
5. Masur -do-	2.30	2.30	2.30
6. Arahara dal -do-	2.40	2.40	2.40
7. Mug dal -do-	3.20	3.00	3.00
8. Gram dal -do-	2.80	2.20	2.80
9. Salt -do-	.40	.40	.40
10. Potato -do-	1.50	1.70	1.60
11. Onion -do-	2.00	2.50	2.50
12. Mustard oil (per litre)	8.00	7.80	7.80
13. Fish (small) per kg.	5.00	4.00	2.50
14. Meat -do-	7.00	8.00	8.00
15. Egg per pair	.70	.80	.70
16. Milk per litre	1.30	1.25	1.50
17. Sugar per kg.	3.95	3.75	3.80
18. Molasses -do-	2.50	2.50	2.60
19. Tea -do-	8.00	8.00	8.00
20. Kerosine per litre	.88	1.10	.90
21. Dhoti per pair	50.00	48.00	—
22. Sari per pair	54.00	41.00	—
23. Long cloth per metre	4.25	4.50	—

During 1978-79, prices of pulses, salt, sugar, eggs, meat, fish, milk, and kerosine rose to almost double. Though there is an attempt from the side of the government to supply salt and coarse powerloom cloths at controlled price as essential commodities through fair-price shops and Consumer's Co-operatives, it has not been very much successful due to absence of control on supplies.

It is evident that Gauhati which represents Kamrup as the terminal market is one of the market centres experiencing a high price rise, although as noted earlier, the percentage of rise may be slightly less than the all-Assam average.

The annual average consumer price-index for working class in Assam in 1978 was 380 as against 367 in 1977 and 330 in 1976 showing a gradual rising trend since 1960. An idea of the trend of prices in the recent years in the district may be had from the following tables furnished by the Department of Economics and Statistics, Assam :

Consumer price Index Number for working class at
Gauhati centre and for Assam as a whole.

Year	Index No (Gauhati)	(Base 1949—100) Index No. (Assam)
1960	102	111
1965	134	148
1970	216	230
1973	268	284
1974	347	368
1975	349	386
1976 January	300	333
February	300	333
March	296	327

The following table will provide an idea about the price-index for non-manual employees in Gauhati as against the all-India index for the same group of people.

Consumer price Index Number for Non-manual
Employees at Gauhati Centre and for all-India

(Base 1960—100)

Year	Index No. (Gauhati)	Index No. (all-India)
1961	105	103
1965	123	130
1970	167	173
1973	201	212
1974	249	259
1975	267	279
1976	260	276
1977 January	263	282
July	286	295
Nov.	290	300

(Source : Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Assam,
and
Central Statistical Organisation, Govt. of India.)

Prices of goods almost trebled within the span of seventeen years. These tables clearly show that the price-level and the cost of living for both working classes and non-manual employees have been rising not only at Gauhati but also in Assam generally and in the country as a whole. This phenomenon has been the result of inflationary pressures. However, the price rise at Gauhati (and in Kamrup district) has been relatively slower than either for all-Assam or for all-India. This is due probably to semi-rural nature of Gauhati suburb which gets supply of essential commodities like vegetables, eggs etc. from the adjoining rural areas at relatively lower price. Moreover, some discrepancy is always noted in prices quoted by the Chamber of Commerce and that actually prevailing

in the market. For proper study of price index a non-official economic survey in the field for research purpose is considered very much essential.

Wage : In order to remove injustice to the working class, the Minimum Wages Act was introduced throughout the State of Assam in 1952. The Minimum Wages Act was first applied to the tea-garden labourers, public motor-transport workers and flour-mill labourers. During 1953-59 it gradually extended to cover the labourers under the P.W.D. and the local authorities. Minimum wages for workers under the P.W.D. were then revised in 1964. In 1965, the workers engaged in steamerghat also were brought under the Act. In 1966-1967 the labourers under the engineering factories, ply-wood industries, *bidi*-making industries, and jute-baling industry were too brought under the Minimum Wages Act. Originally, the minimum daily wage for labourer was fixed at Rs. 3.25/- and monthly wage fixed at Rs. 85/-. The rate is being revised since then to keep pace with the rising trend of consumers-goods' price though as against the persistent trend of rising prices, the wages or salaries for working class remained virtually stagnant, as it is also in the case of employers.

The Minimum Wages were raised significantly only in 1975 and 1976. Even in rural Assam where the prices have been jumping from 1944 (Index number 100) to 1976 (Index No. 435), the average daily wage-rate did not rise adequately as can be seen from the following table :-

Average Daily Wage Rate (Rs.) in Rural Areas of Assam.

Year	Carpenter	Blacksmith	Labourer	Herdsmen	Other agricultural labourer.
1960	5.28	5.19	3.22	1.94	—
1970	6.8	6.3	3.7	3.3	4.2
1971	6.8	6.4	3.6	3.2	3.9
1972	7.5	7.1	3.4	3.2	3.9
1973	7.9	7.6	3.9	2.9	4.2
1974	8.5	7.8	5.3	3.5	4.8
1975	9.2	7.9	5.4	4.0	4.9
1976	9.4	7.9	5.9	—	5.2
1977	9.2	7.6	4.8	3.7	5.5

According to the labour Bureau of the Government of India, the wages for the lowest daily paid unskilled male worker in Assam were within the range of Rs. 1.54 to Rs. 6.00 as on 30th September 1975 as against the range of Rs. 3.50 to Rs. 5.15 for counterparts in Central Government service. The minimum wage of workers under the P.W.D. which was Rs. 180/- per month or Rs. 6/- per day and Rs. 210/- per month or Rs. 7/- per day respectively for unskilled and skilled labour in 1970, has been fixed at Rs. 8/- and Rs. 10/- per day or Rs. 240/- and Rs. 300/- per month respectively per category in 1977. Rural wages in Kamrup district were generally the same as in the rest of rural Assam, Kamrup, being the most politically conscious district, wage rate for agricultural labour is always high here than their counterparts in other districts of Assam. In 1977, the minimum wage of skilled labour has been raised to Rs. 14.00 in Kamrup,—while that of agricultural labour rose to Rs. 7/- per day in the rural areas against Rs. 8/- per day for unskilled labour in the urban areas. In 1981, it rose to Rs. 20/- and Rs. 10/- per day for skilled and unskilled respectively in Gauhati.

Standard of living : The two main factors determining the standard of living of any community are the income and cost of living. The material standard of living of a commoner in Kamrup district during the pre-British Ahom rule can be ascertained from the statement of Baron Tavernier in the 'Travels in India' which called Assam one of the best countries in Asia as people living there were self-sufficient producing all they needed for themselves. The statement is supported by the following account given by William Robinson—"their firewood, herbs, fruits etc. cost them nothing....the wife spin thread for her own and husband's clothes."

It may, however, be inferred that general economic condition of the people of Kamrup was poor and they were without any ambition and hence their standard of living was very poor in the early period of the British rule. In the words of William Robinson, during the 3rd and 4th decades of the nineteenth century in Kamrup "the wage of a day labourer do not much exceed two rupees a month.....they lie on a mat laid on the ground.....the children go naked. A man with wife and two children usually consumes two maunds of rice in the month, the price of which is one rupee. The other rupee procure him salt, a little oil and one or two other prime necessities....It is during the dry season that fish are plentiful in market. During the floods, the lower classes have their principal supply. Every rice field then swarms with

small miserable fish, which are caught in baskets.....The green vegetables consist more of *Sak* than of *tarkari* which includes fruits and roots. The poorer classes usually content with vegetables which grow wild and cost them nothing."¹¹

According to Hunter, during the 1870s, there were very few rich men in the district.¹² Even then, as B.C. Allan reported, there was no regular landless labouring class in the district prior to 1897 earthquake. The labouring class in Kamrup villages are usually known as *bandha* who enter into agreement with the employer and is treated very kindly. The villagers were not so well-to-do as those of upper Assam where the tea industry put an enormous amount of cash into circulation.

During the early British period, W.W. Hunter and B.C. Allan both found very little difference in the standard of living of the people. The only difference was that the well-to-do people used broader and finer *dhuti* and used a shirt called *chola* besides the *chadar*, while the poorer peasants used shorter *Bhuni* and *gamocha* or *chadar*. Unlike Upper Assam, silk was not generally worn and women did not use much jewellery. Shoes were exception and even the well-to-dos used wooden clogs and sandals made with tufts of sharp pointed grass. The dwellings of the ordinary villager consisted of three or four small houses built round three sides of a courtyard. The compound was enclosed by plantain and other trees. "In Kamrup, the enclosure is often entered through a little room intended for the reception of guests, a refinement which is seldom seen in the homestead of the ordinary villager further up the valley....The furniture of the cultivating classes is simple and consists of a few boxes and wicker work stools, brass and bell-metal utensils, earthen pots and pans, baskets and bottles and perhaps a loom. The villager sometimes sleep on a small bamboo *chang*, sometimes on a mat on the floor, but the middle classes have beds, tables and chairs in their houses."¹³ Food in general consisted of boiled rice with cooked pulse, fish and vegetable curry. Pigeon, duck and deer were the usual meat eaten by the well-to-dos. Even now, in the rural areas of Kamrup, the same standard and mode

11. W. Robinson ; *A Descriptive Account of Assam*, Reprint, 1975, pages 270-71.

12. W. W. Hunter ; *A Statistical Account of Assam, Kamrup*, Reprint, 1975, page 44.

13. B. C. Allen : *District Gazetteer of Kamrup*, 1905, pages 170-71.

of living persists save and except the fact that some modern amenities crept into. But the main point is that there were plenty of essential goods and there was no poverty though there were less amenities.

In independent India, Kamrup shares with the State the lot of low per capita income at constant prices. At 1948-49 prices, the net per capita income of Assam has been practically stagnant and lagging behind all-India figures as seen below :—

At constant (1948-49) prices.

Year	Assam	India
1960-61	251.3	305.6
1965-66	264.9	311.0
1970-71	270.1	351.8
1971-72	271.1	350.2
1972-73	284.3	337.6
1973-74	286.4	347.2
1974-75	295.9	343.2
1975-76	300.4	365.9

(Source : Economic Survey, Assam, 1975-76 and 1977-78).

In 1976-77, there was again fall in per capita annual income of Assam and it reached the level of 299 at constant prices of 1948-49 and 547 from 564 of 1975-76 at the constant price of 1970-71 while in 1977-78 it again rose a little to 552 at 1970-71 constant price.

The cost of living of the general people of the district which was Rs. 12/- per month for a businessman and Rs. 8/- per month for an ordinary peasant house-hold both consisting of man and wife with three children in 1870s; ¹⁴ has now gone upto Rs. 290.00 and Rs. 200/- per month for a family of the same size in 1970-71.

On the other hand, in this district where 26.1% of the total population only are workers out of which 70% in approximate figure depend on agriculture as cultivators and agricultural labour, the size of agriculture holding is very uneconomic. As per 17th round of the National Survey, in 1961-62, average size of operational land holdings in Assam was 3.88 acres or 1.81 hectares while operational holding was 4.76 acres

¹⁴ W. W. Hunter : *Statistical Account of Assam*, Kamrup, Reprint, 1975, pages 44-45.

in Orissa, 6.88 acres in Andhra, 9.93 acres in Madhya Pradesh, 11.49 acres in Gujarat and 13.73 acres in Rajasthan against all India average of 6.59 acres. In 1970-71, it went further down. As per World Agricultural Census of Assam 1970-71, average operational land holding in Kamrup was 1.36 hectares against State's 1.46 hectares. From this we can presume the extent of economic insolvency of the general people of the district as well as of the State. Against this low earning and purchase capacity, per capita availability of food grains also declined considerably due to constant heavy influx of immigrants. According to North Eastern Council, per capita availability of food grains in Assam declined to 124 kilogram against India's 152 kilogram in 1975 from 144 kilogram against India's 155 kilogram in 1973. This position also explains the poor lot and expected standard of living of the average person of the district.

The latest available data on consumer expenditure in the State as was revealed by the 26th round of National Sample Survey is as follows :—

Per Capita monthly consumption expenditure in Assam :

Year	Rural	Urban
1965-66	28.00	40.00
1970-71	40.00	58.00
1971-72	41.00	64.00
Percentage variation between 1965-66 and 1971-72.	+ 45%	+ 65%

Broad pattern of consumption expenditure in the rural and urban areas of Assam as prepared from the State Sample Survey of 25th round of National Sample Survey 1971-72, is also more or less applicable to the district of Kamrup too. According to the Survey, the pattern in 1971 was as below :—

Item	Rural		Urban	
	Expenditure per cent		Expenditure per cent	
1. Food grains	18.67	45.47	19.08	30.04
2. Milk and Milk products	1.86	4.53	3.50	5.51
3. Other food items	10.58	25.77	18.76	29.53
4. Fuel and lighting	2.97	7.23	3.94	6.20
5. Clothing	1.67	4.07	3.55	5.59
6. Other non-food items	5.31	12.93	14.69	23.13
	41.06	100.00	63.52	100.00

Survey report says that in 1971-72 no household had per capita monthly expenditure below Rs. 15/- and the expenditure groups Rs. 15-43/- contained 66 per cent of the rural population and 27 per cent of urban population; while bulk of the rural population was concentrated in the expenditure groups Rs. 24-55/- and urban population in Rs. 43-75/- group. The proportion of expenditure on food items in the rural areas is much higher than that of the urban areas while per capita consumer expenditure in urban areas is higher in general.

The per capita expenditure is increasing every year due to increasing price-index in the State in general. The following table will illustrate the percentage variation of whole-sale prices in Assam from 1973 to 1977.

Items	Year					
	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	March '78 over '77
All commodities	+10.4	+29.4	+ 1.7	- 7.2	+15.2	+ 4.9
A. Food articles	+ 8.88	+38.6	+ 2.7	-10.3	+19.3	+ 1.5
1. Cereals	+12.6	+58.3	+ 1.2	-20.0	+ 6.1	- 1.7
2. Pulses	+15.1	+14.0	+ 4.6	-15.8	+34.3	+34.5
Edil						
3. Edible oil	+28.8	+45.0	-18.0	- 9.1	+41.7	- 1.7
4. Sugar or Gur	+ 7.9	+11.2	-10.2	- 7.2	+ 1.1	-18.0
B. Non-food article	+14.2	+ 8.7	- 1.1	+ 1.8	+18.2	+13.5
1. Liquer and tobacco	+43.3	+ 3.9	+ 6.9	+ 3.0	+ 9.3	+13.3
C. Industrial goods						
1. Raw materials	+11.4	+ 7.8	+ 0.5	- 1.3	+28.8	+ 7.1
2. Finished products	+ 9.4	+12.0	+ 0.8	+ 8.5	+11.3	+23.2

It is noted that in 1976 there was a general fall in prices of food articles and raw materials in Assam, which suddenly shot up considerably in 1977 maximum effect being on pulses and industrial finished products.

Rise of prices for pulses caused big drain of State's income to outside while increased price for industrial goods arrested industrial growth of the State. This increasing trend in prices apparently effected the standard of living in the district very adversely. On the other hand, there is not much increase in per capita income of the State. The following table furnishes datas to form a comparative idea of per capita income and expenditure in the district at constant price of 1943-49.

Year	Index of per capita income	Consumer price Index of working class at Gauhati.
1973-74	110.8	269
1974-75	114.4	349
1975-76	116.2	349
1976-77	115.5	309
1977	—	335

Per capita income at contant price increased only by about 15% over the years since 1953 while cost of living jumped by 3½ times. This natrurally points out to a rather deteriorating general standard of living of the people of the district. Besides, the standard of living in Kamrup is also influenced by the fact that the lower middle income group with their conventional standard of living, is the predominant income group of the district.

Employment : It has already been mentioned that as per 1971 census, economically active population in Assam was 41.25 lakhs showing a work participation rate of 28.2%. Against this all-Assam figure, in Kamrup district, total number of economically active population was 7.66 lakhs and percentage of work participation rate, 26.1%. This low rate of work participation in the district was due to increasing number of floating population coming from other States of India in search of job and also due to influx of immigrants from erstwhile East Bengal. An idea of the occupational distribution of the employees other than cultivators and agricultural labour and self-employed in Kamrup district in recent years can be had from the following table :—

Employment by Industries in Services in the public and private sector in Kamrup district during the year ended on 31st March, 1977.

	Public	Private	Total
Agricultural, Hunting, Forestry and Fishing	2,574	5,068	7,642
Manufacturing	2,480	4,213	6,693
Electricity, Gas and Water	2,365	95	2,460
Construction	7,517	98	7,615
Wholesale and Retail Trade, Hotels etc.	1,135	1,665	2,990
Transport, Storage and Communication	1,138	1,187	2,325
Financing, Insurance and Business Services	3,625	443	4,068
Community, Social and personal services	47,513	7,133	54,646
Grand Total :—	68,537	19,902	88,439

Source : District Employment Exchange, Gauhati.

These persons are covered under the group 'other services' of worker, non-worker division of population.

From this table it is clear that the employment in Kamrup district predominantly occurs in community, social and personal services. Even here the public sector accounts for the bulk of the employed under this head. Evidently the white-collar jobs have the major attraction for the employment seekers.

That Kamrup district is an important trade and commerce centre is borne out by the fact that 'Whole-sale and Retail Trade, Hotels, etc., 'Transport Storage and communication' and 'Financing, Insurance and Business Services' lumped together account for the second largest group in employment attraction. Significantly, even the head 'manufacturing' accounts for a sizeable number of employed thus indicating the concentration of small-scale enterprises in the district. Most of the people employed under these heads are non-indigenous like Kayas, Biharis, Bengalis, Nepalis, Sindhis and Punjabis. About 18.56 per cent of the total population and 71.15 per cent of total workers of the district in 1971 got engaged in work connected with cultivation and plantation. The next biggest occupation is in 'services' while 'trade and commerce' provides the third largest occupation.

Employment in the industries is very negligible. The following table enumerates the number of workers engaged in registered factories of the district in 1977.

Number of workers employed in different registered factories of Kamrup in 1977. (Source : Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Assam.)

Type of industry.	Government	Non-Government.
1. Manufactures of food products.	12	1377
2. Manufacture of beverages, tobacco etc.	—	35
3. Manufacture of cotton textile.	431	—
4. Manufacture of wire sick, synthetic fibre textile.	—	—
5. Manufacture of jute, hemp, mesta textile.	—	131
6. Manufacture of wearing apparels.	—	31
7. Manufacture of wooden furniture and fixtures.	18	656
8. Manufacture of paper, paper products, Printing publishing and allied industry.	321	431
9. Manufacture of leather, leather and fur products.	—	—
10. Manufacture of rubber, plastic, petroleum and coal products.	706	379
11. Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products (other than coal and petroleum).	260	53
12. Manufacture of non-metallic mineral products.	—	42
13. Basic metal and alloys industries.	—	302
14. Manufacture of metal products and parts except machineries and transport equipment	3	140
15. Manufacture of machineries, machine tools and parts except electrical machineries.	243	290
16. Manufacture of electrical machineries apparatus, appliances, supplies and parts.	53	—
17. Manufacture of transport equipments and parts.	200	207
18. Electricity.	284	—
19. Gas and Steam.	—	62
20. Water works and supply.	—	—
21. Storage and ware-housing.	—	—
21. Storage and ware-housing.	18	—
22. Education, Scientific and reaserch services.	—	—
23. Repair services.	283	200

It is interesting to note that almost ninety-nine per cent of the population engaged in trade and commerce are not indigenous. The indigenous services and employment seekers usually prefer engagement in office-jobs which brings a fixed lump-sum salary. That even now the craze for white-collar jobs is continuing is evident from the following table which shows that 'Professional'; Technical and Related Workers', 'Administrative, Executive and Managerial Workers', 'Clerical and Related workers', 'Sales Workers' added upto a large total out of the persons still on the Live Register of Employment Exchanges in Kamrup district. However, the category 'production, process, transport and equipment operators and labourers' accounts for the largest single attraction for job seekers. Most of the job seekers donot mention any job of preference

Analysis of Live Register by Broad occupations Division..

	No. as the end of Dec.		
	1974	1975	1976
Professional, Technical and Related Workers.	222	314	545
Administrative, Executive and Managerial Workers.	17	—	—
Clerical and Related workers.	4400	521	647
Sales Workers.	68	4	3
Service Workers.	11	345	458
Farmers, Fishermen, Hunters Loggers and Related workers.	16	31	17
Production process, Transport and Equipment operators and labourers.	2,167	1,353	2,369

Source : District Employment Exchange, Kamrup district

Out of these only a small section of the job-seekers were provided employment in the respective years.

The employment in public sector in Assam shows marked upward trend during the period 1968 to 1978. The number of public sector employees in Assam which was 244.2 thousand on 31st March 1968 increased to 309.4 thousands on 31st March of 1978. The following table will furnish an idea on the actual position.

15. *Economic Survey of Assam*, by Directorate, Economics and Statistics of Assam ; pages 87 and 40 respectively of the Reports for 1970-71 and 1977-78.

Statement showing employment in public sector in Assam as on 31st March.

(Figures in thousands)

	1970	1975	1976	1977	1978
1. Railways.	39.1	41.00	41.73	42.2	42.1
2. Other Central Govt. Esstts.	37.7	30.51	31.09	30.8	28.6
3. State Govts.	113.4	106.20	154.8	157.3	177.4
4. Quasi Govts.	53.8	80.02	43.06	48.0	51.6
5. Local bodies.	11.8	8.15	9.52	9.7	9.7

Against this, according to the quarterly Arca Employment Market Report for Kamrup the position in December 1978 and June '80 are as follows :-

Sector	As at the end of Dec. 78			As at the end of June '80		
	No. of Estt.	No. of woman employee	No. of male employee	No. of Estt.	No. of woman employee	No. of male employee
A. Public						
Central Govt.	91	859	17614	100	923	19530
Quasi Central Govt.	103	551	6402	112	449	7295
State Govt.	474	3113	44738	491	3739	50559
Quasi State Govt.	74	404	7284	76	427	7885
Local Bodies	14	249	1335	14	265	2176
B. Private						
Large Estt. (employing 25 and above)	128	3075	11041	114	3435	13638
Smaller Estt. (employing 10-24 persons)	166	53	2309	165	62	2385

According to the quarterly Area Employment Reports, employment in the public sector in Kamrup rose from 75,390 of March 1976 to 83,930 in March 1979, while in private sector, employment came down from 19,660 in March 1976 to 16,520 in March 1979. This fall in private sector employment figure is due to closure of a number of factories owing to various economic, labour and entrepreneurial reasons.

The table above will show that the increase in public sector employment in Assam is due to the government mainly the State Government, which have opened up new departments and offices in the district. On the otherhand, as a State, there is a reduction of number in Central Government employment due to shifting of Assam's capital from Shillong to Dispur, with major employment giving central offices like offices of the Accountant General, Post-Master General etc. remaining in Meghalaya. It may however, be noted that the figure above also includes the number of casual employees subject to release from employment without notice.

Employment according to status under the state government offices and establishments situated within Kamrup in 1975 will be available in the following table :-

Statement showing sub-division-wise posting of Assam Government employees in Kamrup district according to status as on 31-3-75.

Name of Sub-division.	Class-I	Class-II	Class-III	Class-IV
1. Gauhati.	764	1,302	14,662	9,302
2. Barpeta.	16	169	2,035	1,076
3. Nalbari.	10	94	1,455	720
District Total in Kamrup	790	1,565	18,152	11,098

Basic pay range of the Class-I officers runs from Rs. 500/- per month to above, while that of Class-II, Class-III and IV Officers runs between Rs. 400/- and 1500/-, 300/- and 1200/- and Rs. 175/- and Rs. 300/- respectively.

Out of these employees female employees in total, covering all categories, are 1,214 in Gauhati Sub-division, 57 in Nalbari Sub-division and 90 in Barpeta sub-division. Number of Scheduled castes, Scheduled tribes (Hills), Scheduled tribes (Plains), Other Backward Classes and

Others in the district on the date were 1878, 380, 1390, 6678, 21279 respectively.

Educated unemployment : The number of educated jobseekers in the district has continued to rise. The table below which shows the number of job-seekers registered under different categories from 1970 onward in the state will amplify the position.

(As on 31st December)										
Sector	Year		Year		Year		Year		Year	
	1970	P.C.	1971	P.C.	1975	P.C.	1976	P.C.	1977	P.C.
	Total		Total		Total		Total		Total	
	No.		No.		No.		No.		No.	
Engineering graduate	386	—	303	—	56	—	55	—	75	—
Agricultural and Vet. graduate	23	0.5	15	0.4	62	0.3	65	0.2	94	0.3
Medical graduate	16	—	32	—	110	—	75	—	127	—
Post-graduate	526	0.7	450	0.5	505	0.6	660	0.7	945	1.0
Graduate	4,429	5.7	3,982	4.8	11,112	13.0	12,521	13.7	16,500	16.7
Under graduate	5,734	7.3	5,725	7.0	16,509	19.0	17,965	19.6	20,271	20.4
Matriculate	14,197	18.1	14,371	17.5	53,965	63.2	57,134	62.4	57,551	58.0
Others	52,739	67.6	57,488	69.8	—	—	—	—	—	—
Diploma holders	—	—	—	—	401	0.5	444	0.5	694	0.7
I.T.I. trainees	—	—	—	—	2,644	3.1	2,627	2.9	2,902	2.9

Maximum number of educated unemployed are literates and under-matric while the matriculates occupy the second position.

In December 1978—the number of educated persons without professional or vocational training and previous work experience in the Live Register of Kamrup district Employment Exchange was as follows :-

Literate and others	..	28,898
Matriculate and Higher Secondary and P.U. Passed	..	24,572
Arts graduate	..	4,066
Science graduate	..	1,648
Commerce graduate	..	353

Recently the Government of Assam has opened up a separate Employment Exchange for registering the unskilled under-matrices, literates, and illiterate youth job-seekers at Gauhati.

Employment to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and Women in Government and Semi-Government Services : The percentage of employees belonging to Scheduled caste and Scheduled (Plains) Tribes increased during 1971-78. Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes constituted 6%, and 6.48% of the total employment in the district on 31st March 1979. It is an improvement over 1970 figure which did not constitute even 5% of the total employment. Against this employment figure, 2,854 Scheduled Tribe job-seekers registered at the Employment Exchange.

In December 1978 there were 3971 women jobseekers registered at the Employment Exchange Centres of Kamrup. Women formed about 8.4% of the total employees in the district as per Employment Market Report for the year ended in March '79. They were mainly engaged in Central Government, State Government, and quasi Government services. Some other details have been discussed in the Employment section of this chapter.

The role of Employment Exchanges in Kamrup : There are three Employment Exchanges in the district. There is also an Information and Guidance Bureau. From the quarterly Area Employment Market Reports published by the Department of Labour, Assam, it transpires that the number of work-seekers in the district has been swelling from year to year, particularly from 1974 onwards. As against 22,453 job-seekers in March 1974, there were 24,323 in March 1975; 38996 in March 1976; and 51,184 in March 1977. The number further rose to 66,950 on 31st March 1979. The poor impact of the Employment Exchange is evident from the fact that the total number of their Live Register increased from 25,207 in December 1974 to 66,950 in March 1979. The Exchange could succeed only in a small way in the matter of placement. Disappointingly enough, the placement figures have even been declining in recent years. Only 1,110 persons were placed in employment through Employment Exchanges in the district during 1979, as against 525 of 1978, 720 in 1977, 1,219 during 1976, 882 in 1975 and 1407 in 1974. This limited success of the Employment exchanges in the district can only be partially explained by the manpower imbalances. It is true that the district has been experiencing shortages of skills, especially in the fields like Pharmacists, Nurses, Midwives, Chemists, Fire Fighters, Lady Health Visitors, Stenographers, Fast Typists, Bull-dozer mechanic, Re-

Frigerator Mechanic, Boiler Attendant (licensed), Diesel Fitter, Cutter, Paper-machine Operator, Rewinder Operator, Paper Finisher etc. On the other hand, surplus manpower has been persisting in some other fields on account of over production of unskilled workers and persons without any technical or vocational experience, such as fresh Matriculates, Pre-University and Graduate degree holders. But the Employment Exchanges have not been as purposeful as they could have been even without the limitations. The fact that there has been a sharp decline in the number registered from 70,406 in December 1976 to a mere 5,185 during the quarter ending March 1977 is a matter of concern. Presumably, the employment seekers are losing faith in the ability of Employment Exchanges to find them jobs. Even the few placements arranged by the Employment Exchanges were mainly benefiting those coming from outside Assam in contrary to the Central Government policy directive for employment of local people in services bearing salary below Rs. 800/- per month. The Employment Review Committee of Assam pointed out that about 57.6% of the employees in the undertakings surveyed were from outside the State. This Committee also pointed out that the role of Employment Exchanges in securing appointments was negligible. Thus out of 12,386 vacancies in 1970 only 7.79% were filled by the intermediation of Employment Exchanges.

National Planning and Community Development :- As economic development of an area is linked with its industrial development, some idea of the impact of planning on the economy of the Kamrup district can be had from the following data :

District-wise Registered Factories in Assam, 1976.

	No. of Registered Factories
Kamrup	297
Darrang	195
Dibrugarh	535
All-Assam	1,742

(Source : Statistical Handbook, Assam, 1978).

Of the three districts which had a significant industrial growth, viz., Kamrup, Darrang, and Dibrugarh; Kamrup district accounted for the second highest with 297 registered factories, the first highest being that of Dibrugarh. Kamrup, with about 20% of the State's population accounted for about 17% of the industrial development as revealed by the number of registered factories.

In Agricultural development, however, the district did not make satisfactory progress as can be seen from the following table.

In spite of distribution of improved seeds, fertilizers and implements and land-reclamation facilities provided in the district through the Community Development Blocks, average yield of almost all important crops per hectare in Kamrup is very much deplorable in comparison to other districts like Cachar, Darrang, and Dibrugarh. Deep probe and scientific analysis of its reason seems overdue.

In regard to educational development, Kamrup has scored highest in the State as shown below :--

Enrolment

District	Univer- sity	College for general education	College for pro- fessional education	Schools for gene- ral education	Schools for pro- fessional education
Goalpara	—	6,407	264	2,93,710	3,01,622
Kamrup	2,123	23,629	3,447	5,24,699	5,58,321
Sibsagar	—	16,852	1,429	3,85,908	4,08,274
Dibrugarh	607	8,688	1,142	2,04,299	2,16,832
All-Assam	2,730	80,925	7,547	24,04,658	25,23,232

(Source : Statistical Handbook, Assam, 1978).

From the table giving data on spread of education in the district which had a good educational spurt, we see that Kamrup was the biggest beneficiary of the State's educational expansion. It may however be noted that due to location of State Government headquarters in Gauhati, educational facilities had to be expanded in the city to accommodate the wards of the Service-holders working in these establishments. A large section of these students enrolled in schools and colleges as shown above, therefore, belong to other districts of Assam as well as other parts of India. Some developments in fields of communication, industry, Co-operation, Flood-Control, Forestry, Livestock and Power also have been achieved in the district during the last first 'Five Year Plan's and details about these things have been discussed in the relevant chapters of the Gazetteer. So no separate mention of these things has been made here.

The impact of Community Development Programme on the district may now be viewed in nut shell. The following table indicates the relative progress of the movement in Kamrup and other districts.

Districts	No. of position (1975-76)			
	Stage-II	Post Stage-II	T.D. Blocks	Total
Goalpara	1	16	3	20
Kamrup	—	23	2	25
Darrang	—	12	1	13
Nowgong	—	13	—	13
Sibsagar	—	17	—	17
Dibrugarh	—	9	1	10
Lakhimpur	—	7	1	8
Cachar	2	13	—	15
Karbi Anglong	—	—	2	2
N. C. Hills	—	—	7	7
Assam Total :	3	110	17	130

Source : Directorate of Panchayats and Community Development.

This table shows that Kamrup had the highest number of post Stage-II blocks.

Total Government expenditure under the special programmes in Community Development Blocks in the State during 1971-72, 1972-73 and 1973-74 was as shown below :—

Name of programme	(Rs. in lakhs)		
	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74
Applied Nutrition programme	7.12	6.12	5.73
Well construction programme	1.95	3.00	6.00
Crash Nutrition Feeding Programme	25.73	70.42	68.20
Pilot Research Project	0.55	0.61	0.69
Crash Schemes for Rural Employment	81.89	104.89	90.84
Pilot Intensive Rural Employment programme	—	4.30	9.95
Total :	117.81	189.34	181.41

The following table gives an idea of the achievement under the Community Development Programme in the State.

Unit	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75
Improved seeds					
Tonne	9,533	8,579	17,460	10,334	16,645
Fertiliser distributed					
"	8,362	16,669	18,433	9,678	9,110
Improved implements distributed					
Nos.	3,548	4,282	4,006	2,104	2,641
Improved animals supplied					
Nos.	812	496	1,386	569	242
Drinking Water Wells constructed & renovated					
"	2,242	2,176	1,436	1,685	904
Adult literacy					
"	723	695	611	511	355
Land reclaimed					
Hectares.	4,856	6,856	7,430	4,409	2,036
New Kutcha road constructed					
Kms.	1,044	1,200	1,207	1,291	790

(Source : Directorate of Panchayat & Community Development).

District figures could not be furnished due to non availability of departmental data on community development.

Special mention may be made of the Applied Nutrition programme which was sponsored by the Government of India in collaboration with UNICEF and WHO. Upto 1975-76 the schemes covered 47 Community Development Blocks in the plains areas of the State. The Crash Nutrition Programme which formerly formed part of a centrally sponsored scheme was transferred to the State Sector. The main objective of this programme is to cater nutritious food to children in the age-group 0-6 years, and expectant and nursing mothers. Mahila Samities, Youth clubs and other voluntary agencies were associated with the nutrition programme. A number of poultry units, fishery units, horticultural units and kitchen gardens, school gardens and Community gardens started functioning.

The table below gives an idea of the physical achievements of Community Development in Kamrup district.

Year-ending March 1973-74.

Distribution of Improved Seeds	quintols	24,924
Distribution of Chemical Fertilizers	"	16,304
Distribution of Iron ploughs	Nos.	72
Chemical pesticides distributed	Kgs.	36,052

Programme achievements under the Applied Nutrition programme in Kamrup district (1973-74).

School children, pre-school children (Nos.)	Expectant and Nursing mothers (Nos.)	Fish Supplied (Kg.)	Vegetable (Kg.)	Eggs Supplied (Nos)	Milk Supplied (litres).	Total number trained in the programme (Nos)
51,747	8,901	95	2,000	61,050	115	236

(Source : Directorate of Economics & Statistics ; Community Development programme in Assam).

Crash Rural Employment Scheme : In order to create part-time working field for rural farmers and unemployed youths, the Government of India introduced a Crash Rural Employment Scheme during the 4th Five Year's Plan. The intention was to create permanent assets of productive and utility nature for Rural Panchayats. In 25 Development Blocks of Kamrup under the Scheme a few thousands of people were given off-time employment for a period of 3 to 4 months at a lump-sum payment of Rs. 100/- per month in 1971-73. On the other hand a few assets like fisheries, orchards, farms and roads for the Gaon Panchayat and Mahkuma Parishads were created in the district.

CHAPTER X

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

It is needless to mention that as elsewhere in the world, the earliest political institute in Assam or Kamarupa was Monarchy. From epigraphic references it can be collected that the machinery of government consisted of 7 components viz. king, minister, territory, fort, treasury, army and ally. The institution was primarily hereditary, established and run through election or selection of the head from amongst the eldest in the line, as it was evident from election of Brahmapala as the king by the elders and selection of Mahendra, the son of Arathaby Ganapati Varman, the reigning king by rejecting Cakra and Aratha—his two sons as they were not considered fit; and such selections were done with the consent of the people. People believed in the theory of divine origin of the institution—through which moral, property, aspiration and salvation of the manhood can be attained by preventing rule of 'Matsyanyaya' in the country.

There was *Mahadwarapati* to head the security force of the country and *Mahapratihara* to head the Secret Services.¹ There was a well-organised institution of messengers through which royal orders were carried from the kings to the people and also from the king to his deputies and officers and even to the kings of other countries.

There was a council of ministers which was divided into 3 categories - i.e. *Mantri*, *Amatya* and *Saciva* headed by the chief minister who was designated as *Maha Amatya*.²

The king and his deputies used to issue administrative circulars to proclaim matters of importance to the people from their camps. These circulars were called *Sasanas*.³

1. *Hayunthal Grant* of Harijara Verma.
2. *Kamauli grant* of Vaidyadeva, *Bargaon grant* of Ratnapala and *Tezpur grant* of Vanamala.
3. *Doobi grant*, *Nidhanpur grant*, *Gauhati grant*, *Khonamukhi grant*, and many such other grants so far discovered.

For administrative convenience, the kingdom was divided into divisions called *Bhuktis*,⁴ *Mandals*,⁵ *Visayas*, *Puras*,⁶ *Agraharas* (as group of villages) and *Grama*.

Old-time administrative set up :

During the Mughal period an area of old Kamrupa from river Sankosh to the Barnadi was brought under the administrative system of the Mughals. This territory was under Koch king immediately before it was won over by the Mughals and was known as Koch Hajo. The Mughal king created a *Bilayat* with this territory under the Subeder of Bengal and placed a Fauzdar at Hajo which was called *Thana* or military sub-headquarter, the *Bilayat* was known as Koch Hajo, and it was divided into four *Sarkars* and each *Sarkar* into a number of *Parganas* or *Mohals*. The *Sarkars* were (1) Kamrup, (2) Dhekeri, (3) Dakhinkul and (4) Bangalbhum.⁷ Under Kamrup *Sarkar* there were 41 *Parganas* such as (1) Kowarbhag, (2) Patidarrang, (3) Banbhag, (4) Bama-Banbhag, (5) Bardarrang, (6) Bahbari, (7) Satrajia, (8) Chowrahikhata, (9) Kasimpur, (10) Barbhag, (11) Dehor, (12) Kshetribhag, (13) Bazali-Baherkhata, (14) Baushi, (15) Barnagar, (16) Patkata-Barnagar, (17) Barpeta, (18) Bezini, (19) Phulguri, (20) Baska, (21) Digjal, (22) Hajo, (23) Gauhati, (24) Rikab-mohal, (25) Peshkas, (26) Pandaribari, (27) Baragmohal, (28) Puswa, (29) Gudra Umananda, (30) Hemamohal, (31) Maki Mohal, (32) Chetalbazi, (33) Ferojate, (34) Paikan-mohal, (38) Kachari-mohal, (39) Chutiamohal, (40) Karkhana and (41) Bazali.

Under *Sarkar Dhekeri* number of *Parganas* were 19 (nineteen). These were - (1) Khutaghat, (2) Guma, (3) Parbatijowar, (4) Kasbe Dhuburi, (5) Jamira, (6) Tariya, (7) Ghurla, (8) Julkarmohal, (9) Kasbe Ghila, (10) Chapgarh, (11) Reshamatanti, (12) Konklar, (13) Khumar, (14) Kathmohal, (15) Kotowali, (16) Dimali mohal, (17) Dhamadimohal, (18) Sulhat, and (19) Dastak mohal.

The *Parganas* under *Dakhinkul Sarkar* were (1) Sambhor with 5 *Tapas* such as Bagaribari, Samuria, Bekeli, Haljal-Ojakheli and Tapa Tisimpur under it (2) Pandu with 7 *Tapas* viz. Tapa Bangeswar, Tapa Majhiyali, Tapa Chayania, Tapa Beltola, Tapa Bhaduakata, and

4. *Epigraphica Indica-II*, p. 359, and XXVI, pp. 62-68.

5. *Ibid*—V, pp. 181-88.

6. *Nidhanpur grant* of Bhaskarvarmana, *Gauhati grant* of Indrapala, *Puspabhadra grant* of Balavarmana III, and *Subkhankarapataka grant* and *Khonamukhi grant* of Dharmapala.

7. S. K. Bhuyan : *Anglo Assamese Relations*, 1949, Introduction, p. 5.

2 others ; (3) Dumuria, (4) Bahranti, (5) Mechpara (6) Kalumlawapara, (7) Kahraibari, (8) Pushyatala, (9) Garomohal and (10) Gorhkati ; while the Parganas under Bangalbhum were (1) Baherbandh, (2) Bhitbandh, (3) Gaybari, (4) Sakibaretala and (5) Chandiyani.

These revenue divisions⁸ were placed under local officers who were designated Chowdhury, Patowari, Amin etc., Each *Pargana* was under one Chowdhari. *Paraganas* were divided into *Taluks* and the *Taluks* were under the *Talukdars*. Each of the *Taluks* were divided into *lats* with 3 to 6 villages and were placed under one *Thakuria*. Office employees working under these revenue officers were *Kakatis* and the field officers were *Saras*. *Saras* and *Kakatis* were paid employees. Revenue collected from the villagers on behalf of the king was called *Jaigiridhan* and *Saras* collected these *Jaigiridhan* and *Kakatis* maintained accounts of these collection and depositors. This system brought from the Mughals was prevalent only in Kamrup and was called *Pargana Bandi* system.

Under the Ahom administration, Kamrup within the present geographical boundary was placed under one Barphukan who had his headquarter at Gauhati. The entire area situating on the northern side of the Brahmaputra was called Uttarpur or Uttarkul which was also known as Dhekeri while the area situating on the southern bank was called Gauhati. The town Gauhati which was also known as Saraighat was comprised of Latacil or Panichaki, Joyduar, Dharamduar, Duwargarhila, and Panduchaki on the southern bank ; and Kanaibarasibowa, Silarchaki, Sindurighopachaki and Saraichaki on the north bank.⁹

Under the British :

After the British advanced upto Maramukh beyond Raha in Nowgong in the middle of 1924, Mr. David Scott, the Joint Commissioner of Assam, tried to settle the administrative set up in the Lower Assam. He maintained the *Pargana* and *Taluk* system retained by the Ahoms in Kamrup but organised them systematically. As regards revenue and judicial administration, Mr. Scott organised it on British pattern. The Ahom Viceroy Barphukan was transferred to Upper Assam assigning him a judicial post and the revenue establishment of Lower Assam was placed under one native *Saristadar*. The first *Seristadar* appointed by Mr. Scott at Gauhati was Haliram Dhekialphukan of Duwaria Barua family. The pattern of offices was closely modelled upon the establishments in the

other districts of Bengal and have Persian names such as *Navis*, *Khajansi*, *Seristadar*, *Muhafiz*, *Peskar*, *Tahsilder* etc.¹⁰ In 1825 there were four departments under the Lower Assam division with headquarter at Gauhati. These were :— (1) Judicial, (2) Revenue, (3) Police and (5) Jail.

Seristadar was the head of both judicial and revenue departments. Head of the branch in the judicial department was *Ru-bakar Navis* and Revenue branch head was *Peskar*. *Muhafiz* who was also known as *Mahapesh* was assisted by a Deputy *Muhafiz* and both had to work in both the branches. Under them were 5 *Muhafizes* in the Judicial and 6 *Muhafizes* in the Revenue branch. Of them, 2 in each branch were Assamese *muharrirs*. Besides these officers there were other officials like *Navis*, *Khajansi*, *Jamaddar*, *Poddar*, *Dastry*, *Peons*, *English writer*, *Interpreters*, *Gangajalia*, *Mullakurani* and *Assam Pandits*. *Gangajalia* was the rite performer for the Hindus, while the *Mulla kurani* was the rite performer for the Muslims. As all the employees were from Bengal, the *Assam Pandits* and 4 *Muharrirs* were appointed from amongst the Assamese in order to create confidence in the minds of the local people.

The Jail and Police departments were maintained by Darogas, *Jamadars* and military men who were assisted by *Muharrirs* and Civil employees like *Chaprasis*.¹¹

As the result of this new administrative set up, "a whole host of clerks and petty officials from Bengal came in the wake of the British rulers, as Assam was not in position for some three generations to supply English-knowing personnel for taking part in the administration and at their instances, the British government, partly also to simplify matters, made Bengali the second language of the administration and the schools in Assam."¹² This had initiated most of the economic, social and political problems of Assam which have still been the causes of most of the disturbances in the State.

As Political Agent on the North-East Frontier, Mr. Scott established his office at Gauhati. His office consisted of 3 *Munshis* for writing and interpreting Persian and Hindustani, one *Muhafiz-i-daftar* (*Mahapesh*) or Keeper of public papers and record, six *Muharrirs* or clerks, two *Tahbildars* or Cashiers, one *Dastry* who prepares the writing materials, a few *Jamadars* and *Chaprasis* who were all inferior officers of Police, Customs or Excise, and their orderlies. Besides, there was a staff of interpreters

8. *Kamrupar Buranji*—edited by Dr. S. K. Bhuyan, 1958, p. 31-32.

9. Dr. S. K. Bhuyan : *Sargadeo Rajeswar Singha*, published by Asom Prakashan Parishad, Gauhati, 1975, p. 244-45.

10. N. K. Barooah : *David Scott in North East India*, 1970, p. 88—158.

11. *Ibid*, p. 157-58

12. S. K. Chatterjee : *The Place of Assam in the History and Civilisation of India*, p. 78.

consisting of 4 English writers, and interpreters of the Burmese, Manipuri, Khasi and Singhpho languages along with their orderlies. Amongst all these staff there was only one Assamese employee known as the Assam Muharrir.¹³ Later on this establishment was converted into the Commissioner's establishment of Lower Assam.

In 1834 Captain A. Bogle, the collector of Lower Assam Division who pursued the line of Mr. Scott, formed new *Parganas* and *thanas* in Kamrup as per natural boundaries like rivers and other natural features presenting good line of a demarcation without least disturbances to existing *mauzas* or *Parganas*. Under the new arrangement, the whole district excluding the Bhutan *Duars* was divided into seventy independent fiscal Divisions.¹⁴

As for administrative set up then prevailing within the district, the following passage from the Statistical Account of Kamrup by W. W. Hunter may be quoted :

"The representative of the authority of Government in each district, is the Deputy Commissioner. With him rests the organisation, supervision and control of all the multifarious departments and branches of revenue and executive administration; and he has, besides, important judicial functions entrusted to him. The Deputy Commissioner is assisted by Assistant Commissioners and Extra-Assistant Commissioner.

"...Honorary Magistrate also are appointed in certain localities to petty cases. In the Police department, the Deputy Commissioner is similarly assisted by a special officer—District Superintendent of Police, to whom is entrusted the immediate management of that department."¹⁵ In Kamrup, revenue circles were called *Tahsildari* circles or *mauzas* and were placed under the Choudharies, who were called *Mauzadars*. All the important departments found at present were opened up then and the same administrative set up and system is prevailing even now. As regards Civil and Criminal Law administration, there were 3 Courts viz., (1) Gauhati, (2) Barpeta and (3) Rangia.

The old District Gazetteer published in 1905 has described the then administrative structure of the district as follows :- "For general administrative purposes the district is divided in two sub-divisions. Gauhati

is under the immediate charge of the Deputy Commissioner; Barpeta is entrusted to an Assistant Magistrate who is usually a native of the country. The Deputy Commissioner is allowed three subordinate Magistrates and two Sub-Deputy Collectors as his immediate assistants and a second Magistrate and a Sub-Deputy Collector are usually posted at Barpeta. The unit of the Police administration is the *thana*, of which there are 16 in the district, and of revenue administration, the *mouza* or the *tahsil*.

"Appeals lie to the Deputy Commissioner from orders passed by magistrates of 2nd and 3rd Class and from the orders of First Class Magistrates to the Judge of the Assam Valley. Appeals from the Judge lie to the High Court of Fort William in Calcutta. In 1902 there were 7 stipendary Magistrates and 2 Honorary Magistrates in the district...the Deputy Commissioner acts as Sub-Judge while one of the assistant magistrates in each sub-division discharges the functions of a munsiff."¹⁶

At present, for administrative purposes the district has been divided in to three Sub-divisions, i.e. Gauhati Sub-division, Barpeta Sub-division and Nalbari Sub-division. The Nalbari Sub-division was formally declared as such only with effect from 4.4.67. But prior to the declaration of Nalbari as a separate Civil Sub-division, an administrative unit under an Executive Magistrate had been functioning there since 1955, and accordingly the first Criminal Court was established at Nalbari on 14-11-55. Subsequently, other branches of administration such as Supply branch (2.5.56), Sub-treasury (2.4.58), Touzi branch (13-4-59), Nazarat branch (18.12.59), Bakijai branch (16-12-59), Revenue Sale branch (16.8.61), Development branch (1.1.60) etc., were started. In this connection it may also be mentioned that the Rural Development Unit at Nalbari was actually started on 1.4.53 but it came under the magistracy with effect from 1-1-60 on the abolition of the post of Rural Development Officer.

Barpeta Sub-division was created in March 1841.¹⁷ It is one of the oldest Sub-divisions of Assam. Besides the Sub-divisional Officer, there is one Principal Revenue Officer, one Land Acquisition Officer and two Executive Magistrates to help the Sub-divisional Officer in the day to day administrative works of the Sub-division. For judicial administration, there is one Sub-divisional Judicial Magistrate, 2 Judicial Magistrates, one Assistant District Judge, and one Munsiff. The history of the establishment of the different administrative units at Gauhati and Barpeta is not immediately known, but it is evident that most of the units were started along with the formation of the respective Sub-divisions.

13. N. K. Barooah : *David Scott in North-East India*, 1970, p. 133.

14. William Robinson : *A Descriptive Account of Assam*, 1975, Reprint, pp. 282—289.

15. W. W. Hunter : *Statistical Account of Assam*, Reprint, 1975, pp. 63-64.

16. B. C. Allen : *District Gazetteer of Kamrup*, 1905, pp. 216-217.

17. W. W. Hunter : *A Statistical Account of Assam*, Vol. I, Reprint 1975, page 16.

Gauhati is the Head-quarter of the district and it is immediately under the control of the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup. Similarly, the Sub-divisions are under the immediate control of the respective Sub-Divisional Officers and they work under the general instruction and guidance of the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup.

Again for the smooth running of administration, both for revenue and police administration in every Sub-division, there are a number of Revenue Circles and Police Stations and Out Posts.

There are 8 Revenue Circle and 7 Police Stations under the Gauhati Sub-division; 5 Revenue Circles and 3 Police Stations under Nalbari Sub-division, and 4 Revenue Circles with 5 Police Stations under Barpeta Sub-division.

It has already been stated that for the administrative convenience in the north bank of the district, the third Civil Sub-division has been functioning with the Headquarters at Nalbari with effect from 4.4.67.

This newly created Sub-division comprises an area of approximately 855.55 square miles (2022'8 square kilometer) with a population of about 4,93,746. The number of *mauzas* and villages in the new Sub-division are 25 and 857 respectively. The headquarter of the Sub-divisional Police Officer is also located at Nalbari.

At the early period of the establishment of the Magistrate-Court at Nalbari, the executive magistrate was in charge of law and order for the entire area subject to the overall control of the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup. Among other functions, the magistrate had to conduct Municipal, Town Committee and Panchayat elections. He had also to function as Sub-Treasury Officer, Bakijai Officer, Sale Officer, and also was in charge of supply matters. Prior to the formal declaration of Nalbari as a separate sub-division, there were three magistrates—one for judicial, one for executive and the third for executive and treasury functions. But with effect from 4.4.67, the former magistrate's court has been converted into the Sub-divisional court and accordingly one Sub-Divisional Officer has also been posted at Nalbari as the local Head of administration. The first two magistrates possess 1st. class power while the third one possesses 2nd class power. The first Judicial Magistrate at Nalbari was posted since the separation of Judiciary from Executive on 26.1.64 and the officer generally tries criminal cases. The judicial magistrates are under the control of the District Judge whereas the executive magistrates are under the control of the District Magistrate.

As in the past, the Sadar Sub-division is under immediate control of the Deputy Commissioner and the other two Sub-divisions are administered by a Sub-divisional officer of the I.A.S. or A.C.S. cadre subject to control of the Deputy Commissioner. The Deputy Commissioner is, in turn, responsible to overall to the Commissioner of Plains Division whose headquarters is also at Gauhati. The Deputy Commissioner is assisted by the Additional Deputy Commissioners and Sadar Sub-divisional Officer over and above a number of Assistants and a number of Extra Assistant Commissioners for executive works. Similarly, the S.D.O. at Barpeta is assisted by a number of Extra-Assistant Commissioners for administering all executive works with the senior E.A.C. as the next immediate officer of the S.D.O. and similar officers have also been posted at Nalbari for running the general administration in the newly created sub-division as mentioned earlier.

The same set of officers are to work both for general and revenue administration, but the circle officers who are primarily of the A.C.S. II cadre, are primarily responsible for revenue administration. The circle officers or the Sub-Deputy Collectors, as they are generally called, are assisted by sub-ordinate Land Records' staff such as *Kanangoes* and *Mandals* for all land revenue and survey works. For smooth running of land revenue administration, a *Kanango* is generally entrusted a sub-circle and a *Mandal* a *lot* which is the lowest unit of land revenue organisation. Details are to be found in Revenue Administration Chapter.

As mentioned earlier, for the purpose of revenue administration of the district, there are as many as 17 number of revenue circles and each circle is under the immediate control of a Sub-Deputy Collector who is again responsible to the District Collector for the collection of land revenue in the concerning circle.

Most of these circles in form of *Tahsils* were established between 1883 to 1893 with subsequent sufflings and resufflings to meet the demand of time. Originally there were 13 *Tahsils* in 1891.

(2) District Staff :

Deputy Commissioner and his functions and powers : Officers assisting him, designation and strength :

The Deputy Commissioner is the District Magistrate for carrying out the general administration of the powers embodied in the Code of Criminal Procedure and other special Acts. As a Collector, he is

responsible for all revenue matters including collection of land revenue, implementation of land reform measures etc. The execution of all planning schemes relating to the district also constitute his responsibility and thus, he is to play the role of a co-ordinator for all the major development departments, such as Agriculture, Veterinary, Fishery, Industry, Medical, Public Health etc. For this purpose, the Collector is made the Chairman of the Sub-Divisional Development Committee of the Sadar Sub-division. The other Sub-Divisional Development Committees are presided over by the Sub-divisional Officers, but that does not diminish the responsibility of the District Collector so far as the execution of the District Planning Schemes are concerned. The Collector, being the Chief Executive Officer of the district, is also responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the district.

In fact, the Deputy Commissioner is the pivot of the district administration. Till the separation of the Judiciary from the Executive, the Deputy Commissioner tried criminal cases and heard appeals from and on orders of the sub-ordinate lower courts in the capacity of the District Magistrate. The Deputy Commissioner still exercises the magisterial powers mainly 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 meeting 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 as the supreme authority of Law and Order in the district although the Superintendent of Police is the head of the Police Organisation in the district. Thus the multifarious functions of the Deputy Commissioner form a sprawling net that fringes the area of operation of some department and overshadows entirely that of few others.

Prior to the independence of India, in Assam, the Deputy Commissioners of six civil districts (including Kamrup) of Assam had the civil powers of Sub-ordinate Judge, and the Assistant and Extra Assistant Commissioners had the ordinary power of Magistrates of First, Second and Third classes. The powers of a Munsiff were also exercised by one or more of these magistrates at each district and sub-divisional headquarter.¹⁸

18. Assam Administrative Report, 1921-22, page 52.

But the Magistrates ceased to exercise the civil power of Munsiffs since separation of civil matters from the executive magistracy with regular appointment of Munsiffs and Magistrates separately in compliance with the statutory directive of the Constitution of India.

The Deputy Commissioner as the head of the revenue administration of the district supervises through his sub-ordinate officers collection of land revenue and local rates by the *Mauzadars*. Maintenance of cadastral village maps and records of right in up-to-date corrected form is one of the most important jobs to be carried out by the Deputy Commissioner with the help of the Registrar *Kanango* attached to the district headquarters. It is also the duty of the Deputy Commissioner to save revenues of the state by keeping all government lands, reserved or not, out of illegal encroachment by way of eviction procedure.

As the head of the district administration, it is the duty of the Deputy Commissioner to ensure quick, proper and efficient distribution of the essential controlled commodities like rice, *atta*, sugar, cement, C.I sheets etc., within the district. He is also to associate himself with the educational, cultural and developmental activities of the district;—as constant and intimate touch with people of all walk of life is the *summum bonum* of efficient administration. In order to stimulate the cultural fervour of the people, the Deputy Commissioner also has to utilise the district unit of the Information and Public Relations Department.

Offices of the Deputy Commissioner's establishment : The Collectorate has been divided into the following major branches and almost each branch is headed either by a departmental executive officer or by an A.C.S. officer. The branches at present are :

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1) Election branch. | 11) Loan and Relief branch. |
| 2) Supply branch. | 12) Revenue Misc. branch. |
| 3) Planning and Development branch | 13) Registration branch. |
| 4) Judicial branch. | 14) Settlement branch. |
| 5) Accounts branch. | 15) Bakijai branch. |
| 6) Textile branch. | 16) Sale branch. |
| 7) Land Acquisition branch. | 17) Tauzi branch. |
| 8) Housing branch. | 18) Revenue record branch. |
| 9) General Revenue branch. | 19) Nazarat branch. |
| 10) Excise branch. | |

The ELECTION branch is a part of the Deputy Commissioner's office but the office establishment is not within the amalgamated general esta-

Electoral Branch. It is under the overall control of the Chief Electoral Officer, Assam. This branch was opened in Kamrup in the year 1948, under the name of 'Reform Branch' within D. C.'s amalgamated general establishment but subsequently separated. There are separate Election Officers at Sadar and mufosil Sub-divisions. They are the executive officers assisting the D.C. or the S.D.O. (as the case may be) in holding General or By-election to Assembly or Parliament. So far as the preparation of Electoral Roll is concerned, the Election Officer has statutory authority to do so as Electoral Registration Officer independent of the Deputy Commissioner or the S. D. O.

The SUPPLY branch is also a part of the D.C.'s office in the sense that the D.C. is the controlling head of the department although the Deputy Director of Supply with his own establishment is departmentally responsible for all matters relating to his department in the district. Usually one experienced A. C. S. Officer is posted as the Special Officer or the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Supply, at Gauhati, and the staff of the Supply office belongs to the D.C.'s establishment. The Deputy Director of Supply or the officer holding the charge of supply matters on behalf of the D.C. is assisted by a Superintendent of Supply and a number of Inspectors in the District Headquarters and an Inspector of Supply in each of the Sub-divisional headquarters, subject to overall control of the Deputy Commissioner at Gauhati and respective Sub-divisional Officers at Barpeta and Nalbari.

The PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT branch is headed by a Sub-divisional Planning Officer who is responsible for preparation of Sub-divisional plan, programmes, and periodical reviews thereof and the Panchayats that came into existence with the enforcement of the Assam Panchayat Act 1959. There is one Sub-divisional Planning Officer at district and one each at Sub-divisional headquarters to help the D.C. or the Sub-Divisional Officer as the case may be. There are altogether 25 Blocks in the District, and all the Block Development Officers are to work in sub-ordination to the Development branches at the district and Sub-divisional headquarters, over and above, under the administrative control of the Assistant Development Commissioner, Panchayat and Community Development, Gauhati.

JUDICIAL Branch : Till 25.1.64 the Judicial branch dealt with the following subjects.

- 1) Magistracy, Criminal cases, Returns and Criminal fines.
- 2) Citizenship.

- 3) Passport.
- 4) Cinema.
- 5) Local Self Government.
- 6) Labour matters, Strikes, Lockout, Payment of compensations etc.
- 7) Arms and ammunitions, Magazines etc.
- 8) Lunatics.
- 9) Verification of C/S of the person for appointment to various jobs.
- 10) Jail Advisory Board.
- 11) Jail Visit.
- 12) Deserters etc.

After separation of the Judiciary from the Executive with effect from 26.1.64, a clerical staff consisting of the bench assistants, Judicial Peshker, one L.D.-Cum-Typist, one Fine assistant and Miscellaneous assistant have been placed under the control of the Chief Judicial Magistrate in the rank of the Assistant District Judge to facilitate smooth management of the work. This staff is deputed purely for judicial work as shown in item (1) above, although it is under the establishment of the Deputy Commissioner.

The remaining staff is now dealing with non-judicial matters as per item (2) to (12) above under the control of the D.C. (D.M.) and A.D.C. (A.D.M.).

The ACCOUNTS Branch is headed by the Treasury Officer who is in charge of the District Treasury and is responsible for maintenance of the day to day transactions under his jurisdiction. The Accounts branches in Nalbari and Barpeta Sub-divisions were originally managed by one E.A.C. in each sub-treasury and was known as Sub-treasury Officer. But now all the Treasury and Sub-treasury Officers are appointed from the personnels belonging to the Assam Finance Service.

The TEXTILE branch is managed by a Sub-Inspector of Textile with his counter-part at the other Sub-divisions. There were 168 (both cotton and yarn) wholesalers and 607 (both cotton and yarn) retailers under this branch in Gauhati Sub-division alone who had to procure licenses of various nature to deal in cotton or woollen clothes or cotton yarns. The license fee and renewal fee contributed a good amount to the Public Exchequer.

There are two branches of LAND ACQUISITIONS in the Sadar Subdivision. One is engaged in general acquisition work and the other

is responsible for acquisition works so far they relate to major Central Government projects like Railway, Brahmaputra Bridge Construction, Pipe Line etc.

The Deputy Commissioner was also the district executor of the HOUSING scheme in his district in the initial stage of the Housing scheme which undertook Low-income group and Middle-income group Housing activities along with development of building sites share clearance and subsidised industrial housing work. He was assisted by two Inspectors of Housing at the Sadar Sub-division and one Inspector at each Sub-division who is under the control of the Civil Sub-divisional Officer. Later on, the housing scheme has been transferred to the Housing Corporation with Headquarters at Gauhati.

The REVENUE (General) branch is the most important part of the Collectorate. Here, the Deputy Commissioner is assisted by a Principal Revenue Assistant of the Assam Civil Service Cadre and a Revenue *Seristader* of considerable experience in revenue matters and the latter is responsible for all administrative work in this part including its branches such as *Nazarat*, Settlement matters, Revenue record matters under the Registrar *Kanango*, Establishment etc. *Tauzi*, Sale and *Bakijai* branches are generally entrusted to the S.D.O. (Sadar) who is assisted by the *Tauzi Navis*, the head of the *Tauzi* branch. *Bakijai Nazir* is the head of the *Bakijai* branch and other staff. In a word, all revenue matters including settlement of Government waste land, constitution and dereservation of V. G. Rs (Village Grazing Reserves) & P. G. Rs, (Professional Grazing Reserves), natural fishery etc., and clearance of government lands from encroachers through regular and prompt eviction etc., come within the purview of this branch.

The Deputy Commissioner is also primarily responsible for the EXCISE administration of his district including the control of the district Excise staff, and is responsible to the Commissioner of Excise, Assam. The Deputy Commissioner has the Superintendent of Excise as his technical adviser. The matters of routine nature are disposed of by the Superintendent of Excise and those of policy and other important matters are put up to the D.C. for orders. The Superintendent of Excise is the Chief Executive Officer in Excise matters of the district. He is directly responsible for every branch of the Excise administration but works in subordination to the Deputy Commissioner. Subject to the control of the Deputy Commissioner, the Superintendent is empowered to issue orders on Excise matters. In the Sub-divisional level, the S.D.O.s of Barpeta and Nalbari in subordination to the Deputy Commissioner are responsible

for the Excise administration of their Sub-divisions and for workings of the Sub-divisional Excise Officers.

The LOAN and RELIEF branch primarily deals in the matters relating to issue and sanction of agricultural loans or other loan, grants, and subsidies as relief measures. Rehabilitation loan is also issued from this branch. Generally the branch is under the S.D.O. (Sadar).

The REVENUE MISCELLANEOUS branch deals with appeals in revenue matters, civil suits, stamps and sale of estates for arrear land revenue and other Government dues. *Bakijai* cases for realisation of arrear government dues under various Government Acts, partition of estates, annulment and settlement of annulled estates, Record room, Forms and Stationery articles etc., are under the supervision of the D.C. and the A.D.C.

The Deputy Commissioner is also the District Registrar and to assist him in REGISTRATION works, there are one Deputy Registrar and two joint Sub-Registrars in the Sadar Registration office and a number of Sub-Registrars in different places of the district such as Barpeta, Nalbari, Rangia, Sorbhog and Pattacharkuchi. The last two offices work on commission basis. The Deputy Registrar is the immediate controlling officer of the Sub-Registrars of the district subject to administrative control of the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup.

Administrative set up : To assist the Deputy Commissioner in efficient running of the administration, there is a set of Gazetted Officers of the Civil Service Cadre. The Additional Deputy Commissioner is the next officer to the Deputy Commissioner and remains in charge of the district when the D.C. is busy otherwise or on leave. In revenue matters and law and order administration, he enjoys concurrent power and jurisdiction with the Deputy Commissioner under the provisions of Assam Land Revenue Regulation and Criminal Procedure Code. There are 2 Additional Deputy Commissioners at Gauhati for Kamrup. The first A.D.C. generally deals with criminal matters while the 2nd A.D.C. deals with revenue matters. At present two more Additional D.C.s to assist the D.C. in Development and Supply matters have been posted.

The S.D.O. *Sadar*, is the next in rank to the A.D.C. The S.D.O. *sadar* is followed by the Senior E.A.C. and other E.A.C.s in order of rank. Similarly the S.D.O.s at Barpeta and Nalbari exercise the powers delegated to D.C. so far the subdivision is concerned and is assisted by the Senior E.A.C. and other E.A.C.s all in subordination to D.C., Kamrup. The Extra Assistant Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners and Sub-Deputy

Collectors are all Revenue Officers under the Assam Land Revenue Regulation. The Sub-divisional Officer is generally a Senior Extra Assistant Commissioner or Senior Assistant Commissioner from the State or the Central Civil Administrative Cadre. Besides the Sub-Deputy Collectors in the Revenue Circles, there is a band of Block Development Officers placed in charge of the Blocks. All these officers generally belong to Assam Civil Service (II) Cadre and work in sub-ordination to the D.C.

Since partial separation of the Executive from the Judiciary in Kamrup district which came into force with effect from 26th January, 1964, magistrate not categorised as Judicial Magistrate under the control of the High Court, are to be known as Executive Magistrates. All these Executive Magistrates belong to the State or the Central civil Administration Services.

The Judicial Magistrates are appointed by the High Court exclusively for judicial work and their administration is completely under the High Court. There are 7 Judicial Magistrates, one of whom also work as a part-time Munsiff; and one chief Judicial Magistrate in Gauhati. There are 2 Judicial Magistrates and one Sub-divisional Judicial Magistrate each at Barpeta and Nalbari at present.

(4) Other Officers in the district-level under control of Heads of Department.

The district administration is so organised that in every sphere the D.C. is to be directly connected or consulted. He enjoys this unique position as the Chief Revenue Officer of the district and also as the head of the district administration.

The Deputy Commissioner is also the Chairman of the district Relief Committee, District Soldiers' and Ex-service men's Board and Statistical Committee. Relief funds are placed at the disposal of the Deputy Commissioner who disburses it through the field agencies like the Revenue Circle offices and Block-development offices. Quarterly Crop and Area Forecast Reports are routed through the Deputy Commissioner as the Chairman of the District Statistical Committee of which the District Statistical Officer is the Ex-officio Secretary. The Deputy Commissioner is, besides, the ex-officio chairman of the Small and Marginal Farmers Development Agency and Small and Marginal Fish Farmers' Development Agency set up by the Government of India. Thus the Deputy Commissioner is always associated with every developmental project undertaken in the district by the agencies—central or state.

Likewise in the sub-divisions, the Sub-Divisional Officer is also associated with every Central or State Government agencies as Ex-officio Chairman of the Sub-divisional Committee at sub-divisional level.

As the Chairman of the Development Committees and also as the co-ordinator of the different development agencies in the district, the Deputy Commissioner has connection with all the district level state government departments situating in the district, though these offices are under the administrative control of their own parent departments. Some such district level officers are :--

- 1) District Agricultural Officer, Kamrup, Gauhati.
- 2) District Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Officer, Kamrup, Gauhati.
- 3) Civil Surgeon or District Health Officer, Kamrup, Gauhati.
- 4) Superintendent of Police, Kamrup, Gauhati.
- 5) District Information and Public Relations Officer, Kamrup, Gauhati.
- 6) District Labour Officer, Kamrup, Gauhati.
- 7) Superintendent of Fisheries, Kamrup, Gauhati.
- 8) Assistant Director of Cottage Industries, Kamrup, Gauhati.
- 9) District Statistical Officer, Kamrup, Gauhati.
- 10) District Transport Officer, Kamrup, Gauhati.
- 11) Deputy Inspector of Schools, Gauhati.
- 12) Superintendent of Weaving, Gauhati.
- 13) District Adult Education Officer, Gauhati.
- 14) District Welfare and Probation Officer, Gauhati.
- 15) District Employment and Craftsmanship Training Officer, Gauhati.

It is, however, difficult to categorise a set of officers as district officers, as the internal administration or the departmental organisation of a government department do not always tally with each other. In some cases, the jurisdiction to a district officer covers the entire civil district with his subordinate officer working in the sub-divisional level. In all these offices there are a number of officers designated as Inspector to assist the district and the sub-Divisional officer. Under the District Transport Officer, there are a number of Enforcement Inspectors besides the Motor Vehicle Inspector. The task of the Motor Vehicle Inspector is to check the fitness of the vehicles while duty of the Enforcement Inspectors is to enforce observation of Motor Vehicle Rules by the vehicle owners and drivers. But in some departments no such district officers with sub-ordinate officers at sub-divisional level are to be found and in such cases officers are to work independently with jurisdiction over a departmental zone or section or division or a civil sub-division,

having subordinate officers within their own jurisdiction. Such officers under state level officers of different departments stationed at Gauhati are :

- A. Revenue Department :
1. Office of the Settlement Officer, Gauhati town.
 2. Office of the Settlement Officer, Tenancy Settlement.

Area jurisdiction of the second officer is only the revenue district of Kamrup.

- B. Forest and Soil Conservation Department :

1. Divisional Forest Office, East Kamrup Division, Gauhati.
2. Divisional Forest Officer, West Kamrup Division, Gauhati.
3. Divisional Forest Officer, North Kamrup Division, Rangia;

all three of them are under the controlling authority of the Conservator of Forest, Central Assam Circle.

4. Working Plan Officer, Lower Assam Circle, Gauhati;
5. Divisional Forest Research and Survey Officer, Gauhati;

both of them work under the Conservator of Forest, Working Plan Circle.

6. Divisional Forest Officer, State Zoo Division, Gauhati under the

Additional Chief Conservator of Forest, who is also the Chief Wild Life Warden, Assam.

7. Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forestry Division, Nalbari,
8. Divisional Forest Officer, Afforestation Division;
9. Divisional Forest Officer, Publicity, Gauhati; all three work under

the controlling authority of the Conservator of Forest, Social Forestry Circle, Assam.

10. Divisional Forest Officer, Economic Division, Gauhati;
11. Divisional Forest Officer, Silviculture Division, Gauhati.

12. Assam Forest School, Jalukbari;
13. Silviculturist, Assam.

The first three are district level officers while the last one is a state-level officer under the Conservator of Forest, Research and Education Circle.

14. Forest Utilisation Officer, Gauhati;
15. Field Director, Manas Tiger Project, Barpeta Road;

The first officer is a State level officer while the second one is a project officer. Both these officers are under the direct control of the Chief Conservator of Forest, Assam.

C. P.W.D.

1. Superintending Engineer (Road and Building) Gauhati Circle;
2. Superintending Engineer, Capital Construction Gauhati, Dispur.
3. Executive Engineer, Gauhati Road division, Gauhati.
4. Executive Engineer (Road) Gauhati;
5. Executive Engineer (Building) East, Gauhati.
6. Executive Engineer (Building) West, Gauhati.
7. Executive Engineer (E & D) Gauhati;
8. Executive Engineer (Mechanical Division), Gauhati.
9. Executive Engineer (Electrical Division), Gauhati.

D. Irrigation

1. Executive Engineer—Irrigation, Gauhati Division.
2. Executive Engineer—River Research and Investigation, Gauhati.
3. Superintending Engineer, Gauhati Project Circle.

E. Public Health

1. Executive Engineer, Public Health Engineering, Gauhati Division.
2. District Family Planning Officer, Gauhati;
3. Executive Engineer, Public Health, Urban Housing Corporation, Basistha.

F. Agriculture

4. Inspector of Drugs, Gauhati.
1. Regional Agricultural Engineer, Gauhati.
2. Horticulturist, Gauhati.
3. Fruit Technology Officer, Gauhati
4. Jute Development Officer, Gauhati
5. Senior Agronomist, Gauhati.
6. Agriculture Marketing Officer.
7. Agriculture Information Officer.
8. Cash crop Development Officer.
9. Seed Testing Officer.
10. Agricultural Income Tax Officer.
11. Soil Survey Officer.
12. Spices Development Officer.

All these officers are state level officers heading a particular section of the department. They all work under the direct control of the Director, Agriculture, Assam.

For general agriculture departmental administration, the revenue sub-divisions are called the districts and officers in charge of these districts are called the District Agriculture Officers.

G. Industry

1. Managing Director District Industries Centre, Gauhati.
2. Manager, Industrial Estate, Bamunimaidan, Gauhati.
3. Special Officer, Powerloom,

is a state level officer working under the Director of Industries directly.

H. Education :

1. Inspector of Schools, Kamrup.
2. District Research Officer, under Tribal Research Institute ;
3. Director of Archeology and Museum, Gauhati.
4. Editor-in-Chief, District Gazetteers, Assam, Gauhati.
5. Director of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Gauhati.
6. Director, State Institute of Science Education.

The last 4 are state level officers while the first three are district level officers.

I. Finance :

1. Superintendent of Taxes.
There are six Superintendents of Taxes in Kamrup.
2. Inspector of Weight and Measures, Gauhati;
3. Assistant Controller, Weights and Measures, Gauhati;
4. Assistant Commissioner, Taxes, Gauhati.

J. Welfare :

1. Sub-divisional Welfare Officer for Tribal, Scheduled Caste and other Backward classes, Gauhati.
2. Superintendent, State Home, Gauhati;
3. Superintendent, Vagrant Home, Gauhati; and
4. Superintendent, Deaf and Dumb School, Gauhati. These three are state-level institutions.
5. Superintendent, Bal-Bhawan, Gauhati.

K. Labour and Employment :

1. Chief Inspector of Factories, Gauhati; is a state-level officer.
2. Chief Inspector of Boiler, Gauhati; is also a state-level officer.
3. Principal, Industrial Training Institute, Gauhati.

L. Transport :

1. Divisional Superintendent, State Transport, Gauhati.

M. Co-operative :

1. Deputy Registrar, Co-operatives—Gauhati.
2. Manager, Whole-sale Consumers Co-operative, Gauhati.
3. Secretary, Assam Apex Weavers' Co-operative Society.

N. Municipal Administration :

1. District Town Planner, Gauhati, is a district—level officer having counterparts only in Tinsukia and Silchar.

O. Home :

1. Superintendent, Jail, Gauhati.
2. Deputy Director, Civil Defence and Home Guard, Gauhati.

3. District Commandant, Home Guards, Gauhati.

P. Supply :

1. Deputy Director, Supply, Gauhati

In respect of some departments the counterparts of the district officers or their sub-ordinates are to be seen working in Barpeta, and also in Nalbari. But in case of state-level officers, there is no other sub-ordinate or counterpart officers in other parts of the state.

The following offices of the state and regional level belonging to the Central and state Governments, Autonomous Bodies, Corporations, Boards, etc., also situate in Gauhati ;

State Government state level offices :

A. Revenue :!

1. Directorate of Land Records and Surveys and Inspector General of Registration, Superintendent Stamps, Registrar General of Birth, Death and Marriages, Commissioner of wakt.
2. Directorate of Land Acquisition and Reforms.
3. Directorate of Survey, Assam.
4. Assistant Commissioner, Assam Tea Plantation Provident Fund.

B. Forest :

1. Chief Conservator of Forest, Assam.
2. Directorate of Soil Conservation, Assam.

C. Co-operative :

1. Registrar of Co-operatives, Assam.
2. Managing Director, Assam Apex Weaver's Co-operative Societies.

D. Agriculture :

1. Controller of Weight and Measures.

E. Education :

2. Directorate of Agriculture.
1. Directorate of Public Instruction, Assam.
2. Directorate of Elementary Education.
3. Directorate of Adult Education.
4. Directorate of Technical Education.

5. Directorate of Cultural Affairs.
6. Directorate of Sports and Youth Welfare.
7. Office of the Librarian, State Library.
8. Office of the Commandant, National Cadet Corps.

F. Finance :

1. Office of the Commissioner of Taxes.
2. Directorate of Accounts.
3. Directorate of Financial Inspection.
4. Directorate of Small Savings Scheme.
5. Directorate of State Lotteries.
6. Office of the Examiner of Local Accounts.

G. Industry and Power.

1. Directorate of Industries.
2. Directorate of Sericulture and Weaving.
3. Directorate of Geology and Mining.
4. Inspectorate of Electrics.

H. Irrigation :

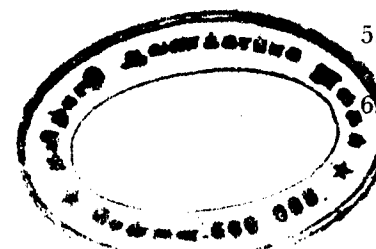
1. Office of the Chief Engineer, Irrigation.

I. Social Welfare.

1. Directorate of Social Welfare.
2. Directorate of Welfare of Plains Tribes, Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes.

J. Home and General Administration :

1. Office of the Inspector General of Police.
2. Office of the Inspector General of Prison.
3. Directorate of Bureau of Investigation.
4. Directorate of Civil Defence and Commandant General Home Guards.
5. Office of the Commissioner Relief and Rehabilitation.
6. Director of Evaluation and



Monitoring.

7. Office of the Commissioner, Election.
8. Directorate of Information and Public Relation.
9. Directorate of Printing and Stationeries.
10. Directorate of Census.
11. Office of the Registrar of Societies, Assam.

K. Transport and Tourism :

1. Office of the Commissioner, Transport.
2. Directorate of Tourism.
3. Directorate of Inland Water Transport and Chief Shop Surveyor.

L. Health :!

1. Directorate of Health Services.
2. Office of the Chief Public Health Engineer.
3. Directorate of Forensic Laboratory
4. Public Analyst.

M. Labour :

1. Directorate of Employment and Craftsmanship Training.
2. Office of the Labour Commissioner.

N. Planning and Development :

1. Directorate of Economics and Statistics.

O. Municipal Administration :

1. Director of Municipal Administration.
2. Office of the Director Country and Town Planning.

P. Veterinary :

1. Directorate of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary.
2. Directorate for Dairy Development.

Q. P. W. D.

1. Office of the Chief Engineer P. W. D. (Road)
2. Office of the Chief Engineer P. W. D. (Building)

R. Fishery :

1. Directorate of Fishery.

S. Supply :

1. Directorate of Supply and Textile.

T. Excise :

1. Office of the Commissioner of Excise.

Autonomous bodies, Boards, Commissioners, Corporations, Federations etc.

State :

1. Gauhati High Court.
2. Assam Public Service Commission.
3. Assam Administration Tribunal.
4. Assam Board of Revenue.
5. Assam Board of Secondary Education.
6. Assam Textbook Production and Publication Corporation.
7. Assam Rural Trading Federation.
8. Assam Agro-industries Development Corporation.
9. Assam Financial Corporation.
10. The Assam State Co-operative Marketing Federation.
11. Assam Government Construction Corporation.
12. Assam Government Marketing Corporation.
13. Assam Hills Small Industries Development Corporation.
14. Assam Small Industries Development Corporation.
15. Assam Industrial Development Corporation.
16. Assam-Meghalaya Mineral Development Corporation.
17. Assam Plains Tribes Development Corporation.
18. Assam State Development Corporation for Scheduled Castes and other Backward Classes.
19. Assam Plantation Crops Development Corporation.
20. Assam Seeds Corporation.
21. Assam Fisheries Development Corporation.
22. Assam State Transport Corporation.
23. Assam State Ware-housing Corporation.
24. Assam Tea Corporation.
25. Assam Khadi and Village Industries Board.
26. Assam Publication Board.
27. Assam State Housing Board.
28. Assam State Electricity Board.
29. The Brahmaputra Flood Control Board.
30. Board of Prevention and Control of Water Pollution.
31. Gauhati Municipal Corporation.
32. Assam Gas Company.

Central :

1. National Agriculture Co-operative Marketing Federation.
2. National Co-operative Consumer's Federation.
3. Food Corporation of India.
4. Central Ground Water Board.

5. National Textile Corporation.
6. Life Insurance Corporation of India.
7. Financial Corporation of India.
8. Agriculture Refinance and Development Corporation.

Central Agencies :

1. Assam Small and Marginal Fish Farmers' Development Agency.
2. Assam Small and Marginal Farmer's Development Agency.

Regional Central Agencies (For north-eastern region)

1. Khadi Commission.
2. National Productivity Council.
3. North-East Handicraft and Handloom Corporation.

Important Central Government offices having offices in Gauhati.

- Finance :**
1. Regional Director, National Savings.
 2. Additional Accountant and Auditor General.
 3. Agriculture Income Tax Officer.
 4. Manager, Reserve Bank of India.
 5. Assistant Commissioner (Annual) Income Tax.
 6. Income Tax Officer (Salary ward).
 7. Income Tax Appellate Tribunal.
- Transport and Communication. :**
1. Indian Air lines Officer.
 2. Divisional Engineer, Telephone.
 3. Senior Superintendent, Post Offices.
 4. Meteorologist, Borjhar.
 5. Technical Officer, Communications Air Traffic Control.
 6. General Manager, N. F. Railways.
 7. Director, Micro-wave communication centre.
- P. W. D.**
1. Superintending Engineer, Central Public Works Department.
 2. Surveyor of works - C. P. W. D.
- Power :**
1. Deputy Assistant Coal Controller.
 2. Central Water Commission.
 3. Chief Project Engineer, Rural Electrification Corporation.
 4. Director, Geology and Mining.
 5. Director, River Research Station.
- Agriculture :**
1. Deputy Technical Adviser, Demonstration Officer, Canning and Food Preservation Centre.
 2. Plant Protection Officer.

- Education :**
3. Assistant Director National Sample Survey.
 1. Assistant Commissioner, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan.
 2. Field Adviser, National Council of Education, Research and Training.
 3. Conservation Assistant (Grade I) Archaeological Survey of India.
- Publicity :**
1. Station Director, All India Radio.
 2. Field Exhibition (Publicity) Officer, Government of India.
 3. Assistant Director, Information and Boardcasting.
 4. Press Information Bureau.
 5. Samachar.
- Industry :**
1. Directorate, Small Industries Service Institute.
 2. Director, National Productivity Council.
 3. Deputy Director, Khadi Commission.
- Labour :**
1. Assistant Labour Commission.
- Supply :**
1. Deputy Senior Marketing Officer.
 2. Regional Manager, Food Corporation of India.
- Home :**
1. Deputy Inspector General, Central Reserve Police.
 2. Deputy Central Intelligence Officer.
 3. Deputy Director, Survey of India.
 4. Director of Census Operation.
- Fisheries :**
1. Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute

Organisational and administrative set up of some central government departments of public importance are discussed below.

(6) Central Government Offices e.g., Income Tax Department, Post and Telegraph Department, Central Excise, C. P. W. D. etc.

Income Tax : The Commissioner of Income Tax, Assam, Tripura and Manipur with his headquarters at Shilong is in overall charge for collection of Income tax and other central taxes such as Gift tax and Expenditure tax in the district. He is, however, helped by five Income Tax Officers posted at Gauhati with their separate and exclusive territorial jurisdiction within the Gauhati Income Tax Circle which comprises the entire civil district. Under this circle there is no branch functioning in the district. The collection of Estate Duty for this district as well as the entire State is done by the Dibrugarh Office of the Income Tax Department. The headquarter of the Appellate Assistant Commissioner of Income Tax is also located at Gauhati.

It may be mentioned here that all the employees of N. F. Railway come under the jurisdiction of the Gauhati Circle but State and other Central Government employees within the district are not assessed here.

The details of the collection of Income Tax and other taxes have been given in the Revenue Administration Chapter.

Central Excise and Land Customs : The Collector of Central Excise and Land Customs, whose headquarter is at Shillong, is responsible for realisation of Central Excise and Land Customs revenues of this district. He is, however, helped by the Assistant Collector of Central Excise posted at Gauhati. Under the Assistant Collector, there are also two Superintendents to assist him in realisation of Central Excise duty on various commodities such as tea, tobacco, mineral oil, cotton fabric, medicine, copper and copper alloy—patent and proprietary, jute manufacture etc. In order to effect efficient collection of revenue, there are six other subordinate units, two at Gauhati city proper, one in the oil Refinery at Noonmati, Gauhati; one at Rangia, one at Dooni, and one at Barpeta Road. Each such unit is termed as a Range. The Range Officers are generally of the ranks of Deputy Superintendent. An Inspector or a Sub-Inspector also is posted according to volume and nature of work.

Post and Telegraph Department : The Senior Superintendent of Post Offices, Kamrup Division with headquarters at Gauhati is the departmental head in the district so far the administration of Post Officers is concerned. For the administration of Telegraphs and Phone services in the district; the S. D. O. Telegraphs, Gauhati, and the S. D. O. Phone, Gauhati are responsible. The jurisdiction of the S. D. O. Telegraph extends beyond the district and except the Gauhati Local Exchange and Sub-Exchange under it (administration of which is the responsibility of the S. D. O. Phone), all other telephone exchanges of the district and telegraph services come also under his (S. D. O. Telegraph) supervision. Recently Microwave Centre of Telecommunication has been opened at Gauhati.

As has already been stated in the Communication Chapter, the district of Kamrup is fortunate enough to own a Central Telegraph Office at Gauhati which is incidentally the first in Assam and a class -I post Office. Further, with the conversion of Barpeta Sub-Post Office to Barpeta Head post Office, Kamrup is the only district in Assam to own two Head Post Offices in Assam.

For collection of Small Savings under the National Small Savings Scheme, there is an Assistant Regional Director for Small Savings at Gauhati. There is also a district unit for the Small Savings Scheme and the said unit is under the immediate charge of a District Savings Organiser.

So far the Engineering Section is concerned, there are at present four Divisions with headquarters at Gauhati which are as follows :

1) **Divisional Engineer, Telegraphs :** He is the departmental head for general maintenance and construction regarding Telegraphs and Telephone lines and wires including Telegraph Offices and Phone Exchanges.

2) **Divisional Engineer, Telegraph Line Construction :** He is incharge of bigger construction of trunk lines and wires throughout Assam.

3) **Divisional Engineer, Telegraph, Long Distance :** He is in charge of maintenance and construction of all carrier lines and long distance lines in Assam.

4) **Divisional Engineer, Telegraph Microwave :** He is incharge of the new project of Microwave Communication in Assam.

Central Public Works Department : The Assam Aviation Works Division with headquarters at Borjhar, Gauhati, is one of the important Divisions of the Central P. W. D. The Division started functioning in the name of Calcutta Aviation Division II during the war time with its headquarters at Calcutta. In the middle of 1956, the said Division was shifted from Calcutta to the Borjhar Air Field itself and thence forth it has been working with the name of Assam Aviation Works Division since 1960. Later on, a unit of the C. P. W. D. Division has been shifted to Bamunimaidam, Gauhati, where a building of its own has been constructed.

Railways : The N. F. Railway was set up as a separate Zone in the year 1958 with its headquarter at Maligaon (Pandu) four miles (6.4 Kilo meter) west of Gauhati town in order to expand and develop rail facilities in Assam. The General Manager, N. F. Railway is in over all charge of the administration of the entire Zone. He is, however, helped by a number of high Officials both technical and administrative in different spheres of the railway administration. The office of the Chairman, Railway Service Commission, North-Eastern Railways also situates at Gauhati. Besides, a unit of the staff Recruiting Office of the Central Government Service Commission has recently been opened in Gauhati.

Over and above the Central Government departments mentioned earlier, there are units of the Central Water Power Commission (Project), Field Publicity Organisation, Press Information Bureau, All India Radio, Central Storage Unit and the unit of the Civil Aviation Department, all located at Gauhati.

CHAPTER XI

REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

A. LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION :

General history of Land Revenue Assessment : The revenue administration in Assam and for that matter of that in the district of Kamrup is a hybrid to the making of which 3 or 4 different systems have contributed.

The Sanskrit equivalent for land revenue, "*Rajaswa*" or "that it is due to the king", appears to give the word land revenue wider content than the English equivalent "land revenue." From *Rig Veda* along corridors of history through *Manu* and *Kautilya*, through *Mahabharata* and other classics down to the reign of Emperor Ashoka, the same concept runs that the land revenue is a share of the produce of the land given to the king.

In picking up the thread of this hybrid called land revenue in Assam, it appears that ancient concept "*Rajaswa*" has its element in it when the ancient Kamarupa kings donated lands to the *Devalayas* and priests. An organised system of revenue administration with a well-knit hierarchy came into being in Kamrupa only with the Mughals when the Mughal Emperors held sway over a part of ancient Kamrupa. The Mughals evolved various systems of land revenue at various times. The ancient Hindu pattern of assessing land revenue as one-fourth of the gross produce as a king's share was followed by the Emperor Akbar down to the time of East India Company.

In the major part of Assam which was under the Ahom, the *Paik* system was followed. But in Kamrup, which was held by the Mughals during 1612-1627, the *Pargana* system of the Mughals took root. The Ahom did not disturb the system during the later period and king Chakradhwaj Singha (1863-70) confirmed it. The *Khel* system was partially introduced and mixed into *Pargana* system.

As informed by B. C. Allen, "the system in force under the Ahom kings was one of personal service. The whole of the normal population

was divided into bodies of 3 (three) men called *gots*, each individual was styled as *paiks*. One *paik* out of the three was always engaged on labour for the state and while so employed was supported by the remaining members of his *got*." The bigger section of the population was called *khel* consisting of three to six thousands of people. During the period of civil strife and on the eve of the Burmese war when money was required for war purpose, the Ahom government introduced a capitation tax in Assam. In Kamrup, it was a house-tax called *Kharikatona*. Officers were allotted the services of a number of *paiks* called *Likchows* and were given some rent free lands called non-Kar or *maummati* and were allowed to occupy large tracts of waste-land called *Khats*. There were two *Khats*, viz., Fatasil and Jalukbari in Kamrup. The lands allowed free of rent to the *paiks* for their manual services were called *gamati*. "Not all *Paiks* were

required to render manual labour. There were some who paid a tax in money in lieu of manual labour....." and who "were called *Chammai*....." As for the *Paiks*

on lands, in return for his services each *paik* was allowed 8 bighas (about 1.07 hectares) of rent-free land besides the homestead and the orchard, to be called *basti*, attached to it. In practice, the *Paik* had transferable and hereditary rights over *basti* land. For any other excess land occupied by a *paik* he had to pay Re. 1/- per *pura* (0.535 hectare). *Chamuas* had to pay Rs. 2/- per *pura* as revenue to the *Mouzadar* who retained $\frac{3}{4}$ th of the collected revenue and deposited $\frac{1}{4}$ th with the government. The *Mouzadar* were called *Choudhuries* in Kamrup. The revenue collectors engaged by the Mughals were called *Malguzars* and these *Malguzars* were primarily the *Choudhuries* so deputed by the ancient Kamarupa kings. In revenue collection matters, *Mouzadars* were placed in charge of Revenue circles or *Parganas*. and *Taluks* were under the charge of the *Patowaris* or *Talukdars*. The modern counterpart of the *Patowaris* are *Kanangos*. *Thakurias* were in charge of villages and present synonym for this post is *Mandal*. *Kakatis* were the office-accountants and revenue record keepers attached to the revenue collecting officers, while *Tekelas* were the field-workers employed for personal contact with the *Paiks* and revenue collection.²

Lord Cornwallis introduced Permanent Settlement in 1793. Mention should be made that the present system of granting *patta* to a *ryot* or to a tenant is a measure under Section 59 of Regulation 1793 introduced by Lord Cornwallis, the then Governor General of India.

1. N. K. Barua : *David Scot in North East India*, 1970, pp. 222.

2. W. Robinson : *A Descriptive Account of Assam*, Reprinted 1975, p. 212.

According to W. W. Hunter, the one time Director General of the Statistics Department to the Govt. of India, the ordinary tenure in Kamrup, as founded by the British was *ryotwari* in which proprietary right on land belonged to the Government and the tenant had the right of occupancy in the land covered by his lease so long he continued to pay government revenue punctually. The Government had the authority on the right of resumption of any land on the tenant's failure to pay rent. Lease by Government was then generally for one year, with right of transfer tacitly acknowledged. In those distant days, large *ryotwari* holdings were called *chamua* in Kamrup. The only distinction between an ordinary *ryot* or cultivator and a *chamuadar* of the early British times in Kamrup appears to be that while the *chamuadars* paid revenue directly to the Government, the ordinary *ryot* paid his revenue to the *Mauzadar*, the revenue collector. The second half of the 19th century registered an increase of *ryotwari* holdings in Kamrup district.

Nisfkhiraj tenures in Kamrup district in the beginning were half revenue free land holdings for religious and charitable purpose. The Ahom king Raja Chandrakanta Singha imposed certain taxes on this type of land also. These taxes were called *Barangani*. In 1834, Government under British at first directed the same type of assessment of land except in special cases. Gradually, however, certain lands came to be known as *lakhiraj*, i.e., free from Government revenue and *nisfkhiraj* revenue at half rates while the *kheraj* estates were full revenue paying estates. *Nisfkhiraj*, i.e., half revenue paying estates were again of two types in Kamrup district—1. *Pirpal* land granted for the Moham-medan religious institutions; 2. *Nankar* land-granted to Hindus for services to State and other reasons. *Nankar* land granted for religious purpose were called *Dharmottor* while the *Brohmottors* were lands given to the *Brahmins*. The *Nisfkhiraj* estates were heritable and transferable while the *ryotwari* land which primarily belonged to the State to be resumed at any time.

(i) Old-time land settlement, assessment and management :

The history of land revenue assessment and management in Kamrup district really takes an interesting reading, details of which have been given in the Introductory Notes of the Assam Land Revenue Regulation of 1886. Herein below we have only given a summarised historical sketch.

Originally though there were no revenue circles in Kamrup, land records were maintained even during the Ahom rule. The initial settlement operation in Kamrup was made by Pramatta Singha (1744-51)

3. W. W. Hunter : *A Statistical Accounts of Assam*, Reprint, 1979, p. 49.

and arrangement for maintenance of record of right was made. The document was maintained by the *Majimdar Barua* who was the *Kanango* under the Ahoms. The revenue circles had been created after a gradual and organisational development and prolonged evolution during the British period. Under the Ahom Rulers, the land constituted the absolute property of the Sovereign. The *ryots* who cultivated the land were more or less like serfs. Under the Ahoms, there were only two classes of land, viz., *Ubar* and *Katoni*. *Katoni* was the land acquired by a *paik* as a right for his service and *Ubarland* was the waste land brought under one's plough and for which revenue was to be paid to the king or his agent.

Soon after annexation of the State, the system of land administration introduced by the Ahom kings, was to continue for a few years except the personal service which was done away with. Each *paik* or person was assessed a sum of Rs. 3/- for his homestead, paddy land, and garden. For 1824-25, Mr. Scott's actual total demand from 19 *Choudhuries* and other *Malguzars* of the various *Mahals* of Kamrup was 69,086 *Narayani* rupees (Koch currency), then prevalent in Kamrup. He also imposed a tax on the *Debottar* and *Brahmottar* lands and introduced half-yearly collection drive to ensure good revenue. In 1832, a land tax was introduced in place of the poll tax in the plains districts. Each district was divided into *Mohals* which were resettled annually upto the year 1835. The system of collection of land revenue was not uniform and generally collected through the agency of the commission agents like the *Choudhuries*.

In 1836-42, in the plan of settling for a short-term of years, a circle of villages called *mouzas* with *Choudhuries* or *Mouzadars* was started. In 1854, annual settlement had again been reverted to. Then the lands were divided into three main classes namely (1) *Basti*, (2) *Rupit* and (3) *Faringati*. The rate of assessment differed in each district. In Kamrup, the assessment was 6 *annas* (37 paise) per *bigha* for *Rupit* and 4 *annas* (25 paise) per *bigha* for all other classes. This rate prevailed upto 1870, when the assessment was raised in all five districts to Re. 1/- a *bigha* for *Basti*, 10 *annas* (62 paise) per *bigha* for *Rupit*, 8 *annas* (50 paise) per *bigha* for *Faringati*.

After passing of the Bengal Government Resolution dated 19th October, 1870, a new set of settlement rules was introduced in Assam by the Commissioner of Assam. These Settlement Rules were broadly based on the following principles :

(a) The term of settlement of land was to be limited to 10 years and with discretion of Commissioner to 15 years.

- b) Settlement was to be made to occupant cultivator.
- c) The rate of assessment was to be fixed for the term of settlement, liable to alteration in next settlements.
- d) Permanent holdings were to be heritable and transferable if transfers were registered.
- e) Lands brought under cultivation during the currency of a settlement were to be assessed at actual measurements year by year, but heritable and transferable title was not to be conferred for such land until next settlement, if found in possession.
- f) The revenue was to be collected by the Mouzadars placed in charge of the fiscal circle, who were to be given no interest in land but were to be given commission on revenue they might collect.

The first survey of the villages for preparation of cadastral maps in Assam was undertaken in 1883 in order to classify the holdings of the cultivators properly under the settlement rules of 1870. By a proclamation of February, 1854, under the Govt. of India Act of 1854, the nine original districts of Assam viz., Goalpara, Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur, Garo Hills, Khasi and Jaintia Hills and Naga Hills districts were created.

Creation of the Chief Commissionership for Assam increased the total receipt for Assam and in Kamrup, the revenue receipt which was Rs. 1,23,569.00 in 1824-25, rose to Rs. 8,01,906.00 in 1874-75.

From 1871 to 1887 all Settlements in Assam were made under the Settlement Rules of 1870. Prior to 1870, only annual lease on land was issued. In 1883, a serious effort was made to introduce long-term settlement and decennial settlement of *Khiraj* land was introduced. Introduction of periodic lease of land diminished the area of relinquished land to a great extent thereby bringing in some sort of stability to revenue administration.

The settlement operation of 1893 became ineffective in Assam, particularly in Kamrup as many people died of Kala-azar in 1889 leaving the fields barren followed by devastation caused by 1897 earthquake. These made recovery of revenues practically impossible. This loss of revenue was tried to be met by raising the rate of revenue which proved doubly failure. Thereafter in 1902, resettlement operation on new classification and principle began in Kamrup. Under the system, 48 number of classes arose in land though in fact there were only 4 major classes (1) *Basti*, (2) *Rupit*, (3) *Faringati* and (4) *Baotali*. Maximum division was

made in respect of the *Rupit* land depending on its quality of soil, its situation, and the facilities it enjoyed. The subject was elaborately discussed in Nowgong and Darrang District Gazetteers. The same classification was followed in Kamrup. This settlement operation in Kamrup continued for 3 years upto 1905. Total *Khiraj* and *nisf-khiraj* land brought under classification was 28,27,829 *bighas* and it brought down the earlier revenue demand from Rs. 11,55,934 to Rs. 11,15,639, i.e., by Rs. 40,295.00 for the district.

During the subsequent settlement operations areas fully assessed for ordinary cultivation in the district increased considerably. Such areas which was 5,42,190 acres in 1912-13 rose to 7,83,174 acres in 1927-28. Reclassification resulted in more revenue and it came to be Rs. 1,93,313.80 in 1916-17. During the next settlement operation of 1923-28, the amount of revenue further increased to Rs. 2,01,01,620. In this settlement operation 30 years lease was issued to the lease holders in the district excepting in the fluctuating *char* areas of Barpeta and Chamaria. The town area of Gauhati also was reassessed in this operation which enhanced the revenue for Gauhati town from Rs. 5,502 to Rs. 17,527.00 i.e. more than 3 times. This practice of periodic settlement operation is being carried out regularly uptill now. In every such operation, classification of land and revenue rates are re-examined and revised as per Settlement Rules.

As per these Settlement Rules, Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Assistant and Extra Assistant Commissioner, *Mouzadars* and *Mandals* were declared as Revenue Officers and invested with several powers for making settlements. The district was divided into *Mouzas* and Circles under *Mouzadars* and each *Mouza* was sub-divided into village tracts consisting of not less than 200 houses under one *Mandal* who assisted the *Mouzadars*. These rules required the *Mouzadars* to make measurements of land prior to settlement, and he was held personally responsible for the correctness of his work. The *Mouzadars* required to record a field register (*Chitha*) from which a *Khatian* and a revenue roll (*Jamabandi*) were to be prepared. Since the responsibility of survey and preparation of land-record has been solely vested with the Sub-Deputy Collectors of the Circles, collection of revenue is, however, still made through the *Mouzadars*.

(ii) Rate of Revenue :

It may be pointed out here that the rates of assessment introduced in 1870 remained in force until 1893-94 when Kamrup along with the rest of the temporarily settled districts in the Brahmaputra Valley was again reassessed in the course of one year—by the Director of Land

Records and Agriculture, assisted by the Deputy Commissioner and Sub-divisional Officers. The assessment was based mainly not on the value of the produce or the quality of the soil but on the demand for land which was estimated by the density of population, the proportion of settled to unsettled land, and of fluctuating cultivation. On this principle, villages were divided into four classes and the lists were modified locally from considerations of soil fertility and facilities for the disposal of produce. The previous classification of land into *Basti*, *Rupit*, and *Faringati* was maintained and land growing *bao* was included in the *Rupit* class, in continuation of a practice which originated in 1886 owing to the defination made with the approval of the then Chief Commissioner Mr. Darra. According to the defination, *Rupit* was the "land which grows *bao* or any species of transplanted rice." It was done partly with a view to ensure uniformity of classification and incidentally resulted in increasing revenue in Kamrup. Instead of one set of rate which hitherto applied equally throughout the district, there were now four sets corresponding to the four classes of villages as below :—

	1st Class		2nd Class		3rd Class		4th Class		
	1	2	3	4	5				
	Rs.	An. P.	Rs.	An. P.	Rs.	An. P.	Rs.	An.	P.
<i>Basti</i>	1	6 0	1	4 0	1	2 0	1	0	0
<i>Rupit</i>	1	0 0	0	14 0	0	12 0	0	10	0
<i>Faringati</i>	0	12 0	0	10 0	0	9 0	0	8	0

Effect of this revised rate can be surmised from the following paragraph quoted from pages 19-20 of the Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of Kamrup district, 1928, published in 1930. "The application of these rates raised the total land revenue of Kamrup (due in surveyed and unsurveyed portions taken together) from Rs. 9,79,347 to Rs. 13,33,414 or by 36.14 per cent. The progress of settled area of all kinds and revenue since the first settlement is indicated by the figures given below. Allowances must be made for probable inaccuracies before the settlement.

The areas shown include the total land held in surveyed and unsurveyed portions of the district upto 1926.

Year	Revenue Rs.	Area (in Acres)
1834-35	2,11,951	3,24,301
1852-53	3,48,017	4,75,533
1865-66	4,29,163	4,72,510
1868-69	7,97,267	Not available (New Settlement)
1892-93	9,79,347	3,95,887
1893-94	13,33,314	3,88,029 (New Settlement)
1902-03	12,33,082	6,47,651
1905-06	12,17,598	6,42,225 (New Settlement)
Settlement Year— 1925-26	17,80,112	10,07,688 „

It is observed that from 1893 to 1905. there was gradual fall in revenues. As it has already been mentioned, it was due to the *Kala-azar* epidemic and earthquake which occurred with devastating effect on the people of Kamrup. This occasioned the settlement operation of 1902-05 in Kamrup bringing down the per *bigha* rate of revenue on *Khiraj* established and fluctuating land from previous 13.71 *annas* and 10.02 *annas* to 13.65 *annas* and 9.46 *annas* respectively. This rate, however, was enhanced in 1916-17 Settlement Operation which made it 11.96 *annas* per *bigha* for established *khiraj* land and 8.83 *annas* per *bigha* for fluctuating areas. During 1923-29 Settlement Operations in Kamrup, however, the incidence per settled *bigha* in established area increased from 11.96 *annas* (16 *annas*—1 rupee) to 14.64 *annas* and from 8.83 *annas* to 10.49 *annas* in functioning area.⁴

Though maximum rate of revenue has been prescribed by the Assam Land Revenue Regulation 1886, Settlement Rules thereunder categorically prohibit the per *bigha* revenue rate in the Brahmaputra Valley to be below Re. 1.00 and for the erstwhile Surma Valley to be below 8 *annas*. But in 1936, the Assam Land Revenue Re-assessment Act was passed and under this Act, revision rate of revenue on re-assessment was tagged with price-index of the state. As for the town, enhancement of the revenue rate over the old revenue was in no way to

4. *The Assam Land and Revenue Regulation*, eighth edition, 1968, page lxxxi—lxxxiii.

exceed by 400 per cent. In case of homestead land, more leniency was directed. In determining the rate of revenue, however, (1) productivity, (2) situation and (3) use of the land were considered besides the average level of prices of agricultural products in the locality for fifteen years preceding the re-assessment.

(iii) **Local rates** : As already mentioned above, in addition to the ordinary land revenue assessment, all estates falling within *Khiraaj*, *Lakhiraj* and *nisf-khiraaj* classification have to pay local rates under the provision of the Assam Local Rates Regulation, 1879. The entire amount collected as local rates is handed over to the Local-Self Government institutions like Local Boards, Municipalities, Panchayats, etc., to meet the local expenditure on relief work, prevention of famine, education, medical, relief, public buildings, communication and other public improvements. The tea-gardens were brought under extra local rate by enforcement of the Assam Local Rates and Local-Self Government (Amendment) Act (Assam Act VI of 1926). Under this Act, the tea garden estate holders were to pay an extra local rate of 8 *annas* (.50 paise) per *bigha* of land actually under tea cultivation and this entire amount was credited to a 'Road fund' to be administered under the orders of the local government for improvement of the road communication in the concerned tea district areas.

The following is the amount of local rates demand for Kamrup district during 1895-1925.

Year	Local rate demand
1895—96	Rs. 1,08,662.00
1927—28	Rs. 1,56,122.00

Subsequently, local rate was permanently tagged to the land revenue of the state.

(iv) **System of Land Tenure :**

It has already been mentioned that different systems of revenue administration were working in Kamrup. The *Parganabandi* system introduced by the Mughals during their temporary hold over a part of Kamrup created a sort of feudalism in form of *Malguzars*, i.e., *Choudhuries*, *Patgiris*, *Talukdars* and *Thakurias*. These people were utilised by the British during their re-organisation of Revenue administration in the district.

Ryotwari system, the forerunner of present *Mauzadari* system, was built up by the ceaseless efforts of the then Commissioner of Assam, Hopkinson, who wanted to give substantial right to the people without middlemen like Bengal *Zamindars*. The *ryots* were given permanent heritable right on their land against regular payment of land revenue to the Government. Though all the evils of *Zamindari* system could not be removed from the *ryotwari* system that is the *Mauzadari* system, yet this remains to be the best in the times. It was introduced in Assam proper, as has already been mentioned earlier, after the passing of the Bengal Government Resolution dated 19th October, 1870. In this system Government directly deals and settles land to the occupant cultivators and recognises no intermediate feudal class. Colonel Hopkinson negotiated with the Government from 1861 to 1887 on the question of giving the cultivators a permanent heritable and transferable rights of property in their lands and also to raise the assessment rate which was very low at that time. The Board of Revenue strongly advocated for long term settlements with *Mouzadars* and the creation of the class of landed proprietors by assignment of long leases to be eventually converted into permanent holdings. Colonel Hopkinson sought to enforce in Assam a *Ryotwari* settlement of the simplest and purest character, the collection being made directly from the *ryots* by the government officials. Ultimately the Bengal Government decided in 1896 with the approval of the Government of India to give the actual occupant of the soil a secured tenure as can be conferred upon him, subject to payment of revenue to the Government at rates fixed for long periods.

Thus, the foundation of the *Ryotwari* system of tenure was laid. Although Government decided to eliminate the intermediate feudal class it could not, however, eliminate it totally. The owners of *Chamuas*, *Khiraaj khais*, *Nisf-khiraaj* estates or *Lakhiraj* estates continued to sublet their land to tenants. Even with this little defects, the *ryotwari* system of land tenure proved to be the best mode of land tenure for these years. Under the above *Ryotwari* system, the following divisions in the tenure system is noticeable (1) *Khiraaj* periodic, (2) *Khiraaj* annual, (3) *Nisf-Khiraaj* or half-free revenue paying estate, (4) *Lakhiraj* or full revenue free estates, (5) Free Simple Grants, (6) Special settlement, (7) Waste Land Grants for 30 years, 45 years and for 99 years. These Acts were discussed in detail in Nowgong and Darrang District Gazetteers.

Zamindary System : As to the creation of Zamindary system of settlement, it was not that no effort was put in. In fact, efforts were made by the Bengal Government and the Board of Revenue to create

permanent settlement or Zamindari in the line of Bengal and Bihar, but it did not get the approval of the local administration in Assam. Hence, no Zamindari form of settlement could be established in the district.

(v) **Revenue Administration :**

The revenue administration in Kamrup, where Muhammadans retained the same system of revenue as found in Bengal was different from that of Eastern Assam. For fiscal purposes, the district was divided into 26 *parganas* each in charge of a Choudhury who received as remuneration a certain portion of the lands under his management.⁵ The names of the *parganas* are furnished in chapter I. The next unit was the *Taluk* in charge of Talukdar. The *Choudhuries* and the *Talukdars* were assisted by their subordinates called the *Thakurias*, the *Patgis* and *Gaon-Kakatis*.

The lands granted by the Ahom *Rajas* to temples, religious institutions and pious and meritorious persons were generally called *Nisf-Khiraj* or half revenue paying estates, as distinguished from *Khiraj* or revenue paying estates. In course of time, these lands were held revenue free, and the owners called themselves *Lakhiraidars*, denoting total exemption from payment of revenue. *Lakhirajlands* were classified under several heads, viz., *Debottar* lands granted for the maintenance of temple, *Brahmottar* lands for that of *Brahmans*, and *Dharmottar* lands for religious and Charitable purposes. For the support of mosques over the tombs of saints, the Muhammadans also granted away the requisite land as *pirpal* or *pirmum*. The practice was also affirmed by the Ahom King. The *Lakhiraj* estates were subtenanted by the estate-holders who were the chief priests or heads of the connected temples or religious institutions and in fact they were the *defacto* owners of those landed properties. All these estates have now been acquired by the Government and brought under assessment under regular settlement. In 1928, there were 86 *Dharmottar* estates in Kamrup. These 86 *Dharmottars* were originally parts of 38 *Lakhiraj* estates with 34,060 acres of land in the district.

When the first settlement of land in the district under the British administration was introduced by Captain Bogle in 1833-34, the district was divided into 76 *Parganas*.

Remuneration or commission paid to the revenue agents during the early period of British rule was as follows :—

Officers	Remuneration
Choudhury or Mouzadar	— 7% of the collected revenue and one <i>pura</i> of land for every Rs. 100/- collected as land revenues.
Patowaris or Talukdar.	— 7% of the collected revenue and $\frac{1}{2}$ <i>pura</i> of land for every Rs. 100/- collected as land revenue.
Thakuria	— 7% of the collected revenue and 6 <i>puras</i> of land in all.
Kakati	— $2\frac{1}{2}$ % of the collected revenue and 4 <i>puras</i> of land in all.
Saras or Tekelas	— One 4 <i>puras</i> of land in all.

In 1853, there were 151 *Choudhuries* in Kamrup, with 89 *Patowaris* or *Talukdars*, 495 *Thakurias*, 497 *Kakatis* and 993 *Saras* or *Tekelas*. The cost of fiscal staff was $20\frac{1}{4}$ % of the total revenue demand. As lands were settled annually and larger settled areas meant larger profit to the revenue officers, there was a tendency to increase the area of the *Mouzas* and *Tahsils*. In case of increase of *mouza* area through reclamation of adjacent waste lands, as per suggestion of Mr. Mills, the *Mouzadar* was allowed 15% of the revenue as commission and were allowed half of the revenue from reclaimed land as commission during the currency of the Settlement. Three years later the commission of the *Mouzadar* was reduced to 10% and in 1872 the slab-system of commission to *Mouzadars* were introduced. As per this system commission to the *Mouzadar* on collected revenue was as follows :

First 6000/-	— 10%
For the amount over Rs. 6000/-	— 5%

In 1883, the British Government decided to appoint salaried officers for collection of revenue as *Mouzadari* system was considered very expensive. Accordingly, *Mouzas* were amalgamated and formed into *Tahsils* or revenue circles and were placed under some salaried revenue officers called *Tahsildars* or Sub-deputy collectors. The first *Tahsil* in Kamrup were opened at Palasbari in April, 1883. The details of first revenue circles of Kamrup with years of establishments are given below.

5. S. K. Bhuyan : *Anglo-Assamese Relations*, 1949, page 531.

Statement showing number and names of Revenue Circles in Kamrup with years of establishment :

Name of Tahsil		Year of establishment
1. Gauhati	..	1885
2. Barpeta	..	1886
3. Nalbari	..	1888
4. Rangia	..	1885
5. Tamulpur	..	1887
6. Palasbari	..	1883
7. Boko	..	1883
8. Chaygaon	..	1883
9. Patidarrang	..	1884
10. Bajali	..	1886
11. Hajo	..	1887
12. Barama	..	1888
13. Raha	..	1891.

After formation of Gauhati *Tahsil* in 1885, the first Town re-settlement operation in Gauhati was undertaken in 1893. The town lands were classified as trade site and residential land. The rate of assessment for trade site in the town was Rs. 30/- to Rs. 300/- per acre. Revenue for residential site, however, varied from Rs. 6/- to Rs. 9/- per acre.

Under the rules, the waste land within the town limit was ordinarily to be settled for a period of 30 years ; and as per discretion of the Deputy Commissioner was to be settled with the highest bidder in auction in case of several applicants for settlement.⁶ In this way, the land revenue administration had undergone frequent changes and gradual development till enactment of the Assam Land Revenue Regulation in 1886 which is still in force.

B. PRESENT SYSTEM OF SURVEY, ASSESSMENT AND COLLECTION OF LAND REVENUE :

The principal methods of survey of the village carried on in the district were the cadastral and extension survey. Such type of survey was introduced in Assam after framing of Decennial Settlement Rules of 1883. The main object of the survey was to ascertain whether the holding of the cultivators were correctly measured and properly classified under Settlement Rules 1870 which were still in force at that time

6. B. C. Allen : *District Gazetteers of Kamrup*, 1905, p. 205—9.

Another object was to discover the concealed cultivations and also to facilitate issue of decennial lease by preparation of village cadastral map, fixing the locality and boundaries of every cultivator's holdings. The cadastral survey yield very satisfactory results but proved too costly. Later on, this survey was carried out thorough the Land Records staff. However, the cadastral survey maps are regarded as the correct records of holdings and such surveys are still continued where there are non-cadastral villages.

Generally the extension survey is carried on by the *Mandals* in cold weather by plane table traverse. After the traverse boundaries are passed by the Sub-Deputy Collector or the Supervisor *Kanango*, the detailed survey is undertaken. After completion of the interior survey, the map is to be checked by the S. K. and the S. D. C. In addition, the Director of Land Records and his assistants also considerably test and pass such survey. In this way the maps are prepared by the *Mandals* in the same manner as the professional surveyors did. The maps prepared in the course of cadastral survey either by the professional parties or by the *Mandals* are to be kept up-to-date by the *Mandal* under the supervision of the S. K. and the S. D. C.

In the Resettlement operations, such maps are to undergo through checking and if found incorrect according to present position, these are to be corrected by survey, retraverse or by more correction as necessitated.

(i) **System of assessment :** The land revenue is assessed by the Sub-Deputy Collectors with the help of the Supervisor *Kanangos* and *Mandals*. The assessment of land revenue is governed by the Assam Land Revenue Regulation, 1886 and the Rules framed thereunder, and the Assam Land and Revenue Re-assessment Act, 1936 and the Rules framed thereunder. The Assam Local Rates Regulations, 1879 and the Rules framed thereunder govern the assessment and levy of local rates. For the purpose of land revenue assessment, lands are surveyed and measured and classified according to a previously fixed terminology for this purposes. A record of rights known as *Jamabandi* is maintained.

(ii) **Collection of Land Revenue :** Collection of land revenue is done through the *Mouzadars* for *patta* lands. Prior to acquisition of temple lands, revenues thereof was collected by the *Dolois* of temples. The *Mouzadars* were created for facilitating collection of revenue. The payments of revenue for the directly paying estates, e. g., Tea Estates land and Free Simple Grants etc., are made by the settlement holders of such estates directly into the district treasury. For taking coercive action to realise arrear

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revenue, the *Mouzadars* are vested with certain powers of the Deputy Commissioner under the Land Revenue Regulation and they can attach movable property and move the Deputy Commissioner to annul or sell estates of the defaulters. The *Mouzadars* of course cannot attach immovable property and when such occasion arises, they shall have to move the Deputy Commissioner to proceed against immovables.

In the collection of land revenue the *Mouzadars* are helped by a set of village headman or *Gaonburas* who are duly appointed by the Deputy Commissioner. These village officials used to get no salary but a remission of land revenue to the tune of eight *bighas* which was later increased upto 20 *bighas*. The practice has now been discontinued. Instead, they are paid some lump-sum remuneration. Over and above their engagement in land revenue collection work, these village officials were to maintain birth and death register of their respective jurisdiction and submit them to their respective *Mouzadars* or other revenue officer for onward transmission to the government.

The *Mouzadars* are allowed commissions on collected revenues. The rate of commission is revised from time to time by the State Government. Followings are the rates revised since the independence.

Year	Rate	Slabs on collected revenue.
1950-1957	10%	on first Rs. 15,000.00
	5%	on the remainder.
1957-1965	15%	upto Rs. 15,000.00
	10%	between Rs. 15,000/- to Rs. 40,000/-
	5%	above Rs. 40,000/-
1966-1971	17%	upto Rs. 15,000/-
	11%	between Rs. 15,000/- to Rs. 40,000/-
	6%	above Rs. 40,000/-

Even then revenue collection position in the district remained static. It even worsened. So in order to encourage the *Mouzadars*, the rate of commission was again revised in 1971 vide circular No. RLR. 22/66/230, dt. Shillong 28/8/71, with effect from 1/7/71, as follows :

on first 25% of the demand	..	10%
on second 25% of the demand	..	15%
on the next 25% of the demand	..	20%
the last 25%	..	25% ;

provided entire demand is satisfied within 3 years following the demand year.

For *Mouzadars* of less-demand group whose demand does not exceed Rs. 34,000/-, an additional contingency allowance was allowed at the following rate.

Amount of revenue.	amount of contingency.
(1) For <i>Mouzadar</i> with total demand upto Rs. 20,000/-	Rs. 1400/-
(2) „ „ „ demand standing between Rs. 21,000/- to Rs. 25,000/-	Rs. 1000/-
(3) „ „ „ standing between Rs. 2500/- to 30000/-	Rs. 650/-
(4) „ „ „ Rs. 30001 to Rs. 34,000/-	Rs. 250/-

In spite of that, the revenue authority of the district says, the position did not improve due to perpetual occurrence of natural calamities like flood, erosion, cyclone, pest and draught.

It may here be noted that although the *Mouzadari* system of land revenue collection has become an important institution and is working satisfactorily for years together, the present picture of *Mouzadari* collection is not a bright and happy one. Many of the *Mouzadars* had to be proceeded against for defalcation, temporary misappropriation and poor collection. It is also a fact that people have also developed a mentality to delay government payment as much as they can, which is due to almost perpetual economic depression.

(iii) **Income from Land Revenue and Special Cesses connected herewith :**

The district of Kamrup contributes yearly a good amount of money as Land revenue to the State exchequer. The following statement will show the annual land revenue (in rupees) during the period ranging from 1953-54 to 1959-60.

1953-54	..	27,09,654
1954-55	..	23,32,361
1955-56	..	26,33,758
1956-57	..	27,73,696
1957-58	..	29,90,518
1959-60	..	30,71,368

The land revenue demand does not remain static. Due to fresh settlement of waste land, re-assessment or termination of the term of Settlement of the settled lands, and also due to annulment of settlement or fresh settlement, the demand of particular area oscillates but the revenue from 1956-57 to 1959-60 seems to be on the increase.

The revenue demand for 3 subdivisions of Kamrup district along with arrears for 1977-78 has been illustrated *mouza-wise* below :

Table-A

For Gauhati Sub-division, the year 1977-78.

Sub-Division	Name of mouza	Demand current		Arrear	
		L. Revenue (in Rs.)	L. Rate (in Rs.)	L. Revenue (in Rs.)	L. Rate (in Rs.)
Gauhati Sub-Division	1. Dimoria	46,989	11,449	1,17,866	28,906
	2. Sonapur	42,641	10,755	65,397	29,799
	3. Panbari	40,202	9,939	75,790	18,077
	4. Gauhati	80,543	20,194	58,601	21,297
	5. Beltola	74,472	19,210	2,21,390	75,766
	6. Ulubari	1,55,938	39,742	4,34,098	1,57,484
	7. Jalukbari	28,643	7,549	1,18,461	35,578
	8. Ramcharani	44,480	11,161	1,99,549	62,457
	9. Rampur	33,613	8,768	98,374	29,752
	10. D.S. Bongsor	34,980	8,773	31,686	7,534
	11. D. Rani	42,692	10,692	63,925	12,079
	12. Barduar	33,000	8,253	50,668	16,826
	13. Bholagaon	26,836	6,731	79,058	20,918
	14. Choyani	39,000	10,863	1,09,384	46,312

7. Source : Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup.

Sub-Division	Name of mouza	Demand current		Arrear	
		L. Revenue	L. Rate	L. Revenue	L. Rate
Gauhati Sub-Division	15. Chaygaon	58,356	14,886	1,87,840	54,496
	16. Boko	38,340	9,579	97,465	34,154
	17. Bongaon	58,356	14,886	1,87,840	54,496
	18. Kuki	35,794	8,940	28,800	7,202
	19. Bekeli	40,085	10,023	14,690	6,1236
	20. Pub-Chamaria	41,525	10,387	1,23,148	2,23
	21. Goroimari	43,477	10,879	80,805	23,639
	22. Santoli	42,664	10,670	63,399	19,179
	23. Nagarbera	50,465	12,614	1,23,766	19,969
	24. Chamaria	36,473	9,123	92,923	36,408
	25. S.S. Ghopa	44,628	11,611	2,15,553	71,758
	26. Barbongsor	39,840	11,695	4,56,056	1,84,897
	27. Patidarrang	46,355	13,927	2,01,998	73,528
	28. Karara	49,533	14,937	2,58,461	96,713
	29. Pubpar	51,230	13,984	1,14,448	38,558
	30. Modartola	47,858	10,330	1,55,754	48,099
	31. Pubbongsor	51,024	13,334	1,81,882	57,303
	32. P. Bongsor	24,604	6,384	1,54,532	56,233
	33. Hajo	66,614	16,987	2,21,381	61,630
	34. Ramdia	39,213	10,230	1,81,110	51,445
	35. Pubborigog	37,709	13,292	1,67,473	59,148
	36. P. S. borigog	25,677	7,778	38,294	18,239
	37. P.K. Mahal	40,413	12,412	83,944	46,994
	38. Kaurbaha	44,437	11,397	67,035	31,204
	39. Panduri	68,856	16,625	2,32,790	69,365
	40. Betna	55,382	15,092	92,480	35,612
Total		18,88,690	3,92,218	53,85,490	18,00,158

Table—B

Sub-division—Nalbari

Sub-Division	Name of mouza	Demand current		Arrear	
		L. Rev. (in Rs.)	L. Rate (in Rs.)	L. Rev. (in Rs.)	L. Rate (in Rs.)
Nalbari Sub-Division	1. Khatamouza	58,878	20,102	25,034	26,319
	2. Batahghila	26,787	8,183	31,535	11,236
	3. Natun Dehar	31,416	8,710	59,861	51,368
	4. Upar Barbhag	49,738	58,282	58,282	14,367
	5. Bahjani	41,829	12,512	2,07,606	76,532
	6. Dharmapur	44,722	13,161	1,78,068	34,360
	7. Khetri				
	Dharampur	39,671	11,180	86,705	71,694
	8. Pub-Barbhag	50,561	17,054	1,02,085	51,470
	9. Pakowa	50,073	14,474	78,205	32,844
	10. Ps. Barbhag	53,829	16,631	1,22,648	49,649
	11. Tihu	38,002	10,582	1,42,399	56,064
	12. Namati	52,568	15,060	75,553	46,457
	13. Nambarbhag	33,350	9,462	11,319	35,428
	14. Uttar Baska	72,244	18,075	48,896	13,190
	15. Dakhin Baska	52,062	13,021	1,27,823	64,313
	16. Madhyam Baska	74,568	18,654	1,60,042	1,06,964
	17. Ps. Baska	61,439	15,367	1,21,693	46,485
	18. Pub-Baska	62,072	15,535	84,835	36,906
	19. Kumarikata	64,933	16,236	83,003	21,065
	20. Defeli	63,709	16,933	44,989	8,760
	21. Pub-Barkhetri	25,628	6,435	94,156	27,830
	22. Ps. Barkhetri	27,234	6,870	63,900	38,445
	23. Madhyam				
	Barkhetri	28,485	7,129	87,594	31,232
	24. Uttar Barkhetri	36,052	9,282	1,96,249	60,312
Total ..		11,39,750	3,14,246	25,04,800	10,03,990

Table—C

For Sub-division, Barpeta

Name of mauza	Demand current		Arrear	
	L. Rev.	L. Rate	L. Rev.	L. Rate
1. Pub Bajali	25,902	8,599	1,05,706	39,082
2. Uttar Bajali	50,446	15,052	1,37,016	52,435
3. Sariha	48,450	13,999	1,07,806	32,752
4. Hastinapur	67,003	17,132	1,70,776	38,752
5. Manikpur	34,741	10,248	1,33,100	61,084
6. Chapaguri	49,937	12,490	45,257	10,757
7. Kaklabari	47,937	12,917	1,20,728	32,261
8. Bajali	68,708	17,181	68,948	18,937
9. Barpeta	70,162	16,297	3,32,084	1,12,792
10. Bhabanipur	27,315	7,369	67,131	44,568
11. Betbari	47,464	12,692	1,34,449	40,536
12. Paka	68,983	17,753	1,32,895	45,598
13. Sarukhetri	72,301	18,773	1,42,474	45,024
14. Nagaon	46,973	12,318	1,27,854	34,746
15. Chenga	45,006	11,395	2,46,812	85,211
16. Titapani	63,049	5,770	1,95,446	49,681
17. Jania	75,750	18,965	76,135	21,776
18. Mandia	57,297	14,329	1,06,831	36,249
19. Baghbar	82,473	20,641	35,4,949	96,463
20. Bagribari	17,743	4,441	2,15,811	63,449
21. Kharija Bijni	43,945	10,993	1,27,063	34,254
22. Gobardhana	68,206	17,068	96,534	24,888
23. Howli	82,508	20,660	1,54,562	41,240
24. Ghilajari	64,097	16,054	2,32,115	61,661
25. D. C. Bauchi	66,388	16,448	2,62,020	86,844
26. Ruposhi	54,668	13,830	1,91,769	49,216
Total	14,46,084	3,72,474	40,86,236	12,50,294
Gauhati	18,88,690	3,92,218	53,85,490	18,00,158
Nalbari	11,39,750	3,14,246	25,04,800	10,03,990
Grand Total	44,74,524	10,78,938	1,19,76,526	40,54,442

C. ORGANISATION OF THE LAND REVENUE DEPARTMENT AT THE DISTRICT

The Land Revenue Department at the district-level consists of Deputy Commissioner at the head with S. D. Os at Sub-divisions and S. D. Cs at Circles. The A. D. C., Principal Revenue Assistant and E. A. Cs are also revenue officers who help the Deputy Commissioner or the S. D. O. in all revenue matters with the aid of the subordinate land records staff such as *Saibors*, *Kanango*, *Kanangos*, and *Mandals*. These officers assist the Deputy Commissioner in various revenue matters such as Bakijai, Land Acquisition, Relief, etc., besides watching over revenue collection and revenue administration in general. For the collection of Land revenue Deputy Commissioner is under the Commissioner, whose office is also located at Gauhati.

For the purpose of land revenue administration the district is divided into three Sub-divisions namely, Gauhati, Barpeta and Nalbari. The third Sub-division (Nalbari) is functioning as such with effect from 1st April, 1967. There are at present five circles in Barpeta Sub-division, 5 in Nalbari Sub-division and 8 circles in Gauhati Sub-division, the total being nineteen circles. A Sub-Deputy Collector remains in charge of the circles. Under him, there are the supervisor or *Kanangos* and the *Mandals*. Every circles in the district has been divided into Sub-circles. Number of circles and sub-circles in 1978 were as indicated in the chapter I of this book and a *Kanango* remains in charge of a group of *lots* situating within the circle. For administrative convenience some of the circles also are divided into sub-circles. Each circle and sub-circle is also divided into *lots*. There are in Barpeta circle 58, Bajali circle-58, Barnagar circle-58, Baghbar circle-48, Gauhati circle -28, Hajo circle -58, Rangia circle -53, Tamulpur circle -24, Nalbari circle -56, and Tihu circle -46 *lots*.

The Circle Sub-Deputy Collector's office forms the lowest branch of the Revenue Department. The revenue office came into existence during the early days of the British rule in Assam. This office maintains the land records of the area under its control. In 1975, each circle consisted of the following staff.

CIRCLE	No. of S.D.C.	No. of A.S.O	Permanent S.K.	Permanent Mandal
1	2	3	4	5
Barpeta	1	—	2	58
Bajali	1	—	2	58
Baghbar	1	—	2	48

1	2	3	4	5
Barnagar	1	—	2	53
Gauhati	3	1	1	28
Palasbari	1	—	1	36
Chaygaon	1	—	2	68
Kamalpur	1	—	1	40
Hajo	1	—	2	58
Rangia	1	—	2	53
Nalbari	1	—	2	56
Tamulpur	1	—	1	24
Tihu	1	—	2	46

For the purpose of land revenue collection the entire district has been divided into 89 *Mouzas*.

Along the border of Meghalaya, there are 6 six non-cadastral Garo villages within the Palasbari Revenue Circle area. These villages are called *Paham* and only a house-tax at the rate of rupees two per house is collected from the residents as a temporary measure till the area is properly surveyed during the next settlement operation.

As mentioned earlier, each *mouza* has been given for revenue collection one commission agent known as *Mouzadar*. The *Mouzadar* works under the Sub-Deputy Collectors and the former is regarded as semi-Government personnel getting commission from the Government for collection of revenues. Principle and rate of these commissions have already been discussed above. In the district of Kamrup, there are at present 86 *Mouzadars* for the purpose of collection of land revenue. *Mouzas* are sub-divided into *lots* numbering about 5 or 6 in average. Each *lot* is in charge of a *lot Mandal* or *Patowari*. The duty of a *lot Mandal* is to prepare revenue rolls, survey and assess newly taken up lands and exclude from the revenue rolls lands that have been relinquished, abandoned or eroded and also to keep records up to-date by effecting necessary changes in *Jamabandi* (Revenue rolls) and *Chitha* (field index) and to submit reports on waste land position. The *Mandal* is also given miscellaneous works, like collection of crop statistics, census of livestock, reports regarding flood damage, flood relief works etc. In 1978, number of revenue circles increased to 18, number of *mouzas* remaining the same. Details of these 18 revenue circles, with their sub-circles and *mouzas* have been discussed in Chapter-I.

Assessment of revenue is generally made for a period of 30 years and thereafter revised. In the course of assessment, survey, demarcation of boundaries of each estate, re-classification of land, preparation of records of rights etc., are also done. In the district, the work is prepared under a special operation by a Settlement Officer appointed for the purpose. The Settlement Officer is assisted by a number of Assistant Settlement Officers according to the number of circles of the district. The entire land records staff of the district under operation is placed under the Settlement Officer during the period of re-settlement and the number of *Mandals* and *Kanangos* is increased.

The land revenue department at circle level is required to perform primarily the duties related to land records as enumerated in the Assam Land Records Manual. The Land Records Staffs are to keep the land records up-to-date, submit annual assessment list or *doul* and to carry on extensive surveys of the non-cadastral villages if any. But now the works of the land records staff have increased. Along with regular land records works, flood relief, loans, crop-cutting experiments, sample survey and many other multifarious reporting works are becoming almost regular works of the land records staff.

The land records of a village are constituted of a village map, a *Chitha*, and a *Jamabandi*.

Map : Maps are prepared from field survey according to scale, which clearly indicate the boundaries of each field. Usually, in the rural areas where the density of population is low, 16" inches to one mile scale is adopted and in town areas 32" or 62" inches to one mile scale is adopted in preparation of the maps. The maps are corrected in resettlement operation and made up-to-date as instructed in the Assam Revenue Re-settlement Act, 1936.

Chitha : *Chitha* is a field index maintained in Assam Schedule-XXXVII, form No. 1. *Chitha* is written according to serial numbers of field *dags* as indicated in the map of the village. The *Chitha* contains the following information, viz., serial numbers of each field, name of the *pattadar* or settlement holder and his father's name, kind of lease, name of occupants, name of tenants if any, name of crops grown if double cropped, with areas, whether lying fallow, whether lying unsettled the class of land etc.

Except the annual lease holders, periodic lease holders have got a permanent, heritable and transferable right of use and occupancy. The

annual lease confers no right of transfer or of inheritance beyond the term of lease. Either due to death or due to transfer, the *chitha* requires to be corrected and made up-to-date every year as per instructions in the Assam Land Records Manual. Also there are rules and procedures on the subject laid down in the Assam Land Revenue Regulation.

Jamabandi : *Jamabandi* is a record prepared from the *chitha* which indicates the revenue and local rate of each estate. The *Jamabandi* is maintained in Assam Schedule - XXXVII. Form No. 3 and contains the following information, viz., 1. Class of land, 2. Name of *pattadar*, 3. *Dag* number and area, 4. Class of land, 5. Revenue and local rate assessed.

Besides these, in practice, the *Mandal* also maintains a *Hath-Chitha* and *Hath-map* where he notes down the details of government waste-lands both in cadastral and non-cadastral areas. In these records, he also notes down the names of the encroachers on government lands and prepares the penalty-revenue list called *Touzi-Bahir*. This particular piece of document is the root-cause of all complications in revenue matters.

The Officers most intimately connected with the maintenance of the land records are the *Mandals*, S.K. S. D. C.s and Registrar *Kanangos* in D. C.'s and S. D. O.'s offices, Detailed instructions of the duties and responsibilities of these officers are given in the Land Records Manual and according to these instructions, the records are prepared and maintained by the respective revenue staff and offices.

Revenue Courts : The Revenue Courts consist of the courts of the Deputy Commissioner, Additional Deputy Commissioner, S. D. Os (both Sadar and Sub-division), E. A. C.s and Sub-Deputy Collectors at the circle. As a court of original jurisdiction, these courts deal with the original revenue matters upto a prescribed limit laid-down under various revenue laws. Appeals lie to the Sub-divisional Officer or the Deputy Commissioner (as the case may be), from orders passed by the Sub-Deputy Collectors or other Revenue Officers in the district. The Board of Revenue, Assam, with its headquarters at Gauhati is also functioning since 1962 to decide appeals against the orders of the Deputy Commissioner or Settlement Officers.

The Commissioner, whose headquarters is also located at Gauhati, remains also in overall charge of the revenue administration (excepting land record and survey) and the said officer acts as the medium of communication between the district officers and the Government.

(ii) **Agrarian movement of early times, Bhoodan, peasant organisations etc. :**

In the sixties of the 19th century, agrarian movements or risings were noticed in the form of *Raij-Mels* or *Mels*. The original village *panchayat* transacting business on social matters developed into this popular assembly which brought the entire body of the villages within its fold for deciding and executing matters in common in social and economic spheres. Monolithic unity was perhaps the rule with the *Mels*, for violation of decisions arrived at in common entailed social boycott. The British authority had a mortal fear of the authority of the *Mels* which they compared with the Nihilist organisation. The *Raij Mels* increased popular consciousness and confidence in united strength. The role of the *Mels* in connection with the so-called 'Assam-Riots' reveals the extent of their power in administering a severe jolt to the imperial power. They made the people conscious of their own degradation. The *Mels* were active in districts like Sibsagar, Nowgong, Darrang and Kamrup. In the district of Kamrup, this movement acquired particular intensity in Rangia and Lochima (Sarukhetri *Mouza*) and voiced their protest against the unjust enhancement of land revenue which was imposed in 1893 under the plea that the assessment of 1873 had been lenient and that peoples' capacity to pay had not been fully taxed. In Kamrup, the percentage of increase over the prevalent assessment was 54.48, the highest percentage being in Darrang -60.79%. It was therefore natural that Kamrup and Darrang should have protested vigorously against such arbitrary assessment. Thus a series of *Raij-Mels* were held to give organised shape to the spontaneous revolt of the people against alien authoritarianism. Detailed account of these peasant risings have been given in the History chapter of this Gazetteer.

Bhoodan : The Bhoodan movement though started much earlier, it really gathered momentum towards the end of 1960 when Binova Bhawe, the *Bhoodan* leader, arrived in the district. The arrival of Bhabeji made the people feel the impulse of the movement and strengthened the cause of *Bhoodan* and *Gramdan*.

Approximately 2,910 (two thousand nine hundred ten) acres of land have so far been donated to Bhoodan. The distribution of *Bhoodan* land has not started yet except in the village Bagulamari where land has been distributed to 25 families among which 2 families are reported to be landless. The donees are all plains tribal (Boro) except one who belongs to general community.

During the tour of the Bhoodan leader, as many as 145 villages were unofficially received as *Gramdan*. But in absence of any follow-up

action however, the tempo of *Gramdan* cooled down and when official declaration was sought to be given under the Assam *Gramdan* Act, 1961, only 25 villages came up and could be declared as *Gramdan* till 1964. The above 25 villages are all in Gauhati Sub-division, their circle and *mouza*-wise distribution are as follows :

Revenue Circle	Mouza	No. of <i>Gramdan</i> villages
Tihu	— Madhyam Baska	— 6
Tamulpur	— Dakshin Baska	— 1
Tamulpur	— Pub-Baska	— 1
Tamulpur	— Kumarikata	— 7
Chaygaon	— Bangaon	— 4
Chaygaon	— Boko	— 3
Rangia	— Betna	— 2
Rangia	— Pachim Borbhag	— 1
Total :		25

It is expected that some more villages may come up in Chaygaon circle for official declaration.

Peasant Organisations : Among the peasant organisations, mention may be made to the Field Management Committee and Co-operative Farmings. The main object of the Field Management Committee will be towards the agricultural improvement covering the following points.

- To improve the field in the matter of protection from flood and by irrigation.
- To win co-operative efforts for successful farming.
- To introduce good seed and suitable manure.
- To protect crops from destruction by pest and rats etc.
- To provide assistance to the individual farmer in every possible way.
- To put-up common permanent fencing in the field.
- To introduce rotation of crops.
- To develop agriculture gradually into co-operative farming.
- To impart scientific knowledge on agriculture to cultivators.
- To maintain agricultural statistics.
- To do all that may be necessary for achievement of the object mentioned above.

So far a number of Field Management Committees have been organised in the district and they are looking after the field management

work under the guidance of the Agriculture Extension Officer in the Block areas. Besides, there are Krishak Sabhas at some areas in the district.

(iii) **Rural wages and conditions of Agricultural labour :**

Prior to the 2nd world war, the daily wages of casual labour varied from Rs. 2.00 to Rs. 3.00. Agricultural labourers in general are very poor, and their wages are also meagre. Upto 1930, they were usually employed on a monthly salary basis which range from Rs. 25/- to Rs. 35/- per month with food and lodging. Comparing the productivity of land, the rural wage condition of agricultural labour couldnot be expected to be more hopeful than that. It is evident that the lands, the main capital of the agriculturists, have already passed to the hands of the non-agriculturist traders. As a result, the poor agriculturists either have to maintain themselves on a very uneconomic holding with hard struggle or to live upon others by sacrificing the best part of their labour. In return they get poor quantity of yield in kind or cash which is barely sufficient for their existence. However, in recent years, daily wage for agricultural labourer has been fixed at Rs. 8/- without meal and Rs. 6/- with meals. A agricultural labour employed on annual contract, however, now gets a lump-sum between Rs 600/-to Rs 900/- with food, clothing and lodging.

The factors responsible for the deplorable condition of the rural wage and agricultural labour appear as follows :

The yielding capacity of land is daily decreasing, and very little efforts have been made by the agriculturists to compensate it. The methods of cultivation are crude and not at all scientific. The peasants are not willing to bring together the small holdings into compact economic blocks under co-operatives. Generally, the villagers do not want to allow irrigation channels pass through their lands nor they generally grow green manure in the field to reap the benefit of organic manuring. So the people in general donot get good yield from their land and hence cannot pay high wage to the labour.

Tea Gardens in Kamrup district : The first tea-garden in Kamrup was started in 1854. In 1895, there were 29 tea-estates in Kamrup with 24,122 acres taken up for tea of which only 4,953 acres were under tea. In 1915, number of tea gardens in Kamrup came down to 22 with only 3,140 acres under tea though area of land taken for tea cultivation on lease was 20,372 acres. In 1928, however, the position improved a little and number of estates rose to 26 with 3,418 acres

under tea though leased area was actually 25,898 acres. The present number of tea estates in Kamrup is 15 with 2,873 hectares in area under tea. This figure is the second lowest in Assam—the lowest being Goalpara with 10 estates and 2,281 hectares under tea. The tea-estates should have been a good source of revenue for the district but unfortunately most of the tea-estates are notoriously defaulters. Revenue collected from the tea-estates in 1979 was Rs. 41,089.16 only.

The tea-lands of Upper Assam are more productive than that of Kamrup. Hence even as back as in 1893—the revenue assessed on tea-lands of Kamrup was 9 annas (.56 paise) per *bigha* while it was 12 annas (.75 paise) per *bigha* for Upper Assam tea-land. The rate even lowered during 1902 settlement operation and made 8 annas (.50 paise) per *bigha*. During 1923-28 settlement operation, however, rate of revenue on *Khiraj* lease for special cultivation was raised to 10 annas (.62 paise) per *bigha* in surveyed villages throughout the state while for unsurveyed villages the old rate continued.

This shows the poor condition of tea plantation in the district of Kamrup. The following statement will illustrate the position under different Waste Land Grant Rules in Kamrup on the 30th June 1951.⁶

Waste land settlement rules	No. of estates	Area in acres
1. Under Rules 1838	3	156
2. Under Rules 1854	2	457
3. Fee-Simple Rules, 1861	17	4,408
4. Grants under 1838 and 1854 redeemed	20	13,538
5. 30 years Lease Rules of 1876 and corresponding Rules	18	5,995
6. Periodic Rule for Special Cultivation	32	5,902

Some of these lands were later on acquired by the goverment under different Ceiling Acts.

Land Reforms : Large tracts of land in Assam was full of jungles at the times when the British came. And therefore the policy of the British Government was to throw open large tracts of land for tea plantations. So there arose the need of invitation for cultivation of jungles and fallow lands in Assam that land were settled on 45 years to

6. *The Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886, Eighth Edition, 1968, Introduction page XII.*

99 years lease without any assessment of revenue which were known as revenue free estates. But as the years went on and the century turned, pressure on land mounted by degrees. In the early part of the 20th century, say following the formation of the province of Eastern-Bengal and Assam, large number of population came over to Assam, clamoured for settlement. In 1912, Eastern Bengal and Assam was again dismembered and province of Assam was again created. But the stream of population continued to flow from East Bengal side in such ever increasing volume that in the nineteen thirties, Line System was introduced by the then Government to control the influx of immigrants into Assam. But it is worthwhile to note that the inflow continued in an unabated manner and large chunks of land in the Kamrup, Nowgong, and Darrang districts were occupied by the immigrants without much of a legal right. These immigrants were very tough and hardworking agriculturists and as a result, the local population, more particularly the tribes and other backward classes, were driven further and further away into the nooks and corners of the State as they failed in the competition with the immigrants. Tribal belts were created to protect the interest of tribal people on areas primarily inhabited by them and transfer and settlement of land within these areas to non-tribal immigrants was even legally prohibited. List of tribal belt areas in Kamrup, as is now, is given below.

Statement showing the names of Tribal Belts and Block in the district with areas.

District	Sl. No.	Name of Tribal Belts or Blocks.	Constituted as per Notifications	No. of village	Area in Bighas.
Kamrup	1.	South Kamrup (Chaygaon) Tribal Belt	R.D. 74/46/161 dt. 22.8.49		3,02,352
	2.	South Kamrup (Gauhati Tribal Belt—	No. RD. 74/46/172 dt. 27.2.50	419	7,72,464
	3.	Tamulpur Tribal Belt—	No. RD. 74/46/161 dt. 22.8.49	178	4,62,637
	4.	Baska Tribal Belt—	-do-	135	3,77,512
	5.	Chapaguri Tribal Belt	-do-	84	2,64,010
	6.	Gobardhana Tribal Block—	-do-	24	38,348
	7.	Bajegaon Tribal Block	-do-	4	6,526
	8.	Kharija-Bijni Tribal Block—	-do-	16	27,542
				860	22,51,391

Of these belts Chaygaon belt covers three Revenue Circles viz. Palashbari, Chaygaon, and Boko. Gauhati belt is spread over Palashbari Revenue Circle, Gauhati Revenue Circle, and Sonapur Revenue Circle. Out of Chaygaon belt-1,92,469 Bighas 2 Kathas and 15 lochas are unclassified forest lands; and from Gauhati belt, 5 Malaybari group villages were separated from the tribal belt in order to settle 165 refugee families while the entire area falling within greater Gauhati area was freed from the belt in order to make the area available for general development purposes.

In all these belts, however approximately 4,19,304 Bighas of land were released subsequently from Tribal belts and blocks in order to rehabilitate displaced persons.

About the fate of the Scheduled castes, tribes and other backward classes in the state the Government was so much concerned that even before the Constitution of India in 1950, provided for special protection of the Scheduled castes and other backward classes and went ahead and enacted (and added) Chapter-X in Assam Land and Revenue Regulation designed for protection of backward classes with effect from 22nd October, 1947. It appeared that following the creation of tribal belts and blocks in Kamrup district under Chapter X of Assam Land and Revenue Regulation the said belts and blocks were to be kept out of bounds from the non-tribals.

As has been stated above, due to the pressure on land, free grant lease was altogether abolished in course of time. The Government in the meantime was also seized of the problem of tenancy in its various forms following Independence. Mahatma Gandhi was often declaring that land belonged to the tiller. The Directive Principles enshrined in the Article 39 of the Constitution of India which reads "the ownership and the control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good" had possibly actuated the State Government to have a deeper look into the problem as to what are the rights of the actual tillers of the soil who actually wears out his whole life on the soil itself. The Government came to realise that the actual tiller of the soil is a cipher and the major share goes to the owner of the land. Even long before the enactment of the Constitution of India in 1950, Govt. of Assam passed Assam Tenancy (Temporarily Settled Areas) Act, 1935 designed to give protection to the tillers of the soil. But soon it was found that the Act had failed to serve the purpose and the poor tenant was there where he was. And therefore the Assam Adhikars Protection and Regulation Act was

passed in 1948 to give protection to the tiller of the soil and his rights against his landowner. But as before the tiller of the soil remained where he was and the landowner found enough loopholes in the Act to beat the tenant in his own ground. Years after, the Government came to realise to its dismay that the Adhiars Protection Act, 1948 has also failed and therefore the Government came out with the enactment of Assam (Temporarily Settled Areas) Tenancy Act, 1971 after having replaced the Assam (Temporarily Settled Areas) Tenancy Act, 1935.

The relationship between the landlord and the tenant of Kamrup district has been brought out in the Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Kamrup district, 1928, under the Sub-heading "Rates of Rent" wherein it was stated—"Big landlords such as the owner of *Debottar*, *Dharmottar*, *Pirpal* and some *Brahmottar* estates treat their tenants at least the old ones well. Tenants of *bhogdhami* lands pay *bhog* in kind instead of cash rent. In *paikan*, *Dharmottar* and *pirpal* lands, tenants pay the Government's share (half the revenue at *Khiraj* rates) and in addition render their accustomed service or in lieu thereof pay the other half of the revenue to the funds of the temple, *satra* or mosque. Among the *brahmottar* land-holders, the *Maharaja* of Durbhanga and Babu Upendra Nath Sen realise from their tenants nothing but the full rate of revenue. The *Parbatia* Gosains—the descendants of the religious preceptors of the Ahom kings—who are by far the biggest *brahmottar* land-holders have imported Bengal customs in their dealings with tenants. Amounts—sometimes in cash and sometimes in kind—in excess of the revenue due are realised by them for *seva*, *puya*, higher local rates, cost of rent receipt, grazing, etc. New tenants have to pay *salami* or *mukhachwani* in addition. Petty *brahmottar* land-holders are mostly local men whose sole endeavour is to make as much out of the tenants as possible. Inferior lands are let out on mere Government revenue but a margin of profit is bargained for lands of the average quality. Good lands are let on *guti adhi* and in populated areas on *chukti adhi*. In the *guti adhi* system, the paddy crop is harvested and thrashed; the resulting grain is then divided equally between the landlord and the tenant. In *chukti adhi*, the entire risk of a failure of crop is taken by the tenant who binds himself to give the contracted quantity (usually an estimated half of the normal yield of the land) to the landlord. The usual *chukti adhi* rate for *sali* lands varies between two and three *maunds* of paddy per *bigha* according to the productivity of the land. Some landlords who let out lands on cash rent exempt their tenant to render service for a few days during festivals and the seasons of sowing and reaping. Others adopt inaccurate measure-

ments with rods shorter than the standard Government pole of 8 cubics in length. The European tea garden Managers realise rent in kind. The Manager of Amchong Tea Estate charges Rs. 5-5 per *pura* (equal to 4 *bighas*) and requires 15 days service on the garden. His neighbour at Sonapur Tea Estate levies Rs. 8-8 per *pura* and requires 9 day's service—of which one third is to be gratis and the rest to be paid for."

As per the Assam Fixation of Ceiling on Land Holdings Act, 1956 ceiling of ordinary cultivation was fixed at 150 *bighas* per family. The ceiling was reduced to 75 *bighas* by 1972 amendment. The ceiling has now been reduced to 50 *bighas* plus 4 *bighas* for orchard per family as per 1975 amendment. Originally in the tea garden land was allowed according to 1:2 formula, but in 1972 amendment, the 1:2 formula has been replaced by item-wise allotment of land for ancillary purposes on the basis of actually planted area of tea according to the Tea Board Return as on 24.3.71.

Following the announcement of Twenty Point Programme by the Government of India, in which land reform was one of the more important programmes, the State Government constituted a high-power Committee headed by the Minister, Revenue, as Chairman for speeding up the distribution of ceiling surplus land. Such Land Reforms Committees have also been constituted in Sub-divisional and Circle level.

In the meanwhile around 1972, the State Government adopted the policy of discontinuing the settlement of land altogether. Therefore, when the ceiling surplus lands were being distributed, the allottees could not be given settlement and instead were given certificates only.

Under the Ceiling Act, Collectors were the final authority for disposal of ceiling cases with appellate provisions to the Govt. The Govt. by an Ordinance struck down the appellate provisions from May 3, 1976 and kept certain revisional jurisdiction in its hands. For expeditious

disposal of ceiling cases, the Govt. in about 1976 appointed 39 Additional Collectors. According to a "Brief Note on Land Reforms in Assam" published by Revenue Department, (Land Reforms Branch) Govt. of Assam dated 28th July '76, a total area of more than 15 lakh *bighas* of ceiling surplus land were acquired by 30th June '76 against the preliminary estimate of 12 lakh *bighas*. According to the said brief note, among 1,84,672 families 6,57,38 *bighas* were distributed within 30th June '76. It gives the following statistics in the matter of ceiling proceedings and their results in Kamrup district.

Acquisition of Ceiling Surplus Land upto May 1978

(area in *Bighas*)

Name of Sub-division	No. of ceiling cases instituted	No. of Ceiling cases disposed	Land Acquired (Area in <i>bigha</i>)
All Assam Totals In Kamrup District	17,784	16,802	15,68,125
Nalbari Sub-division	1,322	1,315	28,193
Gauhati Sub-division	1,508	1,503	1,37,594
Barpeta Sub-division	875	871	57,671

DISTRIBUTION OF CEILING SURPLUS LANDS UPTO MAY 1978

(Area in *Bighas*)

Name of the Sub-division	Total		Community Break-up (Weaker section)			
	No. of families	Areas	Scheduled No. of families	Castes Areas	Scheduled Tribes No. of families	Areas
All Assam total	1,98,924	6,92,430	11,514	38,531	10,334	51,349
Nalbari Sub-division	3,276	9,589	84	364	876	2,615
Barpeta Sub-division	7,157	23,340	570	1,266	716	2,442
Gauhati Sub-division	20,811	78,858	2,628	9,739	2,274	11,832

Source : Director of Land Records, Assam, Gauhati.

As per the Assam Adhilar Protection Act and Assam Agricultural Tenancy Act, the tenants have acquired partial heritable and transferable right over the land under long-term tenancy. In order to make this right exercisable, a record of right to the tenants was necessary. So in order to prepare the tenancy record, the tenant's record of right operation was taken up in 1975. Following is the achievement of this operation in Kamrup :

TENANT'S RECORD OF RIGHTS OPERATION

(As on 30th June 1976)

Sl. No.	Subdivision	Tenants recorded	District total
		Kamrup district	92,074
1.	Gauhati Subdivision	52,739	
2.	Barpeta Subdivision	18,620	
3.	Nalbari Subdivision	20,715	

STATEMENT SHOWING THE POSITION OF REVISION PETITIONS FILED BY INDIVIDUALS.

(Published on 28.7.76)

Sl. No.	Sub-division	No. of Revision Petition	Areas Acquired by impunged orders	Area affected by stay orders	Area free or distribution
	Kamrup District		B. K. L.	B. K. L.	B. K. L.
1.	Gauhati Sub-divin.	80	1562 0 14	1167 2 10	394 3 4
2.	Barpeta Sub-divn.	70	357 3 5	294 4 8	62 3 17
3.	Nalbari Sub-divn.	176	1240 4 9	723 4 6	517 0 3

Source : Director of Land Records, Assam, Gauhati.

Besides Land-revenue, stamp-duty collected as registration fees against transfer of properties and registration of documents, and also the revenue receipt from fisheries, form important items of income of the district.

Administration of Other Sources of Revenue—Central as well as State :

The other important sources of revenue derived by the State Government are Grazing Tax, Fishery Revenue, Excise Revenue, Registration fees, Receipts under Assam Sales Tax Act, Assam Amusement and Betting Tax Act, Motor Spirit and Lubricant Tax Act, Professions Tax Act, Agricultural Income Tax, etc. Receipt of revenues from the fisheries in Gauhati Sub-division which was Rs. 1,23,547.00 in 1964-65 rose to Rs. 2,05,650.00 in 1978-79. The registration fees received in the Nalbari increased from Rs. 32,200/- in 1964-65 to Rs. 1,05,475/- in 1973-74 just after the 1972 Land Ceiling Bill was introduced and then it came down to Rs. 70,419/- in 1975-76. The table below will give an idea about the revenue collected as registration fees in the three Sub-divisions of Kamrup. Revenue earned in Gauhati Sub-division from stamp-duty in 1975, 1977 and 1979 were Rs. 14,02,647.00, Rs. 15,53,475.02 and Rs. 14,70,783.00 respectively.

TABLE - 6.

Registration fees collected in the three Sub-divisions of Kamrup since 1960.

Year	Gauhati	Barpeta	Nalbari
	Registration fees realised	Registration fees collected	Registration fees realised
1960	Rs. 88,955.00	Rs. 15,506.00	—
1965	Rs. —	Rs. 45,345.00	Rs. 28,955.00
1970	Rs. 1,63,414.00	Rs. 47,065.00	Rs. 50,672.00
1975	Rs. 2,83,184.42	Rs. 91,152.00	Rs. 70,419.00
1976	Rs. 2,00,935.09	Rs. 1,30,722.00	Rs. 68,343.00
1977	Rs. 4,17,428.14	Rs. 1,24,147.00	Rs. 61,489.00
1978	Rs. 3,00,995.62	Rs. 1,08,669.00	Rs. 72,071.00
1979	Rs. 3,16,252.02	Rs. 97,478.00	Rs. 73,561.00

The Deputy Commissioner and the Sub-divisional Officer (as the case may be) are responsible for collection of Grazing tax, Fishery revenue (under Revenue Department) Excise Revenue etc.

The Taxation Department in the district of Kamrup is entrusted with the administration of the following taxation legislations - (a) Assam Sales Tax Act, 1947, (b) Assam Finance (Sales Tax) Act, 1956, (c) Assam

Sales of Petroleum, Petroleum Products including Motor Spirit and Lubricant Taxation Act, 1955, d) Central Sales Tax Act, 1955, e) Agricultural Income Tax Act, 1939, (f) Assam Amusement and Betting Tax Act, (g) Assam Professions, Trades, Callings and Employment Taxation Act, (h) Assam Passengers and Goods Taxation Act and (i) Assam Urban Immovable Property Tax Act., (j) Assam Purchase Tax Act.

To implement the above mentioned Acts in the district of Kamrup there are seven Superintendents of Taxes out of which five are posted in the Gauhati Sub-division and one in each of Barpeta and Nalbari Sub-divisions. To help the said Superintendents, there are also 21 (twentyone) Inspectors of Taxes and the number of such Inspectors posted at Gauhati, Barpeta and Nalbari Sub-divisions are 11, 5, and 5 respectively. The work load and responsibilities of the department extended to collection of particulars of purchase and sales from different sources, initiating new assessments, detection of evasion of taxes, collection of Tax dues from the assesseees regularly, maintenance of registers and records, and institution of cases and proceedings in respect of taxation dues.

The Office of the Superintendent of Taxes at Gauhati was started in February, 1948 with jurisdiction extending over Goalpara, Garo-Hills besides Kamrup. Subsequently, separate offices were started for the above two districts. The Unit offices at Barpeta and Nalbari were established in July, 1954. An Assistant Commissioner of Taxes is also functioning at Gauhati (since July, 1960) exercising jurisdiction over all the districts of Lower and Middle Assam. The officer is meant primarily for speedy disposal of appeal case within his jurisdiction. The following table show the collection of taxes under different Taxation Acts in the district from 1952-53 to 1976-77⁸.

8. Source :- 1. Commissioner of Taxes, Assam—Gauhati.
2. Statistical Hand Books by Director of Economics and Statistics, Assam—Gauhati.

TABLE - I
State Taxes and Revenue Collection in Kamrup district. (1952-53 - 1976-77)

	1952-53	1953-54	1954-55	1958-59	1959-60	1969-70	1975-76	1976-77
1. Annual Land Revenue	—	270,9654	23,32,361	31,47,218	30,71,368	—	—	—
2. Annual Excise Revenue	7,79,439	8,09,704	8,12,688	1,33,010	—	—	—	—
3. Collection under the Assam Sales Tax Act.	13,09,656	15,63,563	17,18,597	30,83,538	29,92,178	116 lakhs	168 lakhs	296 lakhs
4. Collection under Assam Amusement & Betting Tax Act.	2,22,991	1,79,322	2,18,941	4,67,667	4,78,010	92 lakhs	141 lakhs	188 lakhs
5. Collection under Motor Spirit & Lubricant Tax Act.	3,68,578	3,71,071	4,13,673	11,43,422	11,42,320	505 lakhs	633 lakhs	692 lakhs
6. Collection under the Profession Tax Act.	41,118	60,465	70,120	1,06,525	1,54,774	22 lakhs	36 lakhs	692 lakhs
7. Collection Agricultural Income Tax	4,47,247	1,22,006	1,68,118	37,038	4,56,592	432 lakhs	468 lakhs	1744 lakhs
8. Carriage Tax	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5 lakhs

Source : Statistical Abstract of Assam.

The sources of Central Government revenue derived in the district are Income Tax, Estate Duty, Gift Tax, Wealth Tax, Expenditure Tax, Central Excise & Land Customs Tax etc. (The realisations under the Central Sales Tax Act, 1956 is done by the Taxation Department of the State).

The Commissioner of Income Tax, Assam, Tripura and Manipur with his headquarter at Shillong is in over-all charge for collection of Income Tax, Gift Tax, Wealth Tax, and Expenditure Tax in the district. He is, however, helped by five Income Tax Officers posted at Gauhati with their separate and exclusive territorial jurisdiction within the Gauhati Income Tax Circle which covers the entire district.

The collection of Estate Duty Tax for this district as well as the rest of the State is done centrally by the Dibrugarh office.

It may be mentioned here that, the Gauhati office was started in the year 1927 with one Income Tax Officer, but with the gradual expansion of business activities, the strength of officers had to be increased. But except all the employees of the N.F. Railway, the State and other Central Government employees are not assessed here. The followings are the figures of revenue collected in the district as per different Taxation Acts (from 1959-60 to 1961-62) which shows an upward trend from year to year. Recent figure is not readily available.

Assessment year	Revenue collected in terms of Lakhs		
	Under Income Tax	Under Wealth Tax	Under Gift Tax
1959-60	17.56	.60	.13
1960-61	24.42	.66	.33
1961.62	27.40	.80	.03

Source : Income Tax Officer, Gauhati.

The Collector of Central Excise and Land Customs is responsible for realisation of CE & LC revenues whose headquarter is in Shillong. He is helped by the Assistant Collector of Central Excise who is posted at Gauhati.

Total revenue collected by this establishment is, however, very negligible.

CHAPTER XII

LAW, ORDER AND JUSTICE

Old-time system :

In ancient times, no record of criminal trial was maintained in the country. In Kamrup, which was a part of ancient Kamrupa and Kamatapur Kingdom, rule of monarchy was prevalent. It 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 divine 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 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 to impaling, hanging, cutting of throats, grinding between two wooden cylinders, sawing as two planks and application of redhot iron-rods or burning hoes to different parts of the body until 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 in any of the districts of Assam. Summary punishment for such offences were, thrusting out of eyes or cutting off of knee-paws. Petty thefts were punished with whipping, and cutting off of nose or ears.

Under the Ahom, minor civil and criminal disputes were decided by *Panchayats* presided over by Choudhuries and *Khel* officers. In case of official indiscipline, the officers could themselves inflict minor corporal punishment. The *Panchayats* in Assam was known as *mels*. "Important cases were tried at the Barphukan's court at Gauhati.....Brahman *Pandits* conversant with the laws of the country were attached to the principal courts. Capital punishments requiring shedding of blood could be inflicted by the order of the monarch alone."

1. S. K. Bhuyan : *Anglo Assamese Relations*, 1949, page 567-8

After taking over of Assam by the British; Mr. Scott, the British Agent for N.E. India, during the course of his administrative re-organisations, continued the *mel* system and other ancient forms of judicial administrations. *Panchayats* were constituted in every *Pargana* and populous village where trials were conducted by local village elders. Choudhuries were empowered to decide civil disputes involving value upto Rs. 100/- and to deal with minor breach of peace. Towards the end of 1826, 3 civil courts were established at Gauhati. The lowest court was that of Munsiff which was presided over by a Rajkhowa. The second court was that of *Sadar Amin* which was empowered to decide appeals from the Munsiff court besides hearing original suits. The 3rd and the highest court, besides having all the powers of the *Sadar Amin*, also was authorised to decide minor criminal cases and receive appeals from *Rajas*, Choudhuries and *Mels*.

In 1824, after occupation of Kamrup by British troops, martial law was declared in lower Assam. As during 1824-28 no native court was empowered to try capital offences, there was a great congestion of murder-cases and undertrial prisoners in Jail. So, on Mr Scott's persuasion, Captain White, the assistant to Mr. Scott in Lower Assam, was authorised to apprehend criminals and execute the functions of Magistrate. Trials were to be conducted in native courts presided over by Captain White at Gauhati, serious cases were to be sent to Mr. Scott, the Commissioner by the Magistrate. Mr. Scott was authorised to inflict capital punishment without any reference to the Government. By Act II of 1835, all the courts and magistrates of Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, and Goalpara were placed under the control and supervision of *Sadar Dewani Adalat* and *Nizamat Adalat* which were established at Gauhati.

After formation of Assam Code in 1832, judicial administration in Assam also was run as per the procedure laid down in the Code which was almost the same with the Bengal Code. But procedure patterned after the Bengal Code was so tiresomely lengthy, corrupt, and complicated that no redress was possible under it without lapse of long time. So a non-regulation system grew up in Assam by necessity and by practice. Under the Pre-British rulers, all complaints were made and heard verbally and all grievances were redressed within a week or even a lesser time. Therefore, the people were not accustomed and willing to file written complaint, pay court-fee, and wait its disposal. So, Mr. Scott, in order to accommodate the people, placed a complaint box in the *Kutchery* where people were required to submit unstamped complaints.

(a) **Incidence of Crimes :**

Kamrup has, since time immemorial been the gateway of Assam. Outsiders in search of fresh fields and pastures new in Assam, have to wage their first battle for survival on the ground of Kamrup before they get a foot-hold in the soil of Assam. Being the largest district both in area and population and being the nerve centre of Assam's political life, Kamrup presents exciting spectacles in the study of crimes. The shifting of Assam's capital from Shillong to Gauhati in Kamrup has, to some extent, complicated the already complex crime pattern of Assam's most problem-ridden district. The rapid expansion of Gauhati and other urban and semi-urban centres, industrialisation, rapidly increasing population with consequent unemployment have contributed to the shooting up of the crimes in the district.

(i) **Varieties of crime :** The growing cosmopolitanism of the district has found its reflection in the sphere of crime also. However, strictly speaking by crimes we understand cognizable cases reported to Police Stations. Thus the more common crime found to be reported to the police in the district mainly include theft, robbery, burglary, dacoity and cases involving stolen property.

From the 'Statistical Accounts of Kamrup' of W. W. Hunter, we learn that in the early British days, serious offences against persons and property in Kamrup were very much negligible. In 1872, there were only one murder case, attempt to murder- 1 case, culpable homicide-3, rape-4, unnatural offences-7, exposure of infants or concealment of birth-3, attempt or abetment of suicide-3, grievous hurt-12, hurt by dangerous weapon-1, kidnapping or abduction-7 and wrongful confinement or attempt to theft or wrongful restrain or application of force against public servant or women-4. Dacoity case was only one and lurking house trespass or burglary were 132 cases only. No serious crime prevailed in the district as in the other parts of Assam and there was no organised base of criminals or any criminal cases.²

Increase of population and entry of immigrants from outside the state however changed the picture during the later periods.

At present, theft is the most universal of crimes in the District, 1917, 1836, and 2153 cases of theft were reported in 1975, 1976 and 1977 respectively. Chargesheets were submitted in 497, 446 and 456 of

these cases and 18, 10 and 11 cases respectively ended in conviction. The rest either ended in acquittal or are still pending. Final reports were submitted in 1286, 1266, and 1349 cases respectively.

Next in number are the burglary cases which may be called 'home' crimes as the methods generally adopted by the burglars are often home-spun and traditional. The most common way is to enter into the premises at the dead of night through holes dug in the earth and to steal valuables while the householders are fast asleep. A study of figures during the three years from 1975 shows that there is an upward trend so far as this crime is concerned. For instance, while in 1975 in all 1435 cases were reported, such reported cases soared to 1673 in 1976 and 1862 in 1977.

The reported cases of dacoity show a sudden down-ward trend after 1976. Thus, while in 1975 the number of such reported cases was 40, in 1976 it was 46. But in 1977 there was only 19 such reported cases. However, this sudden downward trend may ultimately prove illusory. A major cause of concern to the authorities has been the grouping of dacoits in the *char* areas of the district particularly in the Barpeta Sub-division, mostly inhabited by immigrants. In Nalbari and Gauhati Sub-divisions the composite of dacoit-groups cuts across racial, religious and linguistic barriers as such groups are constituted by all classes of persons irrespective of race, religion, or language.

Murder, one of the most serious crimes takes its usual toll in the district. However, considering the size and population of Kamrup, the number is not frightening. In 1975, there were 76 reported cases of murder while the figure came down to 54 in 1976 and 56 in 1977. Murder is the culmination of variety of causes and complex interaction of human emotions and motives. However, gain, monetary or other-wise is its prime driving force. In the recent years a new phenomenon has suddenly presented itself in the form of what may be called "Lovemurders." Quite a few cases in different parts of the district notably in the town of Barpeta and the city of Gauhati, is mentionable boy killing his 'beloved' in broad day-light which shocked the social conscience of the citizens.

The incidence of rioting is quite high in Kamrup. During 1975, 1976, and 1977 some 433, 539 and 617 cases of rioting respectively were reported. Group rivalries augmented from property interest are at the root of this crime.

2. W. W. Hunter : *The Statistical Accounts of Assam*, Reprinted 1975, pages 71-73.

Murder, dacoity and rioting are usually the offences of *char* and waste land areas where interest on land frequently brings in different new entrant classes into conflict amongst themselves.

Of the lesser crimes, notable are robbery, copper wire theft, cases under section 411 I.P.C (receiving stolen property) and misappropriation cases. In 1975 and 1976 there were 25 reported cases of robbery in each year whereas the figure for 1977 was 43. Cases of theft of copper wire were 5, 7 and 29 in 1977, 1976 and 1975 respectively. Cases under section 411 I.P.C. came down from 49 in 1975 to 21 in 1977, the number in 1976 being 29. The figures for cases for misappropriation during 1975, 1976 and 1977 were 25, 26 and 24 respectively.

There have been cases of sex crime, smuggling of contraband opium and illicit liquor, attempted suicide and the like. There were 39 detenus under the D.I.R. in 1975. Sex crime and adulteries generally however remain unreported as the victims are generally mute poor women.

In all, the figure of reported cases during the years 1975, 1976 and 1977 were 7,298, 7,145 and 8,549. Of these 114, 28 and 26 cases ended in conviction and the rest are in different stages of trial and investigation. The crimes figures for 1975, 1976 and 1977 are given in Table 'A' appended to this chapter.

(B) ORGANISATION OF THE POLICE FORCE, MAGISTRACY AND JAIL :

(a) **Police** : The city of Gauhati is the headquarters of the police administration. It is headed by the Superintendent of Police. There are three subdivisions in Kamrup. They are Barpeta, Nalbari, and Gauhati. In each subdivision there is one Additional Superintendent of Police who is the head of the Police administration in the respective subdivision. Besides these, there is another Additional Superintendent of Police for the city of Gauhati. Below the Additional S.P.s there are 6 Deputy Superintendents who assist the S.P. and the Additional S. Ps in the discharge of their duties. The entire district has been subdivided into 6 (six) Police circles headed by one Circle Inspector each. The Police Circles are subdivided into police stations (*thanas*). There are in all 17 (Seventeen) such Police Stations at present. The Police Stations are again subdivided into outposts numbering 45 in total. In the city of Gauhati there are in all 7 Police Stations. These police Stations have been placed under 7 officers-in-charge of the rank of Inspectors.

Functionally the District Police force may be divided into two branches viz., Armed branch and Unarmed branch. The Armed branch

is stationed at the Police Reserve in Gauhati. It is in charge of one Armed Branch Inspector. Below him, there is one Armed Branch sub-Inspector, 15 Armed Branch Assistant sub-Inspectors, 69 Havildars, 36 Nayaks, 24 Lance Nayaks, 12 Buglers, 12 Armourers, 70 Drivers, 2 Attendants and 739 constables. Thus the total strength of District Armed Branch is 981. There is one Reserve sub-Inspector who is called the Reserve Officer. This Reserve Officer with the help of his subordinate staff maintains the records of disposition of Arms and Ammunitions, clothing, kits etc. and deals with discipline, leave, pay and increment of Inspectors and officers below their rank and arrange medical, recreational and welfare facilities for the reserve forces. At present the District Reserve Police is running one L. P. School called "Saughamitra" inside the District Reserve where the children of the Reserve Force are imparted elementary education. All emergency deputations are done from the Reserve Branch. The District Reserve also houses the Magazines.

The unarmed Branch of the Kamrup District Police is also a large force. Besides the Superintendent of Police, there are 4 Addl. Superintendents, 8 Deputy Superintendents, 20 Inspectors, 216 sub-Inspectors, 184 Asstt. Sub-Inspectors, 12 A.S.I Sergeants, 94 Head Constables, 10 Corporals, 9 Lance Corporals and 1,742 Constables. Thus the total strength of the unarmed branch is 23,000.

Intelligence Branch : The district Intelligence Branch which is called as District Special Branch is well organised. This Branch works under overall supervision of the S.P. who is assisted by one Additional Superintendent of Police, a few Deputy Superintendents of Police, Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors of Police and Constables. These men in plain clothes collect political and other informations and keep close watch over the political and social developments so that the problem of law and order may be forcefully combated.

There is a Criminal Investigation Department (C.I.D) wing for the city of Gauhati for the investigation and detection of crime. It is headed by one D.S.P., one Inspector, one Investigation and Detective squad consisting of 2 S. Is. one Dog-squad, one Finger-print squad and the police photographer.

There is one prosecuting Inspector (P.I) in Gauhati Court. He is assisted by 3 S. Is and 4 A.S.Is and a few constables. There is one prosecuting S.I. each in Barpeta and Nalbari courts. The P.I. in Gauhati apart from his prosecuting duties at Gauhati also supervises the work of the P. S. I's at Nalbari and Barpeta.

5th. A. P. Battalion : Gauhati is the Headquarter of the 5th Assam police Battalion which is meant for assisting the regular police force for the maintenance of law and order. The 5th A.P. Battalion is stationed at Kahilipara. It is commanded by one Commanding Officer of the rank of Superintendent of Police. Kahilipara is also the present home of the Assam Police Battalion which is meant for the Darrang District.

Village Defence Organisation : The Superintendent of Police, Kamrup is the District Village Defence officer. There are in all 630 registered and 280 unregistered Village Defence Parties which are formed by volunteers from villages. These parties carry on patrol duties during night and thus assisting the police in maintaining law and preventing crimes.

Civil Defence : The role of Civil Defence in time of national crisis can hardly be overstated. It is, therefore, heartening to record that the Organisation of Civil Defence has made rapid strides in the district of Kamrup. It is to be particularly noted that Gauhati is the only Category I Civil Defence town in Assam. The Deputy Commissioner is the Controller of Civil defence and he is assisted by one whole-time Deputy Controller. In Gauhati there are in all 34 Civil Defence wards headed by one Post-Warden who is an honorary officer from the respective ward. The present number of Civil Defence volunteers in Gauhati is 2,914 against an estimated strength of 2,946.

Home Guards : Home guards play a vital role in the maintenance of law and order and in imparting social service in times of natural and man-made calamities. In Kamrup, there are three Urban Home Guard centres at Gauhati, Nalbari and Barpeta with a total strength of 1,020 volunteers. Like-wise there are 2,750 volunteers recruited to work in the rural areas of the district. Thus at present there are 3,770 Home guard Volunteers in the district of Kamrup. The district Home Guard organisation is headed by the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup, who is assisted by one District Home Guard Commandant and below him some other officers. The Home Guard volunteers assist the regular police force in the maintenance of law and order duties. They are also deployed in times of natural calamities like flood and storm. Home Guard volunteers are also deployed to run public utility services in times of strikes and hartals.

Traffic control : The district of Kamrup possesses the largest number of vehicles in Assam. Naturally traffic control has posed a big problem to the police department, particularly in the capital city of Gauhati. After the shifting of the capital from Shillong, the number of vehicles

plying on the roads of the city has enormously increased. It is therefore in the fitness of things that the district police authorities should pay more attention to the traffic control in the city. Already some major steps have been taken in this direction. Now the Gauhati City Traffic Branch is a separate full-fledged branch. It is headed by one D.S.P. (Traffic). He is assisted by 3 Inspectors, 8 S.Is, 4 A.S.Is, 25 Habilders and 342 Constables. The City Traffic Police has 6 vehicles at its disposal. The traffic police has introduced automatic signal system in 9 road points. Besides, there are 32 manual and 10 hand signal road points. White uniform has been introduced for the Gauhati City Traffic Police. It is a treat for the eye to see the city traffic police in their snow-white uniform moving from one part of the city to the other clearing the traffic problems of the citizens.

Fire Brigade : In Kamrup district there is one main Fire Station at Paltanbazar, Gauhati. There are 9 sub-Fire Stations throughout the district. The head quarters of the State Fire Service Organisations are located at Gauhati and the same is headed by one Fire Service Adviser. The Fire Stations in Kamrup district are under the control of Divisional Officer (West). The Main Fire Station at Paltanbazar is supervised by the Fire Officer of the rank of S.I Police, while the sub-Fire Stations are supervised by one sub-Fire Officer of the rank of A.S.I. In Kamrup district at present there are 18 fire fighting vehicles. Besides, being the headquarters of the Kamrup-district Police Administration, Gauhati is also the capital of Assam. Hence, besides the head office of the Assam Police (I.G.Ps. Officer), the headquarters of the following wings of Assam police are also located at Gauhati :

- (1) Criminal Investigation Department.
- (2) Special Branch.
- (3) Border Police.
- (4) Assam Police Radio Organisation.
- (5) Forensic Science Laboratory.
- (6) Bureau of Investigation for Economic Offences.
- (7) Anti-corruption Branch.
- (8) Vigilance Cell.
- (9) State Fire Service Organisation.
- (10) Chief Controller of Village Defence Organisation.
- (11) 5th Assam Police Battalion.
- (12) 10th Assam Police Battalion.

Criminal Investigation Department : Located at Lachitnagar, the C.I.D. is headed by a Deputy Inspector General of Police who is assisted by a Special Superintendent of Police and some other subordinate officers.

The C.I.D. Dog-squad has been thoroughly reorganised. From 3, the number of dogs has been increased to 21. Some pups are also now under training. The dogs are utilised in the work of crime investigation.

Special Branch : The headquarters of the Special Branch is located at Kahilipara, Gauhati. It is under the administrative control of a D. I. G. of Police who is assisted by three S. Ps. at the headquarters and three at the zone level at Gauhati, Tezpur and Jorhat.

Border Police : With its headquarters at Gauhati, this organisation started functioning from November, 1974, under the charge of the Deputy Inspector of Police. Its main function is to check infiltration of foreign nationals and to prevent smuggling.

Assam Police Radio Organisation : The Assam Police Radio Organisation with its headquarter at Gauhati has altogether 452 wireless stations in Assam. Communication plays a vital role in the fight against crime and disorder as it increases the overall efficiency of the police and enlarges its ability to undertake higher assignments. A dependable and highly efficient communication system is a must for the police force. A Very High Frequency (V. H. F.) communication has been extended to all the districts in the State and 20 V. H. F. towers have been erected through out Assam for this purpose. Substantial progress has also been made in regard to tele-printer communication at the district level. All the important district headquarters and some of the sub-divisional headquarters also have been linked with the State headquarters through a net work of teleprinter link.

Forensic Science Laboratory : The Forensic Science Laboratory at Gauhati has made rapid strides in all directions during the last few years. At present it has got all the eight important divisions viz. Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Toxicology, Serology, Ballistics, Questioned documents and Photography which are necessary for thorough and systematic examination of crime exhibits.

It is indeed a matter of pride that the Forensic Science Laboratory is not only one of the best laboratories in the country but is shaping as one of the best laboratories of the kind in south-East Asia also.

Women Police : The city of Gauhati has the benefit of service of women police. In Assam, the State Government had in 1967 sanctioned, as an experimental measure, enlistment of women against the posts of one Assistant Sub-Inspector and 12 Constables. One A.S.I. and 8 Constables were actually recruited and after undergoing training at the Police Training College, Dergaon, they have been posted to Gauhati City.

The Police Commission expressed the view that the Women Police would be useful in Assam since considerable progress had been made in the state in the education of women, the 'purdah' system had almost been non-existent and in many regions of the state women occupied an important position in the social structure. It, therefore, suggested for gradual expansion of the women police section of the force. At present the total strength of women police in the Force is 5 sub-Inspectors, 3 Asst. sub-Inspectors, 8 Head Constables and 21 Constables. Of them, 21 are posted in Kamrup. They are employed mainly for (a) dealing with Childrens Act, (b) handling of women victims in sex and other offences and in search, interrogation, escort, custody etc, of women prisoners (c) duties in connection with demonstrations by women and for duties in religious and other places where large gathering of women are expected, (d) duty on road intersections near girls, and children schools and (d) frisking at airports.

Public Relations : Public relations in Police service entails projection of a favourable image of the Force through achievement of good will, trust, confidence and esteem of the general public and enlistment of their co-operation. In a democratic set up, the strength and vitality of the police organisation is entirely dependent upon the quantum of support and approbation forth-coming from the general public.

A Public Relations Cell has been opened in the office of the Inspector General of police in Gauhati and an officer has been inducted to head the Cell. Besides, publishing booklets and folders on police-public relations, prompt and accurate information is being furnished to the press by this Cell.

Welfare Activities : The necessity of welfare activities for police personnel need not be emphasised. The State has undertaken welfare measures to provide basic amenities of life such as housing, medical aid, educational, recreational and other facilities conducive to the efficient and high morals of the force.

The police personnel in Kamrup district have been provided with the medical facilities. Hospitals have been established in some centres. Assistance from the Police Welfare Funds is provided to meet the expenses in connection with the medical facilities in the form of specialised medicines, drugs, tonics etc. which the Govt. dispensaries do not provide and for which cost reimbursement is not available. A Central Hospital is running at Dergaon with provision for indoor beds. Six qualified medical officers and one lady doctor have been appointed permanently for this hospital to provide treatment to the deserving personnel and their families free of cost. A maternity centre is also running at Dergaon for the families of the policemen. A hospital with ten indoor beds is also running at Gauhati. This hospital is being supervised by two doctors and a number of subordinate staff including nurses and pharmacists.

L. P. and M. E. School for the children of the police families are running in almost all the battalion headquarters in Kamrup. These schools are being financed by unit funds, supplemented by Govt. grants.

With a view to inculcating in policemen a sense of sportsmanship and *esprit de corps*, games and sports activities are organised. The 5th A. P. Battalion maintains a regular Foot-ball team. Cinema shows are arranged at the headquarters of Police Battalions on week ends with own film projectors. Radios, libraries and reading rooms have also been provided.

The police families in Gauhati are given chances for utilising their spare time on jobs like sewing, knitting and weaving at the family welfare centres. They are paid for their work at the Govt. approved rates.

Recently a Lady Welfare Officer had been appointed in the office of the Inspector General of Police, Assam, Gauhati, to organise police welfare activities effectively.

Bureau of Investigation for Economic Offences : The Govt. of Assam have established a bureau of enquiring into economic offences such as evasion of taxes, circulation of black money, malpractices in industrial concerns, malpractices in connection with export and import, evasion of forest royalty, evasion of excise duties on tea, Jute, etc. One Deputy Inspector General is in charge of the bureau. It has started functioning from 21.11.76 drawing a skeleton staffs from the Police, the Tax, the Transport and the Excise Departments.

The Bureau detected 27 cases in 1975-76, 66 cases in 1976-77 and 17 cases during 1977-78.

Training : The Police Training College, Recruit Training School and Armed Training Centres are located at Dergaon in Sibsagar district. In Gauhati there are however two training centres (1) Assam Police Radio Organisation Training School at Jalukbari and (2) Elementary Fire Fighting Training School at Maligaon.

Assam Police Radio Organisation Training School : Training in four grades from basic to advance, ranging from one year to six months is imparted in this school. As regards standard, this institute can compete with any institute in India. During 1977 altogether 454 trainees were given training out of which 32 hailed from the States of Meghalaya, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and the North Eastern Electrical Power Corporation. During the year 1978, 9 students from Bihar, 4 from Himachal Pradesh and 4 from Nagaland are receiving training.

Central Reserve Police : The headquarter of C. R. P. also situates at Gauhati on Shillong-Gauhati Road beyond Khanapara on the western outskirts of Gauhati.

Railway Police : The function of the Railway police is protection of railways and detection of cases and maintenance of law and order within the Railway jurisdiction. It also helps the Railway authorities in execution of their functions. The headquarters of the Railway police is located at Haflong in N. C. Hills, District. In Kamrup district there are three police stations and three outposts.

(b) **Magistracy :**

As per provisions of the Code of Criminal procedure 1973 (Act-II of 1974) there are two classes of Magistrates, i.e, Judicial Magistrates and Executive Magistrates. For the district of Kamrup there is a Chief Judicial Magistrate at Gauhati. There are four Judicial Magistrates of the first class and one Judicial Magistrate of the second class at Gauhati. The Judicial Magistrates try criminal cases and they have no executive functions. The Chief Judicial Magistrate is subordinate to the Sessions Judge and the Judicial Magistrates, subject to the control of the Sessions Judge are subordinates to the Chief Judicial Magistrate. The Chief Judicial Magistrate may make rules or give special orders as to the distribution of works among the Judicial Magistrates subordinate to him.

For the Barpeta Sub-division there is one Sub-divisional Judicial Magistrate and two Judicial Magistrates of the first class. At Nalbari, there is one Sub-divisional Judicial Magistrate, one Judicial Magistrate of the first class and one Judicial Magistrate of the second class. The Munsiff at Nalbari as a Judicial Magistrate also tries criminal cases three days in a week.

The Executive Magistrates are headed by the District Magistrate of Kamrup at Gauhati. To assist him there are two Additional District Magistrates and a number of Executive Magistrates. There is one Sub-divisional Magistrate at Barpeta and another at Nalbari. The Executive Magistrates do not try criminal cases except under a few sections of Cr. P.C., their duties are administrative or executive in nature. Maintenance of public order and tranquillity is one of their duties. The Executive Magistrates are appointed by the State Government whereas the presiding officers of the Courts of Judicial Magistrates are appointed by the High Court.

(c) Jails and Lock-ups:

Location of Jails etc: There are three jails in Kamrup district; viz., (i) District Jail, Gauhati (ii) District Jail, Barpeta and (iii) District Jail, Nalbari. The District Jail at Gauhati is one of the oldest jails in the State. It is situated at Fancy Bazar area of the city over a plot of land measuring 65 bighas. The staff of the jail at present includes one Superintendent, 1 Jailor, 7 Assistant Jailors, 2 Health Officers, one Pharmacist, 5 craft instructors, 1 teacher, 55 Male Warders and 2 Female Warders. There is a separate enclosure for female prisoners. There is one Jail hospital inside the Jail with two Doctors and one Pharmacist. Ailing prisoners are treated in the Jail hospital, but serious patients are sent to the Gauhati Medical College Hospital.

Most of the police stations maintain their own lock-ups within the P. S. building. There are separate female lock-ups in some of the police-stations of the district.

The Nalbari District Jail is situated in the town of Nalbari over a plot of land measuring 30 bighas. This jail was established in the year 1975. The staff of the jail includes 1 Superintendent, 2 Jailors, 1 Assistant Jailor, 1 Health Officer, 1 Pharmacist, 1 Craft Instructor, 1 Teacher, 17 Male warders, and 2 Female warders. Inside the jail there is one hospital where ailing patients are treated.

The Barpeta jail was established in the town of Barpeta in 1970 over a plot of land measuring 300 bighas. The staffs of the jail include 1 Superintendent, 1 Jailor, 2 Assistant Jailors, 1 part-time Health Officer, 1 Pharmacist, 12 Male Warders and 2 female Warders. There is a jail hospital inside the jail where ailing prisoners are treated. The daily average population of Gauhati jail was 1388.2, 749.34 and 726.02 in the years 1975, 1976 and 1977 respectively. The number of jail mortality in the same years was 42, 12 and 7 respectively. The total population of Gauhati jail was 730 males and 51 females as on 1.1.76 against a registered capacity of 690.

The daily average population of Nalbari jail was 70.64, 99.45 and 107.41 in the year 1975, 1976, 1977 respectively while the jail mortality figure for the year 1977 is only one. The total population of Nalbari jail was 231 males and 2 females as on 1.1.76 against a registered capacity of 150. The daily average population of Barpeta jail was 266.70, 261.30 and 321.99 in the years 1975, 1976 and 1977 respectively. During the same years the number of jail mortality was 3, 1 and 2 respectively. The total population of Barpeta jail as on 1.1.76 was 431 males and 9 females against a registered capacity of 108.

Prison Discipline: The respective Superintendents of Jails are vested with powers under the Prisons Act to deal with violation of prison discipline. He is assisted by Jailors, Assistant Jailors and the subordinate staff in this regard. Unlocking, counting and bathing of prisoners, parade, warding at day time, washing of cloths, looking after sanitation and hygiene etc., are carried out according to the rules laid down in the Assam Jail Manual.

Welfare of Prisoners: The District Jails have Prisoners Welfare Committees headed by respective Superintendent of Jail where the prisoners are also represented by their elected representatives. The Government have adopted various measures for the welfare of the prisoners. The District Jails at Gauhati and Nalbari have one jail school each with one teacher each, where training in the three R's is imparted to juvenile prisoners in particular and to other illiterate prisoners in general. District Jail, Gauhati has Bamboo & Cane, Carpentry, Smithy, Spinning & Tailoring Industries under the Craft Instructors for imparting Vocational Training to prisoners. The District Jail at Nalbari has a weaving industry under one Weaving Instructor for imparting training to the prisoners. Long-term prisoners engaged in these Jail Industries are paid daily wages according to their out-put, which are deposited in Post Office Savings Bank Accounts opened in their names and are handed over to them when they are set free.

All the three jails have facilities for indoor games for recreation of the prisoners.

Recently a society for prison welfare under the name and style of 'The Prisoner's Aid and Welfare Society' has been registered at Gauhati to look after social and economic rehabilitation of ex-convicts. The other objective of the society is to help the poor under-trials, their families and guardianless children of the convicts.

Board of Visitors : In all the three jails there are Boards of Visitors. The Board for Gauhati Jail is constituted of Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup, Chief Judicial Magistrate, Gauhati, and four male and one female non-official members.

The Boards for Nalbari and Barpeta jails consist of respective Sub-divisional Officers and sub-divisional Judicial Magistrates, along with two male and one female non-official members for each Sub-division.

Members of the Board visit the jail quarterly and the Board sits once every fortnight. Members at the time of visiting go round the jail and hear complaints from prisoners. They record their suggestions in the Visiting book which are forwarded to the Government with comments from the Jail Superintendent.

(c) JUDICIARY :

(a) History of the Judiciary: Separation of executive and Judicial functions :

Assam was annexed by the British in 1826. During the early part of British administration in the Brahmaputra valley, the ordinary criminal and civil duties were performed by councils composed of local gentry called *Panchayats*. More heinous cases were tried by the Commissioner's Assistants with the aid of a Panchayat. The Assistant also disposed of appeals from the Panchayats and from their decisions both appellate and original, a further appeal lay to the Commissioner (History of Assam by Sir Edward Gait). Gradually the British system of law and administration was introduced in the Brahmaputra valley. Act II of 1835 defined the legal position of the districts of Kamrup, Goalpara, Darrang and Nowgong. All functionaries employed in the districts were placed under the control and superintendence of the Sadar Adalats in civil and criminal matters and of the Bengal Board of Revenue in revenue matters. When Upper Assam was resumed in 1838, the provisions of the Act, were extended

to Upper Assam. Two districts, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur were created after resumption of Upper Assam. In 1842 Sadiya and Matak territories were added to Lakhimpur District.

In 1837, a set of Rules known as the Assam Code was enacted for the regulation of procedure in civil and criminal cases. In revenue matters, however, the officers were directed to conform as nearly as circumstances permitted to follow the Bengal Regulation.

The Assam Code of 1837 was superseded by the Codes of Civil Procedure and Criminal Procedure in 1860 and the Penal Code came into force in 1862.

In 1861, the designation of the Deputy Commissioner who assisted the Commissioner and whose powers were that of a District and Sessions Judge was changed to Judicial Commissioner. In 1874 Assam was constituted as a Chief Commissioner's province and after a few years the Judicial Commissioner was invested with the powers of a Commissioner of Division to assist the Chief Commissioner in administrative matters.

The Judicial Commissioner then became the Judge-Commissioner of the Brahmaputra valley. In 1903 a separate whole-time judge was appointed who later became the District and Sessions Judge of the Assam Valley districts.

Till 1948, the province of Assam which included the present states of Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya and the Union Territories of Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh was under the jurisdiction of the High Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal which was established in 1862 under terms of the High Courts Act of 1861. The High Court inherited all the functions of the Supreme Court and the Sadar Diwani and Sadar Nizamat Adalats.

On attainment of independence in 1947, the Assam High Court Order 1948, was passed by the Governor General of India and the High Court of Assam was established on the 5th April, 1948. Under the provisions of the order, the High Court of Judicature at Fort William (Calcutta High Court) ceased to have jurisdiction over Assam from the date of the establishment of the High Court of Assam. When the Constitution of India came into force in 1950, the jurisdiction of the High Court of Assam was extended to the District Council Courts and the Regional Council Courts by orders of the Government of Assam under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution.

The Naga Hills District was separated from Assam and the State of Nagaland was formed under the State of Nagaland Act, 1962, and under the provisions of the Act a common High Court was established and the name of the High Court of Assam was changed to High Court of Assam and Nagaland. Thereafter, under the provisions of the North-Eastern Areas (Re-organisation) Act, 1971, another new state i.e. the State of Meghalaya came into existence with the areas of the erstwhile districts of Khasi and Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills of Assam. By the same Act, the Mizoram district of Assam was made a Union Territory and NEFA was made the Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh. The Union Territories of Manipur and Tripura were also made States and the Judicial Commissioner's Court of Manipur and Tripura was abolished. The existing High Court of Assam and Nagaland and a common High Court for the five states of Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura came into existence to be known as the Gauhati High Court (High Court of Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura). The Jurisdiction of the Gauhati High Court was also extended to the Union Territories at Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram.

The principal seat of the Gauhati High Court is at Gauhati in the district of Kamrup. There are circuit Benches of the High Court in all the capital towns of the other states within its jurisdiction, namely, Kohima in Nagaland, Shillong in Meghalaya, Imphal in Manipur and Agartala in Tripura. The Judges sit in single or Division benches in Circuit from time to time. The total strength of Judges is eight including the Chief Justice. The Gauhati High Court is in charge of administration of justice throughout the whole of North-Eastern Region of India. It may be mentioned herein that different areas under the common High Court have different laws. In certain areas even general Central Laws are not applicable. In Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, and Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills districts of Assam, the spirit of the Codes of Criminal Procedure and Civil Procedures is applicable. In these areas various customary laws are in force.

In 1874 two Judgeships were created in Assam, one for the Assam Valley Districts with Headquarters at Gauhati and the other for the Surma Valley Districts with Headquarters at Sylhet (now in Bangladesh). The Judgeship of the Assam Valley Districts was divided into two judgeships in 1948 i.e. the court of the District and Sessions Judge of the Lower Assam districts of Goalpara, Kamrup, United Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Darrang and Nowgong with Headquarters at Gauhati and the Court of the District and Session Judge of the Upper Assam districts of Lakhimpur

and Sibsagar and Cachar with Headquarters at Jorhat. For Cachar a separate District and Sessions Court was established at Silchar after a few years. In 1967, one District and Session Judge's Court was established at each of the District Headquarters. At present the territorial jurisdiction of the District and Session Judge at Gauhati extends to Kamrup district only. Till 1967 an Additional District and Sessions-Judge for the Lower Assam districts was also appointed with headquarters at Gauhati. There was an Assistant District and Sessions Judge also at Gauhati. All the Judges used to hold circuit courts at Tezpur, Nowgong, Dhuburi and Shillong.

Till 1964, like other districts in Assam, in Kamrup also the same set of officials exercised judicial and executive functions. The District Magistrate used to be in charge of control and supervision of detection of crimes and investigation and prosecution of state cases. The District Magistrate was assisted by a number of Magistrates who exercised both Executive and Judicial powers.

Steps for separation of the judiciary from the executive was first taken in the year 1964. A scheme for the purpose was first introduced in the districts of Kamrup and Lakhimpur with effect from 26.1.64. Under the Scheme the entire administration of both civil and criminal justice was placed under the control of the High Court and the Judicial Magistrates placed under the control of the High Court were relieved of their executive duties which were to be done by the Executive Magistrates. The Judicial Magistrates were entrusted with judicial work only. Accordingly Judicial Magistrates were posted at Gauhati, Barpeta and Nalbari and they were under the control of the High Court.

With the coming into force of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (Act 11 of 1974) with effect from 1st April, 1974, separation of the Judiciary from the Executive has been completed in accordance with the provisions of the said Act in Assam excepting the Hills Districts of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills. It may be mentioned that the new Criminal Procedure Code of 1973 was enacted by Parliament with the clear object of separation of the Judiciary from the Executive.

(b) **Organisation of civil and criminal Courts :** As stated earlier, a separate High Court for Assam was established in the year 1948. The Gauhati High Court's permanent seat is at Gauhati. The High Court exercises powers entrusted on it by the Constitution of India and other

central and local laws in the both civil and criminal jurisdiction over the Courts of the District and Sessions Judge. The Court of the District and Sessions Judge for the district of Kamrup is at Gauhati.

The District Judge exercises various powers under the central and local Acts and Regulation for administration of civil justice within his jurisdiction. Appeals lie to the District Judge from original decree of Assistant District Judges where the valuation of the unit is not more than Rs. 15,000.00.

The Sessions Judge held court in circuit at Nalbari and Barpeta. There are two Assistant District Judges at Gauhati. Recently one Assistant District Judge has been posted at Barpeta. Assistant District Judges have original and appellate jurisdiction. They hear and dispose of appeals from decrees passed by the Munsiffs. They try original suits which are beyond the pecuniary jurisdiction of the Munsiffs and their pecuniary jurisdiction is unlimited. There are two Munsiff courts at Gauhati and their pecuniary jurisdiction is upto Rs. 5000.00 only. The Sadar Munsiff also acts as a judge of the Small Causes Court. There are two other Munsiffs' court in Kamrup, one at Barpeta and the other at Nalbari. The Munsiff at Nalbari sits three days a week as Magistrate for trial of criminal cases.

The Civil Courts and offices which are subordinate to the High Court are guided by civil Rules and orders issued by the authority of the High Court. The Officers are members of the Assam Judicial Service. The control of the civil judiciary remains under the direct control and supervision of the High Court.

The District judge of Kamrup is also the Sessions judge of Kamrup. He has all the powers, original, appellate and provisional under the provisions of the code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. So also, the Assistant District Judges are invested with the powers of the Assistant Sessions Judge. The Assistant Sessions Judges try all sessions cases transferred to them by the Sessions Judge. The Sessions Judge can hear appeals from the judgments of the Assistant Sessions Judges. An appeal against a conviction on a trial held by a Magistrate of the second class may be heard and disposed of by an Assistant Sessions Judge if such appeal is made over to him by Session Judge by general or special order or as the High Court may, by Special order, direct him to hear. The Sessions Judge also exercises powers of revision under the provisions of sections 397/399 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

The Magistrates exercise powers as conferred on them under the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (Act 11 of 1974).

There are a number of Executive Magistrates headed by the District Magistrate at Gauhati. There are also Additional District Magistrates and *sadar* Subdivisional Magistrate at Gauhati. In the Subdivisional Headquarters of Barpeta and Nalbari there are besides the Subdivisional Magistrate other Executive Magistrates. The Executive Magistrates in the Subdivisions are subordinate to the Subdivisional Magistrate, subject however, to the general control of the District Magistrate. The Executive Magistrates are appointed by the State Government and the presiding officers of the courts of Judicial Magistrates and the Session Judge are appointed by the High Court. The Judicial Magistrates and the Executive Magistrates exercise their powers as defined by the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.

Panchayati Adalat : The Assam Panchayati Raj Act contains provisions for establishment of *Panchayati Adalats* for trial of petty civil and criminal cases. But upto now no such *Panchayat Adalat* has been legally established in the district of Kamrup.

(c) **Nature of cases and their numbers etc. :** As will appear from Table "A" appended to this chapter, Robbery, Burglary, Dacoity, Theft, Murder, Misappropriation, and cases involving stolen property are the major offences committed within the district. Apart from offences punishable under the Indian Penal Code, a large number of cases punishable under the local laws also came up for trial. Prohibition has been enforced in Kamrup District and consumption and sale of intoxicating liquor is prohibited. Many cases under the prohibitory Acts also came up before the Courts. Varieties of crimes committed in the district have been described in earlier section of this chapter.

Prosecution in criminal cases is conducted by the Public Prosecutor. He is assisted by an Additional Public Prosecutor and some Assistant Prosecutors appointed by the state Government under the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code. There is also a batch of government lawyers in the district and sub-divisional head quarters of Kamrup to assist the Courts.

A number of cases involving public servants for commission of offences punishable under the Prevention of Corruption Act also came up before the courts. There are two Special Judges' courts at Gauhati for trial of offences under the aforesaid Act.

The number of Sessions cases instituted and disposed of during the years 1975, 1976 and 1977 in the district of Kamrup was as follows :—

Year	No. of cases instituted during the year.	disposed of during the year
1975	94	100
1976	140	85
1977	192	130

It appears that there has been a gradual increase in the number of sessions triable cases in Kamrup. There is marked increase in the number of criminal cases in Gauhati Sub-division as will appear from the table below :

Criminal cases in Gauhati Sub-division in 1975, 1976 and 1977.

year	Pending at commencement of the year	Instituted during the year	Disposed of during the year	Total pending at the end of the year
1975	1,948	1625	2,793	1,773
1976	1,773	4,627	3,040	3,360
1977	3,360	4,975	3,493	4,842

The number of civil suits and appeals instituted during the three years 1975, 1976 and 1977 in the civil courts in Kamrup was as follow :

(1) Original

Year	Pending at commencement of the year	Instituted during the year	Disposed of during the year
1975	3,864	2,815	2,408
1976	4,271	1,829	1,954
1977	4,016	2,519	2,479

(II) Appeals

Year	Pending at commencement of the year	Instituted during the year	Disposed of during the year
1975	220	150	117
1976	239	193	139
1977	293	172	123

The largest number of cases filed in the High Court are writ petitions under Article 226 of the Constitution. But due to restrictions imposed during the Emergency the number of such petitions came down in 1976 and 1977. 718 petitions were filed in 1975 but the number came down to 377 in 1977.

The number of cases and appeals filed in and disposed of by the Gauhati High Court during 1975—77 was as follows :—

(civil) First Appeals

Year	Filed	Disposed of
1975	64	8
1976	150	17
1977	56	10

(civil) Second Appeals

Year	Filed	Disposed of	(total) pending
1975	164	87	429
1976	171	103	497
1977	207	97	604

(civil) Misc. Appeals (second)

year	Filed	Disposed of	(total) pending
1975	16	15	36
1976	25	17	44
1977	13	21	26

(civil) Misc. Appeals (First)

year	Filed	Disposed of
1975	59	14
1976	70	26
1977	72	24

Civil Revisions

Year	Filed	Disposed of	(total) Pending
1975	284	124	357
1976	187	105	439
1977	148	239	351

Letters patent Appeals

Year	Filed	Disposed of	(Total) pending
1975	23	21	29
1976	10	15	24
1977	6	15	15

Review

Year	Filed	Disposed of	(total) pending
1975	5	4	4
1976	2	2	4
1977	4	3	5

Civil Rules

years	Filed	Disposed of	total pending
1975	718	696	1,588
1976	461	656	1,393
1977	377	343	1,456

Original cases (Gauhati Branch)

year	Filed	Disposed of	Total pending
1975	175	113	396
1976	130	272	254
1977	169	89	334

Criminal Appeals

year	Filed	Disposed of
1975	201	112
1976	175	157
1977	137	141

Criminal Revisions

Year	Filed	Disposed of
1975	234	152
1976	225	125
1977	223	121

Criminal References

Year	Referred	Disposed of
1975	12	8
1976	13	22
1977	8	24

Criminal Misc. Cases

Year	Filed	Disposed of
1975	115	32
1976	73	33
1977	115	93

(D) Revenue Courts and Labour Courts :

Various Revenue Courts are constituted under the Assam Land Revenue Regulation. These Revenue Courts in addition to the other Civil Courts decide the disputes or claims relating to some revenue matters. The Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, Extra-Assistant Commissioner, Settlement Officer, Assistant Settlement Officer, Sub-Deputy Collector or Executive Magistrate hold courts to dispose various revenue matters within the limits of their local jurisdiction.

The appeals against the orders of the Revenue Officers lie as follows (i) to the Board of Revenue, from the orders passed by the Deputy Commissioner, Settlement Officer or Survey Officer, (ii) to the Deputy Commissioner, from orders of the Sub-divisional Officer, Assistant Commissioners, Extra Assistant Commissioner and Sub-Deputy Collectors, (iii) to Settlement Officer from orders passed by the Assistant Settlement Officer, (iv) to Survey Officer from orders passed by an Assistant Survey Officer.

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 State of Assam, Nagaland, and Meghalaya. Besides these Labour Courts there are industrial tribunals to which appeals lie from the orders of the Labour Court.

(E) Legal Profession and Bar Associations :

Before the Advocates Act, 1961, came into force the legal practitioners consisted of Barristers, Advocates, Pleaders and *Mukhtars*. Pleaders

and *Mukhtars* were not eligible to practice in the High Court. *Mukhtars* practised in the criminal courts. Legal vocationaries other than Advocates and Barristers evolved as Advocates, had to take a licence valid for one year. Under the Advocates Act, 1961, only one class of legal practitioners i.e. Advocates is enrolled. Some Pleaders and *Mukhtars* who did not enrol themselves as Advocates under the Act still continue to practice as Pleaders and *Mukhtars*.

The Head quarters of the Bar Council of Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura is situated at Gauhati. The Bar Council enrolls eligible persons as Advocates. Standards of professional conduct and etiquette for Advocates are set by Rules framed by the Bar Council of India. Disciplinary matters regarding Advocates are dealt with by the State Bar Council and for that purpose there is a Disciplinary Committee of the State Bar Council.

An independent Bar free to manage its own affairs is most essential for the maintenance of Rule of Law. The influence of the Bar in moulding public opinion in socio-political matters is great. It is apposite to mention here that Gauhati has an alert Bar which takes active interest in matters involving the nation and the State in particular. A large number of eminent lawyers of Gauhati took active part in the freedom movement by giving up their lucrative practice and went to Jail at the call of the Father of the Nation. Some of them became top political leaders of the State.

There are two Bar Associations at Gauhati, (I) The High Court Bar Association and (II) Lawyers Association, Gauhati.

High Court Bar Association :

The Assam High Court (now the Gauhati) was constituted on 5.4.1948. Some Advocates who practiced in the Calcutta High Court came to Gauhati to practice in Assam High Court. All the Advocates practising in the Assam High Court held a meeting on 13.6.48 and decided to form a Bar Association for the Advocates of Assam. This meeting attended by 29 Advocates, by a resolution formed the "Assam High Court Bar Association" Late Fakaruddin Ali Ahmed who became the President of India in 1974 presided over the meeting and he was elected the President of the Association. The High Court Bar Association has no building of its own but it has been allowed to use three rooms of the High Court building free of rent. The office bearers of the Association are elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Association. The Association has a good library. The State Government also made grant of Rs.10,000.00 in 1959 and another Rs.7000.00 in 1961 for purchase of

law books. It also received some valuable law books and journals donated by individual members. The members are to pay Rs.150.00 as admission fee at the time of admission and a monthly subscription at a rate fixed by the Association from time to time. At present there are about 150 members of the Association. The Association has a benevolent fund to give aid to the needy members of their Association.

The Lawyers Association, Gauhati : The Lawyers Association, Gauhati, is perhaps the oldest Bar Association in Assam. No exact date or year can now be ascertained as to when the Bar Library at Gauhati was started as no records are available. A list of members of the Gauhati Bar Library for the year 1903 shows that there were 14 members in the Bar of Gauhati up to October of that year. From a Circular Book of 1913 it appears that the body of legal practitioners of Gauhati was known as the Bar Association of Gauhati. But in 1918 the name was changed to Gauhati Pleaders Association. This name continued till 1926 when the name changed to Lawyers Association, Gauhati. Presumably, as Barristers, Advocates, Pleaders and *Mukhtars* were members of the Association, the name of the Association was changed to Lawyers' Association to embrace all categories of legal practitioners.

It appears from the available records that the first Bar Library house was constructed at Gauhati in 1881 on a Government plot of land near the Deputy Commissioner's Court. This house was pulled down in 1896 and another house was built on the old site. Several wings were added to the house in 1924. As number of members increased, several attempts were made to have a larger and commodious building constructed by the Association but due to paucity of funds new constructions could not be started before 1959. The construction of the present two storied R.C.C building of Association was started in 1959 by raising subscriptions from the members. The affairs of the Association are run under a set of rules adopted on 15.9.41. The office bearers of the Association are elected every year at the Annual General Meeting of the Association. The Association maintains a good Library of law books, law reports and journals. The present number of members of the Association is about 350 some of them are also members of the High Court Bar Association.

There are also Bar Associations at Barpeta and Nalbari. The Barpeta Bar Association is one of the oldest Associations in Assam. The Bar Association at Nalbari was formed in 1955 with six members. Now it has about 30 members.

Recently a Junior Lawyer's Association besides the Petition Writers Association and Stamp Vendor's Association also has come up.

Table "A"

3 Years crime figure, for 1975, 1976, 1977 in the District of Kamrup

	ALL CRIMES			ROBBERY			BURGLARY			DACOITY		
	1975	1976	1977	1975	1976	1977	1975	1976	1977	1975	1976	1977
Cases Reported	7296	7145	8549	25	25	43	1435	1673	1862	40	46	19
C. S. Submitted	2323	3338	2163	9	9	10	274	301	350	19	12	3
Convicted	114	28	26	0	0	0	17	6	5	1	0	0
Pending Trial	2003	2201	2111	0	9	10	243	288	343	18	11	3
F. R. True	3074	3631	3611	8	9	5	1063	1304	1290	12	18	1
F.M.M.L. Etc.	3337	1043	1237	8	9	6	98	54	53	3	3	0
Pending Investigation	64	133	1533	0	9	22	0	14	169	6	13	15
Acquitted	204	109	31	1	0	0	14	7	2	0	1	0
	Theft			Copper Wire Theft			U/S 411 I.P.C.			Murder		
Cases Reported	1917	1836	2153	29	7	5	49	29	21	76	54	56
C.S. Submitted	497	446	458	4	2	4	40	19	20	38	21	17
Convicted	18	10	11	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	0	0
Acquitted	29	18	8	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Pending Trial	450	418	439	4	1	4	33	19	20	37	21	17
F.R. True	1286	1266	1349	22	4	0	6	9	1	27	9	2
M.F.M.L. Etc.	123	123	147	0	0	0	3	1	0	1	3	2
Pending Investigation	11	1	199	3	1	1	0	0	0	10	21	35
	Murder for Gain			Rioting			Other Offences			Other Acts		
Cases Reported	0	0	0	433	539	617	426	385	355	1804	2514	3394
C. S. Submitted	0	0	0	181	220	194	249	249	182	991	1048	928
Convicted	0	0	0	4	0	0	38	3	2	29	9	8
Acquitted	0	0	0	27	12	3	186	297	180	98	62	18
Pending Trial	0	0	0	157	208	191	124	97	59	864	977	903
F. R. True	0	0	0	130	133	107	44	25	18	870	773	793
M.F.M.L.	0	0	0	122	175	155	9	14	96	931	651	854
Pending Investigation	0	0	0	0	11	161				12	42	818
	Misappropriation			D.I.R.								
Case Reported	26	26	24	39	10	0						
C. S. Submitted	4	8	1	17	3	0						
Convicted	0	0	0	2	0	0						
Acquitted	0	0	0	8	1	0						
Pending Trial	4	8	1	7	2	0						
F.R. True	5	5	4	21	6	0						
M.F.M.L. Etc.	3	0	2	1	0	0						
Pending Investigation	13	13	17	0	1	0						

CHAPTER XIII

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

(1) PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT :

The Public Works Department in Assam came into being in 1861 along with the creation of the Assam Circle under the Superintending Engineer. This officer was vested with the powers of the Chief Engineer and he acted as the Secretary to the Commissioner 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.

Importance given to construction works under the First Five-Year Plan and some massive flood control projects taken up during the early fifties led to the bifurcation of the Public Works Department on January 30, 1956, into two wings, the Public Works Department (Roads and Buildings Wing) and the Public Works Department (Embankment and Drainage wing). At a later stage, the two wings were converted into separate Departments and placed under separate Chief Engineers who acted as the technical as well as the administrative heads of the respective Departments. The Public Works Department (Roads and Buildings Wing) deals with roads, bridges and buildings and the Public Works Department (Embankment and Drainage Wing) dealt with embankments, river training, flood protection and irrigation works. Later on, the Public Works Department (Embankment and Drainage) was re-designated as Flood Control and Irrigation Department. Its nomenclature was further changed to Flood Control Department with the creation of a new Department known as Irrigation Department with effect from January 1, 1974. Matters relating to irrigation and drainage hitherto dealt with not only by the Flood Control and Irrigation Department but also by the Agriculture Department were transferred to the newly created Department.

For administrative convenience each department is split up into circles comprising one or more districts or a part thereof and placed under one Superintending Engineer. Each circle is further divided into

Divisions under Executive Engineers and each Division into Sub-divisions and Sections under Sectional Officers.

The Public works in the early part of this century in Kamrup district were in charge of the Executive Engineer who was stationed at Shillong. The construction works entrusted to the Department were very light and also limited to construction of larger buildings and the provincial roads viz., the South Trunk Road of about 128 kms, the North Trunk Road of about 115 kms. from Raha to Dumnichauki and the road from Barpeta to Kholabandha of about 28 kms. With the increase of construction works, a separate Executive Engineer's division was created with headquarters at Gauhati. Subsequently, North Kamrup was placed under a new Division under the Northern Assam Circle of the Public Works Department, which covered Darrang district and the then North Lakhimpur subdivision as well under its jurisdiction, with its headquarters at Tezpur. South Kamrup was placed under the Lower Assam Circle with headquarters at Gauhati. Till the Independence, there was not much change and the Public Works Department functioned as an integrated whole covering the fields of roads and buildings, flood control and Irrigation. In 1947, a separate Embankment and Drainage Division was created with its headquarters at Gauhati extending its jurisdiction over a large area including Darrang district.

Along with the implementation of the Five-Year Plans, roads and buildings construction activities began to increase enormously. As a result, more Public Works divisions had to be opened in the district. Thus, the Gauhati West Division (R & B), the Gauhati East Division (R & B), the Nalbari Division (R & B), the Barpeta Division (R & B) with a number of subdivisions under each came to function. Recently, to cope with the increasing works, two more separate divisions viz, the Gauhati Road Division and the Gauhati Buildings Division have been opened at Gauhati. There was also one temporary Division for construction of the Brahmaputra bridge at Pandu. In Gauhati, for the construction of the temporary capital of Assam at Dispur, a Superintending Engineer has been placed in charge of the temporary Capital Construction Division. For construction of the Medical Hospital buildings, there is also a separate Division at Gauhati. Besides, there are Superintending Engineers for Inspection and Quality Control, North-East Council Circle, Gauhati (R & B) circle, Gauhati (R & B) Mechanical circle.

In addition to the above, for the purpose of conversion and construction of the National Highway No. 37 from Dhubdhara to Jagiroad

in Nowgong a separate division known as the National Highway Construction Division was opened at Gauhati in 1966, under the overall charge of an Executive Engineer. He has been assisted in his work by three Sub-Divisional officers at Gauhati, Boko and Sonapur, and by the sub-Engineers and eighteen Sectional Assistants. It may be mentioned that the organisational set-up at the divisional level conforms more or less to the same pattern as in other districts. However, the number of subdivisions and sections depends upon urgency and work load.

The achievements of the Department have been discussed in chapter VII.

The Mechanical Division, Gauhati, formerly covered under its jurisdiction the Nowgong and Darrang districts, each of which was served by a subdivision. This division is under the control of an Executive Engineer, Mechanical, and undertakes repairing of machineries and vehicles.

Flood Control : As has been already mentioned, the Flood Control Department came into being on January, 1, 1974. Prior to this, the flood control measures were executed by the Embankment and Drainage Department, which had a division at Gauhati viz, Lower Assam Embankment and Drainage Division. Along with the creation of the Brahmaputra Flood Commission, the State Department was bifurcated into two separate wings which again were raised two separate departments under independent charges of two Chief Engineers. Kamrup district is now served by two divisions viz, the Gauhati (E & D) Division with two subdivisions at Gauhati, one each at Rangia, Hazo and Mirza ; and the North Kamrup (E & D) Division with headquarters at Barpeta having one subdivision at Barpeta Road. Over and above the divisional staff, there are at Gauhati one Superintending Engineer, B.F.C. Quality Control ; one Executive Engineer, Hydrolic Research Division ; one Executive Engineer, Mechanical Division ; and other staff.

Irrigation Department : This department under its new name came into being on January 1, 1974. Prior to it, irrigation activities were joint responsibility of the Flood Control and Irrigation Department and the Agriculture Department. After creation of this full-fledged department, all irrigational activities of the Agriculture department have been transferred to this department. There are three Irrigation Divisions in Kamrup district viz, the Gauhati Irrigation Division and the Gauhati West Irrigation Division with headquarters at Gauhati and the Nalbari Irrigation (Agri) Division with headquarters at Nalbari. Each of these divisions has two to three subdivisions besides a number of

sections. In addition, there are two more Irrigation divisions in the district for specific schemes viz., Pagladia and Champamati Irrigation Division with headquarters at Sarbhog and the Sukla Irrigation Division with headquarters at Goreswar. Each of the Divisions is in charge of an Executive Engineer and each subdivision is in charge of a Sub-divisional Officer (Engineer). There are also one Investigation Division (Irrigation) and one Mechanical Division (Irrigation) at Gauhati. Besides, one Superintending Engineer, Northern Circle; One Superintending Engineer, Western Custom Service Irrigation Circle ; one Superintending Engineer Eastern Assam Irrigation Circle, One Superintending Engineer, Mechanical West Assam Circle and one Superintending Engineer, Design and Planning are at Gauhati. The jurisdictions of these circles are mostly confined in Kamrup district.

The departmental activities and achievements have been discussed in chapter IV.

(2) **Agriculture Department :** During the pre-Second World War period, the emphasis on Agriculture was rather meagre. Only one Agricultural Inspector and one Demonstrator had the responsibility of looking after 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 some important places. Till 1945, there was, however, no noticeable increase in the strength of officers and the staff. The officers were mainly placed in charge of Government farms. Village-level demonstrations, distribution of improved seeds and technical advice to the cultivators formed a part of their duty.

To cope with the food shortage and unprecedented rise of prices during the Second World War, the Government launched the 'Grow More Food campaign' with seven points integrated programme to increase agricultural food products. Accordingly, the Agricultural Department was reorganised and expanded. The District Agriculture Office at Gauhati was started in 1945 with a District Agriculture Officer under the Director of Agriculture, who is the technical and administrative head of the Department. The strength of the field staff was also increased. One Inspector and a few Demonstrators were posted to each subdivisional headquarters. Besides, one Plant Protection Officer was also posted in Gauhati. It was only after 1956, the Sub-divisional Agriculture Officer was posted to the subdivisional headquarters at Barpeta. Later on, when

Nalbari was raised to a subdivision, one Subdivisional Agriculture Officer was posted to Nalbari. With the inauguration of the Community Development Blocks, Agriculture Inspectors (Agriculture Extension Officers) were posted at the Block headquarters under the immediate control of the Block Development Officers but with ultimate control and technical guidance of the District Agriculture Officer. With the increase of agricultural activities during the plan period, one Subdivisional Agriculture Officer was also posted at Gauhati to assist the District Agriculture Officer.

For implementation of the Grow More Food Scheme, Jute Development Scheme, and the Horticulture Development Scheme, three Inspectors, one for each scheme have been posted to each subdivisional headquarters. One Inspector of Agriculture (general) and one Inspector for Agricultural Marketing having jurisdiction over the whole district have been attached to the District Agriculture Officer at Gauhati. Subsequently, one Assistant Plant Protection Officer and one Agronomist have also been attached to the District Agriculture Office at Gauhati.

There are now twenty-five Community Development Blocks in the district each having one Agriculture Inspector designated as Agriculture Extension Officer and one Additional Agriculture Extension Officer who is placed in charge of implementation of rice and jute package programme besides, a number of Agriculture Demonstrators who are posted to different centres. They work under the immediate control of the respective Block Development Officer subject, however, to ultimate control, supervision and technical guidance of the District Agriculture Officer. In addition, there are Managers of Agriculture Inspector's rank posted to each of the 23 seed farms, horticulture farms and other agriculture farms. The District Agriculture Officer heads the organisation at the district level. The Sub-divisional officers to whom financial powers are delegated are responsible for implementation of agricultural programmes at the subdivisional level. In addition to these officers at the district, there is one Agriculture Information Officer at Gauhati. For Engineering Section of the Department there was one Executive Engineer, Agriculture, at Gauhati, who was assisted by an Assistant Agriculture Engineer. This section of the Department which was responsible for receiving and maintenance of tractors, power threshers, and other agricultural implements and execution of minor irrigation works such as lift and flow irrigation schemes, installation of tube wells, customs, hiring of mobile diesel pump sets etc. was transferred and tagged with the erstwhile Flood Control and Irrigation Department to form an integrated Irrigation Department. In addition to the above, there are other State-level officers dealing

with Marketing Information, Planning, Research etc. at Gauhati. There is also one Agriculture University at Khanapara of Gauhati. The Assam Seed Corporation and the Assam Agro-Industries Development Corporation are also situated here.

The activities and achievements of the Department have been discussed in details in chapter IV.

(3) **Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department :** Prior to 1953, it was known as the Civil Veterinary Department, headed by a Superintendent whose headquarters were located 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 and at subdivisional headquarters of other districts. There were only a few Veterinary hospitals and dispensaries in the towns in charge of Veterinary surgeons in Assam. There were also one Livestock Inspector and a few Livestock Demonstrators in the district under the control of the Local Board, Gauhati.

It was in 1953, that the office of the District Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Officer was established at Gauhati. This officer headed the district organisation. In 1959, financial powers of the Livestock Inspectors were withdrawn and invested in the district officers.

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 has a veterinary dispensary in charge of a Veterinary Assistant Surgeon. One Veterinary Extension Officer and one Field Assistant were also appointed in each Block. Gradually more veterinary dispensaries were opened to cover almost all important places of the district.

The district has now eleven veterinary hospitals, forty-two veterinary dispensaries and a number of key-villages and development centres in Kamrup district. Veterinary Assistant Surgeons and Field Assistants work in the veterinary hospitals and dispensaries. There is also one Mobile Veterinary dispensary at Gauhati, with one Veterinary Assistant Surgeon, two Veterinary Field Assistants and other staff. Disease coverage is given through these institutions. To support the programme of development, a modern Animal Health Centre and also a Biological Products Centre have been established at Khanapara. In addition to, in each of the twenty-three Development Blocks, there is one Veterinary Extension Officer with a Veterinary Field Assistant under the direct control of the

respective Block Development Officer subject to overall control, supervision and technical guidance of the District Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Officer.

Along with the implementation of various veterinary development schemes, the activities of the Department are also increasing rapidly. To cope with such increasing activities, Sub-divisional Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Officers have been posted to each Sub-divisional headquarters. There are some Government poultry farms, livestock farms and bull farms which are in charge of Managers. To look after the livestock section in the district, there is one Livestock Inspector who is assisted by a number of Demonstrators who are entrusted with the Goat and Piggery Development Scheme.

The Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary, Assam, has intensified all development schemes for increase of livestock production. The special programme of training to educate unemployed youths in the field of dairy production, poultry production etc. for generating employment has gained momentum. For this, there is one training centre at Khanapara, Gauhati. There are one Jersey Cattle Breeding Farm at Barpeta and a Frozen Semen Bank at Khanapara. The Barpeta Farm remains in charge of a Deputy Director. A Manager is in charge of the Central Chick Rearing Farm at Gauhati. Besides, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Officers for Fodder Development, Town Milk supply, Dairy Farming, Livestock Development etc. are in Gauhati. The Assam Veterinary College is situated at Khanapara, Gauhati where most of the veterinary development schemes and centres are concentrated.

The activities and achievements of the Department have been discussed in details in chapter IV.

(4) Forest Department.

Brief history of the Department :

Till 1956, the whole civil district of Kamrup was under one Forest Division known as Kamrup Division. For better administrative purposes, on 15th June, 1956, the Division was splitted up into two divisions i.e., the North Kamrup Division and the South Kamrup Division. The entire portion of the Kamrup district lying in the south of the Brahmaputra and the Hajo circle of North Bank fall under the control of the Divisional Forest Officer, South Kamrup Division whose Headquarters are at Gauhati.

The first Reserves were constituted in 1872-73, i.e., 100 years ago. In 1902-03, the Reserved Forests covered only 385.10851 sq. kms. and unclassified State Forests covered 5,970.51694 sq. kms of Kamrup Division. There were altogether 29 reserved forests (including North Kamrup Division) at that time. Further, there was only one artificial plantation maintained by the Department at Kulsi, of which 69.971818 hectares and 121.4058 hectares were under rubber and teak cultivation respectively.

In olden times, the principal centres of trade were Kukurmara and Nagarbera for logs, Loharghat, Kulsi, Boko and Singra for boats, Palasbari for sleepers and Gauhati for building materials. Most of the timbers in log forms were taken down to Mymensingh and Dacca by river till the creation of Pakistan. In 1970-71, Reserved Forests in South Kamrup Division covered 64,000 hectares and Unclassed State Forest covered 76,126 hectares. There were 133,098 hectares of reserved forests under both these divisions. Almost all the forest produces here are extracted by road as every reserved forest is connected by a motorable road.

(Source Statistical Hand Book 1971 and 1973.)

Organisational pattern of the Department :—

The organisational set up of the forest department for Kamrup does not conform to the civil district administration. Kamrup district falls within the Lower Assam Circle covering the districts of Garo Hills, Kamrup, Goalpara, Darrang and North Lakhimpur and its headquarters is at Gauhati. The organisational pattern of this circle is more administrative than executive. The Conservator of Forests is the head of the Forest Circle and advises the Government on technical matters of this department and also does supervision of the works done by the Divisional Forest Officers who head the divisional offices of the department. In each division there are one Assistant Conservator of Forests posted as Divisional Forest Officer and other officers who help the Conservator of Forest both in outdoor & indoor works. Again, for facility of administration, each division has been sub-divided into Ranges, Beats and sub-Beats. The Ranges are run by Forest Rangers and Beats and sub-Beats are run by Deputy Rangers, Foresters and Assistant Foresters.

Exploitation of forests for the purpose of earning revenue and planting up the areas thus exploited are the main works of this Department and for that purpose technical, scientific, financial and administrative matters are greatly involved besides the maintenance and management of the large number of forest workers both in the public & private sectors.

The main duty of the field staff is to protect the forests and forest wealths which are the most valuable natural resources of the country from man, animal, fire, insects and diseases.

The district though has now been divided broadly into three forest divisions such as (1) East Kamrup, (2) West Kamrup and (3) North Kamrup—there are also a number of subject divisions touching the important projects and schemes of the department particularly working in the district. These are—(a) Social Forestry, (b) Working Plan programme, (c) Education and Research (d) the Zoo (e) the Tiger Project (f) Silviculture and (g) forest utilisation. All these divisional officers are headed by the officers of the Divisional Forest Officers rank and each of these officers has a band of officers ranging from the Range officers rank to Forest guard's rank besides the necessary office and field working staff.

The first mentioned 3 Divisional Offices have a number of Range offices, Beat offices and sub-beat offices working under them. The followings are the particulars about Range offices, Beat offices and sub-beat offices under these 3 Divisions :

Division	Range	Beat office	Sub-beat office
1. Kamrup East	Rani	Azara	Chakardeo
		Sajanpara	(1) Sattargaon
			(2) Luki
		Garopara	(1) Nalapara
			(2) Sessa
			(1) Narlong
	Rani	No-beat office	(2) Rajapathar
			(3) Hatimara-ghuli.
			—
	Gauhati	Mainakhurung	—
		Hajo	(1) Fakirtola
			(2) Baramboi
			(3) Deoduar
		Agyathuri	—
		Basistha	—
		Jalukbari	—
		Fatasil	—
		Dirgheswari	—
		Kalapahar	—

Division	Range office	Beat office	Sub-beat office
2. Kamrup West	Sonapur	Gandhmow	—
		—	Hangerabari
		Narengi	(1) Panbari
			(2) Panjabari
		Khanapara	—
		Lokhra	(1) Garbhanga
			(2) Umthana
		Jorabat	—
		Kalangpar	—
		Marakdola	—
		Topaltoli	—
		Margaon	—
		Jakaikona	—
		—	Diksok.
	Singara	Singara	—
		Account	(1) Dekapara
			(2) Bondapara
		Jorabat	(1) Gamarimura
		Account	(2) Gopalpur
			(3) Tintimma
			(4) Namtaranibari
		Santipur	—
		Account	Milaghat
		Andheri	—
		Bagalipara	—
		Dhanipara	(1) Sowthola
			(2) Bogani
		Bamunigaon	(1) Ouguri
		Account	(2) Koimari
			(3) Alukhunda
		Barbakra	—
		Account	—
		Ukium Account	(1) Sarupani
			(2) Umtheli
	Loharghat	Ghograsuk	—
		Rajapara Account	Moduki
		Ghilabari	—
		Mataikhor	(1) Salasarbadi
			(2) Garilik
			(3) Larupara,

Division	Range office	Beat office	Sub-beat office
3. North Kamrup	Batabari	Batabari	—
		Daodhara	—
		Singra	—
		Nalbari	—
		Nikashi	—
		Odla	—
		Subankhata	—
		Kumarikata	(1) Bagikhuti (2) Guibari
Under the North-Kamrup	D. F. O.	Rangia	—
		Barpeta Road	(1) Barpeta
		(excluding project Tiger area)	(2) Sarbhog
			(3) Tarabari
			(4) Gobardhana (5) Baghbar

The Divisional Forest officers are responsible for maintenance, preservation, and expansion of existing forest areas and creation of new forest resources within their jurisdiction. No operation of any kind connected with earth-digging, plant-collection, timber cutting, fuel collection, stone quarry work, hunting etc. can take place without his permission and recommendation within his area.

One Assistant Conservator of Forest is placed in charge of the State Zoo Division. His responsibility is to create tourist attractions within the Zoo, arrange import and export of animals, birds etc. for international and state zoos, to raise a Botanical garden of indigenous plants and to ensure breeding of rare wild-lives in captivity in the zoo. There is a forest research centre in the Zoo.

The Forest Utilisation Officer is meant for the entire state. His duty is to supply sleepers and timber to the Railways and the Central Departmental store, New Delhi, and also to supply posts to the State Electricity Board and timber to the state P.W.D. and Match Companies.

A Working Plan Officer for Lower Assam Circle is stationed in Gauhati. He is assisted by 6 Rangers and seventeen Foresters in preparing working plan for the Western Assam Circle.

Under the Silviculturist who belongs to Research and Training Division of the department there are two Ranges in Kamrup. These are, (1) Basistha and (2) Rani Silvicultural Range. In Basistha Range, there is also a Laboratory Assistant. They study endurance, germination, growth and quality of differences, species of timber and plants in the special climatic and soil condition of the state.

The Social Forestry Section which had been set up in 1979-80, with its headquarters at Nalbari, has two ranges in Kamrup. These are, (1) Nalbari and (2) City Plantation. Their object is to ameliorate environmental hardship in plant-growing in the district, to provide employment to rural mass through plantation work which is aimed at supplying cheap fuel and energy to the people and thereby to improve rural economy.

The Economic Division of this department maintains two ranges viz., (1) Kamrup West and (2) Kamrup East in this district. Its objective is to collect data on different stages of forest operation and to minimise the total cost of management in the entire complete process of operation. Their other task is to study the market position for different forest products at different stages and to suggest forest operation accordingly.

There is another Divisional Forest Officer to survey the forest resources of the district in order to find out raw-materials for different industries working in the district as well as in the state.

Forest School :

In 1948, a forest school was established at Jalukbari where Matriculate Foresters and Assistant Foresters were given training in preliminary forestry for one year. It is a big achievement of the Department. Recently a Forest College for the North-East India has also been established at Burnihat.

The Government of Assam earns a good sum of money as revenue from the sale of Sal timbers & other forest produce. The main sources of revenue of the Department are Timber Coupes, Thatch *Mohals*, Elephant *Mohals*, Kaupat *Mohals*, Fishery *Mohals*, Charcoal *Mohals*, Sand and Gravel *Mohals* etc. Work in Elephant *Mohals* has, however been suspended as a measure for protecting gradually diminishing elephant population in Kamrup.

(5) Industries Department :

The Assistant Director of Cottage Industries, at Gauhati is the head of the Industries Department in the district of Kamrup. The Assistant

Director works according to the direction of the Director of Industries, Government of Assam, Gauhati. His works are also occasionally supervised by the Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup.

There are also two branch offices of the Industries Department, one at Gauhati and the other at Barpeta under the charge of one Superintendent of Industries in each office.

At first the offices of the Superintendent of Industries, Gauhati and Barpeta were set up with one Superintendent for each Sub-Division to cope with the Industrial affairs under the direct control and supervisions of the Director of Cottage Industries, Assam, Shillong. But subsequently, with a view to deal with the rapid development of the Industries affairs of the district, the post of the Assistant Director of Cottage Industries for the district of Kamrup was also created. The head quarters of this officer are located at Gauhati and he is responsible for industries affairs of the district having control and supervision over the above Superintendents of Industries as a district head under the administration of the Director of Industries, Assam, Gauhati.

The office of the Assistant Director of Cottage Industries, Gauhati had been opened in June, 1958, and the office of Superintendents of Industries, at both the sub-divisions were made branches of this organisation. The offices of the Superintendent of Industries, Gauhati and Barpeta were established in March 1958.

Industries Department helps the development of industries in all possible ways, providing technical knowledge, finance, machineries, work-sheds and market loans upto Rs. 2,500 to the artisans on personal surety only. The Government also sanction Industrial loan upto Rs. 20,000/- against tangible surity to industrialists. Industrial Co-operatives can have industrial loans upto a maximum of 15 times of their paid-up share capital without any surity provided the functioning of the Co-operative is found satisfactory and recommended by the Registrar of Co-operatives Societies.

This Department helps in procuring machineries on hire-purchase system through National Small Industries Corporation and also arranges for working capital from State Bank of India.

With a view to develop and help industrial strength of the State, this Department is sanctioning grants-in-aid either in cash or in kind every year to the deserving poor artisans or institutions. This Department is

also supplying improved implements for carpentry and blacksmithy and handtools at subsidised rates to the deserving artisans particularly in rural areas.

The industries Department is arranging supply of coke & coal to industrialists on priority basis. Arrangement of railway wagon is also made for bringing raw materials required for industrialists or actual users and also issues quota certificate for the restricted raw materials. This Department has also arranged for apprenticeship in all possible units to train up local boys with stipends at the rate of Rs. 40/- p.m. within the State and at the rate of Rs. 100/- outside the State.

This Department is running three Training cum-Production Centres in this district and one production centre and a training institute to train up the local boys in different trades.

To supply technicians which are needed by various industries, the Government established an Industrial Training Institute at Rehabari, Gauhati in 1957. The trades are Draughtmanship (civil), Radio Mechanic, Electrician, Plumber, Electrical-wireman, Fitter, Welder, Sheet Metal Worker, Carpenter, and Blacksmithy. The training is for 18 months in the institute followed by 6 months' inplant training outside. It has a provision for stipend to deserving students. The Department has also managed a Cottage Industries Training Institute at Gauhati to provide training in Blacksmithy, Carpentry, Cane and Bamboo works, Doll and Toy making, Pottery, Leather works, Electric wiring, Nail-making and Electroplating.

In fact, along with the establishment of various kinds of industries both in the public and private sectors, organisational set up of the department has also increased considerably. The functioning of technical training institutions like, Industrial Training Institute, the Cottage Industries Training Institute, the Assam Textile Institute, the Central Workshop at Gauhati etc, has necessitated the expansion of the industries department at Gauhati.

To co-ordinate all sorts of craftsmanship and cottage industries training and to arrange self-employment through supply of tool and implements etc.,—a District Industries Centre under one General Manager has been setup at Gauhati.

(6) Public Health Engineering :

Among the departments concerned with public utility services, the Public Health Engineering Organisation has become very useful in the district. The Public Health Engineering Organisation covers almost the

entire state of Assam. Within the district of Kamrup there are two divisions. Division No. 1, in charge of an Executive Engineer, is for the implementation of rural water supply and sanitation schemes in addition to doing works of deposit nature. Division No. II is having separate office and separate Public Health Executive Engineer. Division No. I was opened in the year 1957. Gauhati Sub-division (under Gauhati Division No. I) was opened in the year 1967. There are six sections also,—one at Hajo, one at Rangia, one at Jalah and 3 nos. at Gauhati. Except Jalah section, all other sections were opened in the year 1967. Jalah section was opened in the year 1958.

Gauhati Division No. I : Under this division, there are two Sub-divisions, one at Gauhati and the other at Goalpara under the control of Sub-divisional Officers, Gauhati and Goalpara respectively. Under the Sub-divisional officer (Public Health Engineering), Gauhati, there are six Sectional Officers, one at Hajo, one at Rangia, one at Jalah, 3 nos. at Gauhati (one for stores, 2 for mechanic section). Under each Sectional Officer, there are two Sanitary Inspectors.

The Public Health Engineering Organisation was opened in the year 1956 under the Medical Department, Government of Assam for the implementation of National Water Supply & Sanitation Schemes. During the preliminary period there was only one Public Health Engineer at Shillong and the officers in charge of Jorhat and Shillong Sub-divisions were under the direct control of the Public Health Engineer, Assam, Shillong. In the year 1957, Shillong Division was opened and subsequently the same was shifted to Gauhati and named as Gauhati Division under the direct control of Public Health Engineer, Assam, Shillong. Gauhati Sub-division and Karimganj Sub-divisions were opened in the year 1957. All those sub-divisions were under Gauhati Division. In the year 1958, Goalpara Sub-division was opened and was placed under the Gauhati Division.

Now this organisation has expanded tremendously making the organisation a permanent department.

Under Gauhati Division No. I, for the implementation of Protected Water-supply and Sanitation Scheme, the following districts are covered viz Kamrup, Darrang and Goalpara districts. In the district of Kamrup, the following schemes are executed :

(A) Under National Water Supply and Sanitation scheme (Rural), water supply projects at Hajo, Rangia, Tamulpur and Jalah have been taken

up. (ii) Among other Government works, mention may be made about the water supply at Industrial Estate, Gauhati ; water supply at Khanapara Veterinary College, Gauhati ; water supply at T.B. Hospital Gauhati ; water supply at Khanapara Cattle Farm, Gauhati ; water supply at Birubari, Gauhati ; water supply at All India Radio Centre, Gauhati ; water supply at Assam Engineering College, Gauhati ; augmentation of Gauhati water supply scheme etc.

(7) Department of Excise

The Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup is the head for the State Excise administration in the district and the Excise staff is responsible to the Commissioner of Excise, Assam. He collects the Excise Revenue with the help of a Excise Superintendent as his technical adviser. It is necessary to put up all important matters to the Deputy Commissioner for orders. He is empowered to issue orders on Excise Duty. The Superintendent of Excise is the chief executive officer in the district and all other officers of the department work under the direct control and supervision of the Superintendent of Excise subject to such orders as may be issued from time to time by the Commissioner of Excise, Assam.

The district has three sub-divisions : the Sadar Sub-division, Barpeta Sub-division and Nalbari Sub-division.

The Liquor Prohibition Act has been extended to the whole of the district with effect from the 26th January, 1956 and since then a post of the Deputy Superintendent of Excise has been created to help the Superintendent of Excise in day-to-day administration and supervision of the work of the subordinate officers.

The History of the Department : This department was, at the beginning, a part of the Revenue Department, although, it was not governed by the Land Revenue Laws. It had separate laws by the name of the Excise and Opium Act. At first, it was governed by the Bengal Excise Act and the rules framed thereunder and the Opium Act, 1878, (Indian Act). Later on, in 1910, a separate Excise Act was passed by the name of Eastern Bengal & Assam Excise Act, 1910, and the Opium Act remained the same with certain modifications. Before the Independence, the object of Excise administration was to raise revenue for Government by taxing the sale of spirituous liquors and drugs. But since the Independence, stress has been gradually shifted

to total prohibition, by stages, of all intoxicating drinks and drugs except for medicinal and scientific purpose. In pursuance of that policy, opium and ganja were prohibited totally throughout the state but the Liquor Prohibition was enforced only in certain districts including the district of Kamrup.

This department has become more and more beneficial and some revenue branches were added to it, such as motor spirit & lubricant, amusement, hoarding & profiteering, drugs contr ' & civil supplies etc.

Field of Activity etc. : Although the Inspectors of Excise have been vested with the powers of the officers-in-charge of the police stations, in respect of Excise offences generally preventive works are always done by the police. The officers of the police department not below the rank of an Inspector are empowered to inspect the place of sale and manufacture of Excisable articles, and also officers not below the rank of Assistant sub-Inspector to make search and arrest under the Excise Act. As the years rolled on, the excise revenue has increased and more posts of Inspectors have also been created and the circles have been formed under Inspectors & sub-Inspectors respectively.

In 1970, the Excise staffs in Kamrup district consist of one Superintendent of Excise, one Deputy Superintendent of Excise, twenty-one Inspectors of Excise, and twenty-five Assistant Inspectors of Excise. There are also twenty Prohibition Squads under the Superintendent of Excise in the district. Further, it is stated that the department has succeeded, to a great extent, in prohibiting the intoxicating drinks in the district.

(8) Department of Statistics :

Headed by the Director of Economics and Statistics and working under the administrative control of the Planning and Development Department of the government of Assam, the District Statistical Officer, Kamrup, has his district office at Gauhati. He has a band of Statistical Inspectors under him, the seniors amongst whom are placed at the Subdivisions as Subdivisional Statistical Officers. Junior Statistical Inspectors are placed at Development Block headquarters. Their job is to collect all sorts of statistics necessary for drawing State Plans. Besides, they conduct National Sample Surveys in collaboration with the Directorate of Statistics, Government of India and collect data for quarterly area and crop forecast reports for the district.

Annual Subdivisional and District Statistical Hand Books are published by the district office of this department.

(9) Co-operative Department

The Deputy Registrar, Co-operatives with headquarters at Gauhati, is the district head of this department. Under the Deputy Registrar, there are a number of Assistant Registrars. Some such Assistant Registrars act as Liquidator, some as Bakijai Officers and some others are put in charge of the Civil sub-divisions of the district. In Gauhati, there are two head-quarters Assistant Registrars while one of the other two Assistant Registrars is in charge of each of the Nalbari and the Barpeta sub-divisions. The Assistant Registrars placed in charge of the sub-divisions supervise the day-to-day work of the co-operative societies situating within their respective jurisdictions and prepare and submit proposals for the societies situating within their respective sub-divisions directly to the Registrar, Co-operative Societies.

The Assistant Registrar is assisted by a group of sub-Registrars, Co-operative Inspectors and Co-operative Auditors. In Gauhati, there are 20 Inspectors and 29 Auditors, while there are 13 Inspectors and 25 Auditors in Nalbari and 15 Inspectors and 11 Auditors in Barpeta.

There are a number of loan and subsidy schemes under this department. These are (1) share-capital and managerial subsidy scheme for Consumers', Industrial Banks' and Farming Co-operatives, (2) credit incentive (3) subsidy for consumption credit (4) subsidy supplement for construction of godown and Secretary's residence, (5) share capital contribution (6) godown loan and subsidy (7) share capital and truck-loan to Consumer's Co-operatives, (8) Managerial subsidy (9) share-capital to co-operative Rice mills and (10) share-capital and subsidy to Transport, Industrial Labour, Rickshawpullers' and Forest-labour co-operatives etc.

Duty of the Inspector is to inspect the working of the co-operatives and the Auditors are to audit the account of the co-operatives annually. All subsidies and loans are advanced on their reports. It is the duty of the Co-operative Inspectors and Auditors to guide the Co-operatives properly so that they can become active and thrive.

As the headquarters of the state-level Co-operative Organisations viz., Apex Bank, Stateled, Artfed etc., situate in Gauhati, their accounts are to be audited by the Gauhati Sub-division staff of the Co-operative Department.

CHAPTER XIV

LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT

(a) History of Local Self-Government in Kamrup :

The present system of local self-government in Assam is a legacy of the British administration. Nevertheless, in Assam, some form of local self-government was in existence even during the pre-British days. Dr. S.K. Bhuyan, the noted historian of Assam, terms the *Namghars* established by Sankardeva as village parliaments. The following account depicts the true functions of the *Namghar*, which is regarded both as religious and social institution in the Assamese society.

“With the organisation of *sattras* came their decentralised replica, the institution of village *namghar*, something like the Parish Church. From the beginning, the *namghar* formed the hub of all village activities. It was the village club and theatre. It exercised a close spiritual control over all members of the community, and held them back from many an evil act. In fact, this institution might be called the village parliament, and a parliament run too on broad democratic principles. It was the village court; trials of disputes and crimes were held in it, and no one dared disregard the judgement pronounced by the elders of the village. An excommunication could be decreed by this village panchayat, and is the worst thing that a man in society could dread in those days. Only difficult cases were referred to the Superior of the *sattras* to which the delinquent belonged, or to the government judiciary. Thus through the twin institutions of *sattras* and *namghars* Assamese society was neatly organised; and the moral tone of the people with such vigilance all around was bound to be very fine indeed.”¹

In the pre-British days, the *khels* (unit of people system which prevailed in Assam) also played a notable part as an agency of local self-government.

1. M. Neog : The article, *The Vaishnava Renaissance in the Aspects of the Heritage of Assam*, Souvenir of Indian History Congress, Gauhati, 1959, p. 40.

S. K. Bhuyan, in his *Anglo-Assamese Relations* mentions that Mr. Scott, the first Commissioner of Assam, instituted *panchayats* in populous *parganas* and villages. In his famous *Report of Assam*, Moffat Mills also suggested reconstitution of the village councils and appointment of an influential class of men as *gaonburas* for management of local affairs and thereby, eliminate the constant interference of Government in the affairs of the village.²

Though, the first stage of the growth of the *sattr* institution began with Sankardev, yet during his life time, the religious association organised by him had not taken the shape of a regular institution of a permanent nature. Sankardev, no doubt, laid the foundation of the institution, but the superstructure was raised during the succeeding generations. Madhavdev who succeeded Sankardev as the head of the Vaisnavite sect did not preside over any *sattr* left by Sankardev. It was, at the time of Madhavdev and Damodardev, that the *sattr* institution approached the second phase of its development. There are definite references in mediaeval biographies of saints to the part played by Madhavdev and Damodardev in giving a definite shape to the structural as well as organisation side of the *sattr* institution. Madhavdev, besides reconstructing the Barpeta *sattr* on a permanent basis, systematically divided the prayer services into fourteen units and made necessary arrangements for the smooth running of the *sattr*.

The *sattr* institution of Barpeta is a purely democratic institution run in the pattern of local self-government. The entire *Sattr* has been divided into a number of *Hatis*, the inhabitants of which derive some particular right against performance of certain specific duties for the 'Kirtanghar.' Every *hati* dweller has to pay some cess in kind popularly known as *Kirtanghar-Kar* in order to participate in the affairs of the *Kirtanghar*. The post of *Satradhikar* is open to all irrespective of caste and he is elected by the *hati* dwellers. All disputes of personal and public nature are decided by the council of elders who also belong to the *Kirtanghar* Committee headed by the *Satradhikar*.

The Bodo-Kacharis of Darrang, North Kamrup, Kokrajhar sub-division and Dhuburi sub-division elect a *Deuri* in each village to decide the petty disputes among the villagers. Those Bodo-Kacharis who observe *Kherai puja* have a peculiar system of selecting the *Deuri*. On completion of the *puja*, the *Deodhani* (the female dancer) pours water on a parti-

2. V. Venkata Rao : *A Hundred Years of Local Self-Government in Assam*, p. 21.

cular 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 the dispute. This amount is called *Sabhri*. The opposite party is also required to deposit twice the amount deposited by the first party. The amount deposited by the losing party is forfeited and distributed amongst the members of the assembly. The *Deuris* get no fixed salary but they are offered something in kind.³ As the *Deuri* decides all social disputes amongst them, this institution also may be recognised as some sort of local self-government prevailing amongst a community inhabiting the areas within the district.

The other social organisation which can be compared with local self-government body was the *Panchayat* system. These *Panchayat* bodies were called *mels* in Kamrup and were consisting of recognised village elders. These may also be called the Council of Elders. These *Panchayats* were local small courts and enjoyed a socially and politically recognised power to punish an offender with fine, public humiliation and excommunication though no formal royal or administrative authority was vested on them. The *Panchayats* also acted as guardians of social laws and humane morals of the people. These *Panchayats* whose activities were centred almost invariably in a *Namghar*, even looked after social security, security of life and property, and unity of the local people at the time of any outside attack. Mr. Scott, the British Agent for North-Eastern India, found a number of such *Panchayats* working in the district and decided to keep continue this *mel* system as a part of the judicial administration.

(b) Local Self-government Institutions in Kamrup :

To trace the history of the modern institutional Local Self Government in the district, it is necessary to describe the circumstances leading to the formation of the Local Boards and Municipal Committees in the district. Mr. B. C. Allen, in his *District Gazetteer of Kamrup*, gives a detailed account of these institutions.

The first Local Self Government Act introduced in Assam was the Act of 1915. In 1920-21, Mr. Bentinck, the Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup, decided to form a *Panchayat* body in each inhabited village. But these *Panchayats* became ineffective due to group-politics and disinterestedness of the villagers. The next Act was the *Panchayat Act* of

3. Bhaben Narzari : *Boro-Kacharir Samaj aru Sanskriti*, Gauhati, 1966, pp. 138-40.

1926, which provided for a single-member Panchayat Body. This Act also proved a failure as the villages were not able to discharge their functions in electing and mobilising the Body.

In the early days of the British administration there was little money available for public works of any kind and what there was generally expended under the control of the Public Works Department or the District Magistrate.

In 1872, the management of the district roads was entrusted to a Committee presided over by the Deputy Commissioner. The funds, at their disposal were partly obtained from tolls, from local roads and collections from ferries and other miscellaneous sources, such as balance of convict labour fund, cattle trespass fund, government estate development fund, receipt from fishery etc. But the principal source was the grant made by the Bengal Government from the amalgamated District Road Fund. In 1874, when Assam was erected into a separate administration, the Government of India assigned one-seventeenth of the net land revenue of the five plains districts of the Brahmaputra valley for local purposes. The Miscellaneous 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 4 District Funds, viz, District Reserve Fund, District Road Fund, District Primary School Fund and District Miscellaneous Fund which were subsequently made sub-ordinate funds of one District Improvement Fund⁴ of the province was only Rs. 1,85,000.00 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 etc. Three years later the District Committees were abolished by an executive order, and their places were taken by Boards established in each subdivision. The Chairman of the Board of the headquarters subdivision was the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup; while such Board in Barpeta was presided over by the Sub-divisional Officer, Barpeta Sub-division.

In Kamrup, the Boards were entrusted with the maintenance of all roads within their jurisdictions, with the exception of the two Trunk Roads and the road from Barpeta to the steamerghat, the provision and

4. V. V. Rao : *A Hundred Years of Local Self Government in Assam*, 3rd Edition, 1967, pages 69-70.

maintenance of local staging bungalows and dispensaries, and the supervision of village sanitation, vaccination, and the district post. They were also in charge of primary education, subject to the general control of the Education Department and were empowered to make grants-in-aid to schools of higher grade, subject to certain rules.

Sources of revenue of the Local Board : For these purposes, the Boards had placed at their disposal, the rate which was levied under the Assam Local Rates Regulation of 1879, at the rate of one *anna* (six paise) per rupee on the annual value of lands, as well as the surplus income of pounds and ferries and some minor receipts. The annual budgets of the Boards were submitted to the Commissioner for sanction. The estimates for all works costing Rs. 500.00 or over had to be submitted to the Public Works Department for approval, and important works, requiring much professional skill, were made over for execution to that department. Less important works were entrusted to the Board's overseers.

Before 1874, there was only one amalgamated fund for the welfare of the public. Later on, it was divided into two -(i) general fund and (ii) local fund. The local fund consisted of the collection from ferry, 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, and balance of fund for the improvement of certain Government estates. The general fund was utilised for construction of important road and feeder roads. A portion of it, was utilised for metalling the existing roads.⁵

The principal source of revenue of the District Committee which was constituted under Local Rates Regulation of 1879, was the local rates on the annual value of land. The rate was 2 annas (twelve paise) per cultivated acre. Of the total collection from local rates $\frac{3}{8}$ th were left for works of provincial importance and the balance $\frac{5}{8}$ th were 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 the Government. The Act of 1915, empowered the Local Boards to impose taxes on construction of railways and road-ways, 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.

5. Ibid, p. 327.

Sources of revenue under the Municipal Act, 1864, were house tax, land tax, carriage-tax and tax on other wheeled vehicles for the Municipal Boards. The Act of 1874, added taxes as inhabitants of Municipal holdings, tolls on ferries, bridges and mettaled roads while the Municipal Act of 1884 imposed water, light and scavenging tax. The list was further enhanced in 1923, last adding up taxes on latrines, drainage, private markets, steamer boats, and other vehicles moved at ghats or landing places maintained by the Municipal Board.

In Gauhati, even before the British, *Gaodhan* was levied on every household and the money thus collected was appropriated for improvement of road and tanks of Gauhati. Later on, when all personal taxes were abolished this tax assumed the name of *Hosue-tax*. Thereafter, another tax called *Saru-tax* or hearth tax also was levied on all the inhabitants of Gauhati and subsequently it was changed to tax on each income which was above Rs. 5/- per annum.⁶

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 estimate 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 P.W.D. Secretariat. 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 later suggested modification but the former had the liberty to follow or reject. The final authority for rejection or acceptance was the Chief Commissioner.

In 1915, some 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 would meet at special meeting for consideration. The final authority for the rejection of the budget was the Commissioner. In 1953, the power was vested with Government.

In the year 1961, the areas of Gauhati and Barpeta Local Boards were 6692.53416 and 3299.64726 square kms respectively. The Gauhati

6. Ibid, pp. 326 and 338.

Local Board maintained 419.20 kms. of cart roads while Barpeta Local Board maintained 188.90 kms. of cart roads in the year under reference.

Municipalities : In the district of Kamrup, Gauhati Municipal Corporation is the only Municipal Corporation in existence. The historical background of the formation of the Municipal Committees is given below. There are at present four Municipal Boards and seven Town Committees which have been functioning as agencies of the local self-governing bodies. The four Municipal Boards are—Palasbari, Rangia, Nalbari and Barpeta. The Town Committees are—Kamakhya, North Gauhati, Tihu, Sarbhog, Sarthebari, Pathsala and Barpeta Road.

The following statement prepared with materials procured from the office of the Commissioner of Plains Division, Gauhati, shows at a glance, the dates of inception of different Municipal Boards and Town Committees along with other figurative information. As no particulars on Pathsala Town Committee was available, it could not be incorporated.

Gauhati Municipality : As the sole object of the East India Company was the development of commerce and economic exploitation of the area under their control, no attempt was made to develop the town of Gauhati during the first decade of their hold over this region. But subsequently, when the unhealthy condition of the town caused large-scale death amongst their troops, they thought of a Town Development Committee for Gauhati with the District Magistrate and the Civil Surgeon of the district. Accordingly a Town Development Committee for Gauhati was set up in 1836, the Bengal Government to whom Assam was then tagged, placed Rs. 3000/- at the disposal of Gauhati Development Committee from the town-tax and ferry fund. For the first ten years, this Committee had no fund other than grants from the Bengal Government. Then in 1846 the Committee received approval from the Government to levy taxes on hawkers and dealers and in 1848 the house-tax also.⁷

In 1852, 113 inhabitants of Gauhati submitted an application to the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup, praying for introduction of the Bengal Act XXVI of 1850, in Gauhati. Major H. Vetch, the then Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup, did not agree and Major Jenkins, the Commissioner of Assam also was of one opinion with him. But the Bengal Government

7. Ibid, pp. 37-38.

Sl No.	Name of M. B. and T. C.	Date of inception	No. of ward Commissioners	Total Receipt		Total Expenditure	
				Excluding opening balance			
				1960-61	1961-62	1960-61	1961-62
1.	Gauhati M. B. (now Municipal Corporation)	1-4-1865	30	1604403.96	1116892.72	1033915.23	1312392.81
2.	Palasbari M. B.	10-10-1918	14	41750.00	35500.00	23227.00	28085.00
3.	Nalbari M. B.	15-3-1938	15	63475.99	65617.04	59490.38	63333.80
4.	Barpeta M. B.	25-8-1884	17	235307.00	190058.00	136178.00	220079.00
5.	Kamakhya T. C.	15-2-1956	2	7652.00	11303.50	7382.90	8276.96
6.	Rangia T. C.	1-1-1956	6	63186.31	69171.30	35187.42	80483.37
7.	N. Gauhati T. C.	1-6-1950	6	13744.69	66186.01	5471.64	16152.43
8.	Tihu T. C.	1-1-1951	8	71286.85	20316.76	30358.91	24754.63
9.	Sarbhog T. C.	1-1-1962	—	—	—	—	—
10.	Sarthebari T. C.	1-12-1956	6	8564.87	13096.38	13097.86	9669.64
11.	Barpeta Road T. C.	3-12-1959	—	—	75561.88	—	13438.47

conceded to the prayer and the first statutory Municipal [Board for Gauhati came into existence with power to levy income-tax on monthly incomes of Rs. 5/- and above and also to collect other taxes. But about 50 inhabitants of Gauhati petitioned the Commissioner of Assam to dissolve the Board on ground that only 113 inhabitants out of 3,000 inhabitants of Gauhati prayed for formation of the Board and hence it was not a popular demand. The petition was, however, rejected and the Board continued..

Financial condition of the Board was never solvent since its beginning—as revenue earned from taxes was meagre while the expenditure was leaping high with years. In 1861, Gauhati was the most unhealthy town in India⁸

Subsequently under Act V (Bengal Code) of 1876, Gauhati Municipality Board was reconstituted⁹ as a first class Municipality in 1878. In 1881, Gauhati and North Gauhati both were joined into one municipality. In 1891, North Gauhati was separated from Gauhati Municipal area.

In the year 1905, the town of Gauhati had an area of 7.64045 sq. kms. and in addition to the Shillong-Gauhati cart road, which was maintained by the Public Works Department, there were 22.40 kilometres of road kept up by the municipality, of which, about 15.2 kms. were metalled. There were ten members of the Municipal Committee, six of whom were elected and the Deputy Commissioner was the Chairman. The principal taxes were 7½% on the annual value of holdings, the latrine tax and the water tax. The average municipal receipts and expenditure in the ten years ending with 1903 was Rs. 43,000, the chief sources of income being taxes on houses and lands, water rate, revenue from markets, slaughter houses, and contribution. The chief items of expenditure were water-supply, conservancy and public works. The water-supply was pumped from the Brahmaputra, passed through filtering beds and then distributed through stand-pipes all over the town.¹⁰

The Principal Tax levied was a cess at the rate of 5½% on the annual value of holdings; but considerably more than half of the ordinary income was derived from a grant made by Government, and from the fees levied on Cattle-pounds, markets and ferries. The actual incomes

8. Ibid, page 42.

9. B. C. Allen : *District Gazetteer, Kamrup, 1900, p. 183.*

10. Ibid, pp. 185-86.

of taxation in 1903-04, was only-6/3p (38½ paise) per head. The inhabitants of the town resented having to pay even this small sum, and had more than once petitioned for the abolition of the municipality. The area of the town was 3.54829 sq. kms. and there were nearly 24 kms. of roads within municipal limits but much of those were metalled. There was no attempt made to light the town and, though there were seven masonry wells, the inhabitants for the most part drew their water from small wells sunk inside their compounds.

In 1883, Gauhati Municipality undertook the first water supply scheme for the town with a loan of Rs. 38,000.00 procured from the Government against the security of Gauhati Town Fund. The water works was completed in 1887 at the total cost of Rs. 38,214.00. But in 1891, due to lack of proper maintenance, the water-works broke down. As the municipality had no fund to maintain it, in 1896, it was handed over to the Public Works Department and in 1897, the arrear loan of Rs. 29,000.00 due against the loan of Rs. 38,000.00 was written off by the Government. But supply of water remained a permanent headache to the Board as well as to the Government till today. The population of Gauhati was increasing fast gradually and it came to 12,500 in 1912 against 3,000 of 1852. So, in 1912, the Government conceded to the demand for expansion of the water supply scheme and sanctioned for construction of a new bed and reservoir of water. In 1927, another new scheme for water supply was prepared by the Municipality. This scheme was rejected by the Government.¹¹ In 1958, the Government however, prepared an ambitious scheme to be undertaken with the Central Government loan. Though the Scheme was executed, it had been proved still inadequate to meet the growing demand of the expanding town which was declared a city in 1971. As for the drainage, Gauhati seems to be in eternal deluge during the monsoon uptill now.

Barpeta Municipality : Barpeta acquired the status of a second class town in 1884 as per the Bengal Municipal Act, 1875. Accordingly a second class Municipal Board for Barpeta was constituted in 1886,¹² under the presidency of the Sub-divisional Officer. The Act provided that any area having administrative and industrial centres, where more than half of its population are found to be non-agriculturists, should be constituted into a Municipality. House-tax prescribed for first class

town was Rs. 4/- per house while that for class II town was Rs. 2/- per house.

Barpeta Municipality, however, never could function properly. Even after a hundred years, it could not provide its rate payers a central drinking water supply system, good roads and proper drainage.

The income of the Barpeta Municipal Board is very poor inspite of the fact that most of the local merchants have their permanent home in the town.

The Barpeta Municipality's receipt from taxes in 1968-69 was Rs. 67,400.00 besides the Government grant of Rs. 55,300.00. Its expenditure on general administration in that year was Rs. 35,200.00 approximately while expenditures on conservancies i.e. public health and conveniences, and public work, were Rs. 71,100.00 and Rs. 76,400.00 respectively. Its other sources of income was municipal properties like Town Hall and Fishery from which the Municipality received Rs. 56,200.00 in the relevant year.

Barpeta Road Town Committee : The commercial township at Barpeta Road is developing very rapidly in the last few years. To deal with some Local administrative problems of the town, a Town Committee was formed adjacent to the Barpeta Road Railway Station on 31st December, 1959. It is now one of the most important towns from the point of view of trade and commerce at North Kamrup having its direct connection with the towns like Barpeta, Nalbari and Gauhati. The existence of the railway station at Barpeta Road is also an important factor for the rapid development of the town. The town covered an area of 4.35118 sq. kms. with a population of 13,841 according to the Local Census conducted by the Town Committee in 1964. The population within this Town Committee area increased to 16,987 as per 1971 census.

It is a most important whole-sale business centre in respect of agricultural and other horticultural products. Among the agricultural products mention may be made about rice, paddy, jute etc., and in respect of horticultural products of banana, brinjal tomato, cowflower, cabbages and other vegetables. These commodities are generally carried to Barpeta Road from the rural areas in buffalo as well as in bullock drawn carts. The easy availability of buffalo drawn carts at Barpeta Road is a special feature connected with the trade. Most of the commodities so collected at Barpeta Road are ultimately sent to the consuming centres

¹¹ V. V. Rao : *A Hundred years of Local Self-Government in Assam*, 3rd Edition, 1967, p. 315-16.

¹² *Ibid*, page 64.

in the district. Mustard oil seed is also an important commodity generally found at Barpeta Road.

The Barpeta Road town is divided into three wards and each ward is again sub-divided into 3 blocks. According to the findings of the 1961 census, there were 9,648 population with only 1,832 number of houses. In 1961, its area was 4.143984 kms. but the local census held in the year 1964, showed that the population increased considerably within a few years, but municipal area remained still the same.

Major heads of its income are taxes like house-tax, cesses on stalls and shops, taxes on carts, cycle tax etc. In 1968-69, the receipt of this municipality from taxes was Rs. 1,08,600.80 while receipt of Government grants-in-aid was Rs. 14,600.00. Against this receipt position it incurred an expenditure of Rs. 22,700.00 on general administration, Rs. 25,200.00 on conservancy and Rs. 1,03,200.00 on public works like road-repairing in 1968-69. As for amenities, water-supply is not advanced by the town committee.

Palasbari Municipal Board : It is one of the old Municipal Boards of Kamrup. Its area was 2.66769 sq. kms. The river Brahmaputra gave a serious set back to the town area by eroding away an area of about 0.64643 sq. kms. The town since 1954, has been shifted to VijayNagar and at present, it is known as Vijaynagar Town Committee, the old Palasbari Municipality has been shifted to Mirza. Main income of Palasbari municipality is derived from timber depots and Saw mills. Besides, there are a number of shops and a newly constructed goods market from which also a sizable revenue is collected.

In 1964-65, house-tax collected by this Municipality was Rs. 1,057.00, while receipt from market was Rs. 21,415.00 and receipt from tax on professions and trade was Rs. 2,150.00. On the other hand, the expenditure incurred on administration, public-work and conservancy were Rs. 6,145.00, Rs. 2,203.00 and Rs. 3,599.00 respectively. It received a Government grant of Rs. 18,028.00 and Rs. 19,820.00 respectively in 1965-66 and 1966-67 and spent Rs. 14,487.00 and Rs. 18,040.00 respectively in the relevant years, while expenditure on general administration and conservancy remained almost static.

Pathasala was declared a town as per 1961 census and its town committee was formed subsequently.

The following statement will furnish an idea about receipts of the municipalities (including Gauhati) and the town Committees of Kamrup district in 1968-69.¹³

Name of the Town Committees and Municipal Boards	In rupees		
	Receipt from Taxes	Receipt from property	Government grant
Sarthebari	1,100/-	2,200/-	22,100/-
Barpeta	67,400/-	56,200/-	55,300/-
Sarbhog	400/-	25,900/-	12,600/-
Barpeta Road	1,08,600/-	—	14,600/-
Gauhati	19,57,200/-	2,40,100/-	4,35,400/-
Kamakhya	—	—	14,500/-
Nalbari	28,000/-	32,600/-	47,800/-
North Gauhati	1,100/-	3,500/-	37,500/-
Palasbari	8,400/-	18,900/-	13,900/-
Palasbar	300/-	15,300/-	15,700/-
Rangia	14,500/-	55,300/-	81,300/-
Tihu	8,600/-	5,600/-	18,600/-

Particulars about area, residential houses and population of the Town Committees and the Municipalities in 1971 are as follows :

Name of Town Committees and Municipality	Area in sq. kms.	No. of residence	Population
1. Barpeta Road Town committee	4.25	2644	16987
2. Sarthebari T. C.	2.90	923	6473
3. Tihu T. C.	1.1	678	3244
4. Kamakhya T. C.	2.59	1164	6397
5. North Gauhati T. C.	2.59	1304	7776
6. Pathasala T. C.	1.69	905	5021
7. Sarabhog T. C.	4.2	847	5987
8. Rangia Municipality	5.7	1757	9865
9. Palasbari Municipality	1.42	620	4162
10. Nalbari Municipality	4.25	2678	12548
11. Gauhati Municipality	14.24	23896	123783
12. Barpeta Municipality	3.86	3796	26479

Source : Census of India, Kamrup district, 1971.

13. Source : Directorate of Municipal Administration, Assam.

Gauhati urban agglomeration area is spread over 43.82 kilometre with 39,400 residential houses and 2,00,377 number of people living in it as per 1971 census.

Financial position of the Municipal Bodies : As to the financial aspect of the local bodies as per Annual Report on the working of Municipal Boards and Town Committees for the year 1961-62 (vide letter No. X-21/64/1547 G dt. 10-2-64) to the Commissioner of Plains Division, Gauhati by the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup ; the total income of the local bodies excluding the opening balance and Government grants and loans during the year under report was Rs. 11,48,246.21 against Rs. 11,31,563.05 in the previous year. The total income derived from rates and taxes amounted to Rs. 8,75,687.88 during this year whereas the same of the previous year i.e., 1960-61 was Rs. 8,52,278.10 showing an increase of Rs. 23,409.78. The increase in income in comparison with the previous year was due to construction of houses, opening new stalls, bazars, industries etc., imposition and recovery of arrear taxes etc. The total amount received as grants and contribution from Government for the general and special purposes decreased from Rs. 8,52,278.10 to Rs. 4,41,646.75.

The ordinary expenditure of the local bodies, excluding the repayment of loans and advances etc., during the year under report was Rs. 17,76,866.11 p. against Rs. 13,44,309.34 p. The increase was due to construction of new stalls, bazars, roads, increase in salary and Dearness Allowance of the employees of the bodies and also repairing of the Municipal buildings etc.

The financial positions and the collection of taxes current or arrear, of the Municipal Boards and Town Committees are not satisfactory. The total demand including arrear and current was Rs. 29,10,154.93. while the total collection of the year was only Rs. 9,91,683.38 showing a large amount of Rs. 19,18,471.55 as arrears. The collection of almost all local bodies appears to be very poor and unsatisfactory in comparison with the total demand. Unless systematic or proper actions are taken, means of reducing these huge arrears can not be expected.

A total amount of Rs. 2,46,069.34. had been spent by the local bodies during the year in question for improvement of water supply and drainage.

The main reason for unsatisfactory collection as well as financial position of Many municipalities and Town Committees may be said to be the slackness and negligence of the collecting staff and also due to the

lack of proper supervision of the authority concerned over the collecting staff. The Sorbhog Town Committee was constituted after 31.3.62, as such all figures relating to that Town Committee was not available and so excluded in the above extracts.

It may be pointed out here that prior to the enactment of the Assam Municipal Act, 1956 ; the Assam Municipal Act, 1923 and others governed the municipal bodies. Since 1956, all Municipal Boards and Town Committees came under the Assam Municipal Act, 1956. All powers and duties assumed by different Municipal Boards and Town Committees are not in accordance with the provisions of the above Act. Some of the Municipal Boards or Town Committees have got their own bye-laws for internal administration of the Boards or the Committees.

As to special achievements in regard to transport services, it may be stated that no local bodies of the district has started operation of transport services. But the city buses owned by private individuals are plying only in Greater Gauhati i.e., from Borjhar to Khanapara and Noonmati to Pandu in two different routes covering some portions of the Gauhati Municipal area. The route from Jalukbari to Khanapara via Panbazar is covered by the city-transport branch of Assam State Transport Corporation.

As to milk supply scheme, mention may be made to the efforts of the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department (Dairy Development Scheme) to supply milk in Gauhati but the Municipal Board is in no way connected with it. No other Municipal Boards or Town Committees have got any milk supply scheme.

(c) **Town Planning and Public Health :**

The headquarters of the Town Planner to the Government of Assam and ex-officio Director of Town and Country Planning are located at Gauhati. The Town Planning Organisation has been carrying out Town Planning works which mainly include preparation of Master Plans for towns within the State, Development Plans for villages, Regional plans for different areas and layout plans for various type of *Sarkari* and similar lands.

As regards its work in Kamrup District it may be pointed out here that this organisation prepared a Development Plan for the Mirza Town in order to rehabilitate the people rendered homeless by the erosion of Palasbari Town by the river Brahmaputra. It also prepared a Master Plan for Gauhati which was entrusted to the Gauhati Development Autho-

rity, a body created in 1961, for implementation. Over and above this, five villages of Dimoria N.E.S. Block in Kamrup have been selected for preparation of Development Plan. The villages are —

- (a) Barkhat Arabari
- (b) Barkhat II
- (c) Karsia I
- (d) Karsia II
- (e) Karsia III

The Town Planning Organisation further proposed to prepare the Master Plans for Barpeta and Nalbari Towns by the end of the Fourth Five Year Plan.

There are two Divisions of the Public Health Engineering Organisation in the district of Kamrup with headquarters at Gauhati for the implementation of protected water supply and sanitation scheme. Division No. I which was opened in 1957, is for the implementation of Rural Water Supply and sanitation schemes in addition to doing works of deposit nature. There is one sub-division under the Division No. I at Gauhati (opened in 1957) under the control of Sub-divisional officer, Gauhati. Under the Sub-divisional Officer (Public Health Engineering) Gauhati, there are six sectional officers, one at Hajo, one at Rangia, one at Jalah, 3 nos. at Gauhati, all were opened in the year 1957, except Jalah section which was opened in 1958.

Division No. II is meant for the implementation of Gauhati Water Supply Project with separate office under the Public Health Executive Engineer. The following schemes relating to Public Health were executed in the district :

(A) Under National Water Supply and Sanitation Scheme (Rural) taken up during 2nd Plan.

Sl. No.	Name of Project	Estimated Cost	Source of supply & target achieved			Villages covered	People benefitted.
			R/W	T/W	P/W		
1.	Hajo Rangia and Tamulpur.	Rs. 13,90,500/-	53	638	2	362	1,70,000
2.	Jalah	Rs. 4,14,000/-	50	149	1	154	40,000

(B) Other Government Works :

Sl. No.	Name of project	Estimated cost	Source of supply	Target achieved.
		(in Rs.)		
1.	Water Supply at Industrial Estate.	7,000.00	Deep T/W	Completed
2.	Water Supply at Khanapara Vet. College Gauhati.	4,032.00	—do—	—do—
3.	Water Supply at T.B. Hospital Gauhati.	30,200.00	—do—	—do—
4.	Water Supply at Khanapara Cattle Farm, Gauhati.	10,400.00	—do—	—do—
5.	Water Supply at Birubari, Gauhati.	7,000.00	—do—	—do—
6.	Water Supply at All India Radio Centre, Gauhati.	7,430.00	—do—	—do—
7.	Water Supply at Assam Engineering College, Gauhati.	92,000.00	—do—	—do—
8.	Augmentation of Gauhati Water Supply Scheme	4003,00,00	—do—	—do—

(d) District and Local Boards :

Organisation and structure, power and duties, Financial resources and Special achievements : There was no District Board in Kamrup but a District Committee was in existence for a short period under the Assam Local Rates Regulation, 1879. Three years later i.e., in 1882, the District Committee was abolished and the Local Boards in each Sub-division were established as already discussed above. The Assam Local Self Government Act, 1915 (Assam Act I of 1915) came into force on the 1st September 1915 and according to this Act, Local Boards at Gauhati and Barpeta were established on the 1st. January, 1916 with 28 members for Gauhati Board (23 elected and 5 appointed) and 20 members for Barpeta Board (16 elected and 4 appointed).¹⁴

The Assam Local Self Government Act, 1915 provided for the establishment of the Village Authorities in the light of the recommendation of the Decentralisation Commission and according to the scheme of Rural Self Government put forward by the Government of India in 1915. In Kamrup

14. Assam Local Self Government Manual, 1905. pp 119-120.

district, the Deputy Commissioner Mr. Bentick took keen interest in organising Village Authorities in several viallages of the district. In his annual report of the Local Board, Gauhati (1920-21) he wrote "I propose to take advantage of the coming election to give every actual village a Panchayat of its own, each village will keep its own accounts." Next, the provisions of the Assam Local Self Government Act, 1915 relating to the construction, finance, duties, powers and control of the Village Authority were amended by the Assam Rural Self Government Act, 1926. As these village authorities were formed subject to financial control by the Local Board concerned, they could not achieve anything remarkable in the field of rural development for want of appropriate finance.

In the year 1957-58, the Gauhati Local Board was constituted with 41 members and Barpeta Local Board with 38 members, out of which, five members in each Board were ex-officio members. A Chairman and a Vice-Chairman of each Board were elected from amongst its members.

The finances of the Local Boards were derived from the proceeds of Local Rates, receipts in respect of public ferries, receipts under the Cattle Trespass Act, 1871, and also from *bazars* vested in places under or established by Local Boards under the Local Self Government Act, 1915.

The main functions were to establish dispensaries both for man and animal, educational institutions at lower level, improvement of public health and sanitation, improvement of communication facilities in the villages, establishment of *hats* and *bazar* for disposal of local products, to establish ponds under the Cattle Trespass Act, 1871, and also open new ferries under the Northern India Ferry Act, 1878.

The following statement shows the financial aspect of Local Boards in the year specified.

Name of Local Board	Year	Opening balance during the year	Total receipt during the year	Total expenditure during the year	Closing balance.
Barpeta	1957-58	1,95,059/-	4,14,154/-	4,63,281/-	1,45,932/-
Gauhati	1957-58	17,993/-	5,45,848/-	4,62,573/-	65,282/-

The Local Boards had in their credit the maintenance of village roads which were left unattended during the pre-independence days. In 1957-58, the Gauhati Local Board maintained 526.92 kms. of village

roads at the cost of Rs. 1,52,304/- and the Barpeta Local Board 1021.60 kilometer during 1958-59.

(e) **Panchayats :**

Organisation and structure, powers and duties : Financial resources. Special achievements if any : It has already been mentioned earlier that *Panchayat* as a basic organisation of administration existed in this country from the remote past, in fact, the history is replete with instances of village people wielding the reins of administration through the media of vaillage bodies which were called by different names at different times. The modern Panchayats, as such, are nothing but innovations on the ancient administration bodies, thus, making the Panchayats more broad based and all comprehensive and concerned with every aspects of village life. The Government welcomed the decision to decentralise the power of administration and to delegate more and more power to the local bodies with a view to expedite the excentric of local development projects and to enthuse the people to become politically conscious by bestowing upon them opportunity to come in contact with administration with the consequences of making responsible and active citizens for the all round progress and prosperity of the country.

In pursuance of the above national policy the state of Assam had also enacted necessary laws to help and give effect to the avowed objectives of ushering in a people's government in the true sense of the term.

Immediately, after the attainment of Independence, the Government of Assam enacted the Assam Rural Panchayat Act, 1948 with a view to establish village panchayats throughout the plains districts of Assam. This Act provided for two tier panchayat organisation at the village and mauza levels. The Panchayat at the village level was "primary Panchayat" and at the mauza level, "Rural Panchayat". A Primary Panchayat was composed of all adult persons having permanent residence within its area and it had an executive committee with 9-15 members elected by the primary members. The Rural Panchayat at the mauza level was formed by the elected representatives from each primary panchayat. This Act provided for establishment of Union Panchayat at the Sub-divisional level and to replace the Local Boards in due course. Before necessary step could be taken in this direction after covering the plains districts by Rural Panchayats, the matter had to be dropped for

proposed change in the rural areas in the time suggested by the Balvantrai Mehta Committee in the context of the Community Development and National Extension Service Blocks. It may be mentioned here that under the all-India Scheme of the Community Projects administration, since 1952 onward, 25 Community Development and National Extension Service blocks were established in Kamrup district. In each of these Blocks an intensive Community Development Programme was undertaken by schematic budget provision covering the fields of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary, Rural Health and sanitation, Co-operation, Cottage industries, Public works including minor irrigation and rural housing. These programmes were launched as peoples' programme with government assistance and technical guidance. As such the people's interest, action and participation was the mainstay of the programme. Balvantrai Mehta Study Team of the Committee on Plan Projects suggested that in order to evoke people's interest in the Community Development and National Extension Service Programme, a strong and powerful democratic institution at the Block level should be created. Accordingly he suggested for three-tier Panchayatraj organisations at the village, block and District levels. The Government of Assam following the recommendation of the Mehta Committee enacted the Assam Panchayat Act in 1959, for introducing the three-tier Panchayat Raj set-up in the state. Consequent upon the enforcement of this Act since 1960-61, all the old Local Boards were abolished and the assets and liabilities of the local Boards were taken over by the Mahkuma Parishads established under the Assam Panchayat Act, 1959.

The Panchayat Act, 1959, authorised the Gaon Panchayats to levy tax on brick and concrete buildings. But this tax had never been levied by any of the Gaon Panchayats in the district. The Panchayat Act, 1964 authorised Panchayats to levy tax on animals, cycles, professions and on the produce sold in the villages. Though these taxes were compulsorily levied - collection was made very half-heartedly. Though Santanam Committee recommended levy of House tax, pilgrim-tax, marriage tax and tourist tax - these taxes were not levied as people resented these sort of taxes.

The following 3 statements will explain the position of Gaon Panchayats under the 3 Mahkuma Parishads of Kamrup district in 1979-80 so far as the expected Revenues from hats and common pool taxes to supplement the Government grants and its actual realisation is concerned.

STATEMENT -1
SOURCES OF INCOME OF GAON PANCHAYATS IN 1979-80.

Name of M.P.	Name of Development Block	Name of Gaon Panchayat	Sources of income	Assessment made on sources	Actual collection
Barpeta	Mandia	1. Pub Mandia	Hat Revenue Common Pool Taxes etc. to the Govt. Grant.	Rs. 15,662.00	Rs. 12,630.00
		2. Paschim Mandia	—do—	Rs. 26,180.00	Rs. 15,465.00
		3. Baghor	—do—	Rs. 27,500.00	Rs. 11,726.00
		4. Imman Hassan	—do—	Rs. 6,265.00	Rs. 5,903.00
		5. Moimbari	—do—	Rs. 14,800.00	Rs. 12,874.00
		6. Bagmarachar	—do—	Rs. 7,500.00	Rs. 3,705.00
		7. Pub-Jania	—do—	Rs. 18,539.00	Rs. 18,604.00
		8. Paschim Jania	—do—	Rs. 23,446.00	Rs. 23,446.00
		9. Uttar Bagaribari	—do—	Rs. 5,585.00	Rs. 6,381.00
		10. Paschim Chenga	—do—	Rs. 36,500.00	Rs. 21,135.00
		11. Pub-Chenga	—do—	Rs. 17,100.00	Rs. 8,162.00
		12. Pub-Sarukhetri	—do—	Rs. 5,393.00	Rs. 3,987.00
		13. Dakhin Bagaribari	—do—	Rs. 6,500.00	Rs. 6,300.00
		14. Paschim Sarukhetri	—do—	Rs. 17,500.00	Rs. 17,286.00
	Chenga				
		15. Uttar Ghilajari	—do—	Rs. 10,400.00	Rs. 4,722.00
		16. Pub-Bethari	—do—	Rs. 26,800.00	Rs. 11,990.00
		17. Paschim Bethari	—do—	Rs. 12,262.00	Rs. 4,947.00
		18. Pub-Bhawanipur	—do—	Rs. 25,087.00	Rs. 4,917.00
		19. Paschim Bhawanipur	—do—	Rs. 13,400.00	Rs. 7,427.00
		20. Dakhin Ghilajari	—do—	Rs. 14,400.00	Rs. 9,963.00
	Bhabanipur				

Name of M.P.	Name of Development Block	Name of Gaon Panchayat	Sources of income	Assessment made on sources	Actual collection
Barpeta	Gabardhana	21. Hawly	H.R. and C.P.T.	Rs. 13,700.00	Rs. 5,245.00
		22. Gobardhana (Pub)	—do—	Rs. 20,475.00	Rs. 6,139.00
		23. Gobardhana (Dakhin)	—do—	Rs. 19,206.00	Rs. 4,783.00
		24. Gobardhana (Uttar)	—do—	Rs. 10,900.00	Rs. 6,076.00
		25. Kharija Bijni	—do—	Rs. 24,065.00	Rs. 10,771.00
Jalah		26. Chapaguri	—do—	Rs. 10,850.00	Rs. 8,548.00
		27. Koklabari	—do—	Rs. 35,200.00	Rs. 32,146.00
		28. Uttar Bijni	—do—	Rs. 45,400.00	Rs. 19,043.00
		29. Manikpur	—do—	Rs. 14,155.00	Rs. 6,032.00
		30. Dakhin Bijni	—do—	Rs. 27,027.00	Rs. 13,596.00
Keot kuchi		31. Desh Bhakta	—do—	Rs. 26,400.00	Rs. 19,000.00
		32. Gopinath	—do—	Rs. 14,800.00	Rs. 11,191.00
		33. Ambika Giri	—do—	Rs. 4,662.00	Rs. 3,982.00
		34. Bausi	—do—	Rs. 7,458.00	Rs. 5,763.00
		35. Azad	—do—	Rs. 4,129.00	Rs. 4,179.00
Bajali		36. Uttar Bajali	—do—	Rs. 17,000.00	Rs. 8,162.00
		37. Pub-Bajali	—do—	Rs. 13,343.00	Rs. 3,775.00
		38. Dakhin Bajali	—do—	Rs. 12,600.00	Rs. 3,830.00
		39. Hastinapur	—do—	Rs. 14,300.00	Rs. 13,857.00
		40. Madhya Bajali	—do—	Rs. 29,500.00	Rs. 29,300.00
Ruposi		51. Dakhin Titapani	—do—	Rs. 10,268.00	Rs. 7,569.00
		42. Pub-Damka Chaka Bausi	—do—	Rs. 8,265.00	Rs. 4,989.00
		43. Dakhin Ruposi	—do—	Rs. 24,339.00	Rs. 22,339.00
		44. Uttar Ruposi	—do—	Rs. 13,400.00	Rs. 7,500.00
		45. Uttar Titapani	—do—	Rs. 13,045.00	Rs. 13,045.00
		46. West Damka Chaka Bausi	—do—	Rs. 17,940.00	Rs. 5,465.00

STATEMENT - 2

Name of M.P.	Name of Development Block	Name of Gaon Panchayat	Sources of income	Assessment made on sources	Actual collection
2. Nalbari. Tamulpur		1. East Defeli I.	Hat Revenue		
			Common Pool	Rs. 21,000.00	Rs. 14,000.00
			taxes etc. to the then Govt. grant.		
			—do—	Rs. 39,000.00	Rs. 25,000.00
			—do—	Rs. 40,000.00	Rs. 16,000.00
			—do—	—	—
			—do—	Rs. 37,000.00	Rs. 32,000.00
			—do—	Rs. 30,000.00	Rs. 9,000.00
Baska		2. West Defeli II.	—do—	Rs. 19,000.00	Rs. 14,000.00
			—do—	Rs. 11,000.00	Rs. 6,000.00
			—do—	Rs. 21,000.00	Rs. 9,000.00
			—do—	Rs. 15,000.00	Rs. 8,000.00
			—do—	Rs. 23,000.00	Rs. 11,000.00
			—do—	Rs. 15,000.00	Rs. 10,000.00
			—do—	Rs. 12,000.00	Rs. 4,000.00
			—do—	Rs. 21,000.00	Rs. 4,000.00
Tihu Barama		15. Namborbhag	—do—	Rs. 17,000.00	Rs. 5,000.00
			—do—	Rs. 15,000.00	Rs. 7,000.00
			—do—	Rs. 12,000.00	Rs. 4,000.00
			—do—	Rs. 21,000.00	Rs. 4,000.00
			—do—	Rs. 23,000.00	Rs. 8,000.00
			—do—	Rs. 17,000.00	Rs. 5,000.00

Name of M.P.	Name of Development Block	Name of Gaon Panchayat	Sources of income	Assessment made on sources	Actual collection
Nalbari	Pachim Nalbari	20. Khetri Dharmapur 21. Uttar Dharmapur 22. Uttar Pakowa 23. Dakhin Pakowa 24. Dakhin Dharmapur 25. Uttar Bahjani 26. Dakhin Bahjani	H. R. and C.P.T. —do— —do— —do— —do— —do— —do—	Rs. 17,000.00 — Rs. 11,000.00 Rs. 20,000.00 Rs. 9,000.00 Rs. 16,000.00 Rs. 11,000.00	Rs. 13,000.00 — Rs. 6,000.00 Rs. 6,000.00 Rs. 4,000.00 Rs. 4,000.00 Rs. 5,000.00
	Pub Nalbari	27. Pachim Upper Barbhag 28. Pub-Upper Barbhag 29. Natun Dehar 30. Batahgilla 31. Khata	—do— —do— —do— —do— —do—	Rs. 25,000.00 Rs. 14,000.00 Rs. 7,000.00 Rs. 8,000.00 Rs. 29,000.00	Rs. 6,000.00 Rs. 3,000.00 Rs. 5,000.00 Rs. 6,000.00 Rs. 4,000.00
	Barkhetri	32. Pachim Barkhetri 33. Uttar Barkhetri 34. Pub Barkhetri 35. Madhyam Barkhetri	—do— —do— —do— —do—	Rs. 22,000.00 Rs. 34,000.00 Rs. 17,000.00 Rs. 23,000.00	Rs. 11,000.00 Rs. 7,000.00 Rs. 8,000.00 Rs. 14,000.00
	Barigog	36. Barigog-Bonbhag 37. Bonbhag 38. Pachim Bonbhag.	—do— —do— —do—	Rs. 10,000.00 Rs. 23,000.00 Rs. 17,000.00	Rs. 4,000.00 Rs. 5,000.00 Rs. 13,000.00

STATEMENT - 3.

Name of M.P.	Name of Development Block	Name of Gaon Panchayat	Sources of income	Assessment made on sources	Actual collection
Gauhati.	Kamalpur	1. Puthimari	Hat Revenue Common Pool taxes etc. to the then govt. grant.	Rs. 3,650.00	Rs. 583.00
		2. Kamalpur 3. Modertola 4. Saraighat	—do— —do— —do—	Rs. 3,050.00 Rs. 6,454.00 Rs. 4,650.00	Rs. 1,004.00 Rs. 2,864.00 Rs. 3,045.00
	Chamaria	5. Nagarbera 6. Topamari 7. Sontali 8. Chamaria	—do— —do— —do— —do—	Rs. 24,900.00 Rs. 5,250.00 Rs. 26,290.00 Rs. 3,900.00	Rs. 28,500.00 Rs. 3,046.00 Rs. 12,132.00 Rs. 8,066.00
	Hajo	9. Hajo -I 10. Hajo -II 11. Ramdia -I 12. Ramdia -II 13. Paschim Bongsor 14. Pub Bongsor -2 15. Pub Bongsor -I	—do— —do— —do— —do— —do— —do— —do—	Rs. 8,500.00 Rs. 9,100.00 Rs. 8,900.00 Rs. 1,800.00 Rs. 2,800.00 Rs. 8,185.00 Rs. 3,200.00	Rs. 4,708.00 Rs. 3,559.00 Rs. 4,329.00 Rs. 8,895.00 Rs. 2,047.00 Rs. 1,860.00 Rs. 879.00
	Rani	16. Ramcharani 17. Rani Bholagaon	—do— —do—	Rs. 12,000.00 Rs. 12,351.00	Rs. 5,496.00 Rs. 9,304.00
	Chaygaon	18. Dakhin Sarubansor 19. Chaygaon Pantan 20. Pub-Chamaria 21. Champak Nagar 22. Gooimari	—do— —do— —do— —do— —do—	Rs. 5,750.00 Rs. 12600.00 Rs. 11,850.00 Rs. 23,338.00 Rs. 18,700.00	Rs. 2,213.00 Rs. 10843.00 Rs. 11,338.00 Rs. 13,813.00 Rs. 13,984.00

Name of M. P.	Name of Development Block	Name of Gaon Panchayat	Sources of income	Assessment made on sources	Actual collection
Gauhati	Dimoria	23. Sonapur	—do—	Rs. 5,019.00	Rs. 5,552.00
		24. Barkhetripambari	—do—	Rs. 15,252.00	Rs. 8,725.00
		25. Chandrapur	—do—	Rs. 9,057.00	Rs. 6,557.00
		26. Dimoria	—do—	Rs. 6,100.00	Rs. 7,929.00
Karara	Karara	27. Karara	—do—	Rs. 9,086.00	Rs. 4,728.00
		28. Borbagsor	—do—	Rs. 16,050.00	Rs. 10,754.00
		29. Patidarang	—do—	Rs. 4,800.00	Rs. 4,635.00
Rangia	Rangia	30. Baidyagarh	—do—	Rs. 14,142.00	Rs. 8,625.00
		31. Kaurbaha	—do—	Rs. 6,550.00	Rs. 3,725.00
		32. Madhukuchi	—do—	Rs. 9,800.00	Rs. 7,195.00
		33. Borigog	—do—	Rs. 7,100.00	Rs. 1,453.00
		34. Pachim Borigog	—do—	Rs. 3,880.00	Rs. 3,416.00
		35. Goreswar	—do—	Rs. 11,330.00	Rs. 11,010.00
		36. Mohoripara	—do—	Rs. 17,101.00	Rs. 8,094.00
Boko-Bongaon	Boko-Bongaon	37. Bongaon	—do—	Rs. 9,100.00	Rs. 4,114.00
		38. Luki	—do—	Rs. 34,971.00	Rs. 17,447.00
		39. Bekeli	—do—	Rs. 7,930.00	Rs. 6,962.00
		40. Boko	—do—	Rs. 16,788.00	Rs. 13,708.00
Rampur	Rampur	41. Dakhin Rampur	—do—	Rs. 5,400.00	Rs. 1,154.00
		42. Uttar Rampur	—do—	Rs. 27,377.00	Rs. 9,821.00
		43. Uttar Chayani	—do—	Rs. 38,503.00	Rs. 8,073.00
		44. Dakhin Chayani	—do—	Rs. 6,039.00	Rs. 2,942.00
		45. Barduwar	—do—	Rs. 34,636.00	Rs. 6,406.00

Abbreviations—H. R.—Hat Revenue, C.P.T.—Common Pool Taxes.

*Source :—Directorate of Panchayat and Community Development, Assam.

In Kamrup district, 3 Mahkuma Parishads at Gauhati, Barpeta and Nalbari Subdivisions; 25 Anchalik Panchayats at the Development Blocks and 567 Gaon Panchayats were established covering 2,954 Revenue Villages for implementation of 1959 Act. The executive powers and functions under this three-tier Panchayatraj system were vested to the Anchalik Panchayats and Gaon Panchayats while the Mahkuma Parishads were assigned the functions of co-ordination, supervision and guidance to the lower bodies. In the Development Blocks, however, the executive functions were entrusted to the Block Development Officers who functioned as the Executive Officers cum-Secretaries of the Anchalik Panchayats, but they were made responsible to the Anchalik Panchayat, and placed under the control of the Anchalik Panchayat Presidents.

The following relevant extracts from the Assam Panchayat Act, 1959, deal with the 'Organisation & Structures of Panchayats' :—

"Constitution of Gaon Panchayat : Every Gaon Sabha shall elect in the prescribed manner from among its members an Executive Committee called the Gaon Panchayat, a President and a Vice-President.

The Gaon Panchayat shall including the President and Vice-President, consist of eleven members, provided that every Gaon Sabha having population over two thousand five hundred shall be entitled to one additional member for the Gaon Panchayat for every additional increase of population of five hundred subject to a maximum of fifteen.

Provided further that the Gaon Panchayat shall co-opt one woman if no woman is elected to the Gaon Panchayat :

Provided also that wherever five per cent or more of the members of a Gaon Sabha are Scheduled Castes, then in case no member belonging to the Scheduled Castes is elected to Gaon Panchayat, the Gaon Panchayat shall co-opt one such member :

Provided further that wherever five per cent or more of the members of a Gaon Sabha are scheduled tribes, then in case no member belonging to the scheduled tribes is elected to the Gaon Panchayat, the Gaon Panchayat shall co-opt one such member.

Provided further that this representation shall continue only as long as special representation for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes continues to be provided for in the Constitution of India.

The term of office of the president, the vice-president and members of the Gaon Panchayat shall be three years.

Constitution of the Anchalik Panchayat : (i) One representative to be elected as prescribed by each Gaon Sabha falling within the jurisdiction of the Anchalik Panchayat;

Provided that Gaon Sabhas having a population of more than two thousands five hundred shall send an additional member for every additional population of two thousand five hundred or part thereof not less than one thousand two hundred and fifty subject to a maximum of three representatives from a Gaon Sabha.

Provided further that if the President, or Vice-President of a Gaon Panchayat is elected to the Anchalik Panchayat he shall immediately cease to be President or Vice-President, as the case may be, of the Gaon Panchayat. His place on the Gaon Panchayat shall be filled in the manner these offices are filled under Sub-section (1)(i) of section 17 of the Assam Panchayat Act, 1959.

Mahkuma Parishad : The State Government shall by notification, establish a Mahkuma Parishad in each Sub-division and where there is no sub-division, in each district.

The State Government may, by notification, cancel, alter or reduce the area of operation of Mahkuma Parishad under Section 4 of the Panchayat Act, 1959.

Mahkuma Parishad Consists of (i) The Presidents of all Anchalik Panchayat within the area of the Mahkuma Parishad,

(ii) All members of Parliament and Members of the State Legislative Assembly representing the area of the Mahkuma Parishad;

(iii) Chairman of Municipalities, Town Committees and School Boards falling within the Sub-division as ex-officio members, and

(iv) Such Government officials as ex-officio members as the State Government may appoint from time to time.

Provided that if no person belonging to the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes, as the case may be, is a member, the Mahkuma Parishad shall co-opt. one such member from amongst the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, as the case may be.

(2) Ex-officio members of the Mahkuma Parishad shall have no right of vote, under Section 22 of the Assam Panchayat Act, 1959.

The Gaon Panchayat and Anchalik Panchayat within the limits of funds and resources at their disposal and subject to the rules made in this behalf are to provide for the requirements of the area under their jurisdiction in respect of matter specified below :--

1. In the sphere of sanitation and Health

Gaon Panchayat (G.P.) :

- i) Cleaning and lighting of streets.
- ii) Supply of water for drinking and domestic use etc.

Anchalik Panchayat (A.P.) :

- i) Medical relief including establishment and maintenance of Hospitals and Dispensary.
- ii) Maternity and child welfare etc.

2. In the sphere of public works :

Gaon Panchayat :

- i) The control and regulation and development of grazing grounds etc.
- ii) To establish, maintain and manage cattle pounds.
- iii) The planting of trees along roads and public places etc.

Anchalik Panchayat :

- i) Construction and maintenance of minor irrigation work if covers more than one Gaon Sabha.
- ii) Constructions, repair and maintenance of building, roads, bridges, embankments, drains and water ways if concerns more than one Gaon Sabha.

3. In the sphere of education and culture :

Gaon Panchayat :

- i) Maintenance of public radio sets for benefit of rural population.
- ii) Establishment and maintenance of library, reading room, club, or other places of recreation and games.
- iii) Spread of education up to Middle English and Middle Vernacular standard.
- iv) Establishment and maintenance of theatres etc.

Anchalik Panchayat :

- i) The spread of education above the Middle English and Middle Vernacular standards.
- ii) Establishment and maintenance of theatres.

4. In the sphere of self defence and village defence :

Gaon Panchayat :

- i) Watch and Ward of the village.
- ii) Rendering assistance in extinguishing fires and protecting life and property where fire occurs.

Anchalik Panchayat :

- iii) Regulation of offensive or dangerous trade or practice.

5. In the sphere of administration :
Gaon Panchayat :
i) Maintenance of records relating to agricultural produce, census of cottage industry, population changes etc.
- Anchalik Panchayat :
i) Collection of statistics and maintenance of records.
ii) General power of supervision over Gaon Panchayats and approval of their budgets etc.
6. In the sphere of the welfare of the people :
Gaon Panchayat :
i) Welfare of the backward classes.
ii) Organising voluntary labour for community works for the uplift of the village etc.
- Anchalik Panchayat :
i) Relief or distress caused by floods, drought, earthquake and scarcity condition and other calamities.
ii) Organisation of voluntary labour for community works and works for the uplift of the village.
7. In the sphere of agriculture and preservation of forest :
Gaon Panchayat :
i) The improvements of agriculture.
ii) The establishment of graneries etc.
- Anchalik Panchayat :
i) Development of agriculture and horticulture.
ii) Measure for encouraging soil conservation, land reclamation and tree plantation.
iii) Improvement of cattle and poultry etc.
- 8 &
9. In the sphere of breeding and protecting cattle and in the sphere of village industries :
Both G.P. & A.P. :
i) Improvement of cattle and cattle breeding and general care of live stock.
ii) Promotion, improvement and encouragement of cottage and village industries.

Duties and function of Mahkuma Parishad :

- Scrutiny and approval of A. P. Budgets.
- Reviewing the work of the A. P. from time to time.
- Giving guidance to A. P.
- Co-ordination of the work of Anchalik Panchayats pertaining to more than one A. Ps. etc.

Financial resources :

Gaon Panchayat fund consist of—

- Entire Local rate collection of G. P. area.
- 15% Land Revenue collected in the G. P. area.
- Sums received under Cattle Trespass Act of 1871.
- All receipts in respect of tax levied under the Act.
- Any other grants that Government may sanction from time to time.

Anchalik Panchayat funds consist of—

- 10% Land Revenue collected within the area of A. P.
- Receipt under Northern India Ferry Act, 1878.
- Share of sale proceeds of hats.
- Any other grant that Govt. may sanction from time to time."

In Kamrup district there were three Mahkuma Parishads namely Gauhati, Barpeta and Nalbari at Sub-divisional level. Under the Gauhati Mahkuma Parishad there were 9 Anchalik Panchayats with 179 Gaon Panchayats and under the Nalbari Mahkuma Parishad 8 Anchalik Panchayats with 212 Gaon Panchayats and under the Barpeta Mahkuma Parishad there were 8 Anchalik Panchayats with 176 Gaon Panchayats. Thus, the total number of Anchalik Panchayats were 25 and Gaon Panchayats 567 prior to the introduction of two-tier Panchayatiraj system. The following table shows the distribution of Panchayats in the district as it was prior to its re-organisation under the new Act.

Mahkuma Parishad	Anchalik Panchayat	No. of Gaon Panchayats
Gauhati	1. Rampur	24
	2. Kamalpur	18
	3. Karara	16
	4. Rani	18
	5. Boko-Bongaon	20
	6. Chamaria	14
	7. Dimoria	21
	8. Hajo	28
	9. Chaygaon	20
		179

Mahkuma Parishad	Anchalik Panchayat	No. of Gaon Panchayat
Nalbari ..	1. Borigog-Bonbhag	.. 19
	2. Tamulpur	.. 32
	3. Rangia	.. 21
	4. Borkhetri-Bonsor	.. 28
	5. Pachim Nalbari	.. 36
	6. Pub Nalbari	.. 32
	7. Baska	.. 19
	8. Tihu-Barama	.. 25
		212
Barpeta ..	1. Ruposi	.. 25
	2. Jalah	.. 18
	3. Mandia	.. 27
	4. Barpeta	.. 19
	5. Gobardhana	.. 18
	6. Bhabanipur	.. 24
	7. Bajali	.. 22
	8. Chenga	.. 23
		176

With a view to promote Rural Self Government in its real perspective, the Government of Assam enacted a new Panchayat Legislation in 1972 under the name and style of "The Assam Panchayat Raj Act 1972" and thereby repealed the Assam Panchayat Act, 1959. This new Act provides for a two-tier Panchayat Raj setup with Mahkuma Parishad in each civil sub-division of the plains districts Gaon Panchayats with a population of 15,000 to 20,000 in each. Under this Act, the erstwhile Block-level Anchalik Panchayats have been abolished and executive powers and functions assigned to the Mahkuma Parishads and the Gaon Panchayats within their own spheres of developmental activities as enumerated in the Act have also been curtailed. Here, the Mahkuma Parishads have been given a wide range of functions and powers with enhanced financial resources. The Gaon Panchayats have to act as executing agency of the Mahkuma Parishad concerned, besides their own activities with the assigned financial resources. The Development Blocks have been placed under the control of the Mahkuma Parishads. The Act has further provided for transfer of schemes and instructions of different development departments to the Mahkuma Parishads with funds and staff involved there in. A noteworthy innovation in the Act is the Committee system under which six Standing Committees on different subjects have been formed in each Mahkuma Parishad. Each Standing

Committee has been entrusted with the function of planning and implementation of schemes of their respective subject. The Presidents of the Standing Committees form the Executive Committee of the Mahkuma Parishad. The Executive Committee headed by the Chief Executive Councilor of the Mahkuma Parishad is vested with the financial and executive powers of the Mahkuma Parishad. The meetings of the Mahkuma Parishad are conducted by the Chairman of the Mahkuma Parishad elected by its Councilors from amongst themselves.

The Panchayat Raj institution has been assigned to different assets and financial resources under the provision of the Act. A share of land revenue at the rate of one rupee per capita of population viz., 45 paise per capita to M.P. 45 paise per capita to G.P. and 10 paise to the Equalisation fund of the Panchayats and the local rate at the rate of 25 paise are being allotted to the Panchayat Raj institutions. Besides, transferring of departmental schemes with funds, quite a number of independent resources such as bazars, cattle pounds, ferries, fisheries, taxation provisions on varied local items, and share of certain Government revenue are allotted under the present Act to the Panchayat Institution.

In Kamrup district, 3 Mahkuma Parishads in the Gauhati, Nalbari and Barpeta sub-divisions with 45, 38 and 46 Gaon Panchayats respectively have been functioning since 1973—74. Names of these Gaon Panchayats are enumerated in pages 613 to 618 this Chapter.

(f) **Other Local Self Governing bodies :—**

Port-Trust etc. : There are no other agencies of Local Self Governing bodies such as Port-Trust etc. in the district, besides the Gramdan Villages and the few Trusts mentioned in the chapter XVIII.

CHAPTER XV

EDUCATION

A. Historical Back ground :

Education and culture form the solid tissue of society and civilization of a particular people of a particular place. Hence, accounts of the same need to be carefully preserved for posterity.

This chapter contains the accounts of education and culture of the district of Kamrup which is comprised of the four education subdivisions of Gauhati, Barpeta, Nalbari and Rangia with a total population of 2,854, 183 (as in 1971) speaking Assamese language with a local twist.

Education during 1226—1826 (pre-British Period) :

Prior to the introduction of English education, the 'Guru-Kula System' of education was prevalent in this district as it was in other parts of the country. This system of education also met with serious blows with the inhumane aggression of the Burmese invaders. The Treaty of Yandaboo, however, made it possible to restore peace and steps were taken by the Agents of the East India Company like David Scott, Robinson and Captain Jenkins to rehabilitate and expand the indigenous system of education with the hope of winning over the heart of the people.

The aristocratic families gave their children education at home under the proper guidance of Brahmin or family scholars. Schools were held also in temples, private dwellings, houses of teachers and under the shade of big trees. Though elementary education was given mainly on the three R's, yet the higher studies consisted of Sanskrit language, literature, grammar, philosophy, the *Sastras*, Astronomy, the Vedas and the Kavyas which were imparted specially in *Tols* where the scholars, educated in Banaras and Nadia, imparted knowledge to the pupils.

(a) Historical background of the growth of Education in Kamrup district : (Early modern period)

History does not speak of an organised system of education during this period. As in other parts of India, here too, we find the same system of handing down the family trades, arts, crafts etc., to posterity.

In *satras*, education and training in *satviya* cults and crafts like music, dance, musical instrument; philosophy, religion etc., were imparted to resident students. Besides this, there was prevalent a study of Astronomy which is evident from the name *Pragjyotisha* by which present Kamrupa was then known.

Nabagraha was the main seat of this study where *Suryya-Bipras* engaged themselves in Astronomical studies and preparation of Horoscope etc. This study was, however, extremely limited and confined to a particular class. The Ahom kings Siva Sangha, Rudra Singha and Rajeswar Singha gave liberal donation of land etc., for the development of the Nabagrah *Mandir*. Gradually, indigenous schools sprang up though very few in number. These are known as *Tola*, *Pathsalas*, *Madrasas*, *Satras* and *Namghars*.

Tols : David Scott found in his time that the *tol* system was still continuing in some parts of Kamrup though it was on the verge of decay. In 1826, he obtained permission from the Government of India to promote education through this indigenous system by assigning land-grants to the *tols*. These *tols* were Gauhati *Tol*, Nilachal *tol*, Hajo *tol*, Bajali *tol* and Sila *tol*. Most of the *tols* were attached to temples. Each *Pandit* attached to these *tols* was to educate 30 pupils each through Sanskrit in Bhagawata and Ramayana and also was to teach Arithmetic, medicine and Astronomy. The *Pandits* were granted 30 puras of rent free land each. Of the *tols*, the *tol* at Shila near Barpeta was of great repute. It was an important centre of learning disseminating Sanskrit learning throughout the State and also in Koch-Bihar. In 1930, however, this seat of learning was abolished.

At present the following *tols* are still existing in Kamrup

Gauhati : Sukleswar (1964), Sanskrit Bidyapith (1970), Umachal (1972).

Barpeta: Barpeta, Sundardiya, Gomura, Bhogpur, Muguria, Bengapara and Girish Bidyapith of Pathsala, the last mentioned one is multipurpose.

Nalbari : Nalbari is regarded as *Nabadweepa* of Assam as far as Sanskrit Culture is concerned. Gandhia village of this subdivision is the most renowned and important ancient site of astrological studies in the district. Besides, there are a number of Sanskrit *tols* in this area.

Besides the above mentioned important *tols*, in 1979-80, there were found to be above thirty-nine institutions of *tol* type throughout Kamrup. Of these 24 are recognised *tols*.

The Sanskrit Board controls examination etc. of these institutions. This Board is situated at Gauhati.

Pathsalas : Unlike the *tols* there were some agencies of education which imparted education in 3 Rs. These were called Pathsalas.

Madrasa : Same as *Pathsalas* but were exclusively meant for the Muslims.

Satras and Namghars : Apart from the above formal agencies, there were and still are, the important indigenous centres of learning, the *Satras* and the *Namghars*. *Satras* are few in number whereas almost each village has its own *Namghar*. *Satras* are of higher order and have a wider jurisdiction. They are endowed with more power than the *Namghars*. The aim of these institutions though mainly religious, these might be considered to be the nerve-centres of Assam's cultural and educational life during those days. These institutions have all along served not only as centres of offering prayers and holding religious discussions but also as centres of all important functions of the society i.e. religious, social, legal, cultural, political, educational etc. These were originated by *Mahapurusha* Sankardeva and Madhavadeva. The important educational and cultural features of the *Satras* and *Namghars* are as below :

Literature : Literature available in these institutions was rich and lofty in content, expressed in a language and manner, which are at once simple and sublime and written in a style never written before. Though written ages ago, the *Kirtan*, *Dasham*, *Nat*, (one act play etc) and *Geets* (particularly *Bargeet* etc.) are still counted to be the best literature of Assam. *Sishyas* or pupils were taught to read and recite these texts in the *Satras*.

Religions : Methods of Religious teaching used in these institutions can be easily passed as most modern. Through songs, *nams*, dramas dances, *bhaonas*, *kirtans*, Drumplays etc., lessons were imparted in such a manner which attracted the minds of young and old, men and women alike. The lessons were purely spiritual no doubt, but the way, these were imparted, developed the mind as well as the body.

Cultural : Music, both vocal and instrumental, dance, crafts and acting were taught through *Satras* and *Namghars* and some professional singers called *Gayans* and professional instrumentalists called *Bayans* were trained to attain perfection in these branches for the purpose. *Nats* were trained in the art of acting to perform *Bhaonas* while the *Sutars* were taught the woodcrafts and the scheme of dye-making. These *Sutars* carved *Mukhas* (masks) motifs, different designs, images, boats, *Sarais*, *Ashans* etc. for the *Namghars* functioning under that particular *Satra* and dyed them in permitted colours.

But such types of education was for a particular section of the people only. The people, at large, remained illiterate. Ladies of respectable families were taught reading to enable them to read scriptural literatures like *Kirtan*, *Dasham*, *Namghosha*, *Epics* and *Puranas*. Their education was, however, conducted at home under the guidance of the elders. It was considered to be a luxury on the part of the rich people to allow their children to enjoy and to learn something from Sanskrit literature. The Brahmins were serious in their study, as by caste they formed a professional class who had to impart intellectual education to the pupils and to widen the horizon of their mental realm. But the agriculturists who formed the bulk of the population, wanted the development of occupational efficiency not through any formal education but informal practical experiences. Poverty compelled them to use the children as helping hands in agriculture and handicrafts.

This was in nutshell the state of education during the Ahom period which does not give a very bright picture.

B. Beginning of Western Education :

(a) **General Education :** For the sake of convenience of administration, the British kept Assam as a part of Bengal and entrusted its administration on David Scott, the first Agent of North Eastern Frontier of India. But as ill luck would have it, Assam suffered a double blow. Firstly, by coming under British rule and secondly, by being attached to Bengal. Being tagged to Bengal, Bengali was imposed in Schools of Assam instead of Assamese as the medium of instruction.

David Scott, however, was in favour of imposing indigenous education and during his time, as many as, eleven such schools were established throughout Assam. The curriculum of these schools consisted of *Satras*, Sanskrit, Grammar, Astronomy and in some schools the *Bhagavata* and the *Ramayana*. The medium of instruction was Sanskrit. Subse-

quently, Mr. Mills in his report of 1854 suggested the following steps for improvement of indigenous education :—(a) remodelling of vernacular schools (b) establishment of normal schools to train up a body of teachers, (c) creation of a separate department for the study of Sanskrit in general, (d) a Sanskrit department for *mofussil* schools and (e) two Sanskrit colleges in Upper and Lower Assam. Mr. Adams also supported the plan.

But the remodelling of the indigenous education of this region was not implemented on the line suggested by Mr. Adams in his third report and was given up by the Commissioners after Jenkins held the view that it was not worth spending. They were of the opinion like Macaulay that "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia." They wanted to introduce western education to build "a class of persons who will be Indians in blood and colour but English in tastes, opinions, morals and intellect."

David Scott was an efficient administrator in the sense that he satisfied the common people by giving importance on the expansion of indigenous schools and at the same time, wanted to open English schools to educate the people of upper and aristocratic classes of Ahom regime who lost much of the political, economic and traditional privileges in the British rule. He knew well that the chance was there, of this dissatisfied class to revolt against the Government if they were not assured of getting economic and political security. He made it a special provision to employ Assamese people in the administrative jobs and ordered his subordinates to prefer local people in the appointment of jobs. He proposed to open one English school at Gauhati but his sudden death in 1831, kept the proposal unfulfilled.

Captain Jenkins, who came as Commissioner of Assam followed the same path of David Scott. He showed deep love for the culture, tradition and literature of the province and at the same time wanted the people to be educated. He encouraged the students to go to Calcutta for higher studies and took personal responsibility in sending boys there. It was he, who sent Anandaram Dhekial Phukan and Gunabhiram Borooah to Calcutta giving them financial help even.² He submitted a scheme to the Government in which he proposed for the establishment

of English Schools in four *sadar* stations. But the General Committee of Public Instruction recommended only one English school at Gauhati. Thus, the first English teaching school was established at Gauhati in 1835 with Mr. Singer as its Head Master.³

Primary (New Elementary) Education : David Scott not only encouraged indigenous education, but also advocated for the establishment of schools for teaching of 3 R's. The policy of establishing schools for teaching of 3 R's had the support of Mr. Jenkins, the Commissioner.

In 1838, James Mathies the Collector of Gauhati submitted a plan for increase of Primary schools and also for an Anglo-Assamese school. But due to Macaulay's "filtration theory", the plan was not accepted by the Committee of Public Instruction.

In 1854, Wood's despatch recommended recognition of non-Government Schools and also a grant of Rs. 1.00 for every 10 students.⁴ This gave fillip to the establishment of new schools imparting knowledge of three R's, of course, most unfortunately, through the medium of Bengali. This state of affairs continued till 1873.

Side by side, the Missionaries too established primary schools, fortunately enough for Assam in Assamese medium. It is actually due to the effort of the Missionaries that in 1873, Assamese was introduced as medium of instruction in Primary Schools of Assam.

Local Boards, Municipality : In 1882, the Indian Education Committee entrusted the local authorities with the administration and spread of education throughout India. Accordingly in Assam, the Local Boards and the Municipalities took over charge of Primary Education. Gokhale's Bill of 1911, made things easier and the number of schools considerably increased. In 1919, education became the concern of a Minister in the cabinet and an Act was passed making Primary education compulsory. This act is known as Assam Primary Education Act, 1926. Though the act was passed, no action was taken to implement it. But due to gradual awakening of educational consciousness amongst the people, the number of schools considerably increased. The list below projects the picture of primary education in British Kamrup during the later half of the nineteenth century.

3. H. K. Barpujari : *Assam in the days of Company*, 1963, page 277.

4. *Ibid*, p. 280.

2. S. K. Bhuyan : *Early British Relations with Assam*, 1928, p. 38.

Year	Number of Schools	Number of pupils
1874—75	175	3634
1880—81	203	5106.
1890—91	219	9236.
1900—01	281	10,881

(b) **Literacy and Educational Standard :** As a result of intensive measures for the spread of education, the mass literacy movement of the pre-war period was re-oriented with the name of Social Education embracing within it the broader aspect of general improvement of the adult life with literacy as the central focus.

According to the Census of 1901, in Kamrup, the number of literate male and female per million was 68 (stated to be higher than that recorded in any other district in the Assam valley) and 2 respectively. During the decade 1901—11, literacy per million increased upto 102 among the males and 5 among the females. In the next two decades, a steady increase in the proportion of literate persons appeared for both male and female. The following table shows the details of literacy in Kamrup district as per census of 1911, 1921, and 1931.⁵

Statement showing number of male and female literates per million in Kamrup.

Per million											
Year	All ages		0-10 Years		10-15 years		15-20 Yrs.		20 and above		
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1911	54	102	5	14	2	128	9	172	12	144	5
1921	91	161	14	47	9	163	21	224	24	189	12
1931	101	174	17	74	13	136	22	228	25	204	15

5. Census of India, 1911, Vol III, Assam, part I Report, p. 91 and Census of India, 1921, Vol. III, Assam Part I Report p. 109 & Census of India, 1931, Vol. III Assam, Part I, Report, p. 160.

In 1911, and 1921, Kamrup district was the most literate with 6.53 per cent and 9.29 per cent respectively. After 1931, this district has fallen down in the ladder of literacy because of the influx of illiterate cultivators and labour immigrants of outside.

According to the Census of 1951, the percentage of literacy in the district increased to 19.83 and sex-wise distribution of literacy percentages stood at 30.4 for male and 7.53 for female. In the 1961 Census the percentage of literacy was calculated to be 27.36, the sex-wise distribution of which stood at 39.22 for male and 13.55 for female. The percentage of literacy rose to 28.77 in 1971 and that of male and female to 38.19 and 18.17 respectively. This indicates a steady rise in general literacy status of the district.⁶

In 1961, out of every 10,000 population of Assam, Kamrup district had 1,594 literates. The district had 172 villages without any school, 1,743 villages having single teacher school and 1,056 villages having multi-teacher schools. The standard of literacy in 1961 and 1971 of this district with comparison to that of Assam is shown below.⁷

Year and place	Total population	Literate (without educational level)	Primary, Junior Basic & below Matriculation.	Matriculation and above.
1961				
Assam	11,872,772	2,298,570	807,537	141,948
Kamrup	2,062,572	363,466	166,427	34,414
1971				
Assam	14,625,152	1,136,089	2,641,755	338,937
Kamrup	2,854,183	217,515	514,723	88,792

6. Census of India, 1971, Assam, General Report, p. 83.

7. Census of India, 1961, Assam, General Report, page 182, and Census of India, 1971, Assam, General Report, page 89.

As per census of 1971, out of total population of 2,854,183; 8,21,030 returned as literate and educated persons, the sex-wise division of which was 5,76,752 males and 2,44,278 females. The per-centage rate of literacy was 28.77—38.19 males and 18.17 females. This shows a considerable fall in literacy amongst male population since 1961, which was due to increase of illiterate immigrant population and general deterioration of economic condition of the common people of the district during the period.

(c) **Education amongst the Scheduled castes, and scheduled tribes :** The spread of education among women and backward classes and tribes have specially been stressed. There are junior basic, senior basic, secondary schools and full fledged colleges exclusively for girls but no such seclusion is being kept in regard to the students belonging to backward and tribal classes. Greater facilities regarding scholarship, admission, book grants, free studentship have been provided for them.

castes are slightly better. In respect of education from Matriculation and above, both are to some extent at par. In 1961, percentage of educated below Matriculation standard and above for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in Assam will be available from the following table.⁸

Year 1961	Scheduled caste	Scheduled tribe	Non-scheduled general.
Below Matriculation	24.08	23.25	27.00
Above Matriculation	.33	.33	1.46

Education among the scheduled castes and tribes made some headway during the previous decades.

It may be noted that the female folk amongst the scheduled castes are less literate than the female-folk of the scheduled tribes. But taking the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes population without any sex division, Scheduled Castes are more literate than the Scheduled tribes as is seen from the following table.⁹

8. *Census of India, 1961, Assam, General Report.* page 184.

9. *Census of India, 1961, Assam, Kamrup,* page 331-33.

Statement showing number of literates and educated amongst scheduled castes and scheduled tribes sex-wise as per 1961 Census in Kamrup.

	Total population		Literate and educated			
	Male	Female	Male		Female	
			Number	P.C.	Number	P.C.
Scheduled Tribes	114239	108149	26066	22.9	8009	7.4
Scheduled Castes	64314	53995	17813	27.70	5773	1.69

The following statement will furnish an idea about progress of education amongst the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, the two backward sections of the society in the district during 1961—71.¹⁰

	Percentage of literates and educated	
	1961	1971
Scheduled Castes	19.9%	22.04%
Scheduled Tribes	15.32%	19.02%

C. Post Independence Education :

(i) **Primary Schools :** Education in the pre-independence period was of slow growth. In 1874—75, there were 175 primary schools with 3,684 pupils. With the introduction of provincial autonomy, under the Government of India Act, 1935, education in all the stages made phenomenal progress. As against only 175 Primary Schools in the district in 1874—75, the number came to 262 in 1901—02, and 265 in 1911—12. The number rose to 1,940—50, 2,222 in 1955—56, 2,576 in 1958—59 and 3,149 in 1964—65. As regards female education number of primary schools which was 5 in 1903—4, increased to 12 in 1911—12.

Number of pupils (both boys and girls) and teachers showed below indicates the rates of increase in different periods from 1901 onward in the district :—

10. *Economic Survey, Assam, 1978-79* page 74.

Year	No. of pupils	No. of Teachers
1901—02 ..	9543	—
1949—50 ..	120481	2745
1955—56 ..	140764	3436
1958—59 ..	177180	4113
1964—65 ..	249185	5848
1979—80 ..	343007	8717

Source : Inspector of Schools, Gauhati.

The above figures show the extent of progress in education so far as the primary education in the district is concerned. A real picture of the growth of education can be obtained, when we take into consideration the progressive ideas embodied in the aims and objects of education as well as the methods of reorganisation. Far reaching changes have been brought in the context of primary education when the concept of Basic Education was introduced and gradually made an integral part of primary stage. Basic Education ultimately has been accepted as the National pattern of education in the country and accordingly, conversion of all primary schools into the basic pattern has been progressively undertaken since the country gained independence. In our state with the introduction of the Basic Education Act, 1954, proper steps to orient the primary schools in the basic pattern have been undertaken. The primary purpose of education was conceived to prepare the young boys and girls for good citizenship by inducting certain good traits and habits in them from their early childhood and to release their potential capacities in such a way as to enable them to grow to manhood to serve the society at large. Thus, it is the desired aim to develop a balanced personality and this would be possible if opportunity to creative activities is provided in the schools. Thus, the method of teaching was adopted through some socially useful craft and also the natural and social environment in which the children live.

The course of study includes Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Nature-study including some Geography and cultural activities. The instruction should be integrated and correlated with the help of a craft or the social or natural environments.

Re-organisation of administrative set up for Primary Education was undertaken in 1948 after the Primary Education Act, 1947 was enacted. Under the Act, State Primary Education Board was established and School Boards in each of the Plains sub-divisions of the district were created

in order to control and administer all the primary schools. The primary schools which were under the control of Local Boards hitherto, have been directly placed under the School Boards. Necessary funds for the payment of salaries of teachers and for the maintenance of the schools have been placed under the School Boards through the State Primary Education Board. The pay scale of the teachers has been improved to a time scale of Rs.30-40/- in place of Rs.12 to 15/- under the Local Boards. Subsequently, the scales had been further increased as follows :

Untrained	..	Rs.40-1-50/-
Trained	..	Rs.50-1-60/-
or		
Matriculate		

The scale of pay for primary school teachers was subsequently raised to Rs.125-4-200/- for Matriculate teachers, and Rs.200/-12-50 500/- for Graduate teachers and Rs.140-6-275/- for trained Matriculate teacher. For non-Matric teachers basic pay was raised to Rs.100/- and further recruitment of non-Matric teachers was stopped.

Number of Inspecting Officers have been increased for better supervision and administration of Lower Primary Schools. It may be pointed out here that a new feature in primary education has also been brought about by the enactment of Primary Education Act, 1947 which emphasised compulsory primary education for the age group of 6-11 years. The Act has been implemented since 1948-49 in certain selected areas of the district.

To keep pace with the provision of compulsion, Attendance Officers have been appointed to maintain and enforce compulsion in the district. They are to take steps to improve the attendance of the pupils in schools and to see that no pupil of the age group of 6-11 years remains unadmitted in the school.

Expansion in primary education has been made during the period since Independence. The change of ideas and ideals brought by Independence was sought to be reflected most in Education. Efforts are made so that attention of education could be shifted from class to mass as per the Constitution. Endeavour was made to create a mass zeal for self dependency and self-sufficiency and as a result, instead of Primary Education, Basic system of education began to be more and more emphasized. Unlike the existing primary schools, the Basic schools were craft centred and agriculture was introduced as one of the crafts to make the schools self-sufficient. In 1954, Basic Education Act was passed and the

State Government renamed the Board of Primary Education as the Board of Basic education with the Education Minister as its President. Following this act, some of the Primary Schools were transformed into Junior Basic Schools.

In 1962, Assam Primary Education Act was amended making Primary education free and compulsory. This act is known as Assam Elementary Education Act, 1962.

By March, 1974, the enrolment of students in the district stood at 3,38,299 of which 2,04,181 were boys and 1,34,118 girls. In 1979-80, however, enrolment rose to 3,43,007.

Number of Primary and pre-primary schools, however, increased as is illustrated by the following table.

Statement showing number of primary and pre-primary schools in the district with number of students in the roll from 1959-60 to 1979-80.

Year	1959-60	1960-61
1. Primary and Junior Basic School	2,730	2,984
Students	1,97,062	2,12,477
2. Pre-primary and Nursary school	1	1
Students	42	55
	1979-80	
1. No. of Schools (Primary)	3,995	
Students	3,43,007	
2. No. of Schools (pre-primary)	123	
Students	4,603	

Source :—Inspector of Schools, Gauhati.

Efforts are being made to improve the standard of Primary Education by raising the number both of schools and teachers and arranging Teachers Education Programmes and increasing pay etc., of teachers. Steps are also being taken to educate the parents to educate their children.

(ii) Secondary Schools : Middle English, Middle Vernacular, Madrassa, Senior Basic, High and Higher Secondary Schools : Along with the expansion of Primary Education, Secondary Education also made progress during the 20th century. The extent of growth can be viewed from the tabular statement given below :—

Year	No. of High Schools	No. of Pupils	No. of Middle Schools	No. of Pupils
1901-02	3	291	3	280
1949-50	52	18,051	174	18,481
1956-57	94	32,787	309	32,669
1958-59	117	42,118	337	40,006
1964-65	187	67,253	487	56,615
1979-80	486	123,700	721	1,01,131

The Secondary Education comprises the stage after the primary stage below the University stage. It includes different types of Schools, High Schools affiliated to the Board of Secondary Education where boys and girls are prepared for the Matriculation Examination Middle English Schools, comprising the three lower classes of a High School, impart education after the primary stage. Middle Vernacular schools are institutions with three classes after the primary stage where generally English is not taught but greater emphasis put on teaching of mother tongue and Arithmetic in place of English. Senior Basic Schools are in continuation of the Junior Basic Schools where the courses are slightly different from the M. V. Schools with emphasis on craft. The teaching is given through the method of correlation as in the case of Junior Basic Schools. English is taught in such schools. Recently, however, English is introduced in the M. V. Schools also as an additional subject.

These schools which are higher than Primary but lower than secondary, are known as Higher Primary or Lower Secondary, as far as their stages are concerned. As they are either growths of primary schools or independent institutions, serve as bases for secondary schools. However, they follow the same curriculum. The course of instruction of Middle English, Middle Vernacular, Madrassa and Senior Basic is the same, with the exception that English is taught in the former i.e. in M. E. and not in the latter i.e. in M. V. Madrassa and Senior Basic.

Classes in M E., M. V. & Madrassa.

Independent Schools - Classes V to VIII.

Growth of Primary Schools - Class I to VIII (I-IV Pr + V to VIII).

Basic of Secondary Schools - Classes V-X (V-VIII Middle + IX, X High).

Subjects taught in these schools are Assamese/Bengali, History, Geography, Arithmetic, Elements of Geometry, Mensuration of plane surface, Surveying, Botany and Agriculture.

The Madrassas are exclusively meant for the Muslims. Arabic is, therefore, taught in these schools over and above the common curriculum. In Kamrup district, in 1959-60, there were 360 such schools with 44,676 students in the roll, next year in 1960-61. number of schools rose to 386 with 46853 students. In 1979-80, number of these schools increased from 418 in 1971 to 721, with new enrolment of 1,01,131 students.

Historical Background of regular Secondary Education : As a result of Lord Bentinck's educational policy, High English Schools were established throughout India in 1835. In Assam, too, the first High English School was established at Gauhati, Kamrup district in the same year.

Assam could have her own Education Department only in 1874 when she was detached from Bengal. From 1874 to 1906, the department was under an Inspector of Schools. In 1906, Mr. Sharp became the Head of the Department of Education in Assam. As Government encouraged establishment of High English Schools by giving grants and as well as appointments to the students passing out of these schools, quite a number of such schools were established by the people. The Missionaries, too, opened some such schools. By 1882, Government established one such school in each district of Assam to serve as an ideal.

The medium of instruction in the first High English School in Assam was Bengali till it was replaced by Assamese later in 1872. Till 1937, when Assamese was the medium of instruction in Assam High Schools, English was the medium of instruction for higher education.

High Schools of Assam were under the Calcutta University till 1947. From 1948, along with the opening of the Gauhati University, all the High schools came under it.

The Middle English Schools continued to be under the control of the Education Department and the Middle Vernacular and the Senior Basic

Schools came under the control of the different School Boards after the enactment of the Basic Education Act, in 1954.

The Middle English Schools are generally under the control of their respective Managing Committees subject to control of the Education Department. The Government advances aids to these schools for their maintenance through the Department.

For better supervision and inspection of the High Schools, one Inspectorate with headquarters at Gauhati was created in 1951 with the jurisdiction over the districts of Lower and Southern Assam and later its jurisdiction was reduced with the creation of Western Assam Education Circle at Dhuburi.

For all-round improvement of the schools in the secondary stage, great encouragement has been provided by Government for development of physical, cultural and moral aspects for the students. More liberal grants have been provided for development of physical activities in the shape of games and sports. Opportunities have been provided for cultural contact and development of such activities. Greater facilities have been advanced to the backward classes, scheduled and tribal people by award of scholarships, book grants and through provision for universal free-education for scheduled castes and tribes students.

The aided and recognised High Schools in the district in 1963-64 were as follows.

Gauhati subdivision	.. 112
Barpeta subdivision	.. 44

Some of these have recently been converted to Higher Secondary Schools. Subsequently, the district was divided into four educational subdivisions under one Deputy Inspector of schools each. These subdivisions are (1) Gauhati, (2) Barpeta, (3) Nalbari and (4) Rangia.

Number of High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools in the district increased from 156 in 1971 to 486 in 1978-79 showing a tremendous advancement within the span of 8 years.

Secondary Schools in Kamrup district (Sub-division-wise);

Gauhati Sub-division :

Cotton Collegiate School : The first English school to satisfy the long cherished aspirations of the local people came into being in 1835, under the name of Gauhati Seminar, now known as Cotton Collegiate School.

It is the first English High School of Assam. The most unfortunate event which proved to be the first unwise action done by the British administration took place with the starting of this school, resulting in age-long mistrust and communal venom between the two sections of the people living in Assam, but for which, these two communities could have lived eternally with natural love, friendship and win the greatest understanding. This unwise action was the introduction of Bengali as the Court Language and the medium of instruction in Assam schools. Gauhati Seminar was established in 1835 with classes IV to X. Captain Jenkin's contribution towards building up of this school was great. Local people too contributed liberally to its growth as this was the fulfilment of their cherished desire.¹¹ The first Headmaster of this school was Mr. Singer on a salary of Rs.150/-per month. In 1838, he was succeeded by Mr. Robinson who was getting a salary of Rs.300- per month. The Headmaster with two other teachers, one Bengali and the other Assamese, imparted education to the pupils. The medium of instruction in lower classes was Bengali, and was English in upper classes. In spite of the eagerness of the people and also of the pupils, progress of English education was, however, very slow and this was probably due to the system of education, particularly, the medium of instruction.

Rapid increase in the number of pupils was found from the Bengal Educational Report of 1836, which stated that the student enrolment increased up to 113 at the end of 1835, which was 58 only in the beginning. In 1837, the number of pupils increased from 136 to 154 of which 36 were Muslims, one Christian and 117 Hindus. The subjects taught were English composition, History, Geography, Grammar, Mathematics and Bengali. The books that were recommended were Murray's Spelling book, Marchman's Brief survey of History, Scholar's Spelling Assistant, Cliff's First Geography, Elements of Grammar and Lennie's Grammar with notes. The Headmaster with two teachers—one in Bengali and the another in English—imparted knowledge to the pupils.

The Calcutta University recognised the Gauhati School in 1858 as an Entrance Examination School for the first time. In 1864, the first batch to appear in the Entrance Examination included such illustrious sons of Assam as Ananda Ram Barooah, Jallnur Ali Ahmed, Sibaram Bora and Madhab Chandra Bordoloi. Later on, on repeated representations from Mr. Robinson, Inspector of Schools for Assam and his successor Mr. Murray, in May 1866, the Collegiate section was opened in this School

11. H. K. Barpujari : *Assam in the Days of Company*, 1963, page. 279.

to prepare local indigenous students for F. A. Examination.¹² Since that time the School has been known as the Collegiate School.

Sonaram High School : The second school in Kamrup district is Sonaram High School. It was founded in 1864 and named after Late Sonaram Rajmedhi, the donor. Late Tarun Ram Phukan had permanently established the School at Bharalumukh, Gauhati. The first Headmaster of the School was Late Bipin Chandra Chakravarty. This School had the fortune of having Late Gopinath Bordoloi and Late Syed Shadulla as its Headmaster and Assistant Headmaster. The most significant feature of this School was its contribution towards furtherance of National Spirit. During the Non-co-operation Movement of pre-Independence period the School made substantial contribution.

Kamrup Academy : The third school of the district is the Kamrup Academy, established in 1940. The significance of this school lies in the fact that this was opened defying the Government circular of the then Director of Public Instruction, Mr. Cunningham, making it obligatory on the part of parents to give an undertaking that their children would not take part in Civil Disobedience Movement. The School was permanently established in its present place by Late Gopinath Bordoloi.

Arya-Vidyapith H.S. & M.P. School : The establishment of this school in 1958, was a contribution to the people by late Giridhar Sarma, a renowned Assamese. At present, it is one of the best schools in this district. The total enrolment in the School in 1978, was 775.

All the above four Schools are now Higher Secondary and Multi-purpose Schools. The Sonaram, the Kamrup Academy and the Arya-Vidyapith Schools have been provincialised in 1977. All these Schools follow the curriculum prescribed by the Board of Secondary Education, Assam.

Panbazar Girls' High School : The first High School for Girls in Gauhati was the Panbazar Girl's High School. This is a growth from the original L.P. School for Girls which was established in 1883, and subsequently raised to M.V. and M.E. in 1897 and 1919 respectively. The High School sections were given start in 1926. The first batch from this school appeared in the Entrance (Matriculation) Examination of Calcutta University in the year 1929. The School being the only Girl's High School in Gauhati, it catered to the needs of Assamese and Bengalis equally. Of late, the School caters to the need of Assamese girls only, as Schools have been opened for Bengali girls separately.

12. H. K. Barpujari : *A Short History of Higher Education in Assam (1926-1900)* an article published in the Golden Jubilee Volume, 1951-52, Cotton College, P. 15

Today, the strength of the school is 1200. Another girls' school known as Tarini Charan Girls' School had been established after the name of Late Tarini Charan Choudhury. It is a government Higher Secondary and Multipurpose School and it follows the curriculum prescribed by the Board of Secondary Education, Assam.

There are 2 Secondary Schools run by the Missionaries one for boys and the other for girls. These are Donbosco (Boys) and St. Marys' (Girls). Both are High Schools. St. Marys' has pre-primary and primary sections attached to it. The medium of instruction is English in St. Marys' and in Donbosco both English and Assamese.

There are a number of other Boys' and Girls', High Schools in Gauhati, all of which were established in different parts of the city to cater to educational need of the expanding city. In the same way, many other Schools at every stage have sprang up throughout the district on public effort and public demands during last few decades. Names of all these Schools could not be furnished.

Central Schools : These Schools run by the Central Govt. are also there at Gauhati. One is situated at Narengi, one at Kahikuchi and the other at Khanapara. These Schools are known as Central Schools and cater to the need of the children of the Central Government employees mainly. The Schools take other students as well. The medium of instruction in these Schools are both English and Hindi.

Besides the Central Schools, there are a number of English medium Schools in Gauhati. Some such Schools are (1) Donbosco School (2) Saint Mary's Convent, (3) Saint Nichols School (4) Sacred Heart School, (5) South point Montessori (6) Little Flower, (7) Holy Child, (8) Udaygiri (9) Montessori Bhawan, (10) Faculty School, (11) Mandakini, (12) Satsai School, (13) D.A.V. School, (14) River-View Montessori School etc.

Most of these Schools initially started as pre-Primary Schools, later on, developed into Higher Secondary stage. A few, however, still remain at their pre-Primary and Primary stages.

After Independence people became increasingly conscious of education and as such quite a number of schools sprang up. In 1971, there were a good number of Secondary Schools in Gauhati Sub-division.

The number of the Higher Secondary Schools was 8 (7 boys, 1 girl's) with enrolment of 5,450 boys and 970 girls.

The number of the High Schools was 138 (117 for boys 21 for girl's) with enrolment of 28,784 boys and 17,093 girls.

The number of the Middle School was 261 (235 for boys + 26 girls) with enrolment of 18,431 boys and 14,105 girls.

Barpeta Sub-division : Barpeta High School : The first High School at Barpeta was a growth of the then existing Middle English School there. In 1871, it was raised to the status of a High English School. Unfortunately due to shortage of fund the School was again reduced to the Middle English School and allowed to continue as such till 1879. In 1880, with the help of some benevolent well-wishers, the institution again became a High School and presented its students for Entrance Examination in 1884. But as ill-luck would have it, here was again a set back in 1891-92. This time, the Government also gave some aid and in 1914, it was provincialised. In 1958, it was raised to a Higher Secondary School. The first Headmaster of this School was late Babu Jogendra Nath Sanyal (1880-86). This School has the credit of producing the following great sons of Assam :

Late Bani Kanta Kakoty (Scholar), Late Gopinath Bordoloi (Ex-Chief Minister of Assam), Late Kameswar Das (Ex-Chairman, Assam Public Service Commission) Late H.K. Bhuyan (Ex-Director of Public Instruction; Secretary, Education; Vice-Chancellor Gauhati University; Chairman, Assam Public Service Commission), Shri Radha kanta Das (Mathematician) Late Hali Ram Deka (Ex-Chief Justice High Court, Assam) and Shri Dharmananda Das (Ex-Chief Secretary, Government of Assam).

Barpeta Bidyapith : This was established in 1930. Like Sonaram School of Gauhati, this School too was established during the Freedom Movement as a National School.

In 1972, the number of Schools in Barpeta Sub-division was as follows : Higher Secondary, 4 (boys and girls) with 4,397 boys and 78 girls. High Schools, 108 (86 for boys + 22 for girls) with 21,222 boys and 8,374 girls and Middle Schools, 219 (191 for boys + 28 for girls) with 19,213 boys and 4,085 girls.

Nalbari Sub-division : Gordon High School is the first High School of this Sub-division. It was a growth from the then existing Middle English School which was founded in 1917. The School was named after Lt-Col. P.R.T. Gordon, the then Commissioner of Assam Valley. From 1959, it has been made a Higher Secondary School. There are two other important High Schools in Nalbari town. These are (1) the Datta Barua High

School and (2) the Mahendra Choudhury Girls' High School. Both the Schools were established out of the public donations.

In 1971, number of schools in Nalbari was as follows:— Higher Secondary Schools, 2 (boys and girls with 289 boys and 35 girls.) High School, 83 (75 for boys and 8 for girls) with 11,510 boys and 4,262 girls and Middle Schools, 195 (171 for boys and 24 for girls) with 17,696 boys and 9,203 girls.

Rangia Sub-division : Because of the location of the place, this educational Sub-division appears to be slightly backward than the other three Sub-divisions. In 1971, there were the following Schools in the Sub-division : High Schools : 27 (24 for boys + 3 for girls) with 4,546 boys and 1,267 girls and Middle Schools : 52 (47 for boys + 5 for girls) with 3,722 boys and 2,693 girls.

Types of Schools : Till 1977, there were three types of Secondary Schools.

1) Government Schools : All cost of these schools are borne by the government. The Higher Secondary Schools throughout the district are of this category.

2) Government Aided Schools : These schools receive aid from the government under Deficit Grant system.

3) Private Schools : This type of schools are established at public initiative and subsequently receive adhoc grants from the Government on fulfilment of certain prescribed conditions. From 1977, as per Government decision all schools have been provincialised and school-education upto secondary level have been declared free from April, 1978. The following table shows the progress of Secondary Education in the district from 1967 to 1977:—

District	Year	Mid/High/H.S. Schools	No. of teachers	
			trained	Untrained
Kamrup	1967—68	799	1,397	4,934
	1968—69	834	1,519	5,068
	1969—70	858	1,605	5,084
	1970—71	894	1,740	5,187
	1971—72	952	1,874	5,472
	1972—73	980	1,894	5,690
	1973—74	1027	2,132	5,974
	1974—75	1 041	2,145	6,193
	1975—76	1 089	2,231	6,388
	1976—77	1,097	2,369	6,618

(ii) **Standard of Education :** Since Independence Class Education has changed into Mass Education. This has resulted in an increased number of schools with number of students.

Naturally, the quality of education has to yield to quantity and the academic standard has suffered. This is mainly due to dearth of adequate number of qualified teachers, and also non-availability of proper facilities.

The Board of Secondary Education with its Education Officers occasionally organises short courses of training for the teachers to acquaint them with modern educational development and bring them up to the mark to handle effectively the changed curriculum and also the new situation arising out of increased number of pupils.

N.C.E.R.T (National Council for Education, Research and Training) also organises short courses of training of teachers independently as well as in collaboration with the Board to drive in the new ideas of productivity, Work-experience, Evaluation, Vocationalisation, new approach to teaching of Science etc.

As recommended by Kothari Commission, in education, the main emphasis is laid on teaching of Science and Vocational education.

For improving the standard of teaching of English, there is also a Teacher's Training Course in English attached to Gauhati University.

(iv) **Teacher's Education :**

Primary : Normal Schools for training of Primary School teachers were opened throughout the State. The first such school was opened at Jorhat. The aim of these schools was to train vernacular teachers in techniques of teaching for Primary as well as Middle Schools. At the beginning the trainees were all deputed and now non-deputed trainees too take admission. Besides, Normal schools, there are also the Basic Training Centres for training of teachers for Junior Basic Schools which are now categorised as the primary schools.

In Kamrup, district there are the following Normal schools and Basic Training centres :

Normal school at Howly and Basic Training Centres at (1) Howly, (2) Mirza, (3) Rangia, (4) Nalbari and (5) Chenga.

The curriculum followed in the schools is more or less the same but more emphasis on craft is given in the Basic Training Centres. The subjects taught are the principle and methods of teachings, content of various school subjects up to Matriculation standard, Drill etc.

Previously the qualification required of the trainees was pre-matric but now the standard has been raised to Matriculation.

The Government also established the State Institute of Education in 1964 and State Institute of Science Education in 1978 for research and organised training also for improving the quality of teachers of primary schools. The State Institute of Science Education is situated at Gauhati and the State Institute of Education at Jorhat.

Secondary: Prior to Independence, there was practically no provision for training of secondary school teachers. A microscopic few candidates were trained in St. Edmands College and St. Mary's College of Shillong, and they appeared under the Calcutta University.

Only in 1949, a Department of Bachelor of Teaching was opened under the Gauhati University. This department was closed later on. In 1957, Government opened the first B.T. College of the State at Jorhat.

In Kamrup district, the first training college was opened in 1967 at Gauhati and named after Banikanta Kakati, the illustrious scholar of Assam. It is a private enterprise with an aid from the Government. Besides this, there is no other B.T. College in the whole of the district.

There is a Hindi Training College for teachers in North Gauhati. It was established in 1969. The College runs two courses, - one for undergraduates and the other for graduates.

College Education : Back ground : The then Inspector of Schools, Mr. Robinson (1841-1864) mooted the idea of establishment of a local College pointing out the fact that the people of Assam were reluctant to send their sons to Dacca or Calcutta on account of their apprehensions of ill-treatment that might be meted out to the students and supported

his plea by citing the fact of non-utilisation of a few scholarships that were made available for students of Assam.¹³

In May 1866, Mr. Robinson's successor Mr. Murray opened the first Arts classes in the Gauhati School (the present Cotton Collegiate School)

The school was then staffed with a band of scholars and an acting Professor of Baranasi College, Sri Lakshinarayan Das was brought in to serve as a Headmaster. Subsequently, F.A. classes in 1866, and Law classes in 1870, were also opened in the school.

But the attempt to establish higher educational institution in the state soon met with gloom and despair. There were mainly two reasons for this. The medium of instruction in the upper classes was English and the Lower classes Bengali. The students were, therefore, made to suffer under two foreign languages with consequent deterioration in the result of the school. This defective method of teaching together with the maintenance of inadequate staff of teachers further deteriorated the institution. Mr. Mills, in his report, rightly pointed it out as "the low progress made in English schools in Assam may be (imputed) more to defects in the system of education than to the want of zeal and promptitude on the part of students". Yet another cause of despair was that the average expenditure per head of a student of the collegiate school was Rs. 1,086.00 whereas the figure was much lower in the Presidency College of Calcutta i.e. Rs. 210.00 only. Hence, from the economical point of view also the school was found to be untenable and, therefore, demoted to its former status.¹⁴

In the meantime, two illustrious sons of Assam namely late Manik Chandra Barua and late Rai Bahadur Jagannath Barua while prosecuting their studies at Calcutta Presidency College, submitted a memorandum to the then Viceroy, Lord North Brook. In response to their prayer, the Viceroy visited Gauhati and acquainted himself with all the problems of educational requirements in the region.

At last, the then Chief Commissioner of Assam, Henry Stedman Cotton disclosed in a public reception on November 3, 1899, that a second grade Government College was going to be started at Gauhati. Accordingly, the college was started in 1901. The students of the first batch were Sir Md. Sayed Shadulla, Iswar Praasid Barua, Kamakhya Ram Barooah, Girish

13. Assam Commissioner's office File No. 502, 1862 : *Report of Mr. Robinson, Inspector of Schools Assam*, to the Commissioner of Assam, dated 4th October, 1862.

14. *Ibid*, p. 16.

Chandra Bardoloi, Umanath Gohain, Bibhobananda Chouduri etc. Thus began an era of advanced education in the district as well as in the state.

The district had 32 (thirty-two) established colleges and venture colleges for general education in 1976, against 17 (seventeen) in 1964. It is, thus, apparent that the number of colleges in the district do not compare with the figure of 1901-02, when there was only one college with 57 students. It may be mentioned in this connection that the number of college-going students in the year 1975-76 rose to 25,972 against 5,515 of 1958-59 in the whole of the district. Beside these, there are 8 more colleges on vocational and professional subjects in the district, number of students in which were 3,580 in 1975-76.

Cotton College, Gauhati : The first College of Assam, was formally opened on 27th May, 1901, by Sir Henry John Stedman Cotton at Gauhati. The College was named after him as Cotton College. The College began with 45 students in the 1st year of I.A. class and about the same number in 2nd year. Late F.W. Sudmerson was the first Principal of the College. It is needless to say that Late Sudmerson was the most loving yet most vigilant hard task master to whom the College owes its best nourishment in its infancy for a healthy growth.

The College was a Government College from the beginning as such its physical want as well as other facilities regarding library were quite good. It was affiliated to the Calcutta University and remained as such till 1948 i.e., the opening of the Gauhati University. The percentage of pass showed a continued steep rise at the beginning

1902	.. 40%
1905	.. 51%
1906	.. 65.38%
1907	.. 96.65%

In 1909, the College was granted affiliation for I.Sc. and B.A. ; in 1910, B.Sc. was opened and affiliated. B.A. Honours was started from 1913. The College was residential from the beginning. The College had late Dr. S. K. Bhuyan, Khan Saheb Mahibullah, Dr. B. K. Kakaty, Dr. H. K. Bhuyan all illustrious sons of Assam, in its staff. In 1912, there were 2,000 students. The first female student was admitted in 1929, and co-education was given start to in the College. In 1933, there were 2 girls in I.Sc. Now every third student of the total enrolment of over 1,900, is a girl. In 1940 the College had the first Lady Professor, and the

number rose to 12 in 1962. At present, there are altogether 135 Professors and Lecturers, the male being 104 and female 31. The College celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in 1961. In 1979-80, the old administrative building of the college has been replaced by a R. C. C. building. The College has its own Auditorium Hall known as Union Hall which is being used for conducting different examinations and conferences of both the college and the Government. The old auditorium known as Sudmerson Hall is now used as a class room.

At present, there are seven boys' hostels and 2 girls' hostels providing accommodation to hundreds of students.

In 1969, the Govt. decided to start Posts-graduate classes in Physics in Cotton College. Since then this department has become a full-fledged P. G. Department. Also in 1975, P. G. teaching in Botany, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Biology was started. Recently teachings in same Arts subject also have opened up by the department.

The College has grown in size and strength now. At present, there are over 1,900 students learning in this institution. The following table will show the size of enrolment every year since 1973.

Year	Total enrolment	Boys	Girls.
1973-74	1,955	1,499	456
1974-75	1,959	1,344	615
1975-76	1,878	1,360	518
1976-77	1,850	1,340	510
1977-78	1,881	N.A.	N.A.

The figures for 1976-77 and 1977-78 do not include Post-graduate students. The number of Post-graduate students in 1977-78, was 56 in previous and 20 in final.

A large number of scholarships have been instituted at the college to help and encourage the poor and meritorious students.

The Cotton College library is one of the best libraries in Assam. The number of books in the library was, 2,200 in 1909-10 and 5,000 in 1915. At present, the figure touched 65,000. Moreover, the number of journals subscribed to by the library is over 40.

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KAMRUP DISTRICT GAZETTEER

It is a better organised library and better used by the students of the College.

Bhola Barua College : In order to commemorate the name of Late Bhola Nath Barua, the industrial magnet of Assam, his nephew Sri Keshab Kanta Barua of Gauhati, founded Bhola Barua College in Gauhati. The entire deficit in the budget of the college was borne by the founder till the college became self sustained. It was opened in 1942, with I. Com. and I.A. classes under the Calcutta University.

During the 2nd World War, the college had a set back and could function properly from August, 1943, with 15 students only. Late G. N. Bordoloi was the first Principal of the college. As there was a great need for college education within 4 years, the college had as big a number of students as was sufficient to make the college self sustained. Some of the eminent scholars of the town volunteered to render honorary teaching services in the institution for first few years. In 1948, the college got itself affiliated to Gauhati University. B.A. classes were opened in 1952. It is an aided college and has 2 shifts both in day and evening.

Handique Girls' College The much needed girls' college was established under the name of Gauhati Girls' College in 1939, in the Panbazar, Girls' High School building. The name of the college was subsequently changed to Handique Girls' College as K. K. Handique donated a substantial amount towards the college offering both Arts and Science classes upto degree level. The first Principal of the college was Smti Rajabal Das, whose untiring labour of love for female education brought the college into existence.

Now, this institution has attained the status of one of the best degree colleges in Arts. The number of students has been progressively increasing, in January, 1961, the number of students was 500.

The college has two Girls' hostels for providing accommodation to the girls from outside Gauhati.

Gauhati College : Another degree college named Gauhati College was established in 1964, under the initiative of general public of east Gauhati. It is a government aided college, under deficit system. The present enrolment is 1,038 ; out of which 902 are boys and 136 girls.

There are other two colleges, (1) Gauhati Commerce College and (2) Jnanadabhiram Barua Law College in east Gauhati. Both these colleges are prospering very well and educational standard of these two colleges has been proved to be very high.

Besides, a few more colleges viz., Dispur College, R.G. Barua College, (both for boys and girls), Kanya Mahavidyalaya and K. B. Girls, College (both Girls Colleges), have been established recently.

Nalbari College : The necessity of starting a college at Nalbari to provide facilities for higher studies was felt as early as 1935 and in a public meeting presided over by late T.R. Phookan, it was decided to start I.A. classes in the proposed Sanskrit College. For some practical difficulties, however, the idea of opening I.A. classes in the Sanskrit College had to be abandoned. A fresh decision was arrived at to establish a new college independent of the Sanskrit College. An organising committee was formed with Sri S. K. Dutta, I. C. S., the then Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup as President and Sri Prabhat Ch. Goswami M.A., B.L. as its Secretary.

The Committee in co-operation with men like Sri Sarat Ch. Goswami, Inspector of Schools and Rai Sahab Sri Pratap Narayan Choudhury raised an amount fairly sufficient to start I.A. classes with effect from the session 1945-46 in the local Public Library and the Theatre Hall for want of better accommodation. This arrangement continued till 1949 when classes were shifted to well-ventilated and airy buildings constructed in the spacious field of Japarkuchi, a village about little over a kilometre to south from the Nalbari station. The people of the village of Japarkuchi showed a sense of magnanimity and far-sightedness by allowing without protest the use of their village Grazing Reserve for establishment of the college. The college owns an area of about 5.388949 hectares of the land out of that reserve. With the shifting of classes to the new buildings, affiliation upto B.A. degree was secured under the Gauhati University and the college was raised to that standard. There was further expansion of branches of study when science section upto I. Sc standard was started in 1958.

The college started with an enrolment of only 28 students in the 1st year I.A. class in 1945-46 but in 1960-61, it had 530 students.

The college was affiliated since its inception in the year 1945 under the Calcutta University as a second grade Arts College. It was

raised to the degree standard of the Gauhati University with effect from 1948 and later science subjects were also introduced upto I. Sc standard in 1958.

The college has twenty members of the teaching staff including the Principal. There is limited hostel accommodation for 60 students only. The college owns a very good library. There is provision for both outdoor and indoor games in the college. Besides reading room facilities, students are given training in extra-curricular activities through the different branches of the College Union. The college has so far been able to maintain a uniformly good result in all the University Examinations.

M. C. College, Barpeta : To impart higher education to the students of Barpeta and its neighbouring areas, the Madhab Choudhury College was founded in 1939, with a donation of Rs. 10,000/- from a generous lady, Srimati Jibanlata Choudhuri of Barpeta town on condition to run the college after the name of her deceased husband, Sri Madhab Chandra Choudhuri. The institution had the honour to being opened by the then Education Minister of Assam, Sri Gopinath Bordoloi on the 4th of July, 1939 in the Barpeta Vidyapith High English School where it was housed for about 6 years. Soon after, it was shifted to the present site, a newly constructed thatched house which sustained a severe damage during 1942. The college received donations from other public also.

The college was started with 30 students. The number gradually but very slowly increased and at present, the number of students in the college is 620 including 19 girls.

The college was started as a 2nd grade Arts college. It was affiliated to Calcutta University upto I.A. standard. The affiliation of the college upto I.A. standard was however transferred to Gauhati University when this University was established in 1948. The college obtained affiliation from Gauhati University upto B.A. standard in English, Assamese, History, Economics and Philosophy. The I. Sc. classes have since been opened and affiliation from the Gauhati University in Science subjects has been received.

The first batch appeared in the I. A. Examination in 1948, and the first batch appeared in the B.A. examination in 1950.

The College has a good library, and a games fund of its own. The College team is very good in Volley-ball and Football and every

year participated in the All-Assam Inter College sports festivals and won for it the Volley Ball Trophy during 1957 and 1958.

The college building is situated at the northern out-skirts of the town. Construction of more buildings for accommodation of science classes also has recently been made.

The student's hostel attached to the college consists of four blocks and has provision for 72 seats. There is a new block to accommodate the scheduled caste students. The college provides facilities for training of students in senior division of N.C.C.

Pragjyotish College : Pragjyotish College was started in 1954, as an evening college in the building of Sonaram High School at Bharalumukh, Gauhati, to meet the growing demand of one more college at Gauhati. The college had a strength of 180 students at the very start.

The college opened a day section in 1957 in a thatched building on a plot of land consisting about 2.8085.21 hectares of land at Santipur Gauhati, granted by the State Government. The main building of the college was completed in 1958, and in the same year, it got affiliation upto I.A. standard.

The I. Sc. class was started in August, 1958, and a separate building for laboratory was constructed. The University affiliation upto I. Sc. standard was granted in 1960.

B.A. Class was also started in 1958. University had granted affiliation upto B.A. standard in 1960. The first batch of I. Sc. and B.A. candidates had appeared in 1960. The College started B. Sc Classes from July, 1960.

The college maintains a good library. It has two shifts, one regular at day time and the other in the evening.

The real strength in March, 1960, was nearly 1,400 students in both the shifts.

There is no hostel at present but the State Government has granted a hillock for this purpose. The work of construction has just been started.

Arya Vidyapith College : The Arya Vidyapith College, Gauhati was started in July, 1958, in the premises of the Arya Vidyapith Higher

Secondary Multipurpose School which was also established in January, 1958. The Arya Vidyapith College was established with the avowed objective of making it a residential institution. The Government was kind enough to allot a plot of land measuring 4.0417117 hectares to the college on the Lakhra Road near the Bharalu river. The management was thinking to accommodate all the academic buildings both for the college and the school in the same campus to create an educational atmosphere, and all the hostel buildings both for the college and the school conveniently in another campus.

Along with the reorganisation of the college education by converting all the colleges to Three Years Degree Course from 1962, the management of the Arya Vidyapith College also started 3rd Year B.A. Class from the session of 1960-61.

During March, 1961, there were 262 students in all the classes (1st year 114, 2nd year 108 & 3rd year 40). In 1980, the number of students in the college rapidly increased.

Bajali College, Pathsala : The necessity of a college in the educationally backward parts of North Kamrup specially of the Bajali Circle and its neighbourhood was keenly felt by its people for long. To remove this long felt need and also to bring higher education within the reach of all, particularly of the poorer section, the people of Bajali took a momentous decision to start a 2nd grade college in both Arts & Science at Pathsala as early as January, 1951. Practical shape to the project was, however, delayed due to various reasons and in fulfilment of a part of of the project, the 1st year I.A. classes only in certain subjects were started as the nucleus of the Bajali College on 5.7.55. About 6.928224 hectares of land were purchased, several lacs of bricks for building purposes were burnt in the college ground with support of public contributions mainly of the people of Bajali. Two notable amounts advanced as well as the contribution offered by the traders of Pathasala Bazar gave enormous impetus to the workers and supporters of the College.

At the beginning of the 1st year, the classes were held in the premises of the Bajali High School in the morning but after some time, shifted to its own buildings. Affiliation to the I. A. standard in certain subjects was granted with effect from 1958.

With beginning of the session, 1959-60, Science section was also opened in the college.

The College was declared open by the Chief Minister of Assam B. P. Chalika on 18.11.58. The old Arts College building has been converted for science sections and reconstructed and remodelled accordingly. In the building, laboratories, lecture-halls, stores have been set up and equipped according to need.

During February, 1961, the strength of the students was 294 in all and in 1978, the number increased to several hundreds. It has a good library.

Pandu College : The Pandu College was formally opened on 5th September, 1961 to cater to the needs of students residing in and about Pandu, Amingaon, Maligaon, Jalukbari, Azra and Kamakhya. The enrolment of 533 students at the very start of the college showed the great need that went unregarded in the past.

The college was started as a night college with P. U. and Three Years Degree Course Arts classes only. Subsequently day shift in Pre-university science classes upto 2nd year and Degree course classes had been opened. Gradually Honours courses in different Arts and Science subjects with regular science section have been introduced.

In 1964, the number of students in the college were as follows :

P.U. Science	..	140
P.U. Arts	..	260
1st year T.D.C.	..	176
2nd year T.D.C.	..	213
3rd Year T.D.C.	..	142

Number of students increased manifold in recent years. The percentage of results of this college is also encouraging.

At present, there are colleges in almost all the important towns and trade sites of the district.

Some of these colleges such as (1) Barnagar College, Sorbhog, (2) B.H. College, Howli, (3) Mirza College, Palashbari, (4) Tihu College, Tihu, (5) Rangia College, Rangia ; have developed very speedily.

Gauhati University : The Gauhati University was established in 1948, by an Act "to established and constitute a teaching, residential and affiliating University at Gauhati", passed by the Assam Legislative Assembly with jurisdiction over all the schools and colleges in Assam. A detailed account of the growth and functioning of the University is given below.

Under the Gauhati University Act, the Government of Assam requires to contribute annually not less than Rs. 5,00,000 to meet the recurring charges of the University. Under statutory provisions, the Court, the Academic Council and the Executive Council were constituted and the University started functioning from 1st January, 1948. Early in 1948, the University took over and conducted the following examinations, with number of candidates shown against each, which were till then conducted by the Calcutta University.

Examination	Candidates.
Matriculation	6,016
I.A.	1,713
I.Sc.	648
B.A.	632
B.Sc.	98
B.Com.	67
B.T.	41
Law	82
First M.B.B.S.	53

Gradually there came to be additions to the above list of examinations and the number of candidates at different examinations went on increasing.

In the course of 12 years the number of different annual examinations conducted by the University rose to 21. The total number of candidates appearing in some of the major examinations in 1960, were as follows :

Matriculation	..	24,660
I.A.	..	7,384
I.Sc.	..	1,983
I.Com.	..	820
I.Sc. (Agri)	..	78
B.A.	..	3,367
B.Sc.	..	471
B.Com.	..	302
B.Sc. (Agri)	..	44
1st M.B.B.S.	..	109
Final M.B.B.S.	..	109

There are four professional colleges, affiliated to the University. These are the Medical Colleges at Gauhati and Silchar and the Engineering

Colleges at Gauhati and Silchar. Honours courses in B. A., B. Sc. and B.Com. extended over two years, while the Law course was and ever since a three-year one.

Of the affiliated Colleges, by far, the most important was Cotton College, Gauhati. It is a Government institution of long standing which, used to provide instructions not only in the undergraduate and graduate courses but also for the M.A. Course in a number of subjects, which, however, though were discontinued for some time along with the establishment of the post-graduate departments directly under the University are taken up for leadings again since a few years hence. The (Earle) Law College, Gauhati which as an affiliated Government College was soon taken over by the University and became its constituent College. Subsequently another Law College named after late J. Barooah, the first Principal of Earle Law College, was started. It is functioning with full vigour now.

The number of affiliated colleges, both professional and general has been increasing year by year during the first twelve years and raised to 35 in 1960.

The teaching work of the University was carried on in the beginning only in the Postgraduate, Law, B.Com and Teacher's Training Department. Undergraduate classes other than B.Com were held only in such subjects as were not taught in any of the affiliated colleges. Honours classes in Assamese and Botany were held in the University and a Diploma course in Secretarial practice had also been provided. In the Postgraduate department, there were four Professors, ten Readers and a number of Lecturers. Subjects in which students were admitted were :—

Mathematics, History, Economics, Philosophy, Commerce, Assamese and Botany. For Undergraduate work, there were teachers in Education, Anthropology and Statistics, while Law was a fullfledged course.

Gradually, new departments were added to the list. Thus, departments were opened in Geography in 1949, Geology in 1950, English, Chemistry, Physics & Teachers' Training in English in 1955. The number of students in the different departments in 1959-60 as shown below gives an idea of the increase of students in different departments of the University.

Mathematics	..	81
History	..	131
Economics	..	210
Philosophy	..	40
Commerce	..	111
Assamese	..	50
Sanskrit	..	6
Political Science	..	126
Botany	..	36
Education	..	12
Anthropology	..	16
Statistics	..	29
Geology	..	22
Geography	..	9
English	..	72
Chemistry	..	31
Physics	..	36
Agro-Botany	..	15
Teachers' Training in English	..	26
B.T.	..	44
Law First Year	..	236
Law Second Year	..	141
Law Third Year	..	96

The following table will show the rapid rise of number students and candidates since 1960, which is indicated by the out-turn from Gauhati University in 1975.

Level	Appeared	Passed	P.C. of pass
Pre-University			
i) Arts	13,283	5,557	41.8
ii) Science	3,304	1,756	55.1
iii) Commerce	694	237	34.2
Bachelor			
i) Arts	12,708	6,739	53.0
ii) Science	3,026	1,796	59.3
iii) Commerce	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
M.B.B.S.	110	71	64.6
B.E.	78	66	84.6
B.T.	1,152	528	45.8

Level	Appeared	Passed	P. C. of pass
M.A.			
i) English	67	42	62.7
ii) Bengali	62	26	41.9
iii) Economics	104	90	86.6
iv) History	84	49	58.3
v) Philosophy	44	36	81.8
vi) Education	58	49	84.5
vii) Arabic	10	9	10.0
M.Sc			
i) Mathematics	38	21	53.3
ii) Statistics	16	10	62.5
iii) Physics	47	44	93.6
iv) Zoology	20	20	100.0
v) Geology	27	26	96.3
vi) Anthropology	17	16	94.1
vii) Botany	31	29	93.5

The strength of the teachers in the University under different categories in 1959-60 was as follows :—

Professors	..	5
Readers	..	20
Lecturers	..	72
Demonstrators	..	10
Curators	..	2
Farm Manager	..	1

Over and above, the University has taken up various research schemes as given below :—

1. Arecanut Research Schemes : The scheme of investigation on the better utilisation of the by-products of arecanut financed jointly by the Central Arecanut Committee and Gauhati University was carried out in the Department of Botany of the University under the supervision of the Professor H. K. Baruah, the Head of the Department of Botany.

2. Ergot Scheme : The scheme for investigations on the production of Ergot and industrial organisation of its products in Chemotherapy was carried out in the department of Botany. The scheme was jointly financed by the I. C. A. R. and the Government of Assam.

3. Research Training Scholarship Scheme : Under this scheme financed by the Government of India researches were carried out in the department of Botany and Chemistry on various subjects.

4. The Pine-apple Scheme : The researches on the improvement of pine-apples by the application of synthetic hormones was undertaken in the Botany Department.

5. Tribal Culture and Folklore Research : With funds made available by the University Grants Commission and by the State Government Research Schemes on tribal Culture and Folklore Department of Assam have been undertaken by the University.

6. Survey of Handloom Industry in Assam, Manipur and Tripura : The University has undertaken a scheme of "Survey of Handloom Industry in Assam, Maripur and Tripura" at the instance of the all-India Handloom Board, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, a sum of Rs. 102,000/- was placed at the disposal of the University for the purpose. The research scheme is expected to throw some light on the working of the Industry.

7. Urban Employment and Unemployment Survery, Assam : This survey was initiated in August, 1955 at the instance of the Research Programme Committee, Planning Commission, Government of India.

Comprehensive training was arranged at Gauhati for the field work which, was carried out by an Ad-hoc staff consisting of Post-graduate students mainly from the Department of Economics, Commerce, Education, Statistics and Mathematics.

Urban employment forms an important part of national planning and it is hoped that the information available from the survey will be helpful to the Government in formulating policy regarding this important problem.

Besides, the schemes mentioned above, research works on different problems are undertaken by different scholars in the different post-graduate departments of the University.

The University has a good Library of its own which contains about one lakh books and journals.

Introduction of Three Year Degree Course at the University : The University of Gauhati had decided to introduce Three Years Degree course at the University with effect from the session 1962-63. A Three-Year Degree Course Committee was formed to draw up details and to take up steps for implementation of the scheme. The Committee has drafted the syllabi of the Three-Year Degree Course and the Pre-University Courses including the Pre-professional courses. The Committee has obtained statements of financial requirements from the affiliated colleges for upgrading the Intermediate Colleges and also for improvement of the existing Degree Colleges. A meeting of the Principals of affiliated colleges was invited and it was decided to recommend the existing affiliated colleges for upgrading. The University conducts regular research projects through scholars working under the guidance of established scholars of the University and presents wards of Ph.D. and D. Lit. degrees.

There are museums attached to most of the department of the University, to acquaint the students with the agricultural, industrial, natural resources and cultural heritage of Assam and also with the methods of learning of the subjects.

A new section "Labour Saving Devices" has been opened and a few machines (e.g. Adding Machine, Calculators, Addressograph machine) have been acquired. This section helps to familiarise the students with the actual working and operations of labour saving appliances as used by the modern offices and big industrial concerns.

Students Advisory Board : The functions of the students Advisory Board is to secure admissions to educational institutions in foreign countries. The Board has also been disseminating to the students of the State various information relating to awards, scholarships, fellowships etc., offered by foreign, central and state governments through circulars and press-comuniques and has extended all helps in obtaining such facilities.

Gauhati University Sports Board : The University has set up the "Gauhati University Sports Board" to encourage, organise, control, manage and supervise inter-collegiate competitions in sports, games, debates, symposiums etc., on sound lines and to select teams of students for participation in the Inter-University competitions in such events.

There is a number of scholarships and prizes awarded by the University to the scholars at different University Examination levels.

University Gold Medal is awarded for standing First Class first in each of the subject in the M.A., M.Sc., and M. Com. Examinations.

National Cadet Corps : Members of the senior Division of N.C.C. Units attached to the affiliated Colleges are permitted by the University to offer Military Education as an additional subject for the Intermediate Examination in Arts, Science, and Commerce. The full course of Senior Division N.C. C. Training completed by the Cadets will qualify them for the Examination in Military Education.

The N. C. C. Organisation in Assam is consisted of the following Senior Division Units :—

Senior Division Units :	Strength. Cadets.
1. 1st Assam Bn. N.C.C. Gauhati	8— 393
2. 2nd Assam Bn. „ Silchar	8— 393
3. 3rd Assam Bn „ Tezpur	8— 393
4. Jorhat Inped. Coy., Jorhat	3— 193
5. Sibsagar „ „ „ Sibsagar	3— 193
6. Nowgong „ „ „ Nowgong	3— 193
7. Barpeta „ „ „ Barpeta	3— 193
8. Dhuburi „ „ „ Dhuburi	3— 193
9. 11 Assam Med. „ „ „ Dibrugarh	2— 120
11. 8 Assam Signal Section Gauhati	2— 120
11. 21 Assam Erg. Platoon Gauhati	2— 120
12. 4th Assam Naval Units Gauhati	2— 120
13. 2nd Assam Tech. Air Sqn. Jorhat	2— 60
14. 13th Assam Armoured Sqn. Dibrugarh	3— 160
15. 3rd Assam Tech. Air Sqn. Gauhati	2— 120
Total :	54—2,964

(Girls Division -Senior Wing)	Authorised Officer	Strength Cadets
1. 1st Assam Girls Sub-Troop, Gauhati.	1	45
2. 2nd Assam Girls Sub-Troops, C. College, Gauhati.	1	45
3. 3rd Assam Girls Sub-Troops, H. Girls College, Gauhati.	1	45
4. 4th Assam Girl's Sub-Troops, D.C. Barua Girls College, Jorhat.	1	45
5. 5th Assam Girls Sub-Troops, D.H.S.K.-College, Dibrugarh.	1	45
Total :	5	225

Combined Cadre and Social Service Camp : The Combined Cadre and Social Service Camp organised by the N.C.C. authorities is held annually at a selected site. Function of the camp is to construct roads, bridges, digging of tanks and distribution of medicines in the rural areas.

All-India Conferences : Representatives of the University in different subjects attend all-India conference held annually by the different bodies ; and convocations are held to confer degrees.

Endowments : The following Endowments and Memorial Lectures have been created so far in the University :—

	Amount
1. Bhagawan Devi Brahmin Prize, Donor-Shri Kedarmal Brahmin B.L.	Rs. 1000.00
2. Manindra Mohan Memorial Prize,— Donor-Shri Surendra Mohan Das, M.A.	Rs. 1,000.00
3. Sreemati Barada Ghose Prize,— Donor Sreemati Barada Ghose	Rs. 500.00
4. Dr. J. C. Bardhan Fund,— Donor—Dr. J.C. Bardhan, B.Sc.	Rs. 8,161.43
5. Pratiba Devi Medal,— Donor Late Uma Kanta Goswami, M.A.,	Rs. 500.00
6. Krishna Kanta Handiqui Prize,— Donor Dr. V. Venkata Rao.	Rs. 1,000.00
7. Dr. V. Venkata Rao Scholarship Fund,— Donor Dr. V. Venkata Rao	Rs. 150.00 (Per month with effect from Oct. 1957).
8. Pratiba Devi Trust Fund,— Donor Director of Public Instruction, Assam	Rs. 10,590.19

9. Chandra Kanta Abhidhan Publication Fund. Donor K. K. Handiqui, M.A.	Rs. 17,000.00
10. Rama Kanta Hazarika Memorial Prize— Donor—Shri Atul Chandra Hazarika, M.A.B.T.	Rs. 1,000.00
11. Bani Kanta Kakati Prize— Donor Dr. V. Venkata Rao.	Rs. 1,000.00
12. Zebunisha Begum Medal— Donor Shri Abdul Rahman	Rs. 2,000.00
13. Mohini Lecturers Fund— Donor—Shri Harihar Choudhury,	Rs. 20,000.00

Finance : The main source of income of the University is the fees for the different examinations held by the University. A part of the income is also derived from the tuition and other fees from the University students. These incomes, however, are not sufficient to meet all the financial commitments of the University but the grants received from the State Government and the University Grants Commission go a long way to supplement the University's own income. The annual State Government Grant which amounted to Rs. 5,00,000 at the beginning, has subsequently been raised to Rs. 10,00,000.

Building Construction : The University had to work in the beginning in hired buildings and temporary constructions. Temporary arrangements for the residence of staff and students were made at Gauhati while the constructions in permanent site at Jalukbari continued. There is one Executive Engineer to execute the construction projects of the University. Now the University is functioning from its permanent site.

Vocational Institutions: There is one Government Aided Commerce College and a number of vocational Commercial Schools at Gauhati.

In the Barpeta Sub-division there are one Normal School and one Basic Training Centre (both situated at Howli) one type-writing school and one Blacksmithy and Carpentry School. All the above institutions are managed and financed by Government.

Gauhati Medical College : The College was started on 1st of August 1960, by the Government of Assam for imparting lessons leading

to the M.B.B.S. degree under the Gauhati University. The duration of the course is 5½ years and candidates passing I.Sc or P.U. Science with Biology are admitted in the college on the basis of merit. Since the introduction of the Three Years Degree Course by the Gauhati University, the students passing out Pre-University course in science are required to undergo one year's Pre-medical course before they are finally taken into Medical Science course.

Although, the college was suffering from acute teething trouble, yet almost all departments of the Medical Science have, by now, been opened either in rented house or specially constructed houses or other Government buildings. Since a few years back, the Gauhati Civil Hospital was taken over by the College authority and this has facilitated in the actual functioning of the college. The following departments have so far been opened in the college.

1. Anatomy, Physiology, Biochemistry,
2. Chemistry, Pharmacology,
3. Pathology, Social & Preventive Medicine,
4. Medicine, Jurisprudence,
5. Ophthalmology, gynaecology,
6. Radiology, Surgery,
7. Anaesthesiology.

The annual intake capacity of the college is 100. In 1976, there were 747 Students in the college roll. The college has been shifted to the Kalapahar area on completion of the buildings and hostels. The Nursing College also situates in the same area. Some of the practical classes are conducted at Panbazar hospital site. Some other details about this college have been furnished in Chapter XVI of this gazetteer.

Assam Engineering College : The Assam Engineering College was established in 1956, to serve the areas of Assam (which included both Meghalaya and Mizoram then), Tripura, Arunachal (erstwhile NEFA) and Nagaland. The college was started as the "Assam Civil Engineering College" in 1955 with 72 students in First Year Civil Engineering. Courses of Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering were introduced in the year 1957-58. Prior to the session 1962-63, the courses had been of 4 years duration. Since then Five Years Integrated courses were introduced in the college with the change in the system of Secondary Education in the country. Courses in Chemical Engineering were introduced during the session, 1963-64.

The progressive growth of enrolment of students are as follows :—

Year	Civil Eng.	Mech. Eng.	Elect. Eng.	Chem. Eng.	Total
1955-56	72	—	—	—	72
1956-57	60	—	—	—	60
1957-58	64	32	28	—	124
1958-59	61	30	30	—	121
1959-60	60	30	30	—	120
1969-61	60	30	30	—	120
1961-62	61	30	30	—	121

The courses being common upto 2nd year, choice for branches of study is granted in 3rd year class. During 1962-63, the 1st year students were 120, 2nd year—59 ; in 1963-64, 1st year—120, 2nd year—58 ; in 1964-65 1st year—118, and 2nd year—22. The strength of students in 1972-73 was 1008, in 1973-74, it was 956 and in 1974-75, 958. At present it has crossed over 1,000.

The achievement of the college shown by the following statistics is encouraging.

Year	Civil Eng.	Mech. Eng.	Elect. Eng.
1960	80.4%	—	—
1961	71.2%	—	—
1962	73.8%	47.6%	45%
1963	90%	36%	48%
1964	84%	74%	75%

The following categories of stipends and scholarships have been offered to the deserving students so as to encourage technical education in the state : (1) 24 engineering scholarships (12 in Civil Engineering, 6 in Mechanical Engineering and 6 in Electrical Engineering).

- (ii) A number of annually renewable special scholarships.
- (iii) Government of India Merit-cum-Means scholarships of Rs. 75/- per month each.
- (iv) Backward and Economic Backward scholarships are awarded by the State Scholarship Board, Assam.
- (v) Nominees from different State Governments get stipends and loans from respective State Governments.
- (vi) Besides the above, 13% of students get free studentship.

The college has also provided for reservation of seats to certain categories of students shown below subject to fulfilment of the conditions for admission by such students.

Scheduled caste	5%
Scheduled Tribe (Plains)	10%
Scheduled Tribe (Hills)	12%

The College is equipped with a big library, two tennis courts, one football ground and other facilities for indoor games.

Ayurvedic College, Gauhati : The college under the control of the Director of Health Services, Assam, was started on the 22nd December, 1948 to impart lessons on Ayurvedic system of medicine. The duration of the course is four years leading to the award of Diploma by the Assam Board of Ayurvedic Medicine. The annual intake is twenty-four and the students must be either Matriculates with the working knowledge of Sanskrit or the Sanskrit Madhyama with the working knowledge of English are admitted in the course. But due to the rush of the students to Medical Colleges or Engineering Colleges, even these 24 seats are hardly filled up, the reason of which, is perhaps, attributable to the want of proper status and prospect in the field of livelihood. A few diploma holders are, however, working in Government subsidised Ayurvedic Dispensaries and Ayurvedic sections of Civil hospitals of the state.

Though the college was started as early as in 1948, the hospital of its own for clinical training of the students was established only after 1965.

Pragjyotishpur Homoeopathic College : This college was established in 1976. It is now functioning in its own building situating on its own site allotted by the Government in Khanapara area of the city. A small 20 bedded hospital is also attached to the College. Number of students enrolled in the College in 1980 was 171.

Besides this college another Homoeopathic College, under the name and style of Gauhati Homoeopathic College started in 1976, is also functioning in Gauhati.

Assam Veterinary College : The Assam Veterinary College was established in the year 1948, at Nowgong. Subsequently it was shifted to Gauhati in the early part the year 1950 and housed in the compound of the Veterinary Directorate (due to then prevailing financial stringency

of the state), with a view to impart training in Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry to the youths of the State. Hitherto, only a few persons were being trained outside the state involving huge amount of expenditure from the state exchequer. The dearth of qualified Veterinarians were keenly felt in the state to handle the multifarious activities for the welfare of livestock population which still play the major role in rural economy of the state. The increased production of milk, meat, eggs and other dairy products to meet the shortage of food-stuff for the fast growing human population of the state depend mostly upon the qualified veterinarians from this institution. Incidentally, this is the only institution of its kind in the North Eastern region of India.

Initially, the college was an institution of a three years Diploma Course in Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry (G. V. Sc. & A.H.) which was, in 1963, enhanced to four years Diploma course for the Matriculates. In the same year, the College was affiliated to the Gauhati University for introduction of B.V.Sc. & A.H. degree course. In 1958, the Degree Course has been extended to five years course for Matriculate entrants and four years course for I.Sc. passed students, in order to bring the course of studies in this college to the level of other Veterinary Colleges of the Indian Union. One year Veterinary Field Assistant Training Course leading to award of certificate is also conducted in this institution. The office and the laboratory of the Regional Sterility Officer, Assam, is also housed in the Assam Veterinary College and he works under the guidance of the Principal of the College.

The growth of enrolment into the College has been increasing at a rapid speed year by year, from 45 in 1948-49, in its inception, to 253 in 1959-60. In 1972-73, it rose to 313, in 1973-74 to 395 but in 1974-75 its enrolment was reduced to 258. The enrolment had to be curtailed due to lack of accommodation and other facilities in the former site of the college though there was a great demand for Veterinary personnel in the state. This draw-back is now removed as the college has been shifted to its permanent buildings at Khanapara.

Uptil now, 19,240 G. V. Sc. & A. H. Diploma holders and 25 B. V. Sc. & A. H. Degree holders have been produced from this college. The number of Veterinary Field Assistants trained upto date is 300.

The College possesses one well equipped Library containing books, journals and periodicals on Animal Husbandry and other

allied science subjects, besides, other newspapers and magazines for current news and world affairs. The College provides various scopes for out-door and indoor activities like National Cadet Corps, Extension Work, Social and Cultural Activities, Extramural training and excursions, games, sports, Gymnasium etc. The students of this institution have a reputation of disciplined behaviour and won twice the coveted banner-best prize in the march past of the Inter College Sports Festivals. They also won a large number of athletic prizes and trophies in those sports festivals. They were adjudged as the best Hockey team of Gauhati for two consecutive years. Some players of this College have represented Gauhati University and some Clubs outside the state to play Hockey and Foot ball games both inside and outside the state of Assam.

The College staff conducts scientific studies on local problems relating to Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Sciences and contributes Scientific articles to various professional journals of the country. The staff also helps the Veterinary Department of the State by conducting field investigations on multifarious problems experienced from time to time by the field workers engaged in the fields for Veterinary and Animal Husbandry activities. The Departmental Research Centres such as the Nutritional Laboratory under the Physiological Chemist, Khanapara, the Bovine Contagious Pleura Prevention Scheme, the Biological Products Laboratory and Artificial Insemination Centre as well as Poultry Development Scheme with its Central Sheep-rearing Farm at Gauhati have been opened for the staff and students of the College for teaching and demonstration works. The Cattle Breeding and Dairy Farm and the Co-operative Milk Pasteurisation Plant at Khanapara provide also scope for the staff and students for teaching and other practical knowledge. The Veterinary Hospital at Gauhati, the largest of its kind in Assam had offered facilities for Clinical & Surgical aspects of teaching on the subjects of Medicine and Surgery till the surgical section with Research Laboratory was shifted to Khanapara.

Veterinary Field Assistant Training Institute : With effect from the session 1959-60, an independent Institute, under the supervision of the Principal, Assam Veterinary College was established to impart regular training to selected stipendiaries leading to certificates which qualify the holders for the posts of Veterinary Field Assistant or Stockman under any Government or private establishment. The Institute is temporarily housed in the College premises at Khanapara

The Assam Veterinary College was shifted stage by stage to its permanent site at Khanapara. It is now a fullfledged residential institution.

Gauhati Commerce College : In 1962, under the initiative of late Dr. B. K. Barua, Gauhati Commerce College was established, which had enabled the students to take Commercial education. It is a Government aided college where, besides other general subjects like English, Assamese ; Accountancy, Banking, Business Management, Commercial Law, Insurance etc., are also taught. This institution has a hostel within the college campus.

Assam Engineering Institute : The Assam Engineering Institute was established in 1948, to turn out technical hands for implementation of various schemes undertaken by the Government. The management of the Institute rests with the Directorate of Technical Education, Government of Assam. The annual intake capacity of the Institute is 180 in three different branches of study i.e., Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Electrical Engineering. Besides, here the Draughtmanship is also taught. The duration of the course is of three years in addition to two year's practical training and lead to the award of National Certificate of Council of Technical Education. There are large number of scholarships and stipends tenable in the Institute. During the year, 1960, 50 students were stipend holders and 75 were scholarship holders. Every state and the Union territories of the North East region award stipends to their students nominated for training in this institute. It has a hostel of its own.

Assam Textile Institute, Gauhati : The erstwhile Government Weaving Institute, Gauhati, was upgraded and enlarged as Assam Textile Institute with the introduction of a three years diploma course besides, the existing certificate and Artisan Courses during the year, 1956 under the control of the Directorate of Sericulture and Weaving, Government of Assam.

The object of upgrading this Institution was to raise the standard of training in the field of the Textile Technology and also to turn out responsible textile technicians, who, on completion of the 3 years Diploma Course, would be able to organise the Textile Industry, improve the existing implements, introduce better ones and render all possible assistance and technical advice to the artisans in choosing better raw-materials, using better types of appliances, for economical and quality productions of the fabrics from the different fibres.

After completion of training in the Institute the students are deputed for six months' Practical Mill-Training at various Cotton Mills in West Bengal or elsewhere.

The final examination of the Certificate and Artisan Courses are conducted by a Board of Examination appointed by the Government of Assam, Sericulture & Weaving Department.

The students in the Artisan Course are generally entertained in private sections such as Mahila Samities, School Board etc., and the students of other courses are generally employed by Government in the Community Development Blocks or in the department itself.

The number of seats in various courses are as follows :—

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| (a) Diploma | — 15 seats (out of which 10 students are awarded by Government of Assam on merit basis). |
| (b) Certificate | :— 30 seats (30 stipends are awarded by the Government of Assam on the basis of merit. |
| (c) Artisan | :— 30 seats (out of which 20 students are awarded stipend by the Government of Assam on merit basis.) |

Students, passing out I.Sc or Pre-University with Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics are only eligible for admission in the diploma courses. For other courses students are expected to be of Matric standard (for certificate) and M. E. or M. V. passed (for Artisan).

Assam Survey School : The Assam Survey School started in 1913 at Jalukbari which is situated at a distance of 12.32 kilometre west of Gauhati Court. It is on the left side of the Assam Trunk Road leading to Goalpara.

The area of the Survey School compound was 42 B-O-K-4 lechas excluding 52 B-l-K and 15 lechas covered by the Lankeswar hillock.

The compound holds the office, the staff quarters and the camping ground. It was an ideal place for survey training having large fields surrounded by the hills and jungles and the Dipor Bil to its South. But the entire area was taken over by the department of Defence, Government of India in the early sixties and since then the school has been functioning from a small rented house situating at Santipur, Gauhati.

The School started with one Principal and three teachers with one Office Assistant. It began to impart training in Survey to the students and officers. Persons desiring to secure appointment as *Mondal* or *Patwaris*,

having minimum prescribed qualification of M.E. or M.V. School standard, are selected for admission by the Director of Surveys, Assam, and they are given training on Survey and Land Records Rules in the Regular Recorders Course of 6 months. Senior *Mondals* in the Service are selected for 4 months training in special course class who, after passing this examination qualify themselves for promotion as Supervisor *Kanangu*. *Mondals* who are found deficient in Survey work are deputed for a 3 three month's Refresher Course training. Training course for A.C.S. Class I Officers or I.A.S. officers (I.C.S. Officers in the past) are for 3 months and for A.C.S. class 11 officers, it is 4 month's course.

In the past, about 12 officers, 12 recorders for special course classes and 50 students in the recorders regular course and about a dozen recorders in the Refreshers Course were given training during one calendar year but along with passing of time as the demand increased, the number of trainees in all branches began to multiply.

For this reason, since 1951, a condensed course for 35 working days was introduced for a batch of officers over and above the regular course class and intensive course or 3 month's for students to be trained as recorders to meet the demand of the district Re-settlement operations was added and during one year, two or three batches of students in the Intensive Course class had to be given training.

The Examination on all branches of the survey training is generally conducted by the Deputy Director of Surveys, Assam, and the Settlement Training of officers together with the examination on that subject is the concern of the Assistant Director of Land Records.

Since a few years back, the officers of I.P.S. and A.P.S. have also been subjected to for Survey and Settlement Training.

There was a proposal to upgrade the institution like that of Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal Survey Schools. But the proposal did not materialise due to occupation of the building by the Defence Department.

Assam Administrative Staff College, Gauhati : Looking to the need for a plan study of Public Administration in Assam, it was decided by the state Government of Assam in 1960, to provide training for both in-service personnel and direct recruits of State Civil Service, Class I and II in a training institute of Public Administration in Assam. With this end in view, "Administrative Training School" started functioning from 1st March, 1960 at Gauhati. Gradually, the area of training were extended to Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland and it became the only

institution of its kind in the North-Eastern Region of India. In 1964, the training school was renamed by the Government of Assam as "Assam Administrative Staff College" Gauhati and it was declared as a permanent establishment of the Government of Assam with effect from 23rd June, 1970.

The Principal of the College was re-designated as Director of Training and the two lecturers were also redesignated as Joint Directors of Training in 1972.

The Commissioner of Plains Division was also appointed as Ex-officio Commissioner of Training.

The College is housed in the building constructed as the Tourist Lodge of the Government of Assam at Ulubari, Gauhati. The institution is a residential type providing hostel accommodation for 12 (twelve) trainees at a time. It has also provided accommodation for library facilities, office and residential accommodations for some Grade IV staff. Till now, a numbers of Officer's batches from Assam, Arunachal, Nagaland and Mizoram have been imparted training in this institution.

The aim of the College is to equip the young officers with knowledge of Law, Codes, Rules and Regulations, relating to different Acts, Principles of Public Administration, Finance, Accounting, Developmental Activities, both under Plan and normal ; Constitution and its principles etc., to make the trainees more efficient for the day to day Administration of the State.

The Administrative staff college is under the control of the Appointment Department of the Government of Assam.

The Government has introduced two month's refresher course for the officers who have completed 6/7 years of service. This course consists of matters of administrative interest and current socio-economic problems.

Proposal for a permanent college building with a campus of its own has been accepted, which will provide more facilities to the trainees and the teaching staff.

Assam Forest School : The Assam Forest School was established at Jalukbari, 11.20 kilometres west of Gauhati in the year 1948, out of the Post-War Reconstruction Fund and with the initiatives of the then Chief Minister (Lokapriya G. N. Bordoloi), Forest Minister (Sri R. N. Brahma) and the Senior Conservator of Assam Sri P.D. Stracey I.F.S. The School now imparts training to Foresters and Asstt. Foresters in practical as well

as theoretical aspects of Forestry. Forest Utilisation, Forest Engineering, Botany, Surveying, Forest Law, Forest Accounts etc. constitute the theoretical training while Nursery, raising of forest trees, Plantation works, Weeding, Cleaning, Thinning, Climber, Cutting in Plantations and High forests, Hill-road alignment, Surveying with chain, Plan-table and prismatic compass, Enumeration of trees, Height measurement etc. constitute the practical side of the study.

This is the only training institution of its kind in the state and besides training up Forest subordinate staff under the state Government of Assam, it trains up those serving under Arunachal, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya administration and also the District Councils of Karbi Anglong and N. C. Hills.

The annual intake of the school was originally 20, then 22, but subsequently raised to 24 since 1963-64 session. The training period runs for eleven months, from November to September.

This is a departmental institution as such the Superintendent who is the head of the school, acts under the direction of the Chief Conservator of Forest who in turn, is guided by the policies of the Forest Department of Government of Assam.

It may be mentioned here that as a part of the practical training, the students are taken round to all types of forests in Assam from Lekhapani in the east to Jamduar in the west touching Bhutan and Arunachal, whenever possible. The annual excursions for each batch which begin in December are rounded off in May of the following year with a visit to Pine Forests and sacred groves of K & J Hills.

Industrial Training Institute : The Industrial Training Institute was established on 3rd December, 1957 with the primary object of ensuring a steady flow of skilled workers for industry, of raising the quality and quantity of production by systematic training of workers and of reducing unemployment among educated youths by equipping them for suitable industrial employment.

The Institute is controlled by the Directorate General of Employment and Training, Government of India, New Delhi, and managed by the Director of Technical Education, Assam.

The Institute at present is imparting training to the students in different trade courses to produce Draughtsman (civil) Radio Mechanic, Plumber, Electrical Lines man & Wire Man, Fitter, Welder, Sheet Metal

Worker & Blacksmith with the prospect of increasing to about 20 different trades in near future. The present intake is 16 students in each trade.

The duration of training period extends to 18 months followed by six month's inplant training outside. The final examination is conducted by the Directorate General of Employment and Training and certificates are also issued by them on successful completion of six months inplant training as stated above.

The session of the Institute commences every nine months and Matriculates are only admitted to Draughtsmanship (civil) and Radio Mechanic courses and for other courses non-Matriculates are eligible.

Cottage Industries Training Institute : With the advent of industrial development in Assam the Government of Assam felt that a well equipped upto-date Cottage Industries Training Institute was of immediate necessity, and as a result of that, the Cottage Industries Training Institute at Gauhati came into being in 1954. This is a continuing scheme since implementation of the First Five Year Plan and its primary aim was to train those unskilled personnel of the state in the crafts noted below so as to mobilize the people of Assam into skilled hands and to do away with the unemployment problem thereby. Educational standard for the eligible trainees is class VIII while age-group permissible is 16 years to 21 years. (All, except Carpentry and Nail-making are, of two years duration course.)

Trades :—

1. Blacksmithy.
2. Carpentry wood works - three years course.
3. Cane & Bamboo.
4. Leather Works
5. Doll & Toy Making (only girl candidates are eligible for admission). This craft is financed by the Handicraft Board.
6. Nail Making -six months course.
7. Pottery.
8. Electroplating (Not operated).
9. Electric Wiring (Not operated).

Upto 1978, since inception, 661 trainees have passed in the trades mentioned above. Some of the successful trainees have been advanced loans by the Government to help self-employment in their own trades. Industries Department absorbs the trained artisans in Government jobs whenever possible.

The administration of the Institute is run by the Industries Department, Cottage Industries Branch, Government of Assam. There is a Managing Committee to advise Government on the affairs of all schemes of development and other affairs of the institution. The Managing Committee consists of three government officers and four non-officials, who are nominated from the representatives of industrial concerns and the local influential people, by Government. Day to day management rests with the Principal of the institution. This is the pioneer institution of its kind set up by the Government in which, education of crafts and industries courses is offered.

The Training is given both in theory and practice. More stress is put on the practical work.

In addition, Elementary Engineering, Workshop Practice, Drawing & Blue Print Reading and Elementary Mathematics are taught as common subjects.

There are one boy's and one girl's hostel within the campus to house the trainees.

Certificate holders of this institute is eligible for employment in government jobs and can take bank loans under Small Industries Promotion Scheme. Besides, promising trainees of the Institution may be selected for further specialised training outside the state.

Normal School, Howli : The Normal School at Howli, which is situated in a serene rural atmosphere was opened on 31st August, 1950, and subsequently provincialised on 1.3.57. This is the only institution of its kind in this district. The aim of this institution is to train vernacular teachers in the principles and method of teaching and to keep them in close contact with the village folk and their way of life.

Trainees desirous of undergoing training here at Howli generally hail from the remote villages of Goalpara, Kamrup and Darrang districts. Every year, the teachers of M.V. schools are being deputed here by the different Boards of the districts of Goalpara, Kamrup, and Darrang. Sometimes the teachers of Golaghat and North Lakhimpur Sub-divisions are also deputed to this institution.

There are sixty government stipends to be awarded to the deserving trainees on the basis of results of the Admission Test conducted by the institution. A deputed teacher also enjoys deputation allowance, over and above his usual pay and other allowances admissible under the Rules.

The Normal School, Howli, is consisted of 3 classes viz., 1st year, 2nd year and 3rd year class. The capacity of each class is generally 36, but sometimes this limit is relaxed in order to meet the situation, whenever occurs.

No tuition fee is charged from the trainees of the Normal School. Boarders of the hostels attached to the school are to pay a nominal monthly fee for medical attendance and seat rent.

The compulsory Drill classes are the special feature of this institution.

Schools for the Cultivation of Fine Arts : (Music, Dancing, Painting etc.)

The following institutions and organisations are working for the cultivation of fine Arts in the district.

Assam Lalit Kala Akademy : The Assam Lalit Kala Akademy (State Academy of Art) was inaugurated at Gauhati on May 5, 1959, by the then Education Minister of Assam, Sri D. Sarma. The main aim of the Akademy is to work out a scheme for the growth and nourishment of art and painting, sculpture and other graphic arts. The Assam Lalit Kala Akademy is an autonomous body governed by a General Council constituted by the Government, Education Department. The work of the Akademy is conducted by the Executive Board elected by the General Council.

The Akademy's activities are of a varied nature and fall into the following main heads :

1. State exhibition of Art.
2. Exhibition from abroad and outside the state to and from.
3. Publication programme.
4. Recognition and aid to art organisations.
5. Survey of indigenous craftsmen, sculptors and painters.
6. Seminar of Art Education.
7. Artists' conference etc.

It may be mentioned here that the annual exhibition of art of the Akademy is one of the most important programmes which provides an opportunity for the people together, an experience of contemporary art.

Tagore's Painting Exhibition was organised by the Akademy during the time of centenary celebration.

The organisation is still in dormant stage and when it will grow well, it is supposed to play a vital role in fostering and co-ordinating activities in the sphere of visual and plastic art not only in the district but throughout the state of Assam.

Gauhati Music College : The Gauhati Music College, a pioneer institution of its kind in Assam was started in 1946, under the guidance of late Lokapriya G. N. Bordoloi, the then Chief Minister of Assam and under the patronage of Late Rohini Kumar Choudhury, the then Parliamentary Member from Assam.

It had laid down in its constitution that its aims and objects should be to teach classical music (vocal, instrumental and dance), and also to carry on research in the indigenous music, to organise musical demonstrations from time to time with a view to demonstrate the achievements or work of the institution, to hold debates and arrange for lecture and discussion on music and allied subjects, to maintain allied subjects to take up manufacturing and repairs of musical instruments and to open its branches.

The college was affiliated to the Bhatkhande Sangit Vidyapith, Lucknow, U.P. in 1957, and Assam Sangit Natak Academy in 1956. Since its affiliation, the college has been popularising classical music throughout the state and every year, students from this college sit for various examinations conducted by Bhatkhande Sangit Vidyapith. During the year 1962, 62% students came out successful and prior to that percentages stood at 70% to 82%. In 1957, two of the students secured all-India positions in Intermediate examination.

The students of this college also participated in cultural demonstration and competition in Boroda Youth Congress festival held in the year 1958, and won first prizes both in folk dance and orchestra and second prize in group singing. In 1960, the students participated in Jaipur Youth Congress festival and earned a good name on behalf of the state.

It may be mentioned here that with a view to popularising music, the college had invited the sixth session of the Assam Sangit Natak Academy, which was inaugurated by Dr. Radhakrishnan, the then Vice-President of India.

With all these records of past activities, the College now proposes to expand its activities in the field of both Manipuri and *Satriya* style of dance and music which are two indigenous forms of dance with their wide mass appeal.

Manipuri style of dance is so well known throughout India that it is perhaps, needless to give any introduction to it here.

The *Satriya* dance like the Manipuri dance is also a separate style of dance with its special characteristics. The main theme of this form of dance with music is the worship of Lord Krishna.

The spirit of Vaishnavism as propagated by Mahapurush Sankardeva, the great exponent in the field of literature and cultural activities of the state is embodied in the music accompanying the dance and dramas. The devotional songs in praise of Lord Krishna are known as *Bargeets*, which are set in different tunes and expressions. The *satriya* dance and music present a great field for research work for their special characteristics.

Narayan Sangit Maha Vidyalaya : It is Government aided music college established in 1965. The main object of this institution is to teach the Hindustani classical music and the traditional songs of Assam.

The College was affiliated to Bhatkhande Sangit Vidyapith, Lucknow and Prayag Sangit Samitee, Allahabad. The percentage of successful students every five year-wise is 85%. The institution has a five years degree course and is recognised by the Central Government.

Sangit Satra : This is the only institution in Gauhati which devotes exclusively to scientific teaching of *Satriya* Music and dances. This institution situates at Chandmari, Gauhati.

Other institutions of repute where classical music both vocal and instrumental, are taught are, (1) Urvashi Sangit Vidyalaya, (2) Aikyatan Sangit Vidyalaya, (3) Kanak Kali Sangit Vidyalaya, etc. All these institutions are situated in Gauhati. Besides, there are numerous music institutions in Gauhati, where musical instruments of the west such as Violin, Guitar, Mendolin etc., are taught.

Assam Art and Craft Society : This is an institution which teaches free-style drawing and painting. The speciality of the institution is that it believes in the open air culture of fine-arts. It has produced a number of creative geniuses in paintings in the town. These artists have already organised a number of competitions and Arts exhibitions in the city and won good reputation.

Artists' Guild : This is a well-founded society of artists who strive to adopt paintings and drawings as a profession in life. Its head office situates at Silpukhuri, Gauhati. A number of its artists held individual and

combined Art exhibition in the Arts Gallery of Bhagawati Prasad Barua Bhawan, Gauhati as well as outside the state.

Arts College : The only Government Art College of Assam situating in the Santipur area of Gauhati is struggling hard for its expansion without a site and building of its own. It teaches drawings, paintings, sculptures and modelling and confers Diplomas

In the Barpeta Subdivision, there is one cultural institution in the name 'Sankari Sangit Vidyalay' with an enrolment of 30 students. The institution is maintained by "Bharat Sankari Kala Prachar Samity" a cultural Society located at Dalahati in Barpeta. The students of the institution are imparted lessons on *Sankari Nritya*, dance, drama, *ghosa*, oriental dance and *Sutradhari Nritya*. Besides, *Gayans* and *Bayans* are regularly trained at *Kirtan Ghar* institution.

As regards drama, New Arts Players, Pragati Silpi Sangha, Saubhik, Natsala, and Kinshuk of Gauhati are few organisations which have acquired a good reputation for their stage performances.

In the field of open air dramas, Nalbari (Chamata) and Pathsala have made an impressive headway through (1) Nataraj, (2) Suradevi, (3) Aradhana, (4) Awahan (5) Kahinoor and (6) Assam star. They are famous for their moving stages and items.

Oriental Schools & Colleges : Oriental Schools and Colleges comprise of those institutions which impart education in Sanskrit and Persian or Arabic. The *tols* give education in Sanskrit and the Madrasas give education in Persian or Arabic.

In the district of Kamrup, the Nalbari Sanskrit College is one of the two highest educational institutions for the study of Sanskrit. The other is the Assam Sanskrit College of Gauhati. The Nalbari Sanskrit College was founded by the Kamrup Sanjibani Sabha under the leadership of Late Sarat Chandra Goswami, the then Inspector of Schools on the 5th of May, 1938. The institution was started with the subscription from the generous public. The state Government rendered a nominal aid to the institute at first and it is now raised to some extent gradually. The Students from all parts of Assam including Manipur are prosecuting studies in this institution till recently as it was the only institution of this kind in North-East India till late.

The teaching staff is comprised of one Principal and a number of Professors, all of whom are scholars in different branches of Sanskrit Language.

The college has got provisions for teaching *Ratnamala Vyakaran*, *Kavya*, *Smriti*, *Vedanta*, *Nyaya*, *Samkhya*, *Mimansa*, *Purana*, *Ganit*, *Jyotish* and *Phalit Jyotish* up to the title Examination.

Almost in every year, the students in different branches of study as stated above, have been passing the title examinations and most of them are absorbed as Sanskrit teachers in the Government and Government-aided educational institutions.

It has already been mentioned that in the medieval times, only the Sanskrit was the medium of education. Shri Purusottam Bidyabagish hailing from Kanykubja (Kanauj) established a *Tol* at Shila, 8 kilometres away from Barpeta town during the reign of Ahom kings. At that time Shila was one of the prominent centres of learning in the district as well as in the state. From this centre the Sanskrit culture spread throughout Assam and Koch Bihar. *Kabisurya* Halayudha, a renowned Indian scholar was also associated with this *Tol*. The *Proyog Ratnamala Vyakaran* of Shri Bidyabagis is used in *Tols* of Assam upto this day. *Kabisurya* wrote many books on *Smriti* also.

The *Tol* at Shila existed till 1930, and after its abolition, the Scholars of this institution established *Tols* in different parts of Goalpara, Kamrup and Koch Bihar districts.

Nalbari is regarded as the "Nabadwip of Assam" in the spheres of Sanskrit culture. This unique institution attracts every household specially of Gandhiya area towards the study of it. The headquarter of the Sanskrit Board which controls the examinations of different *Tols* of Assam is situated in Gauhati.

In Barpeta Subdivision, there are two High Madrassa and one senior Madrassa schools along with a number of Government aided and recognised M.E. Madrassa schools. Moreover, there are 3 High Madrassas (one at Rangiya and two at Gauhati town) and a number of M.E. Madrassas both recognised and aided in the district.

The above Madrassa schools are being managed by the respective Managing Committees as per Departmental Rules and orders under the direct control of the Deputy Inspector of Schools. Recently 2 Arabic Colleges, one in Barpeta sub-division and the other in Gauhati sub-division, have been started.

Other educational institutes : Assam State Institute of Science Education : This institute arranges science education trainings for teachers, conducts researches in methods of science education and prepares books and implements. The institute situates on Zoo Road, Gauhati.

Vigyan Mandir : The Vigyan Mandir situates at Dimoria. It was started in 1953, by the C.S.I.R. and was taken over by the Government of India in 1965. It was transferred to the state government in 1963. The objects of the Vigyan Mandir are (I) to teach the rural people the modern scientific methods (II) to educate people by popular scientific lectures, cinema shows, and exhibitions and (III) to serve the students of rural areas. It is now, actually a science museum meant for children of Secondary schools. The students from the schools of the rural areas having no laboratory facility conduct occasional visit of the students to this institution where some practical classes are held and specimens are exhibited by the officer-in-charge of the institution.

Education for the Handicapped : Deaf, Dumb and Blind : In order to cater to the needs of handicapped children, one Deaf and Dumb school was established at Gauhati, in March, 1949. This institute is now aided by Central and State Governments. The inmates (deaf mutes) of the institution are given general as well as vocational training in the following way : (1) General : Through oral academic method of education upto Lower Primary standard both in speech and language. The duration of the course is 8/10 years. The following vocational trades are taught in this school side by side during schooling : (a) Carpentry, (b) Spinning & Weaving, (c) Drawing & Painting & Clay modelling, (d) Leather works, (e) Knitting & Sewing, (f) Cutting and tailoring, (g) Chalk making etc.

The school is named as Bhowri Debi Sarawgi Deaf and Dumb School after the name of the wife of the donor Shri Chunilall Sarawgi.

In January, 1976, the Society for the Welfare of the Blinds, established a school for the blinds, with a view to impart education on music, craft, paper-bag making etc. to the blind students. It is a private concern but receives non-recurring grant from the Government. At present, there are 35 students only in this institution.

The Mental Welfare Society has established one school for mentally retarded children at Gauhati in 1979. It is running in a rented building at Bamunimaidam. Its own building is being constructed in its own land measuring 9.364334 hectares at Kahilipara, Gauhati.

Implementation of Social Education scheme in Kamrup district :

The Scheme of Social Education in the district of Kamrup was initiated in 1950. The following is a short summary of the work on Social Education in this district.

Adult Literacy Programme : The sole aim of organising the Adult Literacy Centres (now termed as Social Education Centres) is to help the adults of the villages in learning the 3 Rs as far as practicable. Besides, learning the 3 Rs the adults are given proper lessons to be acquainted with modern amenities and scientific living.

The duration of study in such centre is 8 months only. Generally adults of age group 14 to 40 years are enrolled in Adults Literacy Centres. With a view to check the relapsing habits of the adults, the books on new-literatures are distributed among them. Moreover, a bi-monthly magazine "Janasiksha" by name is published by the Social Education Department suited for neo-literates.

All the Development Blocks of Kamrup district have their Social Education Scheme, through which Adults Literacy Programmes are implemented in their respective areas.

The Adult Literacy Centres, so far organised by the Department in the district are given below.

Year	Total Nos. of Centres	Male Centres	Female Centres	Enrolment		Made literate	
				Male	Female	Male	Female
1958-59	107	90	17	1,958	330	1519	251
1959-60	58	44	14	1,132	265	833	186
1960-61	61	56	5	1,214	75	816	36
1961-62	44	38	6	918	137	589	83
1962-63	48	42	6	958	104	641	71
1963-64	58	48	10	1,010	206	740	142

Now this programme is executed through the Charcha Mandals, Yuva Mandals and Mahila Mandals.

Library Organisation : Organisation of New Libraries for helping the growing ones with the books and the periodicals and aiding the promising Libraries are some of the important features in the field of mani-

fold activities of Social Education. The Book-grants are sanctioned to deserving Libraries.

Community Centres : Some Libraries have been converted into Community Centres which are serving as area Libraries. The Community Centres have their own schemes for betterment of the community in all respects.

In the district of Kamrup, 10 Community Centres have so far been organised from the Social Education Department. Besides, every Development Block has been directed to organise 5 to 10 Community Centres in their respective areas.

Non-Student Youth Organisations : With a view to encouraging the non-student youth organisations, lump-sum grants are sanctioned to such organisations. These youth organisations perform open air theatre, organise dramatic performances and other cultural functions besides, undertaking works for economic development. In the district of Kamrup the grants have been sanctioned to 11 of such organisations in 1963-64. The Social Education Department encourages cultural and recreational activities in the Community Centres and Libraries. The organisations of Mahila Samitee, and the children's organisations are also sponsored by this department.

Training Camp : Training camp for Social Workers, Librarians and teachers of the Adult Literacy Centres are organised annually to make them fit to run the institutions properly.

Permanent Adult School : Permanent Adult Schools have also been organised by the department at Kanwachal, Gauhati and Sualkuchi, with a view to imparting elementary education to the working class people who are above 14 years of age.

Cultural, Literary and Scientific Societies : Location, objective membership, significant Contribution etc. :

Cultural Societies : There are enumerable cultural organisations in the district. The following is a list of some of the important organisations :

- 1) The "Rupachanda" under the Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Gauhati.
- 2) Kamrup Natya Samity, Gauhati.
- 3) Pragati Silpi Sangha, Gauhati.
- 4) Madhuchayanika, Gauhati.

- 5) New Art Players, Uzanbazar, Gauhati.
- 6) Anupam Kala Kunja, Gauhati.
- 7) Kristi Bikas Sangha, Gauhati.
- 8) Milan Mandir, Barpeta.
- 9) Prachya Sangha, Patancharkuchi.
- 10) I.P.T.A., Gauhati.
- 11) Pragjotishpur Kala Parishad, North Gauhati.
- 12) Dipak Sangha, Silpukhuri, Gauhati.
- 13) Natsala, Gauhati.
- 14) Kingshuk, Gauhati.
- 15) Saubhik, Uzanbazar, Gauhati.
- 16) Assomi Sangha, Nalbari.
- 17) Bajali Paragati Sangha, Pathsala.
- 18) Hajo Kala Bhavan, Hajo.
- 19) Kamrup Kohinoor Natya Samitee, Nalbari.
- 20) Milon Silpi Sangha, Belsor.
- 21) Assam Academy for Cultural Relations, Gauhati.
- 22) Sangit Sevak Sangha, Barpeta.
- 23) Asom Lekhika Santha, Gauhati.
- 24) Srimanta Sankar Kristi Biskash Samiti, Gauhati.
- 25) Purba-Bharati, Nalbari.
- 26) Guwahati Sahitya Sabha, Paltanbazar.
- 27) Dispur Mukul Sangha, Dispur.
- 28) Alochana Chakra, Gauhati.
- 29) Sishu Bikash Kendra, Gauhati.
- 30) Guwahati Moina Parijat, Kanwachal.
- 31) Lekhak-Lekhika Santha, Gauhati.
- 32) Sora-Chanda, Chenikuthi.
- 33) Kamrup Sahitya Parishad, Pattacharkuchi.
- 34) Guwahati Sahitya Sabha, etc. etc.

Over and above the numerous cultural organisations not stated above, the Kamrup Anusandhan Samittee (Assam Research Society) and the Directorate of Historical & Antiquarian studies, both of which are located at Gauhati, are also contributing towards the cultural development as well as historical research in the State.

1) Kamrup Anusandhan Samittee : The Kamrup Anusandhan Samittee or Assam Research Society was established at Gauhati on the 7th April, 1912, to carry researches in matters relating to History,

Archaeology, Literature, Ethnography etc. Due to untiring efforts of some selfless workers, this society made rapid progress in historical and archaeological collections and within a short time formed the nucleus of a museum. Subsequently the collections were transferred to the Assam State Museum established in 1940. Thus, the Samittee is the parent institute of the Assam State Museum, Gauhati. The Samittee has a building of its own at Gauhati on the south bank of Dighali Pukhuri near Assam State Museum. The Society is managed by an Executive Committee consisting of ten members.

The main object of the Samittee is to carry on researches in matters relating to History, Archaeology, Ethnography etc., to publish a journal and other works, and to collect books, manuscripts, coins, copper plates, statues, carved stones, anthropological articles etc.

The following four classes of members are in the list of the Samittee.

- i) Ordinary members.
- ii) Associate members.
- iii) Honorary members, and
- iv) Life members.

"The Journal of the Assam Research Society" is the mouth-piece of the Samittee. It was founded in 1931, and the founder Editor of the Journal was Rai Bahadur K. L. Baruah, an eminent historian of Assam. Dr. B. K. Baruah, M.A. Ph.D. was the Editor-in-Chief of the journal. The Samittee has published two valuable manuscripts, "Assamar Purani Buranji" Edited by Pandit Hem Chandra Goswami and another Assam History edited by Dr. S. K. Bhuyan M.A., B.L., Ph. D., D. Litt.

The Samittee maintains a good library which contains some rare and valuable books and magazines, old manuscripts including some illustrated ones, transcripts etc.

2) Department of Historical & Antiquarian Studies (Narayani Handique Historical Institute): Establishment of a Government Department for the furtherance of historical research based on the ancient written documents of Assam, was first considered a great necessity by Sir Charles Lyall, the officiating Chief Commissioner of Assam. His contemporary Sir Edward Gait submitted a scheme defining the scope of the work of collection and preservation to be undertaken in 1894. As a result of his efforts the valuable historical materials were collected, which he published in 1897 in his book, "Report on the Progress of Historical Research in the Province of Assam". The Government in the meantime, established

the Department of Ethnography with Mr. Gait as the first Honorary Director, and the materials collected were deposited in his office at Shillong. Lt. Col. P.R.T. Gurdon succeeded Mr. Gait, who collected and edited a few papers on Assam's history and coins. From 1904, Sir Bamfylde Fuller, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, initiated the publication of monographs on hill tribes of Assam. From 1912, Pandit Hem Chandra Goswami undertook systematic search for ancient manuscripts pertaining to Assam under the Department of Ethnography. Dr. J. H. Hutton succeeded Mr. Gurdon in 1920, during whose time, more intensive study of the hill tribes was undertaken. This Department of Ethnography having been confined mainly to ethnographical studies, the necessity for the establishment of a separate Department for historical studies was felt. On constant representations being made to Mr. J. R. Cunningham, the then Director of Public Instruction regarding the absence of facilities for promotion of historical learning, he moved the Government in 1928 for establishment of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies to be maintained by Government from its Exchequer. As a result of this move, the Government of Assam, during the administration of Sir Laurie Lucas Hammond, established this Department and a circular, setting forth its aims and objects, was issued by Mr. R. Friel, Secretary to the Government of Assam, in the Transferred Department on June 28, 1928, to all Heads of Departments including the Commissioners of Divisions.

Thus, this department came into being and began to function from July 15th, 1928, with a regular office established at Gauhati under the control of the Assistant Honorary Director of the Brahmaputra Valley.

It may be stated here that antiquarian research started in Assam, as in other places, under the British patronage. The East India Company, for the first time in the British history availed of an opportunity of obtaining some informations about Assam during the time of Swargadeo Gaurinath Sinha through the initiative of Captain Welsh who was sent to help the king against the Moamaria insurgents. Captain Welsh wrote a good account about the government and the people of the land in 1792. This was followed by the historical and geographical account of Dr. J. P. Wade. The records of the East India Company 1792 and 1826, supplied good evidences of their attempt to collect information throughout Assam. Francis Hamilton made a comprehensive survey and collected valuable information which he incorporated in his "Accounts of Assam". Ever since the coming of the British, therefore, Assam's isolation was broken and, as the foreign accounts show, the interest in Assam's history and administration received due attention of the Government. Captain

Jenkin's Diary of the Tour in Upper Assam, 1839, contains a good information about the administration of the Ahom rulers. The Administrative Reports, Census Reports and Monographs etc., brought out regularly from 1874 onwards, contained detailed information about the land; but then these reports served the purpose of administration having little or no historical scholarship.

The first systematic attempt to conduct investigation into the history of Assam under Government auspices was made with effect from 1894. Practically the Department of Ethnography should be taken as the forerunner of the Department of Historical and Antiquarian studies.

Late Rai Bahadur Radhakanta Handique donated a sum of Rs. 10,000/- (ten thousand) towards the construction of a permanent building for this department, which was to be named after his wife Narayani Handique. This donation enabled the Department to house its office as well as the manuscripts already collected which, at the initial stages, had to be shifted from place to place. The site for the building was allotted by the Government, with a substantial amount, to supplement the total cost of construction. The building was formally opened on April 4th, 1936, by the then Governor, Sir Micheal Keane.

The donor of the building had also donated a beautiful portrait of his wife, Srimati Narayani Handique to be kept in the Institute which was unveiled ceremoniously on February 7th, 1940.

The Department has till now collected about 3,000 (three thousand) manuscripts in Assamese, Sanskrit and Tai—Ahom languages covering all important branches of learning together with some important records. A few of the manuscripts have been purchased and some others have been taken on loan. Manuscripts have also been collected from other institutions in India as well as from abroad. Photostate copies of manuscripts, Dharmaputana, Tripura Buranji and Ahom Buranji in Tai original have been procured from the British Museum, London. Photostate copies of all the Assamese manuscripts preserved in Asiatic Society Library, Calcutta, have also been obtained. Assamese manuscripts in large numbers are found preserved in Koch Bihar and a few in Jaipur. The Department has been trying to collect the said manuscripts. It is reported that the Bodlien Library of Oxford has also preserved a few Assamese manuscripts. Among the collections are a few illustrated manuscripts namely Hastividya, Sankhadavadh kavya, Sailya parva, Dharmaputana and Tirthakaumudi. It is, however, a fact

that the horde of treatises collected for this Department constitute but a small fragment of the huge mass of manuscript—treasures, now preserved at the institutional archives and by individual owners which they have kept as heirlooms. In most cases, the manuscripts have not been properly preserved as it is a difficult task for a untrained hand to preserve manuscripts written in Sanchi barks and cotton papers and, therefore, it would be better for all concerned if these manuscripts, lying scattered at different places, are collected for scientific preservation in the State Archive. The sole credit for bringing most of the historical masterpieces of Assam to light goes to Dr. S. K. Bhuyan, who headed this department for a quite long time. The first edited work came out in 1930, when 'Kamarupar Buranji' and 'Asom Buranji' of Harakanta Sadar Amin were published.

The Department served as a liaison office between the State Government and the Department of Archaeology, Government of India, Eastern Circle, Calcutta, on state archaeology until the establishment of the State Department of Archaeology in 1964. It had been entrusted with the work of surveying, collecting and preserving records of the State under the auspices of the Regional Records Survey Committee constituted for the State in response to the instructions issued by the Indian Historical Records Commission, National Archives of India. This Committee had been entrusted with the work of compilation of a National Register of Records.

Literary Societies : As to the literary societies, mention may be made of the local branches of the Asom Sahitya Sabha.

Sabita Sabha, as an affiliated branch of Asom Sahitya Sabha, was established in 1950, for promoting Assamese language and literature. The membership of the Sabha is open only to persons having literary achievements to their credit. The meetings of the Sabha are held on suitable occasions for discussing literary topics and linguistic problems. The Sabha has published a number of books of high literary worth. *Bihagi Kabi* late Raghunath Choudhury was the founder President of this Sabha.

The Gauhati office of Asom Sahitya Sabha has been functioning from the Bhagabati Prasad Barua Bhawan situating near the State Library, Gauhati. One Assistant Secretary of Asom Sahitya Sabha is in charge of the Sahitya Sabha office here. Both the buildings of Asom Sahitya Sabha situating in Gauhati, have been constructed out of donated funds.

Kamrup Sahitya Parishad : It is an independent district level literary organisation having affiliation to the main Asom Sahitya Sabha. This organisation has a number of branches in the district and has acquired

a plot of land in Jalukbari, Gauhati for its Central Office. It has a number of important published books to its credit.

Guwahati Sahitya Sabha : It is an affiliated branch of Asom Sahitya Sabha. This is the only local branch of Asom Sahitya Sabha which possesses a landed property with an office building of its own in Gauhati.

Mukul Sangha, Dispur : As an affiliated branch of Asom Sahitya Sabha, it initially functioned in Shillong. But along with the shifting of the Assam capital from Shillong, a branch of the Mukul Sangha was also founded in Dispur. The members of the Sangha meet in occasional literary sittings held usually in private residences of its members.

Besides, there are many other Alochana chakras and Lekhak-Lekhika Santhas functioning in different corners of the district.

Scientific Societies : The Assam Science Society was formed in 1953, with headquarters at Gauhati. It is a registered organisation and aims at to achieve the following objects :

- i) To advance and promote the cause of science in Assam both in pure and applied branches.
- ii) To promote research in different branches of science and technology.
- iii) To disseminate scientific knowledge by holding discussions on the original papers and also the important topics of common interest.
- iv) To perform all other acts, matters and things that may be necessary for the fulfilment of the objects of the society.

At present the membership is restricted to about 200 persons. The expenses of the Society are met from subscriptions collected from members of the Society and state government's grants. The Society has already published a number of scientific books, including a compilation of Assamese equivalents of scientific and technological terms. Over and above these, the Society has been arranging symposia, popular talks and film shows on different branches of science during the last eleven years. Several eminent Indians and foreign scientists also participated in many of these functions. The society also conducted coaching classes in French and German languages for a number of years.

Recently, the society has submitted detailed plans to the state government for establishment of a Fundamental Research Institute, a children's science museum and an Astronomical observatory.

The society also publishes two periodicals. One is the "Journal of the Assam Science Society" (annual) and the other is "The Bigyan Jeuti" (quarterly), in English and Assamese respectively.

Libraries, Museums and Botanical and Zoological gardens etc. : The district of Kamrup is bestowed with a good deal of important libraries such as the State Library, District Library, Cotton College Library, Libraries of the Kamrup Anusandhan Samiti and the Department of Historical & Antiquarian Studies and University Library. The establishment of these libraries has given a great impetus to the students as well as the public for developing cultural and reading habits. Besides, there is a library invariably attached to every educational institution. Moreover there are welfare organisations and various clubs in the city most of which also possess their own library.

It may be mentioned here that numerous institutional libraries and other public libraries almost in all villages of the district have been growing up with the public and the Government helps.

Museums : The Assam state Museum is located at Gauhati just on the southern bank of the Dighali Pukhuri (Tank). This Museum is the direct offspring of the Kamrupa Anusandhan Samitee or the Assam Research Society which was established at Gauhati in 1912 (April) to carry on researches in matters relating to history and archaeology. Due to untiring efforts and selfless devotion of some workers including Rai Bahadur K. L. Barua, the Samitee could formally open the museum, which was its primary object, in 1940. The opening ceremony was performed by the then Governor of Assam, Sir Robert Neil Reid. But the founder president of the Institute Rai Bahadur K. L. Barua did not live to see it formally opened by the Governor.

In the year 1953, the Museum was provincialised to intensify the collection of fresh treasures. It is now proving to be a "Treasure House" of our glorious past and the students including research scholars are haunting it for perfection or collection of materials in the field of their respective studies. The Museum has got a fair collection of antiquities and some modern works of art and culture.

The authorities of the Museum have recently brought out a very interesting book under the title of "Ancient Treasures of Assam" wherein the glimpses of art, culture, history and literature of the state are found.

Further, the sets of pictures, the post cards of choice showing sculptures of the state, have also been brought out. The different articles

on epigraphy, sculptures etc., acquired for the Museum have been published in different journals including 'Epigraphica Indica'.

The Museum has a library of some rare and valuable books on art, culture, history, archaeology, museology etc.

Over and above the State Museum, there are two other notable museums, one is the Forest Museum and the other is Commercial Museum. The former is maintained by the Forest Department and the later by the Gauhati University.

Botanical & Zoological Gardens : Save and except the small garden attached to the Botany and Zoology Departments of Cotton College, there is no separate botanical garden in the district. However, two small departmental gardens are maintained by the State Ayurvedic College (where medicinal plants are also found) and the Assam Forest School (mainly for practical demonstration to the students concerned). There is also another small garden at the Ulubari Nursery under the Agriculture Department.

The Assam State Zoo-cum-Botanical Garden came into being in August, 1958, under the State Forest Department. It is located on the east of the R. G. Barua Road mainway between Chandmari and Dispur Charali, the distance being about 6.40 kilometres from the District Court.

This zoo owes its origin to the all-India Congress Session held at Jalukbari during January, 1958. The question of starting a zoo for the state was actually mooted out after the session was over and accordingly the Government of Assam decided to start the zoo with the few animal-exhibits collected by the Forest Department for the Congress Session.

The Forest Department thus, being entrusted with the responsibility, acquired the present site which has proved to be too ideal for a zoo because of its hilly topography with the luxurious natural regeneration all over it.

The present area of the zoo is in the neighbourhood of 129.904206 hectares. It has now a host of animals both local and foreign like African Lions, Kangaroo, African Baboons, Japanese ducks, Monkeys, Deer, African Ostrich etc., besides the Assam black Panthers, Rhinos and King cobras.

Besides these there are two very important Nurseries maintained by two private persons in Gauhati for raising seeds, seedlings, and plants of different varieties on commercial basis.

CHAPTER XVI

MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES.

(a) **Survey of Public Health in early times :** Before introduction of Allopathic system of Medicine and Surgery ; the Ayurvedic and other indigenous systems of medicine were prevalent in the district. In the earlier period of the British rule in the province, the people had their belief in the old and traditional Ayurvedic System of Medicines and the common people used to go to *Ojah* and *Bez* (Village Physicians) who used to practise with the herbs and crude surgery.

In this context, it may however be noted that during the Ahom rule there were separate departments under the trained officers and physicians to look after the public and personal health of citizens and to prescribe indigenous medicines for patients, both human beings and animals. "The practice of Ayurvedic treatment is also substantiated by the extant manuscripts on the subject, some of which have now been preserved at the department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies at Gauhati. The science of Ayurveda, it may be stated, is based on what is known as *Tridosha* i.e., *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*, and these trio are taken as the sole supporters of the entire body" : The *Vaidyavati*, an Assamese work on *Ayurveda* with 27 folios deals with the various symptoms of fever and prescribes medicinal herbs and treatment. The work begins with an invocation to Sri Krishna and Dhanantari. Besides, we have some other manuscripts on indigenous medicine viz *Vaidyasarodhara* and *Cikitsa Sanhita* in Sanskrit. The *Cikitsa Grantha*, *Vyadhi Gusivar Katha*, and *Cikitsa Mantra-Tantradi* in Assamese are some of the important treatises written by Assamese experts of old Kamrupa. Another treatise named *Togasataka* was written by one Nagarjuna of Vajrayana school. According to Dr. P.C. Choudhury he is probably a contemporary of Ratnapala of Kamrupa.* The treatise begins with an invocation to Ganesha and Dhanantari and describes symptoms of different kinds of tumour, carbuncle, boils etc. and prescribes medicinal herbs for these diseases. "It should be noted in connection with the Ayurvedic Treatment in Assam that this

1. *Aspects of the Heritage of Assam: Indian History Congress, Twenty-second Session, Gauhati 1959 P. 25.*
2. P. C. Choudhury : *History of the People of Assam to the Twelfth Century A. D.* Gauhati, 1969 p. 408.

science and the healing mantras have been considered almost inseparable, or that in spite of the extensive use of medicinal herbs, major part of the healing of patients is believed to have been done by incantations, a reference to which, is found to have been made at least in some works. The origin of this idea may, however, be traced back to many early texts, and the intimate connection between the two, the herbs and the healing mantras have been so ingrained in our nature that the patients do not feel relieved of their diseases unless a reference is made to *Kamarupa-Kamakhyā* in a Tantrik style and also to *Dhanantari*, and the so called demons of illness are driven out by the medicinemen with the help of mantras. In this respect the village *Ojās* are more reliable, people think, than the physicians with Ayurvedic training. The fact is not that the mantras alone are all important, but that the mantras in the hands of the *Ojās* using medicinal herbs are more effective, people think, than the herbs ~~valongit~~ prescribed by the physicians. This superstition is popular even to-day, and it is more so with the tribes who believe that all diseases are caused by the demons of illness. Whatever the ground for this belief, along with the magical practices and mantra for which Kamarup became a noted centre, evidently under the influence of the Tantrik system; the use of medicinal herbs became greatly popular among the people in general. It seems to us that as Kamarupi system of indigenous Medicines was worked out with details, and it has not been difficult with a village *Ojāh* to find out a herb from the neighbouring jungles though for a modern man who is not acquainted with medicinal value of the local plants, the difficulty lies only in the identification of most of the medicinal herbs. The tradition has, however, been kept alive, and the Ayurvedic treatment of what is called the *Asuri* type is very popular at least in the villages.

There was another side of the practice of Ayurvedic treatment in Assam. The Ahom and the contemporary rulers established separate departments for looking after and the treatment of animals. They maintained officers in-charge of elephants and horses in particular. Ralph Fitch, who visited the Koch capital during the time of Naranarayana in the 16th century A.D. observes thus: 'They have hospitals for sheep, goats, dogs, cats, birds, and for all living creatures. When they be old and lame they keep there untill they die' (E. Gait, History of Assam, p. 61). It appears therefore, that the Veterinary science was well developed, and it is admitted that this science is an important addition to the practice of indigenous medicines.³ Two

3. *Aspects of the Heritage of Assam*: Indian History Congress, Twenty Second Session, Gauhati, 1959, P. 26.

treatises known as *Ghora Nidan* for treatment of horses and *Senor Vyadhi* (treatment of hawks) were also prepared and compiled during this period.⁴ The earlier one was written by Sagarkhari. In the earliest period, a scientific treatise on elephant diseases, known as *Hastayurveda* was compiled by one Palakapya-muni "in the region where the river Lauhitya flows from the Hamalayas to the sea."⁵ The author was probably from Kamarupa. The treatise contains 160 chapters, divided into sections bearing on *maharoga*, *kshudraroga*, *salya* (surgery), and *uttara* (therapy). A profusely illustrated work in Assamese, entitled *Hastividya-nava* was compiled by Sukumar Barkath in A.D. 1734 under the order of the Ahom ruler, Siva Sinha and his queen, Ambikadevi. It is not based on the *Hastayurveda*, but, as known from the text, the materials are taken from the work *Gajendra Chintamani* of Sambhunatha. The manuscript is a voluminous work with 193 folios in original. It deals with different types of elephants up to folio 103 and then deals with their ailments and treatments with the help of medicinal herbs. The valuable treatise on ailments of horses, the *Ghoranidana* of Sagarkhari, is in Assamese with 39 folios. The work describes the different kinds of horses, the symptoms of their diseases and treatments. As many as 109 kinds of diseases and their treatment are described there.⁶

It is, therefore, evident that prior to the British rule in Assam, the people of this region were ignorant of the allopathic system of medicines. Assam came under the British occupation much later than the other provinces of the country. Thus, naturally, the history of allopathic medical treatment in Assam is comparatively of recent development.

The major maladies of the people of this region were Kala-Azar and Malaria. Heavy morbidity and mortality from these diseases were noticed amongst the imported labour population in tea industries. As there was heavy loss amongst the working population, the management realised the necessity to employ some trained allopathic personnel in the different tea gardens. Thus, so called trained personnel were, in general, either attached to general practitioners or had some course in the allopathic system of medicine but without any recognised Medical degree or diploma. Even to the various limitations of these Medical personnel, their number was quite inadequate to meet the demand for such persons to deal with

4. Ibid, P. 282.

5. *Anandasrama*, Sanskrit Series Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society, Vol V, p. 311

6. *Aspects of the Heritage of Assam*, Souvenir of Indian History Congress—22nd Session, Gauhati, 1959, P. 26-27

the health problems of the labourers. The establishment of the Berry White Medical School at Dibrugarh in Upper Assam in 1899, could not satisfy the demand. This School was, then, lacked of the recent advances in the medical sciences. However, till 1947, the only source of medical man-power in the State used to be the licenciate medical practitioners (L.M.P.) produced by the Berry White Medical School only.

Thus, in the early period of the British administration, the medical facilities in the province were quite inadequate and the existing provisions were also not satisfactory. Up to 1875, there was only one dispensary in Kamrup district, and that was in the town of Gauhati. In *A Statistical Account of Assam* by Mr. W. W. Hunter, we find the following statistics for 1874, as compared with those of the previous year. "Total in-door patient treated 209 against 186, daily average 8.64 against 8.24, percentage of deaths to total treated 17.70 against 17.74, total out-door patients 972 against 793, daily average 28.84 against 21.90." 7

We may now turn to the extent of medical facilities and the state of Public Health which were recorded for this district in the later part of the 19th century.

Mr. B. C. Allen in his old Gazetteer of Kamrup stated that there were only two dispensaries in the district in 1881. These two principal dispensaries were located at Gauhati and Barpeta.

The following brief statement shows the expansion of Medical facilities and the number of patients treated in the district in the period between 1881 to 1901.⁸

Year	Number of Dispensaries	Number of Patients treated
1881	2	3,887
1891	7	18,981
1901	10	51,754

The same source indicates that for every patient treated in 1881, there were 13 in 1901, while the number of operations performed rose from 161 to 982. In the past, the diseases for which treatment was, most commonly applied were malarial fever, worms especially among children, dysentery, diarrhoea, splenetic, scorbutic, dropsy, elephantiasis, leprosy, venereal affections and ulcers. Cases of rheumatic affections and infections of tapeworms were frequently known to occur. Besides, during the period from 1881 to 1901, Cholera, Smallpox and Kala-Azar played havoc in

7. W. W. Hunter : *A Statistical Account of Assam*, Vol. I reprint 1975 p. 99.

8. B. C. Allan : *District Gazetteer, Kamrup*, 1905, p.229

the public life in the district. In 1918-19, there was an influenza epidemic in the district though there was gradual decline of *Kala Azar* and *small-pox* epidemics due to expanded medical activities. But problem of cholera resulting from pollution of water still continued as a constant side-effect of flood. Diphtheria did not normally occur in a virulent form but cases of Goitre were frequently found in the neighbourhood of Gauhati and Tetenus and Anthrax were met with in every part of the district. It may also be noted that in the seasons of the epidemic, the poorer classes always suffered most, owing, no doubt, to their filthy habits, want of proper food and shelter, and their habitual neglect of all sanitary precautions. Likewise, the opium-eating had a most pernicious effect upon the health of the people, those addicted to this practice being much more liable to succumb to disease than others. But the villagers as a whole were fairly free from venereal diseases in all its forms. Skin diseases and worms were constantly brought for treatment to the dispensaries. The native methods of midwifery left much to be desired and it was feared that mortality in childbirth from puerperal fever and other causes were considerable.

(b). **Vital Statistics** : The practice of maintaining vital statistics became common in the district during the British days. Prior to 1907, vital statistics were prepared on the basis of verbal reports of births and deaths submitted by the *Gaonbura* or village headman to the *Mandal* of the circle. From 1907, the *Gaonburas* were to submit written report. In theory, they submitted the report every second week, but in practice, they were received at much longer intervals as the *Gaonbura* was an unpaid servant of the Government and not amenable to discipline. There was no agency under the Deputy Commissioner to verify these reports. Hence due to non-verification of dates, the vital statistics so maintained in the past were found to be not accurate. So in 1908, the task of compilation of vital statistics was transferred to the Civil Surgeon from the Deputy Commissioner. Now-a-days, vital statistics are collected in the village level by the *Gaonbura* who in turn submits it to the *lot Mandal* or to the *Mauzadar* who compiles monthly return and submits it to the District Medical Officer of Health. In the urban areas, such statistics are received from the Chairman, Municipal Boards and Town Committees. Registrations in tea gardens are compulsory and the Manager of each tea garden maintains registers of births and deaths and submits monthly returns to the District Medical Officer of Health. Finally, the Civil Surgeon (now designated as District Health Officer) submits the statistics of the whole district to the Director of Health Services, Assam, Gauhati, for compilation on monthly and yearly basis. So far as Railways are

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concerned, the Station Masters are to keep registers of births and deaths in the railways. These are submitted to the Chief Medical officers of the Railways, who make a monthly return and submit to the Director of Health Services, Assam.

The figures indicating the natural increase of population based on vital statistics do not tally with those of the Census. Natural increase of population is not fully reflected in the vital statistical figures. It has been continually observed in the Census Reports since 1911, that the births are more often omitted than deaths. In 1951 Census Report, it has been mentioned that, sometimes, this omission in urban areas went up to 40% per cent. One more defect of vital statistics collected in Assam is the meagre or wrong classification of causes of deaths.

The following vital statistics in the district indicate the births and deaths as reported in the 1961 Census for some selected years since 1951 to 1960.⁹

Year	Total births	Total death	Total increase of birth over death	P.C. increase of birth over death
1951	8,018	4,768	3,250	40.53
1954	6,893	3,730	3,163	45.89
1957	6,202	3,539	2,663	42.94
1960	6,195	2,949	3,246	52.40

The following table shows the births and deaths year-wise occurring in the district during the period from 1965 to 1977 :—

Year	Total birth	Total Deaths	Total increase of Birth over Death.
1	2	3	4
1965	2458	1456	917
1967	2897	1579	1134
1969	2871	1655	1007
1971	3018	1995	1276
1973	1542	1004	538
1974	3089	1826	1263
1975	3173	1442	1731
1976	3247	1201	1746
1977	3488	1552	1932

Source : Directorate of Public Health, Assam,

9. Census of India, 1961, District Census Handbook, Kamrup, p. 408.

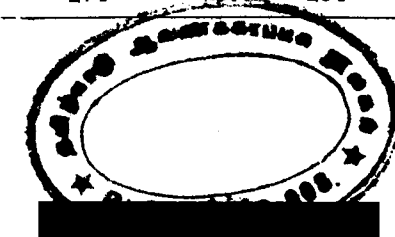
But much reliance cannot be put on these figures which were supplied mainly by Hospitals only as most of the births and deaths occurred outside the Hospitals.

(c) **Diseases Common to the district :** Details of the nature of diseases that were commonly found in the district more than 70 years back have already been mentioned in the earlier pages. Some of the common diseases of the past are still found in varying degrees in the district. But due to the recent advancement of preventive and curative aspects of Medical science, marked improvement of treatment of these common ailments of the past has been noticed. The Civil Surgeon, now designated as District Health Officer, of Kamrup recently reported that influenza, dysentery, helminthiasis, tuberculosis, leprosy, malaria etc., are some of the common diseases of the district at present. It is also reported that small-pox, chicken-pox and measles were very frequently met with in epidemic forms especially in the rural areas where the standard of sanitation is very low. Influenza generally breaks out following a spell of continuous rain and floods. Malaria which was one of the dreaded diseases of the country that seriously affected the people often causing set-backs in agricultural and industrial outputs, has been brought under control. The National Malaria Eradication programme undertaken by the government since 1935 has brought about remarkable results in reducing the incidence of the disease since the launching of the programme. A team of vaccinators has been working under the supervision of the District Health officer. Similarly, to control small-pox epidemic, there are Rural Health Inspectors, Rural Health Assistants, and Vaccinators in the district. In short, the intensive anti-small pox campaign has achieved excellent results and the state as a whole is now, to some extent, free from small pox, though chicken-pox and measles are still occurring in epidemic form. The following statement will show the position of the district as regards deaths from some specific infections during the ten years following 1950.¹⁰

Statement showing death from some selected diseases in Kamrup from 1951 to 1960.

Year	Cholera	Fever	Small pox	Dysentery Diarrhoea	Plague	Respiratory diseases.	Child birth
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1951	162	630	147	8	18	43	98
1954	..	1,291	14	130	..	121	72
1959	2	2,063	14	140	..	119	74
1960	42	404	179	274	..	254	77

10, Ibid,



Year	Malaria	Kala-azar	T.B.	Snake-bite	Leprosy	Cancer	Suicide
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1951	2,346	39	..	6	..	..	28
1954	1,587	41	2	1	..	..	28
1959	545	60	..	1	..	5	14
1960	873	103	5	2	..	27	24

An idea about deaths caused from specific diseases in the district during the period from 1965 to 1977 may be gathered from the following data collected from the Directorate of Health Services, Assam.

Statement showing death from some Selected diseases

Name of Diseases	Year								
	1965	1967	1969	1971	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
1. Cholera.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
2. Fever.	111	127	142	101	170	259	261	250	271
3. Small-pox.	..	..	1	..	1	1	..	..	..
4. Dysentery.	9	..	12	17	28	41	32	39	37
5. Diarrhoea.	10	11	14	16	53	63	26	56	49
6. Plague.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
7. Respiratory Diseases.	2	3	8	3	8	11	69	27	37
8. Suicide.	..	..	1	1	2	3	2	2	1
9. Child Birth.	4	6	9	10	12	22	16	21	14
10. Malaria.	..	1	..	..	1	1	1	..	..
11. Kala-azar	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
12. T.B.	12	10	7	12	22	52	54	65	52
13. Snake-bite.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
14. Leprosy.	..	..	..	..	14	5	11	11	10
15. Cancer.	..	..	..	..	14	32	..	27	16

Note :—Nil reports are shown as vacant.

(b) Public hospitals and dispensaries :

Organisation of the Medical Department : Formerly the Inspector General of Civil Hospitals, with his headquarter at Shillong was the head of the Medical Department in the province of Assam and the Civil Surgeons and the Sub-divisional Medical officers were responsible for the districts and sub-divisions respectively. The headquarters of the Civil Surgeon of Kamrup Division were at Gauhati whereas the headquarter of the sub-divisional officer was at Barpeta. After the creation of Nalbari as a separate Sub-Division, a Sub-Divisional Medical officer has been posted at Nalbari which is the headquarter of the Sub-division.

In 1944, the Public Health Department was reorganised and it was placed under the Director of Public Health with his headquarters at Shillong. Later on, to offer more Medical facilities especially in the rural areas of the province, two posts of Assistant Directors of Public Health were created, one for the Lower Assam districts with headquarters at Gauhati and the other, for upper Assam district with headquarters at Jorhat. Thus these two Divisions i.e. Medical and Public Health were controlled by two separate Assistant Directors under the Director of Health Services, Assam. Similarly, in the district there was a Civil Surgeon to control the Medical Department of the district helped by the Sub-divisional Medical Officers at the sub-divisions, and a District Health Officer was stationed at Gauhati to control the Public Health Department with the Sub-Divisional Officers at the Sub-Divisions.

But since 1958, both the works have been amalgamated and the Civil Surgeon, now designated as District Health Officer, Kamrup, has been the controlling officer both for preventive and curative aspects of the work. As a result of this amalgamation, the District Health Officer became the head of the Medical Department at the district-level and under him there are Assistant Surgeons both for curative and preventive purposes on public health duty. In recent years both preventive and curative measures have been adopted by the Medical Department providing medical facilities, medicines and also are deputing doctors and other medical personnel to the villages. Thus, the key person at the district-level to supervise the civil hospitals, public health units, state dispensaries etc. of the district is the District Health Officer. At the Sub-Divisional level there is one Sub-divisional Health Officer, one each in Barpeta and Nalbari sub-divisions. The functions of the officers are more or less akin to the District Health Officer. The Sub-Divisional Health Officers are also assisted by their respective Assistant Surgeon I (P. H.) in public health works.

All state hospitals, dispensaries and primary health units numbering over hundred and seventeen ¹¹ which are spread over both urban and rural areas, are to look after the curative and preventive aspects of the diseases. Besides, all Medical Officers are concurrently empowered to act as Food Inspectors and to look after and check adulteration of food-stuff. Besides, some hospitals and dispensaries are provided with maternity and family welfare wings to render child welfare, maternity and family planning services in their respective areas.

Though the exact date of the establishment of the first Dispensary at Gauhati is not known yet, it is presumed that it was established a few years before 1874 as it found mentioned in the Statistical Hand Book of W. W. Hunter in 1874.

In 1875, another dispensary was opened in the sub-divisional town of Barpeta. Gradually more dispensaries were established in the district and in 1901, their number increased to ten. These dispensaries were located at Gauhati, Barpeta, Nalbari, Chaygaon, Palasbari, Hajo, Rangia, Boko, Bali and Raha. There were no private hospitals and dispensaries in the district at that time (District Gazetteer, Kamrup, 1905, by B. C. Allan).

Medical facilities though expanded during the later part of the British rule fell far short of the needs of the rural people of Kamrup district. It was only after the independence that a net work of dispensaries was set up in the rural areas approximately one within a radius of eight kilometres. These dispensaries which were, at first, under the administrative control of the Local Boards, had been taken over by the government after introduction of the Panchayat Act, 1959. Since then, these have been termed as State Dispensaries and placed under the control of the Civil Surgeon, (the District Health Officer). The number of public hospitals (Civil Hospitals) is comparatively small in comparison with that of the State Dispensaries and Primary Health units. In Kamrup district, Civil Hospitals are located in the sub-divisional headquarters and other important towns. In the district headquarters at Gauhati, the Medical College Hospital serves the purpose of the Civil hospital. At present, there are two Civil Hospitals in the district and they are located at Barpeta and Nalbari. Besides the state Civil Hospitals, there are also Medical College hospital, Police hospital, Railway hospitals etc. in the district. In these hospitals, total number of beds for indoor patients were 1361 in 1966-67. In this context, it may, however, be mentioned that before the establishment of the Gauhati Medical College,

there was a state Civil Hospital at Gauhati with 174 beds. Besides, an Emigration Hospital and one Maternity Hospital managed by a Trust were taken over by the Medical College authority to impart clinical teaching to the students. All the three hospitals were running smoothly before taking over by the college authority. Later on, to cope with the ever increasing attendance both in the out-door patients' and in-door patients' departments, and also to render better services, temporary constructions with 215 beds together with the operation theatres were done in the old Civil Hospital campus. The total number of hospitals in the district were nine in the year 1976-77. In all these hospitals, and medical institutions in the district the total number of indoor patients treated during 1975 was 28,000 while outdoor patients receiving medical attendance in that year were 32,83,000.

The following is the statement showing gradual expansion of medical facilities in Kamrup district during 1968-79.

	1968-69	1970-71	1974-75	1978-79
Number of Hospitals.	7	6	8	9
Dispensaries.	87	88	90	90
Primary Health Centres.	17	17	19	30
Rural family Welfare Planning centres.	—	47	—	158
Beds.	1,117	1,164	1,209	1,407
Indoor Patient treated.	168	231	5,784	N.A.
Outdoor Patient treated.	10,500	13,975	3,095	N.A.

Source : Directorate of Statistics, Assam.

Gauhati Medical College Hospital : The Gauhati Medical College Hospital has served mostly four districts i.e. Goalpara, Kamrup Nowgong and Darrang with a total population of 84,96,369 according to 1971 Census and also a part of Meghalaya and Arunachal. This College Hospital has the largest number of outdoor patient's attendance, admission, operations, deliveries etc. amongst the hospitals in the entire North Eastern region. It has performed the highest number of female sterilisation and Medical termination of pregnancy in this region in the past few years. As a matter of fact, this hospital has made significant contribution in the field of family planning. Besides, there is a World Health Organisation sponsored training course under the Meternity Training Programme (M.T.P.) for the doctors of the North Eastern region in this college. The attendance of patients in both outdoor and indoor sections is swelling up day by day. The following brief state-

11. *Statistical Hand Book of Assam*, 1976, by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Gauhati, p 119.

ment shows the year-wise number of indoor patients and outdoor patients treated in the Gauhati Medical College Hospital in 1973, 1974, 1975 and 1976-77 respectively.¹²

Indoor patients admitted					Outdoor patients admitted.			
Year	1973	1974	1975	1976-77	1973	1974	1975	1976-77
Number	10,724	18,084	21,915	23,000	1,32,000	1,43,000	1,88,000	2,06,000

The total strength of beds of the Gauhati Medical College Hospital is 865 and number of extra beds provided to meet the emergent situation is 15 in the year 1976-77 and the average percentage of beds occupied during the year is 85.¹³

The Hospital, at present, is housed in the old civil hospital campus in Panbazar area. Recently the maternity ward has been shifted to the new building at its permanent site. The permanent site for construction of the college and hospital complex was selected at Narakachal hill near Dispur. The land for the purpose was acquired in 1962, currently the construction works of the Medical College and Hospital are going on at the foot of the Narakachal hill. It is planned to make the college and hospital complex a residential institute both for post-graduate and under-graduate students. In 1976-77, besides, the Principal and the Vice-Principal, there were 28 Professors, 45 Assistant Professors, 29 Registrars and 52 Demonstrators.

State Dispensaries : In 1974-75, there were ninety State Dispensaries in Kamrup district which increased to 93 in the year 1976-77. In most of the State Dispensaries, family planning units are also attached to render family welfare services in the area. State Dispensaries are located at Changsari, Digaru, Dhupguri, Hahim, Guamara, Hekera, Halogaon, Kamakhya, Maniari Tinsuk, Nagarbera, Ramdia, Guiya, East Gauhati, West Gauhati, Kulsi Alikash, Amragabarihat, Baraghati, Bihdia, Bhalukghata, Chaygaon, Chamaria, Dorakohora, Dampur, Dhubibalisatra, Goreswar, Kamalpur, Khetri, Kaniha, Loharghat, Lokhara, Nahira, Palashbari, Rampur, Uparhali, Khanapara, Rani, Barama, Nikashi, Dighali, Subankhata, Doulasal, Solmara, Barimakha, Nowkata, Athiabari, Alliah, Belsor, Milon, Burinagar, Chamata, Balowa, Dhamdhama, Dwarkuchi, Dakhirgaon, Kumarikata, Khatabari, Marowa, Kamarkuchi, Namati, Nilpur, Sarekuchi, Tihu, Topoliabaganpara, Uttardharmapur, Byaskuchi, Kamargaon, Titapani, Gohia, Bhella, Jania,

12. *Statistical Hand Book, Assam*, 1973, Gauhati p. 92.

13. *Ibid*, 1978, P. 125.

Sarukhetri, Nalbari, Sorbhog, Adabari, Howli, Pattacharkuchi, Koklabari, Tarabari, Sadari, Bhabanipur, Charadmama, Kawaimari, Kachumara, Sarumanipur, Sarupeta, Helem, Pathsala etc. The total number of beds in the Hospitals, Dispensaries and Primary Health Centres was 1,361 in the district during the year 1976-77.

Subsidised Dispensaries : (Allopathic) : In addition to the State dispensaries mentioned above, there are also a number of subsidised dispensaries in the district. In 1971 there were twenty-seven such dispensaries in Kamrup. They were located at Akaya, Athgaon, Kaurbaha, Kashibisnupur, Madhukuchi, Namati, Puthimari, Singarpura, Sonapur, Uttar-Ghilabari, Bangsor, Gotanagar, Hahara, Jagobari, Lawtola, Nartap, Bahjani, Bhadra, Barmurikana, Barsimaluguri Baranchari, Haribhanga, Nankarbhaira, Niznamati, Thomna, Barnibari, Kothora, Amdah, Baghamara, Cheki, Nityananda, Puthimari and Raha.

Rural Health Centres : In 1960, there were ten Rural Health Centres with facilities to admit indoor patients. Each Primary Health Centre usually covers a population from forty to sixty thousands. Each centre is required to attend both curing and preventing of diseases occurring in the area, survey of diseases, taking up of sanitary measures, supply of drinking water etc. In June 1971, the number of such centres increased to seventeen. They were located at Baramboi, Dihina, Pacharia, Saniadi, Gandhinagar, Batakuchi, Bamunigaon, Gomerimura, Chandrapur, Amrikhowa, Era, Fingua, Amdah, Gobardhana, Medakhat, Adabari, Kothora.

Primary Health Units/Centres : In recent years, Primary Health Centres have been established in rural areas for dealing with in preventive and curative aspects of diseases giving more emphasis on the later. Such centres have been established as per recommendation of the Bhore Committee (Health and Survey Committee) and the observation of the World Health Organisation to the effect that there should be integrated health care through primary health centres in rural areas. Each Primary Health unit provides a few beds for maternity cases. Each unit has 2 to 3 sub-centres to look after the curative and preventive aspects of diseases. Maternity cases, child welfare and family planning services are also dealt with in the sub-centres. The Medical-Officer, in-charge of the Public Health units, supervises the sub-centres and he is assisted by a group of qualified personnel like Sanitary Inspectors, Lady Health Visitors, Midwives etc. In June 1971, Primary Health units were located at North Gauhati, Rangia, Hajo, Sualkuchi, Sarupeta, Boko, Golagaon, Nagoan, Tamulpur, Mukalmua, Ghagrapara, Barpeta Road, Kalgachia, Jalah,

Chenga and Massalpur. All total twenty-nine Primary Health centres have been established in the district by 1976-77.

Maternity and Child Welfare Centres : Services rendered in the district by maternity and child welfare centres also deserve mention. In 1960, twenty-four such centres were functioning in the district. Auxiliary Nurse and Midwives like Public Health Nurses were posted there to render some preliminary treatment in these centres. Such maternity and child welfare centres were located at Kothora, Rangia, Damdama, Goreswar, Dhamdhama, Massalpur, Jalah, Kamargaon, Tihu, Rampur, Barama, Dorakohora, Jharabari, Gauhati, Pathsala, Rangia and Nalbari. In 1971, there were 33 such centres in the district.¹⁴

Besides the State Government help and patronage, the Maternity and Child Welfare Centres are also getting assistance from the World Health Organisation and UNICEF. Some of the Maternity and Child welfare centres are financed by the State Social Welfare Board.

Family Planning Services : In recent years, the problem of Family Planning has attracted the attention of the people both in the urban and the rural areas. The Government has adopted various devices to control the increasing birth rate in the district. The State Government started about 70 Family Planning Welfare Centres upto January, 1963, in different parts of the district. The clinics, dealing with Family Planning matters are there, one at each, in Maternity Home of Gauhati, Pathsala, Barpeta, Jalah, and Maternity welfare Centres at Rangia, Nalbari, Hajo, etc. To make the family planning programme more popular among the people, family planning committees are also functioning in the district. Thirty-one such family welfare centres were established in the district in 1976-77. Further, Orientation Training Camp accompanied by I. U. C. D. insertion and exhibitions on family planning are held mostly in rural areas with the help of the Community Development Blocks. Mass publicity through Mobile Cinema show, group discussion, and general meetings are held on the subject and booklets, pamphlets and posters relating to family planning are also distributed to the public who need them. Various contraceptive materials, including insertion of loop, are given in the hospitals and other maternity clinics, and upto December 1967, 5,101 loops were inserted in the district since its inception in June 1964. Much increase has been noticed latter. Its number was 1,639 in 1976-77. According to the District Family Planning Officer, Kamrup, the I.U.C.D. has been done in the district through the mobile unit

14. *Census of India, 1971, District Census Hand Book, Kamrup. P. 4*

of I.U.C.D. Besides the doctors and nurses who conduct the Family Planning works in the hospitals, dispensaries and other family planning clinics, there are also a huge number of Field Workers and Social workers under the District Family Planning Officer Kamrup, Gauhati.

In respect of the insertion of I.U.C.D. (loop) the district has made rapid progress in the subsequent years. Thus 267 and 1,042 (loop) were inserted in the district in 1973-75 and 1974-75 respectively.

The following brief statement shows the number of sterilisational operation in the district during 1973-74, 1974-75 and 1976-77.¹⁵

Vasectomy		Tubectomy		Total	
1973-74	1974-75	1973-74	1974-75	1973-74	1974-75
1	2	3	4	5	6
750	3,268	910	2,118	1,660	5,386
1976-77	18,548	4,909		23,457	

It may be mentioned here that the first Vaginal Tubectomy camp in the Eastern Region of the country was organised by the Gauhati Medical College in its attached hospital. Every year a number of Tubectomy and Vasectomy camps are conducted by the staff of this college. Culdesopic vaginal sterilisation is being done regularly in the college hospital. Besides, in the recent years, provisions for sterilisation and other family planning measures are being made available in the state Civil Hospitals, Primary Health units, State Dispensaries and in other reputed institutions of the district.

Doctors : Till very recently, the doctors in the State Civil Hospital and State Dispensaries were classified into two categories viz, Assistant Surgeon I and Assistant Surgeon II. Recruitment to the former was made from persons possessing M.B.B.S. degree and partly by promotion from the Assistant Surgeon II who were recruited from persons possessing L.M.P. or L.M.S. Diplomas. But due to the recent reorganisation of the Medical Department, some changes have been affected in respect of designation of the Medical personnel of the state. Accordingly, the Civil Surgeon is redesignated as District Health Officer and the Assistant Surgeon I as Health Officer I.

15. *Statistical Hand Book, Assam 1976, p. 125 and*

" " " 1978, p. 122.

The total number of allopathic doctors serving in the State Civil Hospitals (excluding the Gauhati Medical College and Hospital), Dispensaries, Public Health Centres etc. under the control of the District Health Officer of the district was 141 in June 1971.

The statement below shows the number of patients treated in the government hospitals and dispensaries in the district for the years 1967 to 1971 and from 1973 to 1975.¹⁶

(Figures in hundreds)				(Figures of patients in thousands.)			
Year	Indoor	Outdoor	Total	Year	Indoor	Outdoor	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1967	267	10,338	10,605	1973	5,746	1,506	7,252
1970	231	13,975	14,206	1974	4,481	3,084	7,565
1971	412	16,278	6,690	1975	5,1784	3,095	8,879

The above statement, however, indicates that the number of patients in both outdoor and indoor sections has been increasing rapidly year after year. But the number of beds for the indoor patients has not increased in the same proportion. The numbers of beds in Kamrup district in 1969-70, 1970-71 and 1971-72 were 1,139, 1,164 and 1,181 respectively. In 1976-77, the number of beds increased to 1,361, in addition to the 865 beds attached to Gauhati Medical College and Hospital.

Nurses : There is shortage of Nurses in the hospitals and dispensaries of the state. Almost all the State Dispensaries of the district are running short of qualified nurses. This nursing service which ranges from the post of Nursing Superintendent at the top of the Nursing staff in the hospitals and dispensaries, is running in deficit. Thus in 1967, the number of nurses (including Public Health Nurse-sisters, Auxiliary Nurses, Midwives, Health Visitor etc.) was only 56. Their number increased to 109 in June 1971 against 173 dispensaries, hospitals etc. functioning in the district. For training of Nurses, there is a School of Nursing attached to the Gauhati Medical College. B.Sc. (Nursing) Degree course also has been started from January 1975. The said Nursing school produced 280 Nurses and 85 auxiliary Nurse-cum-Midwives upto 1975. Besides, training facilities for nurses are also available in the Baptist Mission Hospital, and the Red Cross Hospital, Gauhati. Even then the demand still remains unfulfilled.

Ayurvedic Treatment : As in other districts of the state, in Kamrup too, the old system of treatment is quite popular. To develop this old system of medicine, the Assam Ayurvedic College has been established at Jalukbari near Gauhati University in 1968. The college offers Diploma/Degree in Ayurvedic and most of the Diploma/Degree holders are the registered Ayurvedic practitioners of the state. To render Ayurvedic treatment to patients, there are sub-divisional dispensaries in the district. A few Ayurvedic sections are also running in a number of hospitals of the district. In 1971, there were 31 Ayurvedic doctors in different hospitals and dispensaries of the district. The following is the list of subsidised Ayurvedic Dispensaries in Kamrup district viz. Maukhuli, Sakhatibazar, Barunjani, Bhomlahati, Nanara, Rangia, Sutargaon, Karkapara, Athgeeta, Barmuikona, Baskabuniad, Bijulighat, Dhamdhama, Gangapukhuripar, Gaon Rajanthan, Gandhia, Gopalthan, Kakaya, Kachua, Mularkuchi, Hularkuchi, Helesha, Kaithalkuchi, Bartola, Pub-Bangaon, Dotori, Nimua and Baigang.

Homeopathic Treatment : The Homeopathic system of treatment has gained popularity, specially in the towns. The number of pharmacies and Homeopathic practitioners are increasing in most of the towns of the district. With the establishment of the Gauhati and Pragjyotishpur Homeopathic Colleges in Gauhati, this system of treatment is becoming more popular. There are 106 registered Homeopaths in the district of which 67 alone practice in Gauhati; of these Homeopaths 2 are degree holders, 6 are Diploma holders and the rest are simple practicing Homeopaths. All these practitioners are granted licence by the Board of Homeopathic System of Medicine, Assam, Gauhati, to practice Homeopathy.

Employees State Insurance Scheme : The Employees Insurance scheme has been implemented in Assam since August 1958. In Kamrup district, a number of Employees State Insurance dispensaries are functioning for providing Medical aid to the insured labour population.

Tuberculosis Service : For the treatment of the T.B. cases, there is one T.B. Clinic at Barpeta with X-Ray plant and laboratory, for early detection and treatment of cases. This clinic is under the management of the Medical Department of the Government of Assam. The Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi Memorial Chest Hospital at Gauhati with 102 beds is also an important private hospital for tuberculosis patients in the district. It is managed by a Trust and the major portion of its finance comes from the government of Assam. For proper control of tuberculosis, the Department of Health Services, Government of Assam, is con-

16. Statistical Hand Book, Assam 1973 and 1976, pages 93 and 120, 121 respectively.

emplating to adopt domiciliary treatment together with protection of the susceptible disease in a planned way instead of mass detection of case and treatment. Besides, the mass B.C.C. vaccination programme was vigorously executed in the district and almost all the school going children were innoculated after due test.

The district provides no mental hospital for the lunatics. However, provision is available to keep the non-criminal lunatics in the District Jail at Gauhati and so long as these lunatics are kept in the Jail, they are examined by the Civil Surgeon of the district.

Special facilities accorded : It has been mentioned earlier that special facilities with regard to the medical treatment is not available in all the Civil Hospitals and dispensaries. However, T.B. patients are given free treatment and aid in the T.B. Aid clinic located at Barpeta in the district. The Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi T.B. Hospital at Gauhati also offers special facilities to the T.B. patients of the district. Special facilities for the treatment of different diseases are available in the Gauhati Medical College Hospital. Besides these, the service rendered by WHO and UNICEF to expand health services in Community Development areas and supplies of equipments to the hospitals and dispensaries are also noteworthy in the district.

School Health Services : During the second Five-Year plan, the School Health Service was started in the district of Kamrup with a view to inspecting the student population regarding their health and rendering medical treatment as far as possible. According to the said School Health Service Scheme, cases of students with defective health are followed up in the School Health Clinics and in family visits. The Students requiring special medical attention are observed and checked periodically by the Primary Health Unit personnel during medical inspections. During 1959-60, Public Health Propaganda -cum-Mobile Dispensary Unit was also started as a part of Health Education in the district.

Medical facilities in the rural areas : Until very recently medical facilities in the rural areas of the district were far from satisfactory. From the records of the old Gazetteer of Kamrup we find that in the past due to the absence of adequate medical facilities in the rural areas, death rate, especially infant mortality, was very high. The incidence of *Kala-azar* and Malaria was very high in the district like other districts of Assam. Generally, Tuberculosis, Cholera, Small-pox and other contagious diseases were rampant and epidemic took a heavy toll every year. Only a few measures were initiated towards eradication

of the scourge during the post-war period. However, after independence, during the First Five-Year Plan period, activities were mostly confined to the urban areas. During the Second Five-Year Plan period, besides intensifying the measures initiated under the First five-year plan, some more schemes were started and medical facilities were extended to the rural areas as far as possible.

To provide medical facilities in the Rural areas, during the Second Plan period, Primary Health Units and a few Ayurvedic Subsidised dispensaries were established in the district. Most of the Primary Health units in the district were established in the Community Development Block areas. During this period, the State Hospitals were also provided with modern equipments and appliances. Particular emphasis was laid on the training of technical personnel like Medical Graduates, Nurses, Auxiliary Nurses, Midwives, Pharmacists, Sanitarians etc. In addition to these, adequate measures were also adopted in the district for the eradication of Malaria and small-pox and to control of Filariasis, Tuberculosis, Leprosy and other communicable diseases. Moreover, about 59 Local Board Dispensaries of the district, which are located mostly in the rural areas were taken over by the State and later on, were brought upto proper standard.

For the improvement of sanitation and rural hygiene, Sanitary Inspectors, Rural Health Inspectors and Health Assistants are placed in the Community Development Block areas for inspection of supply of pure drinking water, construction of sanitary latrines etc. They are also supervising anti-small-pox works done by the vaccinators. The works of these Health staff are supervised by the Medical Officers of the concerning areas.

Further, it may be mentioned here that a part of the Maternity Hospital in Ulubari, and the Azara and Kamalpur Primary Health Centres with their sub-centres became the Urban and Rural Health care-centres in the district. The Health Team is formed not only with the Physicians and Surgeons, but consists also of the para-medical staff. The training facilities for Junior and Senior nurses are available in the Medical Colleges of the State. To fill up the shortage of Pharmacists who are needed to run the pharmacies, the Institute of Pharmacology for the training of Pharmacists with two years course has been established in Dibrugarh.

(c) **Private hospitals and Nursing Homes :** The numbers of private-hospitals and dispensaries are comparatively low in Kamrup District than in Dibrugarh and Sibsagar districts. In Sibsagar and

Dibrugarh districts, tea, oil and coal industries have their own hospitals and dispensaries. However, in the recent years along with the establishment of various industrial and educational institutions, a number of private hospitals and dispensaries are coming up in the district. The Chatribari Christian Hospital is one of the important private hospitals located at Gauhati. This hospital was established in 1924. The present strength of bed in the hospital is 125 with full facilities for surgical, obstetrical and medical treatment, including X-Ray and laboratory plants. A Blood Bank has also been established in the hospital. The hospital is managed by the Council of Baptist Churches of North-East India. The Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi Memorial T.B Hospital with 102 beds and Dr. Bhubaneswar Barua Cancer Institute are two other private hospitals located at Gauhati. Both these hospitals are run by two separate Trusts. There is also one Leprosy hospital in Gauhati at Bhutnath. In addition to these, the tea gardens and other private companies also maintain their own hospitals and dispensaries. The semi-Government educational institutions, like the Gauhati University also maintain their own hospitals for the treatment of its students, staffs, and other employees. Besides, there are four more private Nursing Homes at Gauhati. One of them is located near Kalapahar, one at Kharghuli, one at Santipur—Kumarpara and the other one at Dispur. All these Nursing Homes are well equipped with modern medical facilities. Besides, there is a Maternity Hospital run by the Gauhati branch of Indian Red Cross Society at Gauhati.

The number of private practitioners and specialists has been on the increase particularly in the urban areas of the district. The specialists, in branches like E.N.T. Dentistry, Gynaecology, Pathology, and Ophthalmology have, in recent years, opened their clinics at Gauhati and in the Sub-divisional towns. Besides these, there are two centres of Nature—Therapy and a number of Acupuncture centres operating in Gauhati.

(d) Medical and public Health and Research centres and institutions :—Except the Medical college of Gauhati, there is no recognised medical and public Health research centre in the district. In the whole of the state of Assam, there is only one recognised Health Training Centre for disseminating knowledge of birth control and Public Health in Dibrugarh district. However, the Gauhati Medical College now, fulfils some of the fundamental needs of public health and birth control measures. The Gauhati Medical college was established in 1960, as the second medical college in the North-Eastern region. In addition to the supplying of requirements of health personnel, the college was established with two more objectives,

namely, (i) to render better curative and preventive health care to the area, and (ii) to conduct clinical and fundamental research within the limits of financial resources. At the time of establishment of the college, the old Civil Hospital with 124 beds, the Emigration Hospital at Hedayetpur and the Maternity Hospital at Ulubari managed by a Trust were taken over by the Medical College authority to impart clinical teaching to the students. To cope with increasing attendance both in the In-door Patient and Out door Patient Departments, temporary buildings for 215 beds and operation theatres were constructed in the old Civil Hospital campus.

The land for the construction of the college and hospital complex was acquired at the foot of the Narakachal hill in 1962. Till 1968, the practical classes were housed temporarily in the buildings belonging to the Ayurvedic college adjacent to the Gauhati University campus. The R.C.C. multistoreyed hostel buildings with modern architectural design and beautiful land-scape at the foot of the hill, are considered to be one of the best Medical College hostels in India.

The college was inspected by the Inspectors appointed by the Gauhati University and the Indian Medical Council for final affiliation in 1964 and got the recognition from both the authorities and also from the General Medical Council of Great Britain.

The Indian Medical Council granted permission to the College to start the post-graduate course in Anatomy, Bio-Chemistry, Physiology, Pathology and Obstetrics and Gynaecology. In 1969, the post-graduate classes in Medicine, Surgery, Ophthalmology, Otorhinolaryngology, Pharmacology and Preventive and Social Medicine leading to degree and diplomas were started. The Gauhati Medical College is the only medical college in Assam to have a full-fledged Department of Forensic and State Medicine. Upto January 1977, the Gauhati Medical College has produced 1,085 graduate doctors and 102 post-graduate doctors in different specialities. In addition to above, the college has produced 18 Radiographers and 63 Laboratory Assistants in the same period.

Besides, the Gauhati Medical College Hospital, other state Civil Hospitals, Dispensaries, Public Health centres etc. provide adequate facilities towards public health and family planning matters. Every Maternity and Family Planning centre in the district assists the women in taking necessary measures for birth control in order to pursue family planning.

Like elsewhere in India in Assam also many women annually die after child birth only for the lack of knowledge about nutritional problems. The women of the low income groups have neither any opportunity for rest after child-birth due to their engagement in the fields or in other

allied services, nor have they the capacity to purchase nourishing food which are so essential to maintain their health specially in the post-natal period. Thus, the want of nourishment and the lack of knowledge on nutrition are the most aggravating problems for the early death of women and frequent child birth. In the very recent years, however, the department of Publicity and Family Planning wing of the Medical and Public Health Services Department of the Government of Assam has adopted various measures including free cinema shows, audio-visual talk etc, to spread the knowledge of nutritional problems among the masses. The establishment of the Health Education Bureau in Assam in October, 1960, has also removed a long-felt want in the field of dissemination of knowledge about health and hygiene among the masses. This Health Education Unit, besides, exhibiting film show on health education, the officers moving with the Public Health Propaganda-cum-Mobile Dispensary units hold meetings on health and hygiene. Necessary public health propaganda was also made as usual, by the staff of health by exhibitions, leaflets and posters. The Directorate of Panchayat and Community Development also organises Nutrition Education classes in the rural areas through the Community Development Blocks of the district.

(e) **Sanitation :** Not much attention was paid in the past to the matters relating to sanitation in the district. It is truly observed in the old Gazetteer of Kamrup that sanitary arrangements, there were none, the rubbish was swept up into a corner and allowed to rot with masses of decaying vegetation and the complete absence of latrine render the neighbourhood of the village a most unsavoury place. But in the urban areas, particularly at Gauhati, the sanitary condition was much better. As repeated by W.W. Hunter, "In Gauhati, under the influence of Municipality, sanitation has made real progress. Each member of this body has a quarter of the town assigned to him for supervision. The large tanks from which, much of the water supply is derived, are kept scrupulously clean. Polluting the tanks in any way is punishable by a bye-law. The streets are clean, the surface drains open and free from obstructions and the inhabitants, both European and native, are obliged to attend to the conservancy of the grounds about their houses."¹⁷

Much improvement in sanitary conditions has since been noticed both in the urban and rural areas. The Medical and Public Health staff are giving all possible help for maintenance of public health and sanitation both in the urban and rural areas. In the urban areas, the Municipal Boards and Town Committees are maintaining necessary staff such as, Health Officers, Sanitary Inspectors etc. to look after the problem of sani-

tation in the respective areas. For improvement of the sanitary conditions in the rural areas, Rural Health Inspectors and Health Assistants have been appointed, whose main duty is to disinfect water supply sources and take preventive measures during epidemic. Over and above this, one Sanitary Inspector in each Primary Health Unit has been appointed to look after sanitation problems. In the urban areas, where there are Municipalities and Town Committees, conservancy staffs are also engaged to look after the sanitary conditions. The functions of the Health Officers are anti-Malarial activities, control of epidemic and also inspection of food stuff. The Sanitary Inspectors supervise the works such as the clearance of latrines, the drains, culverts, and sweeping of roads are carried out by sweepers in the town areas. The Health Officers and Sanitary Inspectors have to submit periodical reports to the Civil Surgeon, Gauhati, about the sanitary condition of their areas concerned.

No slum clearance or underground drainage system is functioning in the district. There is at present, no underground drainage or sewerage for Gauhati. The disposal of sewage is done by trenching ground method and the surface drainage is stagnated in various *bils* in the town. As such during the rainy season, some areas are liable for flooding. The important outlet to the Brahmaputra river in the city is the Bharalu river. But the water level of the Brahmaputra, during the flood seasons, fluctuates as high as 36' feet and the current of the Bharalu river flows reversely. Similar conditions prevail in the eastern part of greater Gauhati as well as in the Kalapahar area of the city. But presently the Department of Town and Country Planning Government of Assam, has prepared a complete drainage and sewage scheme for greater Gauhati, and two parts of the underground sewage construction work have been completed by 1978-79.

There is the provision of protected water supply in the Municipal areas of Gauhati. In the city, the existing water workshop is situated on the Kharghuli Hills in the Uzanbazar area. But the capacity is not enough to serve the entire needs of the city. Some of the areas of Fatasil, Santipur, Kumarpara, etc. are still served by wells. Recently, the Master Plan authority for greater Gauhati, has adopted a comprehensive scheme for water supply in the city with reservoirs at Sarania, Kalapahar and Panbazar. The burg-intake had been located behind the Deputy Commissioner's bungalow protected by two natural spurs on the river Brahmaputra. In front of the Deputy Commissioner's bungalow at Panbazar, the second water works is working at present. In other towns of the district, the Municipal Boards and Town committees maintain tube-wells and ring-wells for water supply in their respective areas.

17. W. W. Hunter : *A Statistical Account of Assam*, Reprint, 1975, page 99.

The Public Health Engineering Department is mainly concerned with supply of water under the National Water Supply and Sanitation Scheme, meant for both the rural and urban areas and sponsored by the Government of India. The Gauhati Water Supply Scheme as mentioned above, which falls under the urban schemes, was taken up during the Second Five-year plan with an estimated cost of Rs. 132.75 laks. But later on, the Government of India, Ministry of Health, limited the said estimated cost for Gauhati Water Supply Scheme during the Second plan period, and the amount was incurred during the 3rd plan scheme.

Under the same National Water Supply and Sanitation Scheme (Rural) taken up during the Second plan, considerable areas of the district of Kamrup have been provided with protected water supply. The areas of the district thus benefited include Hajo, Rangia, Tamulpur, and Jalah. The estimated cost for the Hajo, Rangia and Tamulpur areas was Rs. 13.90,500/- and that of Jalah was Rs. 4,14,000/-. In the first three areas about 362 villages and about 154 villages in the latter area were covered under the scheme. In these areas, more than 2 lakhs people were benefited.

The other water supply schemes executed by the Public Health Engineering Department of the Government of Assam by means of deep tube-well system were as follows :--

Sl. No.	Estimated Cost.
1. Water Supply at Industrial Estate, Gauhati	Rs. 7,000/-
2. " " " Khanapara Veterinary College, Gauhati	Rs. 4,032/-
3. " " " T.B. Hospital, Gauhati	Rs. 30,200/-
4. " " " Khanapara Cattle Farm, Gauhati	Rs. 10,400/-
5. " " " Birubari, Gauhati	Rs. 7,00/-
6. " " " All-India Radio Centre, Gauhati.	Rs. 7,430/-
7. " " " Assam Engineering College, Gauhati.	Rs. 92,000/-
8. " " " Augmentation of Gauhati water works scheme.	N.A.

In addition to these, in the rural areas, the *panchayats* under the respective Community Development Blocks have provided tube-wells and ring wells for the benefit of the villagers.

Recently some deep tube—well schemes have been undertaken by the State Public Health Engineering Department in the district. Each of these schemes costs above a lakh and one such scheme has been completed in the Gita Mandir area of Gauhati.

Anti-Malaria measures : According to medical experts, Malaria causes more sickness and loss of working power than any other disease in India. It constitutes the major public health problem in India, from the point of view of both morbidity and mortality. It is widespread especially in the riverine plains and the Himalayan foot-hills. The deaths from Malaria are usually registered under 'fever' along with the deaths from many other causes. The exact proportion of 'fever' deaths due to Malaria is unknown but it is estimated to be as high as one-third of the total deaths. To fight with this common disease of Assam, a Malarial section was started in 1945, which was further strengthened by more staff and equipments under the post-war Development Scheme. Anti-Malaria measures were extended to more areas and the use of D.D.T. was introduced for the first time. Quinine was distributed through the Public Health Department. Packets of Mepacrine tablets with instructions for use were supplied to postal and other agents for sale in rural areas which were becoming increasingly popular. Now as a result of this, Malaria has been controlled to a great extent especially after the introduction of the National Malaria Eradication programme. In the district, the said programme is now carried out by the Assistant Malaria Officer who works under the direct supervision of the State Malaria Officer. The Assistant Malaria Officer is assisted by other staffs posted in the Sub-divisional towns of the district.

CHAPTER XVII

OTHER SOCIAL SERVICE.

(A) Labour Welfare : Organisational set-up and activities :

The Labour Departments of the Central and State governments shoulder the responsibility of labour welfare in the district. The Departments have been armed with a number of Labour legislations passed by the Indian Parliament and the State Assembly. The legislations so far enacted cover both public and private sector establishments. The employers have been brought under the purview of the legislations and are expected to adopt necessary welfare measures in their establishments. Some of these Acts and Regulations are : The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923; The Indian Trade Union Act, 1926; The Tea District Emigrant Labour Act, 1934; The Payment of Wages Act, 1936; The Assam Maternity Benefit Act 1944; The Industrial Employment (Standing orders) Act, 1946; The Industrial Disputes Act, 1947; The Factories Act, 1948; The Assam Shops and Establishments Act, 1948; The Minimum Wages Act, 1948; The Coal Mines Provident Fund and Bonus Scheme Act, 1948; Employees Fund Act, 1948; Employees State Insurance Act, 1948; The Plantation Labour Act, 1951; The Working Journalists (Condition of service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1955; The Assam Tea Plantations Provident Fund Scheme Act, 1952. The Motor Transport workers Act 1961 etc.

These Acts and Regulations cover a wide range of labour welfare measures such as housing, medical, education, nutrition (establishment of canteens etc) rest and recreation, day nurseries, sanitations, holidays with pay, maternity and sickness benefits, bonus and Provident Fund benefit, workmen's compensation benefit etc.

The Labour Directorate of the Government of Assam is responsible for the implementation of the above Acts and Regulations. The said Directorate consists of several officers of different cadres to which Labour Commissioner is the head. In the headquarters, the Labour Commissioner is assisted by one Additional Labour Commissioner, one Chief

Inspector for Plantations, one Chief Inspector for Motor Transport undertakings, one Labour Welfare Officer, one Special Officer of Labour for Committees and Conferences, one Registrar and other staff. The Chief Inspector for Plantations and the Chief Inspector for Motor Transport undertakings are appointed under the Plantations Labour Act and the Motor Transport Workers Act respectively. The functions of the Labour Welfare Officer relate to the looking after the interest of workers in welfare matters. This Directorate has five administrative zones, each in charge of an Assistant Labour Commissioner. In the Gauhati zone of Kamrup district there is one Senior Assistant Labour Commissioner who is assisted by one Assistant Labour Commissioner, one Labour Officer, two Inspectors and one Motor Transport Inspector. Besides, in the enforcement of the Acts mentioned earlier, most of the officers from the Labour Commissioner right upto the rank of Labour Inspector function as conciliation officers under the Industrial Disputes Act, for maintaining industrial harmony and settling industrial disputes between the employers and the employees. In addition to his normal duty the Labour Commissioner functions as Registrar of Trade Unions and Certifying Officer. Besides the officials of the State Labour Department stationed at Gauhati, a Central Labour Inspectorate with its headquarters at Gauhati is functioning here extending its jurisdiction over Lower Assam, North Bengal etc. The officials of the Central Inspectorate have been declared as Inspectors under the following important Acts amongst others.

These Acts are, (1) Payment of Wages Act (Railway Rules), (2) Payment of Wages Act (Mines Rules), (3) Minimum Wages Act, (4) Hours of Employment Regulations (5) Employment of Children Act, (6) Fair Wages Clause-C.P.W.D. and Military Engineering Service, (7) Industrial Employment Standing Orders Act, (8) Industrial Disputes Act. etc.

The Chief Labour Commissioner, the Deputy Chief Labour Commissioner, the Regional Labour Commissioner and Conciliation Officer of the central government are designated as Inspectors under the above Acts having jurisdiction over this region. The designation of the Conciliation Officer and the Labour Inspector (Central) has been changed to Deputy Regional Labour Commissioner and Assistant Regional Labour Commissioner respectively.

Besides the inspection of both public and private sectors in the Central sphere, for the purpose of the enforcement of the labour laws in general, the prosecution side is also looked after by the Inspectorate.

For this purpose, the State Governments concerned have declared the officers having jurisdiction as Public Prosecutors. The Inspectors are declared as Labour Welfare Officers for and on behalf of the Ministry of Defence.

Under the Factories Act, 1948, there is one Inspector of Factories at Gauhati who works under the administrative control of the Chief Inspector of Factories, Assam. His main function is to ensure that the provisions of the Factories Act are strictly observed for the interest of the workers in the factories.

Industrial Tribunal and Labour Courts : To try industrial disputes, government of Assam have set up two Industrial Tribunals—one for Upper Assam with headquarters at Dibrugarh and the other for Lower Assam including Cachar with headquarters at Gauhati. Their functions are to adjudicate the disputes referred to them by government under provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act.

Further, it may be mentioned here that under the Five-Year Plans the government of Assam have undertaken the establishment of Community Centres for Plantation Labour in concentrated Tea areas with a view to ameliorating the conditions of labour and training them up in cultural, social, economical, educational, and similar other activities.

The State Labour Department has also established a number of welfare centres for urban industrial labour in Assam including one at Gauhati. The scheme dealing with the training of departmental officers for the welfare of Labour is also a right step for the interest of labour.

The enactment of the Plantation Labour Act in 1951 has brought much improvement in the working conditions of the plantation workers in Assam. It is a comprehensive piece of legislation and has put employers under obligation to provide various facilities to their employees. The Act is applicable to all tea, coffee, rubber and cinchona plantations with an area of 25 acres or more and employing 30 or more persons. It can be extended to other plantations by the State Govt. It provides for creation of inspecting staff by the State Govt. and imposing penalties for contravention of provisions of the Act. Under this Act, the employers are required to provide drinking water, sufficient latrines and urinals for men and women, canteens in every plantation where 150 or more workers are employed, and creches where 50 or more women are employed. Employers are also to make arrangements for proper medical and educational facilities for the workers and their children. Providing standard

type 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 allowed to work in plantations and night work between 7 P.M. and 6 A.M. is prohibited for women and adolescents. Welfare Officers are to be appointed in every plantation where 300 or more workers are employed.

In accordance with that Act free education upto the Lower Primary standard is provided by the management in most of the tea estates of Assam. Besides to provide medical facilities, the management of the tea estates has established hospitals and dispensaries wherever necessary.

In tea plantation, houses are provided free of charge. In the early thirtieth and forties, 90% of the houses in the tea plantations of Assam were *Kutch* houses made of mud walls and thatched roofs. Those houses were devoid of sanitary provisions. There were no latrines, windows or verandahs in those houses. Labourers were required to get their houses repaired themselves. Even access to labourer's quarters was prohibited to all except worker's friends and relatives on grounds of right to private property. The Royal Commission in 1929 objected to this and recommended that "all the plantation areas should be thrown open to the public and there should be Boards of Health and Welfare to determine minimum requirements of housing."

The problem of providing improved housing accommodation came up for discussion at the first Tripartite Plantation Conference held at New Delhi in January 1947. Later on, it was discussed at the Second Session of the Industrial Plantation's Committee held in April, 1948, and again at the Standing Plantation Committee meeting held in September, 1949 and November 1950. The Indian Tea Association drew up certain minimum housing specification which were accepted by the Govt. of Assam¹. With the enactment of the Plantation Labour Act 1951, responsibility for making necessary houses for the worker and his family, now lies upon the employer of respective tea estates. In pursuance of this Act some provisions, no doubt, have been made but still much remain to be done especially in uneconomic and small tea gardens.

The introduction of the Assam Tea Plantations Provident Fund (and Pension Fund) Scheme Act, 1955 has ushered in a new era of socio-economic upliftment for the plantation workers in the state of Assam.

1. R. C. Saxena : *Labour Problems and Social Welfare*, p. 214.

2. *Ibid*, p. 227.

It extends the statutory guarantee of social justice and social security to the working class of the plantations.

The scheme of Provident Fund under the Act is applicable to (a) Plantations having 25 or more acres of land under tea with productions of more than 456 lbs. of tea per acre, and (b) plantations having 50 or more acres under tea irrespective of the rate of production. In pursuance of the provisions of the Assam Tea Plantations Provident Fund Scheme (Amendment) Act, 1958, some small and uneconomic plantations have been exempted from the purview of the scheme. Out of 790 tea gardens in the state, the scheme was in force in 708 tea gardens on March, 31, 1973.

The 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. 1000/- per month per head. The employees of the tea gardens are classified; in three broad categories viz., adult labour, adolescent and children but the Fund recognises no such classification for its membership. The rate of contribution to the provident fund has been raised from 6 % to 8% of the wages of the workers both for the employers and employees.

The scheme provides for advances, refundable and non-refundable, to the members from their provident fund accumulations on specific grounds. Refundable advances are made available for marriage and death ceremony in a member's family and non-refundable advances are available for construction of dwelling house, payments of Life Insurance premiums, purchase of shares of co-operative societies and subsistence when famine conditions prevail due to natural calamities and unemployment due to closure of gardens.

The scheme is administered by the Board of Trustees with its head office at Shillong and the cost of administration is met from a separate fund created by contributions. This office has now been shifted to Gauhati.

Since the introduction of the scheme, its functions and scope have been considerably expanded by adopting other ancillary schemes viz., Life Insurance Scheme through Provident Fund, Old-age Pension Scheme and Family Pension Scheme.

Life Insurance through Provident Fund was introduced in 1963 with a view to rendering financial protection to the family of the deceased member. While extending this additional benefit it was ensured that no

additional financial burden was put upon the member on that account. The lives of the Provident Fund members in the age group of 18 to 40 years insured for Rs. 1000/- Rs. 500/- and Rs. 250/- in respect of the clerical staff, male labourer and female labourer respectively, are assigned to the Board of Trustees who keeps in its custody and prefers claims as and when necessary on the Life Insurance Corporation. This obviates the medical examination or age-proof of individual members and direct payment of premia by employees. The amount of premium is paid by the Board of Trustees from the Provident Fund contributions of a member annually and the balance is credited to his Provident Fund Account. However, on the amount paid off as premium no interest is paid by the Board of Trustees. The cost of administering the scheme is very economical and it is met from the commission earned on the policies from the Life Insurance Corporation of India.

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 earning 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, to receive 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, to receive annually for a period of 5 years.

(c) Additional interest of 1% on the credit balance of member who ceases his membership in the Fund prior to completion of 10 years of membership.

d) Facility of commutation.

The scope of the Pension Scheme has been much widened since 1.4.72 to provide family pension to the family of a member in the event of his death while in service. The benefit under the old-age pension scheme would continue in respect of the members who retired or died prior to 1.4.72 while the revised pension scheme including family pension

has been made applicable in respect of the member who dies or retires on or after 1.4.72. Under the new scheme family pension is granted @ Rs. 40/- p.m. for life or till remarriage and lump sum of Rs. 1,000/- to the family of the deceased member who dies while in service.

The Family Pension Fund comprises the annual contribution made by the Govt. of India and the amount annually transferred from the general Pension Fund @ 11.6% and 21.3% of the wages of the employee covered under the scheme respectively. Besides, the Govt. of India have agreed to bear the entire administrative cost of the Family Pension Scheme.

The enactment of the Assam Tea Plantations Employees Welfare Fund Act, 1959 is another land mark in the history of welfare legislation for the tea employees in the State of Assam.³ Under the provisions of this Act a Fund is to be constituted out of all fines realised from the employees in the course of management of the plantation, all unpaid accumulations, all grants from the State or Central Govt. or the Tea Board; any voluntary donation, any sum borrowed under section 8 of the Act and any sum unclaimed or forfeited in the Provident Fund account of the employees. The Fund shall vest in the Board of Trustees constituted by the State Govt. and shall be applied to meet the expenditure in connection with measures which in the opinion of the State Govt. are necessary for promoting the welfare of the employees employed in the State of Assam. Without prejudice to these general provisions the Fund may be utilised by the Board of Trustees to defray expenditure on adult education, community and social education centres including reading rooms and libraries, community necessities, games and sports, excursions, tours and holiday-homes; entertainment and other forms of recreation; home industries and subsidiary occupation for women and unemployed persons; corporate activities of a social nature; cost of administering the Act including the salaries and allowances of the staff appointed for the purposes of the Act and such other objects as would in the opinion of the State Govt. improve the standard of living and ameliorate the social condition of the employees provided that the Fund shall not be utilised in financing any measure which the employer is required under any law for the time being in force to carry out.

In addition to above, the following Trade Unions (industry-wise with their memberships) are also functioning in the district for safeguarding labour interest and also to maintain healthy industrial relations.

3. Compiled from the Annual Report of the Working of Assam Tea Plantations Employees Welfare Fund Act, 1959 ; for 1970.

Transport :

1. State Transport Workers Association, Gauhati membership-3,814.
2. Motor Transport Workers Union, Fancy Bazar, Gauhati, membership--2,500.
3. Greater Gauhati City Bus Employee, Ulubari, Gauhati; membership--200.
4. Kamrup Taxi Drivers' Union, Fancy Bazar, Gauhati, membership-175.

Agriculture :-

1. Assam State Rural Workers Union, INTUC Office, Ulubari, Gauhati; membership--5,000.

Civil Engineering :

1. Samjukta Assam Garakpatni Karmi Sangha, Ulubari, Gauhati; membership--1023.

Mineral Oil :

1. Refinery Workers' Union, Noonmati, Gauhati, membership--691.
2. B.O.C. Pipeline Workers' Union, Gauhati : membership--67 (in 1966).
3. Assam Petroleum Workers' Union, Gauhati; membership--160 (in 1966).
4. Indian Oxygen Employees' Union, Gauhati; membership-78 (in 1966).

Electric Supply :

1. Assam State Electric Supply Workers' Union, Gauhati, membership--1,209 (in 1966).

Local Bodies :

1. Gauhati Paurasabha Pani Jogan Shramik Sangha, Panbazar, membership--78.

Salaried Employees group :

1. Assam Khadi Board Workers' Union, Gauhati, membership-322.
2. Assam Agro-Industries Shramik Sangha, Ulubari, Gauhati, membership-92
3. Assam Cinema Karmi Sangha, Gauhati; membership--92.
4. Employees Union, Assam Small Scale Industries, Development Corporation, Gauhati, membership-74.

Personal Service Group :

1. Gauhati Medical College Hospital Karmi Sangha, membership--220.

Bank Employee Group :

1. Apex Bank Employees' Union, Gauhati, membership-512.

General Engineering Group :

1. Engineering and General Workers' Union, Ulubari, Gauhati, membership-95.

In addition to the above, quite a good number of worker's unions like (1) N.F. Railway Mazdoor Union, New Gauhati, (2) Railway Handling Labour Union, (3) Assam Transshipment Worker's Union, (4) Press Worker's Union, Kamrup, (5) Mill Mazdoor Sangha, (6) Kamrup District Wiremen Union, (7) Kamrup Construction Workers Union, (8) Imperial Tobacco Company Employee's Union, (9) Hume Pipes Worker's Union, (10) Journalist's Association., etc., with their registered office at Gauhati, is working hard for the betterment of their condition.

B. PROHIBITION :

(i) Opium : References have been made in various accounts to the consumption of opium by the people of the Brahmaputra Valley. Captain Welsh in 1792 reported to Lord Cornwallis that the king Gaurinath Singha was intoxicated with opium. Its wide-spread use and consumption were reported by David Scott, Robinson and other writers including Mills who in 1853 said that "three-fourths of the population are opium eaters, and men, women and children alike use the drug".⁴ The *Burkandazes* that were brought to Assam, were said to be addicted to opium. They after creating a reign of terror in Kamrup for sometime, remained with the Koch kings at Beltola near Gauhati where they grew the poppy for the first time in the history of Assam, during Lakshmi Singh's reign.

In the petition of Moniram Dewan presented on behalf of himself and others to A.J. Maffat Mills, Judge of Sadar Court in Calcutta on his visit to Assam in 1853 and incorporated in Mills' Report on the Province of Assam, 1853, occurs the following passage which is worth mentioning.

"In Lakhmee Sing Rajah's days, poppy seeds were introduced from Bengal and first cultivated at Beltullah, but during his time opium was used only by a few respectable people and not by the lower orders"⁵

Captain Butler in his book 'Travels and Adventures in the Province of Assam' published in 1855, writes that opium was first introduced into Assam in 1794, when the British troops assisted the *Rajah* against the Muttocks.

4. E. Gait : *A History of Assam*, 1967, p. 382.

5. Mills : *Report on the Province of Assam*, 1853, p. ixxvi.

It is therefore assumed that cultivation of poppy was practically unknown in Assam before it was introduced by the Rajput troops who were brought into Assam either by the Koch chiefs or by the British. It was, however, not so widely cultivated then as in the later years. Its cultivation was however put down with a very strong hand by the high officers of the Ahom rulers. This suppression of poppy cultivation at the beginning of the nineteenth century was affected by an imposition of tax of Rs. 12 per *pura* of land under poppy cultivation.

When finally the British in 1826 took possession of Assam, they first turned their attention to the establishment and consolidation of their power. From 1826 to 1860 they practically followed a policy of drift on the question of opium for revenue purpose in order to undersell the indigenous product. Government opium was sold at Rs. 5 per *seer* in 1835. The new administration did nothing to check the opium habit or even the cultivation of the poppy. It allowed the terrible evil to spread among the people, who had just come under their power after nearly a century of feuds and internecine wars. This attitude of indifference continued for about thirty years till the publication of Mr. Moffat Mills' report of 1853. Mr. Mills though emphatic in his condemnation of the opium habit was not inclined towards total prohibition. According to him "its use has, with many, almost become a necessary of life and in a damp climate like Assam, it is perhaps beneficial if taken with moderation." As such he recommended that its home cultivation should be prohibited in Assam and opium should be sold from treasuries at a price which would act as a deterrent to those who indulged in its excessive consumption. However, nothing was done till 1860 when its cultivation was prohibited and the drug also came to be issued through the treasury.

Even in those remote days, Indian leaders of prominence denounced the indifferent attitude of the Govt. At the same time they did not countenance the establishment of a Government monopoly in opium. In his petition to the Government in 1853 Moniram Dewan gave expression to contemporary opinion on the subject in the following words, "the introduction of the Government opium into the province will have to be put a stop to and the people allowed to grow their own drug. But some method ought to be invented by the *Mohamuntree Saheb* (i.e.—king's representative) for the eventual eradication of opium cultivation by gradual reduction at the rate of one in twenty per annum."

About the same time. Anandaram Dhekial Phukan another patriotic Assamese leader of the time wrote thus : "the extensive introduction of Government opium, however, leads us to conclude that the measure will be productive of consequences other than the extirpation of the drug from the country." The introduction of Government opium and the effort to under-

sell the local product did indeed have consequences other than total destruction of the evil. In answer to arguments for a monopoly, Anandaram Dhekial Phukan again said, "that by abolishing the production of opium in the country and rendering it dearer to the people, the use would be rendered less universal". But he adds : "We would beg to submit that the people will never shrink from the use of the drug as long as they continue to obtain supplies of it and whatever be the price put upon it they would seldom consider themselves too poor to purchase it".⁶ In spite of these protests Government monopoly was introduced and poppy cultivation as stated above was abolished in 1860.

Thus the first restriction on opium was imposed in 1860. This took the shape of prohibition of cultivation and manufacturing; prohibition of unlicensed sale; imposition of duty; prohibition by imposing licence fee; and gradual reduction of retail shops in opium.

Mr. B.C. Allen in his old Gazetteer of Kamrup had mentioned that between 1877 and 1883, the right to sell opium in a particular *mahal* was put up to auction, but this system was found to be unsatisfactory and in the latter years, the individual shops were sold. The general result of the Government policy has been to enormously reduce the facilities for obtaining the drug. In 1873-74, there were in Kamrup 845 shops for the retail vend of opium. thirty years later there were only 112. The opium habit was never as prevalent in Lower as in Upper Assam, and in Kamrup it appears to be gradually dying out, as while in 1873-74, 290 *maunds* of opium were consumed, in 1899-1900 it was only 121 *maunds*.⁷

In respect of the prohibition of opium, in 1920-21 the ration of opium shops was fixed on a gradually descending scale throughout the state of Assam. The system of allowing the sale of opium only to consumers who held passes was introduced in the district of Kamrup in 1925. From 1927 the ration of opium-eaters below 50 years was so regulated as to reduce the same gradually to nil within ten years. This operation was started from 1st April 1928.

On the 15th April 1939, the Congress Coalition Government introduced total prohibition in Dibrugarh and Sibsagar sub-divisions in Upper Assam and it was extended throughout the state in 1947 by promulgation of the Assam Prohibition Act on 1st April 1948. A survey of opium addicts was made in 1948 through the non-official agency and in Kamrup district alone the consumers stood at 706 with a monthly ration of 9 *seers* of opium in the year of survey. Since then all possible measures were

6. Ibid, p. xivii.

7. B. C. Allen : *District Gazetteer, Kamrup*, 1905. p. 210.

taken to eradicate the evil habit of opium by the official and non-official organisations. The number of total opium shops in the district before prohibition was 30 with a monthly ration of about 18 *seers*. Finally, all the opium shops were closed in this district from 1st March 1951. For the treatment of the addicts and in pursuance of this policy government opened a treatment centre at Tamulpur on the 8th May 1952, which was subsequently shifted to Bornihat on 7th January 1953 thence to Rampur on 17th January 1954.

To combat with the underground world of smugglers, the stringent methods of vigilance, propaganda and detection and prevention of smuggling contraband opium into the state of Assam were carried on by the official and non-official agencies. This had improved the position to a great extent. A survey of the number of addicts was carried on in the district in the 1st week of March 1959 and it was found to be 61. Most of these addicts belong either to tea-garden labourers or scheduled tribe communities.

(ii) **Liquor Prohibition** : In pursuance of the declared policy of the government, the liquor prohibition was first introduced in Barpeta sub-division from the 1st of March 1953 and in the north bank of Gauhati sub-division from 2nd October 1954. Encouraged by the success and the keen interest and enthusiasm evinced by the public, the introduction of total prohibition came into force from the 26th January 1956. Total consumption of country liquor throughout the district vended through Excise Shops was 29,825 L.P.G at the time when total prohibition was enforced in the district.

In order to get active co-operation from the public in successful implementation of the prohibition policy, several prohibition committees were set up with official and non-officials so as to mobilise public opinion, survey liquor addicts and to watch the movements of smugglers etc. Further to deal with the Liquor Prohibition policy, government have appointed one Honorary Organiser and one Assistant Honorary Organiser to intensify the Liquor Prohibition propaganda. To educate the mind of the mass people, government have distributed many posters, leaflets and held free cinema shows both in urban and rural areas.

As a result of prohibition, government have lost annual excise revenue to the tune of Rs. 8,22,599.00 and incurred an additional expenditure of Rs. 1,70,171.00 for its enforcement. This is apparently a major dig into the resources of the state but the government withstood this loss in pursuance of the national policy of general welfare.

Though the government have enacted the Assam Liquor Prohibition Act, 1952, the use of *Laopani* or rice beer by the tribals is commonly noticed in the district. This is stated to be the ancestral liquor of the tribals and other tea-garden tribes. The following is the usual system of manufacture followed in preparation of country liquor. "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 *chattaks* of *bakhar* to half a *kalah* of water, 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 coneshaped vessel filled with cold water, and a saucer is placed at the bottom of the post 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".⁸

Now a days, *Fatika* or *Mod* are illicitly distilled by some professional brewers are local rums prepared by them. In preparing this liquor, they use both molasses and rice. These invisible manufacturers and traders generally setup their breweries in jungles and hills and sell the products under the cover of night. So though public and open drinking no longer exist, the vice is still there to the ruin of some weak, indolent and rowdy characters.

(iii) *Ganja* and *Bhang* : *Ganja* and *Bhang* are primarily needed by a section of people who are devotees of Lord Siva. The wild *Ganja* grows freely in the district but it is not relished by the immoderate *Ganja* smokers. *Ganja* is usually mixed with water, kneaded till it becomes soft and cut into small strips and smoked. Preparation of *Ghota*, a delicious beverage served on the *Shivaratri* night contains some quantity of *Bhang*. The Assam *Ganja* and *Bhang* Prohibition Act 1958 prohibits possession and consumption of *Ganja* and *Bhang* and its smoking apparatus except for social, religious, medical and scientific purposes. The total prohibition of *Ganja* and *Bhang* in the state of Assam has been introduced with effect from 1st April 1959. But it is stated that there is ample scope for smuggling of *Ganja* from the neighbouring Bhutan and Khasi Hills.

8. Ibid, page 214.

A number of difficulties have been encountered in enforcement of the prohibition Laws. Although there is total prohibition of liquor in Kamrup since 26th January 1956 there are some practical difficulties in the enforcement of prohibition laws in the district. The major difficulty is that this district is bounded on the South by the wet state of Meghalaya and on the North by the independent & sovereign state of Bhutan. As liquor is not prohibited in both these states there is every possibility of smuggling of liquor to Kamrup from those areas. The opening of big distilleries along the border in recent time has become a great menace to the prohibition policy of state government. In the border of Kamrup and Meghalaya there are a number of outstill liquor shops under which the Excise Laws and Acts of Assam are not applicable. The shops are regulated by the independent *Sieus* and *Sardars* in their respective jurisdictions. It also appears that the public in general are not as enthusiastic against the evils of drinking as has been evinced in case of opium. Hence the co-operation which is so essential from the public is relatively low.

It is also noticed that with the vigour of Prohibition Policy implemented by the Excise Vigilance parties, the drinking people have taken recourse to Tinctures, medicated wine and spirituous medicinal preparations which are not within the bounds of Prohibition Laws. The topography of the district with hills and jungles also provide ample facilities to the illicit distillers to carry on their illicit trade although detection in such cases are running unabated.

On many occasions the present law does not sufficiently warrant convictions in liquor consumption cases unless a person was found drinking liquor in the prohibited area, which is difficult to prove in absence of any specific provision in the law. Lastly, the propaganda programmes conducted by the non-official organisers are also found ineffective as they are not properly equipped.

(c) **ADVANCEMENT OF BACKWARD CLASSES :**

The description of 'backward classes' is commonly applied to the following four sections of community :

- (a) Scheduled Tribes (b) Scheduled Castes (c) Other socially and educationally backward classes.

According to the Censuses of 1951, 1961 and 1971, the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes population constituted an important segment of the total population of the district.

9. Source : Superintendent of Excise, Gauhati.

People belonging to Bansphor, Bhuinmali or Mali, Brittil-Bania or Bania, Dhupi or Dhobi or Dhoba, Dugla or Dholi, Hira, Jalkeot, jhalo, Malo or Jhalao-Malo, Kaibarta, or Jaliya, Lalbegi, Mahara, Mehtar or Rishi, Namasudra and Patni are regarded as scheduled caste. Kaibarta or Jaliya and Namasudra constitute an overwhelming majority of the scheduled caste population. The sub-division-wise break-up figures of the scheduled caste population in the district as per 1971 census are as follows: Barpeta sub-division 51,452; Nalbari sub-division 33,272 and Gauhati sub-division 80,038.

Scheduled tribes people are Boro-Borokachari, Deori, Hojai, Kachari including Sonowal, Lalung, Karbis, Mech, Miri, Rabha etc. Among the scheduled tribes, Kacharis constitute the overwhelming majority in the district. The Karbis are also found in large number in Gauhati sub-division. The sub-division-wise break up figures of the scheduled tribe population as per the same census in the district are as follows: Barpeta sub-division 77,451; Nalbari sub-division 1,02,403 and Gauhati sub-division 1,18,236. Among the other backward classes are Ahoms, Chutiyas, Koches, Jugis (Nath), Kamars, Napits and other tea garden tribes.

The problems of the backward classes and tribes vary from one section to another, each section having its own social problems. The people of these communities lag behind their brethren belonging to more advanced communities. Sri Sri Sankardeva tried to bring them into the fold of the general community by initiation into the Vaishnavism. As a result we find the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe people of Assam comparatively advanced than those of the other states of India. During the British period they were left to their own devices. Proselytization carried out by the Christian Missionaries among the backward classes of the district quickened modernisation of the converts, particularly in the field of education.

It was only after independence that attempts were made to bring an all-round development to the standard of living of the people belonging to backward classes. One of the Directive Principles of State Policy of the Constitution of India solemnly declares that the state shall promote with special care the educational, social, and economic interests of the weaker castes and scheduled tribes and shall protect them from social injustice and exploitation. To give effect to the aforesaid directive, Article 275 of the Constitution has provided for grants-in-aid out of the Consolidated Fund of India to meet the costs of schemes of development undertaken to promote the welfare of such tribes and to raise the level of administration in the tribal areas of the state. Accordingly welfare measures initiated under the general plan are being implemented by special programmes. The development programmes under the Article 275 of the Constitution may be broadly grouped under four heads namely, (a) Communication (b) Education and Culture (c) Development of Tribal economy and (d) Health and Water supply. Besides some steps taken to ameliorate the condition of the backward classes since 1947 are briefly described below:

(i) Reservation of Seats in the Legislative Assembly and Panchayats: Out of the twenty-two Assembly Constituencies in the district in 1972 General Election Sarukhetri is reserved for Scheduled Caste and Barama and Tamulpur are reserved for scheduled tribes. In the Anchalik and Gaon Panchayats and also in Mahkuma Parishads a number of seats are reserved for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes to secure their representation in those elective bodies.

(ii) Reservation of Posts in Government Services: In pursuance of the provisions of Articles 16(4) and 335 of the Constitution of India, the Government of Assam decided that there would be reservation of vacancies for members of the scheduled and scheduled tribes in making appointments to services in connection with the affairs of the state Government as indicated below:

1. Scheduled castes— 7%
2. Scheduled tribes (plains) — 10%
3. Scheduled tribes (Hills) — 12%

Prior to August 1963, only five per cent of posts was reserved for the scheduled castes. The policy of reservation of vacancies has been followed by all the departments in making appointments to services and posts of the state government subject to other terms and conditions as laid down in the notification issued on the 24th August, 1963.¹⁰

10. Assam Govt. Notification No. AAP. 66/63/482, dt. August, 24, 1964.

Though no reservation for Other Backward classes and Religious minorities is prescribed, there is an understood policy and written directive to prefer their cases in appointment matters.

As for the physically disabled persons, recently a policy has been adopted by the State Government to reserve one per cent. of the vacant seats for each of the (i) blind (2) deaf and dumb and (3) other wise handicapped persons in Government appointments.

(iii) Education : An analysis of the level of development reached by the people belonging to the backward classes has been made earlier in chapter XV. From the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan efforts have been made to eradicate illiteracy among the people of the backward classes. With that 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 benefit of the tribal people.

Further, the students belonging to the above backward classes have been benefited by the scholarship schemes both in the Secondary and Collegiate stages and by free education scheme in the Secondary stage. In case of training and educational facilities outside the state, the interests of the candidates belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are duly protected. Even in the State Council of Ministers, there are representatives of the backward classes and tribes to look after the interest of the people.

(iv) Constitution of Tribal Belts and Blocks :—In order to protect the interest of the tribal people over their land, the Government of Assam carved out certain blocks comprising of areas predominantly inhabited by the tribal people.

Miscellaneous : Almost all the departments of the state government earmark a portion of their total allotment for the development of backward classes including scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The Co-operation Department offers grant-in-aid towards the share capital and

expenses on management of 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. To remove the scourge of leprosy which is commonly noticed in the tribal areas adequate measures have been adopted by the Govt. 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 state government are implementing numerous schemes in keeping with the declared policy of the government to ameliorate the conditions of the weaker sections of the society. In the different Five-Year Plans priorities have been given to execute all welfare schemes meant for other backward classes and tribes in the district.

Recently a housing-scheme also has been undertaken for construction of low income group dwelling houses for landless scheduled castes people in the district under the Minimum Need Programme.

There are a number of public and non-government Social Welfare organisations working in the district for promoting the social, educational and economic welfare of the public in general and weaker sections of the society in particular. Names and particulars of these organisations are furnished in chapter XVIII of this Gazetteer.

CHAPTER XVIII

PUBLIC LIFE AND VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

(a) Representation in the State and Union Legislatures :

Until 1874, Assam was administered as a part of Bengal, but in that year, it was formed into a separate province under a Chief Commissioner. This arrangement lasted till 1905 when Lord Curzon partitioned Bengal and formed a new province by joining Eastern Bengal with Assam under a Lieutenant Governor. Three Assamese and an European represented Assam in the Eastern Bengal and Assam Council at Dacca, the new headquarters of the province. In 1912, Assam was again restored to a Chief Commissionership and in January of the following year, a Legislative Council with eleven elected and fourteen nominated members was formed, over which, the Chief Commissioner presided. This council is perhaps memorable for the 'Tainted money' controversy, in which, Rai Bahadur Phanidhar Chaliha, a citizen of Sibsagar, characterised the opium traffic as immoral and the revenue from opium as 'Tainted money' demanding total abolition of the opium trade. This brought an angry report from the Chief Commissioner, Nicholas Dodd Beatson Bell, who presided over the Council.

The Indian National Congress was born in 1885. A number of political leaders from Assam participated in the second Annual Session of the Congress held in Calcutta, in 1886. The first Session of the congress held in 1885 in Bombay was composed of selected individuals from the three major presidencies of Bengal, Bombay and Madras and there was no delegate as such from Assam. But even in 1885, it is remarkable that a public meeting was held in Assam under the presidentship of Mr. Ananda Mohan Bose and a resolution supporting the objects of the Congress was sent by telegram to the organisers of the Bombay session revealing the interests of the Assam people and their association with the aims of the Congress. To the second session eight delegates were duly elected from Assam to participate in the deliberations. The Assam delegates were active in the early sessions. In the session of 1886, there was keen debate over the Jury system prevailing then in the country. Late Devi Charan Barua from Assam, speaking on the Jury system said, "They (the planters) are generally a class greatly wanting not only in culture but in that sense of fair play (where natives of India are concerned) wrongly supposed to be inherent in all Bri-

tions and their verdict is not always in conformity with the evidence or the dictates of Justice; and in my opinion and I speak from personal experience—Jury system has proved injurious to Assam and this very system is one of the reasons why our poor *colliers* are so oppressed in Assam". This extract will reveal the sturdy patriotism and the fearless exposition of wrongs that characterised the Assam delegate's speeches even in these early days. The same speaker also took active part in the session on the subject of Legislative reform and showed proficiency on the subject. The spirit with which the Assam delegate supported a vital resolution on Legislative reform and bespoke the feelings of the people of Assam, indicated unmistakably the ardent patriotism of the Assamese.

In 1887, in the Madras Session of the Congress, three delegates represented Assam. The Assam Legislative Council was formed in January 1913, with eleven elected and fourteen nominated members. The Assam Valley was represented by five members including one representative of the Muhammadans in this Council, the members of which in turn also elected representatives to the Indian Council at Delhi.

When Assam was raised to the Status of Governor province in 1920, the new Legislative Council was formed with fifty-one members (39 elected and 12 nominated) of which, three were officials and nine non-officials. The Legislative Council held its first sitting on the 3rd January, 1921 and Mr. Bell as mentioned earlier, was in the Chair. The district of Kamrup was duly represented both in the General Constituency and in the Muhammadan Constituency. Late Khan Bahadur Mahibuddin represented from the Muhammadan constituency which, Comprised Kamrup, Darrang, and Nowgong. The Assam Valley planting Constituency elected three members. The Commerce and Industry constituency elected one member. The province of Assam was represented in the Council of States by one member elected by the Muhammadan and general Constituencies alternately. Assam was represented in the Central Legislative Assembly by Six members—two nominated and four elected. This system of representation continued till 1937, when the first Legislative Assembly was formed in Assam with 108 members under the 1935 Act, introducing provincial autonomy. Out of the 108 seats, 34 were reserved for Muhammadans; 9 for Europeans, European Planting and European Commerce and Industry; one for women; 14 for Indian Christians, Backward Tribals (Plains), Backward Areas (Hills) and Labour and the remaining 50 seats were general.

General Elections : The political history of India underwent a tremendous change once again in the year 1952, when the first General Election on the basis of Universal adult franchise was smoothly conducted eliminating thereby all hitherto prevailing restrictions on franchise which were determined by property, tax, educational qualifications, communities etc. This adult

franchise put all men and women, scheduled castes and tribes in equal footing so far the right to elect their own representatives.

Legislative Assembly : The first General Elections of independent India were held in 1952. The district of Kamrup was divided into fourteen Assembly Constituencies, i.e., Sorbhog, Tarabari, Barpeta-west, Barpeta North-East, Patacharkuchi-Barama, Nalbari-South, Nalbari-North, Rangia, Kamalpur, Hajo, Boko, Palasbari, Pub-Bangsor, Silasundari Ghopa, and Gauhati. To give fair representation to the people belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, three seats were reserved in three different constituencies in addition to one general candidate elected from each constituency. Thus Barpeta North-East, Patacharkuchi-Barama and Rangia were double-member constituencies in Kamrup district in the General Elections of 1952. Accordingly, in Barpeta North-East, one seat was reserved for the Scheduled Castes people while in two other constituencies, i.e. Patacharkuchi-Barama and Rangia, two seats, one in each, were reserved for Scheduled Tribes. Thus, in the said election total seventeen representatives were elected to the State Assembly from Kamrup district. In this context, it may, however, be noted that among the elected candidates, ten belonged to the Indian National Congress, three to the Socialist party, three Independents and one (from Gauhati) belonged to the Communist party of India. The returning of the ten representatives out of seventeen from the Congress party indicates that the people had great faith upon the said party and its leader. It is significant to note here that in the first General Elections for the State Assembly, out of 6,70,816 total electorate in the district, 4,64,371 eligible voters participated in the poll in which 4, 52, 064 and 12,307 votes were found valid and invalid respectively. It is also remarkable to note here that in some rural constituencies like Barpeta-North-East, Patacharkuchi-Barama, Rangia etc., where large number of electorates happened to be illiterate, quite a good number of invalid votes were found. Particulars of the election have been furnished in Appendix "A", at the end of the chapter.

House of the People : For the purpose of elections to the House of the People (Lok Sabha), the district of Kamrup has two seats, Gauhati and Barpeta and for both the seats Assembly constituencies of the neighbouring districts of Darrang and Goalpara are tagged with them. In other words, the Jurisdictions of both the seats are not confined within the boundary of the district. The main contesting parties in the Elections from Kamrup district are the Congress, the Socialist and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party. One candidate stood from each party in both the constituencies. There was also an Independent Candidate from the Barpeta Parliamentary Constituency in the Elections. Both the congress candidates from these two constituencies declared elected to the Lok Sabha. Their nearest rival candidates belonged to the Socialist Party. The statement below shows some of the particulars of the Parliamentary Elections of the district in 1952.

Constituency	Total electors	Votes polled	Invalid votes	Congress	Socialist	K.M.P.P.
Barpeta	3,32,791	1,75,788	1,081	76,293	63,950	24,013
Gauhati	3,60,331	2,01,255	1,341	96,122	72,553	33,921

Congress candidate elected.

K.M.P.P. :— Kisan Mazdoor Praja party.

General Elections, 1957 : For the purpose of General Elections, 1957, a number of constituencies were delimited throughout the country. This was done as provided under the Constitution for the purpose of delimitation of the constituencies of both the House of the People and the States Legislative Assemblies. After the Census of 1951, the Delimitation Commission Act, 1952, was passed and promulgated on the 7th January, 1953, on the basis of which, the constituencies were delimited. The Delimitation Commission visited the State, heard the views of the public and the Government and finalised the proposals after taking into consideration the representations and recommendations etc, put forward by the public, local bodies as well as the State, Government. The Delimitation Commission's final order was published on the 22nd January, 1955. Except minor corrections to regularise omissions no major changes had to be made on the basis of the Revised order due to the fact that provisions of the State Re-organisation Act did not affect this State.

The total number of seats allotted to the State Legislature and also to the House of the People from this State remained the same as in 1952. As a matter of fact, there was also no change of seats in the district of Kamrup either to the State Legislative Assembly or to the Union Parliament. Certain necessary adjustments in the boundaries of the then existing constituencies were effected, with consequential reallocation of a few reserved seats. By preference, new names were given to some old constituencies. Constituencies as delimited by the Commission, gave general satisfaction.

Assembly Elections : The electoral rolls prepared originally for the 1952 Elections were modified in the district and on the basis of this, the Second General Election was conducted in 1957. For this purpose, the district was divided into fourteen Assembly Constituencies as in 1952. Out of seventeen seats two seats were reserved for scheduled tribes and one for scheduled castes. The main contesting parties in this election as in 1952 were the Congress, Praja Socialist Party and the Communist Party. In the elections Congress secured nine seats, Praja Socialist Party five and Communist two. Besides, one seat was occupied by an Independent candidate. The results

of this election indicate that the hold of the Congress Party was slightly reduced in the district and that of the Praja Socialist Party increased to some extent than in 1952. Particulars in respect of the votes secured, votes found invalid etc., are furnished in Appendix 'B'

House of the People : As regards representation to the Parliament, the Gauhati Constituency fell within the district and the major part of the Goalpara parliamentary Constituency which elected two members (one reserved for scheduled tribe) also fell within Kamrup district. In the Elections the Gauhati seat was captured by the Candidate belonging to the Praja Socialist Party and the other reserved seat went in favour of the Congress party. The following statement shows some of the particulars of the Parliamentary Elections in the district, in 1957.

Constituency	Total electorates	Votes polled	Invalid votes	Congress	Socialist	Communist
Gauhati	4,20,761	2,40,121	X	96,624	1,43,497	—
Goalpara*	7,83,396	—	—	1,83,774	61,382	1,03,151

* **Note :** Goalpara was a double-member constituency of which one was from Kamrup district where the Congress candidate came out successful.

The above statement shows that both the Indian National Congress and the Praja Socialist Party had almost equal influence in the district, as the seats were equally won by the parties. The Communist Party of India had also its hold in the district as it could secure 1,03,151 votes in one Constituency.

The increase of women candidates in 1957 General Elections both to the State Assembly and the Parliament is also a notable feature in Assam. One woman candidate was elected to the State Assembly in 1952 and one to the House of the people but five elected to the Assembly and two to the House of the People in 1957.

General Elections, 1962 : The third General elections which were due in 1962 for reconstitution of the Assam Legislative Assembly as well as for electing new members to the House of the People from the State of Assam was concluded in February, 1962. In this Elections, the system of double-member constituencies was abolished. This had brought uniformity and other advantages for the completion of the poll. The Two-Members Constituencies (Abolition) Bill, 1960 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 23rd December, 1960 with a view to abolish the double-member Parliamentary as well as the Assembly constituencies and also for the creation of single-

member constituencies in their places. In pursuance of the said Act, the question of splitting up of the two-member constituencies formed under the Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Order, 1956, was taken up in the first part of 1961. After that for preparation of the draft proposal for delimitation of constituencies, a public sitting was held in the Gauhati Circuit House on 11th May, 1961. Thereafter, the proposals were finalised and amendments to the Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Order, 1956 were published.

There were two-member parliamentary constituencies in the State of Assam in one of which, one seat was reserved for the Scheduled Castes and in the other, one seat for the Scheduled Tribes. Splitting up of the constituencies was done as follows :—

Name of the two-member constituencies.	Name of the single-member constituencies.
1. Cachar	1. Cachar 2. Karimganj (S.C.)
2. Goalpara	1. Barpeta 2. Goalpara (S.T.)

So far as the State Assembly is concerned, there were fourteen two-member constituencies in Assam. In five such constituencies, one seat in each was reserved for the scheduled castes and in the remaining nine constituencies, one seat in each was reserved for the scheduled tribes (plains). Splitting up of the said constituencies was done as follows in the district of Kamrup.

Name of the two-member constituencies	Name of the single-member constituencies.
1. Barpeta	1. Barpeta 2. Bhabanipur (S.C.)
2. Patacharkuchi	1. Patacharkuchi 2. Barama (S.T.)
3. Rangia	1. Rangia 2. Tamulpur (S.T.)

Besides the above, the other single-member constituencies were Sorbhog, Boko, Rampur, Palasbari, Gauhati, Kamalpur, Hajo, Tarabari, Nalbari-West, Nalbari-East and Jania.

The main contesting parties for the State Assembly in Kamrup district in 1962 General Elections as in 1957 were the Indian National Congress, the Praja Socialist Party, the Communist Party of India, the Jana Sangh, the Revolutionary Communist Party of India and the Workers Party of India. The Indian National Congress which was the most dominating party in the country at that time contested in all the seventeen seats in the district, the Praja Socialist Party contested in fifteen seats; the Communist Party of India contested in eight seats and the other three parties, i.e., Workers Party of India, Jana Sangha and the Revolutionary Communist Party of India contested one in each respectively at Gauhati and Sorbhog. Besides, there were also twenty-eight Independent candidates in all the seventeen seats in the district. In this Assembly Elections, Congress secured thirteen seats and the rest four seats were secured by the Praja Socialist Party. It is interesting to note that the other four contesting parties could not secure a single seat in the district.

For the purpose of election, the Elections Commission of India specified two categories of symbols in Assam as reserved symbols and free symbols. The former group of symbols included (i) Two bullocks with Yokee (Congress), (ii) Hut (Praja Socialist Party) and (iii) Ears of corn and sickle (Communist Party of India). Among the free symbols included, (i) Lamp (Jana Sangha), (ii) Tree (Socialist), (iii) Star (Swatantra), (iv) Bicycle, (v) Flower,, (vi) Scales and (vii) two Leaves.

Particulars in respect of the number of electors, total votes polled, votes secured by different political parties and independent candidates etc. have been shown in Appendix 'C'. Apart from the abolition of double-member constituencies as mentioned earlier, the marking system of voting was also introduced in this election for the first time in Assam. In the First and Second General Elections, the system of voting adopted was the balloting system under which a voter had to exercise his right of franchise by merely putting a ballot paper in the ballot box of the particular candidate for whom he wished to vote. This system, although simple and had worked very well in the first two General Elections and in the elections in the pre-independence days, had its own drawbacks as there was scope for the ballot papers being illegally taken out of the polling station or not being put into the ballot box or of the ballot papers being transferred from the ballot box of one candidate to that of another candidate.

With the successful completion of the 1962 General Elections, the marking system of voting has become another milestone in the progress made towards perfecting the system of elections.

House of the People : In this election, two representatives had to be elected from the district of Kamrup to the House of the People. Accord-

dingly, the elections in Gauhati and Barpeta seats were held on 19th and 24th February 1962. Three candidates in the Gauhati Parliamentary Constituency and six candidates in the Barpeta Parliamentary Constituency contested for these two seats. From the Gauhati constituency the candidate belonging to the Praja Socialist Party won the seat with 1,33,821 votes and the Barpeta seat went in favour of a female candidate belonging to the Indian National Congress. The Congress candidate secured 86,691 votes and the candidate belonging to the Praja Socialist Party got 64,100 votes. There were also four Independent candidates from the Barpeta constituency but none could secure above 27,000 votes. Details of this election are as follows : *

Constituency	Total electorates	Total votes polled	Congress	P.S.P.	C.P.I.	Candi- date elected
Gauhati	4,67,175	2,80,492	1,01,750	1,33,812	32,600	P.S.P.
Barpeta	4,50,184	2,32,351	86,691	64,100	—	Congress

General Election, 1967 : The Fourth General Election was held in February, 1967 for reconstitution of the Assam Legislative Assembly as well as for electing new members to the House of the People. The poll of the 1967 General Election was completed on 24th February, 1967 and the declaration of the result was completed on the 1st March, 1967. In this General Election, about 61.89% of the electorates exercised their franchise.

It may be noted here that the Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Order No. 4, 1966, relating to Assam provided for 14 seats in the House of the People, of which, one seat each was reserved for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes (Hills) and Scheduled Tribes (plains). For the State Legislative Assembly, 126 seats were provided out of which, 8 seats have been reserved for the Scheduled Castes, 10 seats for Scheduled Tribes (Plains) and 15 seats (excluding shillong) for the Scheduled Tribes (hills).

Assembly Elections : In this General Election, the number of representatives to be elected to the State Assembly from Kamrup district increased from seventeen to twenty-two as a result of the delimitation of constituencies on the basis of population. These constituencies are Sorbhog, Bhabanipur, Patacharkuchi, Barpeta, Jania, Baghbor, Sarukhetri

* Number of votes secured by four Independent candidates are not shown in the statement.

(Sc.), Chenga, Boko, Chaygaon, Palasbari, Gauhati West, East Gauhati, Jalukbari, Hajo, Nalbari west, Nalbari East, Borbhag, Barama (St.), Tamulpur (St.), Rangia and Kamalpur. Out of these, Sarukhetri was reserved for scheduled castes and Baroma and Tamulpur were reserved for scheduled tribes (Plains).

As in the past, the Indian National Congress contested in all the seats, C.P.I. (M) in four (Nalbari East, Gauhati East, Chaygaon and Sorbhog), C.P.I. in four seats, P.S.P. in ten seats, Swatantra Party in two seats and Jana Sangha in two seats. In this election, Congress secured ten seats, Independent candidates without having any party affiliation got six seats, Praja Socialist Party four seats and two seats namely Gauhati West and Rangia went in favour of the Communist Party of India. No doubt, there were keen contests among the party candidates and some Independent Candidates made unique achievements because of their personal influence rather than party affiliation. The statement at Appendix 'D' shows the party position, total electorates, votes polled, number of candidates contested etc. in the election in the district in 1967.

House of the People : As in the 1962 elections, two representatives had to be elected to the House of the People from the Kamrup district in 1967. The Barpeta Parliamentary seat was contested between the candidates of the Indian National Congress and the Bharatiya Jana Sangha. The Congress Candidate (late F.A Ahmed) secured 1,73,240 (60.12%) votes and the Jana Sangha candidate secured 1,14,920 (39.88%) votes. But for the Gauhati seat there was a contest between the Communist party of India and the Indian National Congress. Besides, there were four Independent candidates for this seat. Thus the Barpeta seat was secured by the Indian National Congress and the most prestigious Gauhati seat went in favour of the Communist Party of India.

The statement below shows the particulars of the Parliamentary Elections (1967) in the district.

Constituencies	Total electorates	Total votes polled (a)	Congr- ess	B.J.S. (b)	C.P.I.	Inde- pendents (c)	Candi- dates elected
Barpeta	4,13,057	3,01,065	1,73,240	1,14,920	—	—	Congress
Gauhati	4,12,702	2,75,000	88,658	—	90,208	82,473	C.P.I.

(a) Total votes polled including rejected Votes.

(b) B.J.S. Bharatiya Jana Sangha.

(c) Total Votes secured by all Independent candidates.

Fifth General Elections : Assembly Election 1972: This is the first time that a single General Election to the Assam Legislative Assembly was held in the State. This is because of the fact that elections to Parliament were delinked from the elections to the State Legislative Assembly in view of the dissolution of the Parliament in December, 1970. Accordingly, election to the Lok Sabha took place almost one year earlier in 1971. The Election Commission of India originally proposed to have the election sometimes in the 3rd week of February, 1972. But due to the outbreak of the war between India and Pakistan in the first week of December, 1971 and the consequent declaration of the National Emergency, the proposal to held elections in February 1972, was deferred. Fortunately, however, the ending of the war within a fortnight facilitated the Government to held the elections in March of the same year.

In this General Elections, the poll for the State Assembly took place in two different dates, viz., on 7th March, 1972 and on 11th March 1972. In nine constituencies in Gauhati Sub-division, the poll took place on the 7th March, 1972. The counting of votes was completed on 30th March, 1972. After the division of the Indian National Congress as Congress (R) and Congress (I) from the point of view of the Party affiliation, only the Indian National Congress (R) contested in all the seats, whereas the Congress (O) contested only in one seat, C.P.I. in six seats, C.P.I.(M) in three seats and the Socialist Party in seven seats. But the total number of Independent candidates in all the seats of the district was sixty-six. The results of the elections show that the Indian National Congress was the most dominating party as it secured nineteen seats out of twenty-two, two seats (Hajo and Borbhag) went in favour of two Independent candidates and only one seat (Nalbari East) was secured by a Socialist Party candidate. Another important feature of this election is that four women candidates were elected to the State Assembly from the district. It is also seen that few all-India parties like the Communist Party of India, C.P.I., the Communist Party of India (Marxist) etc., are almost eliminated in this election. The impact of the Congress policies at the Centre like Bank Nationalisation was keenly felt and so large number of people voted in favour of the Congress. The statement at Appendix 'E' shows Party position, total electorates, number of candidates contested, votes polled, etc., in the Assembly Election, 1972.

House of the People, 1971 : As mentioned earlier, the Fifth General Elections to the Lok Sabha held a year ahead of the term of expiry. As per Delimitations of Parliamentary Constituency Notification, New Delhi, 20th April, 1966, the Barpeta Parliamentary seat covered the Assembly constituencies of Abhayapuri, Bongaigaon (both in Goalpara district), Patacharkuchi, Barpeta, Jania, Baghbar, Sarukhetri, Chenga, and Nalbari west (in Kamrup district). Nine Assembly constituencies namely Goalpara

West, Goalpara East, Dudnai (in Goalpara district), Boko, Chaygaon, Palasbari, Gauhati-East, Gauhati-West and Jalukbari (in Kamrup district) were included in the Gauhati Parliamentary constituency.

In the Barpeta Parliamentary constituency, there was a triangular contest between Indian National Congress, Bharatiya Jana Sangha and one Independent. The Indian National Congress won the election by polling 2,10,662 votes against 74,532 and 4,414 votes polled by the candidates of B.J.S. and Independent Candidates respectively out of the total valid votes 2,89,618.

In the Gauhati Parliamentary constituency, there were six candidates one each belonging to Indian National Congress, Communist Party of India, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Indian National Congress (organisation) and two Independent Candidates. Indian National Congress won the contest by polling 1,40,483 votes out of the total valid votes of 2,21,191. The votes polled by other parties were : Communist Party of India, 44,482; Communist Party of India (Marxist), 15,190 and Indian National Congress (Organisation), 12,002 votes. Of the two Independent Candidates, each polled 4,121 and 4,913 votes.

House of the People, 1977 : Election to the 6th Lok Sabha took place in March, 1977. The appearance of the Janata Party into power in the Centre defeating the ruling Congress is the special feature of this election. The Barpeta Parliamentary constituency included Bongaingaon, Abhayapuri North, Abhayapuri South (S.C.), Patanchakuchi, Barpeta, Jania, Baghbar, Sarukhetri, Chenga and Dharampur Assembly constituencies. Similarly the Gauhati Parliamentary constituency included Dhudhnoi (S.T.) Boko (S.C.), Chaygaon, Palasbari, Jalukbari, Dispur, Gauhati East, Gauhati West, Hajo and Barkhetri Assembly constituencies. In the Barpeta parliamentary constituency, contest took place between the Indian National Congress and the Bharatiya Lok Dal Candidates (Janata Party). The Congress candidate defeated the B.L.D. candidate by a margin of 48,114 votes. In the Gauhati Constituency, there were three candidates, one from the Indian National Congress, one from the Communist party of India and the other from B.L.D. now merged with the Janata Party. The B.L.D. Candidate secured 1,49,255 votes whereas the other two contesting candidates, of Congress and C.P.I. secured 22,135 and 1,12,815 votes respectively.

The following statement shows the particulars in respect of total electorates, votes polled, votes secured by the candidates of different parties in the Elections to the Lok Sabha from Kamrup district in 1977.

Name of constituency	Total electorates	Valid votes polled by			Total valid votes	Rejected votes
		I.N.C.	C.P.I.	B.L.D.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Barpeta	5,58,853,	196,832	—	1,48,718	3,45,550	9,714
Gauhati	5,53,272,	112,815	22,135	1,49,255	2,84,205	7,393

Assembly Elections 1978 : In the Fifth Assembly Elections in 1972, the district of Kamrup had to elect twenty-two representatives to the State Assembly. In the Assembly Elections of 1978, two more seats were created in the Kamrup district bifurcating some of the old constituencies. The constituencies were Sorbhog, Bhabanipur, Patancharkuchi, Barpeta, Jania, Baghbar, Sarukhetri, Chenga, Boko (S.C.), Chaygaon, Palasbari, Jhalukbari, Dispur, Gauhati East, Gauhati West, Hajo, Kamalpur, Rangia, Tamulpur, Nalbari, Barkhetri, Dharmapur, Barama (S.T.) and Chapaguri (S.T.). In this context, it may be noted here that before the election, the Congress was again divided into two as Indian National Congress and Indian National Congress (I). Both the Congress parties contested all the twenty-four seats in the district and the Bharatiya Lok Dal Janata contested twenty-two seats. Other parties like, the Communist Party of India contested 9 seats, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) seven seats, All-India Forward Block one seat, Socialist Party one seat and the Plains Tribal Council of Assam two seats. Before the election, the Janata Party made alliance with the P.T.C. of Assam and accordingly the Janata Party did not put up candidates against the two constituencies reserved for the Tribals mainly in Barama and Chapaguri. But the most striking feature of the election was that a large number of Independent candidates contested almost all the seats and their total number was ninety-five. The results of the election showed that it was for the first time that a non-Congress party viz., Janata party secured thirteen seats in the district. On the contrary, the Indian National Congress could secure only three seats, the Indian National Congress (I) two seats, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) secured three seats and the Independent candidates without having any party affiliation secured two seats. The Plains Tribal Council of Assam as a locally recognised party could not secure any of the two reserved seats, one of which went in favour of the Congress and the other seat was secured by an Independent candidate. Besides, other centesing parties like the Communist Party of India, the Socialist Unity

Centre of India (contested at Dispur) could not secure a single seat in the district. It is also interesting to note that a large number of Independent candidates lost their security deposits in this election. The statement at Appendix 'F' shows the particulars in respect of number of constituencies, number of voters, contesting candidates party-wise etc., in the Assembly Elections in the district in 1978.

Newspapers : The history of Assamese Newspapers and magazines began with the publication of the Arunodai by the Baptist Mission in 1846 from Sibsagar. This Magazine ushered in a new era in Assamese literature and Journalism. But the renaissance in Journalism came to Assam with the publication of the "Times of Assam" from Dibrugarh in 1885. This Journal was brought out by Radhanath Changkakati who took leading part in setting up an influential organisation for the wide circulation of this paper. This weekly contained news, views, advertisement, literary articles and information on trade and commerce and social events. The paper was of great help to the tea industry for circulating various advertisements and notices. The publication of the paper stopped during the Second World War. The paper was revived as a bi-weekly by Jiwan Ram Phookan in 1947-48 but after his death "The Times of Assam" stopped circulation. "The Times of Assam" served as the training ground for many young men, who became outstanding Journalists of Assam in later years.

A landmark in Assamese Journalism was the publication of the "Asamiya" in 1918. This was a weekly paper published from Dibrugarh, founded by the poet Chandra Kumar Agarwalla, it was edited by reputed writers like Sadananda Baruah and Nilmani Phookan before it was shifted to Gauhati. The paper was finally closed down in 1958-59.

The 'Assam Tribune' another English weekly was founded by Late Radha Gobinda Barua in 1939. Originally, it was established at Dibrugarh but in 1946, the paper was shifted to Gauhati and came out as a daily from the said year. The Assam Tribune was originally owned jointly by Mr. Soneswar Barooah of Tinsukia and Mr. R.G. Barooah of Gauhati. Mr. R.G. Barooah was the founder proprietor of the paper till death in 1977. This paper also made significant contributions to the Freedom Movement.

There are now six daily newspapers in Assamese and most of them are published from Gauhati. Two bi-weeklies and nearly sixty weeklies and fortnightly papers are published from different places of Assam. Like the newspapers most of the periodicals are published from Gauhati, the headquarters of Kamrup district.

The particulars of the newspapers and periodicals currently published from Kamrup district are as follows :

Name	Periodicity	Language	Place of Publications
1. The Assam Tribune	Daily	English	Gauhati
2. The Assam Express	"	"	"
3. Dainik Asom	"	Assamese	"
4. Agradoot	Bi-Weekly	"	"
5. Natun Asamiya	Weekly	"	"
6. Nilachal	"	"	"
7. Asom Bani	"	"	"
8. Asom Raj	"	"	"
9. Alok	"	"	"
10. Janamat	"	"	"
11. Amar Pragati	"	"	"
12. Purbajyoti	"	Hindi	"
13. Yagoyog	Fortnightly	Assamese	Patacharkuchi
14. Yubak	"	"	Gauhati
15. Yugasakti	Weekly	Bengali	"
16. Desh Bani	Weekly	Bengali	"
17. Samaj	"	"	Gauhati
18. Esterner	"	English	"
19. Ajanta Magazine	Quarterly	Assamese	"
20. Roopkar	Monthly	"	"
21. Natun Prabhat	"	"	"
22. Roopam	"	"	"
23. Chirantan	"	"	"
24. Oroni (Ladies magazine)	Quarterly	"	"
25. Rastra Sevak	"	Hindi	"
26. Jonbiri	Monthly	Assamese	"
27. Namnai	"	"	"
28. Rodali (Children's magazine)	"	"	"
29. Bismoi	"	"	"

Name	Periodicity	Language	Place of publications
30. Mauchak (Children's magazine)	Monthly	Assamese	Gauhati
31. Trivani (Stage and Cinema)	Three-monthly	"	"
32. Jowar	Half-yearly	"	"
33. Mahila	Three-monthly (both Assamese & English) -	Nalbari	Gauhati
34. Amar Pratinidhi	Monthly	Assamese	
35. Nava Bharat	Weekly	Bengali	
*36. Asoma	Monthly	"	Calcutta
**37. Raijor Batori	Weekly	Assamese	Gauhati
***38. Assam Information	Monthly	English	"
39. Pragati	"	Assamese	"
***40. Payobhora	Fortnightly	"	"
41. Akash	Monthly	"	"

Besides the above newspapers and periodicals, a number of monthly, fortnightly and weeklies are published in and outside the district. All these publications are also widely circulated in the district. They are (1) Monoranjan (monthly Assamese) (2) Prakash (monthly Assamese) (3) Naba-Diganta (monthly Assamese), (4) Awahan (monthly Assamese.), (5) Nibanua Sambad (monthly Assamese.) (6) Rahimala (monthly Assamese.), (7) Amardesh (Barpeta, weekly Assamese), (8) Amar Alochoni (weekly Assamese), (9) Mor-desh (two-monthly Assamese), (10) North Eastern-times (quarterly English), (11) Samakalin (quarterly Assamese), (12) Sampratik Samayiki (quarterly Assamese), (13) Consciousness (quarterly English), (14) Bharat Ima (quarterly Monipuri), (15) Hamra-Dhwani (Nepali), (16) Aloran (quarterly Assamese), (17) Batori (quarterly English), (18) Biswadoot (quarterly Assamese/Bengali), (19) Benjar (quarterly Bodo), (20) Assam Observer (fortnightly-English published from Sapatgram Goalpara), (21) Lahar (quarterly Assamese), (22) Bibhisika (quarterly Assamese, published from Jorhat), (23) North-Eastern Spectrum (monthly English), (24)

*Published by Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Gauhati.

**Agriculture Department, Govt. of Assam, Gauhati.

***GOVT. of India.

Jugodharma (weekly Assamese), (25) Carriers and Digest (monthly English etc. In this context, it may also be mentioned that a number of local periodicals in Assamese, namely Ramdhenu, Manideep, Deepak (Children magazines) etc., were also very popular magazines in the district. Nilachal in Assamese is also an important bi-weekly published from Gauhati. Ramdhenu gave deep thought to the needs of the growing people. It was read by all rich and poor. It was particularly popular amongst ladies and intellectual section of the society. The Natun Asamiya was also an oldest Assamese daily which gave independent public opinion since the advent of freedom.

Besides the local papers and papers published from other parts of the state, some Calcutta and Delhi papers are widely circulated in the district. These are, The Hindustan Standard, Juganter, The Amrit Bazar Patrika, The Statesmen, The Times of India, Blitze, Ananda Bazar Patrika, Screen etc. In the field of periodicals The Illustrated Weekly of India, Modern Review, Reader's Digest, Health, Sangam, Filmfare, Sports, Eve's Weekly New Delhi, Femina, Sun, Sunday, Contour, Probé, etc. are also widely circulated in the district. Foreign periodicals like Times, Women and Home, Soviet-land also find good circulation in the district.

(d) Voluntary Social Service organisations : In the district of Kamrup, a number of voluntary social service organisations are functioning for the upliftment of socially degraded and other weaker sections of the society. Besides, the voluntary organisations, the Department of Social Welfare of the Government of Assam has also undertaken a number of schemes for the rehabilitation and welfare of the refugees and the rehabilitation of other socially handicapped and distressed people. The following are some of the important institutions dealing with the subject as noted above in the district.

(1) State Home for Women, Jalukbari : Under the Aftercare Programme initiated by the Government of India for the eradication of the evils of prostitutions and for the upliftment of the rescued women, the State Home for women was established at Jalukbari in Kamrup district in January, 1957. The ultimate aim of the scheme is to rehabilitate the rescued women in the society. With that end in view, a training-cum-production centre is attached to the State Home for Women. This Training Centre was established on 22nd October, 1960, and since its inception, it was managed by the Cottage Industries Department of the Government of Assam till 1967 when it was handed over to the Social Welfare Department. The main object of this centre is to give training to the inmates of the State Home and Destitute Home, Jalukbari in various trades and also in nursing so that after discharge from the Home, they

can earn their own living. Rehabilitation of the inmates is also made by way of marriage, restoring back to their parents and guardians and over and above providing them with employment wherever possible. The expenditure of the State Home is borne both by the State and Central Governments at the agreed ratio of 50:50:

In the Training cum-Production Centre, the following trades and crafts are taught, (1) Knitting and Embroidery, (2) Cutting and Tailoring, (3) Doll and Toy making, (4) Fancy Bag making and (5) Weaving. The Centre provides two-years Certificate Course to the inmates.

The following brief statement indicates the number of students admitted and the number of students passed from the Centre (in every five-year wise).

Students admitted	Students passed.
1961—66 89	58
1966—71 164	99
1971—76 134	70
1976—78 74	19

(2) State Home for the Destitute Women, Jalukbari :—This centre located at Gauhati is meant for destitute women and socially underlooked helpless women having no support and shelter. The Home has a section for sheltering guardianless women including widows. The Government have undertaken this scheme mainly with a view to give security and relief to this category of women.

(3) Vagrants' (Begger's) Home at Fatasil, Gauhati : As in all other parts of the country, the social evil of beggary is a problem in Assam also. To eradicate this evil from the society, the State Government have taken up this scheme and with a view to control begging, the Assam Prevention of Begging Act has been passed. Currently a Vagrant Home has been functioning at Fatasil, Gauhati on the basis of voluntary admission into the Home.

(4) Sishu Sadan, Jalukbari : This orphanage was established in 1967 by a registered body. The Government of Assam allotted about 0.66770 hectares of land to this organisation at Jalukbari, which has constructed its own building complex comprising of a school, a play-ground, besides a production centre and the residential hostel for orphans. There are about 35 orphans from all walks of life of the State in this institution. The orphans are given primary education in the school situated within the camp.

pus and afterwards are sent to nearby High School for further study. They are taught handicrafts like spinning, weaving and knitting. Up-till now 5 girls sheltered in this institution have been given out in marriage and 3 girls have been provided with employment in this institution.

(5) Yuva Nivas Santha, Gauhati : It is an organisation registered under the Societies Registration Act. Its main objectives are to work for cultural integration of the youths living in the North-Eastern India and also to provide residential, educational and also the training facilities to working youths of both sexes and economic rehabilitation to the distressed women and children belonging primarily to the economically backward section of the society in the area. It is, at present, running 2 working women's hostels providing housing and messing accommodation to 42 working women whose a monthly income is below Rs. 800/- and is also providing free residential accommodation to needy students, trainees, and women. The Government of Assam has allotted a plot of 1338/7 hectares of Land at Narangi to the organisation which is constructing its own 2 storied brick building with provision for accommodation to 150 working women and 80 economically distressed students, trainees, distressed women and children. For construction of the Nivas, the Government of India have advanced about Rs. 14 Lakhs in the form of grants-in-aid and it has been supplemented by Government of Assam, giving grants-in-aid of Rs. 1.75 lakhs and public donation. The organisation has taken up the task of imparting education to economically backward women, and the pre-primary and primary education to children including the orphans and distressed within the campus and also is conducting training in productive crafts like dairy, poultry, fishery, horticulture, weaving, tailoring, knitting, embroidery, and cooking. The aim of the organisation is to expand its socio-economic and welfare activities to all the districts of Assam. Some of its schemes are being financed by the State Social Welfare Board and are helped by the Social Welfare Department of the Government.

(6) Sishugram : Established in 1975 at Indrachal hillock of Uttar Gauhati, this is a very laudable project undertaken by a band of freedom-fighters engaged in social welfare works. It has upto now sheltered 30 orphans, looked after and guided by 3 trained lady workers mothering them. The village 'father' who is selected from amongst the local reputed voluntary social workers, manages the affairs of the Sishugram.

(7) Assam Prisoner's Aid and Welfare Society : The society has undertaken a very important but neglected field of social welfare work. It has arranged legal aid to 4 under-trial prisoners, rehabilitation aid to 12 released convicts and shelter for four

guardianless minor children of whom the single guardian is in jail either as under-trial prisoner or as convict. This is one of the rare social organisations working in the field in the country.

(8) Assam Mental Welfare Society : Of a comparatively recent origin, the society is now running an educational centre for mentally retarded children at Gauhati. The society has acquired 70 Bighas of land at Kahilipara, Gauhati, where construction work of its building is going on. The educational centre which will be a residential one is unique in the state.

(9) Mahila Imdad : Established in 1975 as an all-India organisation in New Delhi, its state branch is working in Gauhati. It is running a training-cum-production centre at Bamunimaidan. Its other objective is to establish one working women's hostel in Gauhati for which this organisation has received building grant from the Government of India.

(10) Assam Seva Samity : It is a very old Social Welfare organisation having its head office at Gauhati. In Gauhati, the Samaj is running one Craft Training and Production Centre at Gopinath Nagar and one Orphanage at Noonmati. The Leper's Asylum established by this Samaj has been handed over to the government of Assam.

(11) Assam Pradeshik Mahila Samity : It is a State-level welfare organisation meant only for women. It is running one Nursery School and one Lady's Craft Training Centre at Hedayetpur, Gauhati. One of its important activity is regular weekly literary discourses held amongst its members. This organisation has thousands of its branches spread over both rural and urban areas of the state.

(12) Eastern India women's Association : Established in the late sixties, this organisation is regularly conducting secretarial Practice Training courses along with cooking classes and competitions amongst the ladies of the city. Its head office situates at Lakhtakia.

Besides these organisations, there are a number of organisations and institutions which are working for educational, cultural, social and economic up-liftment of the general public in the district. A list of some such institutions and organisations is given below :—

1. Assam Sankar Sangha, Gauhati
2. Theosophical Society of India, Gauhati.
3. Arya Samaj, Gauhati.
4. Working Women's Association, Gauhati.
5. Umachal Yogic Ashram, Kamakhya.

6. Sanghamitra, Bharalumukh.
7. Asom Sevak Pratisthan, Gauhati.
8. Asom Mahila Sangha, Panchavati.
9. Ananda Bhawan, Zoo Road.
10. Lions Club, Narengi.
11. Rotary Club, Gauhati.
12. Child Welfare Centre, Panbazar.
13. The Assam State branch of the Indian Council of Child Welfare, Ambari, Gauhati.
14. Sadou Asom Maina Parijat, Gauhati.
15. Sarada Sangha, Chatribari, Gauhati.
16. Ramkrishna Mission, Gauhati.
17. Sreemanta Sankar Kristi Bikash Samity, Paltanbazar, Gauhati.
18. Artists Guild, Gauhati.
19. Art and Hobby Centre, Panbazar.
20. Mitali Sangha, Gauhati.
21. Pubali Sangha, Zoo Road, Gauhati.
22. Vivekananda Kendra, Gauhati.
23. Sishu-Bikash Kendra, Santipur.
24. Deepak Sangha, Navagraha, Gauhati.
25. Ladies Club, Gauhati.
26. Children's Recreation Club, Gauhati.
27. Haj-Yatri, Santha, Gauhati.
28. Kamrup Mahila Silpanusthan, Uzanbazar.
29. Y.W.C.A., Gauhati.
30. Baptists Missionary, Gauhati.
31. Christian Youths Association, Gauhati.
32. Assam Plains Tribal Association.
33. Assam Scheduled Caste Association.
34. All-Assam other Backward and more Backward Communities Association.
35. Adibashi Association.
36. Mitra Mandali, Sarania Ashram.
37. Streesakti Jagaran Samity, Dakhin Sarania.
38. Assam Pensioner's Association.
39. Sadou Asom Nibania Swartha Rakshi Samaj, Gauhati.

Over and above the officially recognised welfare schemes there are quite a good number of voluntary social welfare organisations in the district engaged in social welfare activities like eradication of leprosy, pre-basic education and crafts training. For these purposes, the Social Welfare Department sanctions annually a considerable amount as lumpsum grants-in-aid to deserving organisations.

The district contains some of the most important state-level voluntary social service organisations. Some of these organisations have already been

mentioned above. Some such other organisations are Assam state Relief Committee (Robindra Bhawan, Gauhati); The Assam Medical Relief Committee; Provincial Unit of the Bharat Sevak Samaj; Indian Red Cross Society (Gauhati Branch); Bishnu-Nirmala Trust, Asom Yuvak Samaj, and the Destitute Women & Children Welfare Home run by Assam Pradesik Mahila Samity. All the above organisations have got their head Offices or provincial offices at Gauhati and are the recipient of grants-in-aid from the Central Social Welfare Board. There are other voluntary social service organisations such as Boko Mouman Ashram, Tamulpur Gramodyog Pratisthan in the district receiving grants-in-aid from the Central Social Welfare Board and Khadi and Gramodyog Commission.

The Assam State Social Welfare Advisory Board : Its head office is at Gauhati, has undertaken some schemes which are meant purely for the welfare and upliftment of the women and children in the rural areas of the State. The State Government and the Central Social Welfare Board bear the entire expenditure of the Board equally in respect of its establishment. As regards the Welfare Extension Projects established by the State Board, which are mainly for the welfare of women & children, the expenditure is borne by the Central Social Welfare Board, the State Government and the Community Development Department at the agreed ratio of 12 : 6 : 5 respectively. There were, in 1964, eight such co-ordinated Welfare Extension Projects in different parts of the State, including this district. As regards the old pattern of the Welfare Extension projects, which have since been normalised and handed over to the voluntary organisations, the State Government bears only 10% of the expenditure on such projects and the Central Board 75%. The remaining 15% is required to be raised from the local resources by the voluntary welfare organisations which take over such projects. The Central Social Welfare Board was formed in 1953, to encourage voluntary efforts by granting financial aid or technical advice. It has started a large number of Welfare Extension Projects, the programmes of which are carried out in close co-operation with the welfare schemes of the State Government as well as the Ministry of Community Development which has now, formed a special wing for the co-ordination of all welfare works for women being done in the project areas whether under the Ministry or the Board. In Assam too, it has its own Social Welfare Advisory Board of whose head office is located at Gauhati.

Trusts : There are a limited number of trusts in Gauhati and all these trusts were founded for the purpose of promotion of Social Welfare.

(1) Kusturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust—Its agencies in Kamrup : On Ba Kasturba's death, the public decided to erect a memorial as a mark of their admiration for this simple and typical Hindu wife.

Many suggestions were made,—the schools for women, libraries and so on, but Mahatma Gandhi with his intuitive feeling for the right thing, suggested the present scheme for the training of village women, which was undertaken by the Kasturba Gandhi Memorial Trust. The Central Social Welfare Board took advantage of the experience of this organisation and persuaded them to undertake the training of their village-level workers. Accordingly in many Stages, welfare projects have been started to provide the women with some part-time lucrative work enabling them to supplement their family income. These projects are run on a co-operative basis with the help of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Thus, the Central Social Welfare Board has been responsible for greatly stepping up the tone of Social Welfare work and in giving it proper direction. Apart from helping old established institutions and organisations, and supporting the numerous new schemes, it has given the women the initiative to be social workers and also the opportunity for shouldering responsible posts, enabling them to earn experience and confidence.

In Assam, the Kusturba Gram Sevika Bidyalaya was started at the foot of the Saraniya Hill in Gauhati in 1946. This is a State-level institution of its kind and it was inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi in January, 1946. The State-level Office of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust is also located at the Saraniya Hill. When Gandhiji came to Assam for the last time, the Provincial Advisory Committee for the Trust decided that the Gram Sevika Bidyalaya to be opened by Gandhiji and accordingly late Dr. Harikrishna Das, Gopinath Bordoloi, Dr. Bhubaneswar Borooah and other leaders of Gauhati helped the Provincial Committee in the matter. For the stay of Mahatma Gandhi, a beautiful thatched house with a decorated cap on the roof was constructed at the Saraniya Hill.

In this context, it may be mentioned here that late (Mrs) Hem Prava Das, wife of Late Dr. Harikrishna Das, was the originator of the Gram Sevika Centre at Saraniya Hill. Besides, since 1947 to 1969, the following Seva Gram Centres have been started in Kamrup district.

1. Saraniya Purba Basic School	..	15.8.47
2. Bahjani Gram Seva Centre	..	20.6.47
3. Batakuchi Gram Seva Centre	..	12.8.49
4. Sonkuchi Gram Seva Centre	..	2.7.55
5. Raha Gram Seva Centre	..	29.9.47

In addition to above, there are four Border Area Seva Centres in North Kamrup. In 1966, twenty delegates from the Tinpukhuri Border Seva Centre of North Kamrup started on foot to the Sarvodaya Conference held at Balia in Uttar Pradesh. Four women delegates from four Border Seva Centres of North Kamrup also accompanied the party completing 1532.80 kilometres on foot. The names of the Border Seva Centres under the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust so far functioning in North

Kamrup are (1) Ahopa Border Seva Centre, (2) Belkhuti Border Seva Centre, (3) Pakijuli Border Seva Centre, (4) Ambari Border Seva Centre, (5) Chandan Nagar Border Seva Centre (6) Tinpukhuri Seva Centre and (7) Thalkuchi Border Seva Centre.

The Trust has done the following welfare works among the people of Assam and in its neighbouring States. Observance of the 'Ba-Bapu' week from 30th January, 1949 to 23rd February of the same year and its follow-up works in the villages by the members of the Trust in connection with the construction of roads, clearing of villages, digging of pits for manure, latrines etc, are some of the important works of the Trust. The humanitarian service rendered by the workers of the Trust to the victims of the flood and earthquake of 1950, in the district of Lakhimpur is indeed an unique service on the part of the Trust. This Centre accommodated twelve widows and twenty-three orphans and the Trust accepted the responsibility for their rehabilitation. On 5th March, 1962, the Centre was converted to Maitri Ashram by Binova Bhawe.

The workers of the Trust also participated in the Bhoodan Movement initiated by Binova Bhawe. Besides, they served the flood and erosion effected people of Palasbari in the camps in 1954 for about four months. In 1955, the Kasturba Welfare Centre was established in Mokoksang of Nagaland. In 1959, two batches of *gram sevikas* of the Trust served for about two months in relief works among the flood effected people of North Kamrup. They too served the Tibetan refugees coming through Tezpur to India when they took asylum in the Kaharukhanda camp. When the Language Disturbance took place in Assam in 1960, the workers of the Trust, particularly ladies, visited the houses of the minorities and advised them to work peacefully for the interest of the nation. When Binova Bhawe visited Assam in 1961, some of the sincere workers of the Trust accompanied and served him during his stay in the State. At the time of the Chinese Aggression, in Assam in 1962, they did yeomen's service particularly to the evacuees. In 1963, at the initiative of the workers, the Kastruba Border Welfare Centre had been established in the border of North Lakhimpur and Arunachal Pradesh to remove the long-standing conflict between the people of the hills and plains.

Among other memorable works of the Trust mention may be made of (1, the participation in relief works in 1963, (2) Delhi-Peking Friendship Journey in 1963, (due to the non-availability of permission from the Chinese Government, it had to be abandoned from the Maitri Assam in North Lakhimpur) (3) establishment of peace centre at Kohima in 1964; (4) Welfare service among the ailing people from gastroenteritis in Kamrup and Darrang in 1965, (5) relief work among the flood victims in Jorhat Subdivision in 1965, (6) participation in the Balia Sarvodaya Conference on foot in Uttar Pradesh in 1966. (7) participation in Lok Jatra in India including Assam etc.

In 1968, the Indian Service Mission started welfare works in Tirap district in Arunachal Pradesh but for want of trained *sevikas* a number of trained workers of the Trust had been deputed to assist them in their work. The Assam Branch of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust celebrated the 'Ba-Bapu' birth century upto 22nd February 1970. The 'Gandhi-ghar' of the Saraniya Ashram in Gauhati, was the abode of Mahatma Gandhi and Binoba Bhawe during their visits of Gauhati.

(2) Gandhi Smarak Nidhi : Its objective is to spread the ideology of Gandhian economy and its way of life. It organises seminars on Gandhian Philosophy and to acquaint and train up the public in Gandhian economy. The Nidhi started one khadi training-cum-production centre at Gandhi Nagar, Tetelia. The organisation was headed by a number of veteran Gandhianites like Late Rajkumar Sarbeswar Gohain and published a number of literatures for popular reading.

(3) Bagaria Trust : Founded by the Bagarias, a family of industrialists, the trust aims at establishing educational, training, and medical centres for women and children in general. The children's ward building attached to the Gauhati Medical College, was donated by this Trust.

(4) Bishnu—Nirmala Trust : Founded by Late Bishnuram Medhi, a veteran Congressman of Assam, who donated his entire property for welfare and education of children in particular, has come into operation only very recently. The Trust started its work by opening a small children museum in the Gauhati residence of Late Bishnuram Medhi.

(5) Sarvodaya Trust : In 1959, this Trust was formed by Dr. Tilottama Roy Choudhury and Srimati Amalprava Das as per the wish of their father Dr. Harikrishna Das who donated his entire landed property measuring 106 bighas for propagation and execution of the Sarvodaya ideal of Mahatma Gandhi. The Saokuchi Gram Sevakendra, Chandmari Ashram and Sarania Ashram were established and run by the Trust. Sarvodaya library and dispensary at Panbazar too are two other institutions belonging to this Trust.

(6) Assam Khadi and Rural Reconstruction Trust : This Trust was constituted by Dr. Harikrishna Das who donated his entire pension for development of khadi industry and propagation of Gandhian economy. Veteran Freedom-fighters late (all) Sidhi Sarma, Sankar Barua, Lila Barua, Bishnu Medhi, Omiya Kumar Das, Bimala Chaliha and Dr. Harikrishna Das were members of this Trust. The Trust purchased a plot of land at Baihata for its initial work and started Khadi and Hand spinning and weaving there. Even now this centre bears its profound influence on economy of the area and its development.

APPENDIX (A)

Assembly Elections 1952

Constituency	Total Electo- rates	Valid votes	Rejected votes	Contesting candidates party-wise & Independents					Votes secured by electors	Candidates Elected
				Cong- ress	Socia- list	Tribal League	KM Co- muni- st	Inde- pen- dent		
1. Sorbhog.	49,247	25,403	8	1	1	1	—	4	11,248	Congress
2. Tarabari	39,699	25,720	8	1	—	—	—	1	20,190	Independent
3. Barpeta-West	41,113	25,761	5	—	—	1	—	4	10,025	"
4. Barpeta-North-East (double seats)	90,700	73,675	3,524-2 (one for S.C.)	—	—	—	1	3	25,461 25,169	Congress (both)
5. Patacharkuchi- Barama (double seats)	71,458	66,077	3,367-2	2	—	—	2	1	13,809 12,994	Socialist Congress
6. Nalbari-South	38,141	20,491	103-1	1	1	—	1	2	9,503	Congress
7. Nalbari-North	36,629	18,843	70	1	1	—	1	1	8,821	Congress
8. Rangia (double member)	71,775	59,761	1,323	2	1	—	1	3	14,951 16,054	Congress (both)
9. Kamalpur	36,841	19,472	58	1	—	—	1	3	4,874	Independent
10. Hajo	40,171	30,028	1,915	1	1	—	1	1	15,922	Congress
11. Boko	42,928	24,753	351	1	1	—	1	2	8,056	Socialist
12. Pub-Bangsar	39,843	22,854	236	1	1	—	1	2	10,622	Congress
13. Silasunduri Ghopa	35,380	22,397	1,078	1	1	—	1	—	12,115	Socialist
14. Gauhati	39,891	16,829	261	1	1	—	1	1	5,506	Communist.

APPENDIX 'B'

Assembly Elections, 1957

[illegible]

R.S.P. — Revolutionary Socialist party.
R.C.P.I. — Revolutionary Communist party of India.
Democratic Vanguard — People's Democratic Vanguard

APPENDIX 'C'

Assembly Elections, 1962

Constituency	Total electo- rates	Votes polled	Rejec- ted votes	Party affiliation of candidates				Inde- pen- dent	Votes secured by elec- ted can- didates	Candidates elected
				Con- gress	P.S.P.	C.P.I.	Jana San gha	R.C. P.I.		
1. Boko	44,622	24,109	1,758	1	1	—	—	—	1	12,800 Congress
2. Rampur	46,546	29,594	1,703	1	1	—	—	—	1	14,515 Congress
3. Palasbari	50,304	31,423	2,072	1	1	1	—	—	3	12,494 Congress
4. Gauhati	65,671	38,344	2,440	1	1	1	1	—	4	14,047 Congress
5. Kamalpur	52,998	27,917	2,391	1	1	1	—	—	2	19,038 Congress
6. Hajo	57,669	38,198	2,969	1	1	1	—	—	1	12,681 P.S.P.
7. Tarabari	45,907	30,994	1,775	1	1	1	—	—	—	8,820 Congress
8. Bhabanipur (S.C.)	46,918	23,715	2,028	1	1	—	—	—	4	18,124 P.S.P.
9. Barpeta	50,404	39,869	1,476	1	1	—	—	—	1	25,208 Congress
10. Jania	45,191	31,447	1,636	1	1	—	—	—	—	11,338 Congress
11. Sorbhog	49,474	28,998	1,550	1	1	—	—	1	2	9,015 Congress
12. Barana (S.T.)	44,800	17,431	1,385	1	1	—	—	—	1	13,407 P.S.P.
13. Patacharkuchi	46,126	24,792	1,224	1	1	—	—	—	—	14,429 Congress
14. Nalbari West	58,881	31,536	2,195	1	1	1	—	—	1	7,419 Congress
15. Nalbari East	49,577	27,393	2,021	1	1	1	—	—	4	7,419 Congress
16. Rangia	47,448	19,352	1,329	1	1	—	—	—	2	12,416 Congress
17. Tamulpur (S.T.)	44,306	19,114	1,985	1	1	—	—	—	1	7,993 Congress

APPENDIX 'D'

Assembly Elections, 1967

Constituency	Total Electo- rates	Votes polled	Rejected votes	Contesting candidates party wise & Independent					Votes secured by elec- ted can- didates	Candidates elected
				Con- gress	PSP	CPI	CPI (M)	Swan- tan- tra		
1. Sorbhog	46,060	32,061	1,993	1	—	—	—	—	2	17,237 Congress
2. Bhabanipur	43,019	31,661	2,319	1	1	—	—	—	2	12,865 Congress
3. Patacharkuchi	48,087	27,512	2,192	1	1	—	—	—	2	12,061 P.S.P.
4. Barpeta	51,958	36,839	2,626	1	1	1	—	—	—	14,234 P.S.P.
5. Jania	40,881	35,346	1,778	1	—	—	—	1	—	29,623 Congress
6. Baghor	43,010	36,352	3,438	1	—	—	—	—	3	14,576 Independent
7. Sarukhetri (SC)	44,979	31,779	2,257	1	—	—	—	—	2	18,710 Congress
8. Chenga	45,647	37,589	2,631	1	1	—	—	1	8	16,957 Congress
9. Boko	42,503	29,809	1,169	1	—	—	—	—	2	16,322 "
10. Chaygaon	47,225	32,804	2,098	1	—	—	1	—	3	13,388 Independent
11. Palasbari	47,494	34,870	1,432	1	—	—	—	—	2	18,029 Congress
12. Gauhati-East	49,414	27,675	2,035	1	1	—	1	—	1	15,056 Congress
13. Gauhati-West	42,019	23,459	1,123	1	—	1	—	1	6	7,633 C.P.I.
14. Jalukbari	35,546	24,543	2,192	1	—	—	—	—	1	17,384 Independent
15. Hajo	53,341	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	Congress elected uncontested
16. Nalbari-west	51,938	31,652	2,669	1	1	—	—	1	2	10,776 Congress
17. Nalbari-East	52,121	30,696	3,089	1	1	—	1	—	1	13,736 Congress
18. Sarbhog	54,285	26,892	1,694	1	—	—	—	—	1	14,772 Independent
19. Barana (S.T.)	52,402	28,564	2,581	1	1	—	—	—	1	11,913 Congress
20. Tamulpur (S.T.)	46,972	26,496	2,166	1	1	—	—	—	2	11,442 Independent
21. Rangia	44,107	22,583	1,585	1	—	1	—	—	3	9,760 C.P.I.
22. Kamalpur	51,076	24,354	2,612	1	1	—	—	—	2	7,657 P.S.P.

APPENDIX 'E' Assembly Elections, 1972

Constituency	Total electo- rates	Votes polled	Rejected votes	Party Affiliation of Contesting Candidates					Inde- pen- dent	Votes Secured by elected candidates	Candidates elected
				INC	ING	CPI	BJS	SOP			
				(M)							
1. Sorbhog	55,948	37,912	1,455	1	1	1	1	—	—	3	14,485 (W) I.N.C
2. Bhabanipur	58,944	40,585	1,543	1	—	—	—	1	—	6	13,024 Independent
3. Patacharkuchi	55,292	39,110	1,023	1	—	—	—	1	—	5	19,825 I.N.C.
4. Borpetta	65,543	48,039	830	1	—	—	—	—	1	4	27,465 I.N.C.
5. Jania	51,303	41,179	791	1	—	—	—	—	—	2	31,079 I.N.C.
6. Baghor	54,874	40,849	868	1	—	—	—	1	—	2	32,649 I.N.C.
7. Sarukhetri (SC)	59,309	40,504	1,066	1	—	—	—	—	1	3	19,583 I.N.C.
8. Chenga	57,334	40,906	804	1	—	—	—	—	—	2	22,175 I.N.C.
9. Boko	50,801	36,776	1,236	1	—	—	—	—	—	2	24,241 I.N.C.
10. Chaygaon	56,279	37,485	763	1	—	—	—	—	—	3	18,687 (W) I.N.C.
11. Palasbari	55,737	33,329	894	1	—	—	—	—	—	3	19,877 I.M.C.
12. Gauhati	56,368	28,678	1,175	1	—	1	—	1	1	6	13,840 I.N.C.
13. Gauhati-West	45,769	20,213	486	1	—	—	—	—	—	2	11,048 I.N.C.
14. Jalukbari	39,559	22,971	451	1	—	—	—	—	—	4	8,809 I.N.C.
15. Hajo	60,457	42,396	1,293	1	—	—	—	1	—	2	19,935 (W) Independent
16. Nalbari-West	62,123	37,610	1,126	1	—	—	—	—	1	1	22,696 I.N.C.
17. Nalbari-East	60,126	33,475	1,225	1	—	—	—	1	—	1	17,080 S.O.P.
18. Sorbhog	61,159	32,283	1,040	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	16,456 Independent
19. Barma (S.T.)	64,040	25,629	2,239	1	—	—	—	—	—	3	18,333 I.N.C.
20. Tamulpur.	64,814	39,022	2,377	1	—	—	—	—	—	2	20,241 I.N.C.
21. Rangia	52,926	32,559	1,208	1	—	—	—	—	1	4	10,089 I.N.C.
22. Kamalpur.	58,760	30,166	1,290	1	—	—	—	1	—	7	12,056 I.N.C.

APPENDIX 'F' Assembly Elections—1978.

Assembly Elections—1970.											
Constituency	Total electo- rates	Votes polled	Rejected votes	Contesting candidates party-wise					No. of Inde- pendents by	Votes secured by elected candi- dates	Candidate elected.
				con- gress	cong- ress (I)	Jana- ta	CPI (M)	PTC			
1. Sorbhag	69,655	51,476	1,629	1	1	1	—	—	2	29,794	C.P.I.(M)
2. Bhabanipur	58,254	41,546	1,130	1	1	1	—	—	8	11,454	Janata
3. Patacharkuchi	67,595	41,268	837	1	1	1	—	—	4	18,018	Janata
4. Borpeta	73,264	49,525	824	1	7	1	1	—	7	13,37	Independent
5. Jania	59,540	43,688	764	1	1	1	—	—	—	20,551	Congress(I)
6. Bagbor	55,699	38,716	516	1	1	1	—	—	2	18,023	Congress
7. Sarukhetri	72,530	50,547	926	1	1	1	—	—	5	16,581	Independent
8. Chenga	51,770	39,980	550	1	1	1	—	—	4	16,260	Congress
9. Boko (S.C.)	60,520	49,454	1,180	1	1	1	—	—	4	26,469	Janata
10. Chaygoan	61,589	43,061	953	1	1	1	—	—	4	13,712	Congress(I)
11. Palasbari	66,809	45,046	1,015	1	7	1	1	—	2	14,913	Janata
12. Jalukbari	61,634	41,844	916	1	1	1	—	—	4	15,294	Janata
13. Dispur	57,986	38,787	1,320	1	1	1	—	1	2	16,749	Janata
14. Gauhati-East	73,483	44,085	826	1	1	1	—	—	8	14,702	Janata
15. Gauhati-West	61,790	39,239	924	1	1	1	1	—	10	10,338	Janata
16. Hajo	62,036	43,260	853	1	1	1	—	—	6	15,279	Janata
17. Kamalpur	63,774	42,044	1,210	1	1	1	1	—	6	15,80	Janata
18. Rangia	61,536	42,504	1,139	1	1	1	—	—	3	8,280	C.P.I. (M)
19. Tamulpur	60,161	44,234	1,974	1	1	1	1	—	4	42,960	Janata
20. Nalbari	75,266	47,355	1,185	1	1	1	—	—	1	12,794	C.P.I.(M)
21. Borthettri	70,620	45,620	1,114	1	1	1	—	—	6	24,717	Janata
22. Dharmapur	64,166	40,167	825	1	1	1	1	—	1	15,195	Janata
23. Barama (ST.)	58,663	38,473	1,566	1	1	1	—	—	1	13,377	Congress
24. Chapaguri (ST.)	48,080	41,431	1,910	1	1	1	—	—	5	13,209	Independent

(6) Source—The 6th General Election, to Assam Legislative Assembly
1978. (Statistical Analysis) Chief Electoral Officer, Assam.

CHAPTER XIX

PLACES OF INTEREST

Gauhati : Gauhati the district headquarter town of Kamrup is situated on the South bank of the river Brahmaputra at an altitude of 55 metres from the Sea level, the latitude and longitude being 26°10' 45" (N) and 91°45' (E) respectively.

The ancient name of Gauhati was 'Pragjyotishpur.' the "City of the Eastern Astrology" or Astronomy. In the Kalika Puran it is stated that here (Pragjyotishpur) Brahma first created the stars and planets and hence the city is called Pragjyotishpur—a city equal to the city of Indra. Late K.L. Barua observes that to the immediate East of the town of Gauhati, there is a temple on a hill known as Chitrachala, and this temple is dedicated to the *Navagrahas* or the nine planets. It is probable that this temple is the origin of the name, Pragjyotishpur. Further, he opines that the name 'Dispur' is likely to be the abbreviation of Pragjyotishpur. The other versions of the origin of the name have been discussed elaborately in chapter 11. Thus, in ancient time, this premier city of Assam known as Pragjyotishpur i.e. the "Light of the East," was the capital of Kamarupa kingdom where many renowned kings, viz. Naraka and Bhagadutta of Mahabharata fame and in the latter period, Bhaskar-varmana, Harsadeva, Naranarayana, Rudra Singha and many others ruled over.

Pragjyotishpur was the capital city of king Narakasura of the Mahabharata fame, who is said to have constructed the temple for Goddess Kamakhya on the 'Nilachala hill.' Identity of Gauhati (Dispur) with Pragjyotishpur would be eventful from a reference in the copper plate inscription of Balavarman II, a king of Kamarupa (Circa 875-890 A.D.) where it is distinctly stated that Naraka lived in the city named Pragjyotishpur within Kamarupa and that the city was full of areca-nut trees wrapped with *Pan* creepers. "Betel plant in full bloom" on the Lauhitya; when Mahasena Gupta attacked Pragjyotishpur and defeated its king Susthitavarman, towards the end of the sixth century A.D. is mentioned in Apsad inscription of Adityasena (Circa 672 A.D.). It seems that this battle was fought near Pragjyotishpur, which was even then full of areca-nut trees. That is why this city subsequently got the

name Gauhati or the town of arecanut trees. The word *Guwa* in Assamese comes from the Sanskrit word *Guvaka*. *Hati* means row or line. Gauhati is, however, a misnomer. It is the anglicised form of *Guwahati* by which it is locally known."¹

During the Ahom period, Gauhati constituted the regional headquarters of the Ahom kings' Viceroy for Lower Assam. The present North Gauhati was within the urban jurisdiction of Gauhati and it had regular fortified entrances. These entrances were Jaiduar *chokey* further up the *Navagraha* hill used as entrance from Nowgong district, *Khargharar chokey* at Kharguli area of Gauhati to protect the Kings, arrival, *Kukurakota chokey*, Panikhaiti *chokey* and Beltola *chokey* in the East and South and *Dopdarar chokey* or Duargarita as *Pandur chokey* on the West. The *chokeys* in North Gauhati were Chilar *chokey*, Aswaklantar *chokey* and Rajaduarar or Kanai Barasiboa *chokey*. These gates were guarding posts against the entrants to Gauhati.

During the British rule too Gauhati was made the administrative headquarters of lower Assam with the appointment of Mr. David Scott as Commissioner of Assam Valley at Gauhati. Gauhati was the headquarters of Assam till 1876 when Garo Hills, Khasi and Jaintia Hills and Cachar and Sylhet were added to the Assam Valley districts and a separate province was made with its capital at Shillong under a Chief Commissioner.

In general Gauhati enjoys a pleasant climate. Heat is experienced only during the months of May to August. The annual mean temperature is about 90° F during the summer and 50° F during winter. The average annual rainfall is 63.74". The rain and temperature gradually decrease from September and the period between November and February becomes cool and bracing. The lowest temperature of 50° F. is experienced in January, which thereafter begins to rise.

Modern Gauhati is noted from various fronts. It is a sacred place studded with the beautiful temples of the late medieval period constructed on old stone-temple foundations. Gauhati is also known as *Panchatirtha* having five renowned places of pilgrimage namely Kamakhya on the West on the Nilachal, Aswaklanta and Manikarneswar on the North, Navagraha on the East on the Chitrachal and Vasisthasram on the South on the Sandhyachal. In addition to above five temples, other noted temples like Janardan and Sukleswar temple, Ugratara temple, Chhatrakar

1. Sri Murari Charan Das : *Gauhati past and Present*, an article published in the *Souvenir of XX All-India Obstetric and Gynaecological Congress*, Gauhati 1977.

temple etc., are situated at Gauhati. Umananda which is located on the 'Peacock Island' also known as Umachal or Bhasmachal is situated in the midst of the Brahmaputra, opposite Deputy Commissioner's court building. To crown them all, there is the Gandhi-Mandap at the top of the Sarania Hill which stands in the heart of the city. A few Vaisnavite *satra* viz Auniati *satra*, Tangara *satra* near Dispur, the Tokabari *satra* Dakhinpat *satra* etc, and a number of beautifully constructed *Namghars* and *Kirtanghars* are also situated in and around Gauhati. The *Gita Mandir* which is constructed on the East of the city on the Zoo-Narangi Road is another attraction to the city. Of Vaishnavite *Namghars* (prayer Halls) grown up at different parts of the city, Srimanta Sankar Kristi Bikas Kendra at Paltanbazar is the biggest among them. Religious institutions of different religious groups are also there at Gauhati. The Christians have their Churches at Fancy Bazar, Donbosco compound and at the Church Field, the Sikhs have their Gurudwara at Fancy Bazar, the Jain-Marwaris have their Jain temple at Fancy Bazar and the Muslims have their Mosques in different parts of the city.

As a centre of learning, Gauhati is noted from time immemorial. The local Navagraha temple is a famous site of Sanskrit and Astrological learning since the olden time. These subjects are still being taught in Navagraha, Chatrakara and Janardan temples in their Sanskrit *Tols*. Among the important educational institutions located in and around Gauhati are the Cotton College (estd. in 1901), the Collegiate School (estd. in 1834), the Gauhati University at Jalukbari (estd. in 1947-48), the Engineering College at Jalukbari, the Veterinary College, at Khanapara, Ayurvedic college at Jalukbari, Homeopathic college at Khanapara, Sanskrit College at Jalukbari, the Assam Textile Institute, the School for the Deaf and Dumb, the School for the Blind, the School for the mentally handicapped, B. Barua Cancer Institute, G.N. Bordoloi T.B. Hospital, the Institute of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, the Kamarupa Anusandhan Samity (Assam Research Society), the Assam State Museum, the All-India Radio Station Gauhati, etc. Also at Gauhati there are the Assam High Court, the State Auditorium at Rabindra Bhawan, the District Library, the State Library, the Assam State Zoo, the Nehru Stadium, the headquarters of the North East Frontier Railways at Maligaon, the Jyoti Chitran (film Studio) at Kahilipara and the beautiful rail-cum road Saraighat Bridge on the Brahmaputra river near Pandu. Incidentally, it may be noted that it was here at Saraighat, the Borphukan Lachit, one of the most patriotic commanders ever born in the country killed his uncle with his own hand for negligence of duty stating "Uncle is no greater than the Mother land" and encouraged

his soldiers to defend the country to the last drop of blood in their veins and saved Assam from the hands of the Mughals.

As an industrial centre also Gauhati has its importance. Establishment of the Oil Refinery at Noonmati, first of its kind in the public sector in India, helped Assam to earn a place in the industrial map of the country. Besides, the establishment of the Industrial Estate at Bamunimaidan has opened the flood-gate for the coming up of various industries in the city. From the point of view of communication, Gauhati is well connected by rail, road and air. Water communication is also there through the river Brahmaputra. The National Highway (south) and the North-East Frontier Railways pass through the city.

Gauhati, though not properly equipped with any modern tourist attraction centre, its scenery and natural beauty offer immense scope for such development. Amongst these, the *Dighali Pukhuri* is a beautiful spot in the heart of the city. It is an old tank which has added beauty to the town. Kamakhya, Navagraha, Basistha, and Umananda are some other such attractive spots. To provide recreational facilities to the people of the city, besides the Nehru Stadium mentioned earlier and Maligaon railway stadium, there are a number of small parks and play-grounds in the city. They are, the Lokopriya Gopinath Bardoloi park on the bank of the *Dighali Pukhuri*, the Judges field, the New field, the Machown field, T.R. Phukan park, Sonaram H.E. School play ground, Dispur park, Ambikagiri park, Mahabir park, Church field, Latasil field etc. Besides, in the newly developed areas within greater Gauhati, provisions are there for parks and play-grounds. There are two other small parks attached to the North Brooke gate near Sukleswar and Sri Gauranga Mandir in Paltanbazar and some other parks in the city.

With its commanding position of the Brahmaputra on the North, the situation of Gauhati is extremely picturesque. The scenery of the sunset in the river Brahmaputra gives an exquisite aesthetic pleasure even to an unemotional on-looker from the bank. To the South, it is surrounded by semicircle of thickly wooded hills, while in front runs the mighty river, which during the rains is more than one and half Kilometre across. In the centre of the river opposite the Deputy Commissioner's court lies a rocky island called Urvasi near the peacock island. The further bank is fringed with palms and the view is again shut in by ranges of low hills.

Gauhati may be called the gate-way of the North-East region of India and has occupied a vital place in the economy of the State. The river port at Pandu provides excellent facilities for export and import of goods through the river Brahmaputra. The recent opening of the Tea

Auction Centre at Gauhati has given a new boost to the tea industry of the State and allied business interests. The growing commercial importance can easily be asserted from the increase of income from commercial taxes in Gauhati, which have increased from Rs.49,01,930 in 1961-62 to Rs. 67,02,187 in 1969-70.² As per the Trade and Commerce Survey (1970), made by the Town and Country planning unit Gauhati there were 3,722 shops in the Gauhati Municipal area of which 232 were wholesale, 3,396 retail and 94 were combined (both retail and wholesale) shops with a total yearly transaction of about Rs. 12 crores.

Fancy Bazar is the main shopping Centre at Gauhati. Besides retail sale, most of the wholesale business of the city are conducted from this place. Panbazar is the emporium of books and magazines. It is also the shopping centre of Assam Silks and Handloom Textiles. Within the the Panbazar area there are the Telephone Bhaban, telegraph office, Central post-office, Cotton College building, a number of important banks, Handique Girl's College, Nobin Bordoloi Hall and the Library (formerly Curzan Hall estd. in 1903), Medical College hospital, Gauhati police Station and a number of educational and cultural institutions. Gauhati was the venue of the All-India Congress Session for three times in 1926, 1958, and 1976. Gauhati is one of the important centres of sports activities in the country. The well-known Bordoloi Trophy football tournament is played here every year on a National level. Besides the Bordoloi Trophy tournament, the famous Santosh Trophy inter-state Football tournament were also held here in 1979. The All-India Federation Cup tournament and All-India School meet were held at Gauhati Nehru Stadium. It was also the venue of the Ranjit Trophy Cricket competition (East zone) for many years. It is also the important centre for Table-Tennis in the country.

The city is managed by the Gauhati City Corporation which was constituted on 15th February, 1974. Prior to the formation of the Municipal Corporation, the area of the city was 14.24 square kilometres which was divided into fourteen wards. After its conversion to the City Corporation, the area of the city has been further extended and at present the area of the greater Gauhati City Corporation is 134 square kilometres. Currently for administrative purposes the city is divided into 34 wards including its newly acquired areas.

The shifting of the state capital to Dispur has added more glamour to the city. Till 1947, the population of Gauhati was less than 35,000 and was slowly increasing till 1951. Thereafter the population increased to about a lakh in 1961. Since then, there has been a big spurt in population due

2. Trade and Commerce Survey, 1970.

to gradual industrialisation, commercial expansion, administrative growth and improved communication. The shifting of the capital to Dispur has further increased the population growth and today the population of greater Gauhati is more than 2 lakhs.

There are a number of cinema houses in greater Gauhati area. Accommodation for the tourists and other visitors is available in the Circuit House, Stadium Guest house, Tourist Lodge, Forest Bungalow and a number of big and small hotels. There is also a Tourist Information Office at Gauhati.

Umananda : The Umananda temple is situated on the "Peacock" island in the middle of the Brahmaputra river opposite the Deputy Commissioner's Court. The deity of the temple is Lord Siva and *Sivaratri* is the most important religious festival held here every year. It enshrines a *Sivalinga* and is dedicated to Bhairava, the consort of the Goddess Uma. This peacock island with nearby Urvasi and Arparbat, is a very beautiful spot from where nature-lovers can enjoy the beauty of sun-rise, sunset and also the grand river Brahmaputra.

Janardan temple : The Janardan temple is located to the West of Sukleswar temple. There is an image of Vishnu-Janardan within the temple, which is its presiding deity. A number of beautiful stone images are there on the body of the temple. There is also a stone-inscription of king Paramatta Singha inside the temple. The sun-rise and sunset on the river Brahmaputra can also be enjoyed from this hillock. On the north of the temple facing the Brahmaputra there is a row of images of Ganesha, Surya, Vishnu, Siva and Durga belonging to the 8th - 9th century.

Dispur : Dispur is situated in the south-eastern approach of Gauhati by the side of Shillong-Gauhati Road. Reference to Dispur is also available in the history of Assam. Late K. L. Barua in his Early History of Assam mentions that there is a village two miles (3.20 kilometre) south of modern Gauhati which is still called 'Dispur', indicating that the site of the city of Pragjyotihspur was in or in the immediate vicinity of Gauhati till the shifting of the Assam's capital temporarily to Dispur on 26th January, 1973, it was completely a village. The original inhabitants of Dispur were composed of only two backward communities, viz., the Kacharis (Bodo) and Koches. With the expansion of the urban area persons belonging to other communities have also settled in the village and as a result the village has lost its former homogeneous character. According to the Settlement Officer Kamrup, the total land area of the village is 531 *bighas* or 177 acres.

The temporary capital is located at Dispur towards the South-Eastern part of the metropolitan city and is about eight kilometres from the Deputy Commissioner's Court compound at Gauhati. The foundation stone of the temporary capital at Dispur was laid by late B. R. Medhi, Ex-Governor of Madras and a former Chief Minister of Assam. The new capital complex is having an area of about 389 *bighas* of land. The

Gauhati-Shillong road which connects the upper Assam and Cachar, passes along the Eastern boundary of the new temporary capital. The Gauhati Airport (Borjhar) is conveniently reached by the National Highway 37, the main Gauhati, the Gauhati Shillong road and the Zoo road.

Dispur, the temporary capital has four main functional areas: office-complex area; residential area for the employees; community facility area, such as parks, schools, etc; and shopping and commercial area. Together with all the facilities of water supply, power, post and telegraphs, telephones, milk supply, dispensary, etc., it began to function with the shifting of offices from Shillong in 1973.

The first Assembly Session was held at Dispur capital in March, 1973.

Chanddubi lake : The Chanddubi lake is a natural lagoon occupying the races of the Khasi and Garo foothills about sixty-four kilometres from Gauhati on the road to Goalpara over the National Highway. The lake with its surroundings broken by glades and forests is an ideal holiday resort and has the added attractions of fishing opportunities in the lake itself and small game shooting in the neighbourhood. The place is easily approachable by State Transport bus.

Momaikatagarh : The Momaikatagarh is situated at about five kilometres north of Gauhati which is associated with the glory of the famous battle of Saraighat. Here, Lachit Barphukan, the governor of Lower Assam and the Commander-in-Chief of the Ahom Army is said to have cut his uncle (Momai) for not being able to erect the rampart during the night.

Pandu : A famous river port on the Brahmaputra near Gauhati is now within the Gauhati metropolitan city. Pandu is also the head-quarters of the N. F. Railway since 1953 and it has made substantial contribution for the much needed change and improvement in the Railway system throughout the State. Prior to the opening of the road-cum-rail Saraighat Bridge, all trains started from upper Assam terminated at Pandu. On the completion of the bridge, many new offices and new housing settlements have been built in the neighbouring areas. Pandu town is a very thickly populated area. There is an Arts college at Pandu upto degree standard which is affiliated to the Gauhati University. Now, the railway head-quarters has been shifted to Maligaon which is about 11 kilometres from central Gauhati. The main railway line connecting both the Northern and Southern banks of the Brahmaputra passes through Maligaon at present and railways activity at Pandu has now become almost nil.

Jalukbari : It is now a part of the greater Gauhati area and is one of the most important places within Kamrup district. Jalukbari is the seat of the Gauhati University, Assam Engineering College, Law College, Ayurvedic College, Survey School and the Forest School. Prior to the establishment of these institutions, the entire Jalukbari area was rural in character, but now the whole area covering 7.18 square kilometres is agog with educational activities. Most of the institutions as

mentioned above, are residential in character where both teachers and students are provided with quarters and hostels respectively for their stay. Facilities like medical, postal services, marketing, etc., are locally available. Jalukbari Police Station covers all the areas of the educational institutions. It has also a Railway station and bus stand of State Transport Corporation. Besides, the University and Engineering bus services are also regularly run by the State Transport between Gauhati and Jalukbari.

Palasbari : It is on the south bank of the river Brahmaputra. The old Palasbari was practically eroded by the Brahmaputra and a new Palasbari near the old one has come up. Palasbari is a fast growing commercial place and is famous for exporting timber. The headquarters of Palasbari Revenue Circle is located here. Besides a number of High Schools, an Arts college has also been established here. There is one Municipal Board, covering an area of 2.67 square kilometres. Excellent motorable road is there between Gauhati and Palasbari. A number of saw mills and also one tea factory are functioning at Palasbari. It is also a police station. After the devastating erosion of Palasbari in 1956, the commercial centre of the town has been shifted to a new site at Bijoynagar. The official site has been shifted to Mirza where a new township under the old name grew.

Chaygaon : It is an important business centre specially on jute and rice. A big market is held here twice weekly on Sunday and Thursday. It is also the headquarters of the Chaygaon Revenue Circle. Besides, a number of Government and semi-Government offices and educational institutions are there at Chaygaon. Relics of the Chander Merghar constructed by Chand Sadagor of the Sati-Beula fame are still here. Chandrika Devala, a is an old place of worship in the locality. Local tradition links this temple with the Epic age. Ruins of a Siva temple also exist in the locality.

Chaygaon Merghar : It is located at a distance of about forty-one kilometres to the South from Gauhati. Here the remains of a stone-structure called Chand Sadagor Merghor are noticed. Ruins of a siva temple are also there. The Archaeology Department of Assam have preserved ruins of Chandar Merghar site in Situ.

Boko : Boko is a police station and a trading centre within Gauhati sub-division. The headquarters of Tribal Development Block of Boko and the Boko Revenue Circle are situated here.

Sakrasila : Near Boko, it was the capital of king Arimatta. There are only a few rock-cut figures on the hill top there.

Sonapur : Sonapur, an important place is located at a distance of about thirty kilometres east of Gauhati. It is an orange growing and exporting centre. A weekly market is held here every Saturday. Sonapur is also the headquarters of the Sonapur Revenue Circle. It stands by the side of the National Highway. It was the headquarters of the old-time Dimoria King.

North Gauhati : It is a small town just across Gauhati. For the development of the town and its adjacent areas, a town committee has been constituted at North Gauhati. The said town committee covers an area of 2.59 square kilometres. An Arts college has been started in the town to provide collegiate education. Besides, there are a number of *satras* and temples in and around North Gauhati.

Rudreswar Temple : This temple is situated at a distance of about one and half kilometre at the north of Silsako of North Gauhati. The Ahom King Rudra Singha came from Upper Assam and halted at Rajaduar. On his death here, his son king Pramatta Singha built this temple to commemorate his father's name. This brick temple is now lying in a broken state. There is a *Sivalinga* within the temple.

Amingaon : Amingaon is a historically important place in Assam. It was at Amingaon, that Ram Singha, the Mughal commander made an attempt to enter the port on the North bank by digging an underground passage. But it was frustrated by the Assamese who filled the surrounding areas with water. Now it is a railway town just across Pandu. It is situated on the western outskirts of North Gauhati and can be considered a part of it.

Sualkuchi : It is the famous silk-producing village of Assam. Sualkuchi village together with Sualkuchi *parbat* and Bamun Sualkuchi have recently been grouped to form a new township of Sualkuchi on the north bank of the river Brahmaputra. This small town is situated at a distance of about thirty kilometres to the north of Gauhati and is connected by a good motorable road. During the fair season motor launch service is also provided on the Brahmaputra. Sualkuchi is well-known in the country for producing Assam-silk, *Endi*, *Muga* and *Pat*. The area is very thickly populated and almost every household is having its own factory and one can hear click-clack sound of the shuttle in most of the houses at Sualkuchi.

Hajo : Twenty kilometres from Gauhati on the north bank of the Brahmaputra is Hajo, known for its group of temples and brass, bell-metal and other cottage industries. It is also the headquarters of the Hajo circle and is a fast growing township. Among the temples located at Hajo the Hayagriba Madhab is the most important. A large number of Bhutias visit this temple during winter.

Other temples of Hajo area are Kamaleswar Siva temple, Ganeshwar *Devalaya*, Kameswar *Devalaya*, Kedarnath *Devalaya*, etc. Some of these temples have already been discussed in chapter II.

Baihata Chariali : It is the meeting place of four roads coming from Gauhati, Tezpur, Goreswar and Barpeta. A business centre in North-Kamrup, it is a noted betel-nut growing area and a weekly market is held here on every Sunday. It is situated at a distance of about five kilometres to the South of Baihata Railway Station.

Rangia : It is a big railway Junction of N. F. Railway. Rangia is a noted business centre and the only Arabic College of Assam is located here. It is also a centre of Islamic education and culture. Haradatta and Biradatta-two local chiefs who joined Koch Prince to oust the Ahoms from Kamrup had their headquarters here. Two ancient fortifications called Vaidyargarh and *Pratapgarh* or *Fingua garh* are also situated near this place.

Rangia is called the gateway to Eastern Bhutan. It may also be mentioned here that railway passengers bound for Tezpur and North Lakhimpur are to change their trains here. It is the headquarters of the Rangia Revenue Circle and the town is holding a number of schools and a college. Rangia is a developing town and the local Municipal Board provides amenities to the residents in an area of 5.70 square kilometres. It has also a police station and the area can be easily approached from Gauhati and other important places of North Kamrup.

Nalbari : Nalbari is one of the most thickly populated areas in Assam. The important commercial town is at a distance of about 64 kilometres to the North of Gauhati. The North-East Frontier Railway line and the North Trunk Road pass through the town. As a commercial town, Nalbari exports large quantities of rice, jute, oil-seeds, hides, etc. A number of rice mills, flour mills and jute baling mills are functioning at Nalbari. It also exports large quantities of '*Japis*' particularly for different tea gardens of Assam. Bell-metal, jewellery, pottery, bamboo and cane works, handloom weaving are some of the principal cottage industries of Nalbari. Recently an industrial estate has also been established in the town.

Educationally Nalbari is highly progressive. In addition to a number of reputed high schools, a full-fledged degree college in Arts and Science is also there at Nalbari. Nalbari has immense contribution in the State for the development of classical language, particularly Sanskrit and the first Sanskrit college of Assam is located here. To provide amenities to the citizens of the town, a town committee was constituted at Nalbari in 1938 which was raised to the status of Municipality in 1958. According to the Census of 1971, the jurisdiction of the Municipality extends to an area of 10.50 square kilometres.

Tihu : An important commercial place and a railway station, Tihu is the headquarters of the Tihu Revenue Circle. A number of Government offices are functioning at Tihu. Besides, a number of rice mills, oil mills and Government supply godowns are at Tihu. As an excellent rice growing centre, it has good capacity for exporting rice through railways and by roads. The Tihu Town Committee was constituted in 1957. There is an Arts College at Tihu.

Patacharkuchi : It is situated on the bank of the river Kaldiya. Patacharkuchi has also a police station and is mainly famous for its *satras*. As a rice growing area within the Bajali circle Patacharkuchi exports rice to other places. The Patacharkuchi *satra* was established during the reign of the Ahom monarch Swargadeo Siva Singha. Patacharkuchi Bidyapith is a noted educational institute in the area.

Pathsala : It is an important business centre within Barpeta. Educationally, the place is highly progressive where a number of high schools and a college are functioning. Pathsala is a Railway Station and huge quantities of paddy are exported through railways from here. A town committee has recently been constituted at Pathsala. Pathsala is covered by Patacharkuchi Police Station.

Doobi : This place situated at about 4.8 kilometres from Pathsala, is of great historical importance as an important copper plate inscription of Kumar Bhaskarvarman of the 7th century A.D. was discovered here. The inscription records the victory of the two princes of Bhaskarvarman and his brother Supratisthitavarman over the king of Bengal. It is now preserved in the Assam State Museum at Gauhati. There is a *Saivite Devalaya* named *Pari Hareswar Devalaya* here. Once it was a centre of dance and music. It is as old as the king Bhaskarvarman. Dancing by female *Nartokies* was one of the most important features of the *Devalaya*. A new prayer hall has been erected recently on the old spot of this ancient temple.

Sarthebari : It is the nerve centre of production of bell-metal utensils and brassware in Kamrup district. It is situated at a distance of about seventy-five kilometres from Gauhati. Its bell-metal utensils are noted not only in Assam but have also very good demand from all-over India. Accounts of the bell-metal industry find mention in chapter V-Industries, as such they are not repeated here. A town committee has been constituted recently at Sarthebari to look after the local problems of the place.

Barpeta town : Barpeta was declared as the second Sub-division in the Kamrup district in 1841 as such it is one of the oldest towns in Assam. Its old name was Tatikuchi.³ Once Tatikuchi or Barpeta was within the Bausi *pargana*. Due to the existence of a number of good omens, Sankardeva established a number of *satras* here. Barpeta is now the store-house of *Sankari* culture in Assam. This town is also famous for its ivory works and other cottage industries like pottery, goldsmithy and wooden works. Once goldsmiths of Barpeta were famous in Assam in making ornaments. Barpeta is famous for its *Vaishnava* monastery containing the shrine of Madhabdev, successor to the *Vaishnava* reformer Shri Shri Sankardev. The grounds surrounding the *satra* (monastery) and the *Kirtanghar* (congregational prayer hall) are considered holy. Barpeta is famous for its *Holi* or *doljatra* festival in which thousands of people from different places of India come to participate. This festival is attended by people from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and many other parts of India. This festival continues for four days and during these days Barpeta gives a festive look all around. Another important feature of the festival is that the people who come from outside Assam to participate in it are provided all facilities including food and lodging. It is also a commercial place and rice, jute, mustard, etc., are the chief items of export from Barpeta. From the point of view of educational facilities, the town is having a number of schools and colleges. The town is connected by road. The State Transport buses and a large number of privately owned buses ply daily

3 Gokul Pathak: *Barpeta Satrar Itihas*.

between Gauhati and Barpeta and other places of North Kamrup. The nearest railway station is the Barpeta Road of N. F. Railways and the town is connected with the railway station by excellent motorable road. To administer the local affairs of the town there is a Municipal Board. The area of the town under the Municipality is 3.86 square kilometres.

The annual boat-race festival is a special attraction of the town. All people irrespective of caste, creed and religions join in the race.

Bhella : It is a trading centre and a weekly *hat* is held here. It is at a distance of eight kilometres from Barpeta town.

Hadirachaki : This historically important place is near the Fulara and Chotala, two small hillocks used as professional grazing reserves of Barpeta sub-division. It was the Ahom frontier outpost. In the early British period, customs house at Hadira, opposite Goalpara was established for the purpose of trade. In this place, all imports and exports, except grain, paid a duty of ten per cent or thereabouts according to the terms of a commercial treaty executed with Gourinath Singh by Captain Welsh on behalf of the East India Company in 1793.⁴

Here at Hadirachaki, the last and the most decisive battle was fought between the Ahom king Chandra Kanta Singh against the 'Mans' (the Burmese), who invaded Assam for a number of times. Hadirachaki is located at a distance of about forty-three kilometres south-west of Barpeta town.

Barpeta Road : It is an important commercial centre and a Railway Station within Barpeta sub-division. It is located at a distance of about twenty kilometres north of Barpeta town. Barpeta Road was treated as a town for the first time in 1961. From Barpeta Road huge quantities of vegetable are daily brought to Gauhati by road and rail. Hawli, the important commercial town of Barpeta is situated just near this town.

Barnagar : It is a historically important place situated at a distance of about twenty-two kilometres north-west of the Barpeta town and 4 kilometres from Hawli. It is the headquarters of the Barnagar Revenue Circle. Formerly it was the capital of the Koch kings Balinarayan and Parikshit Narayan. Here in Barnagar, on the Manas river, Roghu Deb, the son of Chilarai constructed a fort which he called Ghilajoypur. The side is now covered with forest growth but numerous fruit trees and tanks are still to be seen there. Barnagar has split into two villages named Uttar Ganakgiri and Dakhin Ganakgiri.

Mathanguri Game Sanctuary : This is an attractive place for its natural beauty. The place is also famous for different kinds of wild animals. But visitors require to take permission from the Forest Department prior to their trips to Mathanguri. The place is located in the North-West of Gauhati and can be reached

4. E.A. Gait: *A History of Assam*, P 352.

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both by road and rail. The distance of the place from Gauhati is about 148.8 kilometres.

Sarbhog: It is an important trade centre and a railway station of the North-Eastern Frontier Railways. The place is especially noted for trade in jute, mustard, milk, rice, arecanut, coconut and other vegetable products. The area was abundant with milk, curd and cream in earlier days and the place derived its name 'Sara' (cream) and Bhog (enjoyment) from this very fact. It is at a distance of about 25 kilometres north west of Barpeta town. It is a developing town and a local town committee is there to administer the local problems of the place. The jurisdiction of the town committee extends to 1.62 square kilometres. It has also a police station.

Tarabari: Tarabari is an important trade centre within Barpeta subdivision, being the only river port of the Brahmaputra within this subdivision. It is at a distance of about twenty-one kilometres south of Barpeta town. During the last few years, a large part of the area has been eroded by the Brahmaputra. It has also a police station.

Darranga: Darranga is on the Bhutan border in north Kamrup and situated at a distance of about fifty kilometres from Gauhati. In every winter, Darranga mela (fair) is held here and thousands of Bhutias come here for the purpose of trade. The articles of the Bhutias include woollen cloth, chamras (hides), kasturi (musk), horses, dogs, cows and other local products of Bhutan. Different varieties of Bhutia dogs can be purchased here at low price. They buy from the traders of plains areas essential commodities such as salt, dry fish, *eri* and other clothes. The Darranga fair is held every year from November to March and attracts a large number of visitors and traders.

In addition to the places of interest described above, a number of important places whose name were rarely heard some thirty years back may also be considered as places of interest within the district. The implementation of Panchayat Acts, etc., and their follow up actions in the field of communications, public health, education, cottage and small scale industries, etc. have no doubt made significant contributions for rapid development of those places. Among such places mention may be made of Massalpur, Mukalmua, Rani, Barama, Tamulpur, Ghagrapar, Hekra, Rampur, Baihata, Jalah, Mandia, Chenga, Bhabanipur, Changshari, Patidarrang, Bamundi, Nagarbera, Dhamdhama, Chamata, Goreswar, Kamalpur, Khetri, Makhibaha, Ramdia, Sarupeta, Nilananda, Jania, Haribhanga, Korara, Mirza, Gobardhana, Bahari, Borigog, etc. Most of these places are connected by roads and rails with all the important towns of the district.



Anantasayi Visnu Temple, Asvakranta : Built by Swargadeva Siva Singha (A.D. 1714—1744) in A.D. 1729, this temple is another example of late-medieval architectural style. It is a Visnu temple and the enshrined deity represents Visnu in his Sayana aspect. It has undergone several renovations during the modern times. The adjacent Mandapa structure is a modern one. The temple has a number of stone plaques depicting Visnu's various incarnations as well as other deities. The existing ruins lying scattered on the premises indicate existence of a previous structure belonging to the mediæval period.



Hayagriva-Madhav Temple, Hajo : The existing temple was constructed under the aegis of the Koch King Raghu-deva (A.D. 1581-1603). It is, in fact, the renovation of an earlier temple on the spot. The Vimana of the temple contains numerous stone sculptures, out of which the elephant frieze at the plinth belongs to an earlier period and remains in situ. The temple belongs to the North-Indian temple style but with structural restoration, such as disproportionately tall wall portion and squat conical Sikhara.



Surya, Madan-Kamdev Temple. It is a two-armed image of either Surya or one of the twelve Adityas, and stands in Samabhanga pose holding two lotuses in his two hands. It probably was a part of wall decoration of a stone temple. The image belongs to 11th-12th century A.D.



Siddheswar Temple, Sualkuchi : Built by Swargadeva Siva Singha (A.D. 1714—1744) in A.D. 1729, it is a Siva temple and is another example of late-mediaeval architectural style. Judging from the existing ruins it can be said that a previous stone temple belonging to about 10th—12th century A.D. existed here. Sculptural remains of the earlier temple had been extensively used on the walls of the existing temple.



Female Dancers, Hedayetpur, Gauhati : Found in the heart of the city of Gauhati, this terracotta plaque depicts three females in dancing posture, the middle one being the tallest among them. This plaque probably constituted a part of wall decoration of some temples. Belonging to about 10th century A.D., it is a typical example of Pala art style.



Persian Rock Inscription, Kamakhya. : This short Persian Inscription is engraved on a rock in the foot hills of the Nilachala (Kamakhya). The inscription bears the Persian legend Khizr-e-ab-a-hayat. The date of the inscription is not known.

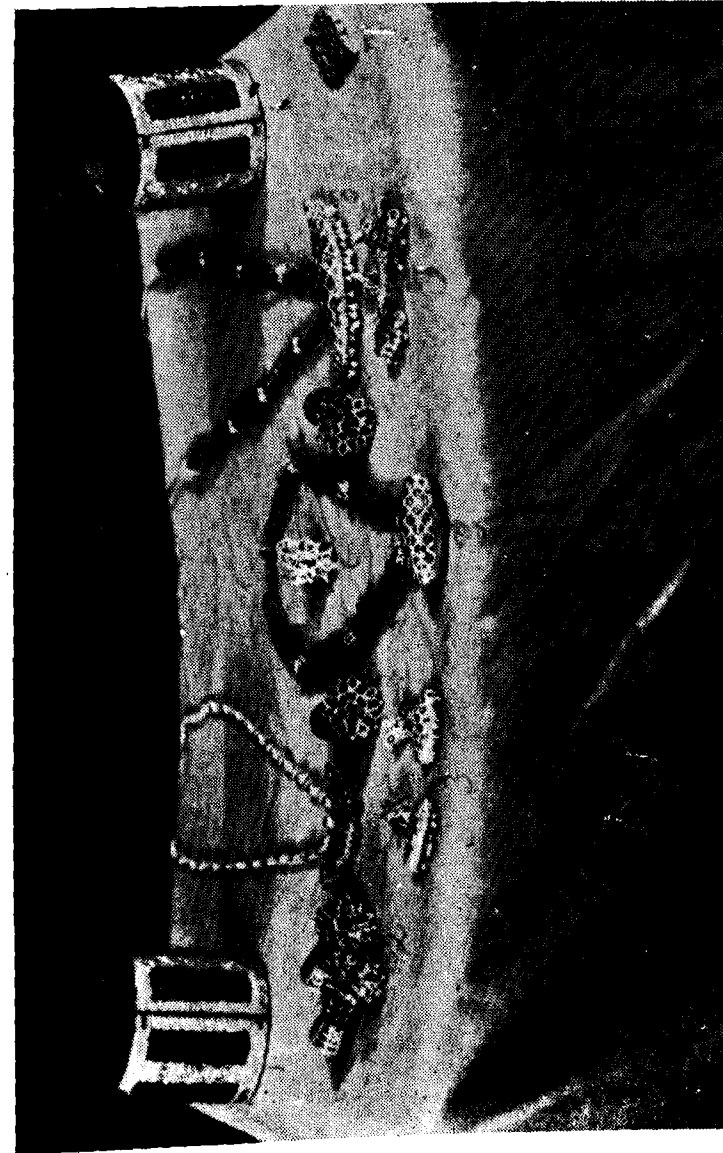


Door-Jamb, Pingaleswar Ruins, Karara.

Part of a temple Door-Jamb containing three decorative bands. At the base is a female (?) attendant holding a Trisula in her right hand and flanked by two other females. It is a part of a Siva temple belonging to 11th-12th century A.D.



Nataraja, Ambari, Gauhati : This huge image, the largest of this kind ever found in this State, was unearthed a decade back at Ambari, adjacent to the Ravindra Bhavan, Gauhati. Tentatively dated to the 12th-13th Century A.D., this ten-handed dancing figure of Siva rests on the bull and is accompanied by two Ganas, one emaciated and the other pot-bellied, both in dancing posture. This image is a typical example of Nataraja belonging to the East-Indian art style.



Ornaments of the Assamese Women : (1) Gam-kharu, (2) Thuria, (3) Dholbiri, (4) Jonbiri, (5) Loka-paro, (6) Shan, (7) Dug-dugi and (8) Bena.

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GLOSSARY

A

Adhi	: A system of crop-sharing by the tenant with the landlord.
Ahu	: A kind of paddy harvested during summer.
Alatiya	: A loam.
Ali	: An embankment across a rice field.
Anguthi	: A ring (an ornament for the finger).
Asrama	: A hermitage.
Ati	: A bundle of paddy.
Avatar	: Incarnation.

B

Baboo	: A term commonly used to indicate a bureaucrat and a man of status.
Bakijai	: A list of defaulting ryots filed by Mauzadar for recovering arrear of revenue.
Bala	: An ornament for the wrist.
Bali-chahiya	: Sandy land.
Banbati	: A bell-metal bowl with a foot.
Ban-kahi	: A bell-metal dish with a foot.
Bao	: A kind of paddy sown in flooded land.
Baradhan	: Glutinous paddy.
Bari	: An orchard.
Barkapor	: Usually made from <i>eri</i> and used as a wrap in cold weather.
Bargeet	: A devotional song introduced by Sri Sankardeva.
Bar-Jal	: A big net used for fishing
Basti	: A homestead.
Bati	: A bell-metal bowl
Bayan	: One who plays with <i>khol</i> .
Bazar	: A market place.
Benu	: A kind of flute.
Bez	: A village physician.
Bheti	: Plinth of a wall or house.
Bherbheria	: A deep and soft clay.
Bhaona	: A Vaishnava dramatic performance.
Bhojghar	: A community feast-house.
Bigha	: A measure of land standing for $\frac{1}{4}$ th of <i>pura</i> of land.
Bihu	: An Assamese national festival.

- Bihuan : A kind of towel woven by a female with foliage design and presented to near and dear one on occasion of the Rangali Bihu.
- Bihu-geet : Assamese folk-songs connected with Bihu.
- Bil : A shallow pool of water; a small lake.
- Boro : A kind of paddy sown in flooded land.
- Bodha-vihar : Residence of Buddhists.
- Bota : A small tray with a foot made usually of silver, bell-metal and brass used for keeping, areca-nut and betel-leaves.
- Bund : A dam.
- Buranji or Buranje : A history.

C

- Chaddar or Chadar : A garment used to cover the upper part of the body.
- Chang : A dwelling place built on a raised platform.
- Chapori : A highland formed on the banks or in the beds of a river by sands and silt deposits.
- Char : A highland formed of by sand and silt deposits of a river.
- Charita or Carita : A biography.
- Chowki : A check-post.
- Chunga : A hollow bamboo; sometimes the knot is retained at the bottom for using as container or measuring liquid.

D

- Dagdagi : A small water container with long narrow neck, generally made of brass or bronze.
- Daibajna : One who foretells, an astrologer.
- Daitya : Monster.
- Dangori : A large sheaf of paddy.
- Dargah : A Muslim shrine.
- Devalaya : A temple.
- Dhara : A bambo mat.
- Dharma : Religion.
- Dhenki : A paddle for pounding rice.
- Dhobi : Washerman.
- Dhol : A big bamboo container for holding approximately 19 kilograms of paddy; also big drum which is played at both ends with hands or sticks.
- Dhulia : Drummer.

- Dhuti or Dhoti : A lower wear for male worn down at the waist.
- Doba : A big one-sided drum.
- Dolonis : Marshes.
- Dong : A small depression in a cultivated land used for irrigation.
- Duar : Gateway or pass on the foothills.
- Durbar : An audience-chamber, a court.
- Dugdugi : A pendant attached to necklace.

E

- Endi or Eri : A species of silk, the cocoons of which are fed on castor plant.

F

- Feringati : A highland on which Ahu paddy and other grains like mustard and sugarcane are grown.

G

- Gamocha : A kind of towel woven by a female with foliage design.
- Ganja : An Indian hemp.
- Goan : A village.
- Garh or Gorh : An embankment.
- Gayan : A group of Vaisnavite devotional singer with instruments.
- Geet : Song.
- Ghar : A dwelling house.
- Ghat : A landing stair or a bathing place on a river bank.
- Ghati : A pot, generally made of brass or bell-metel.
- Got : An aggregate of three or four paiks.
- Gram sevika : A female village worker.
- Gram sevak : A male village worker.
- Gur : Molasses.

H

- Hari : A deep vessel used for cooking or storing food material.
- Hat : A market place.
- Hati : A row of dwelling of the residents Vaishnava monks.
- Hakim : A magistrate.
- Hola : A shallow ravine.
- Hussari : A group musical dance performance done door to door expressing Assamese new year's blessings.

J

-
- Jamabandi : A revenue register holding the names and other particulars of land owners.
- Jan : A brooklet.
- Japi : A wicker-hat, made from split bamboo and *Tokaw* leaves.
- Jatra : A dramatic performance.
- Jhuming : Shifting cultivation commonly practised in hills.
- Jikir : A kind of Assamese devotional folk-songs, popular among the Assamese Muslims.
- Juwali : An yoke.

K

-
- Kahi : A bell-metal dish.
- Kalah : A pitcher.
- Kala-khar : An alkaline preparation extracted usually from banana plant ashes.
- Kartal : A sort of cymbal made of bell-metal and also from bamboos.
- Kathiatoli : A paddy seed bed.
- Koth : A mat made of grass or cork.
- Katha : A measure of land standing for $\frac{1}{4}$ th of a *Bigha*.
- Kaviraj : An Ayurvedic physician.
- Khare or Kharahi : A basket made of bamboo.
- Kheda sikar : A process employed in catching elephant.
- Khel : A division of people made by Ahom ruler for specific profession.
- Khiraj : Revenue—paying land.
- Khol : A sort of musical drum played with devotional songs in particular.
- Khuliya : One who plays *Khol*.
- Krintanghar : A prayer hall of *Vishnavas*.
- Koina : A bride.
- Kula : A flat bamboo tray.
- Kulsi or Kolsi : Water jar, a pitchar.
- Kunwaree : A queen, a princess.

L

-
- Lahi : A fine variety of paddy.
- Lahoni : A swing basket used to remove and throw water from low land to high land, it is usually used as a fishing contrivance and for watering seed-beds.

- Lecha : A measure of land standing for $\frac{1}{20}$ th of a *Kotha*.
- Lota : A kind of water pot, narrow in the middle portion made of bell-metal and brass.

M

-
- Mahal : A division of forests for different purposes.
- Mahura : A piece of reed where thereads are wound for weaving.
- Mahapurasha : A great man.
- Mako : A shuttle.
- Mandir : A Hindu temple.
- Mantra : Incantation, a magic formula.
- Math : A temple.
- Mekhela : A lower-wear for female worn down at the waist.
- Mela : A public show, an exhibition.
- Mela-shikar : A process employed in catching elephant.
- Muga : A variety of Assam silk, the thereads of which are usually yellow with the tinge of gold.

N

-
- Namghar : The congregational prayer hall for the Hindus specially created by Sri Sri Sankardev.
- Nachani : A part of a loom.
- Neothani : A cotton gin.
- Nartaki : A dancer.
- Nat : Drama.
- Nam-Kirtan : Prayer with or without instruments of the Assamese *Vaishnavas*.
- Nritya : Dance.

O

-
- Obhinoy : Acting.
- Ojapali : An Assamese folk song based generally on religious themes, sung with some sort of dance by the leader of the team.
- Oja : A village incantator.

P

-
- Paik : A *ryot* during the Ahom rule whose duty was to render service to the king or the state.
- Panda : A temple—priest.
- Pandit : A scholar.

Parbat	: A mountain.
Pat	: A fine variety of Assam Silk, the yarns of which are prepared from mulberry-fed cocoons.
Pathar	: A field or open space used for cultivation, assembly, sports, etc.,
Pathsala	: A primary school.
Pati	: A kind of fine mat.
Pepa	: A flute like musical instrument.
Pitha	: A cake prepared with rice powder.
Powa	: 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ th of a <i>Seer</i> .
Pukhuri	: A tank, pond.
Pura	: A measure of land standing for four bighas of land.
Puthi	: Book, scripture.

R

Rajah or Raja	: A king.
Riha	: A kind of long wrapper used by the Assamese females round the waist and the breasts; a long drapper used as a girdle and brassier.
Rishi	: A saint.
Rupit	: Land on which winter crop or transplanted paddy is grown.

S

Sabha	: Meeting.
Sagar	: A sea.
Sali	: A principal variety of transplanted paddy.
Santi-sena	: Peace squads.
Sarai	: A tray with foot made usually of silver and bell-metal.
Saria	: A bowl made usually of brass.
Saru	: A deep pot made of bell-metal or brass.
Sashtra or Sastra	: Scripture.
Satra or sattrā	: A religious institution generally established by Vaishnava preceptors of Assam.
Sayambera or Swayambar	: A system of princely marriage in the past, in which a princess selected her husband from amongst the assembled princes through garlanding.
Suriya	: Lower garment used by males, a <i>dhōti</i> .
Swadeshi	: Of one's own country.
Swaraj	: Independence.
Swargadeo	: An Ahom king.

T

Tal	: Assamese cymbal.
Tari	: Indigenous liquor prepared by fermenting date-palm juice.
Touji Bahir	: Revenue for the land entered into the land settlement register.
Thal	: A dish.
Than	: A place of cremation of religious heads.
Tola	: An unit of weight, =180 grains troy.
Toltha	: A beam of the Assamese handloom.
Tenga	: A sour preparation of fruit.
Tokari	: An indigenous one-string musical instrument played with stroke of the ring finger.
Tol	: A kind of educational institution under a <i>Guru</i> meant for teaching of Sanskrit language.
Tulasoni	: Old-time weighing scale.

U

Ugha	: A kind of reel for winding thread.
Ural	: A wooden mortar used for pounding pasddy and rice.
Uruka	: The eve of Bihu day.
Utsav	: A festival.

V

Vansa	: A genealogy.
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Y

Yubaraj	: The prince regent.
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ERRATA

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1	14	exhaltation	exaltation
1	Footnote(2)	History of Civilisation of Assam, 1959..pp. 38	The History of Civilisation of the People of Assam to the Twentieth Century A.D., 1959 p. 38.
2	8	26.53	26.53' North
2	9	92.11	92.11 East
3	5-6	comprises an in	comprises of an
3	8	dated AA 28/3/67 ditto	dated 28/3/67 "
8	25		
9	Table (Col-4, Row-7)	5,72,130	5,72,180
9	13	Cylone	Sri Lanka
9	18	comparision	comparison
11	7	inundates	undulates
11	21	the river	the Brahmaputra river
11	Footnote (9)	Gazetteet	Gazetteer
12	10	Chamna	Chamua
13	7	inoscluations	inosculations
13	8	drains	drain
13	24	adjoininging	adjoining
14	5	sanctituary	sanctuary
14	12	Manasarbor	Manasasaro bor
14	21	parential	perennial
14	25	940	94'E
14	28	Lohit. The	Lohit, the
14	36	become	became
17	Table Column-3, Row-2)	31.6.56	21.6.56
17	14	15	16
17	18	milesin	miles are in
17	23	reaches	reach
17	Footnote (16)	Plan for flood contral	Plan for Flood Control

ii

Page	Line	For	Please read
18	10	55.2	74
18	23	sites	site
18	Table (Column-4 Row-3)	9	8
19	12	22,000	99,000
20	19	of 10,000	of 1 in 10,000
20	25	cusecs	cusecs
20	25	is	in
20	27	occurrence	occurrence
21	27	Sulke	Sukla
21	36	Pods	beds
22	25	choaked	choked
22	39	Damsapra	Damrapara
23	21	enumerated	enumerated
23	Last	quaternary	quaternary
24	2	Bhaban	Bhaban
24	24	53m. and 59m.	53m. and 59m.
24	35	imperceptibly	imperceptibly
25	31	district	district
25	Last	26°21'	26°21'N
26	16.17	drawdown	drawdown
26	20	26°21'	26°21'N
26	37	surface	surface
27	19	borchole	borcholes
27	34	dominants	dominates
28	3	Gneissie	Gneissic
28	7	alluvium	alluvium
28	8	insclburg	insclberg
29	Table (Column-3, Row-4)	calc	calcareous
29	19	whatever	whatever
29	21	infectiong-neisses	injection gneisses
29	25	feldspathic	feldspathic
29	26	myrmekite	myrmekite
30	3	schistose	schistose
30	6	prophyritic	Porphyritic
30	7	enoliths	exnoliths
30	10	Permatite	pegmatite
30	12	quartz are also	quartz also
30	23	E.W. to N.E.S.W	E.W. to E.N.E.-W.S.W.
30	35	through	trough
32	1	gncissestrocks	gneisses rocks
34	13	out-Type	outlying

iii

Page	Line	For	Please read
34	18	parviflora	parviflora
34	19	the commonest storery	is the commonest middle story
34	20	are	of
34	26	quality common	quality.
34	Last	Kuhini	Ruhini
35	12	occurrence	occurrence
35	14	Madria	Makria
35	21	i.e.	of
35	22	subland	such land
35	24	etc. and	etc. climbers
35	36	anctum	sanctum
36	2	anthelminic	antheimatic
36	2	dysentry	dysentery
37	13	maintanence	maintenance
38	17	adversly	adversely
39	1	varities	varieties
39	7	Caat	Cat
41	10	Sambors	Sambars
41	24	aminals	animals
41	28	extint	extinct
41	38	21	12
42	2	Tanpaia	Tanpara
42	2	Katakholi	Katakoli
42	Table (SL.No-8)	Sarechajan	Sarechajan
42	"(SL.No-12)	& Hiragata	& 32
43	Table (SL.No.-29)	Rewmari	Rowmari
44	List (SL. No.4)	Bhenagi	Bhelegi
46	11	Coots	Cotts
46	22	emmigtated	emigrated
47	10	pray	prey
47	10	illigally	illegally
47	31	anually	annually
48	8	forest	Forest
48	19	625square	689.53
48	21	virgin	square
48	23	traping	virgin
48	37	309	trapping
49	9	twenty	303
49	32	meterological	nineteen
49	34	humidity	meteorological
50	10	32°	humidity
50	26	heavly	32°C
50	32.33	northeastenly	heavily
			northeasterly

Page	Line	iv For	Please read
53	Table (Column- Lst, Row-2)	1904	1902
53	Table (Column-9, Row-4)	143.8	143.0
53	Table (Column- 10,"-4)	1959 Jul 25	1890 June 7
53	Table (Column- 10,"-5)	1928	1938
53	Table (Column- 9," 8)	1.1	165.1
53	Table (Column- 10," -14)	Jan	June
55	Last	Date	data
55	Last	1960	1960.
55	Last	date	data
59	10	predominant	Predominant
59	27	Chalico lithic	Chalcolithic
59	Footnote(7)	A Gait	E.A. Gait
60	1	Chins	China
60	18	Dionysims	Dionysius
60	18	Acliau	Aelian
60	24	kelometer	kilometre
60	30	Attriya	Aitareya
60	Footnote(8)	Chatterjee	Chatterji
60	"	History of the people	History and Civilisation of the People
60	Footnote(9)	Hostory	The History
61	1	Maddomes	Macdonel
61	1	Amura	Amur
61	2	sons the of	sons of the
62	16	inaccessible	inaccessible
73	8	century thereafter	century and there after
73	10	Rokp	Rokpo
74	9	magnificent	Magnificent
74	14	Nilambara	Nilambar
74	30	Nariruddin	Nasirudin
75	1	war	was
75	9,20	maruading	marauding
75	11	to have	to have been
75	22	a expedition	an expedition
75	26	Diasng	Disang
76	15	were	are
78	Footnote (49)	Jubritta	Jubritta
80	1	Accoording	According
80	Footnote (51)	Earlp	Early
121	13	intersting	interesting
121	List (No-6)	Bhangara	Bhangara Gohain

Page	Line	For	Please read
121	List (No-27)	Dakhalabma	Dakhala Bura
121	List (No-28)	Olias	alias
121	List (No-31)	Palashbar	Palasbari
121	List (No-32)	Bhuti	Bhutia
121	Satras List (No-1)	Barkuariha	Barkuriha
122	List (No-14)	Malcha	Maleha
122	List (No-29)	Kotalkuchi	Kothalkuchi
125	11	pairyal	pairpal
125	20	Chureh	Church
125	22	Sacvred	Sacred
126	4	1,3-44,034	1,344,034
126	Table (Column-3, Row-4)	179,330	179,380
126	Table (Column-5, Row-4)	340.040	340,040
126	Table (Column-4, Row-5)	67,103	32,042
127	8	25,18,028	25,19,028
127	9	13,15,618	13,15,628
127	9	88,6	88.26
127	10	3,35,156	3,35,155
128	6	127	129
128	17	205	204
128	25	perlance	parlance
128	25	includes	excludes
128	30	250,636	250,635
128	31	27urban areas	9towns
128	31	6,728	68,728
128	32	9 urban areas	6 towns
129	33	3 urban areas	2 towns
129	Table Heading (Column3,4)	2km.	per square km
129	Table (Column-3, Row-1)	3,289,6	3,289.6
129	Table (Column-3) Row-2)	17,7	17.7
129	Table (Column-3, Row-5)	11,6	11.6
129	Table (Column-8 Row-1)	139,354	139,354
129	Table (Column-8, Row-9)	174,706	194,706
129	Table (Column-10, Row-8)	250.635	250,635
129	Table (Column-9, Row-9)	195,071	195,071
129	Table (Column-9, Row-Last)	459.180	459,180

Page	Line	For	Please read
130	15	rickshawpullers	rickshawpullers
133	Table (Column-6, Row-3)	18,566	18,466
133	Table (Col- last, R-2)	26,794	26,479
134	Table (Column-2, Row-4)	1,000	10,000
134	Table (Column-2, Row-8)	V	IV
135	7	Bengla	Bengal
135	Table (Column-4, Row-6)	17.49	17.89
135	Table (Column-4, Row-7)	38.30	38.39
135	Table (Column-4, Row-8)	39.38	38.38
135	Table (Column-6, (row-8)	1,344,03	1,344,034
135	17	78,626	78,636
135	22	38.29	38.39
136	Table Heading (Column-3)	Km.	Square Km.
136	Table (Column-1, Row-3)	Gauhati City	A. Gauhati City
136	Table (Column-4) Row-7	136.239	136.239
137	Table (Column-1, Row-6)	Rennary	Rennery
137	Table (Column-3, Row-10)	48	6.48
178	Table (Column-4, Row-11)	28,876	38,876
138	23	Rennary	Rennery
138	25	have	has
138	32	abundance	abundance
139	22	who works	who are employed
139	29,30	millions	thousand
139	30	emigration to	emigration from Assam to
139	32	compartively	comparatively
139	Footnote (5)	Gezzetteers	Gazetteers
139	Footnote (5)	70-71	69-70
140	10	encroa	encro
140	Table (Column-4, Row-2)	40,595	46,595
140	27	the the halting	the halting

Page	Line	For	Please read
143	2	24,912	24,812
143	13	Gensus	Census
143	Table (Column-2, Row-13)	1,260	1,435
143	Table (Column-3, Row-13)	1,475	1,260
143	Table (Column-2, Row-14)	177	323
143	Table (Column-3, Row-14)	323	177
144	Table (Column-2, Row-Last)	14,373	14,057
144	Source	Census of India Assam 1961, Vol-III, PartIA Page-221	Census of India, 1961, Assam, District Census Hand Book, Kamrup, Page 317 f
144	5	43,603	43,758
146	Table (Column-1, Row-19)	Lushi	Lushai
146	Table (Column-2, Row-3)	6,223	5,223
146	Table (Column-3, Row-3)	5,585	3,585
146	Table (Column-1, Row-17)	77,7244	77,72
146	Table (Column-2, Row-17)	63,397	65,397
165	19	day-do-day	day-to-day
166	17	Aku	Achu
166	17	Aileng	Ailing
166	19	scarificing	sacrificing
168	1	Bodo <- Kacharis	Bodo-Kacharis
168	7	son	sons
168	26	< - The	The
169	2	on	in
169	24	Thsee	These
169	27	change	changed
169	35	need	needs
170	29	any	and
170	31	polygsny	polygamy
171	3	populations	population
175	37	are	is
176	1	economicably	economically
176	12	maintainning	maintaining
176	16	Number Civil Marriages	Civil Marriages

Page	Line	For	Please read
176	23	marriage	marriages
176	24	womean	woman
176	27	civil	Hindu
176	29	arranged quite	arranged and quite
176	33	Incidenc	Incidences
176	35	Marriages	Marriage
177	8	superstitious	superstitious
177	13	end	ends
177	19	unbidgable	unbridgeable
177	19	occasionally	occasionally
177	27	affected	effected
177	34	dissuade	dissuades
177	36	find	finds
178	11	sincerity	sincerity
178	26	effected	affected
178	34	activites	activities
181	1	surrounds	surround
181	13	villagers	village
182	8	sepatetely	separately
182	10	Dhekhal	Dhekial
182	31	garden	gardens
183	8	are	is
183	9	furnitures	furniture
183	17	Palenge	Paleng
184	7	design	designs
184	20	consists	consist
185	24	females dress	female dresses
189	20	shows	show
189	33	caste	castes
190	11	friends	friends
191	31	Magha	Magh
192	8	festivites	fesstivities
192	14	Death	Birth. and death
192	17	is	are
192	20	Islam	Islamism
192	28	folk in order to recreate as well as to offer	folk recreate as well as offer
192	34	affiliations	affiliation
197	26	are	is
197	29	multiplication	multiplications
198	6	lader	ladder
198	30,31	each growth centre	each centre
198	Last	skillfulness	skilfulness
203	Table (Column-3, row-4)	208	

Page	Line	For	Please read
203	Table (Column-4, Row-4)		208
204	Table (Column-6, Row-3)	22146	21469
204	Table (Column-6, Row-3)	1087	108
204	Table (Column-6 Row-last)	350	550
205	1	encrocners	encroachers
205	5	Settlemtnt	Settlement
205	35	one state Farm	one farm
206	35,36	cannals	canals
207	20	addiion	addition
207	21	installing tube	installing 26 tube
207	21	of tube	of 7 tube
207	25	nothern	nothern
207	29	lauchad	launched
208	37	are	is
208	18	irrigaaion	irrigation
208	Table(Column-1, Row-21)	1962-66	1965-66
208	Table (Column-1, Row-22)	196-67	1966-67
208	Table (Column-4, Row-5)	9,99.20	9,990.20
209	7	irrigation	irrigation
209	Table (Column-5, Row-6)	196.00	186.00
209	Table (Column-9, Row-9)	131.00	231.00
212	12	accounts	account
212	17	Nohbaliya	Mohbaliya
212	19	moistered	moistened
212	20	take	bake
212	Footnote (10)	pp.31	pp.130-31
215	4	field	fields
215	7	different	different
215	7	varities	varieties
215	14	practiced	practised
215	28	arumdinaceum	arundinaceus
216	Table(Note)	yeild	yield
217	14	on	of
217	23	official	officials
217	24	review	reviews
218	3	dicstrict	district

Page	Line	For	Please read
218	4	173 tonnes	5.3 thousand tonnes
218	6	usually	usually
218	12	391 tonnes	9.9 thousand tonnes
218	32	broken	broken
219	6	preponderance	preponderance
219	16	yield	yield
220	Table (Column-Last, Row-5)	3,4,979	3,40,979
220	Table (Column-Last, Row-16)	26,520	16,520
221	Last	crops	crop
222	5	thinder	thinner
222	7	later	latter
222	9	yield	yields
223	34	dries	dried
224	8	arcanut	arecanut
224	13	field	fields
224	18	required	required
224	25	pinapple	pineapple
224	32	Pumkins	Pumpkins
224	35	(Smooth Gourd)	(Smooth Gourd),
224	35	(Red pumkin)	(Red pumpkin)
227	35	Goan	Gaon
228	11	diesel	diesel
228	Table Heading (Column-3)	Disel	Diesel
229	33	17	26
229	39	Domu	Domai
230	3	17	26
230	17	North Gauhati, Seed Farms	North Gauhati Seed Farm
233	17	however.	however.
233	20	Desease	Disease
234	Top	GAZETTEFR	GAZETTEER
234	12	particulalry	particularly
234	12	Hahara	Dadara
234	18	have	has
234	22	has	had
234	22	various diesease.	various diseases.
234	28	deseases	diseases
234	32	Lamar	Lemon
235	2	Stemlooper	Samiloopkr
235	3	Mittes	Mites

Page	Line	For	Please read
235	19	Green	Green
235	20	butterbly	butterfly
235	22	Leap	Leaf
236	1	beettle	beetle
236	3	produce	produces
236	4	beettles	beetles
236	5	attacl	attacks
236	6	enormosly	enormously
236	6	damage	damages
236	10	aduit	adult
236	19	pupas	pupae
236	28	distructive	destructive
237	2	Demonostrators	Demonstrators
237	38	1966-66	1965-66
238	32	Mortage	Mortgage
238	32	provide	provides
239	1	Goanlia	Gaonlia
239	1	Small,	Small
239	2	Goan	Gaon
239	19	subsidies	subsidy
239	28	are	is
240	2	the Acts	the following Act
240	25	Feld	Field
241	6	sub-dividsion	sub-division
241	10	are	is
241	33	Diary	Dairy
242	11	liters	litres
242	18,19	Diary	Dairy
242	19	Thi	This
243	Top	ACRICULTURE	AGRICULTURE
243	15	trainers	trainees
243	24	officers	officer
243	30	held	holds
244	4	have	has
244	6	male	males
244	6	female	females
244	20	faired	fared
244	30	1,00	1,000
245	3	Maniari, Tinali	Maniary Tinali
245	5	Artifical	Artificial
245	11,25	artifical	artificial
245	29	oprational	operational
246	21	fluks	flake

Page	Line	For	Please read
247	28	Barnachari	Baramchari
249	4	Gynecology	Gynaccology
249	4	Diary	Dairy
251	2	subsidsied	subsidised
251	Table(Column-1, Row-4)	Tokobari	T.B.
251	Table(Column-3, Row-10)	0.66	0.60
251	Table (Column-5, Row-10)	0.2	0.26
252	27	Straitus	Straitua
253	23	Classogohious	Glassogohious
253	25	Rashtra	Rasbra
254	36	male	males
254	36	female	females
255	2	obtained	obtained
255	33	5,833	5.830
256	1	Sancturay	Sanctuary
256	1	are	is
256	10	ultimately	ultimately
259	9	fulfill	fulfil
259	12	through	thorough
260	8	hill	land
260	13	1967	1974
260	Table(A)(Heading)	damags	damages
260	Table(A)(Heading)	1967	1974
260	Table(A)(Column-2)	1.02	1.02
260	Footnote-(25)	1979, p.38	1979-80, p.21
263	2	1977	1974
263	20	10(ten)	833.96
264	3	lag	lags
264	Table(Column-2, Row-5)	189.24	489.24
264	20	supplimented	supplemented
264	21	effected	affected
265	Top	AGRICUTURE	AGRICULTURE
267	5	partonage	patronage
267	13	describes	describes
267	29	Artaka sastra. The	Arthasastra..... The
267	Footnote (1)	Tavenier	Tavernier
267	Footnote (2)	editor	Edition
267	Footnote (3)	P.Choudhury :	P.C.Choudhury :
268	11	History	The History
		gun-power	gun-powder

Page	Line	For	Please read
268	18, 20, Last	Tavcnier	Tavernier
268	31	elephant's	elephant's
268	32	bellmatel	bellmetal
269	6	dying	dyeing
269	14	certain	certain
269	24	dignitorics	dignitaries
269	26	Wade, "., is	Wade, is
269	28	morning". in	morning. In
269	Footnote (8)	Travenier	Tavernier
269	Footnote (8)	p22	p222
269	14	1,500	17,500
270	36	Asssam	Assam
270	1	53,252	11,644
271	4	1,06,4261	1,06,426
271	16	are different	are of different
271	Footnote (13)	Handicrafts	Handicrafts
271	16	poter's	potter's
272	37	imporatant	important
272	15	district within	district. Within
274	19	insustry	industry
274	Footnote (15)	Handicarfts	Handicrafts
274	4	raw-marterials	raw-materials
275	35	stardy	sturdy
277	1	julld	jululi
278	17	dates	data
278	Table (Column-2, Row-1)	3,490	3,460
279	Table (Column-5, Row-9)	21,80,3000	21,80,300
280	17	Tavcmir	Tavernier
283	5	utilise	utilise
283	11	Manico	Manihot
283	11	papaw	papaya
283	33	segiion	region
284	8	All,	All
284	35	group	groups
285	1	are	is
286	4,5	reservoir	reservoir
286	8	plyster	plaster
286	8	Bungle	Bangle
286	11	manufacturing	manufacturing
286	13	vermillion	vermillion
286	24	foundaries	foundries
286	34	Blackmsmithy	Blacksmithy

Page	Line	For	Please read
292	1	infrastructural	infrastructural
292	8	1955	1956
292	32	Limited area covering	Limited covering
293	9, Table (Column-1, Row-6)	petroleum	petroleum
294	5	1966	1965
294	22	Rs. 7.00 lakh	Rs. 7.20 lakh
294	List (No.4)	Superphosphate	Superphosphate
295	11	Electricity	Electricity
295	15	Industrial	Industrial
295	List (No.3), 18-10	Phosphate,	Phosphate
295	20	Sulfuric	Sulphuric
295	25	absorted	absorbed
295	25	diluted	diluted
295	26	process cleaned	process is cleaned
296	22	16-10-75	16-10-76
297, 298	37, last, 6	entrepreneurs	entrepreneurs
299	2	Patachakuchi	Patacharkuchi
299	9	carpentry	carpentry
299	Table (Column-5, Row-last)	76	73
300	Table (Column-1, Row-6)	Allys	Alloys
300	Table (Column-5, Row-6)	12	21
300	Table (Column-5, Row-12)	—	2
300	Footnote (29)	p.183-85	p.183-87
301	8	latter	later
301	17	produced	produces
301	31	Guo-metal	Gun-metal
302	8	entrepreneurs	entrepreneurs
303	2-3	manufactureing	manufacturing
303	7	51,302,81/-	51,30,281/-
303	14	saught	sought
303	19	Campress	Compress
303	31	sooon	soon
303	34	establaished	established
304	20-21	manufacutcare	manufacture
304	22	conduct	conduit
304	26	Trailors	Trailers
305	24	30	30A

Page	Line	For	Please read
305	Last	Industres	Industries
305	Footnote (30)	30.Ibid	30A. Ibid
306	13	ancilliary	ancillary
306	36	umbralla	umbrella
307	2	Estate	Estate
307	22	Commercial and	Commercial Bank
307	24	Corpoaration	Corporation
307	29	disbursed	disbursed
307	37	scrapes	scraps
308	33	Mechanical	Mechanical
309	15	furnace	furnace
309	34	sections	section
310	5	industrialists	industrialists
310	10, 12, 13-14	emporium	emporia
310	16	benefited	benefited
310	19	artians	artisans
310	23	Development	Development
312	4	comparision	comparison
312	7	hactares	hectares
312	8	are	is
312	Table Heading (Column-3)	lectares	hectares
312	Table (Column-3)	2,720.02	2,720.52
312	Table (Column-4)	2,824.069	2,824.069
313	28	Dibrngarh	Dibrugarh
313	34	They	These
313	37	slippers	sleepers
314	3	9,863.0 kilometres	9,863.0 sq. kilometres
314	3	28,54183 lakhs	28,54,183 people
314	3	of people	
314	26	Craftmanship	Craftmanship
314	Footnote (34)	Rorests	Forests
315	3	concentration	concentration
315	14	selicate	silicate
315	32	ordinery	ordinary
316	31	easy	easily
318	25	evoke	evoked
318	27	it	at
318	30	fiber	fibre
318	34-5	possilities	possibilities
318	Footnote (36)	Development	Development
319	4	Kumarpura	Kumarpura
319	38	foundaries	foundries

Page	Line	For	Please read
321	12	Saulkuchi	Sualkuchi
322	2	exstablishments	establishments
322	11	signifiant	significant
322	33	especisly	especially
323	5	deal	deals
323	22	minimum of wages	minimum wages
323	25	labourers	labourers
323	35	of	at
323	39	mansons	masons
326	Appendix (A) (Column-2, Row-9)	23	3
327	12	Kamarpatty	Kalapahar
328	18	Industies	Industries
329	4	datas	data
329	6	in the wake the	in the wake of the
330	36	Lalchand	Labchand
331	7	instend	instead
331	28	to banks	to Calcutta banks
331	30	and issued	and hundis issued
332	Top	GZAETTEER	GAZETTEER
332	9	mext	next
332	28	Rs.6,000	Rs.5,000
333	17	leading	lending
333	23	prediminantly	predominantly
333	24	live	lives
333	25	depend	depends
333	29	producivity	productivity
334	19,20	lords (agricultural money lenders),	lords, (e) agricultural money lenders,
334	28	no-existent	non-existent
334	36	datas	data
335	4	predomont	predominant
335	14	datas	data
336	3	datas	data
336	4	is	are
336	7	1.7 in the year Again,	1.7. Again,
336	9	division	division
336	12	were	was
336	24	3,64,640	3,58,648
336	26	4th	3/4 th
336	Footnote(I)	Goswam	Goswami
341	Top	BANKINC	BANKING

Page	Line	For	Please read
341	Last	have	has
342	1	ordnry	ordinary
342	5	Purbachal	Purbanchal
345	25,26	establishment	established
345	34	Ho wever	However
346	Table Heading (Column-1)	District centre	District / centre
346	Table (Column-5, Row-1)	17.58	17.58
347	Footnote (4)	Page 21.	Page 20-21.
348	13	oustanding	outstanding
348	13	credit	credit
351	Table (Column-6, Row-1)	6.84	6.84
351	Table (Column-11, Row-1)	80.528	80.528
351	Table (Column-9, Row-3)	4,864	4,894
352	16	libilities	liabilities
352	21	accounts	account
352	21	56.6	56.5
352	31	entire in sub-	entire sub-
353	4	liquidation	liquidation
353	6	persuasion	persuance
353	8	Pragyaotishpur	Pragyaotishpur
353	8	Gozala	Gozala
353	32	32	1912
353	35	controlled	controlled
354	10	finised	finished
354	13	transferred	transferred
354	21	Societies	Societies
355	2	market	marketing
355	34	personel	personnel
355	25	Rs. 1,23,401	Rs. 1,13,401
357	Table (Column-6, Row-5)	2.26	7.26
357	Table (Column-7, Row-6)	2.90	7.90
357	Last	to 21,321	to Rs. 21,321
358	2	recomendation	recommendation
358	20,21	functing	functioning
358	28	1960	1969
359	Table (Column-1, Row-1)	Societies	Banks

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Page	Line	For	Please read
360	11	dorment	dormant
360	14	co-terminous	co-terminus
360	27	headquarter	headquarters
363	Table (Total, Column-3)	745	734
363	Table (Total, Column-4)	687	686
363	Table (Total, Column-5)	2,287	2277
364	20	seperated	separated
365	11	Superintendents	Superintendents
365	15	jurisdiction	jurisdiction
365	15,16	The The	The
368	25,26	Insustrialists	Industrialists
372	1	hold	holds
372	10	persuit	pursuit
373	Top	Eanking	Banking
373	16	administration	administrative
373	32	headquarter	headquarters
374	8	follows	followed
374	10	attratct	attract
374	12	Gazetter	Gazetteer
374	13	rumbled	tumbled
374	17	up	of
375	5	but winter	but every winter
375	17	heterogenous	heterogeneous
377	Table Heading (Column-4)	Summerised	summarised
377	Table Sub-heading (Column-4)	Wheather	Whether
379	Table Sub-heading (Column-4)	Whethhr	Whether
379	Heading (e)	Hawali	Hawli
384	13	Otganisation	Organisation
384	14	origined	originated
384	16	necessasities	necessities
384	Table (Column-2, Row-1)	distict	district
384	Table (Column-2, Row-7)	28'350	28.350
384	Table (Column-2, Row-7)	0.93831	0.9331
389	15	1534	1540
390	19	Pabha	Pabna
390	32	buffeloos	buffaloes

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Page	Line	For	Please read
391	4	1868	1861
391	15,16	extended when	extended in 1989 when
391	28	13 miles	13 1/2 miles
392	32	milleage	mileage
393	17,18	1,1,511.691 kms	1,511.691 kms
393	18	gravelld	gravelled
393	21	subsequent	subsequent
393	Footnote (10)	1878	1978
394	Footnote (11)	1965	1963
394	Footnote (11)	Economics and Economics	Economics and Statistics
394	Footnote (12)	1976	1971
394	Footnote (12)	Economics	Economics
395	9,10	Kilometer	Kilometre
395	9	thousand	lakh
395	10	was	were
397	16	Particulaly	particularly
397	Footnote (17)	Transpart	Transport
397	Footnote (17)	Departmens	Department
397	Footnote (17)	Assrm	Assam
399	Table (Sub-heading, Column-6)	cooters	scooters
400	15	ply	plying
400	Table (Column-3, Row-7)	228	288
401	Table (Column-3, Row-2)	185	285
402	29	Paihladaha	Patiladaha
402	33	300	200
403	6	amalgamated	amalgamated with
405	29	sifferent	different
406	8	are	is
409	10	52.91 kms	53.91 kms
409	18	and	and
409	20	R.F.Friel	R.Friel
411	2	Locomotive	Locomotive
411	6	Late Jawaharlal Nehru	Jawharlal Nehru
411	10	significient	significant
411	26	continue	continue
413	26	stengthen	strengthen
413	34	it still	it is still
415	Table (Column-1, Row-1)	Gauhzti	Gauhati

Page	Line	For	Please read
415	Table (Column-1, Row-2)	Pantoons	Pantons
415	Footnote (20)	the	the
415	Footnote (20)	Economics	Economics
416	Top	DISTIRCT	DISTRICT
418	21,22	of of	of
419	List Heading	Bunglows	Bungalows
420	Footnote (21)	colleccted	collected
423	2	intelligentia	intelligentsia
423	Appendix (36)	Kenduguri	Kendua
424	Appendix (66)	S.Y.O.	S.O.
424	Appendix (67)	Barakanara	Darakahara
425	Appendix (122)	Kunjatal	Kunjaban
425	Appendix (127)	TSE	TSO
425	Appendix (140)	E.S.G.ND	L.S.G.ND
425	Appendix (147)	L.S.C.G.	L.S.G.
425	Appendix (158) (E)	Goa	Goal
426	Appendix (34)	Kalpanibazar	Kalapanibazar
429	Footnote (1)	p.264	p.246
430	14	13,643	13,649
430	14	10,582	10,672
430	Table (Column-1, Row-1)	Genral	Central
431	17	Buliding	Building
431	31	endeavour	endeavour
434	Table (Column-2, Row-4)	3,240	3,240
434	Table (column,4, Row-4)	2,298	2,293
434	20	18,885	18,685
434	21	- 2,986	- 2,936
435	8	arcas	Urban areas
435	Table (Column-1, Row-4)	Artistes	Artists
437	4	Craftsmen	Craftsmen
437	11	launders	launders
437	15	499	459
437	18	weilders	welders
438	Table (Column-5, Row-2)	1,169	1,109
439	5	Dry-cleanets	Dry-cleaners

Page	Line	For	Please read
439	9	dying	dyeing
439	27	localise	localities
440	Table (Column-5, Row-1)	123	125
440	Table (Column-4, Row-3)	77	770
440	Table (Column-7, Row-6)	15	25
444	7	'works'	'workers'
444	14	decade	decades
444	16	crop	prop
444	26	agriculturists	agriculturists
444	36	distriet	district
445	Table (Column-6, Row-1)	7,21,431	7,21,432
445	Table (Column-7, Row-4)	4,658	4,558
446	Table (Column-7, Row-1)	1,785	1,786
446	Table (Column-3, Row-Last)	8,400	8,440
449	Table (Column-8, Row-9)	352	253
449	Table (Column-6, Row-11)	15009	5009
449	Table (Column-5, Row-14)	382	332
449	Table (Column-7, Row-14)	25134	26144
449	Table (Column-8, Row-15)	2696	2606
450	2	shows	show
450	3	has	have
450	16	trand	trend
450	29	38%	3.8%
450	30	9%	0.9%
450	32	8%	0.8%
455	Table (Column-1, Row-9)	Mustered	Mustard
455	13	begining	beginning
455	17	and	and
458	2	employees	employees
458	Table (Column-3, Row-7)	276	238

Page	Line	For	Please read
459	Table (Column-1, Row-1)	1960	1966
460	5	wage	wages
460	6	was	were
460	8	has	have
460	26	spin	spins
460	36	procure	procures
463	6	insolvancy	insolvency
463	10	avilability	availability
463	Table (Column-3, Row-4)	45%	46%
463	Table (Column-3, Row-4)	65%	58%
464	Table (Column-1, Row-4)	-Edil	Edible
464	Table (Column-1, Row-6)	or	&
464	Table (Column-1, Row-8)	Liquer	Liquor
464	Table (Column-4, Row-3)	1.2	1.8
464	Table (Column-4, Row-6)	-10.2	+10.2
464	Table (Column-4, Row-9)	g+0.5	+ 0.5
464	Last	industrial finished products.	edible oil.
465	7	1943-49	1948-49
465	Table (Column-3, Row-1)	269	268
465	Table (Column-3, Row-2)	349	347
465	Table (Column-3, Row-Last)	335	343
465	8	contant	constant
465	10	nartrurally	naturally
465	16	41.25	40.88
465	17	28.2%	27.96%
465	19	7.66	7.44
466	Table Heading (Column-3)	Privateg	Private
466	Table (Column-2, Row-5)	1,135	1,325
466	5	employee	employees

Page	Line	For	Please read
466	Table (Column-1), Row-4)	wire sick,	wool, silk,
467	Table (Column-1, Row-11)	chemicales	chemicals
467	Table (Column-1, Row-13)	allays	alloys
467	Table (Column-1, Row-22)	reaserch	research
467	Table (Column-3, Row-17)	207	278
468	3	services	service
468	Table Heading	occupations	occupational
468	Table (Column-2, Row-3)	4400	400
473	7	without	within
474	Table (Column-10, Row-2)	50	500
474	Table (Column-10, Row-9)	53	530
474	Table (Column-11, Row-10)	65	650
474	Table (Column-9, Row-10)	50	500
474	Table (Column-11, Row-10)	6600	660
477	2	in nut nut shell	in a nutshell
477	Table Total (Column-2)	117.81	117.24
478	Table (Column-3, Row-7)	4,856	4,874
478	3	figueres	figures
481	22	Faroate	Foroyate
481	25	Parbatijowar	Parbatijowar
481	32	with	with
481	Footnote(6)	grant of Balavarmana III and Kalumlawapara	grant, and Kalumluwapara
482	1	advanced	advance
482	26	1924	1824
482	27	ADMINISRTATION	ADMINISTRATION
483	Top	88-158	157-58
483	Footnote (10)	".....Honorary	Honorary
484	22		

Page	Line	For	Please read
484	24	similarly	ordinarily
48	32	described	described
484	Footnote (14)	William	William
485	8	"Appeals	Appeals
485	11,12	stipendary	stipendiary
485	15	district	district
485	18	4.4.67	1.4.67
485	22	subsequently	subsequently
485	31,34	is	are
485	Footnote (17)	16	86
486	15,30	4.4.67	1.4.67
486	17	2022.8	2215.87
		square kilometer	square kilometre
486	27,28	seperate	separate
487	25	17	18
487	30	suffling	shufflings
487	30	resufflings	reshufflings
488	3	constitute	constitutes
488	3	responsibility	responsibility
488	9	responsibility	responsibility
488	12	maintenance	maintenance
488	14-15	adminiatration	administration
488	15	seperation	separation
488	21	Inked	linked
488	31	department	departments
491	4	have	has
491	26	ACQUISITIONS	ACQUISITION
492	5	Housing	Housing
492	7	share	and slum
492	16	later	latter
492	17	administrative;	administrative
492	29	control	control
492	Last	responble	responsible
492	9	Government	Government
493	20	Commissoner	Commissioner
494	Last	Sub-Deputy	Sub-Deputy
494	8	seperation	separation
494	9,10	magistrate	magistrates
494	21	evey	every
494	36	Commissoner	Commissioner
494	5	evelopment	development
495	16	Supermtendent	Superintendent
495	27	do	does

Page	Line	For	Please read
496	37,38	Siviculture	Silviculture
498	31	Archeology	Archaeology
499	8	taxes	taxes
499	19	state	state
500	18	wakt	wakt
501	4	Librian	Librarian
501	20	weaving	Weaving
501	30	Adminis-	Admini-
504	24	Meteorologist	Meteorologist
505	11	Broadcasting	Broadcasting
505	30	Shilong	Shillong
505	34	jurisdiction	jurisdiction
505	Last	assessed	assessed
506	5	district	district
506	10	proprietary	proprietary
506	11	efficient	efficient
506	19	Officers in	Officers is
506	31	incidentally	incidentally
507	32	Gauhati	Gauhati
508	12	the	the
508	13	appears	appears
508	24	1612-1627	1612-1635
508	26	(1863-70)	(1663-69)
508	21	is	is
513	21	Assistant	Assistant
513	28	definition	definition
514	10,12	affect	affect
515	3	fluctuating	fluctuating
515	13	Though maximum	Though no maximum
515	14	(50 paise)	(50 paise)
516	17	permanently	permanently
516	24	were	were
519	13,21	holdings	holdings
520	19	Gazetteers	Gazetter
520	Footnote(6)	yielded	yielded
521	4	continued	continuing
521	7	through	thorough
521	20	were	were
521	35	headman	headman
522	8	Instead	Instead
522	11	remuneration	remuneration
522	12		
525	Table (Column 6, Row 6)	2,23	29,236

Page	Line	For	Please read
525	Table (Column-4, Row-10)	9,123	9,128
525	Table (Column-2, Row-18)	P. Bongsor	P.S.Bongsor
525	Table (Column-2, Row-22)	borigog	Borigog
526	Table (Column-4, Row-4)	58,282	14,600
529	3	non-cadastral	non-cadastral
530	1	generally	generally
531	19	S.K.S.D.Cs	S.K.,S.D.Cs.
532	20	54.48	54.48%
532	25	have	has
533	8	organisations	organisations
533	24	necessary	necessary
533	Last	managemen	management
541	2	Partint heritable	heritable.
541	Table Heading (Column-3)	impunged	impugned
541	Table Heading (Column-5)	or	for
542	Table	Table-6	Table
545	19	shows	show
546	9	sterness	sternness
546	21	thefts	thieves
546	26	was	were
546	29	shedding	shedding
547	18	persuation	pursuance
548	3	pastures new	new pastures
548	14	sphare	sphere
548	22	hamicide	homicide
548	23	cancealment	concealment
548	26	restrain	restraint
548	30	cases	classes
549	15	was	were
550	16	figure	figures
551	8	Ammunitions	Ammunitions.
551	21	23,000	2,300
552	3,6	Battalian	Battalion
552	7	Supdrintendent	Superintendent
552	10,21	Valunteers	Volunteers
552	14	hearteaning	heartening
552	20	honourary	honorary

Page	Line	For	Please read
553	25	(I.G.Ps. Officer)	I.G.P. Office)
554	4	thoroughly	thoroughly
554	4	thoroughly	thoroughly
554	12	functiong	functioning
554	20	efficiant	efficient
554	25	sub-divisional	sub-divisional
557	17	western	eastern
557	20	maintanance	maintenance
557	32,33	Sessions, Judge	Sessions Judge.
557	33	Judical	Judicial
558	1,3,9	is	are
558	12	Maintanence	Maintenance
558	20,32	staff	staffs
558	20,32	includes	include
562	30	Anlong	Anglong
562	35	Bangladesh	Bangladesh
563	5	extendes	extends
563	6	Additional	Additional
563	33	Judiciay	Judiciary
564	14	peculniary	pecuniary
564	30	transferred	transferred
565	17	uptill	uptill
565	21	Misappropriation	Misappropriation
566	Table (Column-2, Row-1)	1625	2625
569	22,23	practioners	Practitioners
570	1,28	practice	practise
570	27	practiced	practised
570	28	Advocates	Advocates
570	32	Association"	Association.
572,573	Table (Column-1, Row-20,28)	Acquited	Acquitted
574	16	administrative	administrative
574	19	dealt	deals
574	24	1,194	1,194
575	23	anormously	enormously
575	28	divisions	divisions
576	21	raised two	raised to two
576	27, 29	staff	staffs
576	35	departmen	department
579	9	were	was
579	33	stuff.	staffs.
579	33	Descase	Disease

Page	Line	For	Please read
579	34	deve-	deve-
580	Last	are	is
583	Table (Column-4, Row-25)	Bogani	Bogapani
585	9	amolerate	ameliorate
586	11,12	Industries	Industrial
586	14	are	is
586	19	office	offices
586	20	orgnisa-	organisa-
586	27, 29	surity	surety
588	7,9	1967	1957
595	7	loosing	losing
595	footnote(3)	Bhaben Narzari	Bhabendra Narzee
596	5	there	it
596	10	raods	roads
596	25	comparision	comparison
597	1	bunglaws	bungalows
597	2	and the district post.	etc.
598	2	carraige	carriage
598	3	as	on
598	4	mettalled	matalled
598	12	House	House
603	14	was	were
603	22	at	in
603	31	Rice, Paddy	Paddy
604	5	population	persons
604	6	4.143984 kms.	4 Sq. kms.
604	26	Municipaity	Municipality
604	27	Rs.21,415.00	Rs.27,415.00
605	5	Mlnicipalities	Municipalities
605	Table (Counm-2, Row-7)	4.2	1.62
605	Table (Counm--2, Row-9)	1.42	2.67
605	Table (Column-2, Row-10)	4.25	10.5
605	Last	Inaia	India
606	14,30,31	comparision	comparison
606	26	Beards	Boards
606	26	satisfactory	Satisfactory
606	29	Rs. 19,18,471.55	Rs.19,18,471.55
606	31	porper	proper
607	3	was	were

Page	Line	For	Please read
607	11	Municilal	Municipal
607	29	incluae	include
608	9	an	and
608	11	suplly	supply
608	12	sub-divisions	sub-division
608	Table Heading (Column-6)	benefitted	benefited
609	Table (Column-2, Row-Last)	4003,00.00	4000,00.00
610	1	Bentick	Bentinck
610	2	vialages	villages
610	18, 25	Tresspass	Trespass
610	22	eductional	educational
610	25	ponds	pounds
610	Last	Gauhati	Gauhati
611	11	Administration	administrative
612	35	of Gaon	of some Gaon
618	Table (Column-3, Row-6)	Borbagsor	Borbansor
618	Table (Column-3, Row-14)	Mohoripara	Mohoripur
618	Table (Column-4, Row-18)	Rs. 16,788.00	Rs.16,478.00
618	Table (Column-5, Row-5)	9,086.00	9,086.00
618	Table (Column-5, Row-6)	16,050.00	16,050.00
618	Table (Column-6, Row-19)	1,154.00	1,154.00
618	Table (Column-6, Row-21)	8,073.00	8,073.00
621	29	Panchyat	Panchayat
622	15	or	of
624	6	district Gaon	district and Gaon
622	15	or	of
624	8	Councillors	Councilors
625	14	intitutions	institutions
625	22	618 this	618 of this
626	5	education	educational
626	21	grammer	grammar
635	10	1,949-50	1949-50
635	14	rates	rate
636	18	desirea	desired
636	23	Arithmatic	Arithmetic
636	25	corelated	correlated

Page	Line	For	Please read
641	5	advances	advance
642	2	th	the
642	6	win	won
642	6	action	action
643	10	furtherence	furtherance
643	14	1940	1930
643	22	renowened	renowned
643	30	brils'	Girls'
643	34	School being	School then being
644	14	sprang	sprung
644	21,22	instruction	instructions
645	Top	CULTURE	CULTURE
645	2	girl's	girl's
645	19	Assam).	Assam),
645	19	(Ex-Chairman.	(Ex-Chairman,
645	20	Commission) Late	Commission), Late
645	22	(Mathematician)	(Mathematician),
646	16	cost	costs
646	25	have	has
649	29	visitted	visited
649	Last	Praasd	Prasad.
650	1	Chouduri	Choudhuri
650	6	do	does
650	12	were	was
650	22	regaraing	regarding
650	35	2,000	200
655	3	out-skirts	outskirt
655	15	2.8085.21	2.8085
655	26	maintarins	maintains
656	10	reogranisation	reorganisation
656	11	manage-	manage-
656	24	a part of	a part
656	30	Pathasala	Pathasala
657	1	College was	College building was
657	3	reconstructed	reconditioned
657	10	about	around
657	33	established	establish
659	13	quently	quently
659	30	fulfledged	full-fledged
661	Table (Column-4, Row-7)	10.0	90.0
661	11	Schemes	Scheme
661	17	organistation	organisation
662	26	is	was
662	26	will	would
663	11	existing	existing
663	12	Unviversity	University

Page	Line	For	Please read
663	14	wards	awards
663	28, 29	comuniques	communiqué
664	Table (Total)	54	54 (Authorised Officers)
667	18	Jurisprudence	Jurisprudence
667	29	1956	1955
668	20	Govenments	Governments
669	35	part the	part of the
669	36	stringancy	stringency
670	5	were	was
670	14	1963	1953
671	9,12	Hocky	Hockey
671	23	Artificial	Artificial
671	34	Institutute	Institute
672	15	Draughtmanship	Draughtsmanship
673	1	examination	examinations
674	13	calender	calender
674	25	concren	concern
674	32	Administition	Administration
674	37	were	was
675	3,4	permanant	permanent
675	22	Adiministration	Administration
676	4	Planatations	Plantations
676	26	Tranining	Training
677	13	development	development
677	29	eigible	eligible
678	7	influericial	influential
678	11	streess	stress
678	18	is	are
678	18	empoyment	employment
683	25	altracts	attracts
684	4	implements	implements.
684	13	conduct occasional	use to visit
		visit of the students	to
684	23	in	is-
685	8	lessions	lessons
685	9	acquinted	acquainted
686	12	scanctioned	sanctioned
692	13	functionig	functioning
692	21	diseminate	disseminate
694	Top	DISTICT	DISTRICT
697	15	103	163
697	25	comperatively	Comparatively
697	Footnote (4)	P.282,	P.27.
698	4	sciencés	science
698	5	licencieate	licentiate
698	12	campared	compared

Page	Line	For	Please read
698	29	diarrhoea	diarrhoea
698	30	venereal	venereal
698	Footnote (8)	Ditirict	District
701	30	effections	affections
701	Table (Column-5, Row-1)	8	48
704	6	dispensaries	dispensaries
704	36	were	was
705	26	Meternity	Maternity
706	7	85	85%
706	17	Demona-	Demons-
706	20	increased	increased
706	17	Demona	Demons-
706	20	increased	increased
706	24	Tinsuk	Tinali
706	Footnote (12)	1973	1978
707	26	later	later
708	36	later	later
708	37	District	District
709	7	1973-75	1973-74
709	20	Hospital sand	Hospitals and
709	26	affected	effected
710	Table (Column-1, Row-1)	1967	1969
710	Table (Column-6, Row-2)	4,481	5,611
710	Table (Column-8, Row-2)	7,565	8,694
710	Table (Column-4, Row-3)	6,690	16,690
710	Table (Column-6, Row-3)	5,1784	5,784
710	25	Gauhati	Gauhati
711	4	1968	1948
711	19	Homeopathic	Homeopathic
711	23, 26	præctice	practise
711	24	practicing	practising
712	3	B.C.C.	B.C.G.
712	18	UNICF	UNICEF
712	34	rempant	rampani
713	34	pharmaculogy	pharmacology
713	Last	dibrugarh	Dibrugarh
714	27, 28	Ophthalmology	Ophthalmology
714	30	Acupuneture	Acupuncture
714	37	neasures	measures
717	20	Bramhaputra	Brahmaputra

Page	Line	For	Please read
717	33	Master Plan	Municipal
718	1	concerned	concerned
718	10	the same National	the National
718	27	Rs. 7,00/-	Rs. 7,000/-
720	5	establisments	establishments
720	18	1952	1955
723	13	thirtieth	thirties
725	8	premia	premiums
726	Footnote(3)	1959;	1969
729	35	respresentative	representative
730	4	would	will
730	5	univegal	universal
730	7	it and whatever be	it; and whatever that
730	18	latter	later
730	21	thirty	Thirty
731	10	vigilence	vigilance
731	31	progaganda	propaganda
731	18	rices	rises
732	22	the various cracks	various cracks are
732		are closed against the	closed against the
732		passage of the	passage of the
732		spirituous cracks	spirituous vapour.
732	25	are closed against the	
732	4	passage of the	
737	15	spirituous vapour.	
737	Last. 1	liquor	liquor
738-39	13	scourage	scourge
741	19	law	low
743	19	Britions	Britons
743	4	Delimination	Delimitation
744	6	concerned	concerned
744	18	fouuteen	fourteen
744	19	Indita	India
744	5	constested	contested
744	17	Yokee	Yoke
745		sickl	sickle
745		1,33,821	1,33,812
746		exercised	exercised
747	19	Table (Column-3,4, Row-1)	3,01,0651, 73,240
748	33	Congress(I)	3,01,0651, 73,240
749	19	form	Congress(O)
749	Last	mainly	from
751	21	centesting	namely
752	9	Esterner	contesting
754		Calcutta	Easterner
		Cource	Gauhati
			Course

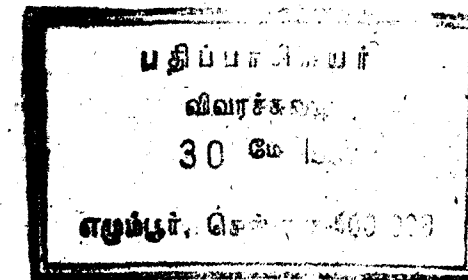
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Page	Line	For	Please read
754	19	Beggar's	Beggars'
754	20	beggery	beggary
754	29	vouluntary	voluntary
757	40	Deartment	Department
758	7	receipient	recipient
759	42	kilomettes	kilometres
760	22	effected	affected
760	30	yeomen's	yeoman's
764	Table Heading (Column-9)	C.P.I.	C.P.I.(M)
765	Table (Column-8, Row-1)	-	1
766	Table (Heading)	Assembly	Assembly
766	Table Heading (Column-6)	INC	INC(W)
766	Table (Column-3, Row-3)	39,110	36,110
766	Table (Column-Last, Row-11)	I.M.C.	I.N.C.
767	Table Heading (Column-12)	UC	SUC
767	Table (Column-6, Row-3)	7	1
767	Table (Column-Last, Row-5 & Row-8)	cingress	Congress
767	Table (Column-2, Row-9)	60,520	69,520
767	Table (Column-13, Row-9)	-	2
767	Table (Column-6, Row-11)	7	1
767	Table (Column-14, Row11)	14,913	14,923
768	5	'Pragjyotishpur.'	'Pragjyotishpur',
768	15, 24	11	II
768	18	latter	later
768	10	aftrival	arsenal
769	12	Duargarita	Duargarila
769	23	pleasent	pleasant
769	26	gardually	gradually
769	30	Modrn	Modern
771	13	scenery	scenic
771	13	immease	immense
771	18	Maligaca	Maligaon
771	33	acorss	across
771	35	furthetr	further

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Page	Line	For	Please read
771	39	excellent	excellent
772	3	form	from
772	18	indtitutions	institution
772	23	were	was
772	24	1979	1965

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