

# Chapter-VI

## Original Writings

### (A) Mughal Invasions in Assam:

S.K.Bhuyan wrote several books, articles, and seminar papers, and delivered speeches on the background of Mughal invasions in Assam in different time of his life. The episodes of Mughal invasions in Assam, which started in A.D. 1616 during the reign of Pratap Singha and ended in A.D. 1682, during the reign of Gadadhar Singha, is an important episode in the history of Assam.

The Ahom dynasty ruled the land of Assam for a period of six hundred years since it was founded in 1228. Several foreign powers sent expeditions to Assam to acquire the land during the Ahom rule, but most formidable among them was the Mughal power, which ruled a vast empire in the Indian sub-continent (excepting the Burmese invaders, which caused the final collapse of Ahom rule). The vigour, fighting skill, superior arms and war tactics of the Mughals on the one hand and weakness of the petty political units then ruling in India, fighting against each other on the other hand, gave them the opportunity to found the dynasty in India and to expand to a gigantic size. But the design of further eastward expansion of this imperialist power was resisted by Assam. No doubt, Assam had sacrifice a lot of wealth and lives in resisting the Mughals, but they save their independence and culture at the costs of these sacrifices.

The Ahom Government did not have any standing army as that of the Mughals. The peasants cultivated their personal lands and the lands of the kings and nobles and performed other civil duties in time of peace. Those very peasants 'Paiks' fought in time of war at the call of the monarchs. In spite of that, the

Assamese army won the final victory against the Mughal forces. Another point worthy of attention is that, two great Mughal expeditions to Assam were led under two great generals in a time when the wealth, might and extension of Mughal empire was in its zenith. These invasions gave an opportunity to the rulers as well as the common masses to examine their tenacity, tactics and collective character of the masses and of the ruling class in dealing the common crises of foreign invasions. These invasions exhibited the capabilities and characters of the people of the land and left some lessons to them for future crises. These invasions left some marks of inspirations also for future.

The books he wrote on the background of Mughal invasions in Assam are-

\*LACHIT BARPHEKAN AND HIS TIMES (published)

\*LACHIT BARPHEKAN (translated to assamese)

\*MIRJUMLA ASAM AKRAMAN

\*MIRJUMLA'S INVASIONS IN ASSAM (translated to english-not published)

\*ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES.

\*RAMANI GABHARU

Apart from these books he composed some articles, Seminar papers and delivered speeches. Some of them were later inserted in the collections of articles and those are-

\*ATAN BURAGOHAIN RAJMANTRI DANGARIA-January, 1925 (STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF ASSAM-PAGE-103)

\*MIRJUMLA AND RAMSINGHA-December, 1926(STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF ASSAM-PAGE-74)

\*LACHIT BARPHUDAN-February, 1947(STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF ASSAM-PAGE-97)

\*ASOMIA BURANJI LEKHAK ATAN BURAGOHAIN RAJMANTRI DANGARIA-18-8-49 (Firstly read in AIR, Gauhati-inserted in BIBDII PRABANDHA-page-186)

\*EKOTA MANUH EKOKHAN PARBAT-AUGUST, 1949(BURANJIR VANI-PAGE-91)

\*ASSAM AS SEEN BY SHIHABUDDIN TALISH-August,1950(STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF ASSAM-PAGE-88)

\*SHARAIGHAT ASE, SHARAIGHAT NAI-25 February 1956(Speech delivered at main session of Lachit Mela held at Janji-inserted in Tripody-63)

All the articles, speeches and Books have their own and separate importance. These were written at different times to meet different requirements. Being written on same background, there are repetitions of descriptions, but all of them have additional and new information and there is different emphasis on different aspect of their contents. But 'ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES' covers widest period of time among them and 'ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES' cover subjects dealt in the remaining books. 'ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES' deals mainly with the episodes of Mirjumla's invasion, Ram Singha's invasion and the period of crisis from the assassination of Udayaditya Singha to the assassination of Sulikpha Lora Raja; while in 'LACHIT BARPHUDAN AND HIS TIMES' the main theme is the Ram Singha's invasion. Although, 'ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES', was published long ten years after the publication of 'LACHIT BARPHUDAN AND HIS TIMES' it has been said as companion volume of

'LACHIT BARPHUKAN AND HIS TIMES', because of their common background and for being supplementary to each other.

It is noteworthy that, the writing of the two books 'LACHIT BARPHUKAN AND HIS TIMES' and 'ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES' were started as two articles, long ago before the publication of these two books in book form. From the article on Atan Buragohain inserted in 'STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF ASSAM', it can be known that the character of Atan Buragohain drew special attention of S.K.Bhuyan in 20's (1925). Likewise, S.K.Bhuyan firstly read a seminar paper on Lachit Barphukan at Poona session of Indian History Congress in the year of 1935. Since then these two writings had been being upgraded with the additional information received later on.

These books were written on the background of the Mughal invasions. but the titles of these books themselves reveal that, prominence has been given to the biographical aspect of the Assamese heroes and heroines of these episodes of Mughal invasions in these books. Although the description of the two invasions and of the critical days is depicted in minute detail, heroism and prudence of the Premier Atan Buragohain and the General, Lachit Barphukan are mainly emphasized in these two books. Atan Buragohain and Lachit Barphukan were contemporaries. Atan Buragohain served in the post of premier since 1662 to 1679 and Lachit Barphukan served in the post of the General since 1668 to 1672. Lachit Barphukan appointed in this post in the eve of Ram Singh's invasion and he died just after the battle of Sharaighat was over. On the other hand, Atan Buragohain was appointed in the post of premier in the midst of Mirjumla's invasion and died after Laluksola Barphukan enthroned Sulikpha and Laluksola surrendered Guwahati to Mughal. The position of the Burha Gohain was next to the king in the hierarchy of Ahom Government machinery. He was a member of powerful clan or 'Phoid' of Buragohain. he had

large landed property, large number of servants served in his estate and in house. and he with his other two colleagues, the Bargohain and Barpatra Gohain could make and unmake a king. He advised and gave opinions to the monarch whenever sought or in time of crisis. Apart from the civilian works, he also participated in the battles as commander also. Like wise, though the position of the Barphukan was below the Buragohain, Bargohain, Barpatragohain and Barbarua, he was the General of the war operations and ruled in western Assam as the viceroy of the monarch. Without sufficient means of communication and for being the area far away from the capital, the Barphukan ruled the area virtually like an independent monarch. Of course it is worthy to notice the roles played by the persons who were entrusted in these two important posts during a critical phase of history the history of Assam. The future of the people and the course of Assam history were much dependent on role of these two persons.

Mughal invasions created some far-reaching consequences. In the Mirjumla's invasion the Assamese force was defeated and the Assam Government was compelled to sign a humiliating treaty at the will of Mirjumla. Lack of military discipline, lack of coordination among among the Ahom commanders. and treacherous behaviour of some of the Ahom nobles weakened the Assamese resistance against Mirjumla. Moreover, it was a failure of the Ahom intelligence to information regarding the actual condition of the Mirjumla's soldiers when they were at Gargaon, the then capital of Assam. In fact, flood, diseases, shortage of foods and surprise attacks of the Assamese soldiers harassed them to such a level. that they were eager to leave the land at an earliest possible time. But this situation at the Mughal camp was completely unknown to the Ahom power. Had they been left for few more days in that condition, they would have compelled to leave the land without any demand or at compromise with the Ahom power. But the ignorance

of the condition of the Mughals gave the opportunity to Mirjumla to dictate the treaty. On the other hand after five years, the Assam government and its peasant soldiers not only recovered the lost territory, but also were able to successfully resist and repulse the next Mughal expedition led by Ram Singha. The defeat at the hand of Mirjumla brought bad names and demoralization to the Assamese side, the victory at Sharaighat, i.e. against Ram Singha brought glory, which became an inspiration for the Assamese for the later times. The invasion of Mirjumla has another importance in the history of Assam, because the Europeans knew Assam for the first time through the European navigators and soldiers who served the Mughal force.

The book Ramani Gabharu deals with the life of Ramani Gabharu (alias Rahmat Banu) and her patriotism. The episode of surrendering Guwahati by Laluksola Barphukan, for consideration of money is dealt with elaborately in 'RAMANI GABHARU'. Although the episodes of Mirjumla's invasion and battle of Sharaighat had to be redescribed in this book also, there are much new and additional information on the life of Ramani Gabharu and in the related area. The introduction to the family members of Ramani Gabharu, the status and position of Ramani Gabharu in Mughal royal family and in the 'harem', her education, conversion, and marriage are briefly described in this book. Ramani Gabharu, the only daughter of king Jayadhwaj Singha, was given to the Mughal harem as terms of the treaty (the Ghilajharighat treaty) signed between Mirjumla and Ahom government after the defeat. She was six years old when she was given. She was brought up in Mughal harem and later was married to Ajam Tara, the son of Aurengjeb. In spite of her long isolation from her family for a long time, she carefully preserved her love for her motherland. She sent a letter to Laluk sola

Barphukan, her maternal uncle, advising him not to indulge in treason to surrender Gauhati to Mughal in consideration of money.

That a main purpose of writing the 'Buranjis' was to provide education on polity to the princess and nobles and that the 'Buranjis' can be utilized as practical guidebooks for the rulers is reflected in the writings of S.K.Bhuyan also. There are some examples of events, which brought harmful consequences to the rulers as well as to the common masses. There are so many incidents inserted in the writings of S.K.Bhuyan, which can be taken as warning for the rulers not to indulge in certain activities and some advices, which are inspiring and beneficial to the rulers and the people. Any kind of leniency, timidity, lethargy, lack of attention on the movements and activities of the surrounding people, carelessness to the royal duties and too much dependability on the ministers of the monarchs pave the way to crises for the rulers and the people. Like wise, the rulers should make sufficient and right war preparation in right time against imminent and possible dangers. 'ATAN BURAGOHAİN AND HIS TIMES' contains records of some intrigues, which led to the assassination of the monarch. The guards, the maids in service at palace played important role in completion of these conspiracies. The maids helped the conspirators, by poisoning the medicine and food for the monarchs and leaking out the confidential information from palace to the conspirators. Likewise, the guards themselves co-operated the assassins by taking arms or by giving unchecked entry and exit to them. Like wise, as the Ahom ruling clans and the nobles were tied with matrimonial relation and at the same time rivalry among them for power also created, sometimes the royal consorts also leaked out confidential information to her relatives against whom a punitive royal order was passed. In fact, these weaknesses ultimately led the downfall of the dynasty and brought sufferings to the people. It may be noted here that, S.K.Bhuyan wrote an article with the title 'A Momentous

Letter' in which he narrates that the letter of Pijou Gabharu to her father Badan Chandra Barphukan invited the Burmese and British rulers to Assam (Momentous letter-The Stateman-Calcutta, Dec.-5, 1924). The role played by the Ahom commanders in the appointment of Manthir Bharali as the commander of the lower Assam flotilla who was a non-Ahom, also helped Mirjumla in his easy access to the capital. Similarly the Assamese force lost a chance of possible victory against Mirjumla for the lack of co ordination among Ahom commanders at Samdhara. The role played by Laluksola Barphukan in surrendering Guwahati to the Mughal in consideration of money and in a hope to become the monarch of the land, allowed the Mughal force to occupy Guwahati without shedding a drop of their blood. The delinquency and indecisions of Atan Buragohain not only led to his own doom, but also a reign of terror started in the capital by Sulikpha the monarch and Laluksola, the then premier. The imprudent haste and mistrust on his own general and neglecting the advices of the commanders at war-front by Chakradhwaj Singha resulted in the Alboi disaster (1669, in which ten thousand Assamese soldiers died in a suicidal attack on the Mughal force at Alboi). Again on the other hand, the heroism of Lachit Barphukan, the patriotic action of Nara Hazarika, the advice of Atan Buragohain to Lachit Barphukan, when the commanders along with the General became for time being cordial to the proposal of Ram Singha to surrender Guwahati (as per the terms of the treaty of 1639 signed by Allah-yar Khan and Momai Tamuli Barphukan)-all these led to the victory at Sharaighat battle. In 'MIRJUMLAR ASAM AKRAMAN', S.K.Bhuyan has commented that, *"if the events of Mirjumla's Assam invasion are examined carefully, both good and bad sides of Assamese people can be realized. This realization is the contribution of history and warning and inspiration for future."*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bhuyan, S.K.- Mirjumlar Asam Akraman, p.145

One of the salient features of the writings of S.K. Bhuyan was that his writings were mainly monographic. He presented some Characters and topics of Assam history with huge information and elaborate-details using vast storage of source materials. He utilized the Assamese published and unpublished 'Buranjis'. Apart from the indigenous Assamese sources he consulted and utilized writings of contemporary Parsi Chroniclers and of other Indian writers or other possible sources. This can be known from the bibliographies of his books and through the study of the contents of the books. All of his writings may be cited as examples in this regard. In 'LACHIT BARPHEKAN AND HIS TIMES', biographical sketch of the Mughal General Ram Singha; In 'MIRJUMLAH ASAM AKRAMAN' sketch of Mirjumla's life, brief sketch of Diler Khan Daud Jai; accounts on Assam by Shihabuddin Talish, Manucci, Bernier, Glanius and Mulla Darbesh are inserted. All these have enriched these books in the aspects of information. No other contemporary historians wrote books in such details. As per the statement of the author himself, he made an effort to write these two books in a scientific way. Thus those books have become almost last resort for all queries and information on the concerned subjects. Of course it is mention worthy that, the two books 'LACHIT BARPHEKAN AND HIS TIMES' and 'ATAN BURAGOHAHAI AND HIS TIMES' were written mainly and largely with the help of two 'Buranjis'-'RAM SINGHAR YUDDHAR KATHA' of Samudrakhari Achyutananda Doloi and the 'ASSAM BURANJI'-SM (both of them are published). S.K.Bhuyan preserves even the language and perspectives of the authors of these two chronicles in these two books. The episodes of the invasions and the political situation of the days, dealt with in these books have got depicted like a picture in these two books with the insertion of the petty events; the conversations of the nobles, commanders, the envoys; letters and agreements in their original form, which took place in the battle-field, in the

palace and in the royal court. For example, the dramatic test organized in the full royal court by the monarch to examine the sense of self respect, quick decision making ability of Lachit Barphukan before he was entrusted in that responsible post of Barphukan, the conversation between Lachit Barphukan and Ram Singha before the final attack was launched, the incident of getting faint by Samudra Churamani Achyutananda Doloi, the Astrologer who accompanied the general, when he blood of enemy suddenly fell in his body; etc. are mentioned in 'LACHIT BARPHUDAN AND HIS TIMES'. Like wise In 'ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES' the events like the upgrading of the wandering Paramananda Sannyasi to the royal priest of Udayaditya Singha; the assassination of the Sannyasi along with the monarch in a conspiracy, in which Debera Hazarika and some maid servants participated; the midnight coup d'état by Saru gohain (later on Ramadhawaj); assassination of monarchs one after another by Debera Barbarua and his atrocities, the league formed by the 'Sharaighat-veterans' under the leadership of Atan Buragohain to control Debera Barbarua, the holy oath taken by the league, the estrangement between Atan Buragohain and the monarch Dihingia Raja Sudoipha and many other such incidents are mentioned. All these help the readers to know the things in minute detail. In spite of these, these books are free from some demerits in respect of information and perspective.

S.K.Bhuyan has referred to the attack by Gaura invaders during the reign of Suhungmong Dihingia Raja (1497-1539) as the introduction to the Mughal invasions in Assam. This is significant in relevance to the Mughal invasions because, the Ahom forces not only routed the Gaur invaders from the land but also, re announced the river Karatoa as the western boundary of Assam, which once prevailed in ancient days. Through this very expedition, a direct contact with the kingdom of Kamata and the rising Koch kingdom was established. The Ahom-Mughal relation, which was

started a few years later, was influenced by this incident. Description of this Gaura invasion is found in the ASSAM BURANJI-SM. The Padshah of Gaur being compelled to pray for a peace treaty gifted two princesses to the monarchs of Assam. The two Assamese commanders of this pursuing expedition were Suklenpha and Sankham Ghar Sandhikoi, the two sons respectively of the monarch Suhungmong and of Frachenmong Bagohain.<sup>2</sup> As per the ASSAM BURANJI- SM, the names of the two gifted princesses were Khanbibi Harmati and Darmati. In context to this background S.K.Bhuyan has commented, *“The invading armies of Padshah of Gaur were repulsed with heavy losses and the Ahom generals overran the territories upto the river Karatoya. The Padshah of Gaur sued for peace by offering two princess to the Ahom king; the Raja of Kamata who had been ousted by the Gaur Padshah was reinstalled in his encesstral throne on which was however on the verge of extinction; and Biswa Singha, who had made himself master of a small territory, taking advantage of the decadence of Kamata sought the support of the Ahom monarch.*

*“As occupation of the subdued territories was not the object of the Ahom expedition, the victorious generals returned to their country after having the rulers of Gaur, Kamata and Cooch bihar to continue in the exercise of their power and authority. This expedition of the generals of Dihingia Raja was regarded ever afterwards as a great landmark, and Ahom kings looked upon the Karotoya river as the ultimate western limit of their dominions<sup>3</sup>*

But some question arises on this important event of victory at Karotoya. In which year this event of Karotoya victory took place? Who was the Padshah of Gaur by this time? Who was the monarch of Kamata, reinstalled by Dihingia Raja? The

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p.2

<sup>3</sup> idem, ABHT-pp.6-7

name of the Padshah is not mentioned in ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES and In 'MIRJUMLAR ASAM AKRAMAN' also it is not mentioned clearly. In 'MIRJUMLAR ASAM AKRAMAN' it is mentioned in this way- *“Towards the end of Fifteenth century of Christian era, Allauddin Hussain Shah, Padshah of Gaur defeated Neelambar Raja, the lord of Kamata and declared himself as the 'conquerer of Kamata and Kamrupa' The monarch of Kamata took shelter of Oparjana Suhungmong Dihingia Raja, the monarch of Assam The Padshah of Gaur sent his foster son Turbak to invade Assam. The war between the Ahom and Gaur forces continued for three years. At last, Turbak had to die in the hands of Assamese. By this victory, the territory of Assam was extended upto Kajoli”*<sup>4</sup>(Td)

The two rulers of Bengal, who were contemporaries of Suhungmong, were Allauddin Hussain Shah (1493-1519) and Nushrat Shah (1519-1532)<sup>5</sup>. The monarch of Kamata was Neelambar, the last ruler of the Khan dynasty when Allauddin Hussain Shah invaded Kamata. The Khan dynasty and the kingdom of Kamata destroyed in the invasion of Hussain Shah. It is not known if any new dynasty was founded in this area. The Bhuyan captured this area after routing Daniel, who was founded as the local ruler in this area by Hussain Shah. Here after Biswa Singha occupied this area.

The invasion of Turbak took place in AD 1532.<sup>6</sup> But before the invasion of Turbak, a few expeditions under the commanders named Bar Ujir<sup>7</sup> Luput<sup>8</sup> and Bitmalik<sup>9</sup> were led to Assam. As per the DEODHAI ASAM BURANI, The invasion of Turbak took place in 'Lakli Raingi',<sup>10</sup> which resembles to Shaka era 1453 and

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<sup>4</sup> idem, Mir. Ass. Akr. , p.1

<sup>5</sup>Barua, S.L.- A Comp.Hist of Ass, p.231

<sup>6</sup> ibid, p.232

<sup>7</sup> DAB, pp.22-23

<sup>8</sup> <sup>9</sup> ibid, p.28

<sup>10</sup> ibid, p.29

1531/1532 AD. But all these invasions were led during the reign of Nushrat Shah (1519-1532). Again, the monarch of Kamata who was defeated by Hussain Shah was Neelambar. He sought shelter and help from Dihingia Raja.<sup>11</sup> This invasion took place in the year 1498. The invasion of Turbak took place in AD1532. This was fought for three years,<sup>12</sup> i.e. upto 1535. It implies that the invasion Turbak took place 34 years after the invasion of Hussain Shah and it was ended after 37 years. Whether Neelambar was in shelter of Dihingia Raja for 37 years? Whether it was Nushrat Shah, who was reinstated by Dihingia Raja? Whether the Ahom commanders dethroned him, to be reinstated in his throne as said by S.K.Bhuyan? In fact the treaty achieved from the Padshah of Gaur was not a treaty achieved from a defeated monarch, but it was a treaty seeking friendship from the Ahom monarch by the Padshah of Gaur.<sup>13</sup>

The story of illicit relation between Garama Kuwanri (the consort of Neelambar, the king of Kamata) and the son of the royal priest who led to the expedition of Hussain Shah<sup>14</sup> is attached to the invasion of Turbak in the Assam Buranji-SM. Although there are mentions of this victory at Karatoya in different places of Buranji, until the confusions regarding the victory are removed, the correct explanation of the widely pronounced phrase “Karatoyat Khanda Pakhala”(washing swords at river) Karatoya is not possible.

S.K.Bhuyan held that the basic cause of Ahom Mughal conflict was the expansionist policy followed both by Mughal and Ahom power. In reference to Mirjumla’s invasion it is said in ‘Mirjumlar Asam Akraman’ *“the half fulfilled ambition of Swargadeo to conquer Karatoya and the need and resolve of resisting*

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<sup>11</sup>, <sup>12</sup> Idem, Mir. Ass. Akr , p.1

<sup>13</sup> ABSM-, pp.23-24 and PAB, p.62

<sup>14</sup> Barua, S.L.B., A Comp. Hist. Of Ass.- p.-180

*that ambition by the Mughals-the conflict of these two national aspirations is the main cause of the invasion of Mirjumla.*"<sup>15</sup> (Td). Of course, S.K.Bhuyan has given some preliminary situation and causes of the invasion. Among them capturing of the territory of Eastern Cooch King Parikshit by Mughals and founding Balinarayan as vassal king in Darrang by the Ahom Government for which the two imperialist power-the Mughals and the Ahoms came face to face with a common border. More over encroachment of borders by the Elephant catching teams of Mughals (This Elephant catching operations were popularly called 'Khedah'), Collection of Agar wood (*Aquilaria Agallocha*) illegally from the forest of Darrang region are mentioned. The treaty signed between Allah-yar Khan and Momai Tamuli Barbarua in 1639 during the reign of Pratap Singha and recovering lower Assam (in 1660) by Jayadhwaj Singha taking the opportunity of fratricidal war for the Mughal imperial throne are also mentioned.

Of course, S.K.Bhuyan has explained the causes of the defeat of Assamese forces in the invasion of Mirjumla very tactfully. He admitted that Mirjumla was great general and had many experiences of fighting wars. He contributed much to the expansion of the Mughal Empire. More over the Assamese peasant soldiers was no match for the cavalry of the Mughal force. The expedition of Mirjumla had some differences with the expeditions before and after Mirjumla, which were resisted by Assamese forces. If the expedition of Mirjumla is compared to that of Ram Singha. Mirjumla was more powerful, wealthier, more experienced, more militant and more trusted general of Mughal power than Ram Singha. The weaknesses, which were noticed in the expedition of Ram Singha, were absent in the expedition of Mirjumla. But still, he has hesitated to admit the General weakness Assamese force in comparison to the Mughal force. Some accidental, individual mistakes are said to be

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<sup>15</sup> idem, -Mir Ass. Akr.P.5

the cause of defeat of the Assamese force (which are already mentioned). S.K.Bhuyan has mentioned, "*The easy success of the imperialists was mainly due to the defection of the Ahom commanders at the appointment of Manthir Bezdoloi Bharalibarua, a kayastha store-keeper as commander of lower Assam flotilla, with the rank of Parvatiyaphukan*"<sup>16</sup> It is true that the Ahom commanders showed reluctance to fight in the appointment of Manthir Bharali. It is mentioned in 'ASSAM BURANJI-SM' "*Majumkhan came towards our country after capturing Behar and keeping Ispijia there then with thousands horses, destroyed the Manaha fort, in this very year after five day in the month of Fagun, on Sunday. The Phukans said, 'the Bezdoloi, of own clan, has come as superior to us, let him fight now. Not a single arrow was showered.'*"<sup>17</sup> But Manthir was not the only commander of the Ahom force at that time. More over, he was an inferior commander in the rank of Parvatiya Phukan. There was the Chengmun Barphukan, the general of the war operation, Langichang Bargohain and Kenduguria Barpatra gohain and all these powerfull cabinets belonged to Ahom community. In fact, these commanders tried to hide their own lack of patriotism, lack of sufficient military experience and skill by blaming the appointment of Manthir Bharali. S.K.Bhuyan also has accepted the way and perspective in which the medieval chroniclers explained the situation.

In time of fighting at Samdhara fort, Atan Gohain was appointed in the post of Bargohain or the Premier. Failure of Assamese soldiers at Samdhara is also said to be caused due to be caused due to mistake. In time of war at Samdhara fort, Langichang Gohain was in the charge of the force stationed at north bank of Brahmaputra. It is said that Langichang Brgohain couldnot send reinforcement to Samdhra fort as sought from the fort. For this mistake the war was lost at

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<sup>16</sup> idem, ABHT, p.25

<sup>17</sup> ABSM, P.93

Samdhara<sup>18</sup> but, in fact, this failure was also caused due to lack of right planning and military discipline of the military operation. Few sentences of Purani Assam Buranji is mentionworthy here, “*Later, the foreigners [Bangal] fought inn the south bank On that time Raja Shahur Barphukan, Ghora kowanr Barphukan, not seeing the foreigners at north bank, sent envoy to Bargohain asking to send men; the Gohain wanted to send man. Hatimuriya, the companion of Bargohain forbid him; [and said ]the monarch has distributed men for the both bank, if foreigners attack us, how shall we be saved? Hearing this, the Gohain did not send man. Fighting continued for five days in south bank; .....yet Ahom couldnot win the battle; the foreigners climbed on the rampart; lokking the its [of the fort]destructionthe people on the boat departed; the foreigners reached Sola?”*(Td)<sup>19</sup>

Like wise regarding the im pregnability and firmness of the Samdhara fort. S.K.Bhuyan has commented in ‘ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES’ “*the fort of Samlagarh in the soth bank opposite Samdhara was impregnable one made so by nature and by man...and the enemy’s batteries could not make any impression on the massive walls of the fort.*”<sup>20</sup>

This Samdhara fort was constructed in the reign of Pratap Singha.<sup>21</sup> There is a brief description, regarding the fort in the fifth chronicle incorporated in the SATSARI ASOM BURANJI as “*Our rampart was small one, there lived some jungle-dwellers [Habiyalia Manuh] of Habung who supplied grass for elephants [Hatighanhi]. When this was known through Kharangi, of Nagaon, on Tuesday after ten days of Fagun the foreigners climbed the rampart. Later our our people fled away*”.<sup>22</sup> It can be inferred that S.K.Bhuyan was influenced by the poetic and

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<sup>18</sup> op cit, p.25

<sup>19</sup> PAB, P.22

<sup>20</sup> Bhuyan, S.K.- ABHT, p.25

<sup>21</sup> ABSM, p.60

<sup>22</sup> SAB, p.125

exaggerating description about the impregnability of the rampart given in the biography of Daud Jai written by Shah Nawaj. Shah Nawaj given this exaggerating description with a view to magnify the victory at the Simlagarh. The description of the Simlagarh fort of S.K.Bhuyan and Shah Nawaj resembles to the Maratha forts. But the Ahoms were not habituated in constructing fort on high hill.

The harassment of Mirjumla in Gargaon was caused by flood, shortage of food (as the supply lines were blocked) and by the surprise attacks of the Assamese soldiers. The Mughal soldiers became eager to retreat at earliest possible time. But Mirjumla was successful to conceal this situation in the Mughal camp. On the other hand, some Ahom nobles, officers and common people easily joined the Mughal party. Even some of them did not hesitate to help Mirjumla in digging the Maidams including that of Sw.Pratap Singha. The inability to know the real situation in Mughal camp was a failure of the Ahom intelligence. Of course, S.K.Bhuyan has finally admitted that lack of right leadership caused the disaster of Assam in the invasion of Mirjumla.

In this place it may be drawn to the notice that, the date of Ghilajharighat treaty signed between Mirjumla and Ahom Government is converted from Saka era to Christian era differently in two different books. The Saka date is 9 Magh, 1584 SE. But the Christian date is 22 January 1663 in *MIRJUMLAR ASSAM AKRAMAN*<sup>23</sup> and 23 January 1663 in *ATAN BURAGOHAİN AND HIS TIMES*.<sup>24</sup>

In '*MIRJUMLAR ASSAM AKRAMAN*' the effort of S.K.Bhuyan to present a high impression of power and might of Assam and Assamese force is vividly apparent. He has interpreted the defeat of Assamese soldiers in the invasion of Mirjumla as the result of some mistakes. Even he has said that the victory of

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<sup>23</sup> Bhuyan, S.K.-Mir.Ass. Akr., p.90

<sup>24</sup> idem, ABHT, p.30

defeat in a war always depends upon destiny.<sup>25</sup> He has described the victory of Assamese force against Ram Singha with enthusiastic and elaborate language. LACHIT BARPHUDAN AND HIS TIMES may be said as the eulogy and glorification of Assam, Assamese soldiers and their General Lachit Barphukan. The victory at Sharaighat has not only been described as the removal of blame of defeat in the invasion of Mirjumla, but also as a record of Assamese heroism, nationalism and patriotism. S.K.Bhuyan has presented the wisely method taken by the monarch in selecting Lachit As the General of the Ahom force<sup>26</sup> the education and training received by Lachit Barphukan,<sup>27</sup> The bliss of Goddess Kamakhya,<sup>28</sup> the accurate calculation of Assamese astrologer<sup>29</sup> influence of new vaisnavite cult<sup>30</sup> cleverness of Assamese envoys, adventurous bravery of Assamese commandoes, elaborate war preparation in the vicinity of Guwahati and so on as the background of the Assamese victory at Sharaighat.

In the above-mentioned books (on Mughal invasions), the personalities of the Assamese characters are also projected with same perspectives. It can be noticed that, S.K.Bhuyan was motivated with his attitude of searching the symbols of national glory for the Assamese people, in this respect also. Some times, there occurred some contradictions in his description with facts as he tried to defend the weaknesses of Assamese heroes or commoners and to exaggerate the achievements. It has already been mentioned that, the battle of Sharaighat is an important event in the history of Assam. It can be speculated that the defeat in Sharaighat would have lead to the loss independence of the Assamese. The Assamese soldiers sacrificed a lot safeguard their independence, but Lachit Barphukan as the General of the

<sup>25</sup> op. cit, p.33, he has used term 'Daivadhin'.

<sup>26</sup> Idem, LBHT, pp.-22-23

<sup>27</sup> ibid, pp20-21

<sup>28</sup> ibid, pp-37-51

<sup>29</sup> ibid, pp.80-81

<sup>30</sup> ibid, p.78

Assamese force can obviously demand more credit for the victory. His patriotism and emotion for the interest of the nation was lofty one. But some incidents, which took place in the battle of Sharaighat, are not praiseworthy. For example, (i) there were more conversations between the two generals of Ahom and Mughal forces. (ii) These conversations were prolonged by Assamese General to have more time to complete the war preparation.<sup>31</sup> Incompletion of war preparation till the moment of advent of the enemy is not advisable. (iii) The imprudent order of Chakradhwaj Singha, who was then far away from the battle, to attack the Mughal forces immediately was responsible for the Alboi disaster, where ten thousand Assamese soldiers died in a single stroke. The order of the monarch can be interpreted as a lack of trust on his own General. (iv) The emotional utterance of Nara Hazarika and jumping over the enemy by Lachit Barphukan in a time when he was suffering from high fever, no doubt, inspired the fleeing Assamese soldiers to fight again. Although the act of Lachit Barphukan is an example of patriotism and emotion for the interest of the country, it reflects a general weakness of the Ahom military system. Such a suicidal emotional behavior is not expected from a General. The description of the battle gives an impression that the destiny of the war rested only on Lachit Barphukan. The lack of able and efficient person in the state to replace a General in a dire crisis reflects general weakness in the system want of sufficient military training and education in the country. In fact the victory at the battle of Sharaighat was determined by the dramatic decision and action of Lachit Barphukan. (v) The example of fleeing of Assamese commanders and soldiers from battle occurred in both the invasions of Mirjumla and Ram Singha.

Likewise contradiction can be noticed in the depiction of the personalities of the Assamese heroes. In regard to Lachit Barphukan, the qualities of his sense of

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<sup>31</sup>idem, pp.47-48

self-respect, dutifulness, patriotic desire, to expel the Mughals from Assam, bravery, sternness, no indulgence for corruption, respect for age-old traditions of the land are praised by S.K.Bhuyan. But these qualities are desirable from every subject of a country and they are basic requirement of a soldier. The sternness in the declaration of Lachit Barphukan that whoever shows any delinquency in exerting duties would be immediately beheaded is compared to Spartan Sternness by S.K.Bhuyan. But the scene of weeping by Lachit Barphukan, when he saw huge army of Ram Singha, or the scene of getting frustration after the Alboi disaster give a different aspect of the personality of Lachit Barphukan.

S.K.Bhuyan has filled the book LACHIT BARPHUDAN AND HIS TIMES with eulogies of the victory and of the General. He has compared the battle of Sharaighat with the battle of Trafalgar, Lachit Barphukan with the indomitable generals like Lord Nelson, Wellington, Rana Pratap, Garibaldi, and Mazzini. In the midst of these eulogies, the decision of Lachit Barphukan along with other commanders to hand over Guwahati to Ram Singha has almost got hidden.

S.K.Bhuyan compared Atan Gohain to Julius Caesar in the article 'ATITAR KAMRUP-MAHILA'<sup>32</sup> probably looking at the resemblance between these two statesmen in their patriotism and their death in the hands of their own colleagues. The prudence of Atan Buragohain is proved by some of his decisions, actions, and advices given to the monarchs and his colleagues in time of both war and peace. Lachit Barphukan became frustrated after the Alboi disaster, but the prudent advice of Atan Buragohain revived the lost vigour and life to Lachit Barphukan. Atan Buragohain opposed the decision of Barphukan and other commanders to surrender Guwahati<sup>33</sup>. His advice to Udayaditya Singha against the decision to send an

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<sup>32</sup> Bhuyan, Jogendranarayan- Ed., BIBIDH PRABANDHA, p.98

<sup>33</sup> Bhuyan, S.K.- ABHT, p.76, LBHT, p.76

expedition against the Daflas,<sup>34</sup> and his refusal to accept the proposal of the nobles to enthone him, all these reflects his prudence and idealism. But he committed some blunders, the results of them were completely opposite to what he had achieved earlier for the state. His contributions in the battle of Sharaighat were vital for the victory, but his delinquencies towards the disastrous and treacherous activities of Laluksola Barphukan resulted in surrender of Guwahati by Laluk Barphukan to Mughals in consideration of money. Like wise his apparent selflessness, farsightedness, patience, his action against Debera Barbarua stabilized the turmoiling situation in the capital caused by the atrocities of Debera Barbarua. But it was his inaction and indecisions, for which conspiracies, assassination were renewed once again in the capital and even himself had to die in this situation (in the hand of Lauk sola Barphukan). Debera Hazarika (later Debera Barbarua) was involved in the kiliing of Udayaditya Singha<sup>35</sup> Langichang Bargohain, Moran Gohain,<sup>36</sup> Ramadh waj Singha<sup>37</sup> the successor of Ramadh waj Singha<sup>38</sup> Suhung Kowanr<sup>39</sup> and others whoever obstacled in his way to control the sovereign power. His atrocities culminated with plan to capture the Buragohain and the Barphukan. But till then Atan Buragohain showed inaction to the affairs at capital, i.e. to the atrocities of Debera Barbarua. In this respect, S.K.Bhuyan has tried to justify the inaction of Atan Buragohain by saying that- *“the inaction of Gauhati nobles in the matter of Debera’s access can be easily explained. The affair at Gargaon in spite of its horror and its dislocation of the normal machinery of government was after all a domestic distemper, which could be easily righted at any moment. Matter of graver consequences had kept the Sharaighat veterans fully occupied during the period and*

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<sup>34</sup> idem, ABHT, p.80

<sup>35</sup> ibid, pp 86-87

<sup>36</sup> ibid, , p.91

<sup>37</sup> ibid, p.95

<sup>38</sup> ibid, pp.95-96

<sup>39</sup> ibid, p.98

*no circumstances could they be persuaded to relax their effort, the threat of foreign invasion still looming large before them as Ram Singha had continued to remain at Rangamati with the hope of resuming hostilities with Assam).*<sup>40</sup>

The danger from outside was obviously an issue, which demand more attention but the situation at the capital also was not less important. The monarch in a monarchy is the symbol of the sovereignty of the kingdom. The killing of monarchs one after another along with nobles of high designations cannot be taken to be an issue of secondary importance. Although, S.K.Bhuyan has held that the internal crisis could be righted easily, the crisis was not righted easily. The crisis caused by Debera gave birth to such a series of events, leading to a reign of terror at the capital, which ended with the accession of Gadadhar Singha. Likewise, it was an internal trouble, towards which also Atan Buragohain showed inaction to show a unity among the nobles (the hollowness of which was known to all) that invited the Mughals once again to Assam and surrender of Guwahati without shedding any blood. Ram Singha never invaded Assam, but it was an internal trouble of highhanded behaviour of Laluksola Barphukan (like that of Debera), for which the Mughal power could occupy Guwahati.

S.K.Bhuyan has commented upon Atan Buragohain, "*the Buragohain was a master genius in penetrating into depth of complex situations*"<sup>41</sup> but being involved in a cold war of power this very premier had to flee away from the capital to save his life from Arjun Dihingia Raja, the monarch, who was installed in the throne by Atan Buragohain and finally Atan Buragohain took sword against him and killed the monarch. He refused the throne but not power. Atan Buragohain created the enmity of Mecha Barbarua by removing from his post, but the premier allowed him to

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<sup>40</sup> *ibid*, p.102

<sup>41</sup> *ibid*, p.126

gather strength and form a league with Laluk sola Barphukan against him. It was not so that Atan Buragohain was unaware of the treacherous activities of Laluksola Barphukan. Miri Sandhikoi and Paniphukan informed him regarding the activities of Laluk sola Barphukan in right time. But instead of taking swift action against Laluksola Barphukan, he engaged himself in constructing the Chintamani rampart in the vicinity of the capital to protect the capital. In spite of all these delinquencies of Atan Buragohain, S.K.Bhuyan has tried to defend Atan Buragohain by saying, "the Buragohain failed to detect the real motive of the wily Barphukan; and he considered it to be his solemn duty to stand by him in pursuance of the oath mutually taken during the disturbances in the reign of Gobar Raja and Arjun Dihingia Raja"<sup>42</sup>

Laluksola Barphukan defied the royal order to surrender Mecha Barbarua, who was accused of an attempt to kill the monarch. Laluk gave shelter to this person who was enemy of Atan Buragohain also. The preparation of Laluk Barphukan to surrender Guwahati to Mughal was also duly informed to the premier in right time. What else and what more evidences are needed to understand the real motive of Laluksola Barphukan. S.K.Bhuyan has mentioned, "*The Paniphukan and Miri Sanikoi Phu kan came to know about the dispatch of Laluk Barphukan's emissaries to Baduli, and they reported the matter to Atan Buragohain. The premier realized the seriousness of the situation, but he did not want to creat an alarm by permitting the report to be accepted as a fact...*"<sup>43</sup> This statement goes against the earlier statement that Atan Buragohain was not aware of the real motive of Laluk sola Barphukan. Of course, in spite of his contradictions, he admitted the delinquencies of Atan Buragohain in a literary language that, and has mentioned, "*Atan Buragohain. the*

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<sup>42</sup> ibid, p.160

<sup>43</sup> ibid, p.148

*premier of Assam and Hamlet, the premier of Denmark, both hesitated to strike at the proper hour, and nemesis exacted from the irresistible penalty. In both cases, to quote Goethe, 'a lovely, pure, noble and most mortal nature without the strength of nerve, which forms a hero, sink beneath a burden which it can not bear and must not cast away'*"<sup>44</sup> Thus the depiction of the character of Atan Buragohain started with the resemblance with Julius Caesar and ended with resemblance with Hamlet.

S.K.Bhuyan has depicted the greatness of Ramani Gabharu in the book with the title by her name. The patriotism and bravery of this lady is the main theme in the book (Ramani Gabharu). This lady was victim of the Mirjumla's invasion in Assam and Assam's defeat in the invasion. She was gifted to Mughal harem as per the terms of the Ghilajharighat treaty. She was six years old, when she was donated and she was the only daughter of Jayadhvaj Singha. Her greatness, patriotism and bravery are depicted on the basis of a letter written by Ramani Gabharu to her maternal uncle Laluk sola. With this letter she tried to debar her Laluk from indulging in the mean act of surrendering Gauhati treacherously for the greed of money. The language, the way of presenting the life of Ramani Gabharu and the content of the letter all these altogether has made the description in the book heart touching. The book can rouse the sentiment of love and affection to the character of Ramani Gabharu. S.K.Bhuyan has written "*the affection of Ramani Gabharu to brothers and sisters; relatives and people of her motherland is her neckless an invaluable ornament [Satsari Kantha har], but her bravery is her invaluable devine dress [Devanga Bhushan]. She passed days in foreign country, being dependent on others' love and character. In such a situation, the emperor Aurengzeb and his son Ajam Tara, subedar of Bengal wanted to capture Guwahati through a conspiracy with Laluksola Barphukan. Ramani Gabharu, wrote to her maternal uncle-'he*

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<sup>44</sup> *ibid*, p. 292

*aware, never indulge in such mean work'. The example of this brave effort of Ramani Gabharu shall remain as an ideal for the Assamese men and women forever."*<sup>45</sup>

But there is another noteworthy aspect. The patriotism and bravery of Ramani Gabharu is praiseworthy from Assamese point of view. But from a general point of view the act of writing a secret letter by Ramani Gabharu to make a state decision futile was illegal and a treacherous to the state. When she wrote this letter, she was not only a subject of the Mughal Empire, but also an honoured lady, member of the ruling class and the consort of Prince Ajam Tara.

In this respect, the Article, "Old Assam: A momentous Letter" of S.K.Bhuyan can be referred here. In this article, he has opined that, the letter sent by Pijou Gabharu to her father Badan Chandra Barphukan invited the Burmese invaders to Assam and the British rule in Assam. Although the nature, background and consequences of these two letters were different, they are common in some points- both the letters were written secretly, illegally and against a state decision.

Likewise in respect of the character Jayadhwaj Singha also, S.K.Bhuyan has tried to give a good impression, although the people of his time said him Bhaganiaya Raja, the fugitive king as he flew and left the capital in the invasion of Mirjumla. Moreover there are ample evidences for his timid and inefficiencies in the 'Buranjis'. In the conclusion of 'MIRJUMLAR ASAM AKRAMAN' S.K.Bhuyan has said, "*There was no any special war in the early years of the reign Sw.Jayadhwaj Singha. He did not know the things well, to which special attention was necessary. So such a disaster took place in the country and he was named as Bhagania Raja*"<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> idem, RAMANI GABHARU, p.61

<sup>46</sup> idem, Mir. Ass. Ak., p.144

But such an explanation for defeat in a battle to defend a monarch, in fact is not acceptable. If such an explanation is accepted, then the causes of the defeats and victories in the history of world have to be re explained. He has again said, *“It is to be said here, the patriotism of Jayadhwaj Singha is mention worthy oneway. The Swargadeo realized that the large area of the western part of Assam up to Karatoya should be recovered and accordingly his soldiers proceeded and attacked Bengal. But the monarch could not imagine that the commanders deployed in lower Assam [Namaniyal Phukan] would quit the battlefield. But the eagerness showed to see the dejected capital in the last moment, reveal that he loved his country by heart”*<sup>47</sup>

More over his eagerness to recover the land from the Mughal occupation immediately by paying the due tributes and correspondences with the neighbouring kingdoms with a view to form a league and to renew war against Mughals again, and his last advices to his ministers to rescue the land from the yoke of foreigners are also mentioned as the proof of his patriotism.

But, S.K.Bhuyan has tried to present Jayadhwaj Singha as a patriotic ruler on the basis of his words and emotion. But in fact he was a timid and inapt ruler. His inaction and inability has found well expression in few sentences said by a trader to the monarch in his fugitive time. The trader [Pohari] said, *“Swargadeo, you indulged in merrymaking. If you had heaped fifteen colds of earth [Pondhara Chapara mati] in right place during last fifteen years, why would have been such condition of you today? Where do you go leaving us?”*<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *ibid*, pp.144-145

<sup>48</sup> *ibid*, pp.49-50

Not only in the saying of the trader but also in his own statements, his timid personality found expression. For example, S.K.Bhuyan wrote, “.... *having sufferings in that place, the weeping monarch embraced the chief queen by her neck and said, ‘the curse of Kamrup has touched me and you all also persuaded me, if some of you had forbid me, did I do this? The Phukan also had been informing me. Had I heaped colds of earth [to construct rampart], would such thing have happen to me?’*”<sup>49</sup>

It is true that, taking the ‘opportunity’ of the fratricidal war of succession for the throne of Delhi, Jayadhwaj Singha occupied the lower Assam, but the preparation and measures to confirm this occupation, was not taken by him. He invited the enemy, but did not take sufficient measures as per the strength of the enemy. It is an evidence of his lack of practical knowledge.

In this way, in describing the Mughal invasion in Assam and in depicting the heroes of this invasion, S.K.Bhuyan has confronted self contradiction and contradiction with facts. These contradictions have taken place for several reasons. In fact, S.K.Bhuyan wanted to super impose the characteristics of nationalism on a medieval feudal political structure. In fact it can be said that the people of Assam had no any feelings of nationalism in those days. There are many instances in the ‘Buranjis’, which reveals that the monarchs considered the state as a personal property for enjoyment. The *Paiks* fought in the battles in consideration of the two ‘*Puras*’ of tax-free land allotted to them and as bound responsibility. The racial and clan consciousness was very much active among the royal dignitaries and nobles. Even in the days of state-crises like, Mirjumla’s invasion, battle of Sharaighat, Moamaria uprising, Burmese invasions and introduction of foreign British rule, opportunism, and clan consciousness, feudal conflicts among the people led the state

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<sup>49</sup> *ibid*, PP.50-51

to more dangerous situation. In many cases, S.K.Bhuyan has accepted the views and descriptions of the medieval Assamese chronicles without any analysis. More over S.K.Bhuyan emphasized much on the speeches and statements of the characters of Assam history in analyzing their personalities than their achievements and actions. The 'Buranjis' were not written with objective and systematic methodology. Like wise, S.K.Bhuyan was guided by his personal patriotism in writing history. He consciously allowed his writing to be influenced by his personal patriotism and so he wanted to justify the wrongs, glorify and magnify the good things of Assam. He searched in the history of Assam some replicas of those patriotic heroes and statesman, which he had found in the history of India, of ancient Greek and Roman civilization and of modern Europe.

These books are rich in information. In writing these books, S.K.Bhuyan utilized huge mass of source materials. The contradictions in view and in information can be detected even with the internal evidences.

Of course, there are many questions regarding the Mughal invasions and on these characters, which are yet to be discovered. It may be mentioned here that, Lachit Barphukan was the youngest son of Momai Tamuli Barbarua, among them, the name of Lao Deka, Bhatdhara, Marangi and Laluk are mentioned in 'ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES'. The name of Luluksola Barphukan is found as the elder brother of Lachit Barphukan in 'LACHIT BARPHUDAN AND HIS TIMES'. It would have been better if these names were inserted in 'LACHIT BARPHUDAN AND HIS TIMES', keeping in view of the title of the book. Likewise, it also known that, Lachit Barphukan was desciple of the Vaisnrite saint Ramgopal Ata.<sup>50</sup> There is important information in 'SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA' that there lived a hero in upper Assam, whose name was Bagh Hazarika

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<sup>50</sup> DHAS. Bull. -2, p.56

and a Muslim by religion. He accompanied Lachit Barphukan in the battle of Sharaighat and helped in the victory against Ram Singha.<sup>51</sup> This information is important for the history of Assam, because it is an additional evidence for the secular character of Ahom Government. It would have been better if these information were inserted in 'LACHIT BARPHUKAN AND HIS TIMES' after due examination.

In this place, what was the battle of Sharaighat to S.K.Bhuyan and how he viewed the relevance of the battle in modern times can be presented with few sentences from his presidential speech delivered in Janji Lachit Mela in 25 Feb 1956. Generally in the writings of the nationalist historians of India a contradiction is noticed in their perspective on Violent and non-violent methods of nation building. When they describe the activities of the Maratha and Rajput heroes, they give enthusiastic sanction to the violent heroism, but whenever they speak of the Indian culture, spiritualism and the non-violent struggle of India for independence, they support non-violent means. The few sentences of the speech of S.K.Bhuyan, quoted here also clarify his view on this point. He said, *“Three Hundred years less fifteen years has passed now from the conclusion of the battle of Sharaighat. Shall we go now to fight the battle of Sharaighat? Now there is no Mughal Padshah Aurengzeb, No Shayista Khan, the subedar of Bengal and no RamSingha will come from Amber to invade Assam, no question arises that Assamese will attack the Mughal taking swords, shields and canons and throw them to Brahmaputra to flow away. In such a situation, there is no need to construct earthen ramparts touching from one hill to another, no need to stain the Hengdan with blood of maternal uncle be beheading him for his delinquency in construction the rampart. Why then we need Lachit?”*

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<sup>51</sup> Bhuyan, S.K.- Sw. Raj. Singha, pp.170-171

*“There is no Sharaighat, but there is Sharaighat. There is no Mughal invasion, but there is the need of being united by the Assamese people in the determination to protect the nation. The problems of Sharaighat were military; the present problems are social, political and cultural. There is no limit of the problems of Assam and these will never end. The problems of yearly floods...until these problems are settled in right way, the Assamese identity will be in danger. We need that mentality and uninterrupted patriotism at every moment, with which the great hero Lachit Barphukan and his colleagues settled the problems”*<sup>52</sup>

*“Now the crisis of Sharaighat is not in front of us, but we have different miscellaneous problems at every moment. We have to solve them with the patriotism of Sharaighat.”*<sup>53</sup>

The writings of S.K.Bhuyan have popularized the Characters of and different episodes of Assam history in general, and likewise his writings on the Mughal invasions have been able to popularize the Assamese heroes among the masses. In the medieval period, the Buranjis comprised the records of the events, which were related to the monarchs only. So the other persons did not get prominence. Collecting the information scattered and buried in these sources, S.K.Bhuyan had focused individually on those characters and episodes and took them into prominence. The people of Assam, now uses the names of Lachit, Mula Gabharu, Jaimati, Sharaighat and so on in their general conversations. These Characters have become icon of heroism, patriotism and nationalism. These names can inspire the Assamese people to work for the state. The writings of S.K.Bhuyan have played important role in creating the enchanting images of these characters.

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<sup>52</sup> idem, Tripodi-pp-66-67

<sup>53</sup> ibid, pp82-83

**(B) Moamaria uprising:**

Moamaria uprising is an important and epoch making event in the history of Assam. S.K.Bhuyan identified it as one of the important causes for the downfall of the Ahom monarchy. So naturally, it has found importance in his writings. This event was found special place in three of his books viz- "AHOMAR DIN", 'SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA' and 'ANGLO ASSAMESE RELATION: 1761 –1826'. S.K. Bhuyan discussed the subject in a brief a chapter of 'AHOMAR DIN' (Page. 7-9); in a lengthy chapter of SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA (Page 126-164) and elaborately in the chapter with the title 'Disturbance in Assam. 1769-92' in ANGLO – ASSAMESE RELATION: 1761-1826. The three chapters on keerti Chandra Barbarua (chapters 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>); The 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> chapters respectively with the titles 'Manipurar Raja JaiSingha; 'Maglou Kuwanri Kuranganayani' and 'Latakata Ran,' The 12<sup>th</sup> chapter with the title 'Asomat Phiringgir Banijya Bistar'; The 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> chapters respectively with the titles 'Ahomar Hindu Dharma Grahan' and 'Asomat Shakta Mat Prachalan' –can be said as supplementary to the subject. In the 6<sup>th</sup> Chapter of ANGLO–ASSAMESE-RELATION 1761-1826 with the title 'Disturbances in Assam, 1769-92' has three parts and 55 subheadings, which are inserted within these three parts. An appendix has also been inserted here. In this chapter the revolt of Krishna Narayan is inserted and it is concluded with Gouri Nath Singha's seeking help from East India Company. Expedition of captain welsh to Assam is given in a different chapter (chapter 7<sup>th</sup>). 'SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA' and 'ANGLO– ASSAMESE-RELATION: 1671-1826' are almost same in regard to the information and perspective of the author on the subject. But 'ANGLO- ASSAMESE RELATION: 1761-1826' being a thesis has witnessed sign of more maturity in the way of presenting the things than that of the SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA. For

example there is a sweeping comment in SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA on women that women are the roots of all troubles through out the histories of all the nations. But such sweeping comment is not found in ‘ANGLO ASSAMESE RELATION 1761-1826’. ‘AHOMAR DIN’ was a creation of S.K. Bhuyan of his school life and the book bears sign of his immature handling of information and lack of careful perspectives throughout the whole book. In the chapter on Moamaria uprising also, there are same unacceptable information and perspective. For example, in the very beginning of the chapter it is written that (i) Maharaj Shiva Singha ascendant the through in 1714. Shiva Singha is the eldest son of Jaymati (page – 7) (ii) ‘Like all the revolution and national crisis of through out world, here is also an women in the root’- this perspective is unscientific and this perspective of S.K. Bhuyan can be noticed in ‘SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA’ also (iii) In this chapter the Assamese suffix “Hant” which is generally used to mean inferior, undignified status of person(s) is added to the Moamorias (as Moamoria hant) while the term ‘Sakal’ used to mean the dignified status, is added to terms like terms like ‘Ahom’ ‘Dangaria’, ‘Bisoya’ etc.. This difference reveals his apathy for the Moamarias and respect for the rulers or for the nobles. Of course, in SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA also S.K. Bhuyan has shown this feeling of ownness to the Ahom soldiers by saying them “our soldiers” (Amar sainya) following the tune of Srinath Duwara Barbarua, The author of Tungkhungia Buranji<sup>54</sup> SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA) and (iv) in ‘AHOMAR DIN’ the incident of Besmearing the forehead of the, the Mayamara pontiff with sacrificial blood by Queen Phuleswari is presented as the main cause of the Moamaria uprising.

On the other hand ‘SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA’ and ‘ANGLO ASSAMESE RELATION: 1761-1826’ were written in his matured stage of life.

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<sup>54</sup> TB, p. 66

Abundant source materials were utilized in these two books and these two books bear signs of his intense reflection and wide study in analyzing the subject.

It is note worthy in the beginning of this observation about the use of the two words “Moamaria” and Mayamara. S.K. Bhuyan has not given any explanation on the origin of these two words in ‘SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA’. The portion quoted from ‘ANIRUDDHA CHARIT’ contains the origin of the name ‘Mayamara satra’<sup>55</sup>. S.K. Bhuyan has quoted this portion in discussing the point of miraculous power of Aniruddha Dev, which is mentioned in the – book named ‘ADI-CHARIT’. Likewise, it is seen that S.K. Bhuyan has used the two words ‘Moamara’ and Mayamara indiscriminately in ‘SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA’. On the other hand it is briefly mentioned about the origin of these two words in ‘ANGLO – ASSAMESE RELATION: 1761-1826’ in this way *‘Aniruddha’s monastery came to be known from that day as Mayamara Satra as he killed the serpent brought to being by his maya of magic. The name became after words corrupted into Moamora or Moamaria from that of a lake in Majuli which abounded in a description of a small fish called Moa and where the second headquarter of the Satra were erected.’*<sup>56</sup> Like wise in this book S.K. Bhuyan very carefully used the word Mayamara for the Monastery and its pontiff and the word Moamara for the disciples of the Satra and for the rebels of the Uprising. [There are many traditions regarding origin of the word Mayamara. The rule followed in ‘ANGLO-ASSAMESE RELATION: 1761-1826’ shall be followed in this writing.]

S.K. Bhuyan has emphasized on different causes in different places of ‘SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA’. In ‘SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA’, S.K. Bhuyan giving the amendment to the view given in ‘AHOMAR

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<sup>55</sup> Bhuyan, S.K.- Sw.Raj.Singha, P.133

<sup>56</sup> idem, AAR, p.200

DIN' has mentioned -*"many people think that the insult done by Phuleswari is the main cause of the Moamaria uprising. It may be one of the many causes or may be the adding fuel to the fire, but the seed of the Moamaria uprising was sowed is the very beginning of the promulgation of Vaisnavite religion."*<sup>57</sup> (Td).

In the page no – 8 of the same book it is said – *"Three things entered during the reign of Shivasimha; entering of Shakta religion into the royal family and into the royal officers; getting the sovereign power by an woman; and not performing the various duties connected with sovereign administration by the monarch. The summarized consequence of these three reasons was –the taking of sword by the innocent cultivators and the fall of the Ahom monarchy."* (Td.)

It is said in Page – 28 – *'Retaliation of the humiliation in the hand of Keerti Chandra Barbarua was the only aim of the Moamaria Uprising'* (Td.)

In page – 126, it is said, - *"The humiliating attitude of the other religious preachers and followers towards the Mayamara pontiff and towards his disciples and tortures of the monarchs and of the royal officers traditionally in generations for these two reasons, an initiated Vaisnavite community was compelled to fight in battle field to safeguard their self respect"*. (Td.)

In page – 146 it is said- *"This demon of Moamaria Uprising which was born from the humiliation of Phuleswari Kuwanri caused destruction of the sovereign Power of Assam"* (Td.)

If the aspect of emphasis on different causes is kept aside, the causes identified by S. K. Bhuyan for Moamaria uprising will be-

- (i) Entry of Shakta cult into royal family and royal officers.
- (ii) Getting sovereign ruling power by a woman.

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<sup>57</sup> op. cit. P.126

- (iii) Leaving the various duties related to sovereign administration by the monarch.
- (iv) Retaliation against the humiliation done by Keerti Chandra Barbarua.
- (v) Humiliating attitude of the other pontiffs and people following other religion towards the Mayamara pontiff and his disciples.
- (vi) Tortures on the Moamarias in generations by the monarchs and royal officers.
- (vii) Retaliation against the humiliation of Phuleswari Kuwanri.

S. K. Bhuyan has narrated some events in support of the causes identified by him in different context and he has analyzed them minutely. For example, to discuss the point of humiliating attitude of the other communities and their pontiffs, he has analyzed some points (i) A '*puthi*' like "ADI-CHARIT" can not be a written by a saintly person like Madhab Dev; (ii) That saintly person like Aniruddha was ousted from the Vaisnavite fold in a tender age by Sankar Dev, cannot be believed (iii) That the stories on his (Aniruddha Dev) cult of impure religious practices which were circulated or heard on those days were created out of the jealousy for the wide popularity, power and resources of the pontiff and of the monastery. S.K. Bhuyan has analyzed the points so, minutely and with such arguments that these have become acceptable. S.K. Bhuyan has opined that the deviated practices of the "Rati Khowa" community may be a secret addition of the age- old traditional custom and habits of the disciples, which were newly initiated in this cult (The 'Rati khowa' cult). Moreover, it is admitted that there was a flexible and silent sanction to these practices observing the moods and temperaments of the tribal people who were

initiated in this cult. It is also said that there might not be any truth and justification for the humiliating attitude towards the Moamaria community, but it is true that such attitude existed in the society in those days. Thus S.K. Bhuyan has given a practical and balance view in analyzing the point.

It is noticeable that S.K. Bhuyan has identified the humiliating attitude of the other religious groups towards the Moamarias as a cause of the uprising. Because none of the preceding historians like Holiram Dhekal Phukan (ASAM BURANJI-1829); Sir Edward Gait (A HISTORY OF ASSAM 1905); Hiteswar Barbaruah (AHOMAR DIN – 1915-1939); Padmeswar Naobaicha Phukan (ASSAM BURANJI – 1990) and succeeding historians like Gunabhiram Baruah (ASSAM BURANJI 1972); P.N.Gohain Baruah (ASOMAR BURANJI – 1937); Dr. S.L. Baruah (A.COMP. HIST. OF ASSAM, 1985); Dr. H.K Barpujari (Ed.-THE COMP. HISTORY OF ASSAM- 1992) has not mentioned this cause in their writings. There is mention above the humiliation of the Mayamara Pontiff by the other Pontiffs in the “Asam Buranji” of Gunabiram Baruah. – *“The other pontiffs showed humiliating attitude toward the Mayamara Pontiff when he was humiliated during the reign of Shiva Singha. Many other pontiffs of equal status humiliated this pontiff not allowing him to sit in equal position (Eke Shari), specially while offering ‘Nirami’ to Lakshmisimha”*<sup>58</sup> But the issue of this humiliation is not mentioned as a cause of the uprising in this Buranji. It is also noteworthy that none of these historians have discussed the subject such elaborately and minutely as what S.K. Bhuyan had discussed on the background, the causes and its subsequent events of the uprising.

The humiliation of the Mayamara pontiff by the other pontiffs and their followers may be accepted as an event, closely entangled with the Moamaria uprising because, it is mentioned in the Buranjis that Gagini, the junior pontiff

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<sup>58</sup> Barua, Gunabhiram- Asam Buranji, P. 109

(Deka-Mahanta) of the Mayamara monastery became excited in the biased patronage, award and recognition offered by Keerti chandra Barbaruah to Dihing Satra. (The monastery at Dihing). S.K. Bhuyan also has mentioned this behavior of Gagini Deka in “SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA”<sup>59</sup> Likewise after getting the royal power; Raghab compelled the pontiffs of other monasteries, excepting the main four monasteries, to take initiation from the Mayamara pontiff.

But, in spite of all these, this issue cannot be taken as a cause of the uprising, because the Moamarias revolted against the Ahom Monarchy and not against the other Pontiffs or other community. There is not any essential relation with the occurrence of the uprising with the humiliation of the Mayamara pontiff and Moamarias by the others. In other words, if the other causes were absent and this issue alone had prevailed before the uprising, the uprising would have not occurred. Likewise, even if the other had not humiliated the Mayamara pontiff and his followers, the uprising would have taken place. It was accidentally got entangled with the causes of the uprising.

The two causes, getting sovereign ruling power by a woman (Tirotar Rajeswari Pad Labh, which is marked as No. II) and retaliation for the humiliation by Phuleswari (Phuleswari Kuwanrir Hatat Powa Apamanar Pratisodh Puran marked as No. VII) have been identified by S.K. Bhuyan on the basis of the same episode.

Out of these two causes, the first one i.e. getting sovereign power by an woman might have wrongly identified by S.K. Bhuyan probably for two reasons This may be a sudden unaware expression of suppressed anti woman feelings of the male dominated society (This phenomenon is global, and it not only prevailed in the

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<sup>59</sup> Bhuyan, S.K.-Sw.Raj.Singha, pp. 147-148

medieval age, but also, it is still continued in many respects) for which he had identified the event of getting the royal power by a woman as destructive to society and polity. Secondly this may be caused due to his (of S.K.Bhuyan) tendency to find out a scapegoat for the faults of the Ahom Monarchy. He found out Queen Phuleswari, the daughter of the Chinatolia 'Nat' as the scapegoat. The Ahom dynasty supplied the themes and materials for the glorification of power, valour and might of the Assamese people, the establishment of which was the mission of his life. The Moamaria uprising caused great loss of men and money of the kingdom and led to the fall of the dynasty and for this reason, the feeling of hatred and vengeance against the Moamaria uprising grew in the mind of S.K. Bhuyan. He termed the uprising as 'Rakshyas' (i.e. a demon)<sup>60</sup> and as a harmful star 'Rahu'.<sup>61</sup> It is mentionworthy here that this kind of feudalistic hatred toward the Moamarias was fostered by many intellectuals who had some modern visions including L.N.Bezbarua and Hemchandra Barua in the post-Yandaboo period. The meaning of the word 'Matak' in 'Hemkosh'-by Hemchandra Barua and the Poem 'Been Baragi' of L.N.Bezbarua witness such view held by them. S.K. Bhuyan identified the religious fanaticism of Queen Phuleswari as a factor, which gave birth to these two 'Rakshyas' and 'Rahu'. There are some valid grounds in identifying the religious fanaticism as factors of the Moamaria uprising.

Prior to the reign of Queen Phuleswari, in the incidents of killing of the Mayamara pontiff or causing oppression on them, at least the Ahom Government had some pretext or grounds justifying their acts, but in the case of Queen Phuleswari there was not any such ground or pretext. The humiliation of the Mayamara Mahanta by Phuleswari was done with the intention to impose superiority

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<sup>60</sup> *ibid* P.146

<sup>61</sup> *ibid*, P.66

of the cult (Shakta cult), which she followed, upon the Vaisnavite pontiff. The influence of a section of Brahmans on the rulers became such intense that, a monarch in the supreme position of the state with sovereign power gave up the throne in the name his wife in a mere prophecy made by the Astrologers that the monarch will lose his throne by the influence of bad star. On that very Brahminical influence Queen Phuleswari humiliated the Mayamara pontiff. And so, the humiliation of the Mayamara pontiff by Queen Phuleswari with her religious fanaticism can be said as an active cause of the uprising. But, S.K. Bhuyan had found fault on her gender of women hood. It cannot be thought that S.K. Bhuyan consciously believed on such contention that “*An woman cannot think of the future for her anxiety for the present*”<sup>62</sup> and “*this humiliation of the Mayamara pontiff by Phuleswari was also done with such feminine mental character*”.<sup>63</sup> S.K. Bhuyan had cited some examples also in support of his contention. But such sweeping comment is not scientific.

The two causes, Oppression on the Moamarias in generations by the Ahom Monarchs and the officers (marked as – vi) and Retaliation for the humiliation by Keerti Chandra Barbarua (Marked as – iv) are again identified on the basis of same events. These events are also knitted with the same single string. The cause, entry of Shakta cult into the royal family and the royal officers (marked as no. -1) is also entangled with those events. The incidents of oppressions on the Moamaria by the Ahom ruling class are narrated in the pages from 139 to 151 in ‘SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA’. This was started in the reign of Pratap Singha and culminated in the hand of Keerti Chandra Barbaruah. S.K. Bhuyan held “*the influence of Bengali foreigner was started in Assam with the introduction of Shakta*

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<sup>62</sup> ibid, P.145

<sup>63</sup> ibid, P.146

*cult by Krishnaram Bidya Bagis, a resident of Nadia, Santipur. Three types of religion entered into the royal family- firstly, the Vaishnavite cult which was widely prevalent in the country, and which flourished with literature and music, secondly- the traditional Deodhai religion and thirdly, - the Shakta cult imported from Bengal. The monarchs tried hard to maintain equality among these three, but it is not always easy to maintain neutrality without any excitement for human mind. Consequently, different cults, different aims, different social structures and different faiths started to appear among people and the Royal family. In the lack of any effort resists them with a fillings of National unity, the process of destruction got started."* <sup>64</sup> This aspect is also supplementary to the causes mentioned above. If carefully observed, it can be understood that the causes viz entry of Shakta Cult among the royal family and officers; appearance of divergent cults and faiths among people and ruling class and influence of Bengali foreigners in Assam, were not the main causes but they were bye-product of another cause. Abstaining from exerting the royal duties, by the monarch (Marked as no.-III) was that main cause from which these bye-products were created. From the very ancient time, the people of Assam and the ruling dynasties had been following different cults and faiths. The religious faiths and rituals [which has been termed as 'Ahom Dharma' by S.K. Bhuyan] were different from the ancient faiths followed by the people. There were some elements in the rituals followed by the Ahoms, which were similar to the Shakta Cult. But due to the farsightedness shown by Sukapha and his successor, no conflict (of serious nature) took place till to the reign of Gadadhar Singha. This aspect is applicable to the case of language also. The incident of outward and harmful influence on the monarchs, on the nobles and on the polity of state became possible only due to inefficiency and weakness of the Ahom monarchy. The cause was rooted deeper in the inability of

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<sup>64</sup> *ibid*, P.124

the monarchs to tackle the situation than Krishna Narayan being a Bengali or the newly entered religion being the Shakta cult. Neither Krishna Narayan nor the Shakta cult entered into the land with an intention to destroy the monarchy.

The personality and character of Shiva Singha, Rajeswar Singha, Lakshmi Singha and Gaurinath Singha were so weak that not only the Brahmins could extend their influence to the monarchs and to the state polity, but also the consort of the monarch, Phuleshwari; Three supreme cabinets (Da-Dangariyas); and an inferior minister Keerti Chandra Barbarua could extend their influence and could play roll in making and unmaking of kings. The timid monarchs, although understood the situation and expected to remove such undue influence they did not dare to do so. Even after discussing these aspects, there remains to comment upon the retaliating attitude of the Moamaria rebels, which is said as the main aims of the rebel in the uprising by S.K. Bhuyan. This view of S.K. Bhuyan points out the character of immediateness of the causes.

In fact, there were some latent important factors, which gave birth to the uprising. These factors are latently present in the narration of S.K. Bhuyan also, but he did not penetrate to that depth, and so they are not focused upon in his writing. With the analysis of (i) the pretexts or valid grounds on which, the Mayamara pontiffs were oppressed since the days of Pratap Singha, (ii) the class character and aims of the leaders of Moamaria uprising, (iii) and the inspirations and interests of the common Moamaria disciples for which they fought the deadly battles, these latent factors can be identified. To analyze these factors, a concise chart can be prepared for the conveniences of observation. The monarchs and nobles involved with the causes of the uprising as found in the sources can be shown as below-

**The monarchs:**

Pratap Singha

Surampha

Udenyadtya Singha

Gadadhar Singha

Rudra Singha

Shiva Singha

Pramata Singha

Rajeswar Singha

Lakshmi Singha

**Religious leaders:**

Nityananda Dev. –

Killed by Surampha

Jairam Dev. –

Jayadhvaj Singha kept his disciples captive

Baikunth Nath Dev. –

Killed by Gadadhar Singha

Chaturbhaj Dev. –

Rudra Singha punished him. Five 'Medhis' were also dishonored publicly. Queen Phuleswari humiliated him along with his disciples by besmearing their forehead with sacrificial blood. She sentenced him to death for his inauspicious prophecies about imminent birth of child in time of her pregnancy. Eventually, he could save his life.

Shilikhataia Kaivalyanandan –

Rajeswar Singha offered special patronage to him. 750 puras of Tax-free lands, a male Elephant with name Saksing; pair of Gold bangles, and a 'Parhi-Dola' was presented to him. Kurti Chandra Barbarua offered biased recognition, praise and award to him. He was appointed as a "Ligira" to use him against the Mayamara monastery.

Gagini Deka - He was junior pontiff of the Mayamara monastery. He took initiative in the Moamaria uprising and expected to become king. Keerti Chandra Barbarua humiliated him also.

Gobinda Gaon Burha of Shagunmari – He organized a band of warriors by the order of Gagini Deka to kill Ragha and Nahar and to enthrone Gagini Deka.

Krisnaram Nyay Bagish - Shiva Singha, Queen Phuleswari and Pramatta Singha became his disciples. Queen Phuleswari wanted to establish Shakta cult as the State religion in his influence and besmeared the Mayamora Mahanta with sacrificial blood.

He was offered the charge of maintaining the Kamakhya Temple. Huge Quantity of land in Kamrup was given to him. Later on he participated in the plot of king making and unmaking conspiracies (in kowanr Bodroh against Laksmi Singha).

#### **Officers and nobles:**

Bez Doloi and Ranga Charan Bhandari Barua- Gadadhar Singha at his advice ordered to snatch the wealth and resources from the monasteries. They were evicted and resettled at Namrup, Cheuni and Tokolai. Some of them were killed. The monasteries set ablaze. Bej Doloi had personal enmity with

Nityananda Dev. Nityananda Dev. had to die in the order of Surampha in the role played by Bez Doloi.

Keerti Chandra Bararua – He circulated remour against Moamaria pontiff that the pontiff had fallen in illicit imperious relation because the pontiff gave shelter and food to few queens ousted from palace. He rebuked and humiliated the pontiff for not saluting Keerti Chandra Barbarua in the Bank of river Diling. Oppressed Raghav Neog and Nahar Khora Saikia cut nose and ears in the allegation of supplying untrained Elephants.

Neog Phukan and Sola Guimala – They were officers during the reign of Pratap Singha. They had to sacrifice in a test of their devotion towards their ‘Gurus’.

Raghav Neog and Nahar Khora Shaikia – They were leaders of the Hati Chungi Clan (The clan which supplied Elephant to the Ahom Monarch). They were disciples of Mayamara pontiff and had to suffer physical torture in the order of Keerti Chandra Barbarua.

Mohanmala Gohain – He was the third son of Rudra Singha. He was popular and honored by the people. He was the right-full successor of Pramatta Singha. But he was deprived from his right by Keerti Chandra Barbarua. Keerti Chandra Barbarua enthroned

Lakshmi Singha who was weak and unpopular.

He did it, so that he can protect his undue interference and influence in State affairs.

All these persons mentioned above were powerful in some way of property and royal, religious or social status. Their powers and might created jealousy for each other. The pontiffs, who were killed by the Ahom monarchs, either defied the royal power in some way or terrorized the Ahom monarchy with their might and resources. There were huge quantities of land and the servants who formed some large groups of allegiant people. The Parbatia Gosain enjoyed a huge estate in Kamrup. More over he had scriptural knowledge, high racial identity and well circulated traditions regarding his miraculous Tantric power. Like wise, Rajeswar Singha wanted to remove Keerti Chandra Barbarua from his power but he could not do so due to might of Keerti Chandra Barbarua. The three Da-Dangaries also firstly showed indifference towards the fighting against Moamarias to see the embarrassment and fall of Keerti Chandra Barbarua. So, it is noticed that the Ahom and non-Ahom nobles were powerful with their large landed property, political power, and large team of allegiant followers. On the other hand the monarch did not have any personal regular trained force under their direct control. The noble, to protect and strengthen their powers and interests fell in rivalry against each other. If there was any person without any personal interest who participated in the uprising, he was the senior Moamaria pontiff (Burha – Mahanta) He tried to debar his son in his ambition of becoming king in every step of the uprising. He supported the uprising to remove Keerti Chandra Barbarua. He advised his son not to dethrone the 'Indrabangshi' dynasty. He cursed an immediate downfall of Raghab when Raghab became arrogant and oppressor after getting royal power. In this respect, participation of Charu Gohain and Ratneswar Gohain along with Mohanmala

Gohain in the rebellious team of Moamaris can be mentioned. The expectations of the participators of 'Kowar Bidroh' (In the reign of Lakshmi Singha) are also mentioned worthy. Bhudhar Gohain the grandson of Rajeswar Singha and Malou Gohai, son of Pramatta Singha also wanted to capture the throne. Thus the Moamaria uprising was conducted by the nobles and was created out of their conflict among themselves.

But question arises why did the common Moamaria disciples fought the deadly battles? What were their interests?

Moamaria disciples fought against the royal force to pay homage to their *Gurus*; (*Mori Jao, Mari Jao, Guru Rin Suji Jao,*) apparently they fought for the cause of the nobles. But what was the inspiration behind their allegiance towards their *Gurus* for which they fought in the deadly battle? The paiks, who fought for the rulers, they fought under compulsion either for the two puras of tax-free arable lands or for fear of cruel punishment of the Ahom Government. But there were not such any compulsion for the Moamaria disciples. They fought in fear of losing something what they got it from their Gurus and from the faith system, which was preached by their Gurus.

If the nature of the Vaisnavite cult is analyzed, it can be noticed that this cult is it self was revolutionary and it brought the values to change the society. Through this religion, neglected and oppressed people struggling for survival expected emancipation from their woes and worries of their worldly life. They made quest in spiritual 'Moksha'. They received recognition of equal social status in this new order. The system of participation in common prayer in the Vaisnarvite order, gave them a feelings of equality and liberty, a feeling of collective force and a feeling of courage. Besides them colorful dramas and music (*Nat-Bhaownas*) performed in the monasteries and Namghars gave them pleasure. The imageries of activities of Lord

Krishna performed in his childhood and in youth, which are depicted in popular language in the scriptures, gave them solace and peace of mind. The affection and respect of the Vaisnavite pontiffs shown towards their disciples gave a feeling of security. On the other hand, the Brahminical cult in its deteriorated form became oppressive. The new Vaisnavite cult declared a silent protest against this oppressive character of the Brahminical cult. More over there was liberalism and flexibility in the Vaisnavite cult for co-existence of old customs and habits of the common people.

The noble class gave birth to the uprising, to protect and strengthen their interest. But the common people fought to eliminate an old order for emancipation from a system of socio-econo-political exploitation and oppression. The ancient nobility grew up with the political power, royal patronages and large landed property. Their position was more strengthened when these facilities practically became hereditary. Enjoyment of these properties Generation wise, the favour became a permanent right. The ancient religious nobility pursued a favourable religious system to suit that socio-economic and political condition. On the other hand the new religious nobility utilized the force of allegiance of their disciples and preached a different faith system. But the Ahom monarch did not grow matured to tackle such complicated situation. The Ahom monarchs of the times of the uprising were weak and were not able to control these nobles. It was a sign of deterioration of the Ahom monarchy. A group of new nobility got prepared to emerge out. The common neglected and oppressed people endeavored to emancipate themselves; religion was merely an external cover.

The subsequent events of the uprising also reflect that the tribal or other petty political unites made efforts to rule inpendently or to overthrow or to defy the Ahom Government. The opposition of the people of Nagaon during the flight of Gaurinath

Sinha, The revolt in Kamrup, in Darrang, foundation of petty independent states in Upper Assam reflects the political aspiration of their leaders.

S.K. Bhuyan has not focused upon the inherent weaknesses in the structure of Ahom Government and upon the underlying economic factors for the emergence of the uprising. But S.K. Bhuyan has preserved so many information, elaborate description of the events and the petty events of those days, in his writing, (which were taken mainly from the 'Buranjis') that with the help of these information a new observer can penetrate into that deep layer of economic and political causes. Of course, till the time of S.K. Bhuyan no historian analyzed the historical events with such perspective.

In 'ANGLO ASSAMESE RELATION: 1761-1826' he has left some traces of modern perspective. 'Democracy in Kala Samhati Satra'<sup>65</sup>; Liberal attitude towards the 'Depressed' castes<sup>66</sup>; 'Schism in Shakta camp'<sup>67</sup>; 'personal considerations' of the thinking class i.e. of the nobles<sup>68</sup>; 'rivalry of the nobles'<sup>69</sup>; 'Ahom feudal lords who regarded their possessions as matter of rights rather than favour' 'numerical inferiority of the standing army at the back and called of the Government'<sup>70</sup> – such phrases reflect this modern perspective. In spite of these phrases of modern perspective, in general, the perspective in 'SWARGADIV RAJESWAR SINGHA' and in 'ANGLO ASSAMESE RELATION 1761-1826' are same and with same perspective he commented in 'ANGLO ASSAMESE RELATION 1761-1826', - "*The solidarity of the Moamarias was kept up by their*

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<sup>65</sup> AAR, p.194

<sup>66</sup> *ibid*, p.239

<sup>67</sup> *ibid*, p. 244

<sup>68</sup> *ibid*, p.245

<sup>69</sup> *ibid*, p.246

<sup>70</sup> *ibid*, p.252

*common desire to arrange the insults heaped on their Gurus by Ahom sovereigns and nobles to which several new factors were afterwards added*".<sup>71</sup>

But had S.K. Bhuyan accepted the 'new factors as the features of the socio-econo-political condition of pre-uprising period, instead of taking them as "Afterwards added", he would have accepted the solidarity of the Moamarias as an emergence of new organized awareness instead of explaining them as creation from their retaliatory attitude.

It is mention worthy that in 'ANGLO-ASSAMESE –RELATION 1761-1826' S.K. Bhuyan has accepted theory of "Mat + Ek" for the origin of the word Matak – "*The Moamarias derive the term Matak from two words, Mat, opinion, will or creed and EK one and they believe the epithet is justly applied to them as they pride themselves in being, of one persuasion, will and Mind*"<sup>72</sup>. But he has doubted this theory in 'SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA' (P-140, S.RS).

Some instant evidences can be cited here, which goes against the 'Mat + Ek'theory- (i) Firstly, the coalesce of the two words 'Mat' and 'Ek' doesnot create 'Matak' as per the rule of Grammer, it creates 'Matoika'. (ii) The theory of 'Mat +Ek' was created firstly in 'ANIRUDDHADEV CHARIT'. But as per 'ASSAM BURANJI SAR' of Kashinath Tamuli phukan, Badaucha was the king of the Matak, who had been ruling in upper Assam in time of the advent of Sukapha to Brahmaputra Valley.<sup>73</sup> (iii) The Chandrakanta Abhidhan indicates as a tribe for the word 'Matak'.<sup>74</sup> (iv)In the fourth cession of Matak league held at Chabua on November 8, 1941, the tribal leader Bhimbar Deuri delivered a lecture. In this

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, p.256

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, p.255

<sup>73</sup> ABS, p.10; Sadaraminn's AB, p.12;

<sup>74</sup> Gogoi. P. - Ahoms in the Mayamara Sect'. P.Gogoi. JOARS, Vol-xxiii, 1977-'78 p.31

lecture, it is revealed that the Mataks had a demand for recording the tribe as a separate tribe in the census of 1941.<sup>75</sup>

None of the former historians prior to S.K. Bhuyan have discussed the subject i.e. the Moamaria uprising so elaborately as S.K. Bhuyan has done. In modern time, many scholars have reflected upon the subject. All these scholars can broadly be grouped into two groups. The first group is formed with scholars who have emphasized on the religious aspect of the uprising and the second group is formed with those scholars who emphasize on the discontentment of the common people, which was caused by age-old exploitation and oppression. Including S.K. Bhuyan, Haliram Dhekial Phukan, Edward Gait, Gunabhiram Barua, Padma Nath Gohain Barua, Changrung Phukan, Maniram Dewan, Dr. Maheswar Neog, Dr. Leela Gogoi, Dr. H.K. Barpujari, Dr. S.L. Barua, Dr. Eni Hazarika (and some others) are in the first group and Dr. Hiren Gohain, Dr. Dhrubajoyti Bora, Dr. Amalendu Guha (and some others) are in the second group. Dr. Hiren Gohain; has mentioned more number of class-conflicts which he identified as the causes of the Moamaria uprising, than all other similar analyzers. He has discussed the class conflicts very systematically. The conflicts, which he identified as the causes of Moamaria uprising, are –

- (i) The conflict between common workers and the feudal officers.
- (ii) Between the monarch and feudal nobles.
- (iii) The internal conflicts among the nobles.
- (iv) The conflicts among the dynastic clans (Phoids)

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<sup>75</sup> Sarma, Debabrat -Amar Asom, page-4, Sept.26, 2007

- (v) The conflicts between the Bhahminical and Vaisnavite leaders.
- (vi) The subdued tribes and tributary kingdom versus the central monarchy.

Among them, he identifies the conflict between the depressed working class and fudal officials as the most active conflict.

Although there is difference in the way of analysis, the most of the information utilized by all the scholars who analyzed on the basis of economic class conflict including Dr. Hiren Gohain are found in the writings of S.K. Bhuyan. While in the writing of the Dr. Hiren Gohain, the conflict between the depressed class and nobility is emphasized, in the writing of S.K. Bhuyan the religious oppression and retaliation of the Moamarias is emphasized and the other causes have become latent and subsidiary. Dr. Eni Hazarika, in her “ ASOMAR ITIHASAT SRI ANIRUDDHA DEB AND MAYAMARA BAISHNAV SAMPRADAY” analyzed different ancient and modern views, but finally, it seen, she has accepted the view of S.K. Bhuyan. The view held by Dr. Nagen Saikia, which finds expression in his comments given in the “Foreword” (Aagkatha) of the same book is not acceptable. He has written – *“Because the Mayamara Mahanta and his disciples did not want political power, they wanted to keep intact their religious, cultural and social ideals intact”*. The ‘Burha Mahanta’ was irrelevant as a rebel or as a participator in the uprising. He became mute spectator in the main part of the uprising. The leaders like Gagini Deka Mahanta, Gobinda Gaonburha, disciple of Mayamara Satra, Raghab Neog and Nahar Khora Saikia who played active roll in the outbreak of the uprising and in leading it, had political vision. They wanted to over throw the Ahom monarchy and capture power for them.

If the Buranjis like “TUNGKHUNGIA BURANJI”, “ASOM BURANJI of Kasinath Tamuliphukan, ‘PADYA BURANJI’, “BURANJI VIVEK-RATNA” and the later writings written on the basis of these Buranjis (Including those of S.K. Bhuyan) are carefully studied, the increasing power and resources of the nobles (religious nobles and the nobles created with political powers), ambitions and anxiety for enlargement and protection of these powers and resources; the envy, rivalry created among them appears as most active factor of the uprising. But the political mass-awareness necessary for such a turbulent uprising was not among the people. There were not any conscious, expressed and open grievances against oppression among the people. Nor they organized on such grievances of oppressions and exploitation. If there had been such mass awareness, the uprising would have taken a shape of revolution and the revolution would have organized against all the feudal conservative environment and values. The powerful nobles were the directors and heroes of this episode. Oppressions on them, their humiliations, their interests have played active and important role in this uprising.

The Vaishnavite cult was not merely a faith system. This was a way of living, a life style. In this way of living, there was hope and solace for “symbolic” and real “Mukti” or emancipation. This hope was the main inspiration behind paying deadly homage (Guru rin) by them to their gurus. Physical tortures, exploitation on them, social inequality and negligence shown to them by the elder privileged class created this discontentment. This discontentment, though important, was dormant and was not open and active in the uprising.

Off course that, the deterioration in Ahom monarchy was conducive to the outbreak of the uprising, is mentioned by all the above historians and analyzers. Likewise, that this uprising lead to the deterioration Ahom monarchy toward its ruin is also mentioned by all including S.K. Bhuyan.

### **(C) Anglo-Assamese Relations:**

S.K.Bhuyan dealt with the subject of Anglo Assamese relation most seriously among all of his historical writings, which is evident from his selection of the subject of his Doctoral research. Prior to the research work on this subject he compiled the book 'EARLY BRITISH RELATION WITH ASSAM' in the year 1928 although the book was the result of his studies of the Assam records of East India Company.

"ANGLO-ASSAMESE RELATION 1771-1826" is obviously the best of the historical writings of S.K.Bhuyan. Being a research work, the book may be considered as the best representation of his views on the subject and a careful study of the book will help in analyzing his views on the subject. This book is a revised publication of the thesis (EAST INDIA COMPANY'S RELATIONS WITH ASSAM) prepared by the author for the Ph.D. degree. The author did the research work for the PhD degree of London University in between 1936 to 1938 at the SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL STUDIES, London. The research work was done under the guidance and supervision of late Mr. H.H.Dodwell, "*the greatest authority on the British period of Indian History*" and the editor of fifth and sixth volumes of the *CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF INDIA*. The examiners of the thesis were two other famous historians –Sir Edward Gait and Professor P.W.Morrell Reader in Imperial history in London University. London in general, the home-capital of the British people who ruled a world-wide empire including India had been a center of intellectual excellence and also a point of attraction for the students, research-scholars, and the scholars of world at that time. More over he had the opportunity to use a centralized institution like India office library to consult the records and publications related to the subject under study. The author had passion and sincerity in the study of Assam History. The original thesis was revised on the guidelines of

the advices of the examiner and with new added portions, which was thought relevant and necessary in later. Besides, as being a result of research-work, writing of this book demanded careful observation, hard labor of the author and also had to be tested through a scientific methodology. The conglomerate maturity of the guidance, suitable atmosphere for intellectual pursuit and the author's stamina, interest, passion, and prior hold in the area under study is a potent factor to produce active impact upon its creation.

The book is divided into eleven chapters. The chapter VI contains three parts, the chapter VII contains two parts and the chapter VIII contains three parts. Each chapter is divided again into several sub-headings.

The basic content of this voluminous work is the English East India Company's (EEIC) <sup>76</sup> relations with Assam. Some topics like *early European* (English and others) *visitors to Assam*, *early European writers on Assam*, *early European merchants* are also presented in the introductory chapter of the book. The study of 'ANGLO-ASSAMESE RELATION 1771-1826' reveals that though the subject matter presented with huge number of related topics (108 topics) under sub-headings within its eleven chapters, the subject matter can broadly be divided into three main phases or three main developments – (a) Trade relation of the English merchants with Assam with their base at Goalpara and Jugighopa (in the district of Rungpore at that time) in between 1771-1790 (b) Moamaria Uprising, Burkendazes at the service of Krishnanarayan, the rebellious prince of Darrang and Captain Welsh's expedition (c) The Burmese invasions of Assam, Intervention of EEIC

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<sup>76</sup>“The Governor and Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East Indies’ (English East India Company) was founded with the original charter granted by Queen Elizabeth I on December 31, 1600. The company was granted a monopoly of trade in the East Indies. -The Ox. Hist of Ind.4<sup>th</sup> ed. p.333

Expulsion of The Burmese, and the beginning of Rule of East India Company in Assam.

As per the records, Assam came to be known to or came in contact with the western people through the travelers, the writers and the traders in sequence. The author has mentioned names and their activities of the early European travelers, writers, and of the merchants in the introductory chapter. Thus all the contacts of the western people with Assam or their knowledge about the land start from the early part of the Sixteenth century. The travelers visited Assam with independent aim to do so or as on their way of journey to Cathay or China. The Assam expedition led by Mirjumla to Assam in 1662 gave an opportunity to some Europeans to experience to visit Assam as sailor, gunner, camp-follower or other way connected with warfare and these people for the first time had left some documents which contain valuable information about Assam affairs of those days.

A keen analysis of all the phases of Anglo-Assamese relation of the said period reveals that trade and commercial interest of the EEIC had been the first and main mobilizing factor in determining the nature of its (EEIC) relation with Assam. The EEIC intervened in the Assam affairs during the Moamaria uprising and Burmese rule to safeguard their commercial interest in Assam. Of course other questions were also involved. Their intervention in the Moamaria uprising was motivated, to some extent with their moral and political responsibility to repulse the Burkendazes who joined the anti-Assam uprising under Krishnanarayan, the rebel leader of Darrang, as they were subjects of EEIC's territory. The request of the helpless monarch of Assam Gaurinath Singha to EEIC Govt. for intervention gave a golden opportunity to compel the Assam monarch to sign a commercial agreement favourable to the company, to collect information about and make survey in Assam.

In the case of Burmese affairs in Assam, the serious question of security of the subjects of company's territory and their empire in India was involved.

The first Five Chapters deal mainly with EEIC's trade relation with Assam. In these chapters efforts of some English merchant and civil servant to extend commercial activities to Assam with permanent establishment in Goalpara and to rouse company's interest to monopolize the Assam trade; company's activities in accordance with their recommendation; Reaction of free merchants both Indian and European, effected by the grant of monopoly to an individual (Killican) in salt trade. accounts of loss and profit of these commercial activities, the things imported and exported to Assam, Mode of Exchange, EEIC's correspondences to the Assam monarch on commercial purpose, attitude of the rulers of Assam towards the western traders are mentioned. In this early trade between EEIC (and other Western merchants) and Assam, Bengal Salt was the most profit making for the EEIC, the item being in highest demand in Assam and thus the salt trade overshadowed the other trade. Some time serious disputes occurred between the Western merchants and the Assamese Merchants mainly due to (a) over exercise of power by the Duwaria Barua(s) who served as officer and as an agent on behalf of the Assam Government in border post and (b) for non-payment of arrear due to the western merchants. These disputes some time led to forceful armed entry into and depredation in the territory of Assam by some effected traders. But sovereign Assam Government showed passive reactions towards preponderances of these intruders and settled the immediate crises tactfully.

The internal political troubles in Assam with the occurrence of Moamaria uprising and its other offshoots badly affected the Assam trade, which resulted in postponement of monopoly in salt trade and withdrawal of establishments from Goalpara.

Till this period The EEIC had been continuously soliciting the Assam monarch's friendship and cooperation for promoting Assam-Bengal trade but in this new phase the situation changed. The Moamaria uprising and its offshoots created such a critical situation that The Monarch of Assam had to leave the capital and finally to seek help from the EEIC. The Assam monarch through its advocates request the Company Government to repulse the Burkendazes who were subjects of Company Government and now have joined into the rebellious force under the Darrang Raja Krishnanarayan against The Assam Government. In such an opportune moment EEIC intervened in the matter Sent an expedition under *a prudent and efficient officer* Captain Wells and compelled the monarch to sign a commercial treaty favorable to Company. In the Chapter VI in its three parts mainly the three topics --(a) The background of Moamaria uprising (b) its development and its effect on Ahom kingdom and (c) background and development of revolt of Darrang Raja Krishnanarayan are narrated in details by the Author.

The first episode of Moamaria uprising of 1769 ended with the restoration of Lakshmi Singha in April 1770 after five month's interruption by Moamaria rule. In the beginning years of the Gaurinath Singha's reign fresh Moamaria revolt broke out and the situation in upper Assam became so critical that the monarch had to leave the capital and to take shelter in lower Assam. More serious danger was waiting here for the monarch. The discontentment of the people of Lower Assam against the Ahom Rule found expression through rebellions under some discontented chiefs of this region; most formidable of them was the rebellion under Darrang Raja Krishnanarayan .He was instigated by two nobles of Kamrup-- Haradatta and Biradatta of Jikeri and received support of the local people of Darrang. With the help of Roush, a private salt merchant at Goalpara, he created an armed force. From internal evidence of the book itself it is apparent that the company government with

its ambiguous language gave an opportunity to Krishnanarayan to recruit Burkendazes from Company's territory to fight against the Ahom ruler to recover his hereditary possession in Kamrup and Darrang. The author has not mentioned this tactics of ambiguity in specific terms. In a helpless situation the monarch had any but the only alternative to seek intervention of the company government.

In the chapter VII within the pages from page no-300 to 423 in 124 pages the expedition of Captain Welsh has been narrated in elaborate details. The Author has given the largest space in the treatment of the expedition led by Welsh to Assam. The causes behind, in its accordance to intervene in this internal politics of Assam of the company government and objectives of this expedition under an "active and prudent officer" Captain Welsh can be outlined in the quotations as (I) "The petition of The Assam Raja and the recommendations of the collector of Rungpore and of Roush produced desired effect."<sup>77</sup> (II) "*The objects, which impelled Lord Cornwallis to send a deputation to Assam, were stated in his minute delivered to the Board in their meeting of October 3, 1792.....After considering the requests of the two Rajas [of Nepal and Assam] and the commercial advantages that Bengal may obtain by a friendly and open intercourse with both countries, it appears to me that it will be no less political than humane in us to interfere our good offices to establish peace and tranquility in those quarters*"<sup>78</sup> (III) "Lord Cornwallis therefore directed "*That no pains or attention should be spread to avail ourselves of so favourable an opportunity to obtain good surveys, and to acquire every information that may be possible both of the population and of the manners and customs, of trade and*

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<sup>77</sup> AAR, p.300

<sup>78</sup> *ibid*, p.301

*manufactures, and natural productions of countries with which it must ever be our interests to maintain the most friendly communication".*<sup>79</sup>

Thus from these lines under quote it can be held that fulfillment of commercial interest of the company was the objective of it in sending this expedition and to achieve this goal the Company government shouldered the responsibility of ousting the Burkendazes from Assam. Here with it may be mentioned that Denial Roush Firstly helped Krishnanarayan in recruiting the Burkendazes in the latter's rebellious army but later he shifted his side and became mediator of the Assam monarch to send back the Burkendazes and to conciliate Krishnanarayan to come in agreement with Assam Government. Likewise later on although Krishnanarayan showed his intention to give up arms against the Assam Government in the assurance of consideration of his hereditary possessions, he could not do so for the opposition of the leaders of the Burkendazes. By this time he was practically trapped with the wishes of the Burkendazes.

Captain Welsh very prudently handled the problem and succeeded (i) to repulse the Burkendazes from Darrang and Kamrup, (ii) to negotiate Krishnanarayan to come into agreement and to surrender (on May 20,1793), (iii) to make an agreement among the Darrang princes (on June 8, 1793) (iii) and to make a commercial agreement Favourable to the Company with the Assam monarch (iv) to restore the Assam monarch in Rangpur (capital) .He had to dismiss some of the flattering but harmful nobles of Assam monarch Gaurinath Singha from power and also curtailed power sufficiently of the monarch to restrain him from his cruel activities in the name of administration. In this regard, the author has commented in the praise of the Captain, which is of course sweeping and general "*The captain was schooled in the best traditions of the British army and British administration and of*

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<sup>79</sup> *ibid*, p. 302

*the enlightened institutions of Europe, and could ill brook the unbridled autocracy of an oriental despot*"<sup>80</sup>

In doing all these he had to use extra-jurisdictional power on his own decision and some time without deliberation of his Government at Bengal. The recall-letter of the detachment from Sir John Shore received by Welsh on April 21, 1794 but he did some thing on his part to restore peace in Assam and so to solve the Moamaria problem. His last encounter with the Moamarias took place on May 12, 1794. "*According to the Assamese traditions Capt. Welsh's last encounter with Moamarias was a severe and decisive one*". He left Rangpur on May 25, and left Gauhati on July 1, 1794.

About the importance of the expedition of Welsh the author has commented with prudent observation that "The aversion of the Assamese people towards strangers was a notorious fact. Now for the first time an authorized body of Englishmen equipped with the up to date methods of exploration and investigation entered into the territories of the Swargadeo and there by broke the barriers which had sequestered Assam for centuries."(p no.307)

The author's view regarding the recall of the detachment by Shore can be known from some of his statements (i) "*the recall of the detachment from Assam was a short sighed action on the part of Sir John Shore.*"<sup>81</sup> (ii) Sir John Shore's Assam policy was the offshoot of his cautious, over prudent and pacific temperament, which manifested itself in his strict adherence to the principle of neutrality and non-interference"<sup>82</sup> (iii) "*Sir John Shore's timidity and the consequent" slavish observance of neutrality" sprang principally from his inexperience and dread of war and to some extant from the peculiar circumstances*

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<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, p.321

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, p.392

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, p. 394

*of the company's administration at that time. He was a scholar, a man of strong religious principles, and experienced mainly of revenue administration...*<sup>83</sup>

The intervening period between the recall of Welsh's detachment from Assam and the first Anglo-Burmese War i.e. from 1794 to 1723 is very important in the history of Assam in general and in Anglo- Assamese relation in particular. This period is given a separate chapter (Chapter-viii) in "ANGLO ASSAMESE RELATION 1771-1826" with the title "NON-INTERVENTION AND ITS ABANDONEMENT." This period witnessed recurrence of the troubles against which Capt. Welsh led his expedition. The Assam Government prayed the Company Government at Bengal for its armed intervention, which was strictly denied within this period. Of course the Assam Government's requests to purchase arms and ammunition from Company were approved in several occasions and these arms helped the Assam monarch to quell the troubles and to restore peace. Like wise the Company government took steps to check the entrance the Burkendazes into Assam. This very period witness the conflict between the Premier and the Barphukan. Conspiracies against the Buragohain, flight of the Barphukan to Burma (Myanmar) and the Burmese invasions (In 1817, 1819, and in 1821) in Assam. Till the Burmese had caused terror in its territory the Company govt. after occupying Assam did not intervened in this matter. In the Part II of the same chapter the Burmese invasions in Assam are described. From the description the summery of the causes of the Burmese invasions in Assam can be outlined. The Burmese imperialism; its conflict with the British power; Conflict between Purnananda Buragohain and Badanchandra Barphukan; Opportunity provided by the advent of Badanchandra Barphukan. Seeking help from the Burmese emperor; and The role of the Assamese consort of

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<sup>83</sup> *ibid*, p.395

The Burmese Emperor, Bodawpaya advocating in favour of Badan. Herewith a few lines may be quoted here—

(A)“*In August 1797 Bodawpaya renewed his intention to place the father of his Assamese consort on the Assam throne and through him carry out his cherished designs against the British*”<sup>84</sup>

(B) “*Bodawpaya saw in Badan Chandra's request an opportunity to push on to Assam which was contiguous to British territory; .....*”<sup>85</sup>

The second and the Third Burmese invasions were conducted restore and consolidate whatever had been achieved through the first invasion. The episode came into conclusion with the Yandaboo treaty (24<sup>th</sup>. Feb., 1826) signed after the defeat of the Burmese power in hand of British power. As per the treaty the Burmese power gave up its claim over Assam along with other terms. Assam came under British occupation and a new chapter was added to the History of Assam with the introduction of British administration in Assam. It is mention worthy that Government had been in possession of Assam before the treaty of Yandaboo. Measures for its administration were being adopted in the course of its conquest. Colonel Macmorein occupied Gauhati in March 1824 and in January next and Col. Richards occupied Rangpur. The people of Assam considered the advent of British, as a fortune for the land, because it rescued them from the pains caused by the lawless tyranny and oppressions of the Burmese. So the new rulers did not find difficulties in establishing their authority in Assam. Company Government appointed David Scott as senior commissioner in Lower Assam and col. Richards as Junior Commissioner with Head quarter at Gauhati. No decision was taken about the nature and fate of the Government of Assam till 1833. In this regard the author has

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<sup>84</sup> *ibid*, p.465

<sup>85</sup> *ibid*, p.466

said in British tune, “Government, as I have said, could not arrive at a final decision with regard to the future disposal of Assam till November 1832 owing mainly to the difficulty in finding an efficient Assamese prince to rule over the country, interposed between British territories and the wild tribes of the extreme eastern confines of Assam. Through out the discussions Scott advocated the retention of western Assam under direct British control, and the restoration of Eastern Assam, with the exception of Sadia country, to a native prince on a tributary basis.”<sup>86</sup> In concurrence of one of the recommendation of Scott lower Assam was declared annexed permanently to the British Territory on March 7, 1828. In this regard, an observation of Scott can be cited here “The inhabitants of Western Assam being conquered by the Ahoms only in recent times and being thus by strangers would not be so averse to the introduction of foreign authority as would be the Eastern Assam. Besides, he believed, that the permanent annexation of Western Assam would be welcomed by the greater portion of the people “Who had always been treated by Surgy Deo and the insolent aristocracy of upper Assam as a conquered people upon whom all sort of dignities might with impunity be heaped.”

After the break out of the early anti British resistance movements under the leaderships of Gomdhar, Godadhar, Piali Barphukan during 1828 to 1831, the question of installation of a native prince in Upper Assam was discussed once again. All these finally led to the decision of restoration of upper Assam under Purandar Singha with condition of an annual tribute of Rs.50, 000/- and of good governance. It got effect on April 24, 1833.

After the occupation of Assam the company govt. measures were taken to set up the security system. The arrangements for this purpose covered foundation of Head quarter of the troops construction of Bungalows and roads, maintenance of a few

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<sup>86</sup> ibid, P.557

steamboats, increase in size, arms and training of the troops. The revenue and judicial administration was organized in a compromised pattern of that of Bengal and Assam. Likewise the Police Department was organized on new lines. Steps were taken to simplify and encourage the people to be convenient with the new elements of the administration. Scott did not get sufficient time as he died in 1831 (August 20), to perfect administrative arrangements. Still, he started arrangements for Education, for growth of agricultural products and introduction of missionary activities in Assam. The author has mentioned about the high esteem of the Assamese people for Scott – *“His loss was mourned by all sections of the Assamese who called him their father. He had piloted the Government’s relations and transactions in Assam during a very momentous period, and his measures and decisions affected the vital interest of the people. But no Assamese entertained any grievances against him, and his memory is still held in very high esteem among the inhabitants. By mixing freely with the people he was able to appreciate their wants and understand their viewpoints and the real spirit of their institutions, which were being gradually modified. In fact,.....”*<sup>87</sup> The author’s view regarding Scott is also found expression in these statements. It is also stated *“One principal reason of his recommending the restoration of upper Assam to a native prince was the opportunity which the nobles would get for employment. With the same object he appointed native officers in the judicial and revenue Departments. He regretted that he could not appoint more Assamese in the ministerial establishment in lower Assam owing to their ignorance of the company’s with full powers of a European Mofussil magistrate. Effect was given to this proposal after Scott’s death by the appointment of Haliram Dhekiel Phukan as assistant magistrate at Gauhati.”* Deduction of such view on the basis of un-analyzed, unexamined comment is either an innocent.

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<sup>87</sup> *ibid*, p.574

overlooked or biased act on the part of a Historian.<sup>88</sup> The author himself represents the views of the people as commented by the author in this very work viz. --“*In such a situation the Assamese hailed the advent of the British as a God-send*”<sup>89</sup> --“*The hearts of the people became glad at the coming of the English*”<sup>90</sup> -- “*As the reward of this pious action in rescuing the people of Assam from the sea of Burmese troubles, may God continue their uninterrupted and undiminished sovereignty till the end of a Kalpa [4320, 000, 000 years] and make them vigorous and powerful as the lord of Amaravati.....*”<sup>91</sup>

The author had later become possibly conscious of his pro-British views in time of publication of the book and probably pointed out towards this aspect in the preface of the book. He has written “*Assam and India have undergone momentous Changes since compilation of the book.....on the 15<sup>th</sup>.August 1947. India emerged into a sovereign republic from its position as a dependency of the British..... Under the pressure of such changes it is but natural that our present day way of thinking is something different from that of Ten or Twelve years ago*”<sup>92</sup>

It cannot be held that the author was unaware about or did not consider the advent of the British power as a danger to Assam but in this research work he kept this view unexpressed.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup>Barua, S.L.’s observation in this regard is note worthy, “Captain White, the political agent, appreciated the difficulties of Purandar and pleaded for reducing his tribute to about Rs. 36,000. He felt that compared to his meager resources, Purandar Singha had paid the highest amount of tribute to British India”—A Comp. Hist. of Ass (p-473)

<sup>89</sup> op. cit., p.552

<sup>90</sup> Barphukanar Git—Quoted from AAR pno.552

<sup>91</sup> (Ms. Ass.Bur. By Maniram Dewan—quoted from AAR, p.-552/ (BURANJI VIVEK-RATNA p.224)

<sup>92</sup> AAR. preface- p. XII

<sup>93</sup> ‘Sw.Raj.Singha’ was completed in the mid of 1936 and Dr. Bhuyan took the manuscript with him while going to London for Ph.D. studies. In this book he reveals his view indirectly that the efforts of the British power to penetrate Assam was dangerous to Assam. —(P-1, line-24)

The concluding chapter of the book is of utmost importance as the author has summed up his findings of his discussion in the previous pages of the book. This chapter helps the readers not only to synthesize the elaborately presented ideas but also to tally his (the reader's) extracted ideas with those of the author and also to have an idea about the author's concluding views. The concluding chapter of "ANGLO ASSAMESE RELATIONS" (chapter -XI) of the book the author has drawn up his conclusions in 32 paragraphs in 16 pages within page no 581 to 597. The author has commented upon the (1) Conquest of Assam by the Company (2) Company's political disinterest in Assam and causes of absence of enmity of Assamese rulers against the new rulers (3) Dependence of Ahom Government for arms and ammunition on Company after 1894. (4) Causes of company's prolonged non-intervention policy and (5) Analysis and criticism of Ahom system of administration – its merits and demerits- its decay.

An apparent look at this concluding chapter unfolds immediately some limitations like deviation from main point, self-contradiction, and inconsistency with and personal exceeding beyond evidential facts etc. on the part of the author. First- it contains comparatively less reflection on the main subject matter of the book i.e. the Anglo Assamese Relation (or EEIC's Relation with Assam) and has discussed more on comparatively less relevant point (if not completely irrelevant!) – merits and demerits of Ahom rule in Assam. Out of 16 pages allotted for the concluding chapter the author has utilized 22 paragraphs and 12 pages in presenting the last point (i.e. numbered as –5) and only 10 paragraphs and 4 pages for the rest.

Now, let the comments of the author be examined here. In the First paragraph it is said "*The conquest was unpremeditated, and in a why (read- way) in (read- it) was forced upon the British who had for many years deliberately refused to assume any control over the affairs of Assam through such assumption was within*

*easy reach of accomplishment. The company had throughout respected the integrity of Assam as in (read –an) independent territory and had uniformly discountenanced any move that tended to disturb the authority of the Swargadeo Raja of Assam. The incorporation of circumstances, which had been produced neither by the conquerors nor by the conquered but by their common enemy, the Burmese. A singular feature of the conquest is the absence of any preceding conflict between the Assamese and their new rulers, so that when the British occupied the country the inhabitants entertained no acrimony of bitterness which is generally occasioned by remembrance of past enmity”.*<sup>94</sup>

The message apparent in these few lines goes against the established notion about the nature of the colonialist, imperialist and expansionist power like the British in general and EEIC in particular. In fact, the British power in other part of India followed a ‘wait and advance’ policy in their expansionist activities. They participated in the conflicts among the Indian princes in the pretext of defending their commercial interest or on other grounds and thus enabled themselves to create space for their consolidation and for further aggrandizements. This process continued till they had a position not to bother for such pretext for extension of power. Of course weakness of the Indian rulers in arms, wealth, war- tactics, and lack of unity among themselves were conducive to British expansionist design. This type of situation occurred in Assam also and the EEIC’s Assam policy is not much different from that followed in other part of India. A power (British) that was forced in later time to quit a land (India) they occupied need not be forced to conquer a land (Assam) nor it can be held that they had any respect for integrity of a foreign territory and authority of its master as opined by the author. The delay in their entrance into Assam in comparison to other parts of India was due to lack of

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<sup>94</sup> AAR, p.581

sufficient information about Assam, inconvenient communication, its unhygienic condition, non-co-operative and hostile attitude of the Ahom government towards the foreigners from west.

In fact, conquest of Assam by the EEIC was accomplished in such a situation and in such a way that the question of any preceding conflict between the Assamese and their new rulers does not arise and although such preceding conflict was absent, the people of Assam was not completely unaware and content with the deceit of company government not maintaining their proclamation made during the war to leave Assam after the expulsion of the Burmese.<sup>95</sup> This awareness and discontentment found expression through the anti-British resistance movement in the thirties only a few years after British occupation of Assam. The people of this land with abundant mineral resources (like Petroleum, Coal etc.), Forest resources, fertile cultivable lands for tea, had to wait for their departure (of the British rulers) till they were compelled to do so.

In the second paragraph it is said, *“Assam was outside the orbit of the company’s political interest. On the decline of Mogul authority there was a regular scramble for power among the native princes of northern and southern India. The rise of the British power was viewed with Jealousy by the Indian chiefs who were consequently urged - “to continual efforts, secret or avowed, to destroy the English Government, and to expel every individual of that nation from India”*(Quoted by the author from Malcolm’s Political history of India) –The English were in constant collision with the native powers until the year 1818 when, partly by military successes and partly by diplomatic alliance. The Ahom rulers of Assam had been enjoying uninterrupted sovereignty since the beginning of the thirteen century”  
Again, *“The independence of Assam was of separate origin and growth, and was not*

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<sup>95</sup> *ibid*, p.542

*derived from the decaying authority of the Moguls. Assam did not therefore become jealous of the English who were gradually stepping into the place of the Moguls. It did not entertain any fear from the English to induce it to through obstructions in their way; neither did the English consider Assam as a possible source of danger to render its suppression desirable, or of strength to make its alliance necessary.....”<sup>96</sup>*

Here in this paragraph the author has not clarified the significance of the year 1818 till when “*the English were in constant collision with the native powers*”. The statements presented by the author –“ *The Ahom rulers of Assam had been enjoying uninterrupted sovereignty since the beginning of the thirteen century*” and “*The independence of Assam was of separate origin and growth, and was not derived from the decaying authority of the Moguls*” where from it is deducted “*Assam did not therefore become jealous of the English who were gradually stepping into the place of the Moguls. It did not entertain any fear from the English to induce it to through obstructions in their way*” are not sufficient for such deduction as the author has done. The said fearlessness from the English may occur from their ignorance about their imperialistic character and activities in other parts of India so far. The Ahom rulers surrendered to the might of EEIC during the Moamaria uprisings and during the Burmese invasions in a helpless condition without any instant alternative solution. It also cannot be said that they were fearless from the English. Finally this deduction goes against earlier comment of the author himself that goes like “*It was a common remark of all European writers that the Assamese were averse to the admission of foreigners into their country. The aversion was principally due to two reasons. From the time of Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar khilji’s invasion in 1205 upto the final expulsion of the Moguls in 1682 Assam was subject to frequent attacks by*

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<sup>96</sup> *ibid*, pp581-582

*the Muhammadans from Bengal; and consequently all men from Bengal and other parts of India were considered by the Assamese as potential source of danger*"<sup>97</sup>

Like wise the comment on the company's policy of non-intervention in Third Paragraph "*The friendship of the Assam government being of no political consequence to the company it uniformly followed a policy of non-intervention*"<sup>98</sup> and the comment given in Ninth paragraph "*The prolonged non-intervention of the company was due to its inability to realize the dangers that would in time emanate from Assam on account of the instability of its government.*"<sup>99</sup> contain contradictory elements. Firstly it is said that that the company uniformly followed a policy of non-intervention but it is said in the later statement under quote this non-intervention was a "prolonged" one. Again it is said in first statement that the "*friendship of the Assam government being of no political consequence.....*" But later it is said "*its inability to realize the danger that would emanate...* "

In the conclusion the author in context with the advent of the Burkendazes and the Burmese, the author has justly commented that "*The devastation of the country was thus largely due to the suicidal policy of the Assamese themselves*" but some of his conclusions drawn in regard to the decay of the Ahom rule are also not free from unclarified questions, controversy and self-contradiction. For example it is said that "*The Ahom living long in the Brahmaputra valley lost the martial ardour which had enabled them to conquer the country and to maintain their power in the face of constant conflicts with the neighbouring tribes and periodic invasions of the Moguls.*"<sup>100</sup> But question arises how a race who had been successful in repulsing the Mogul army in the battle of Sharaighat in the year 1671 and in the battle of Itakhul-

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<sup>97</sup> *ibid*, p.56

<sup>98</sup> *ibid*, p.582

<sup>99</sup> *ibid*, p.584

<sup>100</sup> *ibid*, p.585

in 1682 after long Four hundreds years of their habitation in Brahmaputra valley lost their martial ardour suddenly in the time of Moamaria uprisings (1769-1794) after one hundred years and in the Burmese invasions (1817-1821) after another fifty years. The stereotype theory about Brahmaputra valley is a denial of any martial ardour of the people who had been residing here for thousands of years.

The statements “*But this assimilation of the conquerors with the conquered and the consequent identification of their interest affected the efficiency of the administration* ” and “*The adoption of new religion by the Ahoms changed their outlook on life and human relations; politics which had been absorbing passion in the preceding ages now became less important than before.....*”<sup>101</sup> interpretation of these statements in the subsequent sentences go against the author’s own view presented in the introductory chapter –“*Ahom Social outlook : The Ahoms were liberal in their social outlook, being dominated in their actions mainly by considerations of practical necessity and political expediency.....*”<sup>102</sup> “*They realized the dangers springing from their being in a hopeless minority in a kingdom where the majority were Hindus. They thought they would add to their strength if they become one with their subjects by embracing the latter’s faith. The Ahoms did even give up their own language and adopt Assamese, the language of the ruled. The history of subsequent periods will demonstrate how far this adoption of the religion and language of the subjects was expedient and sound.*”<sup>103</sup>

The view that “*Admiration for this long continuous of Ahom rule was a strong reason for Bentinck to restore Purandar Singha in 1833*” is also far from being fit to be accepted. In fact the company government very tactfully exploited the person of Purandar Singha in appointing him as a tributary vassal in upper Assam at

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<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*, p.586

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.*, p.15

<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*, p.19

an annual tribute of Rs.50, 000.00 to satisfy several discontented groups and at the same time to safeguard and foster their colonial interest. Again the few lines quoted by the author in support of Bentinck's admiration of the time span of Ahom rule is more a curse than admiration as goes like—"Tho' an old government of 500/600 years standing," said Bentinck, "*the condition of the province and of its population at the time of Burmese and of the British conquest sufficiently so that the institutions which existed must have been miserably defective with no inherent (inherent?) disposition to improvement, and it may be a question whether their restoration would not perpetuate ignorance and barbarism rather than tend to the advancement of the country in civilization and happiness. Their continuance the same time for a period of time almost without example in History would seem to indicate something intrinsically good in the original constitution and all events that it is deeply rooted in the feelings of the people.*"

The comment "*All Ahom institutions, religious, social and political were designed to make the rulers good soldiers and good governors.*" is sweeping and based on insufficient examination. In support of his opinion the "Paik system" has also been cited as an example.<sup>104</sup> From the standpoint of efficiency "Paik-system" cannot be an alternative or superior to that of a trained regular force. The force created out of the people engaged in growing crops or in household duties for nine to eight months of a year under this feudal system cannot be expected for instant mobilization in an immediate crises nor the martial spirit and discipline can be expected. From economic point of view also the system was defective and harmful to the state-economy.

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<sup>104</sup> *ibid*, pp.588-589

The statement *“The Brahmans in order to conciliate the Ahom Rulers circulated myths attributing to them a divine origin”*<sup>105</sup> would have been more accurate if it was said that the Brahmans Hinduized the Ahom myths about the divine origin of the Ahom rulers and circulated them among masses. The Ahoms had their own myths proclaiming divinity of their rulers before they came in contact with the Brahmans. This accuracy, as said above, has historical significance.

Another example of inconsistency and contradiction can be cited here-- *“Hinduisation and consequent relaxation of character made the Ahoms much less active and vigorous. The dash and gallantry, which had helped them to conquer Assam, were now replaced by hesitancy and speculation. Hinduism looks at things from the idealistic point of view, while political conduct can never neglect expediency, and can not always be determined by stereotyped convention or a rigid moral standard.”* In the same paragraph the author has said *“The same hesitation had attacked the mind of the Pandava hero Arjuna when he confronted his Kaurave kinsmen in the field of Kurukshetra from which mood he had to be liberated by Sri Krishna by expounding the nothingness of this life and meaninglessness of human relationship. It is the excessive insistence on the superiority of the soul over body, of the spirit over matter, of peace over warfare, where in lies the supreme merit of Hinduism as a religion and its greatest handicap as an active political creed.”*<sup>106</sup>

The Geeta contains the advices of Lord Krishna to Arjuna, which is mentioned by the author and it is revered most by the Hindus. The solution of a problem, as the author holds cannot be the problem itself. Thus, this statement is self-contradictory over simplified extraction about Hinduism. The same religion i.e. The Hinduism organized a group of people dominantly of tribal community to a fraternity and

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<sup>105</sup> *ibid*, p.593

<sup>106</sup> *ibid*, p.595

organized them into a violent rebellious group -The Moamarias could cause a political earthquake to the Ahom rule. The same Hinduism inspired Chhatrapati Sivajee, Rana Pratap Singha and so many to fight die-hard against enemies.

In fact, the situation in which the early Ahoms succeeded to establish a kingdom, to quell whoever resisted their advance, to expand their newly conquered territory changed in later days. The situation changed with the changes in society, in polity, in economy. The problems became more complicated, the enemies newly confronted were more formidable but the maturing of Ahom polity, its administration, its defense-system was slower to its demand. The author has never been attentive to such aspects.

The relation established between Assam and the British power was infact a contact between two different cultures, two different stages evolution of economy, two different stages of political system and its maturity, two different stages of intellectual maturity, and between two different stages of efficiency in military and technological field. In other words, this newly established relation was a contact between two different stages of civilization. This relation was established in the form of submission of the Ahom Government to the British might. Moreover this submission of the Ahom government was not made in the normal condition. Normally the Ahom Government was a self-content, quasi-feudal and quasi-tribal power. In time of submission to the British power, it was wornout of intra-feudal class conflict, power conflict among the ruling nobility and of popular uprising.

The consequence of this relation was very natural, dependence of the weaker side on the mercy of the powerful party. The Colonialism and Imperialism have their own language and course in which, they behave and move. Territorial aggrandaizement, unrestricted harnessing of natural resources, ruthless exploitation of human labour, and enlargement of capital through them are integral part of the

Colonialism and imperialism. Economic exploitation and making profit is the sole aim of the Colonialism and imperialism. The concepts of political morality and people's welfare have no relation with Colonial and imperial expansionism. The progressive or regressive phenomena, which are created as a result of the relation established between the weaker and the stronger, the ruled and the ruler, and between the exploited and the exploiter, are mere by-product of colonialism and Imperialism. It is meaningless to evaluate or analyze the nature and character of a Colonial or imperial power.

The transition, which appeared with the introduction of colonial rule in Assam, may be termed as 'progressive-regressive dichotomy'.<sup>107</sup> It is seen that this dichotomy had not only divided the ruling class and the common people, but also the intelligentsia of Assam in colonial period. They were divided into the two groups of the Protestors and compromisers. S.K.Bhuyan, as a historian, instead of observing these inner currents of the society, polity and economy, himself got merged in this divided society. For that very reason, in spite of being a devout Assamese nationalist, S.K.Bhuyan not only co-existed with colonialism and imperialism, but also believed apparently in the ideas like 'progressive imperialism' or 'missionary colonialism'. On this belief he co-operated and so supported the British colonial and imperial ventures in Assam. He tried to justify the occupation of Assam by the British power. For this very belief on these wrong conceptions, S.K.Bhuyan fell in a theoretical dilemma. He helplessly expressed his belief in progressive imperialism or missionary colonialism at a time when he propounded '*Assamese nationalism*', '*freedom loving Assamese mind*' and his search of Assamese glory in the strength.

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<sup>107</sup> as has been termed by Lopita Nath, Transition in the 18<sup>th</sup> And 19<sup>th</sup> Century Assam, JOARS, Vol. xxxiii of 1994, 1997.P.72

efficiency and might of the Ahom Government. Every careful reader will notice this aspect of the perspective of S.K.Bhuyan in his writing on Anglo-Assamese Relation

It is noteworthy herewith that The East India Company had greedy eyes to the fertile land, its forest and other natural resources from long before the occupation of the land. More over its strategic location also enhanced the importance of Assam and the Eastern Himalayas for British colonial penetration.<sup>108</sup> Griffith has deduced all the narrative of his seminal work 'The History of Indian Tea Industry' from the Industrial Revolution in England<sup>109</sup> and from the shifting of (Brutal) shortsighted colonial exploitation by the East India Company in Bengal to the policy of Industrialization by Warren hasings<sup>110</sup> He has written "*In 1819 David Scott, then agent to the Governor-General in Assam, had began to take interest in the possibility of growing tea and wrote to Dr. Wallich, the Botanist to the East India Company, asking for tea plants and seeds from the company's Botanical garden in Calcutta, 'expressly for the purpose of trying them in the hills to the Eastward of the Berhampooter.' ....In 1823 Robert Bruce learned of the existence of tea in Assam and made an agreement with a Singpho chief for a supply of the tea plant*"<sup>111</sup>

Likewise the idea that 'in the event of the expulsion of Burmese from Assam the country will belong to the British by right of conquest' was already existed in the mind of Colonial Government in Bengal, which can be known from a letter written by G.W.Swinton on February 20, 1824 to David Scott.<sup>112</sup> Reannexation of upper Assam in 1838 by the Company Government was also motivated by the intention to utilize the suitable fertile lands of upper Assam for tea gardens.

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<sup>108</sup> Goswami, Priyam- Assam in the Nineteenth Century: Industrialization and Colonial Penetration p.6)

<sup>109</sup> Griffith, Sir Percival -The History of the Indian Tea Industry p.3

<sup>110</sup> *ibid*, p.33

<sup>111</sup> *ibid*, p.36

<sup>112</sup> Prel. Report on the old Records at Ass Secretariat, p-44

The Bibliography of the book itself allows knowing the vast mass of source materials utilized by the author in working out the book. The author has systematically presented the list of the source materials dividing them into different categories viz. Original and Secondary Sources, Published and unpublished sources, Assamese and English Sources. The total series of the events incorporated in the book can broadly be divided into Two from the view point of source materials - The events directly connected with Ahom rulers and the activities of EEIC in Assam. For the both groups of activities, easily available and abundant written source materials and humane factor supported the author. He had huge number of Assamese Buranjis at his disposal, and so he had already wide and intensive studies in Assam History with his intimate handling of these Buranjis. These Buranjis both published and unpublished, provided sufficient information on activities of the rulers and peoples of Assam. On the other hand official papers, documents, articles, books written in English both published and unpublished related to the British affairs in Assam, preserved mainly in INDIA OFFICE LIBRARY in London and guidance of contemporary authority in the area under his study helped him to have sufficient information for the British part. The said factors enabled the author to consult the bulk of the source materials, to arrange them systematically and prepare the Theses within a short period of two years. The work was mainly library based. An observation on the footnotes gives an idea about the swift movement of his stream of consciousness. The author has drawn references or has put diverse facts and figures from different sources very swiftly in different context of the subject matter. These reflect his mastery, passion, patience, stamina and scholarship of the author in the subject.

The author narrated the concerned topics in an elaborate and detailed manner. The whole work is divided into eleven chapters and these chapters are arranged into one hundred and eight (108) subheadings including the five

appendixes. In many cases the subheadings are supplementary and additional to the main topic, i.e. the Anglo Assamese Relation. For example in connection with the fall of EEIC's monopoly of salt trade in Assam and with the Capt. Welsh's expedition the author has allotted 32 pages in describing the causes, nature and consequences of Moamaria uprising (Chapter-VI—Part-I and Part- II) In the part - III of the same chapter Origin of Koch dynasty, Rift in the dynasty and division of the kingdom, Starting of the Darrang Rajbangsha are narrated elaborately to introduce the revolt of Krishnanarayan. Sketch of the career and personal life of the historical personages in certain contexts are given in the book in the form of appendixes or as attached topics. Thus, the readers can get additional information about Hugh Baillie, Killican, Deniel Roush, Dr.John Peter Wade, David Scott and many others to quell their curiosity about them. The last two appendixes “Discovery of the tea plant”<sup>113</sup> and “Survey and Exploration” contain valuable information on the concerned topic. As the information are collected from a huge number of sources, some of them being not yet published and not easily available the book shall ever remain a valuable gem-house of information for the history of Assam of this period also, apart from its main topic under investigation.

The methodology followed in revealing the findings in his study is dominantly narrative of the facts, systematic presentation of the information collected. The author is comparatively less critical in his approach. His personal reflection on the nature of the Anglo Assamese Relation, various under currents in determining the relation, and emphasis on its totality are nominal. Sometime, he accepts and use the written evidences without examination of their validity. For this reason the main string of the study has become less prominent and submerged in midst of information and narration of the facts throughout the book.

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<sup>113</sup> Gait's Assam History contains a more elaborate discussion on the topic

The area under study is not virgin. There were some books already worked out both published and unpublished which have touched the main points incorporated in “ANGLO ASSAMESE RELATION”. One of them is Gait’s ‘A HISTORY OF ASSAM.’ But author’s enquiry has drawn vast mass of new information into light.

**(D) Woman Characters and awareness:**

As one important feature of the writings of Dr.S.K.Bhuyan was that they were mainly biographical. Both man and woman found individual prominence in his writings (in both of historical and literary writings). Still, his attention towards the Assamese women and the touch with which he analyzed the women characters in his writings were emphatically special. The writings of S.K.Bhuyan where women characters receives special mention and attention can be divided into some groups for the convenience of our discussion and those are-

(a) Poetry/collection of poetries, (b) Article/collection of Articles (c) books written on other topic but women character receives special mention, (d) books specially written on women.

Woman awareness of Dr. Bhuyan firstly found expression through poems as he gave outlet his feelings and emotions through poetical literature in early part of his life. In regard to poetry, princess Jaimati was first and only character of Assam history that got place in his writing. In the year 1908 (June-8) he composed the poetry with the title JAIMATI KUWANRI.<sup>114</sup> Here after PRINCESS JAIMATI was

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<sup>114</sup> Inserted in ‘Surya Kumar Bhuyar Kabita Samgrah’-ed. By Bireshwar Barua.

published in Times of Assam. (15 Aug. 1908.) In 1920 he composed JAIMATI UPAKHYAN in archaic language<sup>115</sup> with the pen name Bhanunandan.

In the collections of articles CHANEKI, BURANJIR VANI, STUDIES IN THE HIST. OF ASSAM and BIBIDH PRABANDHA there are articles on Assamese women or women character. Except the four articles TAPASWINI RABIA, ANANDI BAI JOSHI, FLORENCE NAITINGEL, RAMA BAI SARASWATI inserted in CHANEKI all articles are on Assamese women. The three other articles ASOMIYA TIROTA, JAIMATI KUWANRI and AGAR DINAR TIROTA had been published prior to compilation in CHANEKI. Dr. Bhuyan described the CHANEKI as ARHI TIROTAR JIBAN CHARIT and ADARSHA TIROTAR JIBAN KAHINI i.e. as biography and biographical story of ideal women. Here with it is also said the book as the companion volume of JONAKI which consist of biographical sketch on fourteen historical and contemporary great men. In BURANJIR VANI four articles out of total sixteen articles, are on women character and these four articles are-ASOM JIYARI AMRIT PRABHA (Feb, 1932): SHANTI KANYA RADHIKA ARU TELIYA PATNI (Oct. 1933), GARAMA KUWANRI (June, 1950) and MULAGABHARU (July, 1950). Dr Bhuyan has commented upon the articles inserted in BURANJIR VANI as that they were written from literary angle and as 'article'. In STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF ASSAM, there are two such articles with the titles-PRINCESS AMRIT PRABHA (td.) and NOBLE WOMEN OF ASSAM. In BIBIDH PRABANDHA the only such articles is ATTAR KAMRUPAR MAHILA. AN ASSAMESE NURJAHAN, ASOM JIYARI: part-1 and part-2 (TATHYA SAMBALITA JAIMATI) and RAMANI GABHARU are independent volume on women character written by him.

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<sup>115</sup> In this respect he was influenced by Rabindra nath Thakur. This poem is inserted in the same collection as mentioned above. pp-138-179

The other writings where women characters received author's special attention are ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES, and SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA

The activities, qualities habits and traits of the Assamese women in general and Assamese women attaining individual fame in history are either elaborately described or briefly mentioned in these writings. Names of some of ordinary women whose name found mentioned in different context in the chronicles and folklore are simply listed in these writings. A list of 141 Assamese ladies with separate headings on the basis of age, dynasty and sources is given in AGAR DINAT ASOMIYA TIROTA inserted in CHANEKI. In this list names of Bishwa Dasi and Malati two maids of Susudhi consort of one of the Kamatapur monarchs; Six maids of Rajeswar Singha - Bhanu, Chandamati, Chingini, Malati, Sona, Bhakati are mentioned. Keeping aside the above-mentioned maids in the list inserted in CHANEKI most of the ladies who achieved individual fame belonged to the powerful and ruling noble class.

Of course, that the Assamese women lives in a comparatively free and independent environment, exerted important duties in family life in equal to the males and that they lived a respectful life in society is revealed in his writings. *"Why shall the Assamese ladies not be honored in this way? They are busy all the time with household activities. To help their husband, they plant seedlings, weed them reap paddy, and row boat and cross the river in need, spin yarn and make cloth for all the family members...Assamese women are wealth of pride for the Assamese people."*<sup>116</sup>

In these narratives on women it has got reflected that the women born and brought up in or in the touch of the environment of Assamese society who have gone

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<sup>116</sup> Bhuyan, S.K.- CHANEKI-p.1

abroad as consort of some prince, who have come to Assam as daughter in law or who have stayed in their own country can glorify their lives with their qualities and noble deeds. Some of them have shined in their different status and position as the queen mother, as daughters and consorts of the monarchs and nobles, as ruling queen, for their glaring example of furious and heroic fighting in battlefield; of prudent, daring and courageous opinion or advice, in full royal court; of patronage for benevolent activities; of sacrificing own life for the well being of her husband or of the state, of intellectual pursuits or of such ideal activities (as S.K.Bhuyan held). They have not only shined their own names but have glorified the nation to which they belong i.e. the Assamese. The environment in which a woman can uplift and bloom their inner potentialities can make a nation prosper. It is stated in the article 'ATITAR KAMRUPAR MAHILA'-"we need not take shelter in the Purans to realize the prosperity and greatness of the Assamese people. We can know very well the glory of ancient Assamese women from the history of Assam and of other states of India"<sup>117</sup>

Now questions arise why was S.K.Bhuyan so attentive to and eulogistic about the glory of the Assamese women? What is the nature of his motive behind and of his woman awareness? As Dr. Bhuyan followed the piecemeal methodology in his historical studies and his writings were basically biographical, selection of the women activities for observation is in one way very natural. But he was neither minute nor objective in analyzing the position of women in Assamese society. It is true that the Assamese women enjoyed comparatively more liberty and this was possible to some extent due to (i) the dominant tribal character of Assamese society, (ii) the semi-feudal Assamese society where neither political nor economic power were completely concentrated (iii) the Paik system (iv) non-prevalence of wide-

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<sup>117</sup> Bhuyan, Jogendra Narayan, Ed.- Bibidh Prabandha-p.91

spread Aryan conservatism. As a basic feature of tribal society, ownership of landed property was not handed over to any individual in the medieval Assam rather these were in the name of the Khel or the village community. Most of the working male members of the state were partially bonded laborers of state and they had to render compulsory service to the state or in the fiefs of the nobles for a fixed period in a year. In such a situation the concept of lord-protectionism of husbands over the females finds less ground to root in. Females are co-laborers in earning their livelihood. Her responsibility in both indoor and outdoor activities provided stout physical and mental traits. The consorts, daughters, sisters of the monarchs and of the nobles had much opportunity to enjoy political power and have experience of it for their family ties and nearness of the power holders which they exploited fully. The monarchs had to share his powers with the nobles who had control over their respective powerful clans, landed property and large number of workingmen under them. It is noteworthy that most of the shining Assamese women cited as example by S.K.Bhuyan in his writings belonged to tribal community and to the ruling class.

In fact, it appears that Dr. Bhuyan was less interested in analyzing the economic reasons behind the comparative openness of the Assamese ladies, rather he was motivated with the intention to inspire the Assamese women of his times. As in the phenomenon of Indian renaissance, the upcoming Indian intellectuals with western education, realized the need of women-awakening, voiced and worked for it, in case of Assamese renaissance also, the upcoming educated Assamese middle class realized that there are to achieve much changes by the Assamese women (along with the whole society) to meet the requirements of the changed situation in the coming days. It was a part of the renaissance features, -the search for glory in the past, to grip the glorious past identity (of a super imposed nationalism) and to make sounding announcement of it among others. These intellectuals along with

S.K.Bhuyan realized that the one-legged movement of a male dominated society would be troublesome in the race of coming modern day. He prescribed the remedy from their own history. Having introduction with the western progress, feeling the need of exposure and place of the Assamese women (and of the people in general) in the all-Indian platform, he felt the need of women like 'Mulagabharu' as the woman counterpart of Lachit Barphukan, Rani phuleshwari like Nurjahan, intelligent and learned women like Chau ching gabharu, lady that can shine in abroad also like Princess Amritprabha, Ramanigabharu, Rangili etc. The need continued from pre-independence period till post-independence period.

It was considered, a society with progressive women as a hallmark of modernism. It appears that these spokespersons too endeavored to outlet their personal legacy of the conservative values of a male dominated society. The conflict between liberalization and legacy of conservatism is apparent in the writings of Dr. S.K. Bhuyan. If minutely observed, the qualities of a woman, praised by S.K.Bhuyan are not only human talents and human efficiencies but also equally relative to values of male-dominated society and there is a latent urge to prescribe them for the women in particular and society in general. Dr. Bhuyan praised the shining Assamese women for their active presence in family, in society, in politics, in intellectual pursuits, in battlefield. They are brave, they are clever, and they are patriot - hard for enemies and kind for good cause. But some times they are praised for their helping hand to their male companions- the husbands, they are praise worthy because they adapt in all situation – a princess in a family of wood-cutter and a daughter of a poor father in the palace; she will easily pass her life in her devotion to her husband.<sup>118</sup> Some of them are praise worthy as they are 'Sati' (a chaste woman), as they are 'Patibrata' (devoted to husband), as they are 'Shantikanya'

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<sup>118</sup> Bhuyan, S.K.-Chaneki, pp.1-2

(chaste woman). More over, some scattered comment on women by Dr. Bhuyan reveals this conflict more vividly. For example, (i) it is said in AHOMAR DIN, "...This is the origin of Moamoria uprising; here is also a woman in the root, as in all the revolutions and national crises throughout the world"<sup>119</sup>. That such a biased view was held by Dr. Bhuyan in his Sixteen or Seventeen years of age, is not so. (ii) In SWARGADEV RAJESHWARSINGHA (which was almost completed in 1936, at a time when he sailed to London for Doctoral degree) it is said, "*Women cannot think of the future for her broodings for the present*"<sup>120</sup> (iii) "... This humiliation of Moamoria pontiff by Phulashwari Kuwanri also has come out of indomitable women character".<sup>121</sup> (iv) "*In many countries woman being in power has harmed the country.*"<sup>122</sup> These types of sweeping comments are out come not only of fallacious reasoning but also of legacy of conservative values and low respect for woman. Of course, Dr. Bhuyan simply reflects and carries the values of his time and class, which moves, like a shadow with the Historians.<sup>123</sup> Of course, the spirit of his writings on women in general was not orthodox as revealed in these statements. In the article 'Sharaighat Nai Kintu Ase' S.K. Bhuyan wrote, "*We think that our mothers do not understand the subjects of history and literature, but this view is very much wrong. If they are asked any question in a language which they can understand, they grasp the spirit of the question so quickly that we the male scholars submerged in books also can not do that.*"<sup>124</sup> Thus this statement is as if the amendment of the earlier conservative statements.<sup>125</sup> It is noteworthy that Status of women in medieval

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<sup>119</sup> idem, Ahomar Din, p.7

<sup>120</sup> idem. Sw.Raj.Singha, p.145

<sup>121</sup> ibid, p.146

<sup>122</sup> ibid, P.146

<sup>123</sup> cf. Carr, E.H.-What is History, 'The third point is that we can view the past, and achieve our understanding of the past, only through the eyes of the present', p.28

<sup>124</sup> idem, Tripodi-pp.65-66

<sup>125</sup> Status of women in Aryan society hap-hazardously changed in different times. Aryan conservatism against woman finds well expression in Manu Samhita. It is said here in chapter X, that

Assamese society was not ideal from the modern viewpoint. Although they enjoyed comparatively more liberty, particularly in the tribal societies, there are ample historical evidences, that they were used as commodity. They were used as gift, term of agreements. They were not owner of their own self and will. A female child is not welcome even in modern times, they participated less in administration.

### (E) The Jaimati Tangle:

S.K.Bhuyan opined in several places of his writings that there should be some common issues and symbols of common joy and sorrow for a nation, which is conducive to the unity and strength of the nation. Among such issues and symbols, which were identified or prominently projected by S.K.Bhuyan, the character of Jaimati has created deep impact on the Assamese society in modern times. It has already been mentioned that S.K.Bhuyan was attracted to this character of Assam history from his very childhood. The character had already become widely popular prior to the writings of S.K.Bhuyan and rooted deep in the mind of Assamese people. Later on his emotional attachment turned to a subject of serious study. His poetic writing on Jaimati was expanded and culminated with the writing of Jaimati upakhyān in 1920. He began to write article on Jaimati from 1930. His most elaborate writing on Jaimati was the article incorporated in 'ASOMA JIYARI' with the title 'Jaimati Kuwanri'. The article, in fact, was the second part of his presidential speech delivered by him at the 'Jaimati festival' organized by Kamrup

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an woman may she be a young girl, a youth, or be an old, she would do nothing without prior permission of her husband(verse-147p.-286)/in **Chapter-viii** it is stated that, a single man who is not greedy can be witness, but may they be chaste they are not eligible even in big number, to become witness as their thought is not resolute(verse-77p.-394)./Sleeping,sitting, ornaments, passion, cruelty, envy, ugly behaviour-all these are instinctive to the women-Manu emagined in this way in time of creation(verse-17**Chapter-ix**) vied, **Manu Samhita, translated and edited by Pundit Hargobinda Sastri, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi, 1998.** Examples may be multiplied. Christianity also did not legged behind in this respect. Bible holds that eating the Apple by Eve is the origin of all human troubles. No woman has ever become a Pope.

Mahila Samiti in the year 1934. Regarding the character of Jaimati, S.K.Bhuyan has rightly said “Jaimati resembles Shakespeare in one respect: The inconvertible facts about their life can be represented in a few sentences, in spite of the gradually expanding volume of apocrypha in their case. The facts about Jaimati as given above are all that can be learnt or reasonably deduced from contemporary chronicles where we come across only two statements about her. The first chronicle says:-  
*“previously to this, out of fear for the Barphukan he [Gadapani] had kept his two sons in a Naga village. His wife died in a state of pregnancy in the midst of punishments and tortures.”* In the second chronicle we read –*“At that time [after the departure of the Bengal envoy Govindaram] the Barphukan, after having informed the monarch, caused the death of Bahgariagohain and his brother at Kaliabar. After this he searched princes and killed all those he could get. Having failed in this search for the Burharaja [Gadapani, afterwards King Gadadhar Singha, commonly known as Burha Raja] and having got his wife, Dakhinpatia Hazarika Gidagathi killed her by punishments and tortures.”* The contemporary chronicles hitherto discovered do not say anything further about the circumstances connected with the death of Gadapani’s wife, and her name is not even mentioned in the chronicles we have come across.”

*“But the dry bones of princess Jaimati’s death as found in contemporary records have been replenished by traditions circulated amongst the Assamese people. She is adorned as an ideal wife who sacrificed her life for ensuring safety to her husband by willfully withdrawing information regarding his whereabouts and movements. She was subjected to all forms of tortures, but she stuck heroically to her determination not to give any clue, which might lead to the capture of her husband....*

*Jaimati's son Rudrasingha.... he constructed the Jaisagar temple and the Jaisagar tank which can still be seen at Rangpur, the capital founded by that monarch. It is believed that the temple and the tank were constructed by king Rudrasingha to perpetuate the memory of his mother Jaimati and the site where they stand indicates the value of her torture and death. These circumstances have created a halo round the memory of Jaimati and poems and dramas have been written bringing out the central theme of her immolation for her husband's safety with varying details about the attendant circumstances.*"<sup>126</sup>

In the discussion on Jaimati in ATAN BURAGOHAI AND HIS TIMES, S.K.Bhuyan referred to some sources in which the torture on Jaimati is narrated. Among these sources, S.K.Bhuyan has pointed out the fault of citing sources of a quotation, quoted by J.M.foster in his article on the temple of Jaisagar published in 1874 in the Journal of Asiatic society of Bengal. S.K.Bhuyan also has pointed out the fault of the information in the said article regarding the time of flight of Gadadhar Singha. Of course, S.K.Bhuyan opined that these faults of Foster were caused due to mistake being misled by his Assamese helper who helped foster in writing up the article.<sup>127</sup>

In the article 'Jaimati Kuwanri' incorporated in 'ASAMA JIYARI', S.K.Bhuyan inserted some other sources in which some new information on Jaimati are found. Among them a note of Kripanath Phukan is most important. As per the source, the father of Jaimati was Madurial Laithepena Bargohain. He was relative of Frachenmung Bargohain. Jaimati had eleven stepmothers, mother in law of Jaimati was Siddheswari Aaikuwanri, and she had thirteen sisters and twenty-four brothers.

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<sup>126</sup> Bhuyan, S.K., ABHT-pp.189-190

<sup>127</sup> ibid. P.191

All these discussions on Jaimati, made by S.K.Bhuyan reveal that, he made hard effort for a long period to find out newer information on Jaimati. It may be mentioned here that in the appendix appended in 'SURYA KUMAR BHUYANR KABITA SAMGRAH' (page-182-184); S.K.Bhuyan has given a list of 26 sources to say how the story of Jaimati has expanded gradually, both in literary and historical point of view.

While S.K.Bhuyan endeavoured to unearth newer information about Jaimati and asked the other scholars of his time and of posterity to do so, some writers of his time and of later times have been criticizing the disparities in the information regarding Jaimati and even questioned the historicity of the character Jaimati and raised allegation of distortion of history against in this respect.

It is noteworthy, that the episode of Jaimati was firstly published in the Assamese Megazine 'JONAKI' in the year S.E 1813(i.e. in A.D. 1891-The Aghon-Puh issue) Ratneswar Mahanta (in the pen name of Sri Ram Das Goswami) wrote the article 'Jaimati Kuwanri aru Langi Gadapani' which was published in 'JONAKI'. In this article it is said that firstly Jaimati was brought to 'Barchora', the royal court and in the presence of Lora Raja she was asked to give information about her husband's whereabouts. Then she was taken to Jerenga Pathar where she died in torture. In this very article, Jaimati was adorned with the appellation of 'Sati' for the first time. -"The 'Chaodangs' could not find out any clue about Gadapani even after inflicting tortures on Jaimati for 15/16 days as said above. At last, Jaimati occupied a place with Damayanti, Sabitri in heaven [Baikuntha Dham] devoting her life in the feet of her husband...making everlasting fame for the Ahom and making the name of Ahom sacred"<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Jonaki-p. 395

Here after many Assamese literatateurs composed poetry, wrote drama, novel and even the first Assamese movie was made on the story of Jaimati. The literary imaginations were later added to the tradition on Jaimati prevalent among the masses. These imaginations and additions to the story of Jaimati made it confusing and the historicity of Jaimati began to be questioned. The critics who questioned the historicity of Jaimati were strengthened by the absence of the name of Jaimati and the story of the torture inflicted at the royal order in the earlier chronicles like Assam Buranji-SM, Assam Buranji of Kashinath Tamuli Phukan, Purani Asam Buranji edited by Hemchandra Goswami etc. The situation has become more complicated by the non-reference of the sources by the modern writers in their writings on Jaimati. Ratneswar Mahanta did not mention the source on the basis of which the said article was written. Even S.K.Bhuyan himself did not mention the sources in which he found the two statements on Jaimati in specific terms. He simply mentions, "*Finally a few sentences were found in two manuscripts [Sanchpatiya] collected by Hemchandra Goswami*"<sup>129</sup>

The criticism by L.N.Bezbarua on 'ASAMA JIYARI', which was published in 'Tinidinia Asomiya' in 1935, is mentioned worthy here. After the publication of 'ASOMA JIYARI', S.K.Bhuyan sent a copy of it to L.N.Bezbarua. L.N.Bezbarua studied the book very carefully and commented on different aspects of the book. They are given below in brief<sup>130</sup> -

- (i) Though there are some scattered examples to show the high reputation for the women in the ancient Indian classics, women were in general

<sup>129</sup> Asoma Jiyari-page-26. It is noteworthy that although he has not mentioned name of the Buranji (this is obviously the Assam Buranji-SM).

<sup>130</sup> Inserted in part in Bezbarua Granthavali-vol.-III, pp.2119-2130

considered as some mere Chattels in ancient days- and there are ample examples of tortures on women in the even in the Ahom royal family.

- (ii) The information that Gadapani kept hid his two sons Lai and Lechai in Naga hill is not mentioned in Harakanta Sadaramin's Assam Buranji. Harakanta Sadaramin compiled this chronicle taking informations from the Ahom the trustworthy Ahom nobles and so the information cannot be accepted.
- (iii) L.N.Bezbarua opposed the view of S.K.Bhuyan in acquitting the 'Boy-King', Ratnadhvaj Singha from the blame of committing torture on Jaimati and her death in torture and the view of imposing all the blames on Laluksola Barphukan and Gidagathi Hazarika. L.N.Bezbarua held that 'Lora Raja' must shoulder and share the responsibility of the acts of his ministers and officers, as he was the sovereign of the state. L.N.Bezabarua also pointed out a contradiction in the view of S.K.Bhuyan in regard to 'Lora Raja'. S.K.Bhuyan had tried to defend the monarch from all allegations against him but in one place he termed 'Lora Raja' as 'Koni-Bih', a poisonous seed.
- (iv) The view that Bhotai Deka killed Laluk sola Barphukan being irritated with the atrocities of Barphukan and killing of Jaimati. L.N.Bezbarua has opined that had Bhotai Deka be came these atrocities a few more days ago, the life of Jaimati could have been saved. Herewith it may be added that, in fact Bhotai Deka killed Barphukan, because he (Laluk sola) proposed to offer Bhotai Deka to cut sacrifice in the Kechai-khati temple at Shadiya.
- (v) L.N.Bezbarua, had also opposed the effort of S.K.Bhuyan to defend the role of Gadapani in the incident of capture, punishment and assassination

of Jaimati and free him from the blame and pointed out some contradiction in the descriptions of the activities of Gadapani.-(a) that Gadapani flew away to Naga hill, is not believable, because the very word 'Naga' is not mentioned in the Harakanta Sadaramin's Buranji (b)For that very reason that Gadapani fell in love of a Nagamese girl is also not believable.(c) Gadapani married two Naga girls, but did not marry none of the three Assamese girls- Sonadoi, Rahdoi and Bhogdoi who saved his life in time of his fugitive life although constructed temples and tanks in their name. L.N.Bezbarua satirically said that this reflects Gadapani's special weakness for the Nagamese girls.

- (vi) The writing of 'Padya Buranji' of Dutiram Hazarika is not dependable, because this is a metrical literary composition. S.K.Bhuyan himself had admitted that this metrical writing was written on the basis of oral traditions prevalent among the common people.
- (vii) L.N.Bezbarua also humours the conversation between Jaimati and Gadapani in the time when the Chaodangs and Gidagathi Hazarika were torturing her and Gadapani came in disguise near to Jaimati. It is not believable that the Chaodangs or Gidagathi Hazarika did not hear or could not understand the conversation between Jaimati and Gadapani.
- (viii) As per the Harakanta Sadaramin's Buranji, Jaimati was killed on that very night when Gadapani flew away from his wife from the place where they were then living in a cottage hideout in jungle.

L.N.Bezbarua had criticized the content of the book 'ASAMA JIYARI' with his double-edged sharp language but also criticized some other contemporary writings on Jaimati by other writers also in this article. Through this criticism disparities in the information in the sources on Jaimati and some weaknesses in the

writing of S.K.Bhuyan came out vividly. Thus the act of sending the copy of Asama Jiyari to L.N.Bezabarua by S.K.Bhuyan was very fruitful and proved to be beneficial to the study of the episode of Jaimati. Of course, L.N.Bezabarua criticized basically the dramatic aspects of the episode of Jaimati and the disparities in the sources in regard to Jaimati. L.N.Bezabarua had not contributed positively in settling the tangle of the historicity of Jaimati. He has not remarked in specific language on the historicity of Jaimati. Omission of some information in a particular source (as in the case of Harakanta sadaramin's Assam Buranji regarding Jaimati) cannot be said as the denial of a fact. Like wise a metrical chronicle like Dutiram's 'Buranji' can also be utilized as important source in reconstructing the history of Assam and its importance as a original source cannot be neglected simply because of its metrical character. There are contradictory or unacceptable information in other chronicles also, which are written in prose. It is the duty of the modern historians to reconstruct the history scientifically.

It is true that, S.K.Bhuyan tried to glorify and magnify the sacrifice of Jaimati in the book 'ASAMA JIYARI'. His eagerness to establish the character of Jaimati as the symbol of chastity of the Assamese women is clear. Even he invited the other scholars also to do so in this book. The purpose of S.K.Bhuyan in magnifying the character is also clear from his clear statement in page-56 of ASAMA JIYARI that some common issues and symbols of woe and joy are essential for the sake of unity and strength of a nation.

S.K.Bhuyan admitted that the episode of Jaimati is expanded with newer additions of information both with oral and written sources. Some literary and imaginary additions were also made to the story of Jaimati. He set some questions

also to the scholars and members of Assamese society to clarify them. But he boldly opined that the historicity of Jaimati couldn't be challenged.<sup>131</sup>

It is noteworthy here that, the view of S.K.Bhuyan regarding the role of Lora Raja for the torture on Jaimati was different in the article incorporated in 'Chaneki', which was published in 1928. In this article, it is said that Lora Raja ordered to bring Jaimati to the royal court; she was repeatedly asked about her husband and getting angry with her repeated disobedience to reveal anything about her husband, Lora Raja ordered to punish her and to compel her by hook or by crook to make her reveal information about Gadapani. Mutilation of the other princes was also done with at the will of Lora Raja.<sup>132</sup> Here in this article S.K.Bhuyan has not tried to make Laluksola Barphukan responsible for all these inhuman atrocities as what has been done in 'ASAMA JIYARI'. Of course, the article on Jaimati in CHANEKI is written in a tale-telling style and it contains literary flavour very much.

In fact there is nothing irrationality in the death of Jaimati in punishment on the basis of which the historicity of Jaimati can be questioned. That Lora Raja inflicted torture on the princes that Gadapani flew away in disguise and that even the powerful Buragohain like Atan was killed in this episode of reign of terror under the rule of Lora Raja are historical fact. In such a situation, death of the wife of fugitive prince Gadapani is quite normal incident. More over chronicles are not totally silent in this respect. The Assam Buranji-SM, Asamar Padya Buranji, Sadaramin's Assam Buranji contains the episode more or less.

The invitation and prophecy of S.K.Bhuyan for corroborative evidences to the episode of Jaimati did not end in futile. Some new facts and evidences have come to light in the recent days, which corroborates the investigations made by

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<sup>131</sup> .Bhuyan, S.K.- Asama Jiyari, p.26

<sup>132</sup> ibid, pp.27-32

S.K.Bhuyan on Jaimati. Dr.Sarat Phukan IPS has been able to trace some unpublished Ahom and Assamese manuscripts and some other sources, which establish the historicity of Jaimati on more sound footing. These sources have not only corroborated the some of the information about Jaimati already written up in some published books, including that of the S.K.Bhuyan, but also have brought some newer information on Jaimati. As per the sources, the forefather of Jaimati, Phukimung Kangan was the chief of a province named Mungli in the Mungmao. Jaimati's forefather Chekangan alias Kangan accompanied Sukapha (Siu-Ka-Pha) in his journey to Brahamaputra valley, which was started in AD 1215. The family tree of Jaimati since Phukimung Kangan, has also been traced. Vault of Laithepena b rgohain, the father of Jaimati, names of brothers of Gadapani, Jaimati's other family members, vault of Jaimati, tank named after Malbhog, brother of Jaimati and so many other information are found in the manuscripts collected by Sarat Phukan. [ \* Dr.Phukan delivered a talk with slide-show along with B.K.Gohain on 8-7-07 at Kalakhetra. The news was telecasted in N.E.Television on 9-7-07.<sup>133</sup>

**(D) Some other subjects- a general review:**

In this chapter, three topics have already been discussed, which S.K.Bhuyan dealt with special emphasis. There are many other subjects with which S.K.Bhuyan had dealt with. Among these, some subjects are taken from the 'Buranjis', while others are taken from other sources. It is important to have a look over these subjects to have an idea about the extant of the area in which the investigative eyes of S.K.Bhuyan roamed through and how he has dealt with them.

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<sup>133</sup> The synopsis of the talk is appended as appendix-B. Appendix-C contains two relevant folios of manuscript.

Some of the characters of Assam history, which were dealt with by S.K.Bhuyan are reevaluated already in this chapter in connection with the discussion on the Mughal invasions in Assam. Some women characters are also reevaluated in a separate sub-heading in this very chapter. Apart from these characters some characters dealt with by S.K.Bhuyan are left without being reevaluated in these discussions. For examples, the characters like (i) Rajeswar Singha, (ii) Keertichandra Barbarua, (iii) Jay Singha, (iv) Kuranganayani, (v) Nagayan Saikia Bhotai Deka (BURANJIR VANI-P.116), (vi) Duwalia Pani Phukan (BURANJIR VANI-P.139), (vii) Badan Chandra Barphukan (BURANJIR VANI-P.164), (viii) Maniram Dewan (STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF ASSAM p.163-) (ix) Madhu Mallik (STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF ASSAM p.167-), are discussed in some independent chapters in some books or in some separate independent articles. The first four characters are discussed in some chapters of 'SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA'. There are some separate articles on Lachit Barphukan, Atan Buragohain, Keertichandra Barbarua and they are incorporated in the collection-volumes of articles. Apart from these characters of Assam history he wrote articles on (x) Dr.John Peter Wade (STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF ASSAM. -P.124-), (xi) Hem Chandra Goswami (STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF ASSAM p.64-/BIBIDH PRABANDHA-p.190). The articles on the last three persons help in the study of historiography of Assam and two of them viz H.C.Goswami and Edward Gait were contemporaries of S.K.Bhuyan (though elder to him). He wrote on two Vaisnava saints also viz (xiii) Sankardev and (ix) Harihar Ata. S.K.Bhuyan delivered several speeches in different public meetings in different times. He compiled a book on Harihar Ata, which was published in 1960. These articles throw sidelights on the Vaisnavite movement in Assam. Some characters on whom S.K.Bhuyan wrote articles and published in different News papers and magazines may be mentioned-

(xv) Raja Sahur Barphukan (incorporated in Buranjir Katha)(xvi) Phopai Paniphukan (Buranjir Katha), (xvii) Moran Raja Bharat Singha, (xviii) The Baillie brothers etc. S.K.Bhuyan contemplated to to publish the proceedings of the trial of Prince Gomdhar Konwar and Piyali Phukan and collected necessary materials for these two characters also.

In addition to the characters of Assam history he wrote a few articles on some all Indian Characters also Among them, the characters of Lord Buddha, Shivaji, Vivekananda, Gopal krisna Gokhale, Mirjumla, Ramsingha are noteworthy.

In depicting the characters of Assam history in general, the tune of S.K.Bhuyan is dominantly characterized by his usual attitude of searching greatness and heroism in them and as usually his perspective is seen to contradict with the reality. S.K.Bhuyan collected the information on these characters, which were lying scattered in the pages of the 'Buranjis' and assembled them in such a way that the readers can have them in one place and have a synthesized idea about these characters. It is not so always that all these characters had exemplified their lives with perseverences throughout their lives, with series of achievements or with pursuance of noble ideals. Some of them, in some petty incidents showed their courage and bravery, which glared suddenly. S.K.Bhuyan highlighted these incidents to project their greatness. As a result, the objectivity of observation in evaluating their true personality is harmed. Some concreat examples may be placed here. In the article 'Duwalia Paniphukanar Birattva' incorporated in 'BURANJIR VANI' it is narrated that the Moamoria leader Ragha Moran tried to induce Duwalia Paniphukan, who faught against the Moamoria rebels, to give up arms and to join the rebellious team repeatedly. But in spite of repeated attempts of Raghab Moran, Duwalia Paniphukan remained loyal to his own king and finally the rebellious soldiers killed him. Before he was killed, the soldirs under him either died in

fighting or fled away from the battle. Only one of his servants (*Tamol kata Ligitu*) remained with him. Both of them fought valiantly against the rebel. After narrating this incident S.K.Bhuyan has commented-

*“Readers ! will You have any interest in reading the stories of heroism of Alexander, Napolion, Prithviraj and Rana Pratap here after ? Thanks to Duwallo Paniphukan of Dihingia family....”*<sup>134</sup> In fact, this is an exaggerated comment. In the article ‘Nagayan Saikia Bhotai Deka’ the greatness of Bhotai Deka is depicted by S.K.Bhuyan only on the basis of the act of Bhotai Deka of killing of Laluksola Barphukan when he was asleep at night in the year S.E.1602. All knows treacherous act of surrendering Gauhati to Mughals by Laluksola Barphukan and atrocities committed by him there after. Regarding the act of killing Laluksola by Bhotai Deaka, S.K.bhuyan has said, *“It can easily be inferred what would have happen to the condition of Assam if Bhotai Deka and his companions had not killed Laluk Barphukan”*<sup>135</sup>(Td)

But this very Bhotai Deka and his man at the order of Raja Sahur Barphukan showed the way and entrance to Kaliabar to Mughal army during the invasion of Mirjumla. It is said that Bhotai Deka was bound to follow the order of Raja Sahur Barphukan. In fact, it would have been an example of more bravery for Bhotai Deka if he had defied the traitful order of Raja Sahur Barphukan. Similarly, Bhotai Deka did not kill Laluksola to safeguard the interest of the state. He did nothing against Laluk or his against his atrocities until, Laluk Barphukan proposed to offer Bhotai Deka to cut sacrifice in the Kechaikhati temple at Sadiya.

The number of such examples will be multiplied. The intention of S.K.Bhuyan in focusing on these characters can be known clearly in one comment

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<sup>134</sup> Bhuyan, S.K.-BV, p.150.

<sup>135</sup> *ibid.*, p.117

made by S.K.Bhuyan in the article “Duwaliya Paniphukanar Birattva”. He said-“*We say, let these ‘Buranjis’ be published, the stories there in be circulated, than the translation of foreign drama and novels will be stopped, then the sources and materials for Assamese dramas and novels will be abundant. Then you will see that there will be a new life in the Assamese Literature and a new awakening in the Assamese nationalism*”<sup>136</sup>

S.K.Bhuyan wrote articles on Hemchandra Goswami, Edward Gait, Dr.John Peter Wade and Atan Buragohain. He discussed on the chronicle of Atan Buragohain in the chapter XVIII with the title “Atan Buragohain as a historian” in ABHT. The chapter gives an introduction to the subject given in the title of the said chapter. The article inserted in ‘BIBIDH PRABANDHA’ with the title “Asomiya Buranji Lekhak Atan Buragohain Rajmantri Dangariya”<sup>137</sup> was written for children and was cast through ALL INDIA RADIO, Guwahati on 18.8.49. Major portion of this article has narrated his political character and nominal on his writing.

The three articles on Hemchandra Goswami, Edward Gait and John Peter Wade are very informative. In ‘BIBIDH PRABANDHA’ two different writings on H.C.Goswami written in different times by S.K.Bhuyan are incorporated in the chapter with the title ‘Pandit Hemchandra Goswami’. The two articles were published in the Assamese magazine “MILON” respectively in 1925 and in 1853. The article on H.C.Goswami incorporated in ‘STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF ASSAM.’is more elaborate and the writings of H.C.Goswami and his other achievements are separately introduced in this article. These writings on H.C.Goswami depict the biographical sketch and his scholastic achievements. It is noteworthy that, there are some marked similiarity between H.C.Goswami and

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<sup>136</sup> *ibid*, p.140

<sup>137</sup> Bhuyan, Jogendranarayan-Ed.- Bibidh Prabandha, pp.186-189

S.K.Bhuyan in respect of their growth and activities in the intellectual arena, particularly in the historical studies of Assam. Both of them started their intellectual activities with literary works; then entered into historical studies of Assam- engaged in recovering, preserving, editing and publishing old manuscripts, took initiative in founding two historical organizations and conducted them viz. The KAS and the DHAS; received government patronage, both were responsible servants of British government in Assam and exerted their duties efficiently and sincerely. Of course, while S.K.Bhuyan acquired highest academic degree- the Doctoral and the post-Doctoral-D. Litt. Degree, H.C.Goswami was undergraduate. S.K.Bhuyan served in different and higher designations of government services and the activities of DHAS were more voluminous than that of KAS. But H.C.Goswami already started the ideas and the methodologies followed by S.K.Bhuyan in collecting and preserving the manuscripts, preparing their catalogues and editing them. H.C.Goswami was 20 years' senior to S.K.Bhuyan. That, S.K.Bhuyan impressed, influenced and motivated by the activities of H.C.Goswami is evident. Gratefulness of S.K.Bhuyan to H.C.Goswami is revealed in these articles on H.C.Goswami. These articles are valuably helpful in the study of the course of evolution of the historiography of Assam, particularly in the modern age.

Similarly, the article on Sir Edward Gait incorporated in 'BIBIDH PRABANDHA' also reflects S.K.Bhuyan's grateful feelings toward this British civil servant cum historian. In this article biographical sketch of Edward Gait, his official designations as civil servant in Assam and in rest of India, his contributions to the historiography of Assam and a brief criticism on his 'A HISTORY OF ASSAM' are given. He is said to be the pioneer of scientific historical studies and research on Assam. Those who were engaged in research on Assam history after Gait also followed the course directed by Gait. Of Course, That, Edward Gait

accepted the wrong information that Sankardev borrowed the teaching of Chaitanya dev and that the Assamese language was merely a dialect of Bengali in his census report of 1891 is not mentioned by S.K.Bhuyan in this article.<sup>138</sup> S.K.Bhuyan has depicted the love of Gait for the people of Assam till his demise.

Dr. John Peter Wade visited Assam during the Welsh's expedition to Assam. He accompanied Welsh in the capacity of the Asstt. Surgeon. In the lengthy article on Peter Wade, incorporated in 'STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF ASSAM' S.K.Bhuyan has given elaborate description of the writings of Peter Wade on Assam. Wade collected materials with a view to compile treatises on geography and history of Assam. These were edited and published after his demise. Regarding the value of the writings of Wade, S.K.Bhuyan has said—"*Yet we have in the pages of the indefatigable Doctor a mass of information which will be of invaluable help to all future workers in the field of Assamese history, as they were written by a critical western scholar, who was at the same time an eye witness of the existing machinery of the Ahom government, before the catastrophic disruption brought about by the Avanese hordes of Mingimaha Bandula*"<sup>139</sup>

The articles on Maniram Dewan and Madhumallik incorporated in 'STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF ASSAM' are important because the names of these two persons are entangled with the attempt to spread Sepoy mutiny in Assam. Generally, the heroes praised and projected to be great heroes by S.K.Bhuyan belong to the Assam history of Pre-British period. But these two characters belong to the modern period of Assam history and they rebelled against the British rule in Assam. In the article 'Maniram Dewan: Some new facts', S.K.Bhuyan depicted Maniram

<sup>138</sup> Bezbarua Granthavali-vol.-1, 2nd ed. 1988 page-'Kha'-'Ga'. Later on Gait realized his faults, he regretted for those mistakes and amended his views on Vaisnavite cult in Assam and Assamese language

<sup>139</sup> idem, Stud.Hist.Ass, P.142

Dewan as a great patriot-“ Any fresh revelation about Maniram Dewan and his times is welcome, as it helps us to draw a full length picture of the doing of that great patriot, which unfortunately, is still wanting.”<sup>140</sup> Although the title of the article is given as ‘Maniram Dewan: Some new facts’, nothing new about Maniram Dewan has been stated here. Some new facts on the ‘compatriots’ of Maniram Dewan are stated here and these new facts came to light through a family chronicle, written on the Bhatia Barbaras by Srijut Gauricharan Barbara of Jorhat.<sup>141</sup> The article on Madhu Mallik reveals about a person- Madhu Mallik, who hailed from Bengal, came to Jorhat, Assam with an object to establish an indigo factory and got involved in the Sepoy mutiny affairs in Assam. The article contains information about Madhu Mallik, his involvement in the sepoy mutiny affairs in Asam, trial and judgement on his ‘crime’ and the preparations matured in the palace of Kandarpeswar Singha at Jorhat. This figure of the Sepoy mutiny episode in Assam is left out in the history of modern Assam. This reflects an extension of pan-Indian political manoeuvre in Assam.

These two articles were written in the post-independence period. It is also equally mentionworthy that S.K.Bhuyan collected some documents on the proceedings of the trial of Prince Gomdhar Konwar and Piyali Phukan. He contemplated to publish those papers but could not do that during his lifetime.

S.K.Bhuyan delivered some speeches on Mahapurush Sankardev in different public gatherings in different places of Assam during the period from 1939 till his demise. Some of them were published in Assamese regional and National News papers. Two of these speeches are incorporated in ‘BIBDH PRABANDHA’ also.

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<sup>140</sup> *ibid*, p.163

<sup>141</sup> *ibid*, p.163. Some new facts about Maniram Dewan have been getting revealed and the patriotism of Maniram Dewan are being questioned by some scholars in some of their recent writings

Apart from the speeches on the great vaisnavite saint Sankardev, he compiled a short sketch on another vaisnavite saint Harihar Ata. The source of this book was the 'KATHA GURU CHARIT' edited by Upendrachandra Laekharu. He wrote an article with the title 'Mahapurusha Dharmar Baisistya' which was published in the news paper 'Tinidinia Asamiya' Nov.3, 1939 and in the magazine 'Jayanti'-vol.-II. He planned to incorporate the article in his collection volume 'Buranjir Katha'. But when the book was published with the Title 'ASOM BURANJIR KATHA' in 1989 this article was not inserted in this collection. But there is an article with the title 'Vaisnava-Niryatan'.<sup>142</sup> More over, there are sporadic comments and views of S.K.Bhuyan on the Vaisnavite cult of Assam in SWARGADEV RAJESWAR SINGHA, LACHIT BARPHEKAN AND HIS TIMES, ATAN BURAGOHAIR AND HIS TIMES, and TRIPODI and in some other writings. That all these writings reflect any objective observation on the Vaisnavite cult, it is not so. But in these writings it is revealed that the cult has great influence in the social and national life of the people of Assam. In a speech on Sankardev, S.K.Bhuyan has said. *"Everybody has realized now that the heart of Assamese people is megnimous [Prasasta] and that SankarDev has given the basic teaching [Bij-Mantra] to them for peacefull cohabitation of different castes and creeds. There is no distinction of castes and creeds in the Assamese Hindu society, there is no any obligation, the person should only be a virtuous one. Our brethren people of the Garos, the Nagas, the Mikirs, the Kacharis, the Yabanas, etc were included among disciples of Mahapurush Sankardeva. As a result of it, the Assamese became a liberal nationality"*<sup>143</sup>

<sup>142</sup> idem. Asam Buranjir Katha, pp.70-74

<sup>143</sup> Bhuyan, Jogendranarayan, Bibidh Prabandha-p.207

In the preface of 'Harihar Ata', S.K.Bhuyan has said about the 'Katha Guru charit'-*"In this book, the features of Asamese society of Sixteen century, way of conversation, ideals of religious principles; origin of the Vaisnavite writings and an idea on the political and economic condition of the country are also found...After all, it is essential to study the invaluable 'Katha Guru Charit' full with valuable jewels of the Sankari era, to have knowledge about the culture and civilization of Assam"*<sup>144</sup>

In the article 'Sharaighat Nai, Kintu Sharaighat Ase' incorporated in 'Tripodi', it is said, *"This Vaisnavite cult [Nam-Dharma] is the protecting shield, talisman of the Assamese. If this cult is extinct, the life of Assamese nation will also extinct."*<sup>145</sup>

In the article 'Vaisnav Niryatan' in 'ASOM BURANJIR KATHA', it is said that Vaisnavite cult weakened the Assamese people and so the farsighted monarch Gadadhar Singha began to oppress the Vaisnava saints and disciples. He at his deathbed advised his son Rudra Singha to continue the oppression. Rudra Singha also did so, but as per advice of his deceased father in dream, Rudra Singha discontinued oppression on the Vaisnavas. Of course, the view of S.K.bhuyan that the Vaisnavite cult weakened the Assamese people is questionable and contradictory to his earlier view on it. There were other causes also, for which Gadadhar Singha oppressed the Vaisnavas.

The article "Hadirachakir Para Gana Parisadaloi" inserted in 'BURANJIR VANI' is also an important article. This article witnesses a transition of attitude of S.K.Bhuyan towards the British rule in Assam. That the British rule in Assam was an unjudicious and it exploited and oppressed the natives of Assam is revealed here.

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<sup>144</sup> Bhuyan, S.K.- Harihar Ata, *Nibedan*-first page

<sup>145</sup> idem, Tripodi-p.76

More over the anti-British uprisings, peasant movement and involvement of the Assamese people in the Indian Independence movement have received honourable depiction in this article.

The article “The Assamese” in “Assam Review” has not yet lost its relevance in the present socio-political situation of Assam. The large-scale immigration not only from neighbouring countries, but also rest part of India, caused imbalance in the traditional ethnic and demographic pattern of Assam. Apart from the question of immigration, the tribal revivalist movements in Assam also have created new questions to the definition of Assamese identity. S.K.Bhuyan, many years ago in 1928, in the said article had reflected on the problem. He wrote “*At the present time when Assam is swamped by thousands of immigrants from other parts of India, it has become necessary to precisely define the term Assamese, after whom the eastern most province of India has been named.*” In this article S.K.Bhuyan tried to explain who can be said as a Assamese and examined some criteria and tests by which a person can be defined as a Assamese. He examined the criteria of Religion, Language, Ethnic feature, habitate, Culture, Duration of living in the land and even the Intent of the person on the basis of which a definition of ‘Assamese’ can be framed. Although he has not given any clear defintion to the term ‘Assamese’, it is revealed in his writing that none of the above criterion singly can help to frame the defintion, but some total of them with priority of language and religion a workable definition can be found out. More over clearly marked some groups of people. (some indogeneous tribes of Assam) who can never be called an Assamese. The article witnesses his keen observation and analysis of the Assamese society.

Apart from the historical characters, S.K.Bhuyan had keen eyes on different social, political, economic and intellectual subjects, which had historical importance. He wrote on population structure of Assam and similarities and differences between

the Assamese society and societies in rest of India. He wrote on topics like weaving culture, music, products, natural resources, opium consumption,<sup>146</sup> astronomy, manuscripts, inscriptions of Assam<sup>147</sup>, relation between Assam and neighbouring hill tribes, medication, flora and fauna and so on.

The prefaces written by S.K.Bhuyan in his original and edited books and in other books witness his extensive in the concerned subjects. Some aspects of these prefaces are already has been discussed in different contexts and places of this study. Twentyfive such prefaces written during the period from 1926 to 1964 are incorporated in 'RECOLLECTIONS AND REFLECTIONS'. These prefaces not only contain the summed up contents of the concerned books, but also the problems suffered by him in working out them. They are essential to feel the strenuous endeavours of S.K.Bhuyan in historical studies of Assam and for a justified evaluation of his writings. Hari Prasad Chaliha has termed those prefaces as 'eternal monument' [*Sarbakalik Saudha*].<sup>148</sup> That S.K.Bhuyan delivered numerous lectures throughout his life has already been mentioned and discussed. Irrespective of the place, purpose and subjects, these lectures contained historical information and many cases witness his original investigation and observation and thus were monumental. His paper on Lachit Barphukan read at the first cession of **Indian History Congress held at Poona** in June 1935 was the first attempt to introduce the Assamese hero in Indian platform of Scholars. This article nicely reflected how the people of Assam take the achievement of Lachit Barphukan and the battle of Saraighat for themselves. It was highly appreciated by the scholars of that gathering.

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<sup>146</sup> S.K.Bhuyan composed the article, 'Asamat Kani' incorporated in 'Asam Buranjir Katha' at the request of the then excise minister of Assam in 1947. The article contains valuable information and scholarly discussion on the subject. *CF.* Neog, Maheswar, Bhumika, Asam Buranjir Katha, p.iv

<sup>147</sup> He compiled 'Copper plate and stone inscription of Assam in 1929'

<sup>148</sup> A series of writiting of Hari Prasad Chaliha with the Title 'Patani Sahitya: Dr.Suryya Kumar Bhuyanr Sarbakalik Saudha' are published in Amar Asom, since July 6, 2006

In the presidential speech of the **Modern History Section of Fifteenth session of Indian History Congress held at Gwalior in 1952** he referred to the main trends of Historiography of India. The spiritualism of India and The means of non-violence in the independence movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi were stressed in this lecture. He implored the historians, scholars, poets, journalists, artists and all and sundry to foster '*the spirit of unity so that India may never undergo again consequences of disintegration and divided political ambition*'.<sup>149</sup> He lamented that '*the saints of India have not yet received the attention they deserve at the hands of our academic historians though their lives and teachings are a very powerful instrument for the strengthening of our moral fervour and for the propagation of the message of peace and brotherhood*'.<sup>150</sup> As like in some other places of his writings, in this speech also, S.K.Bhuyan has mentioned the changed trend in historiography in modern days. He mentioned, "*The old conception of history has become entirely changed. History was for long a record of the transaction of the rulers.....and therefore new elements like the condition of the masses and the progress of art and literature have entered into the texture of reconstruction*"<sup>151</sup> S.K.Bhuyan revealed his observation about the reciprocity of thoughts between India and the western nations. He referred to the admiration and new eagerness of the western people for the Indian spiritualism while elements of western realism had penetrated into India. Here in this context, S.K.Bhuyan expressed a statement, which indicates one aspect of his historical philosophy. He said, "*I am one of those who believe in the existence of a devine programme in all human relations and endeavours*".<sup>152</sup> In this speech he did not left the opportunity exploited to say about Assam. He mentioned that Assam

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<sup>149</sup> Indian History Congress, Fifteenth Section, Modern History Section. Presidential Address. p.3

<sup>150</sup>, <sup>149</sup> ibid, p.4

<sup>152</sup> ibid, p.3

had been an integral part of Indian culture since time immemorial. In this regard he referred to the traces of Buddhist influence in Assam. He referred to the practice of writing 'Buranjis' in Assam, Rudra Singha's plan to invade Bengal and his appeal to some Indian monarchs on the basis of the sentiment of Hinduism, Assam's Relation with East India Company, changed attitude of the Assamese people towards the British rule in Assam, comparative delay of enslavement of Assam under British rule, and separate line of Assamese nationalism.<sup>153</sup> He mentioned about the British historiographers on Assam new Assamese historians, historical institutions in Assam and so on in this speech.<sup>154</sup> Another speech of S.K.Bhuyan, which is important from historical point of view, is the **Pratibha Devi memorial lecture series on the topic 'The Military System of the Assamese People'**, delivered on February 27 and 28, 1941 at Gauhati. This was a very lengthy speech and contains much new information on the concerned subject. Although he referred to the warfares of Ancient kamrupa during the reign of Bhaskar Varman and the invasions of Bakhtiyar Khalzi, the speech mainly and elaborately discussed the Assamese war tactics during the rule of Ahom dynasty. Many information mentioned in this speech are found in LACHIT BARPHEUKAN AND HIS TIMES, ATAN BURAGOHAIN AND HIS TIMES and 'MIRJUMLAR ASSAM AKRAMAN'. The speech was delivered on five main points- (1) The permanent military arrangement, (2) Outbreak of hostilities and war preparation, (3) Actual warfare, (4) Conclusion of hostilities, and (5) merits and demerits of the system.<sup>155</sup> Some information, which is not found in the above-mentioned three books, might be mentioned here-

- Ahom soldiers used two kinds of bows- Bagh Dhenu and Karphai Dhenu, which can be used from considerable distance.

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<sup>153</sup> ibid, p.9

<sup>154</sup> ibid, p.10

<sup>155</sup> Miscellaneous file no-67

- The soldiers used sword which were generally straight type called Hengdang usefull both for cutting and piecring
- Shields were made of Rhinoceros skin. Shield men were known as Baruati.
- Ahom soldiers used different kinds of boats. The longer and flat-bottomed ones were made to carry eighty to one hundred men. The boats called Changeli Naos were swifter and were made to carry five to Ten men. Some of the boats called 'Hiloi Chora Nao' were made to carry the Cannons.

Presidential speech at Shillong cession of Asam Sahitya Sabha (1953) and the Presidential speech of History section of Asam Sahitya Sabha, Dhuburi, 1960 are enriched with historical information. Of course the historical facts and phases of Assam history mentioned in the two speeches are found in his other writings and writings on ancient, medieval and modern Assam history of other scholars.

That all of his articles, speeches or other wrtings were valuable additions to the history of Assam, it is not so. All of them neither contain new information nor new ideas. But that he tried to draw attention of his common readers and scholars is witnessed by these writings. He was aware of the importance of the things lying in our surround and tried to make his fellow people aware of them. In course of time some of his writings have proved to be erroneous also, some of them lost relevance at present, but they served the purpose of making people aware of them in his days. These writings reveal multi-dimensional historiographic observation of S.K.Bhuyan. In writing them, he spent time and energy. In the introductory note of 'ASOM BURANJIR KATHA' he wrote, "*Whatever may be the ultimate value of these articles, they are very dear to me as they entailed great labour in their compilation. for historical details have to be gleaned from facts drawn from original records and*

*there is no room for imagination and rhetoric in these matters.*” But the positive aspects of these writings are exploited in large extent by the later historians. In the later research works and publications on Assam history the scholars followed the guidelines, ideas, information found in these writings of S.K.Bhuyan.

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