

Chapter-V

The Bulletins and the Reports

(A) The Report and Conspectus of the KAMRUPA ANUSANDHAN SAMITI- (The KAS) -1927 and The DHAS Bulletins:

On new enthusiasm for historical studies on Assam:

During his second tenure as the Honorary secretary of Kamrup Anusandhan Samiti(1926-1929), S.K.Bhuyan compiled and published a report on the aims and objectives of the KAS and its activities of the year 1925-'26 and part of 1926-'27. The first report on the Activities of the KAS was compiled and published in 1920, which contains the report of the activities of the KAS for the period 1916-1919. Chandrakanta Sarma B.L edited it. The report compiled by S.K.Bhuyan contains valuable information about the origin, the growth, objectives and the activities of the KAS, which is the first non-governmental historical organization of Assam. It was founded in April 7, 1912 with its head quarter at Gauhati. From this report, it can be known that the organization discovered and preserved different kinds of archaeological and historical materials during its 15 years life since its formation. These materials included remains like Images of Deities, Cannons, Cannon balls of different sizes, Manuscripts of varied natures, Inscribed stones, Regalia, Sword, Shield, Potteries, Coins, Paintings and so on. The organization published some booklets and books of historical importance. The organization maintained a library also. It contains information about the enthusiastic founders and patrons (which includes British officers), Executive bodies and staffs of the organizations in different sessions, Budget and expenditures of the organization, speeches of Presidents of some anniversaries of the organization, Remarks of important visitors

on the organization and so on. S.K.Bhuyan followed the same method of recording the different aspects of the activities and other information in the DHAS Bulletins in later, which was followed in this report of the KAS.

During the period from the establishment of the DHAS to the posting of S.K.Bhuyan as the Director of the Department, five departmental Bulletins were published respectively in 1932, '34, '36, '41 and in '51. The then Asstt Director. Birinchi Kumar Barua compiled the fourth bulletin and S.K.Bhuyan compiled the rest. Of course the fourth Bulletins also witness the touch of the able hand of S.K.Bhuyan. It is mention worthy here that, the Third bulletin and Fourth bulletin were published as the souvenirs, respectively of the Opening ceremony of the Narayani Handiqui Historical Institute (i.e. The DHAS with its new building) and of the Unveiling Ceremony of the portrait of the late Mrs. Narayani Handiqui at the Narayani Handiqui Historical Institute. Although these bulletins are reports of departmental activities, these have taken the form of some treatise on historiography of Assam. These bulletins also witness the technique, habitually followed by S.K.Bhuyan, of inserting information wherever possible and thus these bulletins have become some historic document. In fact, it is not easy to mention concisely about the possible availability of data and their historic importance of these bulletins.

Here in these Bulletins, the origin, objectives, future agenda and the achievements of the DHAS are mentioned. These bulletins contain information regarding the efforts of the individuals and organizations in the studies of Assam history in the period of British rule in Assam prior to the foundation of the DHAS. These bulletins contain details of some the earlier manuscripts collected in the early days of the DHAS. The governmental and non-governmental individuals and organizations, which contributed in the foundation and growth of the DHAS, their

historical awareness, sense of responsibility for the society and the nation can be known from these bulletins. Likewise, the cultural, intellectual, social traits of the persons and families, who preserved for generations, collected or donated the manuscripts, also can be known through the study of these bulletins. As S.K.Bhuyan was involved in the activities of the DHAS as the guiding force, since its inception. the activities of S.K.Bhuyan can be evaluated through the evaluation of the activities of the DHAS. More over, these bulletins are also silent witness of the ups and downs of the emotion, which acted as the motivational force in breaking out the movement for collecting, preserving, publishing the manuscripts and making the people aware of their glorious past, under the leadership of the DHAS.

Information regarding the new enthusiasm for reconstruction of Assam History:

There are some scattered information regarding the enthusiasm of some western and native observers, researches and scholars, which help immensely in reconstruction of Assam History. In the DHAS bulletin-2 it is mentioned that, western observers started to write down seriously and thoroughly since the Mirjumla's Assam Expedition. It is mentioned here that "*Tavernier, Bernier, Mannucci, Ralph fitch, Stephen Cacella, T.Cobral, Bartholomew Plaisted, Sebastine Marque wrote disjointed account of Assam and they were characterized by the credulity and uncritical absorption of all travelers tales. The first serious description of Asam and its inhabitants was embodied in the Loss of the Ter Schelling, written by a camp-follower of Mirjumla and published by Glanius in 1682.*"¹The attempt made by Jean Baptist Chevalier, Major James Renall and others to acquire information on Assam and resistance faced in this respect from the Assam

¹ Bull. -2, P.10

monarch, Rajeswar Singha are also mentioned here.² Here after the East India Company got an opportunity to intervene in the politics of Assam when they invited to do so by Gaurinath Singha, the monarch of Assam in time of the Moamaria uprising. The Company Government sent the Assam expedition under the leadership of Capt. Welsh. This Changed situation provided an opportunity to the East India Company to collect information systematically on Assam in large scale. As per the instruction of Governor General Lord Cornwallis, Captain Welsh sent a lengthy report on the customs and traditions and on the products of Assam. Ensign Wood prepared a map of the land and J.P.Wade compiled an account on the history and geography of Assam.³

When the rule of East India Company was introduced in Assam in 1826. many articles and reports were compiled under the government auspices. Many of them were later published, but more other are still buried in the in the form of letters and reports. Governmental information on Assam and neighboring hilly region was first recorded in the letters sent to Kolkata by David Scott. Here after Lord William Bentinck sent Captain Jenkins to collect information on Assam. Jenkins also, mainly with the help of Maniram Dewan collected information on Assam. The reports of Jenkins were also not published. On the other hand, the information collected simultaneously by Colonel Adam white, an agent of the Company was partially published in the Journal of The Asiatic Society of Bengal. A few of the narrative on Assam are preserved in the “diary of a tour in upper Assam” of Jenkins who visited the state of Purandar Singha.⁴

When Assam became a province under the administration of Chief commissioner in 1874, the information on Assam began to be preserved more

² *ibid*, p.10

³ *ibid*, p.11

⁴ *Ibid*, p. -12

systematically in the official notes, monographic reports, censuses made time to time, which were necessary for administrative purpose.

Here after The Company Government got directly involved in re-discovering Assam history with the establishment of the independent 'Department of ethnography' to be run with public revenue. Sir William Ward, the Chief Commissioner of Assam took the initial measures to establish the Department at the steps taken by Sir Edward Gait to take the matter in notice of the Government. Here after with the active steps taken by Mr. Charles James Lyall, the then officiating Chief Secretary and by Sir Edward Gait, the establishment of the Department was materialized.⁵ Gait became the first honorary Director of this Department.

In this very Bulletin, the objectives of the Department envisaged by Edward Gait are found recorded. The plan to collect coins, inscriptions, historical documents, quasi-historical documents, religious scriptures, their study, and preparation of their catalogue and to reconstruct the history of Assam was included in these objectives. After publishing the 'Report on the progress of Historical Research in Assam' in 1897, Gait left Assam. Here in this report, Gait wrote the digest on the original sources of Assam History⁶

Gait compiled the monumental work 'A HISTORY OF ASSAM' utilizing the sources collected through the Department, which was published in 1905. Lieutenant Colonel P.R.T. Gordon (1897) and Dr. J.H. Hutton (1920) respectively succeeded the Directorship. It is noteworthy that, during the directorship of Mr. Gordon, Hem Ch. Goswami was deputed for the period from 1912 to 1913 by the Department in collection of the ancient manuscripts of Assam 1912-13. Measures were taken by the department to transcribe the manuscripts, to prepare elaborate

⁵ *ibid*, P.13

⁶ *ibid*, p.14

catalogue and to publish them.⁷ During the directorship of Mr. Hutton, measures were taken to do research work and to publish monographs on the hill tribes of Assam. Thus the engagements of the Department of Ethnography became larger day by day and this necessitated the establishment of a new Department, which will concentrate solely on the historical studies on Assam.

In such a situation the 'DEPARTMENT OF HISTORICAL AND ANTIQUARIAN STUDIES, ASSAM' was established in 1928. Regarding the establishment of the DHAS, It is mentioned in the first page of the Bull. -1, "*On constant representations being made to Mr. J. R. Cunningham, C.I.E., M.A., D.P.L. Assam, 1912-'31, regarding the absence of facilities for historical research in Assam as contrasted with well organized research institution, existing in other provinces, under the auspices of Government in January 1928, for establishing a department of historical and antiquarian Studies to be mentioned with a regular allotment from provincial revenues. As a result of this move the Government of Assam, During the Administration of his Excellency Sir Laurie Lucas Hammond. established the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies in June 1928.*"⁸

"*Mr. A.H.W. Bentinck, M.A., C.I.E., I.C.S, Commissioner Assam Valley Division. became the Honorary Provincial Director of the DHAS. J.P.Mills, I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner and S.K.Bhuyan, M.A., B.L., (Professor, Cotton College) became Honorary Asstt. Directors of Surama and Brahmaputra valley division of the department respectively.*"⁹ The function of the Department was almost continuation of the historical functions of the Department of Ethnography.¹⁰

⁷ Bull -1, p.5

⁸ ibid, P.1

⁹ ibid, PP.1-2

¹⁰ ibid, p.6

Although it is not mentioned directly, that some non-governmental organizations were engaged in collecting the historical source materials (including the manuscripts), in preserving and publishing them can be known from these very Bulletins. For example, through the two lists inserted in part-ii and part-iii of Bulletin no-1, it can be known that the organization like American Baptist Mission, the KAS, Asam Sahitya Sabha; Ahom Juvak Sanmilan, Gauhati already started to collect, preserve and publish the manuscripts.¹¹ Some individuals in their personal capacity also were also engaged in this move. Similarly, the mention of the ASSAM BURANJI (In Bengali language) by Haliram Dhekial Phukan, the huge manuscript of Assam history compiled by Padmeswar Naoboicha Phukan, the second Volume of BURANJI BIVEK RATNA by Maniram Dewan is found in the DHAS bulletin.

In different context, there are mentions of some important information regarding the historiography of Assam and some significant conclusions can be drawn from these information. For example, conclusion can be drawn that unperverted intellectual urge of some British civil servant also motivated them for their studies in Assam history, which goes against the popular notion that all the move of colonial administrators to reconstruct the Assam history was guided by colonial interest. The modern trend in the historiography of Assam was grown up with the contributions of different interest groups. The colonial rulers, travelers, visitors, scholars, missionaries, patriotic natives and so on formed these groups. They were motivated by commercial and colonial interest, intellectual urge, spiritual and humanistic inspiration and nationalistic patriotic ideals. Admixture of these interests gave birth to the modern trend in the historiography of Assam. That new areas and techniques were adopted in this new trend can directly be known from agendas taken by the Department of Ethnography and the Department of Historical and

¹¹ *ibid*, PP. 30-32

Antiquarian Studies of Assam. It has been mentioned that, Mr. Gait envisaged the objectives of the Department of Ethnography and prepared catalogue of the original sources of Assam history, which included the numismatic, epigraphic and archaeological sources.¹² Apart from the traditional sources, he prepared a list of the published and unpublished writings on Geography, Geology, Ethnology and Philology of Assam.¹³

With the advent of the Printing press in Assam and transitions in the public life, the habit preserving the manuscripts of Assamese people also changed. This also can be known from these Bulletins. In this regard S.K.Bhuyan has commented in Bulletin-2 *“But the facilities of the printing press and the gradual curtailment of religious observances have led to the breaking up of the family store of manuscripts. In a few more decades old manuscripts in possession of Assamese families will be rare. Every family was anciently a repository of manuscripts and we have to collect them in a central place applying to this work all the technique and methodology, which have been developed on the subject of scientific preservation of manuscript.”*¹⁴

There is such ample information regarding the changes that came in the historiography of Assam. The DHAS bulletins can work as the guidebook for the study of historiography of Assam.

On collected source materials:

One of the main objectives of the DHAS was to collect the historical source materials. The Bulletins recorded the activities of the DHAS in achieving this goal. The part-ii and part-iii of the Bulletin-1 contain detail information on the manuscripts collected and transcripts prepared by the DHAS during its last few

¹², ¹³ *ibid*, p.3

¹⁴ Bull.-2, p.5

years (i.e. from 15th July 1824 to December 1931-page-27-49). The list of the collected manuscripts in the part-ii of the Bulletin-1 contain the title of the manuscripts, the name of the person(s), who possessed the manuscripts, the mode of obtaining the manuscripts (whether purchased, borrowed or on donation etc.), the number of the folios of the collected manuscripts, the subject matters dealt in the manuscripts, the materials used for the leaves of the manuscripts (whether Sanchi bark, Muga cloth or Tula Pat etc.) and some of their noteworthy features like insertion of painting and colors there in. Thus from the list it is found that total 61 manuscripts were collected during this period Out of these 61 manuscripts 21 were Ahom *Puthis* and these 21 *Puthis* were collected from Sri jut Nandinath Phukan. Deodhai Pandit of Akhoia Deodhai Gaon, Khaloighora Mouza, Sibsagar, Assam. Most of these *Puthis* deal with Ahom religious rituals, foretelling, finding auspicious day, mythology and Philosophy. This group of *Puthis* includes two Ahom-Assamese dictionaries- 'Bar Amra' and 'Lati-Amra'. Other manuscripts were collected from the KAS, the American Baptist Mission, The Ahom Juvak Sanmilan, the Assam Sahitya Sabha, Anandaram Gogoi, Anandiram Gogoi Upendrachandra Lekharu. Saratchandra Goswami and S.K.Bhuyan. In the part-iii of the Bulletin, the list of transcripts prepared by the DHAS is inserted. This list also provides details of the transcripts. For example, the list contains the names of scribes engaged for transcribing either from the departmental staffs or temporarily appointed.

In the Bulletin-2, part-iii, the information regarding the recently (within January 1932 to January 1934) collected manuscripts is mentioned. This time the number of collected manuscripts amounted to 231. These collections included Hindu religious scriptures along with the secular works and manuscripts of the Buranjis.¹⁵

¹⁵ Bull.-2, pp.51-58

From the Bulletin-3 it can be known that by this time the number of collected manuscripts and transcripts amounted to 415 and 145 respectively. This Bulletin does not contain any detailed list and there is simple mention, “*We have collected in the mean time 415 manuscripts and 145 transcripts.*”¹⁶

Bulletin -4 does not contain any comment on such collection by the DHAS. In Bulletin-5 it is simply mentioned, “*The Department has collected nearly one thousand manuscripts and One hundred transcripts and a large number of rare and useful books on Assam. Some of them are historical documents of first-rate importance, throwing light not only on the past history of Assam, but also that of India. Most of these documents are regular chronicles, called Buranjis in Assamese, compiled in old Assam under the authority of the then existing Government. Some manuscripts contain illustration in colours representing mythological and secular themes and they will enable investigations to study the development and character of Assamese painting and the influences which entered into its productions.*”¹⁷

Thus the DHAS bulletins reveal the materialization of the envisaged objectives. They also reveal the passion and stamina of the people engaged in collecting and transcribing the manuscripts. The contribution and the generosity of the people who lent or donated the manuscripts are also not less significant and valuable in the movement of reconstructing the Assam History. The taste and cultural and intellectual traits of the families also can be known from the nature of the manuscripts they possessed and preserved. The lists of the collected manuscripts in the DHAS bulletins can be used as Library index also, which contain information about some invaluable books. The first two bulletins only contain detailed lists of

¹⁶ Bull-3, p.19

¹⁷ Bull-5, pp1-2

collected manuscripts. The act of mentioning detailed list was avoided in the later Bulletins. It was avoided on the probable grounds- (i) gradually it was felt problematic due to lack of sufficient space (ii) or it was felt insignificant (iii) or for the diminishing enthusiasm caused due to insufficient funds. The information on the collected manuscripts given in the first two Bulletins, the acknowledgements of the persons involved (it is a habitual feature of the writings of S.K.Bhuyan) reflect the awareness of S.K.Bhuyan in record keeping and decency.

On other Historical activities:

The diversity of the accomplished works of the DHAS also can be known from these Bulletins. Apart from the collecting and preserving the manuscripts, other activities of the DHAS were (i) to publishing the manuscripts after being collated, edited and compiled (ii) to sell them in a departmental counter (iii) to run a class on Ahom language (iv) To make corresponding members with a view to expand the area of departmental activities and (v) to make a library.

The Bulletins contain list of the books published by the Department. Thus from the bulletins it can be known that **Five** books were published till the publication of the Bulletin-1, **Four** more Buranjis till the Bulletin-2, No new publication, but Four in press till the Bulletin-3, **Nine** books till the Bulletin-4 and **Six** more books were published till the publication of the Bulletine-5 in 1951. Within this period, the department had published 24 books. Out of these 24 books 15 were edited, translated or originally written by S.K.Bhuyan (Edited-10, Translated-2, Original-3).

The Books published from the Department were sold in the Departmental Counter. Other valuable books were also stored in this counter for sell. The bulletins contain accounts of the money received from this sells counter. The last pages of the published books and of the Bulletins contained the advertisements for sell.

Another enthusiastic move accomplished by the DHAS was the arrangement of the class on Ahom language. These measures were taken during the period of 1931-'32. The class was introduced under a Deodhai Pundit appointed as a teacher. Along many renowned personalities, S.K.Bhuyan himself was a student of this class. To preserve the Ahom intonation, gramophone was used. The main objective of this class was to decipher and discover the text of the old Ahom Puthis.¹⁸

In the early days of the DHAS, a library was founded with the donations received from various persons. Apart from the publications of the Department, other books were also preserved in this library. Some top most British officials donated a huge number of valuable books to this Library¹⁹

The inclusion of the corresponding members reflects three aspects of the DHAS –(i) its structure, (ii) its achieved activities and (iii) its way of functioning its duties. With a view to expand the activities, various scholars, staying in different parts of the globe, particularly those who had special attachment for the history of Assam, were enrolled as corresponding members of the Department after receiving their consent. Regarding the duty of the corresponding members it was written “*We trust that corresponding members will be ready to help the Department with their advice and suggestions from time to time; that they will keep us informed of any historical relic, or manuscript, the acquisition of which is in their opinion, desirable, and that they will bring to the notice of the Department any unpublished historical manuscript, inscription or similar object, the publication of which will contribute to the advancement of historical knowledge, specially with regard to our province; that in short the Department and its corresponding members will represent an association of scholars all working for the object with which the Department was*

¹⁸ Bull-1, p.20

¹⁹Bull-2, P-39-; Bull-3, p.28

established."²⁰ As per the list given in the Bulletin-1 the number of corresponding member was 27 and the number increased in the Bulletin-2 to 36. The corresponding members were such personalities who contributed a lot in the intellectual activities of Assam and are still revered by the people of Assam. The inclusion of these personalities as members of the Department lifted it to the status of a national organization. S.K. Bhuyan invited the national political leaders, scholars from other States of India and from abroad or other important persons whoever came to Assam. to the office of the DHAS, showed the publications and collections or make them aware of the other achievements of the DHAS. S.K.Bhuyan sent letters, copies of publications and other information regarding the Department to many other such personalities serving the mankind in different countries of the world. The appreciations and select remarks of the scholars like Sir Wolsely Haig, editor. Cambridge History of India, Voll-III, "Turks and Afghans", Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. Professor Humayun Kabir, Dr Tara Chand, reflects how the attention of these eminent persons were drawn to the DHAS by the act of S.K.Bhuyan.²¹

On the Growth of the DHAS and historical Studies of S.K.Bhuyan:

The foundation the DHAS was incident that brought far reaching and significant consequences in the history of historiography of Assam. This Department under the able leadership of S.K.Bhuyan gave birth to a movement in collecting, preserving and publishing ancient manuscripts and thus in reconstruction of Assam history. It is noteworthy that this Department was founded under and with the patronage of a colonial government. Already many other non governmental organizations and persons had been engaged in the similar activities, which were done by the DHAS. But being a government Department and receiving a regular

²⁰ Bull. -1, pp.9-10

²¹ Bull-1, p.44-47; Bull-2, p.59-71; Bull. -5, p.23, In Appendix-E, the personalities visiting the DHAS are enlisted.

allotment of the government revenue, although not much as expected, and under the leadership of S.K.Bhuyan who was passionate for the studies in history, hard-working, punctual and disciplinarian the DHAS surpassed all other organizations in this respect. The growth of S.K.Bhuyan as a historian is closely entangled with the history of foundation and growth of the DHAS. The matured stage of S.K.Bhuyan as an historian bloomed with the foundation the DHAS. Here after there remained no difference between the historical activities of S.K.Bhuyan and the activities of the DHAS. From the very beginning of the DHAS, as a newborn, it received sufficient well wishes and inspiration from various corners of the people. Appreciations, donations in cash and kind and all other co-operation rendered towards it by different people reveal this fact. In spite of all these co-operation, the DHAS had to fight against many material wants. What S.K.Bhuyan prayed in all the five Bulletins to the government and the people to render financial help to the DHAS to meet up its essential needs and to materialize its visions, reveals that the DHAS was continuously in financial crunch. The DHAS had the want of a permanent plot of land and of a building for long days. In its early days, the office of the DHAS and its library moved from one place to another -the quarter of superintendent of Cotton Hindu hostel, a room in the Cotton Muslim hostel (now Swahid Mojammit Hoque Hostel), the personal residence of S.K.Bhuyan, the kitchen room and a room at commissioner's office.²² Government grant was nominal and its vision was lofty. Keeping in view of its struggle for survival, the well wishes from people, the dreams it dreamt; the DHAS in these days although was a child institution, but observing the vigor and enthusiasm it showed and what it accomplished in these vary days, it may be opined that the Department got its youth at the very beginning. Sir Michael Kean, the then Governor of Assam said in his speech, "*Listening to the record of what has*

²² Bull.-3, pp.17-18

*been done by this Department which was established only in 1928, one cannot but be impressed and astonished at the scope and variety of the work accomplished in so short time and if so much has been done in 7 or 8 years, what a magnificent promise the future hold*²³

In the 1934, Radhakanta Handiqui donated a sum of Rupees Ten thousand in the name of his wife Narayani Handiqui. Government also allotted a plot of land in the site where the DHAS is at present. The building of the DHAS was constructed. the cost of which was meet up by the money donated by Radhakanta Handiqui. The office of the DHAS got a new name “Narayani Handiqui Historical Institute”.

The hard labour of S.K.Bhuyan in exerting his administrative and intellectual duties as the Asstt. Director and later on as the Director of the DHAS cannot be realized in an apparent look. Initially, he had to make journey to impassable areas in search of the manuscripts, persuade the possessors of the manuscripts repeatedly to lend or to hand over them, make transcripts, preparing catalogue and had to take other technical steps related to editing and publishing them. It has been mentioned that, till the publication of the fifth bulletin The DHAS had published 24 books and out of these 24 books 15 were either edited or translated or originally written by S.K.Bhuyan. By this very period he completed his research work in abroad in a new area of Assam History resulting at the creation of the monumental work “THE ANGLO-ASSAMESE RELATION, 1771-1826”. Simultaneously he had exerted his duty as a lecturer in English at Cotton College. Later on he had to shoulder the responsibility in the post of Principal of Cotton College. He had to shuttle from Cotton College to office of the DHAS, to superintendent’s quarter (he executed as superintendent also) and to his personal resident. A time came, when he had to choice one of the two –the Cotton College and the DHAS and S.K.Bhuyan preferred

²³ Bull-3, p.1.

the later. Sir Michael Kean commented, *"The service of the first Director, Mr. A.H.W. Bentinck, C.I.E., whose wise organization ensured so successful a beginning, have been lost by retirement, but in Professor S.K.Bhuyan the Department has found a successor of unusual diligence and enthusiasm, with a capacity for making dry bones live."*²⁴

The DHAS helped S.K.Bhuyan much in quenching the thirst of S.K.Bhuyan for the historical studies on Assam. The source materials received through the DHAS were also utilized much by S.K.Bhuyan in his original works. The DHAS, the Government, the Society also rewarded S.K.Bhuyan with avenues and recognitions to what he contributed to the DHAS, to the society, to the nation. The information is relevantly recorded in the DHAS bulletins. Nanda Talukdar, biographer of S.K.Bhuyan, has utilized the information abundantly in the biography of S.K.Bhuyan.

All these five Bulletins are not equal in the richness of information and in originality. The numbers of pages of these bulletins were respectively 48, 76, 55, 46 and 29. What the first bulletin contained about the aims and objectives, future aspirations, list of accomplished works of the DHAS and the enthusiasm were expanded in the Second bulletin. The third and Fourth Bulletins were published as souvenirs of two ceremonies - the opening ceremony of the Narayani Handiqui Historical Institute and the ceremony for the unveiling of the portrait of Narayani Handiqui in the institute. In the Fourth bulletin with its 46 pages, the pages from 30 onward contain reprint of the Speeches of the then Governor of Assam and S.K.Bhuyan, which were already published in the preceding Bulletin. Apart from the speeches there are the advertisements of the published books of the Department.

²⁴ Bull-2, P.VIII

Vote of thanks, Eulogistic poems on Narayani Handiqui, National Anthem and accounts of the expenditure for the ceremony covers the pages from 16 to 29. Eleven Years after the fourth bulletin, the fifth one was published in Independent India. In the pages from 24 to 29 the advertisement of the published books is printed, from 13 to 23 the select appreciations on the DHAS and S.K.Bhuyan are printed. In other remaining first 12 pages, the usual writings on the origin of the DHAS, 'DHAS appeal for funds' are written. Pages from 8 to 12 contain a list of contemplated publication, although nothing is mentioned here about any active steps to publish them. More over the out of the 6 publications of the DHAS published during the period from 1940 to 1951, three were original writings of S.K.Bhuyan, and one was translated work. The remaining two were the edited Assam Buranji recovered from the family of S.K.Bhuyan and the 372 paged "GRAMMAR AND DICTIONARY OF THE LAKHER OR MARA LANGUAGE" of A.R. Lorrain. It is apparent that the enthusiasm and achievements of the DHAS showed by the DHAS in its early days diminished greatly in this period and this witnessed by the Fifth bulletin. Later on S.K.Bhuyan himself expressed his frustration in the routine and red-tapism in the activities of the DHAS.²⁵ These very bulletins reveal the fact that in those days also the problem of publishing books due to poor number of readers in Assam existed.

Thus the DHAS bulletins bear the history of historiography in Assam and shall remain as invaluable historical document for research work in this area in the coming days.

(B) Preliminary Report on the Old Records at the Assam Secretariat, Shillong, 1930:

Sir Laurie Hammond, the Then Governor of Assam took an initiative and the Government of Assam made the effort to prepare a catalogue and a handbook and

²⁵ Bull.-3, p-33

possibly a press-list in 1929-1930. The Government of Assam considered S.K.Bhuyan, then serving as lecturer in Cotton College, as the right person to carry out this responsibility. Accordingly S.K.Bhuyan was deputed in this duty during the summer vacation of the year 1930. In 18th June 1930, S.K.Bhuyan submitted the preliminary report on the old records at the Assam Secretariat.

Regarding the importance of the records, S.K.Bhuyan wrote in the preface of the 1950's edition of the Report, "*It is hoped that the old records in the Assam Secretariat will be studied by generations of scholars, and we can only say that they will be surprised at the wealth of information embodied in the crumbling folios.*"

In this report, S.K.Bhuyan gave detailed proposals and estimate of the proposed Catalogue of the records. In this proposal, the planning of citing the Definition of the old records, Grouping of the records, condition of the records, existing dockets and indices, Transcription of the records, classification of the records were mentioned. Likewise he gave the tentative table of contents of the proposed catalogue, necessary equipments, staffs, steps to be taken for printing, time needed to complete the task in different phase are also given in this report. He gave sample of existing dockets of records with contents in outline.

The transactions of the Assam Government during the period from 1826 to 1874 were to be studied by S.K.Bhuyan and the proposed catalogue was to comprise them. These transactions were made to and from the Assam Government with the Central Government, Governments of the neighboring countries and provinces. Although the Government suspended the project in the final stage for financial stringency, the study made by S.K.Bhuyan and the preliminary report brought fruit in drawing attention to this invaluable repository of historical source materials. It is a matter of great astonishment that within a short span of time S.K.Bhuyan grasped the contents of the papers in *Lakhs* in number, crumbled and dilapidated. Of course,

he had some preliminary idea about the method of preparing Catalogue and Press list and about the normal activities of a record room establishment, which he acquired by his visit to the Imperial record Department at Calcutta and to the Records office (at Anarkali, Lahore) of Punjab Government. The Experience of studying the records in the Assam Secretariat brought some other fruits also. In the 'EARLY BRITISH RELATIONS WITH ASSAM' (1928), S.K.Bhuyan had already drawn attention of the scholars to this repository of historical information. The study of the records preserved in the Assam Secretariat acquainted S.K.Bhuyan to some core and original information about the activities of the British Government in Assam. S.K.Bhuyan was immensely helped with these sources in his research on the subject 'ANGLO ASSAMESE RELATION 1771-1826', which he did a few years later. The Report reflects a different experience and ability of S.K.Bhuyan as a historian.
