

CHAPTER: III

THE BRITISH ADMINISTRATION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE BODOS

The undivided Goalpara district is situated in the extreme Western part of the state of Assam. The main inhabitants of the district are the Bodos, Garos and Koches (Rajbangsis). The district has rich natural resources and fertile soil. But, despite its richness in natural resources like Sal forests, by and large, it remained backward since ancient time. In ancient period it remained under the Kamarupa kings, in the medieval, the Khen dynastic rulers ruled for a pretty long time but Hussain Shah intervened in the midst who dethroned the last Khen King Nilambar in 1498 AD¹. Hussain Shah left it under his general called Daniel as tribute-paying vassal². The founder of the Koch kingdom, Bisva Singha was able to establish a powerful kingdom in the first part of the 16th century i.e. about 1515 AD³ and remained in power till the advent of the East India Company in that part of the country. In the declining days of the Koch power, the Southern part of the district with undefined boundaries remained under the rule of Mohammedan Governors.

History:

During the rule of the East India Company, many administrative changes were made in the fate of erstwhile Goalpara district. The estates comprising the former police circles of Goalpara, Dhubri and Karaibari i.e. the Southern portion of Goalpara district came under the colonial administration much before the annexation of Assam by the British East India Company in 1826. From 1765 to 1822 it formed a part of the permanently settled Rangpur district which was also known as Rangamati district⁴. Southern portion of Goalpara district was originally formed a part of Rangpur. It was created into a separate District in 1822 comprising the Police Circles (*Thanas*) of Goalpara, Dhubri and Karaibari⁵. The Governor-General of India by the Regulation X of 1822 formed Goalpara into a separate District which comprised the three Police Circles namely Goalpara, Dhubri and Karaibari. For the administration of justice in all matters a

Commissioner was appointed. In revenue matters, the general Regulations under the Permanent Settlement (of Bengal) were followed⁶. Since Goalpara was lying at the close proximity of Bengal, it was included within the Regulations of Permanent Settlement of Bengal⁷. Again, in the fate of Goalpara district another change was made. By a provision of a Government notification, dated 3rd December 1866, Goalpara was separated from the Province of Assam and placed under the Commissioner of the Koch Behar Division in all matters. The tract of country lying north of the District of Goalpara was known as Eastern *Duars*⁸. It was annexed from the Bhutan at the close of the Bhutan War of 1864. By Government notification, dated 3rd Dec/ 1866, the Eastern *Duars* of Bhutan which comprised an area of about 1568 square miles were attached to Goalpara⁹. Regarding the merger of the district of Eastern *Duars* with the Goalpara district, W.W. Hunter reported that by Government notification, dated 3rd December 1866, Eastern *Duars* of Bhutan with an area of about 1568 square miles which were annexed to British India in 1864 at the conclusion of the Bhutan War, were attached to Goalpara¹⁰. By another notification, dated 10th August, 1868 the civil and criminal jurisdiction was transferred back again to the Judicial Commissioner of Assam. Finally, in February 1874, the district was permanently incorporated with the newly formed Chief Commissionership of Assam and since then it formed an integral part of Assam¹¹.

The British authority until 1864 did not take the charge of direct administration over the strip of land lying North of the undivided Goalpara district, the five *Duars* of the 7 Eastern *Duars*. The first settlement of the Eastern *Duars* was made in 1872. The *Ripu Duar* was settled with the Chapar Zamindar and *Chirang* with the Zamindar of Gauripur. But when the leases ran out they were not renewed, and settlement was made directly with the actual cultivators¹². But the land revenue collection of those settled areas were arranged through the Zamindars of Bijni, Gauripur, Rupsi and Bogribari, Karaibari, Mechpara and Chapar on Permanent Settlement basis with them. But, the *Duars* were kept under the direct management of government. For the collection of the land revenue, the *Duars* were divided into five *Mouzas* viz, Chirang, Ripu, two *Mouzas* of Guma and three divisions of Sidli¹³. The presence of the British administrators was insignificant as the maintenance of the land records was entrusted to the staff of 33 *mandals*¹⁴ under two supervisors called *Kanungos* and a Sub-Deputy Collector. The land revenue collection in the *Duars* which was divided into five *Mouzas* were entrusted to the *Mouzadars* who

were native people. The presence of only the Christian missionaries could be found at places like Grahampur, Sevapur, Haraputa, Joyma Mission and in later dates at Gaurang, Bengtol and Patkijuli¹⁵. The Colonizers ran their administration first from Goalpara town and later shifted it to Dhubri and made it the *Sadar* (Head Quarters) town of the erstwhile Goalpara district. After the Anglo- Bhutan war of 1864 when they completely routed the Bhutias from the Eastern *Duars* they took the charge of direct administration of the country. The revenue settlement was made directly with the *Ryots*. They established police stations at places like Gauripur, Bogribari, Gossaigaon, Sidli and Bijni and recruited many local people as *Kotwal* or sepoy. All the areas of Eastern *Duars* excluding Parbotjoar were brought under a single district known as Eastern *Duars* with its headquarters at Dotma. I.C. Geddes was the Deputy Commissioner of the district when it was merged into Goalpara district in 1866¹⁶.

PEOPLE:

The chief inhabitants of the district of undivided Goalpara were the Bodos (the Cacharis), Koches or Rajbansis, Rabhas and Garos, all of whom were rural communities¹⁷. They lived in scattered villages in the forests and Hills. The Bodos preferred forests, the Garos preferred hills as their dwelling places and the Hinduised caste Koches preferred plain areas.

The inhabitants of Goalpara lived in houses made of bamboo with thatch roofing and sometime, the wall were plastered with mud. But the Bodos (Meches or the Kacharis) preferred hills, forests or jungle tracts as their places of residence. The population of the undivided Goalpara District was entirely rural, and the peoples didn't evince any tendency towards urban life. The results of the Census of 1872 showed that there was not a single town in the district containing upwards of 5000 inhabitants. The Bodos (the Kacharis and Meches) were a purely agrarian people and except a few, by and large, they lived by the produce of their fields¹⁸.

The Bodos (the Kacharis) were scattered all over Goalpara and throughout Assam and parts of North Eastern Bengal. Although they were, without doubt, an offshoot of the original great Bodo (Kachari) race and spoke a language like that of the people of Cachar. They seem to have no country from which they could trace their origin.

Their dwelling places were situated near hills or forests. The *Meches* were also known as Kacharis¹⁹. *Meches* were the most numerous class or Caste in the Eastern *Duars*. They were known as *Mech* in the Western part of the *Duars*, but in the more Eastern parts, they were called indiscriminately *Mech* or Kacharis and again farther East in Assam they were called by the name of Kachari alone losing the name of *Mech* altogether. They formed most of the population in the Eastern *Duars* numbering 8752 adult males²⁰. Although different names like the *Meches*, the Kacharis or Cacharis were given to them by different castes and communities in various places but, they were undoubtedly the same people from the same stock speaking the same language i.e. Bodo. They called themselves *the Bodos*. The Bodos chose the forests and hills for their dwelling places amidst nature for procuring every kind of natural food- meats, fishes, vegetables, etc. The Bodos ate every kind of animal food except beef which was regarded as taboo. The food habit of the Bodos differed from that of their Hindu neighbours as they were fond of using flesh as an article of food principally that of pigs and fowls. They were also very fond of a spirituous drink of their own preparing called *Jou*²¹.

Although they style themselves as Hindus, they retained a belief in a considerable portion of their old religion and many of them regularly made sacrifices of pigs, fowls, pigeons etcetera to the good and evil spirits²². Practices were not in conformity with the system of Brahmanical Hinduism. Because of the reason, probably, they couldn't be accommodated in the Hindu categorization of caste hierarchies. If, any Bodo intended to embrace Hinduism he was allowed to do so only after changing his tribe to caste by giving up his earlier religious practices, traditional customs and language. The Bodos had their own language which was one of the branches of the Indo-Mongoloid Linguistic groups. In the polyglot Assam, the Bodos of undivided Goalpara adapted themselves to speak trilingual- Bodo, Assamese and Bengali. In addition to their own language, the Bodos of undivided Goalpara district understood Assamese and Bengali and they spoke those languages in dealing with the people who were other than their own tribe²³. As per the Census Report of 1872, the number of Kacharis (Bodo) in Goalpara was 22,755 and 29,877 was of *Meches*²⁴. In the Eastern *Duars*, they were still more numerous²⁵.

In the erstwhile Goalpara district, the Bodo occupied the strip of land lying North of present Gauripur Town starting from Rupsi covered with deep forest, widening

further and further towards North-East direction, covering the areas of Parbotjoar, Guma, Ripoo, Cheerung, Sidli and Bijni *Duars*. From the report of B.C. Allen, it is reflected that the Bodos (the Kacharis) were poor not only in materials but in mental health too. The *Duars* were a very unprogressive portion of the district. The greater number of population of those *Duars* was Bodos (Meches). They were in a very primitive and undeveloped state. The Communication and transportation system except river routes were bad²⁶. There was no market and except trade in timber from the Government reserves. No other trading activity was found in that portion of the country. The surplus products of the *Duars* were bartered with merchants who come up the rivers with boatloads of pottery and dried fish. The rate of exchange was generally very favourable to the trader. The rate of revenues as compared with Assam proper were distinctly low. In view of the backward condition of the people and the country, Government didn't take any step to enhance the existing rate²⁷.

The undivided Goalpara district abounds in lakes or *bils*, marshes and rivers of which important lakes or *bils* were Tamrangabil of Khuntaghat Pargana, Upadbil of Habraghat Pargana and the Saras (Saraishor) beel (lake) of Parbotjoar Pargana. The navigable important rivers of Goalpara were Manas, the Godadhar or Gangadhar, the Sankos or the Suvarnakos, the Tipkai and the Bamnai rivers which rise in the Bhutan hills. All of those rivers were more or less navigable during rainy season²⁸. Several large and important forests existed in the Eastern *Duars*, as well as in Goalpara proper, which yielded good profit. The Sal Timber trade of the *Duars* and of Parbotjoar and other parganas had contributed considerably to the wealth and prosperity of the District²⁹.

The progress Report on Forest Administration in Assam for 1874-75, revealed that prior to that year there had been no conservancy or realization of revenue proper from the Government forests³⁰. The report was worked out from a General Inspection and the survey of the forests of the province which was conducted in 1869-70.

New Immigrant Population:

There was large-scale immigration from across the Eastern and Western Bengal state since the beginning of the 19th century. Most of the immigrant populations were Muslims who undoubtedly were hardworking excellent cultivators. They settled mainly in

the permanently settled tract. They cultivated rice and jute in those tracts in large scale. As an enterprising cultivator, they were capable of offering a higher rate of rent to the Zamindars or *Jathedar*³¹. The immigrants were land-hungry peasants and out of whom, 85 percent were Muslims³².

A. Guha assigned two reasons for which the immigrant population were attracted to migrate to the state of Assam- 1. they were under severe population pressure on land at their region of settlement and 2. the report of the presence of huge wasteland at low rent under the Zamindars³³. It was undoubtedly also because of the policies of the Zamindars and later, of the British colonizers which encouraged them to come up to Goalpara vis-à-vis Assam to take up the huge wasteland for cultivation. The Zamindars were interested in increased-collection of rent for their own benefits without considering the future consequences which might fall upon the aboriginal inhabitants of the district.

B.C. Allen's report confirms the presence of huge idle wasteland in undivided Goalpara district. He reported about the division of forests into two classes viz the reserves covering an area of 787 square miles and the unclassified state forests with an area of 558 square miles³⁴. The wasteland at the disposal of the government was categorised as an unclassified state forest. The villagers could take it up at will for cultivation. The greater part of the wasteland was entirely lacking in the shape of tree growth³⁵.

The flow of immigrants to Assam was continuous. The Muslims of the state of East Bengal faced severe pressure on land due to high population density in their homeland. Thus, they were attracted to Assam by the information of the wide existence of land on low revenue³⁶. The British administrators openly encouraged East Bengali immigrants to migrate to the country for boosting the land revenue collection. The immigrants received open support from the British Government. R.C. Kalita in his book *Situating Assamese Middle Class in Colonial Period* quoted the proposals for encouraging immigration into Assam by the then Commissioner of the Assam valley on May 8, 1885. The proposals offered some concessions such as cheaper rate of fare for travel to the 'bonafide' immigrants in the railways and in the steamer services and the settlement of land revenue-free for a term of ten years with such immigrants³⁷. The fact could be corroborated by the report of W.W. Hunter who said that the declaration of

Dhubri as an additional place of embarkation for labourers proceeding to the Assam tea districts was made in March 1871³⁸.

In the first half of the 20th century Assam became the cauldron of several waves of immigrant populations especially of the Nepali settlers from Nepal, the tea garden labourers from various places like Chotanagpur, Telangana, Birbhum etc. and the Muslim peasants from the province of East Bengal³⁹. Because of the British plan of Population Immigration, a large number of populations immigrated to Assam. During 1904-1911, about 54,000 people from East Bengal district of Mymensingh, Rongpur and other places entered Assam. According to the Census of India; 1921, Vol. I: Report 86 by 1921 there were almost 2,58,000 East Bengali Immigrants who had settled in Assam⁴⁰. Mumtaza observed that the Bengali immigrants to the Char lands of Goalpara was first reported in the Census of 1911⁴¹. The immigrants took the form of large-scale influx which was so rapid that within the next two decades those immigrants spread to other districts of lower Assam. They formed an important segment of the population of Assam⁴². Those new immigrant populations who came from a situation of severe stress and pressure on their homeland found the aboriginal inhabitants of Assam in a state of simplicity, cool temperament and easy going which they took advantage off. There were reports of theft, dacoit, molestations of women, and encroachment on the *Patta*⁴³ land⁴⁴. As a result, many simple peace-loving aboriginal inhabitants left their villages for their security which allowed the East Bengali peasants to settle in their villages⁴⁵.

The hardship they (immigrants) experienced at their homeland turned them desperate, while the Rajbansis⁴⁶ and the Bodos, who composed the main aboriginal classes of population, were easy-going and were in most cases, unable to satisfy the greedy landholders' aspirations. Thus, they were pushed out by the new immigrant tenants. In an official note, it was stated that owing to the pressure of the unruly *Bhatias*⁴⁷, the security of holdings of people of the country were legally defenseless because they were not protected in any way by Act VIII of 1869. The immigrant peasants utilised all power to oust them. In order to secure what they want; the immigrants were ready to violate the law. As they were accustomed to fight with spears and any other weapons which might come handy, the original inhabitants could not but to run away from them⁴⁸. One such case was the riot which occurred at Kaldanga Char, within the old

jurisdiction of Lakshipur *Thana* (Police Station), between the rival band of newcomers and the old tenants under two rival *jothedars* of Mechpara Estate⁴⁹.

The position of the *Chukanidars* or the actual cultivators of the land under the Zamindars in Goalpara were pathetic. The influx of the enormous immigrant settlers from Northern and Eastern Bengal brought about a new state of things. It had rapidly raised the value of land and in consequence, rent also rose. The increasing demand for land had created a desire on the part of both Zamindars and middleman to take every advantage of the situation. They took as much as possible out of the competing race of the newcomers⁵⁰. The *Jothedars* having *jotes* in that tract of the district put those up to auction to the highest bidder. And naturally, those who could afford to pay heavy *Salami* (salutary price), in addition to rent, could take up land in detriment of those who were already in possession but were unable to satisfy the rapacity of those *Jothedars*⁵¹.

Goalpara went under the Moghul administration in the middle of the 17th Century and along with Bengal. It was ceded to the British by the Emperor's *farman* of the 12 August 1765⁵². But things continued in that region on the same footing as before. Since Goalpara was the frontier district, 'Might' was the right in those troublous times. Some chieftains could secure a broad tract of territory for themselves and thus Zamindary system prevailed in that part of the country⁵³. The Zamindary system was conspicuously absent in the land East of the river Manas where the *Ryotwari* system replaced it. Those Zamindars were the lords of the marshes and a very light assessment was imposed upon them both by the Mohammedan rulers and the colonial administrators. The Zamindaries were left almost independent. They paid a small tribute to the Mohammedan *Foujdar* of Rangamati in kind which the British after taking over, used to accept the same tribute as land revenue. The assessment on the Bijni Estate was originally fixed at Rs 5,998.00 which was afterward commuted to an annual contribution of 68 elephants⁵⁴. The Zamindars of Karaibari, Kalumalupara and Ghurla similarly paid their dues in cotton. The contribution of revenue in kind was, however, changed for money payment which was later converted into land revenue claim and the revenue fixed as such was made permanent by the Bengal Regulation I of 1793⁵⁵. The Zamindars, over and above land revenue, obtained considerable sums from their forests, fisheries and from the thatching grass, grazing, markets, potter's earth and the mahals⁵⁶.

EDUCATION:

The undivided Goalpara district remained backward throughout the 19th and 20th centuries in respect of the progress of general education and also in matters of growth of industries and towns. The existence of a small number of schools of all grades and non-existence of town with the population of exceeding 5000 since the occupation of the district by the Mohammedans in the middle of the 17th Century were clear indications of its backwardness. In 1847-48, there were only one secondary and 9 primary schools in the district. In the next few years, very little progress was witnessed at the time of the visit of Mr. Mill in 1853. There were only 10 schools of all grades⁵⁷. High Schools were those institutions which were recognised by the Calcutta University as capable of according suitable preparation for the entrance examinations⁵⁸. There were four high schools in the district of Goalpara which were situated at Dhubri, Goalpara, Abhayapuri and Gauripur. The first was a government school but more than half the total expenditure was met from fees. The second received a grant-in-aid and the last two were maintained by Rani of Bijni and Gauripur Raja respectively⁵⁹.

In the 1870s and 1880s, the statistic of growth of Primary, Middle English and Vernacular schools were seen in the permanently settled areas only where populations were substantial. But in the sparsely populated areas of Parbotjoar Estates and Eastern *Duars*, the growth of school was conspicuously absent. Even after the taking over of the direct administration of the Eastern *Duars* by the colonizers in 1865, till the first decade of the 20th century, only two middle vernacular schools were existed at Putimari and Bijni which reached the down-trodden Bodo population⁶⁰. The other schools nearest to the Bodo settlements were Bagribari M.E. and Dhubri only. B.C. Allen reported on the existence of the Middle English schools at Bilasipara, Bagribari, Manikarchar and Dalgoma. Middle Vernacular schools situated at Sukchar, Patamari, Chatrasal, South Salmara, Bijni, Atugaon, Putimari, Amguri, Goalpara and Dhubri⁶¹.

There is the report of the running of the schools by some voluntary organisations in their own accord for educating native populations. In that regard, the *Hita Bidhyayini Sabha* was worth naming which conducted a school with the aid of a grant from Government and by raising subscriptions and donation from the people from all walks of

life and also made effort to establish a printing press in the district⁶². In the 19th century, while reporting the education scenario of the district of Goalpara Hunter said that Education didn't seem to have hitherto made much progress among the people. He also cited the statement of Deputy Commissioner that not more than eight hundred boys had received education at the few schools in the district⁶³.

The genuine desire for education could have driven the population for conducting as many schools as they could in every nook and corner of the district. Due to illiteracy, lack of leadership or due to general apathy towards education amongst the native populations, the efforts to establish schools were not seen. W.W. Hunter in his *Statistical Account of the District of Goalpara* quoted the statement of the Deputy Commissioner who asserted that during 1872-73 there was only one private *Pathshala* (school)⁶⁴ in the district, and the Deputy Inspector could locate no more such institutions though he always made every possible inquiry⁶⁵.

Coupled with the problems of apathy of the Zamindars or the landlords of the district for the promotion of education despite the reports of huge accumulation of money and the unawareness on the part of the general populations, it was bound to hinder the diffusion of knowledge among the masses. W.W. Hunter stated that a very little attention towards the promotion of education among the common masses was paid by the landlords despite their large income derived from the people⁶⁶. He also further affirmed that the Deputy Commissioner was of the opinion that the time was still far distant when there would be a general diffusion of knowledge among the masses⁶⁷. No wonder, the tribes known as the Bodos and Garos, the dwellers of deep forests and hills with migratory habits, never thought on diffusion of knowledge amongst them. They practised shifting cultivations who always remained busy clearing new plots in the virgin soil available at their disposal which again they would abandon them after cultivating two or three years. They remained aloof en-mass from education, the very process of diffusion of knowledge. Even in the twentieth century, many efforts had been made to bring their children to schools because there was the rumour that children who were undergoing education became mischievous (goons) and lazy. However, the number of schools increased by lips and bounds especially the lower and upper primary schools in the district. But middle English schools and high schools were yet to grow in substantial

numbers to allow the primary class passed out students to continue their studies. In the vernacular schools due to slow progress of education, enrolment was made mostly in the primary classes. B.C. Allen wrote that almost all the pupils in the Middle Vernacular schools in 1903-04 were, however, reading in the primary classes and for practical purposes they were little more than superior primary schools⁶⁸. S. Barman cited B.C. Allen's report on the progress of the establishment of schools of all grades which said that at the beginning of the current century, 1905, there were four high schools in the district at Dhubri, Abhayapuri, Gauripur and Goalpara, besides a few number of Middle English Schools. In 1903-04 there were 192 lower and upper - primary schools in the district⁶⁹. Probably, it was due to peculiar Zamindari System in the district that retarded the progress of literacy among the people, which was the sole factor that brought down in its wake the ideas of decent living. Being contented with their traditional agriculture, the rural people of Goalpara district remained illiterate and ignorant and unsophisticated without aspiring for any sorts of modern way of living⁷⁰. There were two Sanskrit Tols, attended by 30 Brahmans. One was kept up by the family priest of the Raja of Bijni, who was paid Rs 10.7 per month for teaching and other was supported by the Gauripur Zamindar. In both schools, Sanskrit Grammar and *Smriti* (Hindu Law) were taught⁷¹.

The doors of the Sanskrit *Tols* (school) were not open to the people of lower classes and the tribes. It was exclusively meant for sons of the Brahmans which also meant deprivation of lower classes of the population of their just rights to receive an education. The district of Goalpara was chiefly peopled by the Bodos and the Garos, categorised as *Nishadas* and the Rajbansis, the *Vaishyas*⁷² or the *Sudras*⁷³. Thus, the patronisation of Sanskrit *Tols* by the Raja of Bijni and the Raja of Gauripur did not benefit the majority common masses.

Roads and Bridges:

It is evident from the colonial administrative reports that in the undivided Goalpara district there were two Trunk roads- the North and the South trunk roads⁷⁴. The North trunk road starts from Dhubri to Kachugaon nearly 50 miles through Balajan, Paglarhat and Dingdinga and thence turns sharply to the East and ran through the Eastern *Duars* to Raha in Kamrup. The important places which the trunk road touched in the

Eastern *Duars* were Saralbhanga, Garubhasa, Sidli and Bijni and meet at Raha. Another route from Dhubri via Bilasipara, Chapar and North Salmara met the trunk roads from Kachugaon at a point before Bijni. None of all those roads were metaled and they were thus liable to be cut up in the rainy season. There were other minor roads which run from North to connect Bilasipara with trunk road at two points. Western branch met at a little West of Patgaon and Eastern branch met it at Garubhasa. Another minor road which ran North from Jogighopa through North Salmara met the trunk road at a point where it crosses the river Aie⁷⁵. Wooden bridges were constructed over many minor streams of Goalpara district. But, over other major rivers, ferries had to be maintained⁷⁶. By 1905, the province of Assam was yet to be connected with Railway network. The Eastern Bengal State Railway, by 1902 had connected Dhubri with Calcutta which passed through Golakganj, Balajan and Gauripur. Another branch line from Golakganj was under construction which passed through the districts of Goalpara and Kamrup till it reached the river Brahmaputra at a point opposite to Gauhati. In the district of Goalpara, that line passed the places of Bashbari, Tipkai, Fakiragram, Sisapani, Kokrajhar, Basugaon, Abhayapuri and Bijni⁷⁷.

The roads in existence at the time of reporting by B.C. Allen (1905), were not metaled roads and hence, they were vulnerable during the rainy season. The bridges over many streams and rivers were yet to be constructed. To meet those handicaps nearly 140 ferries were pressed into services which were the only reliable means of communication throughout Assam⁷⁸. The steamer services had already been opened between Gauhati and Dibrugarh, Gauhati and Dhubri and thence to Jatrapur which had been connected by rail with Calcutta. Those were the major roads connecting some of the places of commercial importance. Out of those roads, some 159 miles were kept up by the PWD and other 356 miles were maintained by Local Boards⁷⁹.

Sal Timber Extraction:

The Landlords, as well as the British administrators, remained ever busy with the collection of land revenue and exploitation of natural resources. The Sal (*Shorea Robusta*), the special gift of nature to the region of Goalpara attracted much the attention to both the Landlords and the British Colonial Administrators. For their own monetary

benefits, the Landlords, as well as Colonial Administrators, ever remained busy cutting down Sal trees unscrupulously without least consideration of the consequences of such wanton destruction. On the wanton cutting of the Sal trees, W.W. Hunter reported that the Bengal woodcutters were found exceedingly busy cutting down whatever Sal trees they wanted in the valuable Sal forests of the Eastern *Duars*, in Goalpara District. The number of partial used trees (trunks only) lying on the ground provided ample evidence of such cuttings⁸⁰. As per the system, they only paid Rs 4.4.0 (8s. 6d) per axe for a year, from which the rate per tree of Rs 0.2.8. (4d) could be calculated. The timber-cutters brought down fifty logs by each man which were cut out two logs each from a tree. At that time, logs realized on the Brahmaputra was Rs 10 to Rs 15 (L 1 to L 1,10s.0d) per pair. Woodcutters acted entirely on their own interests as suited them, as they were in no way restricted as to size or quantity of the wood they cut⁸¹.

The excessive operations of forest products had become the matter of concern for the colonial administrators themselves too. They were coerced to conceive the idea of preservation of Sal trees of the Government estates in the Eastern *Duars* and in the estates of the minor Raja of Bijni which was under the management of the Court of Wards. W.W. Hunter in his *Gazetteer of Goalpara District* cited the government notification of prohibitory order imposed under recent arrangement on felling of Sal timber (*Shorea Robusta*) in the Eastern *Duars*, in Government estates and in the estates of the minor Raja of Bijni which was under the management of the Court of Wards. The department of the Conservator of Forests had planned for the preservation of the Sal trees in the Eastern *Duars*⁸².

For the extraction of Sal trees of *Ripu Duar*, a 6 miles Portable Tramway was purchased at a cost of Rs 16,761.00 which ran from Kachugaon to Fakiragram. The line was laid with labour obtained in return for forest produce granted free for home use⁸³. In later times the Tramway lines became so useful for forest work. There was, no doubt, about the fact that the construction of communication infrastructure and roads by the colonial administrators were basically for their own interests. But, the construction of railways for reaching coal mines, oil fields, tea plantation areas in upper Assam served the beneficent services for the people of Assam in later periods. They turned all into possible to reach every nook and corner of the country of Assam either by railways or by

roads or by steamer services for exploitation of natural resources. Despite the purchase of the Portable Tramways, the colonial administrators were not able to discard the necessity of human labour for extraction of Sal timber from the government reserves - Ripu, Cheerung, Sidli, Guma and Bijni. They continued to employ human labour for extraction of Sal timbers from those areas. The Bodos were employed in large scale as they were best suited for the work and also being the forest dwellers, they loved the profession most⁸⁴.

For extracting Sal trees from the Government Estates of Eastern *Duars* and for departmental working for the clearance of fire lines, the British administrators faced the problem of shortage of manpower. For mitigating the shortage of manpower, forest villages were established. The forest villagers were granted trees free for their own use in return for work done. To enable the department to establish forest villages, the Kachugaon with an area of 66 square miles was constituted a reserve in 1902, although, it contains hardly any timber of value. The object of constituting Kachugaon a reserve was for providing a permanent labour supply for the Ripu Reserve⁸⁵. The Ripu forest lies at the foot of the Bhutan Hills between the Sankosh and the Saralbhangra and covered an area of 235 square miles. The Sal trees of the Ripu reserve were the best developed which grew on the ridges between the numerous streams⁸⁶. At the commencement of the year, there were 182 house-holders, which increased to 263 at its close. The settlers of the newly constituted Kachugaon reserve were the Rabhas and the Meches who were brought from the Jalpaiguri district of Bengal. Most of the other new settlers came from the Goalpara district⁸⁷. The inhabitants of the Kachugaon Reserve forests had to render 1075 days' labour on payment of the ordinary wage of six annas per diem⁸⁸ and until recent times the forest villagers used the term *Beggar Bwinai* which means in Bodo 'labouring with no wages' which they had to render one day each from each family in a year⁸⁹.

The local inhabitants whom Hunter called Castes and hill tribes were the most benefited populations who gained subsistence from the forest products. He said that the castes and hill tribes who gained their subsistence by collecting and trading in jungle products and timber were the Bodos (Mech, Cachari), Rabhas, Garos, Rajbansis and Hajongs. About six hundred boats come up every year from Sirajganj, Decca and other

places in Bengal for the purpose of purchasing timber⁹⁰. They carry down with them timber to the average value of pound 20 for each boat. The total value of the timber traffic was about pound 12,000 per annum⁹¹.

The Bodos did engage themselves in the works of felling Sal trees and rafting down the Sal logs along the river routes to various sale depots like Bagribari, Bilasipara, Saraishaore Dabri and Dhubri from where the Sal logs were taken to Sirajganj, Decca and other places of Bengal. The people of the Eastern Koch country were already familiar with the traders from Pabna, Rajmahal and Gour⁹². There was no direct engagement of those labourers by the British Authority, but they were engaged through the interlocutors called *Daffadars*. Names of many *Daffadars* are still current among the Bodos in their oral history. The *Daffadars* engaged labourers whom the Bodos called *Badaris* (lumberjacks) for felling Sal trees and for rafting down the Sal logs for their masters⁹³. They accomplished the works by going in a group to the appointed location of the deep forests and established temporary makeshifts called *Bada* in Bodo. They stayed there until they accomplished their tasks of felling and rafting down the logs to different sale points. To accomplish those troublesome works, one needed to be a man of able-bodied, strong and stout. The Bodos were no exception to those qualities which might be testified by the remarks of W.W. Hunter on the Bodos (Meches). He said that the Bodos (Meches) were an able-bodied and well-behaved class of people; very few crimes took place among them⁹⁴. He further remarked that the Meches (Bodos) although a degraded race was far from being destitute of good qualities. They were much more honest and trustworthy than the Hindu peasantry of Bengal and less quarrelsome; chastity was esteemed a virtue and crime was comparatively rare⁹⁵. B.C. Allen in his report identified some sale depots. According to him, the present sale depots were at Bilasipara on the Brahmaputra river, Bagribari on the Tipkai river, Kachukata on the Gurufela river and Barabadha on the Baunai river⁹⁶.

The *Badaris* (lumberjacks) when they were about to set out for camping for felling Sal trees in the deep jungle, their near and dear sisters or the beloveds used to sing the following song asking for a pair of fly shuttle made of Sal which the Bodo women use in their weaving of clothes:

Parbotjhora Parbotjhora
Dongphang dannw thangbwla thangbwla
Sal jora makhu jora
Labw labw ada Laru Bandaru.
Parbotjhora, Parbotjhoraao dongphang dannw thangbwla,
*Sal jora makhu jora de labwgwn agwi Goisiri Mainao*⁹⁷.

Free English translation:

(*Sister or beloved*)-

If you set your feet to Parbotjhora for cutting trees (Sal)
 Bring me a pair of fly shuttle made of sal tree dear Laru Bandaru
 (*Badari or Laru Bandaru*)-

If I go to Parbotjhora forest to cut trees
 I will fetch you a pair of fly shuttle my beloved Goisiri Mainao

Although, the occupation of *Badari* was very troublesome and daring expedition, it was very popular among the Bodos. Only the well-experienced persons were allowed to go to the jungle so that they don't fall into any unfortunate incidents there. The forests were full of wild animals like tigers, leopards, wild buffaloes, elephants, poisonous snakes etc. So, the womenfolk bid heart throbbing farewell to their dear and near ones who would go away from home at least for 15-20 days long ordeal. Such songs or the legendary ballads are now being given cognizance and the scholars have been using such materials in modern history writing specially to reconstruct the history of the unlettered communities in the face of the dearth of written historical materials. They offer important clues for the reconstruction of history⁹⁸.

The Southern half of the district of undivided Goalpara was permanently settled, and Government forests were situated in the Eastern *Duars*⁹⁹. B.C. Allen reported that the reserves were seven in number. Bhumeswar was an isolated hill covering an area of 7 square miles in the extreme South-East corner of the *Sidli Duars*. The Guma reserve was another isolated forest covering an area of 26 square miles about 30 miles North of Dhubri. The high land was covered with almost pure Sal forest and the strips of low lying

ground with which it was intersected were gradually filling up with sum (*machilus odoratissima*). The rest of the forests lie at the foot of the Bhutan Hills. The Kachugaon, Ripu, Bengtol and Chirang reserves form compact block 558 square miles in area in the North-West corner of the district¹⁰⁰.

The Sal timber for its endurance and robust quality had a great demand, not only for building boats but also for using as sleepers in the newly laid railway tract through the Goalpara district. The Sal trees were abundantly found in the forests of the Eastern *Duars* but there was a shortage of labour to extract the Sal trees which the Bodos' *Badari* professionals supplied to some extent. A vivid description of the operational system and occasions was made by B.C. Allen in his report on Goalpara district which said that the trees selected by the purchasers were felled early in the year and cut into logs between 6 and 7 feet in length and over 2 ½ feet in girth. Towards the end of the rains when there was plenty of water but no risk of flood they were attached to canoes and floated down to sale points. From there, those logs (*dhums*) were sold to purchasers from Eastern Bengal where they were used for boat building¹⁰¹. There was also a considerable demand for Sal posts, but that was principally met from the forests of the Zamindars. The construction of the Eastern Bengal State Railway through the Goalpara district had created a large demand for sleepers which had been met by the department. Labour was very difficult to procure and in order to facilitate the extraction of timber 9½ miles of portable Tramway had been purchased¹⁰².

The term *Gor Kati* was used for a system of felling Sal Timber and *Thaljat* for stacking timber. The estimated amount of earning of both was pound 3000 per annum¹⁰³. The bulk of receipts were obtained from the Ripu, Cheerang and Guma forests. Sal was sold standing at Rs 10 per tree or annas six per cubic foot at present schedule rates¹⁰⁴. Timber was also extracted from the forests of the Zamindars (Zamindari Forests) of Bijni, Chapar, Gauripur, Mechpara and Parbotjoar. It was generally worked out in the form of poles¹⁰⁵.

The tenants were left unattended to their own fate and destiny. The relationship between the Zamindars and the tenants were nothing more than rent paying and receiving affairs. The British authority allowed those affairs to continue as long as they got their

due share of fixed lump sum revenue from the Zamindars. The British authority left no scruple in allowing the Zamindars to go scot-free to enjoy their forests without payment of any revenue. W.W. Hunter commented that besides Sal there were innumerable valuable other kinds of trees, bamboos, canes etc comprised the heavy forests and jungles of Goalpara District¹⁰⁶. Hunter further reported that those proprietors whose land was situated in Goalpara proper did not pay any revenue to Government for their forests, which were included as an integral part of their permanently settled estates¹⁰⁷.

The Goalpara Division comprised the Government open forest in the Eastern *Duars* which had an area of 422 square miles. Of those tracts about eighty square miles were Sal forest; the contents of which were estimated at two and a half million of Sal trees, with an annual yield, if properly protected, of 25,000 trees¹⁰⁸.

Revenue Administration:

The colonial government administered the strip of land covered under the undivided Goalpara district through their tribute paying Zamindars. The lacklustre attitude of the Zamindars towards the construction of roads, promotion of education, trade and commerce and the establishment of industries was held responsible for the general backwardness of the district. The only kind of administration that could be felt was revenue paying and collecting affairs. Throughout the 26 parganahs in lower Assam, the Choudhuries or native collectors were elected by the Ryots to collect revenue for paying to Government¹⁰⁹. No other officials could be noticed. It is alleged that the colonial government did not pay any attention to the development of Tribal communities. Because it was mainly concerned with regulatory functions such as maintenance of law and order and collection of revenues¹¹⁰.

The colonial administrators were unsympathetic towards promotion of education of the country for which the rural populations whose occupations were agriculture remained ever deprived of education during British rule. The Zamindars (landlords) were also to be blamed equally for the unsympathetic attitude towards the development of education in their respective Estates. The Landlords accumulated huge money which they, unscrupulously, spent for their luxurious mode of living. S. Barman stated that the Zamindars turned parasites in the sense that for every necessity that circumstances

demanding of, they taxed the *ryots* by raising rent and *Abwab*¹¹¹. They became extravagant and were adapted to the western way of life that was brought by the imperialist Government. They frittered away their rental in luxurious modes of living¹¹². He further said that in the hands of the Zamindars, there was a gradual accumulation of a large amount of money. The money was expected by the framers of the Permanent Settlement to be spent on Capital investment, but they spent for their personal pleasures only¹¹³.

Under the Permanent Settlement of Bengal, the *ryots* were the most exploited as they had to bear the brunt of the high revenue demand of their immediate lords or the revenue collecting officials. In the district of Goalpara, where the system of the permanent Settlement was extended, land revenue was fixed in a lump sum with the Zamindars without making a survey for the assessment of revenue. The British authority was liberal to the Zamindars of Goalpara on the ground that the people in that part were extremely poor and as such it was expected that the Zamindars would do works for the improvement of their Estates. But contrary to their expectations the Zamindars did nothing to improve their respective Estates except renting out them to the highest bidders who always had the tendency to collect as much rent as they could from the tenants¹¹⁴.

S. Barman while quoting of A. Guha stated that the company had increasingly realized the gravity of artificiality of its trade which was uneconomic and that to meet its liabilities at home, seeking compensation in a secure and stable income from the territorial was considered necessary. Thus, the expectation of the colonial administration was fulfilled by the permanent Settlement which secured the regular flow of revenue from the Zamindaris¹¹⁵.

Sometimes, Goalpara was called the Bengal district of Assam because of the existence of Zamindari System. In Goalpara, the Permanent Settlement of Bengal was extended for which the district became backward. S. Barman remarked that agriculturalists were proverbially poor. They were still practising the primitive mode of cultivation. They were satisfied with what they had got from their cultivation in the field¹¹⁶. Generally, all the villagers lived from hand to mouth without any desire for enjoying the modern amenities of livelihood. The backwardness of Goalpara district may

be attributed to the existence of the Permanent Settlement with the Zamindars. The Zamindars did not encourage industry and commerce, nor did they encourage education of the *ryots* which could have enabled them to take initiative to shift to other vocations. The existence of Zamindari system deprived the colonial government to have close contact with the rural conditions; the system had imposed an iron-frame-work which had the effect of suppressing the enterprenourships and initiatives of all classes of people¹¹⁷. There is no denying the fact that the British who came as traders but later turned as rulers with their strong arms brought comparatively peaceful life to the land¹¹⁸. They also extended the uniform system of government and education all over India. The phenomenal growth of modern education, roads, transport and communications sets a new condition which affected the tribal economy, society and polity.

The earliest British- Bodo political contact at lower Assam could be referred to the life history of Jaolia *Dewan* narrated by Padmashri Modaram Brahma of Kokrajhar in his article *Jaolia Dewan*¹¹⁹. *Jaolia Dewan* was the historical figure still current as oral history among the Bodos. As *Dewan*¹²⁰ under the Dev Raja of Bhutan, Jaolia was ruling over two parganas- Sidli and Cheerung with its headquarters at Boldi to the North of the present Bijni town. The reference of Boldi and Banti are found in the British official correspondence regarding Jaolia's revenue default accrued to the Dev Raja of Bhutan which was later given to the Rani of Bijni by a *sunnad*¹²¹.

Endnotes:

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- ¹ S.L. Baruah, *A Comprehensive History of Assam*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. 2003, New Delhi, p.181.
 - ² *Ibid*, p.180.
 - ³ E.A. Gait, *A History of Assam*, Lawyers' Book Stall, Guwahati, 1926, p.45.
 - ⁴ S. Barman, *Zamindari System in Assam During British Rule (A Case Study of Goalpara District)*, Spectrum publications, Guwahati,1994. p. 2; Oinam R. Singh & K.R. Basumatary, "The British Administration and its Impact on the Bodos of Goalpara District: A Study" in *Asian Journal of Research in Social Science and Humanities*, vol. 7, No. 9, 2017, p.139.
 - ⁵ W.W, Hunter, *Statistical Account of the District of Goalpara (including the Eastern Duars)*, p.18.
 - ⁶ *Ibid*, p.18.
 - ⁷ *Ibid*.
 - ⁸ *Duars* were the gates between hills and plains areas lying at the foothills of Bhutan with deep wooded valleys through which the Bhutias descended to the plains to impose their influences on the plain populations and for bartering trade. There were such 18 Duars, 11 in West Bengal which was together known as Western Duars and 7 in Assam known as Eastern Duars.
 - ⁹ W.W, Hunter, *op. cit*, p.19.
 - ¹⁰ W.W. Hunter, *op. cit*, p. 19.
 - ¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 18.
 - ¹² B C Allen, *District Gazeteers of Assam, Goalpara (1905)*, p.122.
 - ¹³ *Ibid*, p. 123.
 - ¹⁴ *Mandals* were the employees entrusted with the task of keeping records of land in their respective areas.
 - ¹⁵ M. Basumatary, "Genesis and growth of Christianity Among the Boros of NELC with special reference to Shyamaguri Congregation", in M. Basumatary, (ed) *AINA*, a Souvenir, 2015, p.5.
 - ¹⁶ *British official correspondence letter*, unclassified, Secretariat Archive, Guwahati, browsed on 23/07/1998.
 - ¹⁷ *Ibid*.
 - ¹⁸ *Ibid*, p.37.
 - ¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.36.

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- 20 *Ibid*, p.117.
- 21 *Ibid*, p.36.
- 22 *Ibid*, p.37
- 23 *Ibid*,
- 24 WW Hunter in his *Statistical Account of the District of Goalpara* mistook the Meches and the Kacharis to be two different tribes, but they are same tribe. Because of that he had shown two different population figures for the same tribe in the same year.
- 25 *Ibid*, p.37.
- 26 B.C. Allen, *op. cit*, p.123.
- 27 *Ibid*.
- 28 W.W. Hunter, *op. cit*, pp. 20-21.
- 29 *Ibid*, p.24.
- 30 *Ibid*, p. 43.
- 31 S. Barman, *op. cit*, p.193.
- 32 A. Guha, *Planter Raj to Swaraj: Freedom Struggle and Electoral politics in Assam, 1826-1947*, ICHR,1977, p.102.
- 33 *Ibid*.
- 34 B.C. Allen, *op. cit*, p.78.
- 35 *Ibid*.
- 36 S. Barman, *op. cit*, p.193.
- 37 R.C. Kalita, *Situating Assamese Middle Class in Colonial Period*, Bhabani Print & publications, Guwahati, 2011, p. 49.
- 38 W.W. Hunter, *op. cit*, p.50.
- 39 R.C. Kalita, *op. cit*, p.104.
- 40 *Ibid*.
- 41 I.S. Mumtaza, "The Role of East Bengal Immigrants in the Economy of the Brahmaputra Valley" in P. Goswami, (ed) *Changing Patterns of Economy and Society: 19th Century N.E. India*, Deptt. of History, GU,2007, p.117.
- 42 *Ibid*.
- 43 *Patta* is a term used to denote recorded land holding right.
- 44 A. Saikia, *A Century of Protest: Peasant Politics in Assam since 1900*, Routledge, New Delhi, 2014, p.89.
- 45 *Ibid*.
- 46 *Rajbangsis* were the Hinduised caste from the Bodo tribes.
- 47 The East Bengali Muslims are often called *Bhatias* in colloquial language.

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- 48 S. Barman, *op. cit*, p. 193.
- 49 *Ibid*, p.193.
- 50 *Ibid*, p. 192.
- 51 *Ibid*, p.193.
- 52 *Ibid*.
- 53 *Ibid*.
- 54 B.C. Allen, *op. cit*, p.110.
- 55 S. Barman, *op. cit*, p.193.
- 56 *Ibid*, p.193.
- 57 B.C. Allen, *op. cit*, pp.135-36.
- 58 *Ibid*, p.136.
- 59 *Ibid*, p.137.
- 60 Kalicharan Brahma Jr. *Jew Khourang Arw Saya*, Kokrajhar, Bang.- 1363, p. 67.
- 61 *Ibid*. p.137.
- 62 W.W. Hunter, *op. cit*, p.52.
- 63 *Ibid*. p. 52.
- 64 *Pathsala*- is a vernacular school where the boys are taught to read and write Assamese and very little attention is paid to arithmetic.
- 65 W.W. Hunter, *op. cit*, p.52.
- 66 *Ibid*.
- 67 *Ibid*.
- 68 B.C. Allen, *op. cit*, p.137.
- 69 S. Barman, *op. cit*, p.199.
- 70 *Ibid*, pp. 199,200.
- 71 W.W. Hunter, *op. cit*, p.99.
- 72 Vaishyas – a member of the mercantile or agricultural community, the third class in the Vedic social system, cited from Bakti Vikasa Swami, *The Ramayana*, Bhakti Vikas Trust, Surat, (Rprnt) 2011, p. 582.
- 73 Sudras- a member of the fourth social order, the class of labourers and artisans in the vedic social system, *Ibid*, p. 581.
- 74 B.C. Allen, *op. cit*, p. 98.
- 75 *Ibid*.
- 76 *Ibid*.
- 77 *Ibid*, p. 99.
- 78 *Ibid*.

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- 79 *Ibid*, p.100.
- 80 W.W. Hunter, *op. cit*, p.25.
- 81 *Ibid*, p.25.
- 82 *Ibid*, p. 24.
- 83 C.G. Dingwall Fordyce, *Progress Report of Forest Administration in the Province of Assam for the year 1900-1901*, Assam Secretariat Press, Shillong, 1901, p.4.
- 84 Asharam Brahma, informant, age-67, occupation- Cultivation, Vill.-Naisarbari, P.O. Panbari, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 24/12/2015; Katiram Brahma, informant, age- 84, occupation- former school teacher, Vill.-Panbari, P.O. Panbari Bazar, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 09/10/2014.
- 85 E.S. Carr, *Progress Report of Forest Administration in the Province of Assam for the year 1902-1903*, Assam Secretariat Press, Shillong, 1903, p.19.
- 86 B.C. Allen, *op. cit*, p.79.
- 87 E.S. Carr, *op. cit*, p. 19.
- 88 *Ibid*, p.19.
- 89 Aswini Basumatary, informant, age-86, occupation- Cultivation, Vill.-Panbari, P.O. Panbari, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 29/11/2015; Gajendra Mushahary, informant, age-70, occupation- Cultivation, Vill.-Narayanpur, P.O. Panbari Bazar, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 24/01/2015.
- 90 W.W. Hunter, *op. cit*, pp. 26. 27.
- 91 *Ibid*.
- 92 N. Rhodes, S.K. Bose, *The Coinage of Cooch Behar*, Mira Bose, Dhubri,1999, P. 55.
- 93 Boloram Brahma, informant, age-71, occupation- Cultivation, Vill.- Kokhlingbari, P.O. Binya Khata, District- Kokrajhar, Assam, interviewed on 04/11/2015.
- 94 W.W. Hunter, *op. cit*, p.117.
- 95 *Ibid*, p.119.
- 96 *Ibid*, p.117.
- 97 Janil Brahma, “Dose Naidingphwi-Parbotjoarkhou”, *Souvenir* (in Bodo), 20th Annual Conference, ABSU, Bashbari Session, 1988, p.69.
- 98 B.N. Datta, *Folklore and Historiography*, National Folklore Support Centre, India, Chennai, 2002, p. 85.
- 99 B.C. Allen, *op. cit*, p. 77.
- 100 *Ibid*, p. 79.
- 101 *Ibid*, p.81.
- 102 *Ibid*.

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- ¹⁰³ W.W. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p.24.
- ¹⁰⁴ B.C. Allen, *op. cit.*, p.82.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p.83.
- ¹⁰⁶ W.W. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*.
- ¹⁰⁹ Major Adam White, *A Memoir of The Late David Scott*, DHAS, Guwahati,1988, P.5.
- ¹¹⁰ M. Ramesh Singh, *Tribal Development in 21st Century*, Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2006, P. 5.
- ¹¹¹ S. Barman, *op. cit.*, p.196.
- ¹¹² *Ibid*.
- ¹¹³ *Ibid*, p.186.
- ¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 183.
- ¹¹⁵ *Ibid*.
- ¹¹⁶ *Ibid*.
- ¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.199.
- ¹¹⁸ N. K. Bose, *Tribal life in India*, National Book Trust, India, New Delhi, 2002, P.38.
- ¹¹⁹ M. Brahma, *Jaolia Dewanni Jiu Khaurang*, (in Bodo), Bina Library, Kokrajhar,1988, p.34.
- ¹²⁰ *Dewan* is a term to mean the intermediary (Often disapproving).
- ¹²¹ *British official correspondence letter*, unclassified, Secretariat Archive, Guwahati browsed on 23/07/1998.