CHAPTER - III
CHAPTER –III

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE VILLAGE

Garigaon is bounded by the mighty river Brahmaputra in the north. The N.H.37 and Jalukbari village are situated to the South-west boundary of the village. Gauhati University and Sadilapur village are situated in the east of Garigaon while the Khandazan River is flowing its course along the western boundary of the village. The total area of the village is six square kilometers approximately. The present University site was also a part of the village before this institution came up in 1947. The total population of the village may be estimated at sixteen thousand, the name Garigaon is historical one. During the Ahom-Mughal conflict; “The Ahom kings had built many stockades to resist the attack of enemy. They also built stockades at Guwahati to safeguard the town from the attack of enemy. The stockades were strong and high like the hills. The Ahoms built two types of stockades, viz,-one that was big and another that was small. The big one is known as gār in Assamese and the small one is called Gārī” 21.

One of the such interpretation of the origin of the name Garigaon is – The cultivation was the main earning source of the people of Garigaon

from the old days. From the old days the people of the area used carts or gāri to carry their agricultural products to different places viz- Beltola, Pandu etc. From the Assamese word gāri the village came to be known as Garigaon or the village of carts.

It may be mentioned that the village is surrounded by a number of stockades. There are three stockades, viz.-

a) One starting from Dipār Bil (lake) to the Brahmaputra river

b) The second one starting from the Lānkeswār hill to the Brahmaputra river

c) The third one starting from the Kāleshwār hill to the Brahmaputra river

There are legendary narratives about the stockades of the Jalukbari area, viz-

a) “In the ancient Kamrupa, a king named Arimatta was born in an around 1300 A.D. and he belonged to the ‘Zitāry’ dynasty. The boundary of his kingdom covered wide area including two sides of the Brahmaputra River and stretching up to the present ‘Rāhā’ of Nagaon District. The capital of the kingdom was situated in the western side of Guwahati in erstwhile Kamrupa. It is inferred that located at Dipār bil. Legendary accounts extent in the locality Support this speculative inference. Legends goes that the three stockades mentioned above were used as roads during
the regime of king Arimatta. A stockades was used by the damsels of the city to go to the Brahmaputra river to bath and play in the river. The second one was used by the subjects of the city to go the Brahmaputra River. And the third one, which started from the Khanazan River, and it was used by the king and the nobles. The granary of the kingdom of the king Arimatta was in the side of the Brahmaputra river. 22

But there is no historical record of construction of stockade during the region of the king Arimatta. Most probably, the Ahom king built many stockades on the road, which was used by the king Arimatta.

b) “The king of Rani, a small kingdom near Jalukbari had two queens, name of the queens were Ādāi and Mādāi. One was jealous of the other. If one did one thing the other followed suit in order to show her supremacy. It was the habit of the first queen to ride on an elephant to the Brahmaputra early in the morning every day. Seeing this a second wife begged the king to provide her with the same facility. The king agreed and order for the construction of two stockades parallel to each other. 23

From that time, own wards, as the popular belief goes the two stockades stands on the outskirts of the village Garigaon as the monument

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of the two queens. But there is no historical record. The village Garigaon is sub-divided into two revenue villages, viz- a) Kachari Garigaon, and b) Dehan Garigaon.

We may describe the history of the Kāchāri Garigaon as follows. At one time the southern part of Garigaon was inhabited by ‘Mech’ and ‘Kāchāris’ belonging to the Bodo group. They became converted to the Vaisnavite religion and identified themselves as Koch or Rājbonsi. The name Kāchāri Garigaon is believed to derive from the Bodo-Kāchāri inhabitants of the village. The name ‘Dehān’ was most probably given by the Kāchāries because; the Kāchāris or tribal people identified the non-tribal Hindu people as Dehān. In Dehan Garigaon the original inhabitants were mostly Hāloi Keots and Kālitā. The eastern part of Garigaon inhabited by the Assamese Muslims and Koch-Rājbonsi.

Settlement of Muslim population in Garigaon:

The Muslims constitute a sizeable population in the present day Assam. During the pre-British times their number was negligible. The Muslims of the pre-British days were descendants of those who had been taken prisoners in wars against the Muslim invaders; some of these Muslims were converts from Hinduism or descendants of converted Muslims. So, Shihabuddin Talis who visited Assam in the Ahom-Mughal war time wrote about the local Muslim people. As for the Mussalmans
who had been taken prisoners in former times and had chosen to marry here, their descendants act exactly in the manner of the Assamese and have nothing of Islam except the name, their hearts are inclined far more towards mingling with the Assamese than towards association with Muslims.  

It is difficult to determine the exact date of the Muslims settlement in Garigaon. The Muslims of the pre-British period were descendents of those who had taken prisoner in near against the Muslim invaders Mohammed Ibn. Bakhtiyar led an invasion to Tibet through the kingdom of Kamrupa in 1205-06 A.D. In his return journey, Bakhtiyar was defeated and he suffered a heavy loss of his army in the battle. A few Muslim soldiers who could save their lives stayed in Kamrup as a hostage of Kamrupa King. It is believed that a small group of this Muslim soldier stayed in the south bank of the river Brahmaputra in the present Garigaon area. A large portion of the Muslim population of Garigaon consists of Muslim soldier of the Mughal army, who came to Assam during the Ahom-Mughal conflict. (see Chapter -II; P.20)

The Khanazan river in the history of Garigaon:

"The Khānā River is the life blood of the people of Ramsarani and Jalukbāri Mouzā. There is no definite and clear-cut information as to how the river originated. However, popular believe traces the river to the

Assamese word ‘Khāndā’, i.e. ‘digging’. People believe that the river was came into being after the people of the locality dug out a long trench to facilitate easy movement of water to the paddy field or to the village. Another opinion is that the river came into being as a result of an earthquake or some other natural calamity. They are of opinion that during the earthquake of 1548 A.D. and 1897 A.D. Some crackers appeared around the Dipār Bil and the water of the Dipār Bil started following through the crackers as a result of which the river took shape. Another opinion is that the Koch king of ‘Rāni’ ordered his man to dig the river to facilitate movement of boat along it according to them the river came to be known as Khāndā river”.25

Another opinion is that “In the 13th century A.D. a Muslim governor Mirzanathan came to attack the Kamrupa king. So, he settled in the Gārāl village to invade the kingdom of Rāni. At the time of the movement the chieftains of the hills along with the king of Rāni, attacked the Pandu camp of Mirzanathan. In the infantry war, the army of Mirzanathan was defeated for the first time. Therefore, he sought to attack by the army of Navy. During a short span of time, he has been digging a river from the Dipār bil to the Brahmaputra River to facilitate movement of boats of the Mussalman army. It is believed that the river

was digging within seven days. From the strategic point of view, the Muslim army would be started from the Pandu station to the Kingdom of the king of Rāni through this river. Thus the river came to be known as Khandazan River.

The Hindu Settlement: The Hindu settlement at the present Garigaon area begun at least from the time of the epics and Purāṇas. It may be mentioned that there are a number of old shrines and temples in the surrounding area of the village. That the Sīvā-Pārvāti temple of Kāleshwār Dhām is situated at the south-eastern side of the village and the Siva temple of Lānkeswār Dhām is situated at the southern side of Lankeshwar hill. From the earliest time, people of this area have been associated with these temples.

There are also a number of Nāmghārs or community prayer halls established during the Vaisnavite movement in Assam. The Hindu population of the area is connected with these shrines, temples and Nāmghārs. The tribal population of the area may be said to be earliest settlement in the area.

The Hindu population consist of a number of castes and communities viz- Kāliitā, Koch, Kāivārtā, Nāmāsudrā and Kāchāri etc. while the non tribal Hindu people inhabits in the western side of the

26. Savaoniar, Brihattar Guwahati Vir Lachit Divas Udzapan Committee, 1992
village and the tribal people have settled in the south-west part. It is believed that the tribal people have come from the Gāro hills. Another part of the village is called which is bounded in the south-west side as Kāchāri Garigaon. From the earliest time, the whole present Garigaon area was under the king of Rāni. The Koch people are living in the eastern side of the village and this locality is known as Bezpārā. During the reign of the Koch king Naranarayan, the Jalukbari villages were within the Koch king. It is believed that thus a portion of Koch people was living in the village.

From the earliest time, the Kāivārtās are living in the western side of the village. Most of the Hindu people, like Hāloikeots and Muslims are lived their lives as a source of cultivation. Early references of the Keot are found in the Kāthā-guruchāritā and some royal grants of Ahom king of the 17th-18th centuries. Risely also refers to the Hāloï sub-caste of the Kāivārtās. The Kāivārtās have been staunch Vāisnāvās since the middle of the 17th century A.D.

The Kālitās are agriculturists by the profession. The Kālitās are scattered all over the Brahmaputra valley. It has been started that some Assamese scholars, notably P.C. Choudhury and K.R. Medhi have tried to prove that the Kālitās of Assam originated from the alpine stock who migrated to eastern India before the Vedic Aryāns.
It is believed that during the second world war, many Hindu people have been coming from Pandu area and settled in the village Garigaon.

**Tradition connected with the ward or ‘Subā’ of the village:**

There are number of wards or *Subā* of the village, viz- 

*a)* Fālqipārā or Fency pārā, 
*b)* Pāglāpārā, 
*c)* Bezpārā, 
*d)* Nowāpārā, 
*e)* Fākir pārā, 
*f)* Rāngāmāti, 
*g)* Gāonburhāpārā, 
*h)* Bāniāpārā, 
*i)* Bālāpārā and 
*j)* Pāhlānpārā, etc.

*a)* **Falqipara:** Once upon a time, there are living many people, who travel about with animals for sale. The word ‘Fālqi’ is derived from the Assamese word ‘Fālengi’. Therefore, the *subā* is to known as *Fālqipārā*.

*b)* **Paglapara:** “Once upon a time, there was lived a man named Choudhury; belonged to Choudhury dynasty. However, he was a rich man but he was a mad man. From the Assamese word ‘Pāglā’(Mad), the word is called *Pāglāpārā*”.

*c)* **Bezpara:** “The ward is situated in the eastern side of the village. Once upon a time, there lived people who were ‘Bez’ or ‘ojā’ (village medicine man) by profession. They serve to remove the diseases of the man or the animals. In this area, many ‘ojā’ or ‘Bez’ are living since the earliest time. So, the area is to be known as *Bezpārā*”.

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The name of Bez or Oja are, viz:

Table No – 2

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<td>Late Ram Oja</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Late Pitambar Oja</td>
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d) Nowapara: “People from outside began settling in this area. So, this area is called Nowapara or newly settled area”  

e) Fakirpara: Garigaon is associated with the memory of Hazrat Jalaluddin Tabrezi, who is believed to have passed away in the Kamrupa. Jalaluddin Tabrezi, entered Assam in the first quarter of the 13th century A.D. The saint stayed at the present Garigaon area for some period. It is said that the Muslim saint attracted many people and quite a good number of them were accepted as disciple. These followers of Tabrezi stayed in the present locality of Garigaon, so, this area is called Fākir pārā