PREFACE

Urbanization is the process of origin and development of the urban centres. It is the process of the developed stage of the human civilization. The urban centres formed in the existing environment of the society. Society was tribal in the early period of human history. With the advent of settled agrarian economy things began to change—first the social system then the political system and other establishments of the society. Gradually in the settled society urbanization started in the rural setting. It occurred in society in evolutionary process.

Although the cities were the oldest artifacts of civilized life urban studies is comparatively recent academic discipline. It was with the emerging of new cities after the industrial revolution the way for urban studies paved in the west. Although the Indian cities were flourished from 4th millennium B.C. the urban studies started more slowly in India. The eminent scholars that contributed their works in this field were B. B. Dutta(1925), Stuart Piggot(1945), Amrita Ray(1964) etc.

In spite of the urban centres prevailed in Assam from the epic period and played the significant role by them in history in different manners historians of the land fail to pay due attention to this field. Due to having interest on the field and to focus light on the different developments of the cities in early Assam the present work has been taken. Thus in the present work attempts have been made to analyze the different aspects of urban growth in early Assam and to present a comprehensive and total view of urbanization of the land.
The entire study has been reported in seven chapters. The chapter wise observations are briefly discussed here under.

The first chapter entitled "Geographical and Political Background of Early Assam" covers a description of geographical background of early Assam from 5ᵗʰ century A.D. to 12ᵗʰ century A.D. This chapter also includes a brief description of political history of early Assam of the said period.

The second chapter entitled "Origin of the Cities of Early Assam". This chapter is devoted to analyze the different issues that related in building the cities of ancient Assam. Thus the chapter includes the causative factors that responsible for emerging the cities, the planning and designing and measures for protection that followed in building the cities of Early Assam. This chapter also includes a description of the different types of the cities that formed in early Assam.

The third chapter entitled "Urban Administration and Political Life". In this chapter it is tried to focus light on the city administration of the cities of early Assam and the political life that was followed by the city dwellers of the cities of Early Assam.

The forth chapter entitled "Social Life". This chapter is devoted to present different aspects related to the social life of the city dwellers of Early Assam. Thus in this chapter it is tried to focus light on the categories of people, social customs, dress, ornaments, games and sports etc. that prevailed in the cities of early Assam.

The fifth chapter entitled "Economic Life". In this chapter it is tried to present the role that played by the economic affairs for
origin, sustenance and flourishing of the cities of Early Assam. The major issues that focus light in this chapter are the flourishing of industries, trade and commerce and development of transport and communication system in the cities of Early Assam.

The sixth chapter entitled "Cultural Life" is devoted to present the cultural pursuits of the city dwellers of Early Assam. This chapter therefore includes the presentation of ceremonial activities that held in the court, religious activities, art, architecture, sculpture, painting, education system etc. that prevailed in the cities of Early Assam.

The seventh chapter is entitled as "Conclusion" which covers to present a comparison between the cities of Early Assam and its counterparts of other parts of India and to find out the distinctiveness of the former. It also includes for analyzing some of the factors for decline and disappearance of the earlier cities of Assam.

An "Appendix" is prepared in the last of the work which includes few maps the List of Illustration, Plates depicting ancient inscriptions that issued by the different kings of ancient Assam, sculptural icons consisting of various gods and goddesses and others and few architectural designs.

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