CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The origin of the name "Goalpara" has never been a separate political entity under its own king and its history has to be considered in connection with that of the various states of which from time to time, it formed a part.

Goalpara has experienced with several changes of jurisdiction since it first came under British rule. This part was originally, a part of the District Rangpur (now in Bangladesh). The internal administration of the District administration was conducted by the Zamindari system of the Mughol and subsequently by the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 i.e.; the Zamindari system of Lord Cornwallis and later Haptam Law of 1799. Thus, the Mughol's Zamindari began to operate in Goalpara by the British East India Company. Chandra Narayan was the founder of Bizni Raj estate which in subsequent development broke into Six Big Zamindaries, viz. Bizni, Gauripur, Mechpara, Chapar, Karaibari and Farbothian. It should be mentioned that the Zamindaris were created by the Mughols for administrative efficiency and were held, for the most part by the descendants of the founders of the respective Zamindars. They had to pay a nominal tribute to
the Mughols in kind. When British acquired the Dewani of Bengal, they introduced some revenue measures. The British accepted the tribute paid to the Mughol Government as land revenue.

In 1822, for the administrative convenience, an administrative unit in the name "Goalpara" was established with the headquarters at Goalpara. But after the annexation of Assam in 1826 by the terms of the Yandaboo Treaty, Goalpara was annexed to the Assam Valley division. Bhutan Duars of Goalpara District, together called it as "Eastern Duars". These Duars annexed from Bhutia Kingdom. The Five Duars were Bizni, Sidli, Chirung, Ripu and Guma. With consisting the Duars, the Company Government in Assam created a separate District with the headquarters at Dotma (1864). In 1869, when the Bengal Commissionership of Coochbehar was formed, the District Goalpara, with the newly acquired "Eastern Duars" was included in that Commissionership. In the following years the judicial administration was restored to the judicial Commissioner of Assam, but the executive control remained with the Commissioner of Cooch Behar until the formation of the Chief Commissionership of Assam Province in 1874.

We have seen that the Garo Hills were treated as a part of Goalpara during the first few years of British rule. At that time, the Garo were a terror to the people of plains. So, in 1869, the Government formed into a separate
District with headquarters at Tura. Subsequently, the headquarters of the District Goalpara removed to Dhubri in the year 1873 which was made the "Stramer Terminus". The District of Goalpara was again transferred to Assam and when Assam constituted as a Chief Commissioners Province in 1874. In 1905, after the Partition of Bengal, Eastern Bengal and was amalgamated with Assam to form a new Province of "East Bengal and Assam" and there after, against separated and constituted a separate Province as "Assam Province" in 1912 with Chief Commissioner in the Council.

In the mean time, the major flow of immigrants from Eastern Bengal to Goalpara during the decade 1901 to 1911 began. Under the "Colonisation Scheme" of the Government, the immigrants started settling on "Char" lands of the Brahmaputra. The local people had no interest in the "Char" lands and did not bother about the newcomers coming in the setting there. The then Zamindars introduced the immigrant Muslims to come and settle on the land. Their sole purpose was to earn more revenue to pay the British Government and to product the various kinds of crops, vegetables and commercial crops. The local people were in the habit of relinquishing the land, the Zamindars were more interested in settling land with the immigrants, turned into social problem. Subsequently, however, they ushered new era in the agricultural fields of Assam by producing two or three different types of crops in the same plot of land within the definite period of times. Virtually, they created Green
Revolution in the field of agriculture of Assam.

Through the immigrants hailed from East Bengal and spoke Bengali, they were more concerned with land, their social security and religion. In East Bengal, they were subjected to the oppression and exploitation by the Zamindars. They found both land and social security in the new land they came into.

There were waste land in abundance, particularly in Char areas in which the local people were not interested. There was social security under the administration, which was not much influenced by the Zamindars. Of the immigrants, 85 percent were Bengali Muslims and 15 percent were only Bengali Hindus before the Partition of India. Unlike the Hindu immigrants, the Muslim immigrants accepted Assamese as their mother-tongue. There was great controversy over the mother-tongue. The Muslim immigrants associated themselves with the cultural life of the people of Goalpara and developed a strong aversion to the new trend of the elite and aristocrat class.

As late as the day of Independence of India, the medium of instruction in primary schools situated to the West of the river Gauranga was Bengali and to the East Assamese. The Western part was more influenced by the Zamindars, having social relation with Zamindars of Bengal. The Eastern part was administered by the Raja of Bizni and the
Northern part was under the influence of the Raja of Sidi.
Both these Rajas were socially integrated into the local people. They were culturally not different from the local people.

Most of the lawyers in the District Court at Dhubri and Sub-Divisional court at Goalpara used Bengali in the Court. But after the Independence, entire Bengali Muslims formally accepted Assamese as their mother-tongue and recorded it as such in 1951 Census. The percentage of Assamese speaking population rose from 19.4% percent in 1931 to 62 percent in 1951 Census Report. Therefore, Assamese became majority by language and was recognised as Assamese majority District. Subsequently, more people started filing petitions in Assamese. Gradually, Assamese being used in the Court and other offices. So much so that the immigrants who know only Bengali joined the new trend by writing petitions in Assamese. While the language was Bengali, to give the petitions an appearance of the petition being written in Assamese, they used only typical Assamese alphabet "ג" (Rā) instead of Bengali alphabet "ג" (Rā).

The medium of instruction started being converted from Bengali into Assamese. There was an urge for schools of Assamese medium. The local school Board was every much helpful in fulfilling the aspiration of the people-conversion of Bengali medium school into Assamese ones.
The major indigenous communities in Goalpara Districts were Koch-Rajbonshi, Bodo, Nath, Jogi, Rava, Garo, Santal, indigenous Muslims (Deshi Muslims), Kalita, Brahmin, Shil and Fishermen. The entire indigenous communities spoke their mother-tongues. Goalparia is the common language of all the indigenous communities. Goalparia is not a language but a dialect. This dialect is a rich dialect and has more similarities and co-relation with the Assamese language, so somebody called it as old Kamrupi language. On the other hand, the language, cultural, traditions, customs, folk culture of the people of Rangpur, Cochbehar, Jalpaiguri, Goalpara and the down region of Garo Hills is more or less the same. The name of the language is Rajbonshi, or Kamatai language. The linguist G.A. Gierson also recognised it as Rajbongshi language in 1927.

After the Independence of India, political reorganisation of State begun and the famous Koch-Kingdom defying its ancient status and glory was amalgamated with the present state of West Bengal. The District of Goalpara, was a part of the Koch-Kingdom remained with the State of Assam as one of the District. So, the language and culture of the respective area sharply divided. The district of Rangpur and Dinajpur with Pakistan (now in Bangladesh); such political division had to some extend, disturbed the linguistic homogeneity of the tract. It is now seen, that the language, due to such political division has totally, lost its past status.
and glories as language and is now conversely, treated as
dialect in different states i.e, in Assam as Goalparia Dialect, in West Bengal as North Bengali dialect, in Bangladesh as a Bangladeshi dialect or Rangpuri dialect. But prior to these divisions the dialect of the whole area was firmly a compact one, with its prestige as language with written records of immense value.

The spoken language of the people of Goalpara is called Goalparia, but the spoken language has its different forms in different places of the District. The East, West and the South portion of the District, the dialect take its local form with the local characters and influence the dialect. It has its local name, such as Ghulia, Jharua, Borohazari, Namdania, Habraghatia, Salkochia, Gologanlia etc.

British East India Company occupied Assam in 1826. After, ten years of Company's administration in Assam, Government removed the Assamese language and imposed Bengali from the office, courts and schools in 1837. It continued till 1873. Due to the objection and tremendous pressure of the Assamese people, British government again introduced Assamese in the Offices, Courts and the Schools, except in Goalpara District of the Brahmaputra Valley. Bengali language had been continuing in both the Sub-Divisional Headquarters and the Schools. In the mean time we have got Independence, and the urges for mother-tongue has been
increasing. A movement of gradual transformation started.

The Zamindars, the elites, the aristocrat class and a considerable section of Bengali lawyers were against these movement for conversion of Bengali medium school into Assamese medium ones. The whole of the District of Goalpara surcharged with the social tension, arising out of the language conflicts. There were also other factors which might be taken as the root of the problem. The ethos of the people, socio-economic problems, question of unemployment and the matter relating to the overall well being of the indigenous people were the main concern.

It is noted that at the time of the portion of the country, after the freedom struggle and at the thres hold of Independent, the District of Goalpara had to pass through a great ordeal of the scrutiny of the Redcliff Commission. There was a demand of transfer of District Goalpara to Pakistan through referendum. Two local Members of Assam Legislative Assembly Sarat Chandra Sinha and Sontosh Kumar Baruah were sent to Delhi to prevent the danger. They moved the authority and were successful. The Boundary Commission (Redcliff Commission) sitting in Belvedre Hall in Calcutta, ruled out that the District Goalpara was not within the terms of references for consideration, inclusion into Pakistan' and that Goalpara remained with India.

Language is very important factor which intimately
and inextricably connected with culture. In 1920, Indian National Congress decided to form their organisational divisions i.e; the Provincial Congress Committee on the basis of language, creation-organisation, sometime different from the administrative divisions. To illustrate the point an instance might be cited here. The districts of Cachar and Sylhet were at that time, administratively they were within Bengal Provincial Congress Committee as these to districts were Bengali speaking districts. This necessitated to maintain the fundamental unity that had sustain the people.

Immediately after Independence, it was felt necessary to have cultural re-distribution of States and to fulfill the longings and urges of the people for the formation of the linguistic Provinces, Government decided to appoint a Commission know as the "States Reorganisation Commission" in 1953, with Fazl Ali as its Chairman and F.M. Panikar and H.N. Kunzru as its other two members.

The Members of the Commission toured the entire country to study the problems, outstanding issues of the different sections and ethnic groups and finalized its recommendation for settlement of the issues in a satisfactory way.

The existing social, political and economic organisations all became active and started mobilizing the peo-
ple. Some new organisations came into being. The reorganisation Movement shock the entire country.

Public meeting, demonstration, processions, were held throughout the country, besides other types of mobilization, such as seminars, conventions and consultations. Almost all organisations and institutions actively participated in preparation and submission of memorandum, publication of books, booklets, drawing and redrawing of the maps of the proposed reorganisation of the States.

The demand of reorganisation also started in the North Eastern Region - Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Nagaland, NEFA for creating new state from seceding Assam. These movements practically confined within the submission of memorandum before the Commission. But a notable People's Movement was started in the District of Goalpara. The District of Goalpara was very much shaken. It was struck long ago by the language conflicts and cultural problems between the two warring trends. The submission of memoranda by the interested part is demanding the transfer of Goalpara to West Bengal. On the basis of their claims that the language of Goalpara was Bengali, roused the sentiments and emotion of the people and ignited their passion. The Government of West Bengal also demanded the transfer of the District and merged with the West Bengal. Therefore, there followed a great reorganisation Movement, that shook the entire District and the State of Assam. There was virtual uprising or
The people against the transfer of Goalpara to West Bengal in reorganisation of the States.

The Movement very soon became popular turned into Peoples Movement. The entire indigenous communities like Koch-Rajbonshi, Boro, Rava, Kalita, Brahmin, Shil, Nath, Fishermen (Maji), indigenous Muslims, immigrant Muslims etc. actively participated in the Movement. The leaders of the Movement termed it as "Peoples Movements". In order to sustain the demand of the local people, there were series of meetings, processions, demonstrations, consultations, delegation, and took other democratic means for success of the Movement. Besides, Goalpara District Congress Committee and notable social workers, some new social organisations came forward and joined hand with the Movement.

The people of the District took some means to demonstrate the protest against separation of Goalpara. There were two notable processions launched as the vanguard of creating public opinion. The largest procession which started at the point of Bongaigaon and concluded at Dhubri Gauripur Maidan covering a distance of 130 KM. The procession consisted of all types of vehicles, such as Jeeps, Cars, Buses, Bi-cycles, Trucks banners etc. About 150 vehicles and about lakhs of people spontaneously joined hand with the procession. People were echoing with slogans in the procession to demonstrate the unity and integrity of the different ethnic groups and to establish the right of the
Goalpara people. At last a mammoth meeting was held at Gauripur Maidan at Dhubri on 2 May, 1955. Sarat Chandra Sinha the then President of the District Congress Committee, make out the purpose of gathering, danger of separation of the District etc. Struggling people promised to continue the Movement to the ends.

The other two notable processions came for their destination and met with the largest procession. Such as one of the procession led by Dwijindranath Chakravorty, Bhaban Pradhani and Jadabananda Adhikary from Boxirhat to Dhubri. where about 25 thousand people joined in the procession. Another procession launched by Bazlur Basit, Abdul Karim and Prafulla Chakravorty in the south bank of the Brahmaputra Valley. It started at Fakirgonj and ended at South Salmar Bazar, conveying the people's sentiment against separation of the District. After that, there were several hundred of small processions started spontaneously in their respective localities.

In the beginning, the Movement was all peaceful but later there were outbursts of violence in many places. The Movement was spearheaded by S.C. Sinha with the support of various organisations, institutions, all the ethnic groups, workers in the filed and factories of the entire District except the circle of the vested interested rose to a man. The movement carried through various stages. The last stage was the submission of memoranda before the Members of
the Commission during their visit to Goalpara District.

The All India Congress Committee took serious views of the outburst of violence and sent a team of its representatives to enquire into the matter. After enquiry, the All India Congress Committee asked Assam Pradesh Congress Committee to take action against District Congress Committee particularly against Sarat Chandra Sinha, its President, for the acts of violence that was committed during the Movement. Pradesh Congress accordingly, drew the Disciplinary Action Proceedings Sinha replied. He was however, brought to Delhi. There was a reconciliation and understanding among the leaders of the West Bengal and leaders of the District of Goalpara. The Disciplinary Action Proceeding was later dropped when Sinha regretted for the acts of violence.

The two of the three Members of the State Reorganisation Commission Dr. K.M. Panikar and H.N. Kunzru visited the Goalpara District with a view to study the situation on May 19, 1955. The Members were seated at Dhubri Local Board office. The Commission met the leaders of the Movement. Various political and social organisations and institutions, submitted their memorandum before the Commission. All the memoranda submitted by the political and social organisations demanded that the District of Goalpara should not be transferred to the West Bengal, the Dhubri Unit of All Assam Bangla Parishad. The Bangla Parishad was
infavour of separation of the District from Assam and merged with Bengal. On behalf of the Bangla Parishad, Rameni Kanta Bose pleaded and to be proved, put forward many old documents which was written in the Bengali language as a Bengali predominant District and on the ground, the District should be transferred to West Bengal.

The Members of the Commission, besides Dhubri Unit of All Assam Bangla Parishad, asked the leaders of immigrant Muslim Association for interview. On behalf of their organization, Bazlul Basit, Abdul karim, and Hazi Abual Hussain Pandit, its president, secretary and an important member represented.

The Commission also stayed in Gauhati and met various political and social organisations. The organisations submitted memoranda were- Assam Pradesh Congress Committee, in May 26, 1954, Assam Jatiya Mahasabha, in 20th May, 1954, All Assam State Reorganisation Conference in the 14th May, 1954; Gauhati Lawyers Association, 8th May, 1955, Assam Sahitya Sabha in 10th May 1955. The aforesaid organisations were also against the separation of the District and argued for unity and integrity of Assam.

Some of the political, social and cultural organisations of Meghalaya, Tripura, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and NEFA were submitted memorandum before the commission to create Autonomous District Councils, Autonomous State and
also Union Territories. The basis of their demand were culture, language and economic viewpoint.

Before going to recommend, the Commission studied all the memoranda and personal interview, collected and took during their tour throughout the country. According to the terms of reference, the Commission were at liberty to revise their own procedure for collection information and for ascertaining public opinion, Commission stated collecting data in New Delhi from first March, 1954, and were continued till about the end of July, 1955.

In verification and study the various proposals for reorganisation, Commission have mainly relied on statistical figures as given in the various Census figures. The Census figures for 1951 have been completed accordingly to what are known as "Census Tract".

In preparing its recommendations, the Commission was guided by some basic guide-line contained in its terms of reference. These were:

(i) The preservation and strengthening of the security of India;
(ii) Linguistic and cultural homogeneity;
(iii) Financial, economic and administrative considerations, and
(iv) The successful working of the national plan.
The Commission submitted its Report to the Government on September 30, 1955. Examined all the factors, Commission submitted an impartial and balanced Report. Recommended major change for the States of India. The major proposals regarding the Eastern and Southern boundaries of Assam will need to be considered in this respective. The demand for the creation of a Hill State in Assam is unpracticable and there and circumstances of Assam, why a separate Hills State should be created; special attention should, however, be paid to the development of the Hill Districts and enquiry into the working of Autonomous Bodies created under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution be under taken.

Tripura should be merged with Assam. The present arrangement with regard to the North-East Frontier Agency should continue.

West Bengal claims on the Goalpara District of Assam, also did not recommend to transfer and merge with West Bengal.

The Commission's recommendations were widely discussed all over the country for a number of months. Early in 1956, the Government of India announced their discussions which differed in some respects from the Commission's recommendations. On the basis of these decisions the States Reorganisation Bill was drafted and sent to the State Legis-
lative for their opinion. The Bill was thereafter introduced in Parliament and became an Act on August 31, 1956 and come into force in November 1, 1956.

Now, we come to the major conclusions of our study. The importance and significance of the People's Movement are the following:

(a) The thwarting of West Bengal's claim: overcoming the threat to Assam's integrity: West Bengal's claim to Goalpara was a threat to the territorial integrity of Assam. Assam would have suffered an irreparable loss. But the People's Movement on the issue was successful in thwarting the claim and dispelling the threat. This was a definite gain not only for the District but also for the whole State of Assam.

(b) Unity of the Groups of people having conflicting interests: Prior to the Movement the ethnic groups of people living in the District of Goalpara had certain conflict of interests. The interests of the immigrants who migrated into Goalpara, conflicted that of the indigenous people. The Zamindars created new classes of people to serve their own interest as opposed to those of the ryots. They also conflicted each other. Owing to the backwardness of the area, the District was a good grazing land of all the exploiting forces, one conflicting the other.
During the People's Movement, all the groups of people having conflicting interest barring a few, served round the issue of opposing the West Bengal's claim to Goalpara. In course of the Movement they found unity of their interest in diversity and there was a climate of understanding. For instance, there were all types of misunderstanding between the immigrants and the indigenous people. But in course of the Movement, the misunderstanding was removed a sense of tolerance was developed. They were united in the Movement for their mutual benefit. This was a positive gain to usher in unity among the diversity.

(c) Focussing the attention of other parts of Assam on Goalpara: Goalpara, was a most neglected District of Assam. Because of the Zamindars ruling over there, none gave any attention of the District. During the Movement, Assam Sahitya Sabha, Assam Jatiya Mahasabha, Assam Pradesh Congress Committee, Gauhati Lawyers Association, a number of Members of Assam Legislative Assembly, State Re-organisation Conference and, last but not the least, the Government of Assam itself came forward and stood solidly behind the people of Goalpara. The District go Goalpara, its pitiable plight all were thus in the focus of the attention of the Government and the people. This was a definite gain derived from the Movement. Subsequent development consolidated the gain.
(d) **Renaissance or revival of Assamese literature in Goalpara:** The immigrants who migrated into Goalpara spoke Bengali. But through intermingling with the indigenous people, they embraced the language of the area where they migrated and in course of time, returned Assamese as their mother tongue, such transformation of the social behaviours needed consolidation. They shifted their emphasis on language from Bengali to Assamese, later became known as Na-Assamiya - new Assamese. The Movement provided an opportunity for the immigrants and the indigenous people coming closer, having deeper understanding and to tolerance. It helped the growth and development of Assamese literature and in the District of Goalpara more quickly than ever. This was also a positive benefit we had derived from the Movement. The subsequent course of the events has also proved its truth. A number of writers and others from amongst the immigrants enriched considerably the Assamese literature.

(e) **The Acceleration of the process of adopting Assamese as their language of Communication:** As stated above, those who migrated into Goalpara and the neighbouring districts started slowly integrating into the large society of the indigenous people adopting Assamese as their media in school. They returned Assamese as their mother tongue in 1951 census. This process was further
accelerated after the People’s Movement in 1955 against the West Bengal's claim and soon the process of integration in the matter of language was fully completed. This process initiated in Goalpara helped the completion of similar process in the neighbouring districts. It is a rare phenomenon that an entire community accepted the language of the land into which it migrated. There can be attributed to the impact of the People's Movement.

(f) Recognition of Goalparia Loka-git and culture: Though backward otherwise, the District of Goalpara was rich in culture. Various songs, dances and dramas, their performances in the celebration of the popular festivals contributed largely to the cultural life of Goalpara. The People's Movement that shook the State of Assam brought them into focus. When the people roused themselves emotionally to action, it was an opportunity for them to understand each other. Goalpara which was neglected so long suddenly came in the lime light after the People’s Movement. Goalparia dances, dramas and Loka-git etc. Started being recognised and had by the time been able to occupy the place of honour in the greater society of Assam. A large number of cultural associations, institutions and organisations quickly sprang up. This is indeed a positive gain in the field of Goalpara cultural life.

(g) Unity, understanding and solidarity of the people of
Goalpara: Prior to the Movement there was not so much unity among the different ethnic groups living together for ages in the District of Goalpara as was found in the Movement and thereafter. The Movement made them have understanding and solidarity among themselves. It brought them closer and made them united to fight against the external interference with their language and culture.

(h) The language of the court in the District of Goalpara: While in the other parts of the Brahmaputra Valley, of Assam, the language used in the Courts was Assamese, it was Bengali in the Courts of the District of Goalpara, particularly in the Court at Dhubri. The Movement contributed largely to its changeover from Bengali to Assamese. This is also a positive gain of the Movement.