PREFACE

In Assam we have a tradition of village self-government by the village elders. The Government of Assam being encouraged by the successful working of village Government in the past has undertaken formation of statutory bodies, Panchayat instructions through successive Panchayat Acts since 1948. My official association with the administration of Panchayats in Assam for more than a decade encouraged me to undertake this study. I commenced it in 1969 but because of my official duties I could not devote full attention for its early completion. So far no one has undertaken the study of Panchayats in the State in depth. Dr. V.V. Rao had first dealt with the Panchayats in Assam in his study on hundred years of Local Self Government in this State.

The present thesis is based on original sources such as Census Reports, District Gazettes, Books on ancient and medieval historical accounts on Assam and on the following original records:-

1. The Assam Assembly proceedings and concerned select committee reports.
2. The Panchayat Act, and Rules, executive instructions and relevant records in the Directorate of Panchayat and C.D. Assam.
3. The study reports of the Government of India and Assam relating to the Panchayat and the recommendations of the Assam State level Panchayat Conferences.
As regards the administration and working of Panchayats in the Kamrup district in particular the following records in original were consulted:

(1) The official records of the Mahkuma Parishads and the selected anchalik Panchayats and Gaon Panchayats of the district.

(2) Records maintained about training programmes in the offices of the Gaon Panchayat Secretaries Training Centre and the Panchayati Raj Training Centre (for non officials) at Kahikuchi, Gauhati.

(3) The copies of Budgets and Progress reports of the Gaon Panchayats collected through some Gaon Panchayat Secretaries of the district.

The methodology adopted is empirical. I prepared a comprehensive questionnaire on different aspects of the Panchayats and obtained replies thereon from the members and Presidents of different Gaon Panchayats. Further some members and office bearers of the selected Panchayati Raj institution, as also with the concerned Secretaries were interviewed. My thanks are due to all such persons who were free and frank in their replies which helped me to get a correct picture and also to analyse the leadership pattern of the Panchayats.

In the preparation of the thesis, a number of obligations were included. I am greatly indebted to Dr.
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Last but not the least I express my thanks to Shri P. C. Sarma, Record Keeper, Assam Secretariat and the Librarians of the Assam Legislative Assembly Library, Gauhati University Library, Cotton College Library, Assam State Library, and the Library of the Historical and Antiquarian Department Assam for kindly allowing me to use their libraries.

Padma Kumar Saikia

P. K. Saikia
Assistant Development Commissioner
(Formerly Principal, Panchayat Train Institutes, Kakhua and Deputy Director Panchayat (Drafting Act & Rules) Assam.