CHAPTER - IV

LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION OF UDALGURI SUB-DIVISION

SINCE THE AHOM RULE:

DIVISION OF PERIODS OF REVENUE ADMINISTRATION:

The history of land revenue administration of Darrang district may be divided into the following periods:

1. The Period of Ahom Rule till the annexation of Assam by the British East India Company in 1826.


3. The Post Independence Period.

THE PERIOD OF AHOM RULE:

The region known as Darrang came under Ahom rule during the reign of the Koch King Bali Narayan. He was the first King of Darrang. The Ahom King Pratap Singha appointed him as the tributary king or Raja of Darrang with the title Dharma Narayan in 1616 A.D.¹

The region demarcated by the river Barradi on the north and Asura Ali or road of the Brahmaputra was Ceded to the Ahoms. Bali Narayan was installed by the Ahom King as tributary Raja of Darrang and renamed by them as Dharma Narayan.

With the death of Bali Narayan in an encounter in Singri Parbat in 1637, the History of Eastern Koch Kingdom practically came to an end. His descendants continued to rule as tributary kings of Darrang till the Burmese invasion.

REVENUE ADMINISTRATION DURING THE AHOM RULE:

The Ahom Kings were not only absolute over the subjects but also on lands. Land was not the private property of the common subjects.

All adult males between 18 and 50 were registered as Paiks. All the Paiks or common subjects except the slaves and those appropriated for the religious institution, like the Brahmins were bound to render physical service to the state.

This practice gave rise to the system of 'khel' or guile. Four Paiks constituted a 'got' or unit. These Paiks were under some officers viz; Borā, Saikia, Hazarika, and Phukans. A Borā was incharge of twenty Paiks. A Saikia was incharge of one hundred Paiks. A Hazarika was in charge of one thousand Paiks. A Rajkhovā had authority over 3,000 Paiks and a Phukan had authority over six thousand Paiks.

The Ahom king Gadadhar Singha had to live incognito for some years before ascending the throne. He lived in Kamrup for some years. During his stay at Kamrup, he had been acquainted with the Mughal system of 'Piyal' or land measurement. After the end of Mughal-Ahom conflict, he became the King and introduced first the 'Piyal' or land measurement in the Ahom Kingdom. In order to do the work of land measurement effectively, the King imported Surveyors from Bengal and Koch Behar. At first, 'Piyal' was introduced in Sibsagar district. This 'Piyal' system continued down to the reign of Pramalla Singha.

All lands occupied by the Paiks were surveyed and registered as 'Paikarlands'. The 'Paikarlands' were not hereditary and inalienable. But the officers viz, Baruahs, Saikias and Hazarikas arbitrarily cut off a portion of their land and gave to other Paiks.

Besides, 'Paikarlands', people enjoyed Bori-land and 'Khats'. There was no fixed rule as to the size of
'bori-land'. One and a half to two Puras ( 2 2/3 acres ) of land were granted to the royal Paiks. Generally, the Paiks were granted two Puras of best rice-land in return for their service to the state. The Ahom rulers encouraged reclamation of forests. The Kings did not give more importance to this type of lands and therefore, did not claim taxes for the same.

The 'Khat's' were the cultivable lands of the Ahom officers. The officers reclaimed the wasteland with the help of the slaves. So, there was no limit to the size of Khat-lands. The Bori-lands and Khat lands of the officers were hereditary and free from taxes.

Besides each holder of Bori-land was required to pay a rupee annually as Poll-tax or hearth tax according to the custom of the districts. In Kamrup, it was known as Khari Kata a or Karikatara. In Darrang district, it was a hearth tax, called 'Caru'. There every family, cooking separately had to pay Rs. 2.00 as tax yearly.

All lands in excess of the allotted portions of Paiks were known as 'Ubar' lands. These lands were rented out at a low rate to any individual. This was known as Kalani matia-dhan in the reign of Kamaleswar Singha. The Paiks had to pay Rs. one per Pura in excess of their allotted land.

Besides, there were some territorial and vocational 'Khels'. There was no particular assigned location of these Khels. Sometimes, the Paiks served connections with their
parent Khels in order to avoid taxes or oppressive practices of the officers. Moreover, the Ahom Government collected a plough tax from emigrating ryots who cultivated inundated parts of the country. Another kind of tax realised by the Govt. was hoe-tax for the cultivation of cotton in the hill lands.\(^3\)

The Ahom Kings also made grants to the religious institutions, Brahmins and some meritorious persons of lower Assam. The lands granted to the religious institutions, temples and meritorious persons were known as Nizf-Khiroj or half revenue paying estates. But in order to meet the war expenses, king Chandra Kanta Singha had to impose a tax known as capitation tax. This tax however continued to be levied by the Burmese invaders also.

Moreover, imported Brahmins received land grants in large number. With the beginning of construction and preservation of Hindu temples, ' Debottar ' and ' Dharmottar ' grants were made by the Ahom rulers.

According to Dowan, the following temples, Satras (Vaishnava monasteries) received Debottar land grants from the Ahom Government.

1. Kamakhya Devi - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1
2. Haja - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1
3. Umananda Kedar - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1
4. Sukreswar and other images - - - - - - 48
5. Tamreswari of Sadiya - - - - - - - - - 1
6. Bishanath and other goddess - - - - - - 24
7. Namsureswari - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 7
8. Kaliabar Kamakhya, Nagsankar - - - - 2
   and Kaliani Dewalis
9. Sadasiva of Dewangaon - - - - - - - - - 5
10. Gods of Joy Sagar temple - - - - - - - - 5
11. Gods of Siva Dol temple - - - - - - - - 3
12. Gods of Gauri Sagar temple - - - - - - - 3
13. Gods of Rudra Sagar(- - - - - - - - - - - - 1
14. Gods of Barpujaghar( Makeswar ) - - - - 1
15. Baze Dewal - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1
16. Auniati Satra - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1
17. Dhakhir Pat Satra - - - - - - - - - - - - 1
18. Garamur Satra - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1
19. Kuruabahi Satra - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1
20. Sarugaramur Satra - - - - - - - - - - - - 1
21. Diflu Satra - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1
The following families received Brahmottar grants from the Ahom Government.

1. Khataniars of four Satras - - - - - - - - - -  4
2. Bhattacharyya Pardit family - - - - - - - - - - - -  1
3. Dewalia Thakur - - - - - - - - - - - - - -  1
4. Brahmin Mahanta - - - - - - - - - - - - - -  1
5. Guwahati and Saragaon's respectable brahmin 1
6. Dewalia Pathak - - - - - - - - - - - - - -  1
7. Parbatia Goswami - - - - - - - - - - - - - -  1
8. Nati Goswami - - - - - - - - - - - - - -  1
9. Pahumaria Goswami - - - - - - - - - - - - - -  1
10. Mukalimuria Goswami - - - - - - - - - - - - - -  1
11. Siva Charyya - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -  1
Besides these, the famous Auniati Satra of Majuli had 22,000 acres of revenue free land, Dhakhinpat Satra 12,000 acres of revenue free land. Similarly, Garamur Satra had also 4,000 acres of land. The Government of Assam, however, sanctioned to it only 331 acres of revenue free land. These principal Satras could not sell or dispose of lands. The lands were meant for the maintenance of respective temples or Satras and not for the persons associated with the working of these institutions. 4

There is a controversy regarding the number of Paiks that constituted a 'got' or unit. Originally four Paiks constituted a 'got' but during the reign of Rajeswar Singha the number was reduced to three. They were known as (1) Mul (2) Mewal and (3) Thewal. 5

During the reign of the Ahom Kings, the Paiks did not always remain as Paiks. There were scopes for the promotions of the Paiks. A Paik by virtue of his ability and efficiency could become a Chomuedar who was one of the officers of the lowest rank. 6

The British East India Company did not want to make any radical change until the British rule was completely consolidated. At first, a poll tax of three rupees per paik was imposed in lieu of the old liability to personal service for three or four months in a year.

The duty of collecting these taxes was, at first entrusted to the 'Khel' officials but as the Paiks were scattered during the Burmese invasion, the officers found it difficult to realise taxes from them.

Therefore, the British Government divided a district into blocks called Mouzas or Mahals. The collecting officers were known as Mouzadars, Bishayas, Choudhury and Patgiri.

The British Government appointed some British officers known as 'Principal Assistants' or Collectors in Nowgaon, Kamrup and Darrang districts to carry out the work of revenue administration. 7

The old 'helwary System continued in the northern portion of Darrang until 1841 when a plough-tax was imposed in the area. A regular assessment of revenue was introduced only in 1843. 8

The cultivable area was divided into Basti or homestead, rupit or land on which Sali paddy was grown, bao-toli or land growing bao rice and faringati or land growing drycrops such as Ahu paddy, mustard.

In Kamrup, the assessment of homestead lands varied from Rs. 3.00 to Rs. 1.50 according to the circumstances of the occupants.

For rupit lands, one rupee per pura, the bao-toli at .75 paise and the faringati at .25 paise were assessed. In Darrang district, a plough tax of three was levied.  

Soon after the annexation of Assam, Mr. Scott assessed the first half of these estates at $\frac{1}{3}$ and the second half at $\frac{1}{2}$ and the regular Khiraj rate. But as the proprietors objected, the Government ordered an enquiry in 1861 as regards the rights and privileges enjoyed by the holders of these estates. Major Jenkins, the then commissioner who after completing the enquiry came to the conclusion that the Debottar (land grants made in favour of the deity), Dharmottar, (land dedicated religious purposes) and Brahmottar (land grants made to the priests) would be subjected to half the ordinary rates of revenue.

In 1879, the Government of India declared the Nizf Khiraj lands as heritable and transferable and recognised there estates as half revenue paying ones.

Besides, the Darrang Raj families also enjoyed land **free of cost**. By enacting **Land Revenue Regulation, 1886**, the British Government recognised the following four classes of right, enjoyed by the owners of settled lands viz;

1. The rights of proprietors, landholders and settlement holders other than landholders and rights acquired in the manner.

2. Rights legally derived from any rights mentioned under I

3. Rights acquired under sections 26 and 27 of the **Indian Limitation Act**.

4. Rights acquired by tenants under rent laws in force in the province.¹⁰

As regards the process of collecting revenue from the tenants, it may be mentioned that the British Government, at first, adopted the traditional method of collecting the revenue but later on, abolished the Paik System. Instead, the Paiks were imposed a Poll tax of Rs. 3/- in lieu of personal service to the state.

The British Government measured and assessed the lands of the Paiks and the task of collecting the revenue was entrusted with the (1) Mouzadars (2) Bishayas (3) Patgiris.

Before 1833, Patgiris were the collectors of revenue. They were authorised to issue Pattas also. After 1833, the Mouzadars were entrusted with the task of collection of land revenue on commission basis. Bishayas were also collectors of land revenue.

At the early stage, the lands were divided into three main classes viz:

1. Basti or Bori or home stead.
2. Rupit or low-rice-land.
3. Faringati or High land.

Similarly, the following rates of revenue were fixed:

1. 6 annas (0.37 paise) per bigha for rupit.
2. 4 annas and six pies (0.30 paise) for other kinds of land.

It was Lieut Colonel Hopkinson, the commissioner of Assam who raised the rates of revenue as given below:

1. Rs. 1.00 for basti or home stead per bigha.
2. Ten annas (0.62 paise) for rupit per bigha.
3. Eight annas ( .50 ) other kinds of land without any discrimination of class or value.\textsuperscript{11}

Finally, the following principles were formulated by the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal.

1. The fields were to be measured.

2. Settlement was to be carried on ordinarily for ten years with the occupant cultivators.

3. Such settlement was to be as permanent, heritable and transferable holding.

4. Land brought under cultivation newly was to be given on annual lease.

5. Land revenue was to be collected by Mouzadars on commission basis. This rate of revenue was to continue up to 31st March, 1893.

On the basis of the above principles, the settlement rules were framed by the Bengal Government in 1870 and there came into force immediately. According to these rules, the commissioner, Deputy commissioner, extra Assistant commissioners, Mouzadars, Mandals were regarded as revenue officers and they were empowered to implement the provisions of the afore said rules.

Under the Settlement Rules of 1870, the settlement was to be completed by issue of a patta or lease to a person and taking from him a Kabuliyat, or acceptance in the prescribed form.

Lease for any period not exceeding 10 years in case of fixed cultivation was allowed. But the periodic settlement, however, did not find favour with Colonel Hopkinson, the then commissioner of Assam and majority of Deputy Commissioners.

In short, there were very few long term settlements till the creation of Chief Commissioner’s Province in 1874.12

On the expiry of the term of decennial settlement of 1893-94, a settlement operation was carried out by J. Macwinay, an ics officer in 1905.

He further classified land in to the following:

The better soils (clayey and Loamy) were called 'Athalua' or 'maubelia' and the worst 'Kathna' and 'Baliseria'. Basti classes were also reduced to three classes.

Besides, the result of the assessment was the increase in revenue from the settled khiraj area from Rs. 606,769 to Rs. 607,361 or by 0.01 percent. The disparity between

Mangaldai and Tezpur Sub-divisions in respect of increase in revenue was quite glaring. Mangaldai suffered a heavy enhancement in 1893 and had subsequently suffered both from Kalajar (black fever) and the earthquake. 13

The first Tehsil was opened at Mangaldai in 1892. Tehsil was opened at Kalaigaon in 1888 and at Hindughopa, subsequently transferred to Patharighat.

For enhancing the rate of revenue abruptly from six annas (.37 paise) to ten annas (.62 paise) per bigha and Rs. 1.00 for basti or homestead the peasants around Patharighat rose in revolt at Patharighat of Darrang district.

The ryats of Patharighat protested mainly against the enhancement of revenue of Basti or homestead. The British Government wanted to raise the rate Basti land and garden land because the produce of these lands viz; betel-nut commanded a ready sale on the spot at a higher profit. 14

THE POST INDEPENDENCE PERIOD:

After independance, however, certain basic changes took place due to various measures of land-reforms. All the permanently settled estates of Goalpara and Karimganj covering about 16,80,743 acres have been acquired by Government

under the provisions of the Assam State Acquisition of zamindaries Act, 1951. As a result of this Act, the tenants have become land holders.

Again, under the provisions of Assam State Acquisition of Lands belonging to Religions and charitable Institutions of Public Nature Act, 1959, large areas of Lakhiraj, Nistkhiraj and other intermediary tenures (embracing 1,10,986 acres) have been acquired by the Government. Here also, the tenants of temple and Satras (Vaishnava Monasteries) have become land holders.

Besides, about 5,81,540 acres of land have been acquired from big land holders and proprietors of fee-simple estates under the provisions of the Assam Fixation of ceiling on Land holdings Act, 1956. Here also the tenants have been given the status of land holders.

According to the Administration Report of 1959-60, the following areas of Assam were held under different tenures at that time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF THE TENURES</th>
<th>AREAS IN ACRES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. PROPRIETY TENURES:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Lakhiraj Estates</td>
<td>1,12,558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Fee Simple Estates For the cultivation</td>
<td>5,62,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Permanently Settled Estates</td>
<td>16,80,743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total area under proprietary tenures</td>
<td>23,55,440 acres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. LAND HOLDERS TENURES:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Periodic estates for ordinary cultivation</td>
<td>27,41,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Periodic estates for tea cultivation</td>
<td>3,63,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Nisfkhiraj estates</td>
<td>1,85,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Grants of tea cultivation</td>
<td>2,20,729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Special Settlements</td>
<td>1,03,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Miscellaneous estates</td>
<td>27,559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Town Lands</td>
<td>22,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total area under landholders tenures</td>
<td>37,64,756</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. SETTLEMENT HOLDER OTHER THAN LANDHOLDER TENURES:

(a) Annual Land for ordinary cultivation 19,65,753
(b) Annual Land for tea cultivation 795

Total area of annual Land 19,66,548
Grand total for all tenures 80,86,744

Then, The Assam Land (Requisition and Acquisition) Act, 1948 was passed to provide land to the landless, flood-affected or displaced persons or to co-operative societies formed for the purpose of cultivation.

The principal aim of the act was to acquire surplus land useful for cultivation. Though the life of the act was only for five years, it was extended for another five years in 1958.

In pursuance of the Bhoojan Movement launched by Acharya Vinoda Bhave, the Assam Gramdan Act, 1961 was enforced in all the plains districts of Assam. Though the aim of the act was to bring a revolutionary change through peaceful method, the response for gramdan was not considerable in some districts.

Again, in order to give protection to the non-agricultural tenants of the urban areas of Assam, the non-Agricultural Urban Areas Tenancy Act was enacted in 1955. Adequate protection was given to the tenants against eviction by the landlords.

In order to define relationship between landlords and the tenants in regard to payment of rent, another act known as The Assam Urban Areas Rent Control Act, 1966 was passed. This legislation was valid for a period of five years only. The Governor of Assam promulgated an ordinance known as the Assam Urban Areas Rent Control Ordinance, 1972 (Assam Ordinance III of 1972) to regulate the fair rent of houses.

Moreover, in order to enable the tenants to enjoy Lakhiraj and Khiraj lands, The Assam (Temporarily Settled Districts) Tenancy Act was repealed and a fresh Act, known as The Assam (Temporarily Settled Areas) Tenancy Act of 1971 was passed. This act sought to confer the right of use and occupancy of land for a period of three years.

Moreover, The Assam Adhiaar Protection And Regulation Act is also an important act, with a view to giving protection to adhiars who cultivated land on the basis of crop sharing with the landlord, the Government constituted Boards in all revenue circles. The Sub-Deputy Collector is the Chairman of the Board and the other members are nominated by the Government.26

Moreover, the Assom Gana Parishad Government has made changes in respect of land revenue in the state. The Assam Land Revenue And Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 1990 was passed in the Assam Legislative Assembly. By this act the Government wants to penalise the tribal people selling their land to non-tribal people in the tribal Belts and Blocks. Besides, the act states that any revenue officials involved in illegal transfers of tribal land would be punished.  

Moreover, some provisions of the Land Revenue Regulation, 1886 also need to be amended to meet the challenging of the society. It is seen that the Misfkhirajdars and the proprietors of the Fee Simple Grants sell their lands to other persons in violation of the terms and conditions of granting these estates. The purchasers also enjoy as Misfkhirajdars and proprietors of Fee Simple Grants.

Therefore, necessary changes should be made to convert the states of these lands into Kharji Khiraj Periodic Pattas on transfer or alienation.

Moreover, the Chapter X of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886, is not free from defects because the section 162(5) (a) and (B) provides that land settled for special cultivation and Lakhiraj, Misfkhiraj or special estates

settled with non-cultivators for their maintenance shall be excluded from the provisions of Chapter X.

But if such lands falling within tribal belt or block are acquired under the Land Ceiling Act and made sarkari, no clear mention is there in this chapter about its states.

Therefore, the revenue officer at the grass-root level are under confusion whether these lands after being made Sarkari can be allotted to the people other than protected classes.28

Even since the inauguration of Udalguri Sub-division (i.e. 15th August, 1983), this sub-division has been receiving necessary financial assistance from the Government. Many bighas of lands have been acquired as excess land in the sub-division. This excess land has been distributed to the land less Boros.

As many as 428 families belonging to the scheduled tribe and scheduled caste communities have benefited so far.

Table - 1 shows the years, number of beneficiaries and the amount of money distributed between 1983 and 1987.29

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of beneficiaries</th>
<th>Amount of money distributed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983-04</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>1,50,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-05</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22,322.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-06</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>7,73,748.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-07</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36,250.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, according to Minimum Needs Scheme, landless people have been allotted one bigha of land and financial assistance each simultaneously. Between 15 August, 1983, and 1987 as many as 1,449 landless people have been allotted land under this scheme.

Table - II shows the distribution of one bigha of land and financial assistance to each of the landless people.30

30. Ibid - P. 23.
The advent of large number of migrants whose language, manners and customs differ widely from the tribal people of the study area, has affected the economic, political and social structure of the sub-division. They have opened vast tracts follow land for cultivation but on many occasions with the utter disregard to rules relating reservation of land for various public purposes. Therefore, instances of friction between the migrants and the local tribal people are increasing.

Irrsipe of the legislation, passed by the Government giving protection to the tribal people, there has been widespread encroachment in the tribal belts by the non-tribal from the belt itself and from other parts of Assam viz ; Nepal and Bangladesh.
According to a scholar, migration of various groups of people into Assam began after the establishment of British Raj and the main currents were as under:

1. Immigration to the Assam tea gardens.
2. Immigration of Western Bengal Colonists.
3. Immigration of Nepalis.

Of the three groups of people mentioned above, the first group of i.e., the tea garden labourers came to Assam on a short term basis and later on, they settled down permanently without causing any hindrance to the language or culture of Assam. They were more amenable to assimilation and at times the number of this group dropped. Nepali migration was not so detrimental to the Assamese society but the migration of people from Eastern Bengal was more dangerous. Migration to the district of Darrang may be classified into the following categories:

1. Migration from rural areas to the urban areas which is a common feature in all districts.

2. Migration from one district to another district.
3. Migration from one state to another state.

Regular Census of Darrang district was taken since 1872 in which year the total population of the district of Darrang was 2,35,720 persons. According to the Census of 1911, the population of the district was 3,77,14 persons. The increase by 11.9 was due to immigration of tea garden labourers.

The population of Darrang district increased by 27.69 percent during the decade ending in 1921 when it stood at 4,77,955. The Census of 1921 indicated that there were 25,000 Nepalis in the district.

In 1961, Darrang occupied sixth place in regard to population in Assam. During this decade, the highest rate of growth was recorded in Udalguri Thana or Police Station where it was 75.84 percent.

Table - III shows the Thana wise population as per last three censuses of Udalguri Sub-division. Census could not be carried on in 1981 due to the agitation started by the All Assam Students Union over the foreign nationals' issue.

According to C.S. Mullan, increase in the population of the district was apparently due to two reasons:

1. The immigration of East Bengal (Now Bangladesh) Colonists who settled in large numbers in Mangaldai Sub-division and

2. The natural growth of population. The greatest increase took place in Dalgaon Mouza of Darrang district.

Besides, the Table IV shows the inter-district migration to Darrang District. Groups of people from different districts viz; Kamrup, Goalpara and Mangaldai Sub-division
and they settled down after cutting the jungles of the Sarkari land. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Density per Sq. mile</th>
<th>Percentage of Inter district Immigration in Darrang District</th>
<th>Percentage of Inter district Immigration to total population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysing the salient features of migration E.H. Parkyntain, the Superindentent of Census Operations, Assam observed,

"There had been a big influx of people in to Darrang district from other districts."

Again, immigration of tea-garden labourers is one of the factors that contributed to the growth of population of the district. As recorded in the old District Gazetteer of Darrang, there were 79,513 tea-garden labourers born outside Assam in this district in 1901.

34. Ibid - P. 104.
In 1931, their number increased to 93,000 persons. In course of time many tea-garden labourers left the tea-gardens and settled in waste land. Next, it is the Nepalis who constitute a considerable part of the immigrants to this district. Most of the Nepalis get sufficient grazing land in addition to cultivable lands. The number of Nepalis in the district steadily increased during the early part of this Century.

In order to protect the tribal people from the Onslaught of the immigrants the British Government first introduced the 'Line System' in Nowgaon district of Assam where the land hundy immigrants mainly from Mymersing occupied lands near Assamese villages.

At first, though the Assamese resented to the advent of the immigrants, later on, they saw the better side of the immigrants, their hardworking nature and the contribution they were making to the general prosperity of the district. 35

In course of time, by taking the advantage of the simplicity of the Assamese people, the population of the

immigrants began to swell so much so that Mullan had to warn the Assamese people against the swelling population of the immigrants.

In 1945, the congress ministry adopted a practical measure for the protection of tribal classes in areas predominantly occupied by them as the immigrants endangered the economics and social basis of village life.

Therefore, the areas having fifty percent of the tribal people were selected for forming tribal belts and blocks. Within these belts and blocks reservation of land should be made for safeguarding the tribals and others at the time of living there, and no further settlement was to be made with others. Others at the time of living there had to be given the same protection as the tribals because, in practice, it was found extremely difficult to omit the non-tribal villages situated side by side with the tribal ones. A special officer who belonged to the tribal community prepared, after local inquiries, a map showing the villages having fifty percent of tribal population.

Mullan said, "It is sad but by no means improbable that in another thirty years Sibsagar district will be the only part of Assam in which an Assamese will find himself at home."

Datta, Anuradha, A collection of Academic papers, Gauhati University, P. 4.
On the basis of the 1945 resolution, the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886 was amended in 1947 (vide act. XV of 1947) and a new Chapter under caption "Protection of Backward Classes" was added to it. The new legislation authorised the state government to specify the backward classes who needed protection and to form tribal belts and blocks in areas predominantly inhabited by the tribal people.

Under the authority given to this new law the State Government notified the following classes of persons as 'backward classes' for the purpose of Chapter X viz: (I) plains tribals, (II) tea-garden tribals (III) hills tribals (IV) Santheals (V) Scheduled Castes.

The State Government also constituted 38 belts and blocks throughout the state.

Regarding the settlement of waste land, the amendment (Act. XV) of 1947 stated that even a person not belonging to any of the notified classes could get settlement of waste land provided he was a permanent or a settlement holder at the time of creation of the belt or block. A person belonging to a notified class, however, could get such even if he lived outside the belt or block but within the district.

The Assam Land and Revenue Regulation Act, 1886, amended in 1947 (vide Act. XV of 1947) was not strictly implemented. As a result, the outsiders began to purchase land and somehow they managed to take the Pattas of land.
Therefore, there is a resentment among the tribal people for being land less in their own place. The Government made some strict rules in accordance with the Amendment Act of 1982 in regard to the purchase and sale of land to the other than the tribal people.

According to the rules, those who had been living in the tribal belts and blocks before December, 1947 could purchase and dispose of their land but before doing so they must take the permission of the District Commissioner. Otherwise, registration of land cannot be effected. It was hoped that these rules would give necessary protection to the tribal people and thereby ease the tension prevailing among the Boro-Kacharis of this region.

The Boro-Kacharis have the fear of being minority in their own place. The immigrants had settled down in the study area and purchased land at throw-away prices. Compared to the Boro-Kachari the outsiders have made more material progress. Therefore, resentment and uneasy prevailed among the Boro-Kacharis of the study area.

Though the tribal belts and blocks were created before independence, the revenue rules in regard to belts and blocks were not strictly implemented. The Asom Ganaparishad

Government of Assan has, of course, made some strict rules in connection with the purchase and sale of land. Therefore, it is hoped that these rules will remove many difficulties of the Boro-Kacharis.

While protecting the tribal people from the onslaught of the immigrants, we must think for the people other than the tribals living side by side with the Boro-Kacharis.

These people have been living in the study area since the creation of the tribal belts and blocks. In some parts of the tribal belts and blocks, the tribal community is reduced to minority.

Therefore, it is high time to ponder over the matter and review the care of tribal belts and blocks. If the exiting legislation cannot cover these problems, new legislation should be made to solve the problems of these people.