CHAPTER: VIII

CONCLUSION

Thus, after analyzing all the factors, I have found that the existing administrative pattern, socio-cultural, economic, and religious structure worked as the source of discontentment of the people against the Ahom rule.

The Ahom rule in Assam ultimately declined in the midst of chaos and confusion created by the Moamariya uprising. The Moamariya uprising was the by-product of the Ahom rule. The roots of discontentment were generated from the administration of the Ahom rule and its socio-economic, cultural and religious outlook. Some of the very factors of Ahom rule, which had its strong points and merits, actually turned into the source of discontentment in different conditions and circumstances in course of time.

In our discussion in the chapter Ahom Administrative system it is disclosed that, along with some intrinsic merits in the Ahom institutions, there were some fundamental defects too. The Ahoms were the feudatory lords of the kingdom. All the important appointments for various designations, as far as practicable, were retained amongst them. The higher offices were hereditary. These nobles were the descendants of the chiefs who accompanied Sukapha in the time of invasion and conquest of Assam. This naturally made the Ahoms a distinct class and superior to the--
rest of the subjects, between the Ahoms and the non-Ahoms. Psychologically, they remained in a high position and status than any other people of the state.

The constitutional practices, conventions and State policies were the sources of strength of the Ahom power. These gradually lost the merit to command the common people and zest of their life. The original objectives of State policies were no longer inspired the nobles who began to prefer the personal aggrandizement than the well-beings of the state and the subjects. The later Ahom kings became puppet in the hands of the Burahgohain, Bargohain, Barphukan or Barbarua. Opportunism, rivalry among the nobility and fulfillment of personal ambitions to success in their life, pushed away the cause and promotion of people interests.

The Moamariya uprising sparked off the conflagration. It was the beginning of the end of the Ahom rule. It was immediately followed by the Burmese invasion, and subsequent occupation of the state by the British by the Treaty of Yandabo in 1826.

The Paik system created a compulsory, rude and cruel environment to the subjects. The entire productions, manpower of the state totally depended on this particular section of the people. The strict control from the top and its exploitation gave the entire system an autocratic set up. The Paik and Khel system acted a barrier to the development and expansion of money market as it engaged the—
entire subjects under the compulsory production for the state. The system also closed the way for the development of a complete feudal structure. The system curtailed the social freedom of common people. This increased the dissatisfaction among the subjects. It increased the hatred of the subjects towards their immediate masters and the state.

The situation demanded the change of state policy. The state had some options to mitigate the situation,—

As the first option, it required the reform of the land and revenue settlement, administration, and development of a strong money market with improved trade and commerce, introduction of cash system to the officers instead of allotment of land, change of the land distribution system, imposition of tax over the large estate of the feudal or religious chiefs, to make the royal treasury strong, remove the barrier over trade and commerce and movement of the people—to make a free environment for the spontaneous growth of the economic scenario.

or, as second option to extract more income from the existing system in a more forced way. The ruling class opted for the second option.

The Paiks were organized on an occupational and territorial basis on the khels. A certain spirit of fellowship developed amongst oppressed members of the Khels. One section could naturally transmit its sympathies and antipathies, thoughts and feelings to other sections of members.
Thus, in the time of Moamariya uprising the Moamariyas found easy acceptance to the non-Moamariya section of a Khel.

Most of the Khels got reduced in number because of death of Paiks in ravages and wars. As the result, adequate number of Paiks could not engage for the armed forces and the labour corps for construction of royal camps, public buildings, tanks, roads etc and for supply of other provisions. This brought the over work pressure to the Paiks. As a result it generated the grave disappointment among the Paiks.

In social behaviors extreme social division among the people, restrictions to the subjects, wide gape between the high and low class, rich and the poor and rigid social customs created dissatisfactions among the people. The royal house lost their old fame and acceptance among the common people because of drastic changes in their social behaviours in the later phase. With the development of the Neo-Vaisnavite philosophy in Assam the common subjects acquired the concept of equality and self dignity. They found the social policy of the state very oppressive and against their dignity. These all elements created discontent among the common people.

Initially, the Ahoms did not upset the old social structure. They did not even introduce any drastic reforms in their administration. The Ahom adjusted their government to the contemporary customs and usages of the subjects. They themselves accepted the language, manners and religion of ----
--- the subjects. The masses accepted the Ahom rule as a tolerable dispensation of their fate. They had affection and veneration for the Ahom kings and their administrators as long as they exercised their lawful authority.

The Ahoms in their arrival acquired a kind of traditional acceptance by the divergent people of the land. But the common subjects had no special enthusiasm for the system of Ahom government. When that government went astray and deflected from the path of rectitude, it lost its old acceptance.

In the economic sphere it has been very clear that the Paik had to pay heavy taxes to the State in different occasions, and to different heads. The Paiks had less land than the requirement.

The Ahom government totally depended on the Paiks for tax: cash or kind for state expenditure. The trade and commercial activities was very low. It contributed negligible amount to the royal treasury. The subjects were suppressed economically under the Paik and Khel system of the Ahom. They were instrument only in the state production system.

The entire burden of the state expenditure was borne by the Paiks. From cultivation to handicrafts or mines, all production units were tightly tied with the royal taxation system through the Khels, at the cost of the Paiks. Again in performing any kind of ceremony, the Paik had to pay stipulated tax levied by the state cash or kind. It generally created an atmosphere of dissatisfaction among the common people.

All the good lands were occupied by the royal house, the nobility and religious institutions. The Paiks had to live in small holdings.
—The economic discontentment joined with the religious discontentment which got outburst in the form of Moamariya uprising.

The administration of justice had been better administered in the early centuries. On the eve of the Moamariya uprising the system of justice became harsh, cruel, oppressive and unreasonable.

The decentralization of justice led to the corruption in to the system. When the central authority became week, the provincial authority started to utilize the judicial machinery for their selfish interest.

The Ahom penal law, for example, was severe. The punishments were heavy even for trivial offences. The penalty of death might be meted out to the whole family of a rebel. A person who incurred the particular displeasure of the king might be made to eat his son's flesh. Extraction of knee-pans, eyes and slicing off noses and ears were common practices, along with different cruel forms of execution.

Though most of these punishments were in vogue in other parts of India, in Assam they produced the impression that the government of the Ahoms was inhuman and cruel. That impression made the Ahom government unpopular. Particularly during problematic periods times there used to be gross abuse of the penal law. The ruthless infliction of indiscriminate punishments naturally exasperated the masses

In the analysis of the Ahom administration of justice two extreme ends are found dominated the entire system. In the later centuries the justice percolated with the religion.
It created discontentment far and wide. The fear of barbaric punishment also could not stop the people against the royalty.

It has been established fact that the initiation of the Ahoms rulers and nobles into the Sakta faith and enthusiastic patronage of Sakta priests and their ceremonies, irritated the non-Sakta sections of the community.

The Neo-Vaisnavites felt aggrieved with the religious policy of the Ahom rulers. The Neo-Vaisnavite had evolved out of the peculiar requirements of the Assamese temperament and society.

The Neo-Vaisnavite movement became a part and parcel of the life of the people during this time. The Neo-Vaisnavite no longer felt safe and secure, because they found to their utter dismay that the policy of religious neutrality was being given up by the Ahom rulers in their zeal for the Sakta cult. The Vaisnavite themselves were also a divided house. They had their internecine disputes, and schisms. The Ahom priests were also deeply aggrieved. They looked upon the Ahom government as their own handiwork sustained by their spiritual ministrations. The spread of the Sakta influence and the preference given to the Sakta priests and their practices and counsel, hurt the feelings of the Ahom priests. There were schism and rivalry in the Sakta camp also. Thus there were internal dissensions all round.

The Moamariya Mahantas, Aniruddha Deva and others, who mainly preached amongst the Morans of the —
Matak tribes initiated tribesmen also to the Neo-Vaisnavism. They enjoyed considerable power and prestige, and exerted powerful influence through the unification of their numerous followers.

The followers considered their Gurus as superior to the King. Their liberalism, unorthodox and democratic method of recognition, emphasizes on caste equality, spiritual ways of living and practices endeared them to their devotees and made them popular. When the Moamariya rose in revolt, they rose as one man.

The people tolerated the Government as long as it could give them peace and protection to pursue their normal avocations. Once the Ahom government failed in these primary duties, they lost the indifferent acceptance of the people toward the government. The people started to look the Ahom government as unbearably oppressive.

The political sympathies of the nobles and the officials who constituted the steel-frame of the administration were no longer governed by considerations of State but by personal considerations. Subordination of individual passions to be exigency of the State became a thing of the past.

The nobles were interested in destruction of their rivals and in fulfillment of their own ambitions. In their rivalry the nobles totally lost sight of their duties to the kingdom and—
-- forgot that, ultimately personal interests could not be safe without safeguarding interest of the State and the subjects.

Thus, the pent up discontentment of centuries got the outlet in the form of the Moamariya uprising.

Thus, twenty-five years of continuous civil war created an environment of anarchy, confusion and oppression in Assam. It totally shattered the peace and stopped any kind of progress. The kingdom as a whole reached the point of complete collapse of administrative machinery, degradation of morality and decline of economy. The glory of the Ahom power was gradually diminished in the midst of chaos and anarchy. In fact, the glorious period of the Ahom reign ended with the death of Rajesvar Simha in 1769. The remaining years of this rule upto 1826 were nothing but last flickering and final extinction of the ruling power. Repeated Burmese invasion from 1816 to 1826 and their virtual occupation of the land with large-scale violence, oppression and acts of inhuman cruelties brought the Ahom kingdom to the verge of total ruin. Thus the causes of the decline of the glory of the Ahom rule were the discontentment of the people against the ruling power. The roots of the popular discontent of the people under the Ahom rules were in the system of administration, paik and Khel system, socio-cultural and economic condition of the subjects, the structure of judiciary, and most importantly the religious attitude of the Ahom rulers.