CONCLUSION

We learn from Minhajuddin that the Koch and Mech people in the western part of Kamarupa displayed their admiration for the muhammadanism as early as 1205 A.D. so much so that they rendered their sincerest help to Muhammad ibn –Bakhtiyar, the first of the Muslim chiefs to enter the country after the Muslim conquest of India similarly the Chutiya king Ratandhwaşapalas (1224-50 A.D.) friendly relation with the sultan of Gauda in the Middle of the thirteenth century, the acceptance of islam by the Khon king Chakradhwaja, by 1474A. D the use of the title Khan by some Assamese Hindus of a high social status and the use of some words of perso – Arabic origin by Assamese poets including sankaradeva (1449-1568) clearly show that the Islamic culture gained its popularity at least in the western region of kamarupa even before the time of the conquest of sultan Hussain shah in 1502 A.D.

The annexation of this region of the ancient Kamarupa kingdom to Gauda by Husain Shah of Gauda is an epoch making event in the history of Assam – Muslim relations because this not only ensured the success of the repeated endeavours of the Muslim conquerors in the previous centuries to establish Muslim rule in Assam, but also brought the Ahom rulers of Assam into direct contact and clashes for the first time with the Muhammadans. During the period of his reign this region Hussan shah created a large colony of Afghan warriors there. This was the earliest organized colony of Musalmans in Assam. These Afghan settlers undoubtedly added to the growth of the Islamic element in Assamese culture. It is also learnt from the Buranjis that the Ahoms acquired the knowledge of fire arms only from the time of their clashes with the forces of Hussain shah. Evidently the knowledge of such arms has greatly helped them to emerge as the only saviour of Assam’s sovereign glory against the repeated onslaught of Mughal imperialism in the subsequent period.

After the death of Husain shah in 1519 A. D., when the Ahom monarch Suhungmung (1497-1539 A. D.) liberated this entire parts of Assam from the possession of Gauda, the remnant of the Afghan warriors settled
there by the former being rehabilitated in the different part of the eastern region of the Brahmaputra valley formed the nucleus of the Muslim population in the part of the valley. The Assam Muslim relation, however, entered its final phase only after the opening of the Ahoms war with the Mughals in 1614 A.D., soon after the latter conquered the Koch Hajo or kamrup region having overthrown its Koch ruler prakshitnarayan. It was from this time that the flow of Muslim settlers in considerable strength to western part of Assam particularly to the koch Hajo region and in small number to the Ahom territory or eastern Assam began in a regular and continuous manner. Consequently it has greatly enhanced the Mussalman population in the country as a whole. Most of the Muslims, who were settled in the Ahom kingdom during this period were the war prisoners or the Muslim artisans imported by Ahom kings. Being settled in smaller groups in different parts of the Ahom territory these Muslims came in close contact with the local people and thus the Assam Muslim cultural relation acquired a momentum to flourish in a wider and more continuous manner.

Generally speaking, the war prisoners brought by the Ahoms in the beginning were perhaps naturally not granted the same status as the native people. They were treated probably just as slaves and, therefore, were not employed in government service. But the number of Muslims employed in course of time in various departments including defence and civil appears to have grown sufficiently large and this may perhaps mean that all of them were not freshly imported. Many of them were certainly from among the war prisoners and as they displayed their skill in certain types of work they were granted the same status as the indigenous people and were employed in the government departments with other imported Muslim artisans. Being granted status and facility equal to the local people these Musalmans soon were able to identify themselves with the general population of the country and having displayed their loyalty to the country and their skill in the particular trades in which they were engaged they not only commanded love and respect of the local people but also increased the confidence of the ruling class on them so much so that many of them were
appointed to offices like that of Barua, Hazarika, saikia in different departments including the defence services of the government. Even today there is a large of Assamese Muslim's, who like other sections of the people of the country use the surnames Barua, Hazarika, saikia, Barbara, Bara, etc. Which signify that their forefathers were holding these high offices in the Ahom Government. Displaying their true love for the land and a genuine spirit of sacrifice for the cause of the country in the hour of its calamity created by Muhammadan invasions most of them through their words and deeds. Proved to be the true patriots of Assam. It was for such amount of love of their country and the people on the part of the Assamese Musalmans then that Shihabuddin, Tatish historian of Mir Jumla had to make the bitter remark that they were not true Muslims because they in their heart and soul loved the Assamese people and not the Mughals. The hatred which the Assamese Muslims bore in their heart like other Assamese people against the aggressors or hostile Hindus and Muhammadans alike from out side finds an expression in the action of Rupai, Gariya the Muslim armour beare of the Ahom king Gadadhar Singha against the renowned Azan Fakir of the seventeenth century. We learn from the Barpahi Buranji that sotora Molena (Maulana) an Assamese Muslim, having tried to install an Ahom prince of the Tugkhungia dynasty on the throne of Assam instituted a coup against Lakshmi Singha (1769-1780 A.D.) the then reigning king. But like all other attempts of several princes against this king this attempt of sotora Molona was foiled. It is interesting to note that the followers of this Muslim leader of the coup were mainly from among the non Muslim people who hailed from higher and lower strata of society. Lest we forget the contributions of Assamese Muslim military officer, Bagh Hazarika, whose heroism became one of the factors of the glorious victory of Ahom General Lachit Barphukan against the invading army of emperor Aurangzeb, which posed a great threat to the independence of Assam, in the middle of seventeenth century. This noble spirit of sacrifice and true patriotism which the early Muslim settlers of Assam displayed became an inexhaustive source of inspiration and high
exemple for those Muselmans who entered the country in later periods to accept Assam as their home land and to dedicate their strength in order to uphold the prestige of this land we learn from Abdul kadir, pleader of Nowgong that one of his forefathers who entered Assam during the period of Ahom rule in the country, was appointed as an artillery officer of the Assamese army and in the last Ahom Burmese war he laid down his life in the field for the cause of his homeland and his king Chandrakanta singha after having inflicted heavy loss on the enemy. Bahadur Gaonburha, who with Maniram Dewan led the renowned 1857 struggle of the Assamese people to revive their old sovereign government against British war the successor of this Muslim hero of Assam Burmese war. These facts assert that it was not under any duress that the Assamese Muslims had to act according to the wish of the majority section of the people of the country it was actually for their deep love for the people and the country that they voluntarily came forward to join the other majority section of the people in the services for the wellbeing of their dear homeland.

The employment of Muslim settlers in the government services widened the scope for the increase of person Arabic elements in Assamese culture. We have noted that quite a large number of Muslim were employed in the guilds of weavers, tailors and drapers, masons besides in the royal arsenals. Consequently, different types of dresses, brocades, and various types of Muslim embroidery enriched the old Assamese costumery. The use of enamelled gold ornaments in Assam is believed to have come from the Muslims. Similarly, the doneshaped masonry constructions on the royal palace curved door frames, gates and other masonry decorative work with intricate geometrical patterns of many Hindus temples even now provide evidences of the Islamic element in Assamese architectural designs. It is also believed that the use of metallic spitoons, smoking pipes and hookahs as well as the use of paper (tula - pat) among the Assamese is the result of Muslim influence. Even in the new type of Ahom revenue administration formulated by pratap Singha we note some traces of Muslim revenue system.
The Musaimans employed in the royal arsenals are said to have displayed a high order of efficiency. The gun-powder and cannon manufactured in the Ahom kingdom were acclaimed to be of a superior quality. This was undoubtedly a matchless contriubution of the Muslims to the Ahoms military strength. The growing contact and conflict of the Ahom with the Muhammadan necessitated their developing the culture of the Arabic and Persian language not only in the court towards an effective diplomatic relationship with the latter but also in the Islamic religious centres to impart religious education to their Muslim subjects. This in its turn helped in furthering the growth of the perso- Arabic element in the Assamese language. Even the Assamese fine arts which developed in the Ahom court blossomed forth into new verdure having nourished on the elements from those of Islam. The paintings of Hastividya nava the rise of the culture of the Hindustani music in Ahom court are perhaps the best evidences of this Apar from these the influence of such elements on the Assamese neo Vaishnava literature, music and painting is also not very insignificant. The musical instruments like the Rabab Negera and the Pakhwaj were used by the Assamese Vaishnavs. They also use even now Muslim type of dresses in their performance’s. In spite of all these it is to be admitted that the Muslim settlers in Assam fell under the influence of assumes customs and manners and beliefs. In the early period of Assam Muslim contact the rulers of Assam seem to have taken an indifferent attitude towards Islamic faith. But this does not presuppose that the practice of the faith was altogether forbidden in the country. The creation of a number of Khankahs and dargahs by jalauddin Tabrez in the early thirteenth century the erection of a mosque by sultan Malik yuzbak in 1256-57 A.D and the prolonged stay of Hazarat Ghiysuddin Awliya in Hajo, the episode of Azan pirs suffering in the hands of Rupai Gariya, leave no doubt in our minds that the professing of Islamic faith in ancient Assam was not a taboo.

The practice of religion in the country seems to have some royal interference from the time of Rudra Singha. Like many Hindu religious institutions, Islamic organizations also began to receive some care and
attention of the crown from this period. The issue of copper plate inscriptions by some of the successors of Rudra singha, granting revenue-free land to many dargahs and khankahs, the employment of Muslim priests in the royal palace, the creation of Muslim Sattras, the existence of more than twenty houses of instructions for the children of Musalmans in Rangpur, the Ahom capital and ten or twelve in Gauhati as were observed by J. P. Wade in the eighteenth century, help us to see very clearly that Islam received adequate encouragement from the king during this period. This would appear very striking indeed when we find that many Hindu religious pontiffs suffered humiliating treatment of the capital so much so that their votaries started the Moamariya rebellion in the reign of Lakshmi Singha (1768-1781 A.D. Even though it was through the conversion of a Mech chieftain that Islam first entered Assam early in the thirteenth century and though its influence increased by slow degrees till it gained direct patronage from the crown it was not perhaps the local converts but the infiltrators who constituted the major part of the Asamese. Muslim population at least in the later part of the Ahom period. According to Gait all the Muslim converts used the term Saikh against their names. The census taken in 1872 A.D. That is about forty-five years the end of Ahom rule in Assam shows that out of altogether 1,78,109 Muslim souls in the country only 924 were returned as Saikhs. Supposing that there were some errors in the identification of the Saikhs even if we inflate this number ten times their total strength would be less than 1/17th of the entire Muslim population in the country. We therefore may perhaps consider that Islam could not procure any large number of local converts in Assam even though it entered the country as early as 1205-06 A.D. One of the important reasons for this seems to be that the horizontal division of the Assamese Hindu society being by far less than that in other parts of India and Islam having striking resemblance in some of its cardinal tenets and general external form to Assamese Vaishnavism it could not claim a superiority over the letter on the contrary, the close relation which developed between the Islam and Bhakti, helped the growth of a deeper sense of mutual respect and
tolerance in the minds of their adherents so much so that Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva were taken as guru by several noted Muhammadans like Chandkhan or Chansai and Haridas. These Musalmans were held in high regard by Hindus and Musalmans alike. The impact of this harmonious relation between Islam and Vashanva Bhakti pervaded the fields of fine arts and material culture of the people. We find that the Assamese Zikirs and Zaris through which the seventeenth century Pirs and Alims preached Islam sing the glory of Sankaradeva Madhavadeva and Bhakti. They also in their form, style and expression imitate to an extent the neo-Vaishnava poetry. Such a fine relation between the Hindus and Muslims of Assam greatly helped the germination of a deep rooted secular outlook in assamese social life right in the seventeenth century. This secularity waxed ever stronger and stronger as it passed through the long corridor of centuries so much so that even in the hectic days of Hindu-Muslim riots in different parts of India, Assamese Hindus and Muslim could assemble in the courtyard of a Namghar or a mosque to express their disapproval of any hostility among people of the same land.

The contact of Assam with the Islamic world over several centuries has effectively extended her human horizon. The hostile relations added although in show stages to the manpower of Assam. Even the initial hostility slowly subdued itself into a remarkable spirit of toleration, understanding and accommodation which persist till today in the face of a growing lack of these fine sentiments in some other parts of the country. The Muslim settlers in Assam have identified themselves completely and whole heartedly with the sons of the soil with their attitudes and aspirations. They have contributed in their own way to the material culture of Assam and added to her refinements. Thus what Shihabuddin Talish found to be a ground for reproff has been one of the finest aspects of a cultural miscegenation in this north-eastern corner of India, for the process which this Muslim chronicler observed far in the seventeenth century never had a retarding factor. So Assam today is what the various strands of its population, gathering like a snowball, combined to make it