Chapter - 2

LIVING WITH THE WILD

“In the greater land of Brahmapootra there is a strip of land from six to twenty miles broad on each side ... These lands are therefore uninhabitable, and so long as, the population is scanty, will remain unreclaimed. Over them grows the thick jungle of long grass and reeds and here and in the forests are the homes of tigers, elephants, rhinoceros, buffaloes, bison, monkeys, bears, snakes, deer and wild pig. Partridge, wild duck, and snipe are numerous; and the river itself abounds in alligators and large fish - A.C. Newcombe.”

The province of Assam has been endowed with valuable animals like the world famous one horned rhinoceros is native to its forests. Rhinoceros inhabits in the densest parts of the forest. John M’Cosh’s ‘Topography of Assam’ mentioned that “wild elephants are plentiful, and, move in large herds and are very destructive both to the crops and to human life; entering villages in day light and plundering granaries, and stores of salt, of which latter they are very fond.” Thee jackals were numerous and they were worst night disturbers to the people of Assam province. S.R. Ward viewed that, “there were night visitors of a stronger and more dangerous kind; your cattle and horses are not safe when a leopard or tiger is prowling about your dwelling, which is not an unusual occurrence, as everyone knows who has been many months in Assam.” These animals caused massive damage and destruction of life and property. Shikarieves were appointed by the government to kill the wild animals for saving life and property. Occasionally villagers organized themselves to kill wild animals. In view of these, British

1 Newcombe, A.C., (1905), Village, Town And Jungle Life In India, Edinburgh And London: William Blackwood and Sons, p. 258
2 The East- India Gazetteer (1828), by W. Hamilton also mention about the huge spread of jungle, hills and wilderness of the province
3 M’cosh, John, (1837), Topography Of Assam, Calcutta: Bengal Military Orphan press, P. 45
4 M’cosh, John, Op.cit., p. 44
6 Ibid.
government introduced giving of rewards for killing wild animals for saving human life and cattle which caused a large number of destruction of wild animals. This chapter discusses the condition of wildlife during early the British rule in the province of Assam and also the early British policies towards wildlife. It also includes - the existence of various kinds of wildlife species, human-wildlife conflict, damages done by wild animals and the measures adopted by British government for the destruction of wild animals prior to 1874, when Assam was under the Bengal province. In the year 1874, Assam was declared a separate province under the Chief Commissioner and consequently the separate forest department in Assam province started function though it was formed originally in the year, 1864.

The province of Assam was full of wild animals. The Assamese folk tales are also full of the stories of birds and animals which signify the abundance of wild animals and birds in this province of the country. Assamese folk tales say the story of people fear over wildlife. One folk tale entitled ‘The Chief Daughter and the Snake’ describes the giving of goat or other animals to snakes so that it prevents them from inflicting some terrible punishment upon the villagers. Another story entitled ‘The Spirits of Animals’ narrates about a hunter who killed all kinds of animals. Animals played a large role in all popular imagination. Similarly, it is ardent from the Judicial and Revenue administrative report of Assam, 1835 that there were herds of elephants, rhinoceros, buffaloes, tigers, leopards, jackals and numerous kinds of monkeys. Wild elephants and rhinoceroses appear to abound in great numbers in Uiphum range tract of Lushai country. There were also large number of jungle fowl and pheasants. A large number of wild animals like elephant, tiger, leopard, sambur, hog-dear, metna, pig and monkey were found in the Lushai hills. Uiphum tract of Lushai hills has been described as,

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9 Goswami, Praphulla Datta, (1960) *Ballads And Tales Of Assam*, Department of Publication, University of Guwahati, p. 79
10 (ASA), Judicial and Revenue Administrative Report of 1835, File No. 298, Bengal, Assam Secretariat, General Department, 1836
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
“few parts of the world and certainly no country so abundantly supplied with water and shade is so destitute of game as the land we have been traversing for the past four months. Kookies destroy birds, beast and fish by every means in their power: by shooting and by every description of ingeniously devised and cunningly-concealed trap. On the Uiphum range, however where there has been no habitation for many years, game is abundant, the jungles are full of melody and resound with the strange cries and notes of birds with which the Indian traveller is quite unfamiliar.”\(^{14}\)

The water of Brahmaputra River where ever flowed made the land fertile over which grow the long grass and thick jungles. Colonel Pollock, Madras Staff Corps viewed that “Wherever this river has once flowed and receded it has left vast beds, which are now swamps, covered with tangled and high grass, many of which are quite impassable for laden elephants. In these recesses, almost impregnable, vast herds of elephants, rhinoceros and buffaloes live unmolested, save by an occasional European hunter, who, unheedful of the stories told him by the old stay-at home residents of the deadly malaria prevent there, has penetrated their wilds.”\(^{15}\) Almost every district of the province was full of wild animals. Darrang swarmed with elephants, tigers, rhinoceros, buffaloes, bison, deer of many kinds, bears, pigs, etc.\(^{16}\) Elephants, tigers, leopards, bears, rhinoceros, buffaloes, large deer, and wild pigs were the wild animals, common in Kamrup, found especially in the north of the District, which swarmed with animals of all kinds.\(^{17}\) The larger sorts of game common in Goalpara were tigers, leopards, rhinoceros, bears, buffaloes, and deer.\(^{18}\) Wild animals and large game abounded in the Garo hills, but were rarely to be seen owing to the dense forests and jungle. Wild elephants, rhinoceros, tigers, leopards wild dogs, deer of various kinds, wild hogs, buffaloes, and mithun or wild cattle were found in this district of the province.\(^{19}\) Tigers, elephants, rhinoceros, buffaloes, mithuns or wild cows, bears, leopards, wolves, jackals, foxes, wild hog, and several kinds of deer thrived in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills.\(^{20}\) The

17 Ibid., P.25
18 Ibid., P.27
19 Ibid., P.145
20 Ibid., P.214
principal wild animals found in Naga Hill District were the elephant (Elephas Indicus), rhinoceros (Rhinoceros Indicus), wild buffalo (Bubalus arni), tiger (Felis tigris), leopard (Felis pardus), black bear (Ursus ferox), gáyal or mithun (Gavæus frontalis), wild boar (Sus Indicus), Sámbhar deer (Rusa aristotelis), hog-deer (Axis pocius), civet cat (Viverra zibetha), tiger cat (Felis marmorata) and common wild cat (Felis chaus). The other mammals found in the district were the Pangolin or ant-eater (Manis pentedactyla), porcupine (Histria Bengalensis), huluk (Hylobates hoolook), lángur or Hanumán (presbytis entellus), common monkey (Inuus rhesus), bamboo rat ((rhizomys badzius), common brown rat (Mus decumanus), common striped squirrel (Sciurus palmarum), grey flying squirrel (Sciopeterus fimbriatus), and black hill squirrel (Sciurus macruroides).^{21} Wild animals found in Sylhet district were wild elephants, tigers, leopards, wild pigs, buffaloes, sambhár deer, bara singha or swamp deer, and hog deer in the jungly tracts, besides bison in the south-eastern part of the district.^{22} In Lakhimpur district Wild elephants, rhinoceros, tigers, bears, buffaloes, wild hogs, sambar deer, marsh deer, hog deer, and barking deer, were common. The mithun, or wild cow (Bos gaurus), was also found in the district.^{23} Sibsagar district was abound of the larger sort of game, elephants, rhinoceros, tigers, leopards, bears, buffaloes, and deer were also found in abundance.^{24} The existence of a large number of wild animals in the province of Assam in past can be observed in many other literatures.^{25} The imperial Gazetteer of India (1908) explains,

“The most noteworthy wild animals are elephants, rhinoceros, tigers, leopards, bears, wild dogs, wild hog, deer, buffaloes, and bison (Bosgaurus). The mithan or gayal {Bos frontalis) has been domesticated by the wild tribes, but it is doubtful whether it is now found in Assam in a wild

21 Hunter, W.W., (1879), Op. Cit. Ibid.,p.177
22 Ibid. 269
23 Ibid. P.177
24 Ibid., p.300
state. Rhinoceros are of three kinds: the large variety (unicornis), which lives in the swamps that fringe the Brahmaputra; the smaller variety (soiidaicus), which is occasionally met with in the same locality; and the small two-horned rhinoceros (siwiatrensis), which is now and again seen in the hills south of the Surma Valley, though its ordinary habitat is Sumatra, Borneo, and the Malay Peninsula. The ordinary varieties of deer found in the Province are the sambar (Cervus unicolor), the barasingha or swamp deer (Cervus duvauce/i), the hog deer (Cervus porcinus), and the barking-deer (Cervus muntjac). Goat-antelopes (Nemorhaedus bubalinus and Cemas gorat) are occasionally met with on the higher hills, but are scarce and shy."

The abundances of large number of game, birds, grass and jungle, could be observed in the province and the hunting was occasionally practiced. The large number of wild animals seldom caused trouble to human life and property. However, this conflict between human and animal was not in large scale as it could be seen during British period. Vernacular source like ‘Buranjies’ does not mention about the human-wildlife conflict other than the capturing of wild elephants for administrative purpose. But wild animals were used for making of ‘gati’ (a thick skin-made jacket) and shields with buffalo, rhinoceros, and deer skins. The killing of wild animals for their flesh and ivory was common in medieval Assam. Yogini Tantra speaks of animals like buffaloes, rhinoceros, musk-deer, hair, wild birds, deer, goat, sheep, tortoise, pig, wild fowl and fishes as suitable items of diet even for the goddesses. Occasional conflict between human and wildlife could not be ignored but there was no serious depredation by wild animals or the killing of wild animals in large numbers during medieval period. The Medieval rulers encouraged to clear the jungles for the extension of cultivation but because of heavy rain fall in the area it used to be filled with heavy jungles. The historical evidences showed that the Ahom kings encouraged the cultivators to clear

26 The Imperial Gazetteer of India,(1908) Published under the Authority of His Majesty Secretary of State for India in Council, Oxford: Clarendon Press,P.20
27 ‘Buranjies’ are a class of historical chronicles, written initially in the Ahom and afterwards in western Assamese dialect.
28 Gogoi, Lila, (1986), The Buranjis, Historical Literature Of Assam, New Delhi: Omsons publication, , p. 215
jungle for seasonal and temporary crops. The peasants were at liberty to clear off the jungles and brought them under cultivation. This way they could keep their surrounding clear and aloof from the attacks of the wild animals.

In the initial years, Assam being a peripheral area under Bengal presidency was not given prime importance that led to the administrative negligence of the area. Even the British government charge revenue for the clearance of jungle which was much needed for the survival of life as the province was full of jungles and wild animals could risk their life. The peasants were not at freedom even to clear 100 yards of jungle from their house. The clearance of jungle in the province was initiated only after the British officials realized the importance of commercial value of tea. At least till 1859 the peasants were not free to clear the jungles, when officials realised the need of clearing jungles (see page no. 6). The reason for this might be the revenue collected by the government for the clearance of jungle. Till Assam was administered under the Bengal presidency it was mostly ignored and revenue was collected even for the clearance of jungle. Though it sounds astonishing but it might be the exploitative nature of the British government that they collected revenue even for the clearance of jungle. The absence of the clearance of jungle caused the increase of the jungle (home of wild animals), which brought the wild animals and people in direct contact. The wild animals started committing serious depredations on the crops, more particularly the elephants, which often demolish granaries in the open day to get the grain and salt. Destruction of crops and cattles by wild animals made the human settlement so difficult that many villages were abounded. The ravages by wild animals made the life very difficult.

2.1 Menace of Wildlife

The life of human being and cattle was not secured in the province due to the damage caused by wildlife. The lives and property of the people in many villages in this province were uninhibited because of the depredation by the ferocious wild animals. Wild elephants frequently damaged crops. In the winter of 1866-67, one village was abandoned as a consequence of the destruction caused by wild animals in the Kamrup

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30 Ibid. pp. 47, 36
31 (ASA), Judicial And Revenue Administrative Report Of 1835, File No. 298, Bengal, Assam Secretariat, General Department, 1836
In Naga Hills a village was deserted by its inhabitants on account of the depredation by the ferocious tigers. Captain Rogers, Bengal Staff cops, describe that, “No thefts or murders in India can exceed the horrors and misery caused by the wild animals, and no picture or language can give even a faint idea of the suffering of their victims. These poor creatures, living as they do for the most part in district seldom or ever visited by any European, except an occasional sportsman, are obliged to bear their losses or sufferings with little or no chance of the same being brought to the notice of the government, whose subjects they are.” British official feared for the safety of their lives. Missionary records also reveal the depredation caused by wild animals. It was viewed that Jaipur and Sadiya were abandoned by its inhabitants to the tigers and jackals. Wild animals caused havoc in most of the part of the province. They killed a large number of people every year. Statistical records reveal the depredation caused by wild animals.

Table 2.1 Number of people killed by wild animals during 1833 and 1834

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>By wild elephants</th>
<th>By wild buffaloes</th>
<th>By tigers</th>
<th>By wild hogs</th>
<th>By alligators</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1833</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


32 Hunter, W.W., (1879), *op.cit.*, Vol 1 P.25
33 (ASA), Judicial and Revenue Administrative Report Of 1835, File No. 298, Bengal, Assam Secretariat, General Department, 1836
34 (NAI), Home Public-A, February, 1870, file no.31-48
35 Gammell, W., (1850), *History Of American Baptist Missions In Asia, Africa, Europe And North America Under The Care Of The American Baptist Missionary Union*, Boston: Gould, Kendall And Lincoln
## Table 2.2 Number of person killed by wild animals from 1858-63

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>No. of persons killed by</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tiger</td>
<td>Leopard</td>
<td>bear</td>
<td>wolves</td>
<td>Other animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwalparah</td>
<td>(a) 74</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(b)42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamroop</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>.........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durrung</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(a)71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seesbagar</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(a)21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lukimpore</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>(a) 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cossyah and jyteah hills</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nowgong</td>
<td>336</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(a)15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(b)4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylhet</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(a)21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>821</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NAI, Home, Public-A, February, 1870, File No. 31-48

## Table 2.3 Number of people killed by wild animals from 1866-69

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Loss of human life from several kinds of wild animals</th>
<th>Loss of cattle or crops from the same cause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In 1866-67</td>
<td>In 1867-68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamrup</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durrung</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nowgong</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seesbagar</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luckimpore</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khasi and jyteah hills</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naga hills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylhet</td>
<td>1121</td>
<td>1074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwalparah</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1413</td>
<td>1363</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remarks: *represents the number killed during three years Source: NAI, Home, Public-A, September, 1871, File No. 43-72
Table 2.4 Number of people killed by snakebite during 1866-69

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>1866-67</th>
<th>1867-68</th>
<th>1868-69</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kamroop</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durrung</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nowgong</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seersagar</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luckimpore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khasi and Jynteah hills</td>
<td>No report received</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naga Hills</td>
<td>No report received</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylhet</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gavalpara</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NAI, Home, Public-A, 1871, September, File No. 43-72

A large number of people were killed during the early British rule in the province. From 1858-63 a total of 1,120 people were reported to have been killed in various districts of Assam. In 1866 a total of 1,413, in 1867 a total of 1,363 and 1869 a total of 1,577 people were reported to have been killed by wild animals. By snake bite 324 people were reported to have been killed during 1866-1869. The reports for the cattle killed by wild animals for all the districts of Assam are not available except Sylhet where 2,805 cattle were reported to have been killed during 1866-1869. Between 1869-70, 277 people and in 1870-71, 239 people were reported to have been killed by wild animals.\(^{36}\) In Kamroop 135 people, 16 in Durrung, 49 in Nowgoan, 3 in Sibsagar, 9 in Luckimpore, 9 in Khasi & Jynteah hills, 18 in Naga Hills were killed in 1870-71.\(^{37}\) Among deaths reported by snake bite 62 people were killed in 1869-70 and 72 people in 1870-71.\(^{38}\)

Tiger proved more dangerous animals which led to the killing of maximum number of people during early British rule. Followed by Buffaloes which reported to have killed 124 people from 1858-63. Leopard, bears, wild boars proved equally dangerous for life and property. Elephant, rhinoceros, jackal also occasionally killed people. The wild animals were also dangerous for livestock. Though, reports for all the districts of the province are not available. The Sylhet district reported to have been killed a good number of livestock every year as shown in the table 2.3. However, many deaths from wild animals and snakes were not reported to police and the return of wild animals killed does not include the large animals that were unquestionably annually destroyed

\(^{36}\) (ASA), Judicial And Revenue Administrative Report of 1835, File No. 298, Bengal, Assam Secretariat, General Department, 1836
\(^{37}\) Ibid.
\(^{38}\) Ibid.
by sportsman and those persons who did not claim authorized rewards. On the other hand sudden deaths from natural causes and probably even cases of homicide and suicide were frequently reported as deaths from snake bite. The Deputy Commissioner of Naga Hills viewed that the number of causalities by wild beasts reported by police during 1835 falls far short of the actual number killed by them. A large number of losses of life from venomous snakes were also observed. Even it could be observed that the causalities were more by snake-bite than the wild animals.

The reason for this increased conflict between human and wildlife was that during early days of British in the province British did not give prime importance to this land even jungle were not cleared off which led to the increased conflict between human and wild animals. Even it was not safe for the villagers to walk for 100 yards from home. Tigers were numerous in this province. The thick jungle afforded them plenty of cover; and, as sportsmen were comparatively few, they become in some parts more aggressive than usual. Wild animals made the existence of life and property an utter impossibility. Jungles were so heavy that it was almost impossible to track any wild animal. The lack of clearing jungles caused increase of wild animals in the jungles. Elephant mahals when disposed by auction the ryots were not allowed to cut or burn the jungles. It was also called by the government an inducement for the royts to keep the jungle for thatching their huts etc. Therefore they were deterred from clearing so much land as they otherwise would. Lieutenant J. Lamb, District collector, Durrung wrote to J. Jenkins, commissioner of revenue Assam,

“The asamese as a body prefer money to comforts and in some instances to the necessities of life will you therefore do me the favor of submitting the matter for the further consideration of the Board as unless the ryotts are allowed to cut the jungles I fear the country will soon become so overrun with tigers, bears etc that it will be dangerous to travel on foot. It was bad enough before but now it is not without risk that a man can go 100 yards out of the station after night fall, and what must be where only 2 or 3 dozen people live is easily conceived. I was obliged to go out with several elephants a few days ago to drive away a tiger that had killed some cows

39 (NAI), Home, Public-A, September, 1871, File No.43-72
40 (ASA), Judicial and Revenue Administrative Report of 1835, File No. 298, Bengal, Assam Secretariat, General Department, 1836
41 A.C.Newcombe, (1905), op.cit. P.282
close to indeed I may almost say in the station but the jungle is so heavy that it is out of the question to kill them. I have notice the dense grass jungle also close up to the villages and when I asked why they did not cut it down and burn it the reply was that they would have to pay. It was useless may having it set on fire here and there as the villages are in such matter so easily imposed upon that a word from the farmer of the mehal will lead them to imagine that they are not at liberty to burn it as I do, and even if each village was allowed to clear away 200 or 300 yards all...the farmer will have to pay the revenue out of his own pocket and by burning before the jungle is cut it is likely that the houses would take fire too.”

He therefore requested the government to withdraw the order of non-clearance of the jungle. The Superintendent of Cachar district felt the same and called the need for clearing the jungle and calling of the *shikaries* for the killing of tigers in the district. He wrote to the Commissioner of Dacca Division in the year 1836, as follows:

“The ravages committed by tigers in this Zillah this year owing to the vast increase of jungles have been most destructive. The loss of live-stock has been immense and the destruction of human life most frightful. The reports of the Daroghas return sometimes in a week 14 &15 and I have reason to believe that many deaths occur in the more remote parts of the district which are not reported by the villages. At the Ranes house about 1½ coss from this where there is a guard, a tiger prowling about the vicinity of the bazar and one, a few mornings ago, came almost into my compound. A man was lately killed close to the large pucka bridge. The inhabitants of several villages have deserted them.” I have issued orders to the Darogahs to assemble the people and clear the jungle as much as possible but this can be partially done as the people are afraid to enter the jungle. If you would prevail on the shikaries in your neighborhood to come here, they would, in

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42 (ASA), Assam Commissioner Papers, File No. 446, Correspondence Regarding Goorkhate Mehals From 10th March, 1858 To Jan,1865. Letter From Lieutenant J.Lamb, Collector Of Zillah, Durrung To Coll. J.Jekins, Commissioner Of Revenue Assam, Dated Camp Lahar Barree, 20th January, 1859
addition to the reward per head from government, receive every attention from the inhabitants and be supported by them.”

The need of clearance of jungle was realised by the Government for saving the life and property of the people. In 1847 there were fourteen people reported by the police to have been killed tigers in the district of Cachar. Even the increase of rewards for killing tigers to Rs. 7/- for everyone, old or young tigers in 1848 could not work as there was lack of regular shikaries. The Superintendent of Cachar viewed that, “I consider it very doubtful if an increase to the reward would ensure the destruction of a greater number of these animals. For this reason amongst the inhabitants there are no regular shikaries, only occasionally do they kill one, and that more for sport than for the reward. They do not understand how to use or set the bow and arrow. It is only during the cold weather that one and sometimes two regular shikaries came to cachar, I believe from Mymensing for the purpose of killing tigers and getting the reward. After killing a few they return to their homes. In January last two of them brought in eight tigers seven large and one small, for which they received 38 rupees.”

He further argued in favour of regular shikaries and said that, “the only way to ensure the destruction of these animals would be to entertain regular shikaries if to be had, giving them regular pay and a reward besides for every tiger they killed.”

G. Verner, the Superintendent of Cachar wrote to the magistrate of Tipperah (Tripura) about the increase of rewards and so as to induce the shikarées from Tipperah (Tripura) and Mymensing to kill the tiger of Cachar.

However, in case of snakes the offering of rewards for its destruction did not answer the real object in view while it entails an enormous expenditure on government. A few years ago the plan of granting such rewards was tried in the districts of the Burdwan division (under Bengal presidency) and though the reward was only 2 annas for each poisonous snake the expenditure in a short time an account of rewards amount to 30,000. The fact that the people were ready enough to kill snakes and that they even brought them from distant jungles for the sake of the reward, satisfied the government that the inhabitants of villages and town would for their own sakes destroy a snake

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44 Ibid. p.152,Letter No. 121
45 Ibid., P.148
46 Ibid.
when they meet it, and as nothing was to be gained by killing those that infested jungles the reward were discontinued and have not since been resumed.\textsuperscript{48}

\subsection*{2.2 Killing of Wildlife}

The killing of wild animals prior to British rule by local inhabitants was accidental and not intentional. The elite class used to hunt wild animals as it was supposed to up-hold once social standing fame required a more ferocious animal to be hunted. But the practice of hunting was occasionally and not a regular process. During the British rule the concept of hunting changed, they started killing wild animals for game and trophies, which later led to trade in wildlife. The increase of population because of the migrated labourer in the province especially for tea plantation caused the clearance of jungle to extend the agricultural land so as to meet the need of food of the increased population. Apart from this the need of bringing more and more waste land under tea cultivation also led to the clearance of jungle. It cannot be rejected that one of the reason for the initiative at clearance of jungle and the killing of wild animals was saving life and property but it would be wrong to say that it was the only reason. The introduction of tea plantation was the main concern of the British government. The presence of wildlife was a hurdle in this work. That caused the British government to adopt various policies for the destruction of wild animals during the British regime. Government started the system of reward giving and appointment regular shikariees etc. Mahesh Rangarajan argued that the administrative policies played a major role in the extermination of wildlife in British India.\textsuperscript{49} Rewards were given for the destruction of wild animals in various district of the province.\textsuperscript{50} Some attempts were also made to appoint shikariees but it was not successful. In the lack of shikariees the people had to suffer ravages of wild animals.

The most accepted system adopted for the destruction of wild animals was the giving of rewards. Good sums was given as rewards for the destruction of wild animals varying in amount depending on the species of animals to be destroyed and its prevalence or destructiveness in any particular part of the province. Considerable sums were paid monthly by the district commissioners for the destruction of wild beasts and professional huntsmen were engaged in the pursuit were exerting themselves in an

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{48} (NAI), Home, Public-A, September, 1871, File No. 43-72
\bibitem{49} Rangarajan ,M., (1998) \textit{The Role Of Administration: Fresh Evidence On The Cheetah (Acinonyx Jubatus) In India}, NMML, New Delhi, , P. 43
\bibitem{50} Hunter, W.W., (1879), \textit{op.cit.}
\end{thebibliography}
unwanted degree and it is hoped with good effects like in Kamroop (Kamrup). The District Commissioner of Nowgaon, believed that the grant of an increased rate of rewards in the district had the effects of inducing the people to enter more systematically and generally into the work of the extermination of wild animals.

Special rewards were also occasionally given by the government for the destruction of some particular man eating tiger or a notorious dangerous elephant. Great mischieves were committed by wild boars in Gowhatty (Guwahati) town and to get away of this problem a reward of Rs. 10 was sanctioned by the government for the destruction of wild boar. Tigers were numerous in Jynteah Hills. The Assistant Commissioner in charge of Jayatia Hills reported that 14 human beings had been killed by them. Among the victims was a Haviladar of the 5th Native Infantry, who was on his way to join the Detachment at Jowai. He further observed that, “In the neighbourhood of Cheera Poonjee, and in Cheera Poonjee itself tigers have also been doing considerable damage, four or five people having been killed by them within the last twelve months, besides a good number of cattle.” The officiating Deputy Commissioner of the Cossyah and Jynteah Hills was ask to suggest measures for lessening the number of tigers. He suggested that the reward for killing of tigers should be increased, so as to induce people to engage actively in their destruction. The propose reward was Rs. 25 instead of rupees 5, the existing rate. Captain Hopkinons, Agent to the Governor General of North-East Frontier recommended a special measure for the destruction of wild animals in Cossyah and Jynteah hills, according to him. “The reward for tiger cubs and full-grown leopards now fixed at Rupees 2-8 per head should also be increased proportionately, and be equal to half the reward given for tigers.” The lieutenant-governor sanctioned the increase of the rewards killing tiger in the Cossyah and the Jynteah Hills from Rupees 5 to rupees 20 for each tiger and also the reward for killing tiger cubs and leopards in these hills was increased from 2-8 to rupees 10 each.

51 (ASA), Judicial And Revenue Administrative Report of 1835, File No. 298, Bengal, Assam Secretariat, General Department, 1836
52 Ibid.
53 (NAI), Home, Public, A, September, 1871, File No. 43-72, Letter From The Junior Secretary, To The Govt. of Bengal to the Secretary to the Government of India
54 (WBSA), Proceeding of The Hon’ble The Lieutenant Governor of Bengal During July 1861, Judicial Department, Proc. No. 308 S 309, Dated 1861 19th July, P. 226-227
55 (NAI), Home, Public-A, 5th February, 1870, File No, 31-48
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
some cases the grant of rewards for the destruction of wild animals were stopped like in Naga Hills in 1870 but in the same year itself the deputy commissioner of the district felt the need of reintroduced the practice of granting the rewards. He believed that the system of reward would help to get the exact number of people killed by wild beast. The system of reward giving became one of the important issues among local officials to exterminate the wild animals. Captain Roger, Bengal staff Corps, proposed an unconventional scheme for the destruction of wild life. He introduced a gun especially for killing wild animals. Captain Rogers, Bengal staff Corps, expressed to His Excellency the Viceroy that, “Rewards cannot and will not reduce the number of wild beasts, but a regular system, such as I propose, must eventually exterminate them, or render their power of doing injury nil, as on their first appearance they find death on their road, and the missile that kills them has no power of injuring persons or property, if used with the care that the most simple-minded shikaree can exercise.” He argued that the even if a shikari knew about a tiger and the means of killing him, he did not kill the tiger and allowed the tiger to continue his deeds of blood undisturbed. This was because he looked forward to a sahib coming and shoot it. In this case he not only got higher pecuniary reward but also ammunition. Rogers also argued that the men complained of the trouble in obtaining rewards. Native landholders, did not like wild beasts being killed on their estates, because they imagine it might gave them a chance (if these jungles contained tigers) of making friends with some influential English gentlemen. Especially when the English gentlemen behave in most amiable temper with the natives especially when after hunting wild beast the English gentlemen stand over the skin or body of a tiger he killed, and that gave him good sport. Rogers believed that the absence of the destruction of tigers allowed a tiger extra draught of human blood as well as to feed on cattle. He therefore recommended the killing of wild animals to save life and property.

He proposed a weapon for this purpose. He suggested the use of old muskets which had merely a nominal value as iron, and were constantly being broken up and sold as such. These would remain the property of the state, and could at any time be called in. A pecuniary amount would be charged when the gun while issuing a gun. The only

60 (ASA), Government of Bengal, paper-3, File No: 205/363, Annual administrative report of Assam for 1870-71, and Naga Hills report for that year, 1871
61 (NAI), Home public-A, February, 1870, file no.31-48
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
expense in this gun was an adjustment attached to the trigger that would not exceed four annas per musket. There were three strings attached to the trigger adjustment. Describing his gun Captain Rogers said that, “The one marked A was the fatal one, and, running along the barrel, crosses the path these animals frequent, and is set at the height of the shoulder of the beast it is desired should be killed; and that string represents the line of fire. The bullet, therefore, invariably enters the most fatal part.”

Wild beasts do not wander, as animals of the deer tribe do, all over the jungle, but they invariably travel by the paths and roads through the jungle when going for food or water, these animals mostly used same paths and roads. The Shikaries were mostly aware of their haunts and walks in the district and that they could easily determine where to set the gun, to ensure the animal’s destruction.

To prevent the destruction of animals that should not be destroyed, there were two other strings attached to the triggers, and these (marked BB) were laid at such a height from the ground as to allow a tiger or the other animal it wished to kill to pass underneath without touching. Cattle or person coming in contact with these strings cause the gun to go off, and its fire was perfectly harmless. He further said that on an animal being killed, the man must report it to the nearest Police Station, where he would receive the authorised reward, and deposit the skin. If the skin was not found to be perfect, the reward could be withheld until the reason for the same was investigated. In the event of any people or cattle being killed or injured, the headman of the village in which the same occurred was supposed to report the same (whether they belong to his village or not) at the nearest Police Station, and, in the case of cattle its value was to be stated. They were also supposed to mention by what class of animals the injury was committed, and the date, and the above was to be communicated in the form sanctioned to the District Superintendent of Police, who, if convinced of its truth, would forward it on as before to the officer superintending the destruction of wild animals.

But he did not fully condemn the reward system as he said, “Eight Rupees could be given as a reward, but never more, except under special circumstances having no reference to the damage the tiger is doing, but to any extra trouble or injury the

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64 (NAI), Home public-A, February, 1870, file no.31-48
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
*shikaree* has sustained in killing it; for instance, if he has tied up cattle to entice the animals to pass the line of the fatal chord, and the beast kills it, I would recommend that he receive compensation in addition to the eight Rupees, which is merely a remuneration for his time and trouble.69

Fig.2.1. The diagram shows the proposed system of placing the gun and also the manner in which wild animals could be destroy.

Source: Reproduce from Proceedings of the government of Bengal, Judicial department, February, 1870, proceeding no. 179-180, (WBSA)

69 (NAI), Home public-A, February, 1870, file no.31-48.
But the plan of Captain Roger was highly condemned. “None of the local governments suggest any specific measures for adoption beyond the system of rewards now in force; and almost all subordinate officers whom they have consulted agree in condemning Captain Rogers’ mechanism as unsuited to the territory under their jurisdiction, or as dangerous and full of risk to human beings and domestic animals.” The Chief Commissioner of the Central provinces disapproving Captain Rogers’ plan said, “If the rewards now paid by government are high, then many persons will be induced to adopt hunting as a profession. Many animals will be killed; and the more killed, the fewer will remain, and these fewer will become more difficult to find; the number of animals killed will decrease, and with it naturally the expenditure of government. The high reward will thus result in the more speedy extirpation of these animals. But for government to take upon itself the task of ridding the country of noxious animals, and employ a body of men for this purpose, forbidding other men to follow a hunter’s calling, would be, in the Chief Commissioner’s opinion, a mistaken measure.” Most of the local government consider that the system of offering rewards to be practically the best and recommended no change in this respect. It was agreed that until the jungles were cleared wild beasts would always inhabit them and secondly, nothing was better than a system of rewards. Reward giving was mostly accepted method for the destruction of wildlife. Mahesh Rangarajan argued that the extent of killing for rewards was high. He viewed that the bounty hunting added to the declining population of cheetah in India by 1900. As the government fixed a certain amount of rupees for the destruction of wild animals, people of certain castes adopted the profession of killing of wild animals for their livelihood. They generally entered the jungles at the commencement of cold weather, in parties of 12 or 16. They mostly used to kill tigers and used poisoned arrows to kill them. The number of tiger killed in this manner was so great that the amount of rewards absorbs a great portion of the revenue. But the plan of employing shikariees though tried occasionally but without any real success. Thus, reward giving was the main reason for the destruction of wildlife. Even in some cases...

70 (NAI), Home, Public-A, September, 1871, file no. 43-72
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
73 (NAI), Home, Public-A, February, 1870, file no. 31-48
75 Mcosh, John, (1837) op.cit.,pp. 46,47
marksmen were selected by police, and being furnished with arms and ammunition were encouraged to shoot wild animals and were allowed half the reward in each case, but that too didn’t get success.\textsuperscript{76} Sometime large hunting parties were also organized to destroy particular wild animals to those places where the loss of life and property from wild animals was great.\textsuperscript{77} These hunting parties were organized under the guidance of local officers at a small expense to government. This besides helping to kill off wild beasts, gave people courage and incites them to organize similar hunts on their own account and teach them to make a stand against a danger and destroying their substance and their life as result of wild animals.\textsuperscript{78}

However, in spite of the provision for reward the absent of regular \textit{shikaries} could be noticed, during 1847 only nine tigers brought in for the government reward. For six they being full grown the reward for each was Rs.5/-, two not full grown Rs. 4/- each, and for one small one Rs.3/-. Again the scale of rewards varies from time to time and district wise it depended on the atrocities by the wild animals. In 1848 scale of rewards for elephants was Rs. 10/-, for rhinoceros, tigers and leopard was 5 annas, for bear and buffalos 2.8 annas.\textsuperscript{79} In Nowgaon Rs. 5/- was rewarded for the killing of rhinoceros.\textsuperscript{80} Usually the amount of Rs. 5/- was given for a tiger, Rs.2.8 annas for leopard and bear and Rs. 2/- for Hyenas. These rates of rewards were given for destruction of wild animals in all the divisions of Bengal including Assam during the period of 1850.\textsuperscript{81} The special rewards were also sanctioned in 1850, especially for the destruction of elephants, rhinoceros, buffalo which was at the rate of 10/- annas, Rs.5/- and Rs.2/- and 8/- annas respectively in Assam division and in Cachar Rs. 7/- was sanctioned for a tiger.\textsuperscript{82} The highest amount paid as reward for the destruction of tiger under the Bengal presidency was Rs. 100/- per head.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{76} (NAI), Home, Public-A, Sept.1871, Nos. 43-72
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{78} (NAI), Home Public-A, September, 1871, File Nos.43-72
\textsuperscript{79} (ASA), 1848, Bengal Government Papers, File No.340, Scale Of Rewards For The Destruction Of Wild Animals.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{81} (WBSA), Proceedings Of The Honourable The Lieutenant Governor Of Bengal During February 1870, Judicial Department, Proc. No. 179-180
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{83} (WBSA), Revenue Department, B., Proceedings Of The Government Of Bengal For 29\textsuperscript{th} Oct 1863, Proc. No. B. 361-62
Table 2.5 The following table shows the scale of rewards sanctioned for the destruction of wild animals during 1866

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As. P</td>
<td>As. P</td>
<td>As. P</td>
<td>As. P</td>
<td>As. P</td>
<td>As. P</td>
<td>As. P</td>
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<td>5 0 0</td>
<td>2 8 0</td>
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<td>2 0 0</td>
<td>10 0 0</td>
<td>5 0 0</td>
<td>2 8 0</td>
<td>0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td>7 0 0</td>
<td>2 8 0</td>
<td>2 8 0</td>
<td>2 0 0</td>
<td>0 0 0</td>
<td>0 0 0</td>
<td>0 0 0</td>
<td>0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nowgong &amp; Kamroop districts</td>
<td>15 0 0</td>
<td>2 8 0</td>
<td>2 8 0</td>
<td>2 0 0</td>
<td>0 0 0</td>
<td>0 0 0</td>
<td>0 0 0</td>
<td>0 0 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (NAI), Home, Public-A, September, 1871 File No. 43-72

The wild animals in Darrang used to inhabit in the large wastes of reed and grass jungle, and occasionally caused considerable harm to human life and crop.84 An amount of Rs 416, 7 annas and 8 paisa was paid by the government from 1858-63 as reward for the destruction of wild animals.85 The yearly cost of keeping down the wild beasts amount to about £50 in 1870, and to £172 in 1875. This increase was because of the higher rates of rewards now paid for the destruction of tigers and leopards. In 1870, the rewards paid for killing these animals were Rs. 5(10S.) and Rs. 2.8.0. (5S.) respectively: but in 1873 the rewards were increased to Rs. 25 (£2, 10S, od.) for a tiger, and Rs 5 (10S) for a leopard.86 A considerable amount of £15, 6S. od. in 1866-67, £18, 4S. od. in 1867-68 and £ 9, 5S. od. in 1868-69 was expend in the district of Nowgaon by the government to keep down the tigers and leopard, as these were the main destructive wild animals in the district.87 The reward for killing a tiger which was only Rs.5 per head but it was felt necessary to increase it and subsequently it was increased to Rs.25 in the district.88 Similar rewards were paid for the destruction of wild animals in the Sibsagar district which amounted to 18.4 pounds in 1859 and 4 pounds in 1869.89 A small amount of 10 shillings was paid as reward for snake killing in the Lakhimpur district. This was something not at all done in the other districts of Assam.90 No rewards were paid to kill snakes in any of the province under Bengal before 1874 except Sylhet.91 Thus, paying of rewards for the decreasing of wild animals was mostly accepted method for the destruction of wildlife in Assam as

87 Ibid, P. 176
88 Ibid
89 Ibid., P 232
90 Ibid., pp 300-301
91 (WBSA), Judicial Dept., September, 1873, Proceeding No. 47 -53
it has also been found that almost in all the districts of Assam, rewards were given for killing of wild animals. As a result of various attempts made for the destruction of wildlife a good number of wildlife has been destroyed. The following statistics reveals the number of wild animals killed before 1874.

Table No. 2. 6 Number of wild animals destroyed in Assam from 1858-63

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>No. of animals killed</th>
<th>Amount paid as rewards</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tiger</td>
<td>Leopard</td>
<td>Bear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gowalpara</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamroop</td>
<td>(a) 3,402</td>
<td>(b)1424</td>
<td>(c) 345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durrung</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seebsagar</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lukimpore</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cossyah and jynteah hills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nowgong</td>
<td>(b)133</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(c)12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td>(a)97</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylhet</td>
<td>(b)58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4630</td>
<td>1775</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NAI Home, Public, A, February, 1870, 31-48
Table 2.7. Number of wild animals killed and the reward paid for their destruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of various animals Killed</th>
<th>Cost to government for the destruction of wild animals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In 1866-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rs. As. P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamrup</td>
<td>1289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durrung</td>
<td>93</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nowgong</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>Seebagor</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luckimpore</td>
<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khasi and Jynteah hills</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naga hills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cachar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sylhet</td>
<td>2891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govalpara</td>
<td>425*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remarks: (a). The returns are for 1867-68 and 1869 source: NAI, Home, Public, A, September, 1871, File No. 43-72

From the statistics it can be seen that 8,682 wild animals were killed from 1858-63. Out of which 4,630 tigers, 1,775 leopard 510 bears and 1,767 other animals like wild buffaloes, rhinoceros, elephants etc. (see table 1.6.) Other than these 9,854 wild animals were reported to have been killed from 1866-1869 for which an amount of Rs. 47925 was given as reward by government. (see table 1.7). Tigers were killed in large number as it was a more ferocious animal and caused more number of deaths of people. Other animals like leopard, bear, wild buffaloes were killed in large number as shown in the table.

2.3 Income from Wild Animals

Initially, wild animals were not a source of generating income for the British exchequer except elephants before 1874. Wild animals of Assam did not contribute towards the revenue, or rather to the wealth of the province excepts the trade of ivory in a limited sense in the Lakhimpur district where elephant catching also contributed a nominal amount. In fact elephant were always been a source of revenue for the government of Assam even in the medieval period. The making and use of ivory boxes, fans of ivory, ivory articles were common in Assam. King Rudra Singh presented mats, fans, and chessmen of ivory to the king of Delhi. Elephant catching expedition under kheddah were conducted since the early years of the Company’s rule. In fact, government had

92 Hunter, W.W. (1879) *op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.301
monopoly over elephant catching. There were mainly two kinds of licenses that were formally granted. One was an annual lease of a particular tract of the country. It also gave the permit holder the exclusive right to catch elephants in any manner, he might choose.\footnote{94} The amount paid by such license holder as fee varied time to time. In 1869 the revenue derived from such licenses was 601 pounds and 10 shillings (approximately rupees 6,010).\footnote{95} The other type of license was granted to capture elephants in all unreserved forest upon payment of an annual royalty of 2 pounds or twenty rupees.\footnote{96} However, revenue derived from elephant catching was not considered significant.\footnote{97}

One of the earliest accounts John M’cosh’s \textit{Topography of Assam}, (1937), described the practices of trade in wildlife during early British rule. A large number of elephants were caught and transported annually to various countries. Every year around 700-1,000 elephants were exported annually from Assam and a duty of Rs. 10 was levied at Goalpara on each elephant exported.\footnote{98} The crude practice of Singphos to kill elephants for its ivory who used to kill then by poisoned arrows fired from a musket, and after striking out their teeth, used to leave the carcasses to be devoured by beasts of prey.\footnote{99}

Every year Merchants from Bengal made attempts to visit the Province with koonkees to catch wild animals and were generally very successful. Out of the 600-700 elephants caught in Assam in 1850, around 500 were exported, where as in 1851 about 900 were caught (out of which). Newly caught elephants were often purchased, if under 5 feet in height, for Rs.100/- but the merchants seldom dispose the finer ones in the province as they realized Rs.800 to Rs. 1,00 each for them in Bengal or ‘Hindustan’, if they succeeded in keeping them alive for 2 or 3 years.\footnote{100} Both ivory and rhinoceros horn were exported from Assam. Elephant tusk and buffalo horns and hides were also exported from Sylhet district.\footnote{101} They were not much sought for unless by some caste for eating. The old Rhinoceros were frequently killed for their skin and horn. The skin

\addcontentsline{toc}{chapter}{References}

\footnote{94}{Goswami, S.D., (1987) \textit{Aspects Of Revenue Administration In Assam}, New Delhi: Mittal Publication, P.115}
\footnote{96}{Ibid.}
\footnote{97}{Handique, R., (2004), \textit{British Forest Policy In Assam}, , New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, P. 49}
\footnote{98}{\textit{op. cit.} P. 44}
\footnote{99}{Ibid.P. 42, \textit{Singphos} were a tribe of Assam whose original settlements were on the great eastern branches of Irrawady River.}
was valuable as the best shields in the country were made from it.\textsuperscript{102} Rhinoceros horn were valuable because “Great sanctity is attached to the horn; so much so that the general belief is that there is no more certain way of ensuring a place in the celestial regions than to be gored to death by the horn of the rhinoceros.”\textsuperscript{103} Trade in wildlife, thus could be seen during early British, however, trade in wildlife skin was not found. There are evidences were the tiger skin was cut to pieces or destroyed after reward was given for a particular tiger skin\textsuperscript{104}, so that the same skin might not be used for the reward for a second time.

Though all skins of animals and their claws for which a reward was paid become the property of government and no person should have the option of purchasing the same but no trade in wild beast’s skins was carried on in Assam before 1874\textsuperscript{105} The British government has fixed certain amount to be paid for the sale of the Skin of wild animals. The amount was for tiger, Chita. Panther and leopard was Rs. 10/- each, for bear Rs.2/- and for wolf or hyena Rs. 1/- each.\textsuperscript{106} On the other hand the government had to spend considerable amount to keep down wild animals as it was evident that the British spend more than 67.18 pounds in 1865; 401.16 pounds in 1867; 110.18 pounds in 1870; 228.10 pounds in 1871; 227.10 pounds in 1872; 182.15 pounds in 1873 and 362.10 pounds in 1874.\textsuperscript{107} Amount spent as reward was Rs. 28443, 4 annas, 3 paisa from 1858-63.\textsuperscript{108} In 1866-67, 1867-68, 1868-69 an amount of Rs. 16713, Rs.14148 and 2 annas, Rs. 17064 respectively was rewarded.\textsuperscript{109} The number of wild animals killed was so great that, the amount of rewards absorbs a great portion of the revenue. This was only for those animals killed by shikariees with bows and arrows.\textsuperscript{110} A good sum was spend to keep down the number of wild animals in the province.

2.4 Conservation of forest vis-à-vis wildlife

The history of forest administration and conservancy in Assam was an outcome of the forest administration and conservation efforts by the British government in India. Though Assam has certain regional peculiarities and variations however it shares a

\textsuperscript{102} Mcosh, John. (1837), \textit{Op.Cit.} P. 45
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid
\textsuperscript{104} \textit{Cahar District Record, op. cit.,} Vol. 1, No. 23, p. 97
\textsuperscript{105} Hunter, W.W. (1879), \textit{op. cit.} Vol.1, P.301
\textsuperscript{106} (NAI), Home, Public-A, 1870, August, Nos. 71-73
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid. The Value Of One Pound Was Equal To About Ten Rupees At That Time.
\textsuperscript{108} (NAI), Home Public-A, February, 1870,File Nos. 31-48
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{110} Mcosh, John, \textit{op. cit.} 47
common forest policy evolved by the British government in India. The forest policy of the British government was the development and amplification of imperial control of various resources. The most tangible outcome of colonialism was its global control of resources.\textsuperscript{111}

Though the forest products were used since their establishment of power in India but no significant attempts were made to conserve and protect them, with the exception of those in Punjab. The term ‘virgin’ was used by the British and by many other imperial writers to describe the forest of India as well many other colonies. The exploitive nature of the British official can be observed in the use of this terminology as has been seen that the British government exploited those species of flora which had commercial value. In case of fauna same thing can be said as British government took early initiative for the protection of elephant which was used for administrative purpose. Forest conservancy in Bengal as well as in Assam got the scant attention of the British government just prior to 1863.\textsuperscript{112} In 1862 Mr. D.Brandis visited a portion of Bengal forest and made a note on the future of forest of this region. On 1\textsuperscript{st} of April, 1864 he was appointed as the first Inspector-general of Forest to the government of India. He proposed three significant questions- (1) how forest products could be used in most advantageous manner? (2) What measures could be adopted for the preservation of forest? (3) what could be done for the extension and consolidation of the forestry?\textsuperscript{113} But he did not proposed any measures for the protection of wildlife. A.C.Sinha agrees that there was no distinct policy during the early British rule in North-east Himalayan foothills of which Assam was also a part. In his own words “apparently, there was no formal and distinct forest policy in the middle of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, when the British took over the region under their administration. Not only that, they did not even realize for their first fifty years of rule the necessity of having such a policy.”\textsuperscript{114}

In Assam, the forest department was formed in 1864. Initially, it was a part of forest department of Bengal and ‘Bengal rules of 1865’ was in force in the province till the year of 1874 when Assam was separated from Bengal.\textsuperscript{115} In the same year Assam was

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{111} Gadgil,M., and Ramachandra Guha, (1999),\textit{This Fissured Land, An Ecological History of India}, New Delhi: OUP, P.116
\bibitem{112} 100 Years of Indian Forestry 1861-1961 Vol.1 Issued on the occasion of the Celebration of Indian Forest Centenary, 18\textsuperscript{th} Nov. 1961, Forest Research Institute, Dehradun.
\bibitem{113} Sinha, A.C., (1993), \textit{Beyond The Trees, Tigers and Tribes, Historical Sociology Of The Eastern Himalayan Forests}, Delhi: Har-Anand Publication, p. 36
\bibitem{114} Ibid., p. 35
\bibitem{115} Ribbentrop, B., (1900), \textit{Forestry in British India}, Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of government printing, , p 78
\end{thebibliography}
upgraded to the Chief Commissioner’s province when the Assam forest department came into being with a deputy conservator of forest. However, for the first time forest management was thought of in Assam in the year 1850, when the collector of Kamrup represented to the Commissioner of Assam that the wood cutters from Bengal, after having exhausted by indiscriminate felling the Sal forests in the district lower down the Brahmaputra had found their way to Kamrup in search of Sal timber. And a tax of Rs.15 per hundred logs or nearly 2½ annas for each was proposed by the collector of Kamrup as an attempt to put a control on the uncontrolled felling of timbers. But this attempt at forest management was for revenue collection only as evident from their measures undertaken subsequently regarding forest management. The first attempt at forest conservation in Assam could be seen only when the government forest of Assam were gazetted either as “reserve” or “open Forest” under Act VII of 1865 under the Bengal Forest Rules. The reserved forests were the property of the government, as the chief forest officer and his subordinates had the entire management of, and control over the reserved forests and their products. On the other hand, in the open forest, the authority of the forest department extended only to the protection of such reserved trees as was from time to time notified in the Assam Gazette as reserved. The protection of sal forest caused the government initiation towards protecting the forest. Sal forest was considered of exceptional importance and value. As far the conservation of wildlife before 1874 is concerned their only motive in the earlier stage was game, hunting and its destruction and there was no attempt at their conservation. This can be understood from the fact that 8,682 wild animals were recorded to be killed between 1852 to 1863 and 9,845 wild animals were recorded to be killed between 1866 to 1868. There is enough chance that the destruction was much more as many of the killings of wild animals were not reported like those which were

116 100 Years of Indian Forestry 1861-1961 Vol. II, Issued on the Occasion of the Celebration of Indian Forest Centenary, 18th Nov. 1961, Dehradun: Forest Research Institute, 117 Mann, G., PRFA 1874-75, P.1 118 Ibid. 119 Ibid. 120 Mann, G., PRFA, 1875-76,p. 2 121 Part II of The Forest Rules Published In The Assam Gazette Of 16th September, 1876, P.502 122 Ibid, s 123 Mann, G., PRFA, 1875-76,p. 3
killed for sports. Thus, until 1878 the government had no policy for the conservation of forest.124

The human-wildlife conflict became more during British rule. Statistics reveal that the number of wild animals killed was much more than the number of human being killed by the wild animals. From 1858-63, 217 person were killed while 8,682 wild animals were killed during the same period. Again, from 1866-68, 4,353 human beings were killed by wild animals on the other hand 9,845 wild animals were destroyed during the same period. The British officials argued that the killing of wild animals was needed for the protection of life and property. However, the number of people annually destroyed was much lesser then the wild animals killed. Sport and trade in wildlife led to the destruction of a large number of wild. However, they were not much successful in trade in wildlife in initial year of the British rule. Wild animals except elephants were not item of generating revenue for government exchequer on the other had government had to spend large sum of amount on the destruction of wild animals.

124 Sakia, R., (2001), Social And Economic History of Assam (1853-1921), New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, P. 130