Appendix

Brief life sketch of some Chairmen in Silchar Municipality
Kamini Kumar Chanda was born on 4 September 1862 A.D., who belonged to an orthodox Chatiain Kayastha family in Habiganj sub-division of Sylhet. During his school days Kamini Kumar Chanda came to Silchar. He passed the Entrance Examination in 1878 A.D., securing third position in the whole province. From Presidency College he passed F.A. in 1882 A.D., and B.A. with English honours in 1884 A.D. He passed M.A. in 1886 A.D. He got his B.L. in 1888 A.D., and joined the Silchar District Bar. He became a Vakeel of the Calcutta High Court in 1905 A.D., and an advocate in 1925 A.D.

It was the famous Baladhan case that almost overnight brought Kamini Chanda to all India fame and a legendary figure among the Manipuris of Barak Valley. He worked along with Bipin Pal to create national consciousness of the people of Cachar by organising political institutions. The Cachar Swadeshi Sabha was established with Kamini Kumar Chanda as the President. He was elected the President of the first conference of the Surma Valley Political Conference held in 11th and 12th August, 1906 A.D., at Telihowr. He gave Bipin Pal moral as well as financial support to popularise Swaraj in Cachar. In 1913 A.D., he became a member of the Assam Legislative Council and member of the Imperial Council (1916-1920 A.D.). In the Imperial Council he continuously fought for Universal education, protection of civil rights against the encroachments of the British officials. He had been one of the nineteen members of the Viceroy’s Council, who in 1916 A.D., signed a Memorandum on Constitutional Reforms. In the municipal politics, he became a member of the Board after passing B.L. in 1888 A.D.

It was due to his efforts the municipal status of the town of Silchar was upgraded from that of a Station Committee with limited resources to a Second Class Municipality in 1893 A.D. In 1894 A.D., without contest he was elected Vice-Chairman of the Silchar Municipality. Though he was Vice-Chairman but in practice he used to carry on the works of the Board as Chairman. He was elected the first Indian Chairman of the Silchar Municipal Board in 1913 A.D. By than the municipality has been raised to First Class status. As Chairman of the Board he started many major projects for the development of the Silchar town. Among these,
mention may be made about the development of Sanitary System, drainage, water works and trenching ground for disposal of waste. First Sanitary Inspector was appointed by the Municipality during his Chairmanship. The construction of modern Gandhi Bag was started by him and he named it as Sapnala. One of his greatest achievements was that due to his efforts the water supply connection by Municipality was started. To meet the extra expenditure Latrine tax was imposed by the Board.

Improvement of education held a high priority in Kamini Kumar Chanda’s social reform not only as Chairman of the Board but all throughout his life. A national school was set up in Silchar during the Swadeshi days. He was an ardent enthusiast of women’s education and provided support to the Welsh Presbyterian Schools for girls against the orthodox Hindu school set up by Abhacharayan Mitra. Protesting against the policy of racial distinction of the British missionaries he took the initiative of founding the Dinanath Nabakishore Girls’ School in 1921 A.D. It was organised in the Gandhian model with a weaving department. All the schools used to receive financial grants from the Municipality. He fought for universal and compulsory education, insisting on the need for eradication of illiteracy from the country. To him education was an essential pre-requisite for national consciousness. In 1921 A.D., he joined the Non-Violence Movement of Gandhiji. In 1921-22 A.D., when Mahatma Gandhi, Mohammad Ali Jinnah came to Silchar, stayed at Chanda’s house. In 1922 A.D., he retired from the Municipality. In 1924 A.D., he was elected a member to the Central Legislative Assembly a position which he held till 1926 A.D., and here generally voted with the Swarajyist. He remained the President of Cachar Congress till 1926 A.D. After this he retired from active politics. He died on 19 February 1935 A.D.
Upendra Shankar Dutta

Upendra Shankar Dutta was born in 1304 Bangabda, (November 1898 A.D.) at Silchar. His father Durga Shankar Dutta was a famous Muktar whose ancestral home was at Maymansingh (Bangladesh). In 1914 A.D., he passed the high school from Silchar. From Calcutta University he passed at first M.A. in Philosophy and then B.L. and joined Silchar bar in 1923 A.D. In 1928 A.D., he became the Vice-Chairman of Silchar Municipal Board. In 1930 A.D., when Dhirendra Kumar Gupta was arrested for participating in the Civil Disobedience Movement for six months, in his absence Upendra Shankar Dutta became Chairman of the Municipality for a short period (1930-31 A.D.).

During this short period, Upendra Shankar Dutta had a notable contribution towards the Silchar Municipality. In spite of the opposition of the Board by applying the special power of the Chairman he spent Rs. 500/- without the consent of the Board and constructed small shades at Fatak Bazar for fish, vegetable, grains and other commodities. During his tenure as Chairman, Jyotindra Mohan Sengupta visited to participate the student conference held on 21st and 22nd April, 1931 A.D., and Municipality honoured him with an address of honour.

Upendra Shankar Dutta was a staunch supporter of freedom fighters and whenever needed gave them moral and monetary support. In 1946 A.D., he became the Vice-President of the Cachar Congress Committee and in 1947 A.D., became the President. He gave a speech on the occasion of first Independence Day on 15th August 1947 A.D., at India Club, Silchar. He actively participated in the movement of the creation of a separate Congress State called Purbachal. When Cachar Congress Committee was divided he became the president of Silchar Congress Committee.

He had also contribution in the filed of education and culture. He was very active in the foundation of several educational institutes namely Cachar High School, Gurucharan College, Chotelal Shet Institute, Adarchand High School, Monmohan Mazumdar Girls’ School and Arun Chanda Law College. Due to his initiatives Durga Shankar Patshala and Kulada Shundari Patshala were founded in memory of his father and mother respectively. Another very significant
qualification of Upendra Shankar Dutta was that he was a journalist and for long period he was reporter of the Statesman at Silchar. He died on 18th June 1971 A.D.
Rukmini Kumar Das

Rai Bahadur Rukmini Kumar Das was born on 17th April, 1888 A.D., at Silchar. His father’s name was Rai Bahadur Hari Charan Das, who graduated from the Presidency College Calcutta in 1876 A.D., being the first graduate of the Government Higher Secondary School Silchar, and he took the degree of Law in 1878 A.D. He was the first graduate Lawyer in the district of Cachar. After completing “Dwitiya bhag” under Late Moulavi Aktar Nabi in the infant class Rukmini Kumar Das took admission as a regular student in the 8th class in 1897 A.D., in Silchar Government Higher Secondary School in 1897 A.D. He was the Assistant Secretary in Sports while in school. After passing Entrance Examination in 1906 A.D., he did his college education first at Dacca College and then at Murari Chand College at Sylhet. He passed the pleader examination in 1914 A.D., and joined the Silchar Bar and remained its member till his death. He was the President of the Governing Body of G.C. College in 1951-52 A.D. He was an ardent supporter of Bramha religion but not a follower of the religion. He was the President of the Trustee Board of the Bramha Temple which was situated at the corner of Shillongpatty where present Women’s College is situated. Rukmini Kumar Das strongly protested against the permission of Calcutta Bramha Samaj to construct the Women’s College at the site of the temple by demolishing it.

From 1918 to 1957 A.D., he was associated with the Silchar Municipality in different capacities. From 7th June, 1919 to 5th May, 1922 A.D., he was the Vice-Chairman of the Board. He acted as temporary Chairman from 21st December 1921 to 21st March 1922 A.D.

He was the Chairman of Silchar Municipal Board from 1931-1945 A.D. The Congress supporters always opposed him. As the Chairman of the Board he was very strict administrator and used to maintain strict discipline in the office. He was very particular about the collection of Municipality taxes as well as cleanliness of the town. To carry the dirt truck was used for the first time in place of buffalo cart at his initiatives. To supply water to the different corners of the town he for the first time used truck. It was due to his efforts that Kamini Kumar Smriti Bhawan was built and Keatinge library was renamed as Arun Chanda Granthagar. At
Fatak Bazar electricity was introduced. During his tenure as Chairman Shapnala (Modern Gandhibag) was converted into a beautiful garden. In the field of education he raised the amount of grant sanctioned by municipality to many schools. When the Second World War started, amidst the abnormal situation within the town during the financial year of 1941-42 A.D., he was successful to collect the tax amounting Rs. 74,521 from the total of Rs. 89,448. The Government awarded him the title Raibahadur for his achievement to carry on the work of Municipality very efficiently during the crucial period of war. It was the end of an era of the Silchar Municipality with the end of tenure of Chairmanship of Rukmini Kumar Das, because after 1945 A.D., a rapid change took place in the political scenario of the country and Municipality could not remain confine itself with the municipal problems only.

On 11th June, 1971 A.D., Rukmini Kumar Das died. For fourteen years he acted as the Chairman of the Board. His contribution to the Silchar Municipality can be best understood in these words “The town is in a very good condition, better than any other province. I used to say this Municipality was one of the best in the Division, but now after inspecting all municipalities of the province I am convinced that this is the best administered in the whole province”14. Silchar Municipality was one of the best municipality in Assam along with Shillong and Tezpur Municipalities during the Chairmanship of Rukmini Kumar Das15.
Satindra Mohan Deb

Satindra Mohan Deb was born on 9th February 1901 A.D., at Silchar. He was the son of Kali Mohan Deb, who was a leading advocate of Silchar Bar and a leading citizen of the Silchar town. He was also a member of the Station Committee. Satindra Mohan Deb was a student of Silchar Government School till 1919 A.D., in which year he joined the national movement. He was an active member of the Congress and one of the founders of the Congress in the District of Cachar. He participated in the freedom movement and was imprisoned several times. In 1943 A.D., he was in charge of giving shelter to the political criminals and sufferers and made arrangements for those who wanted to meet Netaji at Imphal in response to his call. He was elected to the Assam Legislative in 1946 A.D., and was the Deputy Whip of the Congress Parliamentary party till 1951 A.D. He took most active part in forming Congress ministry in Assam replacing Sir Saadullah by Shri Gopinath Bordoloi. It was mainly due to his efforts that Mahatma Gandhi, Saukat Ali and Moulaan Mohammad Ali visited Silchar in 1921 A.D. He played an important role in bringing under control the communal riot in 1950 A.D. He was associated with the foundation and development of educational institute like Cachar H.E. School, G.C. College and Vidyapith. He was also connected with India Club, Assam Football Association, Sangit Viddyalaya, R.D.I. Hall, Gandhi Mela and Nari Sikhasram. For one term he was elected as member of the Local Board. He was the Chairman of the Silchar District Bharat Sevak Samaj since March 1963 A.D.

In 1925 A.D., Satindra Mohan Deb became the member of the Silchar Municipal Board for the first time. And till 1961 A.D., he was actively involved in the politics of Silchar Municipality. Simultaneously he also actively participated in the movement of freedom struggle of the country. As a member of the Board he strongly supported the Hartal called by the Congress against the Simon Commission. In this regard, in a meeting of the Board on 31st January 1928 A.D., he gave an anti-government proposal by supporting the Hartal. This incident created a sensation in the town. In August 1930 A.D., Satindra Mohan Deb along
with Chairman Dhirendra Kumar Gupta was imprisoned for participating in the
Civil Disobedience Movement\textsuperscript{18}. In 1945 A.D., when he became the Chairman of the Board, due to a change in the political scenario of the country, the responsibility of the Board increased manifold than earlier. In the post war period, there was crisis of clothes in the town and Satindra Mohan Deb helped the Government by distributing clothes through the ward committee. He also played a vital role in helping the victims of communal violence in 1946 A.D.

In 1948 A.D., the session of Lok Sabha that was held after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi passed the resolution to rename Sapnala as Gandhibag according to the proposal made by Satindra Mohan Deb\textsuperscript{19}. During the tenure of his chairmanship, Municipality granted lands to many educational institute including Arunranchanda Law College. For the recreation of the people Gandhi Mela was started by Municipality during S.M. Deb’s tenure as chairman\textsuperscript{20}.

In 1950 A.D., as a result of communal violence in East Pakistan thousands of Hindu refugees took shelter at Cachar. The Board sanctioned Rs. 3, 50,000 for the rehabilitation of refugees\textsuperscript{21} and Satindra Mohan had a great contribution towards the development of refugee colonies. The Government took steps to prevent the soil erosion of the river Barak due to the pressure created by Satindra Mohan Deb. Though he could not entirely solve the problem of water supply and electricity in the town but in this regard was successful to alert the government. As chairman of the Board he was involved with all the beneficial functions in the town. Though he had to face criticism for some of his activities but Satindra Mohan became the Chairman of the Board when it was a period of transition. And in this situation a chairman like him was very essential. As a farsighted politician he preferred not to contest in the Municipal politics for the fifth time\textsuperscript{22}. 
Mohitush Purakayastha

Mohitush Purakayastha was born on 29th July, 1919 A.D., at village Bhagbari, Karimganj district. He studied up to intermediate at the Government Boys' Higher Secondary School, Silchar. From the age of 14 he started fighting against British imperialism. He was an active member of Silchar Branch of the Tarun Sangha, a revolutionary party of Srihatta District. From 1939 to 1942 A.D., he was the General Secretary of the Surma Valley Student Federation and played a vital role to strengthen agitation against British Government in this valley. During the Second World War he was under house arrest at Baghbari, Kaliganj for his revolutionary activities. Along with others Mohitush Purakayastha was one of the founders of Cachar Krishak Sabha in 1937 A.D.

After the end of the revolutionary period, Mohitush Purakayastha along with most of the workers of the party joined communist party of Srihatta District. He participated in all the students, peasants and labour movement under the Communist Party. In the beginning of 1942 A.D., he joined the Congress party and on 1st September 1942 A.D., was expelled from Cachar for participating in the Quit India Movement. This order of expulsion was withdrawn in April, 1945 A.D. During 1945-46 A.D., he acted as the Secretary of the Cachar District Congress Committee. In 1946 A.D., after the General election at the initiatives of famous Gandhian leader Purnendukishore Sengupta, Mohitush Purakayastha was sent for training to I.N.T.U.C. headquarter at Ahmedabad. After his return from training he devoted to the foundation of I.N.T.U.C. branch at Cachar for tea garden labour.

Mohitush Purakayastha became the Chairman of the Silchar Municipal Board in April, 1961 A.D., defeating Sukhamay Singh by 15-7 votes. Immediately after his election a strong agitation started at Cachar protesting against the declaration of Assamese as the state language. The army shot dead 11 agitators of the language movement at Silchar railway station on 19th May, 1961 A.D. As Chairman of the Board, Mohitush Purakayastha actively supported the language movement. To tackle the problems arising from the movement Mohitush Purakayastha had left a portion of his responsibilities as Chairman in the hands of...
Tarapada Bhattacharjee. Due to his involvement with movement, Chief Minister S.C. Singh deprived him of a portfolio in the Council of Ministers of the state.

During his tenure as Chairman, he had contribution towards construction of new roads and repair of some roads. At his initiatives land was granted to Janiganj Lower Primary School, Itkhola Primary School and Vidhyapith School near Thana at Tarapur. The land conflict between Netaji Vidyabhawan and Sri Sri Shyamananda Aankhra was negotiated due to his efforts. In the 60’s the water works built during the Chairmanship of Kamini Kumar Chanda was not sufficient for the growing population. Due to the pressure created by Mohitush Purakayastha, at the efforts of Government the Board applied for a loan of Rs. 60 lacks from National Water supply and Sanitation Programme. The Board requested the state Government to implement the major project through Public Engineering Department. During his Chairmanship the retirement age of the employees of the Municipality Board was raised from 55 to 58 years by the Government.

On 28th March, 1966 A.D., Mohitush Purakayastha was elected Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha. After the election taking two months leave he left for Delhi but before the end of term did not return back to act as Chairman of the Board. In 1972 A.D., he became the cabinet minister in the state Government under the leadership of Sarat Chandra Sinha. Till his death on 25th January, 1993 A.D., Mohitush Purakayastha was actively involved with the District Cachar Congress Committee and different other social organisations.
Dhijendralal Sengupta

Dhijendralal Sengupta was born in 1914 A.D., at Moulabhibazar, Sylhet (Bangladesh). His father was Dakhshinacharan Sen. He passed metriculation from Moulabhibazar high school and graduated from M.C. College Sylhet. Since his school days he was an active member of the revolutionary party under the leadership of Monmohan Bhattacharjee.

In 1937 A.D., he came to Silchar and started his political career as an organiser of Congress Socialist Party. In 1937 A.D., he became the Secretary of Cachar Krishak Shangha. In 1938 A.D., he became a member of Communist Party. In the same year he became a member of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee.

The peasant and labour movement received impetus under his leadership. He first organised the Trade Union and Dok Mojdur Union at Cachar. Due to his untiring efforts different labour union were set up in Silchar. He was the first President of the Silchar Cartars Union. He was one of the prominent leaders of Thebhagha Movement of Cachar. Due to his political activities he was imprisoned two times before and once after the independence.

After his release from jail in 1949 A.D., Dhijendralal Sengupta devoted himself towards the developmental work of Silchar. He also involved himself in different movements of the people of Silchar.

In June, 1971 A.D., Dhijendralal Sengupta was elected Chairman of the Silchar Municipal Board. In the election he was supported by Poura Unnayan Sangsth and Nagarik Samithi after an agreement between the two parties that in the first half of the term Chairman would be elected from the Nagarik Samithi and Vice-Chairman from the Poura Unnayan Sangstha. And in the second half of the term Chairman would be elected from Poura Unnayan Sangstha and Vice-Chairman from Nagarik Samithi. He was the sole communist leader who was elected Chairman of a Municipality in Assam. During his tenure as Chairman Dhijendralal Sengupta along with the activities of Municipality, he worked for the greater interest of Silchar. These have been already mentioned in the earlier chapters such as establishment of Lic’s Divisional Office at Silchar, shifting of
Flood Control and Irrigation Office from Silchar to Karimganj and the repairing work of Jowai-Badarpur Road. And regarding the activities within the Municipality, Dhijendralal played an important role to release all those who were arrested on suspicion of their involvement with Naxalites. Dhijendralal on behalf of the members of the Municipal Board strongly protested against the separation of Karimganj from Cachar. Under his chairmanship the Board passed a resolution condemning the destructive activities of terrorists of East Pakistan and proposed Government to take adequate security measures. It is also very important to be noted that Dhijendralal played a very significant role in the movement for medium of instruction in the Pre-University level and discrimination of the government towards the Silchar Medical College.

Dhijendralal was an indomitable freedom fighters distinguished politician as well a communist leader. He was an revolutionary peasant and labour leader and also a skilful Municipality administrator. On 7th January, 2004 A.D., he died. The people of Barak Valley will remember him ever as a patriot and also as a leader of the language movement.
Santosh Mohan Deb

Santosh Mohan Deb was the son of Satindra Mohan Deb and Hiron Prova Deb of Tarapur Silchar. He was born in the year 1934 A.D., at Silchar.

He passed B.Com from G.C. College, Silchar and later on took the degree of D.B.A. from Welsh College of Advanced Technology and Commerce, Cardiff (U.K.). In his youth he was a Lawn Tennis Champion. He has also interest in playing Golf and Cricket. He has been associated with different sports association like State Sports Council, Assam, member of Organising Committee of Asian Games, Silchar District Sports Association, Assam Football Association since 1976 A.D. Delhi Gymkhana Club, Delhi Golf Club and Noida Golf Club, recognised International Football Referee, Presently taking major initiatives in the construction of two stadium at Silchar viz. Satindra Mohan Deb stadium at DSA Ground and Indoor Stadium at India Club.

He started his career as businessman but following the footsteps of his father and forefather he joined Congress. In 1979 A.D., he was elected Chairman of Silchar Municipal Board, which position he held till 1985 A.D. At the same time in 1980 A.D., he was elected member of the 7th Lok Sabha. He acted as the observer of Congress party during the Assembly elections of Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Tripura, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Orissa in different period. He has been elected 7th consecutive terms in the Lok Sabha. In 1986 A.D., he became the Union Minister of state, Tourism and Communication. During the first part of 1988 A.D., he became the Union Minister of state, Defence. From June 1988 to December 1989 A.D., he was the Union Minister of state for Home Affairs. In 1989 he was re-elected to the 9th Lok Sabha for 3rd term. In 1990 A.D., he became member of Constitutive Committee constituted under Punjab State Legislative (Delegation of Powers) Act 1987 A.D. In May 1990 A.D., he became the Chairman of Public Accounts Committee and also member of the General Purpose Committee.

In 1991 A.D., he was re-elected to the 10th Lok Sabha and became Union Minister of state for steel (Independent Charge). In 1996 A.D., he was elected to the 11th Lok Sabha for fifth term. In 1999 A.D., he was re-elected to the 13th Lok
Sabha for 6th term. In 1999 A.D., he became member of both the House Committee and General purpose Committee. From 2000-04 A.D., he was the Chairman, Standing Committee on Energy. In May 2004 A.D., he has been elected to the 14th Lok Sabha for 7th term and inducted into the Union Council of Ministers as Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises.

In the social and cultural activities, he took major initiatives for the establishment of two central universities in Assam. Due to his initiatives Silchar Regional Engineering College developed into an institution of repute. He worked for the welfare of Labour specially for workers in tea gardens and villages, flood, cyclonic relief works. He served the rural people of Assam with DRDA loans, development of rural electrification and transport. He also made efforts to expand the provision of water, electricity and sanitation facilities in the slum dwellers. He established a Trust in memory of his father, Late Satindra Mohan Deb for extending financial help to the needy individuals and Association or clubs. He remained President of Nihill Banga Sahitya Sommelani for 2 years and Chief Patron of Bipin Chandra Pal Memorial trust. He took special initiatives in establishing two Gas-based projects at Adamtilla and Banskandi. He is actively involved in construction of Barak Dam and extension of Lumding-Silchar Broad Gauge Railway line.

Santosh Mohan Deb became the Chairman of the Silchar Municipality, which was formed immediately after the emergency. Within a few days he became a member of the Lower House of Parliament. It became easier for the Municipality to receive financial sanction from the Government due to influence of the Chairman both in the state as well as in the central Government. Therefore he started many major projects for the development of the Silchar town. For example, the construction of sanitary latrines at Silchar at a low cost, a scheme of the World Health Organisation for the development of Public Health. The Integrated Urban Development Programme for improvement of roads and drainage of the town and the financial assistance will be provided by both central and state.

Santosh Mohan Deb took the initiatives to repair and reconstruct the R.D.I. Hall, many roads and bye lanes. Due to his initiatives a major financial grant was sanctioned by the government for the construction of a children's park at Gandhi
Bag. In the sixth five years plan Rs. 10 lacs were sanctioned to reform the newly established colonies. And also Municipality took steps to build four more markets under the Integrated Urban Development Plan of the Sixth five years plan.

The most important event that took place during his Chairmanship was the celebration of 100 years of Silchar Municipal Board. Santosh Mohan Deb left no stone unturned to make it a grand success. The centenary celebration included many developmental and beautifications programmes of the Silchar town. It was due to his efforts and request Debabrata Dutta wrote the “Pourasabhar Itihas” (in Bengali) which is the most valuable accounts for the history of Silchar Municipal Board. On 4th August 1983 A.D., on the occasion of Centenary celebration at District library, the Chairman of the Board and Member of Lok Sabha Santosh Mohan Deb presided over the function. Although it was not possible for him to complete all the programme but he showed the path for future development so that Silchar will continue to flourish in the hands of the Silchar Municipal Board.

Notes and references:-

3. Presidency College Register, Calcutta, 1927.
5. Unpublished Diary of Kamini Kumar Chanda recording family events. Hereafter referred as Personal Diary.
10. Ibid., P-2.
15. Shyam, Monujendra, Personal Interview, December, 2008, Ukil Patty, Silchar.
17. Kar, Dipankar, Jananeta Satindra Mohan Deb, in the magazine of Srihatta Sammilani, Delhi published on the 40th cultural day 28th September, Delhi, 1997, P-11.
27. Ibid., P-151.
29. Ibid., P-135.