



RAMIFICATION OF THE ATTACK OF MUGHALS IN ASSAM IN 1671 AND ENCAMPMENT OF ASSAMESE COMMUNITY AT BARGOOL IN KARIMGANJ

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ABSTRACT

The term ‘war’ can be coined as a ladder through which triumph or vanquish can occur in human world. But such ladders can bring both incredible and nefarious byproduct. The aftereffect of a war can be agathokakological for society. Assam visualized plethora of wars that ramified its socio- political state of affairs. The existence of kingdoms in Assam like – the Kamarupa kingdom (CE 350 – 1140), the Ahom kingdom (CE 1228 – 1826), the Kamata kingdom (CE 1257 – 1587), the Kachari kingdom (CE 13th century) – all these structured the ethical characters of the society in Assam. Specially the Ahom kingdom which ruled Assam for 600 years, materialized the ethical and socio – religious structure of Assamese culture in Assam by coming to blow multitude of wars. The Battle of Samdhara (1616), the Battle of Saraighat (1671), the Battle of Itakhuli (1682), all these battles had been combated by the Ahoms to sustain their kingdoms in Assam. Stabilization of kingdoms lead to the installation of communities of different aspects of society. The battle between the Ahoms and the Mughals and finally the Battle of Saraighat that was fought between the Ahoms and the Mughals in 1671 too had resulted in immense community establishment, the outcome of which can be felt in the establishment of Bargool village in Karimganj district of Assam. The significance of Bargool village lies in the fact that it is one of the birth places of one of the ‘Assamese Community’ in Barak valley. The formation of this Assamese community in Bargool is the aftereffect of the war between the Ahoms and Mughals specially the ‘Battle of Saraighat’ of 1671. The only Assamese community of Karimganj in Barak Valley which maintained their own traditions while maintaining good rapport with the Muslim population. Bargool is nestled in Badarpur block of Karimganj district (Assam). Badarpur is an urban area and is known as ‘The Gateway to the Barak Valley of Assam’. It is administered by the President (village headman) who is elected after every five years. As per 2001 census, the location code of the Bargool village is 02529000. Its total area (in hectare) is 1450. Total population stands at 546. Total number of households as per 2001 census was 98.

Key words - community, war, castes, society, village, class.

INTRODUCTION

The plethora of battles that took place between the Ahoms and the Mughals and eventually the Battle of Saraighat (1671) were epoch making war in the history of Assam which took place in the Brahmaputra valley. One of the aftereffect of such battles is the existence of an Assamese community in Barak valley in the form of a village named ‘Bargool’. Bargool is situated in Badarpur division in Karimganj district (Assam). The lower strata of the Ahom kingdom eloped from the Brahmaputra valley during the different phases of battles between the Ahoms and the Mughals which compelled them to make their way to Cachar under the then Kachari kingdom. The lower strata of the Ahom kingdom eloped and made inroads to the then Cachar. The Ahom classes like Kalitas, Koches, Chutias, Sonari, Komar, Bandi-beti, Tamulietc nestled in Bargool and earned their livelihood based on their skilled labour. This is how ‘Bargool’ village came into existence.

HISTORICAL IMPLICATION OF THE TERM ‘BARGOOL’

The term ‘BARGOOL’ has been derived from two Assamese words – ‘Bar’ and ‘gool’. In Assamese language, ‘Bar’ means ‘a garden barred in’ and ‘gool’ means ‘having the shape of a ball or sphere’. It has been assumed that the village had been entitled ‘Bargool’ because of its social and political substance that instantaneously coupled with their life. After their emancipation from

Brahmaputra valley, they stealthily proceeded towards Cachar and nestled in the region that is designated as "Bargool". These lower strata of the Ahom kingdom felt the region shielded for their accommodation for umpteen reasons:-

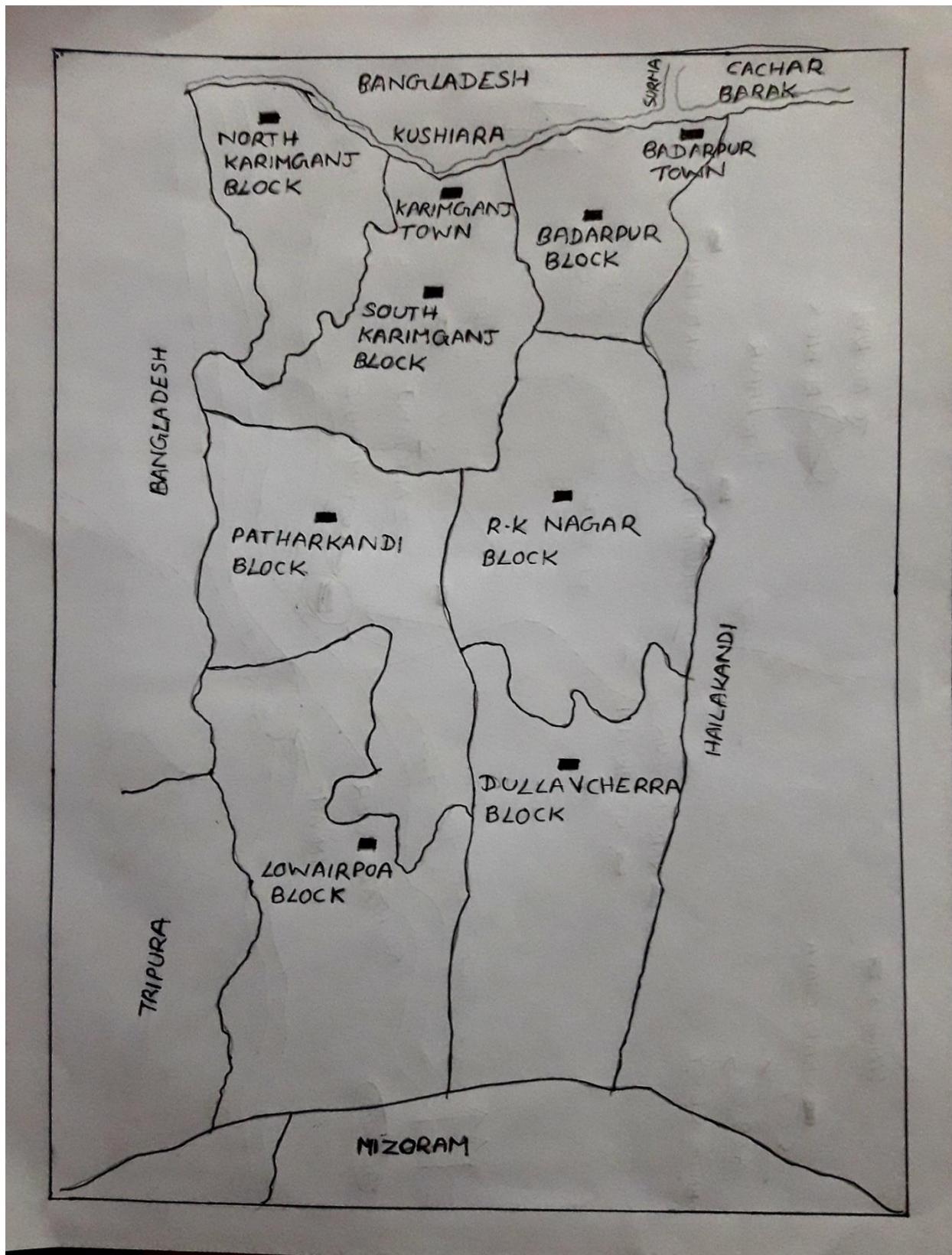
- i) They perceived the region commodious as it is a region scarcely habituated during that time.
- ii) The mass land provided them scope for cultivation and other farming activities.

1

- iii) Mughals will not be interested to entre in such segregated region adjoined by only forests and lands.
- iv) Apt to pursue their unskilled labour what they did under the Ahoms.
- v) The pressing need for enormous Ahoms to settle down together in one region.
- vi) Most noteworthy, they acquired the assistance and asylum of the Muslim zamindars of that region who not only provided them safe shelter, but also provided them their sources of income by engaging them as tenants and ryots in their land.

The above mentioned logical grounds most aptly support the title "Bargool",

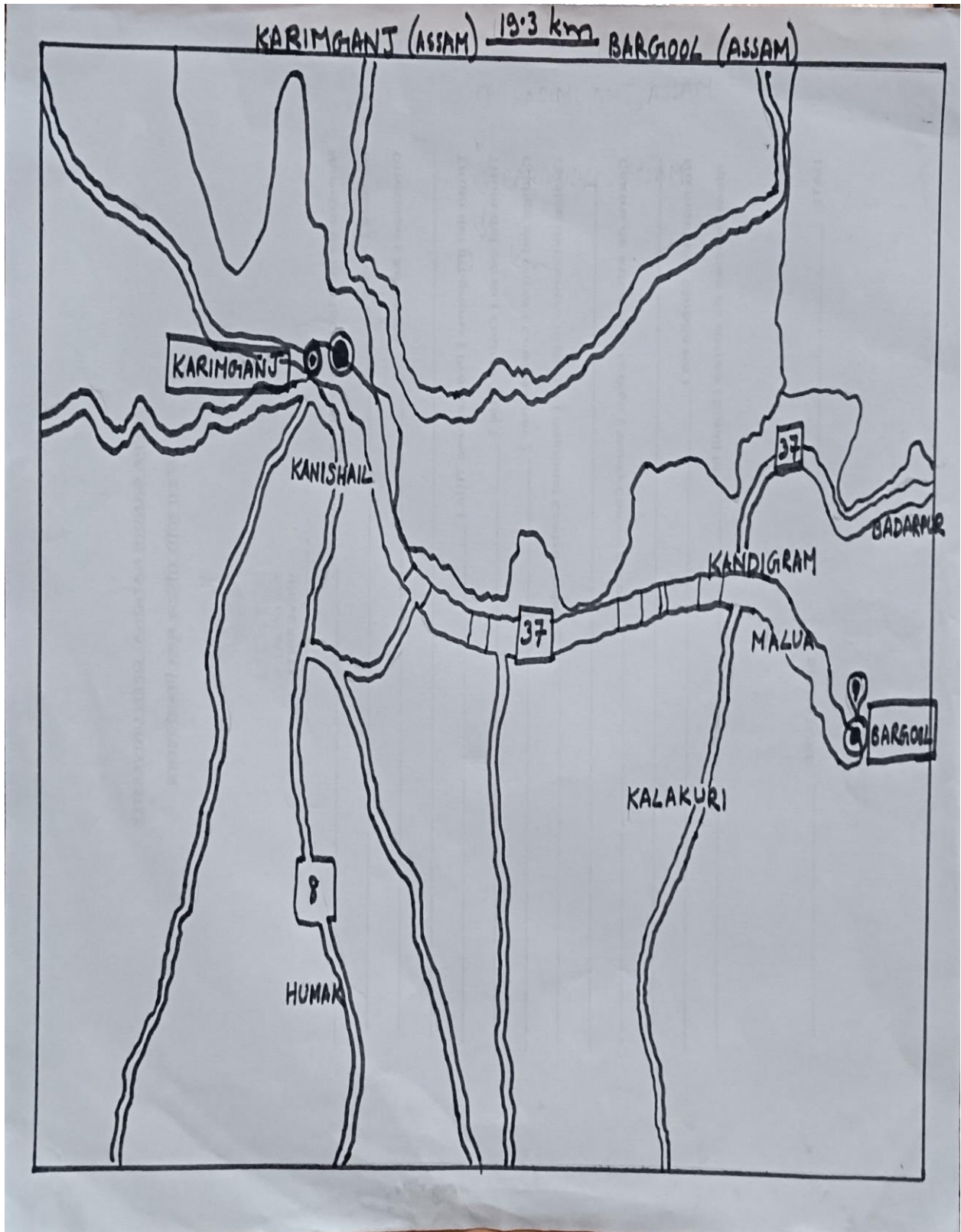




LOCATION OF BADARPUR IN KARIMGANJ DISTRICT (ASSAM)



LOCATION OF BARGOOL IN BADARPUR BLOCK (ASSAM)



MAP DEPICTING THE ROUTE (NH 37) AND DISTANCE FROM KARIMGANJ TO BARGOOL

BACKDROP OF BARGOOL VILLAGE**COMPOSITION OF THE AHOM KINGDOM**

It all embarked with the formation of the Ahom kingdom in Assam which ruled for 600 years. Moreover, the rigmarole of Ahomization came into prominence in the 16th century during the reign of Suhungmung(1497 – 1539) also known as Dihingia Raja I. Ahomization is a process by which the people of other castes and communities like the Barahis, the Nagas, the Marans got incorporated in the Ahom community by assimilating in the mechanism of Ahom counterculture and stewardship. This Ahomization was the outcome of the macroscale territorial expansion of the Ahom kingdom because of the subjugation of the Chutia and the Kachari kingdom. It resulted in the incorporation of multi – ethnic character to the Ahom kingdom for the initial time during the reign of Suhungmung.(Guha, December, 1983)

Next, a religious reformation took place in the socio – political framework of Ahom society by Shankardev in about 15th century. He pioneered Vaishnavite Movement (1449-1569) in the caste structure of the Ahom confraternity.(Madhavadeva, 2012) The raison d’etre of Shankardev was to malfunction the hindrances where upper caste and lower caste were kept in two water tight compartments. The Kala-Samhita was a sub-sect of the lower castes who were elevated to higher status by Shankardev.

Again the Medieval Assam witnessed a scenario of social alteration in the form of Sanskritization. Sanskritization is the process by which indigenous local tribal belts were absorbed into the Ahoms. The phenomena of Sanskritization kicked off with the absorption of Koch into the Ahom kingdom during the latter part of the 16th century. Correspondingly, the Bodo-Kachari tribe, the Chutiyas, the Rabhas, the Kacharis, the Miri, the Mikir and other sub-ordinate tribal belts got incorporated into Ahom society.(Charsley, 1998)

Among them, the Koches, the Bodo-Kacharis, the Chutiyas (a hill tribe), the Kacharis (a Mongoloid tribe) were the notable tribal belt that were absorbed into Ahom society and were pinnacle to the highest social status of the Ahom administration. Various reasons can be attributed for these –

- i) Lack of military robustness of the Ahoms.
- ii) Lack of human resources to run the administration of the Ahoms.
- iii) Guerilla military techniques of these tribes.
- iv) Incorporation of these tribes would enhance the mightiness of the Ahom kingdom.
- v) Incorporation rather than subjugation would enhance the territorial expansion of the Ahom kingdom.

The Ahoms came into the fold of Hinduism in the 17th century. The incorporation of Hindu-Chutiyas, a progressive form of Chutiyas and the Rabhas, a Hindu section of the Kacharis were the sequel of this Hinduization of the Ahoms.

The Royal clan of the Ahoms encompassed the King’s family, Burhagohain, Borgohain and the Borpatra Gohain(latter included in the group).(Home page, Ahom dynasty, n.d.)

The Burhagohain and the Borgohain were the offices of the Dangarias. The Burhagohain also known as Chao Phrung Mung in Ahom language were nominated by the Ahom king. This position first subsisted during the reign of the first Ahom king, Sukapha.(Guha, December, 1983)

Burhagohain were one of the archetype counsellors in the Ahom kingdom. They were indeed the building blocks of the Ahom nobility who were known as Satgharia Ahoms.(Burhagohain, n.d.) They never compete for the Ahom kingship, preferably they were depicted as guide and mentor in persuasively running and administering the Ahom kingdom. In 1280, the Burhagohains were entitled to administer independent territories called “ bilat “ or “ raiya “. They were also made the commander – in – chief of the Paiks. Later another section of Burhagohain called King – lun Burhagohain was also fabricated in the year 1527 to supersede the Burhagohain in the Sadiya province. This post had been termed as “ Sadiyakhowa Gohain “ also known as Thao – mung Bo – ngen during the Ahom period.

Borgohain also known as Chao Thao Lung was the second indigenous counsellors in the Ahom kingdom. Like Burhagohain, he was also designated by the Ahom king. They were also associated to the Satgharia Ahom whom the Ahom king elected for the post of nobility. They were also the wirepuller like the Burhagohain. They were entitled to administer the Sadiya province initially. In 1280, the Borgohains were also entitled to administer independent territories called “ bilat “ or “ raiya “. They were also been appointed, like the Burhagohains, as the commander – in – chief of the Paiks. Later they were entitled to administer the southern region which was from Dikhou river to Kaliabor on

6

the southern bank of the Ahom kingdom. At the end of their entrepreneurship, they were accustomed to the east of the Burai region situated on the north bank of the Ahom kingdom.(Gogoi, 2002)

In the hierarchical social strata of the Ahom society, the Kayasthas and the Kalitas were considered to be higher caste. They were accustomed status equivalent to the Brahmins in the Ahom society.

The Vaishnavas affiliated to the Kayastha caste. They were literate like the Brahmins, but they were prohibited to perform any religious act.

The third tier of the Gohains(counsellors) of the Ahom kingdom was the Borpatragohain. It was inaugurated by Suhungmung in 1527.(Barua, 1939) They were designated officer-in-charge to administer the region from Dafala hills to the Brahmaputra river.He selected Koncheng from Naga community as the first Borpatragohain. As a matter of fact, the Naga community got incorporated with the Ahom community who later appropriated the life and polity of the Ahoms. Later, Garhgayan Patar, Maran Patar were also incorporated in the post of Borpatragohain. They belonged to the families of non – Ahoms who were incorporated to the post of Borpatragohain.

Under these sections belonged the priestly class – Mohan, Doedhai, Bailung, Siring, Phukans, SatghariaAhoms.

The third section supervised the administrative business of the Ahom and this class can be considered as the standard-bearer of the Ahom society. The Kayastha class acted as the accountants of the Ahoms who maintained all the accounts of the administration including the Khels, Paiks, military administration like sustentation of uniforms, food, salaries of the soldiers, revenue, tax collected from cultivation, income and expenditure of the kingdom and so forth.The Kalitas administered the business and merchandise of the Ahom state. They monopolized the trading system and assisted in maintaining the economy of the state. Another class was the Ganakas who were the astrologers of the Ahom state. As the Ahoms pertained to a Hindu ethnic group, they confabulated the astrologers on every occasion, be it offering prayers, crowning of Prince, declaration of war, christening ceremony, yajnas and so on. The class that maintained the third tier of Ahom society were the Keots and Kaivartas who maintained the agriculture of the state. They were the cultivator class who formed the cornerstone of the Ahom state. The Paiks (labourclass) also appertained to the cultivator. They spadework as cultivator when state was in peace and in times of war, they formed a weighty part of military administration by functioning as soldiers of the king.

The Borphukans, also known as Phu – Kan – Lung was a rank instituted by Pratap Singha, the Ahom king. Borphukan belonged to one of the five Patra mantris(counsellors). Patra Mantris meant composition of five mantris to form the Council of Ministers. Borphukans were entrusted with both executive and judicial powers of the Ahom kingdom. The jurisdiction of the Borphukans were entrusted to the west of the Kaliabor river. Its jurisdiction in latter period, shifted to Itakhuli in Guwahati in 1681 after the Battle ofItakhuli.(Barpujari, December, 2019) Though, a sub – ordinate officials of Ahom kingdom, but the Borphukans availed full liberty in its jurisdiction because of its long range distance from Ahom kingdom. Lachit Deka (erstwhile name) was entitled Lachit Borphukan because of his valouras mentioned in Satsori Asom Buranji. The jurisdiction of the Borphukans was from Brahmaputra riverupto Kalong. Kajali and Kaliabor functioned as its headquarters.The following were some sub-ordinate Phukans who worked under Borboruah in administering the Ahom kingdom –

i)Dopdaria Deka Phukan commanded 6000 paiks.

ii) DopdariaNeog Phukan commanded 6000 paiks and also conducted judicial work.

iii) Two sub-divisions subsisted under Chetia Phukans – a) Kaliaboriya Chetia Phukan and b) Guwahatiya Chetia Phukan. They were accountable for Khels.

iv) ChoruwaPhukans were assigned the task of collecting revenue in cash or kind from Paiks and also maintained guilds of the Khels.

v) NaobaichaPhukans and NaosaniyaPhukans were the commanders of the Ahom navy.

vi) BhitarulPhukans projected the royal palace called Raj Kareng in Ahom language.

vii) Na Phukan acted as the gatesmen of the Ahom capital.

viii)Ujanidihingia Phukan administered the Dihingia territory and Namania Dihingia Phukan acted as commander of Paiks.

ix) Garhgaiyan Deka Phukan and GarhgaiyanNeog Phukan jointly acted as commander of Paiks and maintained the judicatory work of the Borboruah.

x) Nyaysodha Phukan passed judgement on cases in the non-existence of Borboruah.

xi) Chang-rung Phukan administered the public work department.

7

xii) Chiring Phukan supervised the liturgiesand ceremonies of the Ahom state.

xiii) Pani Phukan and Deka Phukan commanded 6000 and 4000 Paiks respectively.

xiv) The KharghariaPhukans were in-charge of gunpowder production.

xv) Nek Phukan and Chutiya Phukan.(Borphukan, n.d.)

The Borboruah , also called Phu – Ke – Lung in Ahom language was created in 1621 by Pratap Singha or Susenphaa, was one of the five Patra – mantris of the Ahom kingdom.TheBorboruahs were entrusted with both executive and judicial powers.Apart from the specific regions that falls under the jurisdiction of Burhagohain, Borgohain and Borpatra Gohain, the rest of the regions were placed under the administrative jurisdiction of Borboruahs. Its jurisdiction was to the east of Kaliabor river.(Barpujai, 2004) The offices of the Borboruahs was created because of the expansion of the Ahom kingdom.MomaiTamuli Borboruah was the first Assamese who had been entitled for this post during the reign of Pratap Singha. Alon Dihingia Borboruah was one of the influential borboruah who displayed his chivalry in the

Battle of Itakhuli in 1682. For his exemplary chivalry, King Gadadhar Singha constructed a road named, ‘‘ Barbarua Ali ‘‘ that ran from Garhgaon in Sivasagar to Mohanaghat in Dibrugarh.

The Baruas were the superintendent officers of the Ahom kingdom. The following were the varied sections of Baruas in the Ahom kingdom

- i) Bujarbarua in- charge of civil administration of Kamrup region under the Borphukan.
- ii) Borkayastha Barua were in – charge of Kayasthas that were placed under the domain of the Borphukans.
- iii) Katakai worked as emissary in the Ahom kingdom.
- iv) The Majindar Barua acted as the personal secretary of the Ahom king who used to deal in both domestic and international affairs.
- v) The Bhandari Barua was in – charge of treasury.
- vi) The Duliya Barua was in – charge of royal palanquins.
- vii) The Chaudang Barua supervised executions.
- viii) The Kharikar Barua was the chief artificer.
- ix) The Sonadar Barua was in – charge of jewellery.
- x) The Soladhara Barua were the scarf-bearers of the Ahom Swargadeo. This grade was first rewarded to Lachit Borphukan for his astounding martial skills.
- xi) The Ghora Barua were to supervise the royal stable. Lachit Borphukan had been assigned the post of Ghora Barua of Simulgarh Fort.
- xii) The Dolakaxaria Barua was the post of the superintendent of Royal household guards. Lachit Borphukan had been promoted to this post during the reign of Chakradhwaj Singha.
- xiii) The Bez Barua was the physician of the royal families.(The Ahom Dynasty, n.d.)

Furthermore, the Ahom state possessed sub-ordinate officers like Hati Barua who commanded elephants and others.

Some Gohains which were included in the Ahom kingdom were as follows –

- i) The Sadiya Khowa Gohain administered the Sadiya region.(Baruah, 1985)
- ii) The Marangi Khowa Gohain administered the west of the Dhansiri region.(Baruah, A Comprehensive History of Assam, 1985)
- iii) The Solal Gohain administered Nagaon and Chariduar.
- iv) The Kajalimukhiya Gohain administered the Kajalimukh region.(The Ahom Dynasty- weebly, n.d.)
- v) The Khamjangia Gohain administered the Khamjang region.
- vi) The Banrukia Gohain administered the Banruk region.
- vii) The Tungkhungia Gohain administered the Tingkhong region.
- viii) The Banglungia Gohain administered the Banglung region.
- ix) The Bhatialia Gohain administered the Habung region.
- x) The Dihingia Gohain administered the Mungklang (Dihingia) region.
- xi) The Kaliaboria Gohain administered the Kaliaboria region.
- xii) The Jagiyal Gohain administered the Jagi region at Nagaon.
- xiii) The Mohangia Gohain and Mohongor Gohain administered the salt mines of Sadiya and Mohong areas.
- xiv) The Chakial Gohain administered the outposts of the frontier region.
- xv) The Rohiyal Gohain were in-charge of revenue administration of the Nagaon region.
- xvi) The other Gohains are – Meldangia Gohain, Mejumelia Gohain and Sarumelia Gohain.

Further some sub-ordinate officers in the Ahom kingdom were –

- i) The Rajkhowas hegemonized territories, settled local disputes and supervised public administration.
- ii) The Katakis concordated with foreign countries and hill tribes.
- iii) The Kakatis scribbles official documents.
- iv) The Dolais dealt in astrology.

In this hierarchial order of the Ahom society, the sub – ordinate class of officers like the Boras, Saikia, Hazarika and Phukans were in-charge of Paiks.

KanriPaiks were peasants who acted as soldiers and served the Ahom state in times of war and also engaged in manual work(labourer) in times of peace.

The ChamuaPaiks worked only as peasants.(Baruah, Last Days of Ahom Monarchy, 1993)

The Bolatiyas were the paiks who worked as tenants in the private estates of nobles.

The Dewaliyas were in-charge of temples and satras.

The Bahatiyas were in-charge of hills.

The Talukdars were in-charge of a taluka.

The Kurias and the Patgiris were junior officials who worked under the Talukdar.

The post of Bar Tamuli was created under the Ahoms who were entitled to the post of Royal Garden.

All these officials were true-blue to their services, both to the king and crown prince.

9

The fourth and the last professional communities of the Ahom state were – Telis who worked as oil men; Haris, the scavenger class; Hiras (potters), Sonowal, who dealt in gold; Tantis, who served as weaving class; Baniyas (petty tradesmen); the Katanis, who were chosen for spinning and agriculture whereas the Kaibartas got engaged as piscator.

TheAbaikanChamuawere engaged as blue-collar, the PaikanChamuagot engaged as white-collar, the Kanri Paik constituted manual class.

The Licchous, Bandi-beti, Serfs and Bondsmen, Nadiyals (dom) constituted the proletariat of the Ahom state.(Mondal)

These were the Ahom social classes that visualized the topsy – turvy situations of the Ahom kingdom vis-à-vis the different phases of Ahom-Mughal conflict which ensuingly compelled them to transpose south to seek domicile and to have unassailable life.

THE AHOM-MUGHAL CONFLICT

It all commenced with the segregation of the Koch kingdom (1515) into Eastern Koch Hajo (1581-1616) and Western Koch Bihar also known as Cooch Behar (1586- 1949) after the death of Nara Narayan (a legendary figure according to Bhagvata Purana). Both Eastern Koch Hajo and Western Koch Bihar was ruled by Nara Narayan's son , Lakshmi Narayan and nephew Raghudev respectively.(Lahori, 1630-37) Taking advantage of the malevolence between these two kingdoms, the Mughals in alliance with Lakshmi Narayan and the Nawab of Dhaka assailed Parikshit Narayan (son of Raghudev) in 1602 at Dhubri. Plethora of battles took place between them and so eventually Parikshit Narayan acknowledged to capitulate the Mughals, but Bali Narayan (brother of Parikshit Narayan) prohibited to surrender, retreated under the Ahoms as Bali knew that Ahoms were engrossed in subjugating the Koch. Thus, began the era of Mughal – Ahom conflict.(Barua P. G., 2004)

In 1615, the first Mughal – Ahom conflict embarked between the Mughals and the Ahoms under Susenghphaa (alias Pratap Singha), the 17 th king of the Ahom kingdom. The Ahoms emerged victorious at Duimunishila in November, 1638. In 1639, the bloodshed warfare fizzled out with the signing of the Treaty of Asurar Ali in 1639. As per the terms of the treaty, Barnadi river in the North bank and Asurar Ali in the South bank of the Brahmaputra was embedded as the dividing line between the Mughals and the Ahoms. But in 1641, the state of affairs reversed and the Mughal era began in Guwahati and Hajo with the defeat of Koch king of Pandu.(Bhattacharya, 1929)

A new situation arose when a war of succession took place in Mughal empire after 1658. Taking advantage of this precarious circumstances, Pran Narayan tried to annex Koch Hajo, but it went phut due to the annexation of Guwahati by Jayadhwa Singha (Ahom king).(Stewart, 1813)

A new escapade began when Aurangzeb after ascending the Mughal throne dispatched Mir Jumla II(appointed Subahdar of Bengal in 1661) to subjugate Assam. In 1661, Mir Jumla annexed the Ahom capital, Garhgaon. In 1663, the Treaty of Ghilajharighat culminated to the Mughal domination of Garhgaon.

After the Treaty of Ghilajharighat, Jayadhvaj Singha breathed his last. Already, he had proclaimed Chakradhwaj Singha as his heir apparent on his deathbed. Millions of Ahoms had started migrating after Mir Jumla's assault. Chakradhwaj Singha appointed Lachit Borphukan as the new commander – in – chief. The Ahoms besieged – Shah Buruz, Rangamahals forts, Joidur and Pandu. On 4th November, 1667, they confiscated the fort of Itakhuli. The Ahoms were now able to recapture Guwahati and subdued the old Manas border.

On the flipside, the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb commissioned Raja Ram Singh of Amber to reclaim Guwahati from Ahoms. He was the son of Mirza Raja Jai Singh. On 27 December, 1667, he abandoned Delhi. He reached Rangamati in February, 1669. He was convoyed by ex fauzdar of Guwahati, Rashid Khan and armies from Koch Bihar and the Subahdar of Bengal, Shaistha Khan. Ram Singh incorporated many diplomatic measures to cripple the Ahoms. He even jeopardized the Assamese to evacuate Guwahati. At length in 1671, in the Battle of Saraighat in Guwahati, the Assamese soldiers under Lachit Borphukan inflicted a crushing defeat on the Mughals.(Barpujari, The Comprehensive History of Assam, December, 2016)

Thus, it is clear from the above fact that the lower classes of the Ahom kingdom fled from Brahmaputra valley and proceeded towards Cachar due to the trepidation of the Mughals. The Mughals assaulted the Ahoms in a phased manner, but the most devastating assault was during the reign of Aurangzeb. His commander-in-chief, Raja Ram Singh's attack shattered the conviviality of the second and third tiers of the Ahom kingdom. But the people of the first tier did not split up themselves from the Ahoms.

Plethora of reasons can be attributed for the festering of the first tier of the Ahoms in the Ahom kingdom:-

i) The first tier of Ahoms belonged to the family of royal blood, so they reckoned in defending the Ahom kingdom at the cost of their life.

10

ii) They denied the dictatorship of an intruder, i.e, the Mughals.

iii) Their designation, i.e, the nobility could be gained only in the Ahom kingdom and not in any foreign land.

iv) They vehemently believed in consolidating the base of the Ahom kingdom rather eloping to any foreign land.

Again, copious reasons can be attributed for absconding of the second, third and lower strata of people from the Ahom kingdom:-

i) The Battle of Samdhara (1615) between the Ahoms and the Mughals reckoned the Ahoms, specially the lower strata about the potentiality of the Mughals. The fear of subjugation by the Mughals started to take shape among the lower strata of the Ahoms which compelled them to think for movement in some safe place.

ii) The Battle of Samdhara and the defeat of the Koch king at Pandu in 1641 led to the administrative establishment of the Mughals in Kamrup which scared the lower class of the Ahoms who now began to give a thought for their security.

iii) In 1661, the attack of Mir Jumla, the subahdar of Bengal under the Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb, and seizing Garhgaon, the capital of Ahom exposed the mass potentiality of the Mughals which completely shattered the base of the Ahom kingdom.

iv) They were not in two minds to break the serfdom of the Ahoms.

v) The lower class of the Ahoms were not ready to accept the serfdom under the Mughals as this will shatter their economy. The siphoning of their labour under the Mughals will snatch away their source of livelihood.

vi) It is assumed that religion also played a major role for the movement of the lower strata of the Ahoms. The notion of conversion to Muslim religion under the Mughals compelled them to move towards Cachar.

vii) The Mughal domination would also destroy their traditions and culture which were the vertex of the Ahom kingdom.

viii) As the Mughals were trying to establish Muslim rule during the reign of Aurangzeb, the domination of the Ahoms would lead to Pan-Islamic move which would change the entire political entity of the Ahom kingdom giving a severe blow to the local inhabitants of the Ahom kingdom.

The above mentioned justifications compelled them to locomote towards the then Cachar or present Barak valley for unscathed life.

GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS COVERED BY THE AHOMS WHILE ADVANCING FROM BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY TO BARAK VALLEY

The geographical areas of Assam, known earlier Pragjyotishpur had been acclaimed for the mighty river, Brahmaputra. During the Ahom regime, the land extended covering upto the Bay of Bengal.

As per its physical geography is concerned, except the western plain of the then Cachar which formed the frontier line with the conjoining Bangladesh, Karimganj (a part of Sylhet) was surrounded by hills and mountain ranges on all its three sides.

Cachar also known by the name of South Assam or North Eastern Bengal was literally the extended part of Greater Surma or Meghna Valley of Bengal.

As is evident from the physiographical division of Assam, we can assume that these sub-castes might have chosen- rough terrain, roadways, hill ranges, forest region and waterways to proceed stealthily to Cachar. Crossing the rough terrain of Karbi plateau which is the innermost part of the Meghalaya plateau, they set foot in Cachar.

Some others might have crossed the plain of Brahmaputra valley and passing through hills of North Cachar hill district and Barail range, Nagaland and Manipur, they entered Cachar. These were considered as the Tertiary depositional zone.

11

The Ahoms had commenced their campaign from the Brahmaputra valley in the North to Cachar in the south. These two regions were bisected by the Mikir (Karbi-Anglong) and Cachar hills. The north bank tributaries of Brahmaputra rivers comprised of – the Jidal, the Subansiri, the Siang, the Kameng, the Dhansiri, the Puthimari, the Pagladiya, the Manas, the Champamati, the Saral Bhanga, the Aie, the Sankosh. Passing through the north bank tributaries, they happened to encounter steep slopes, shallow channels, sandy beds which schlepped heavy silt charge. (The Brahmaputra River System, 2018)

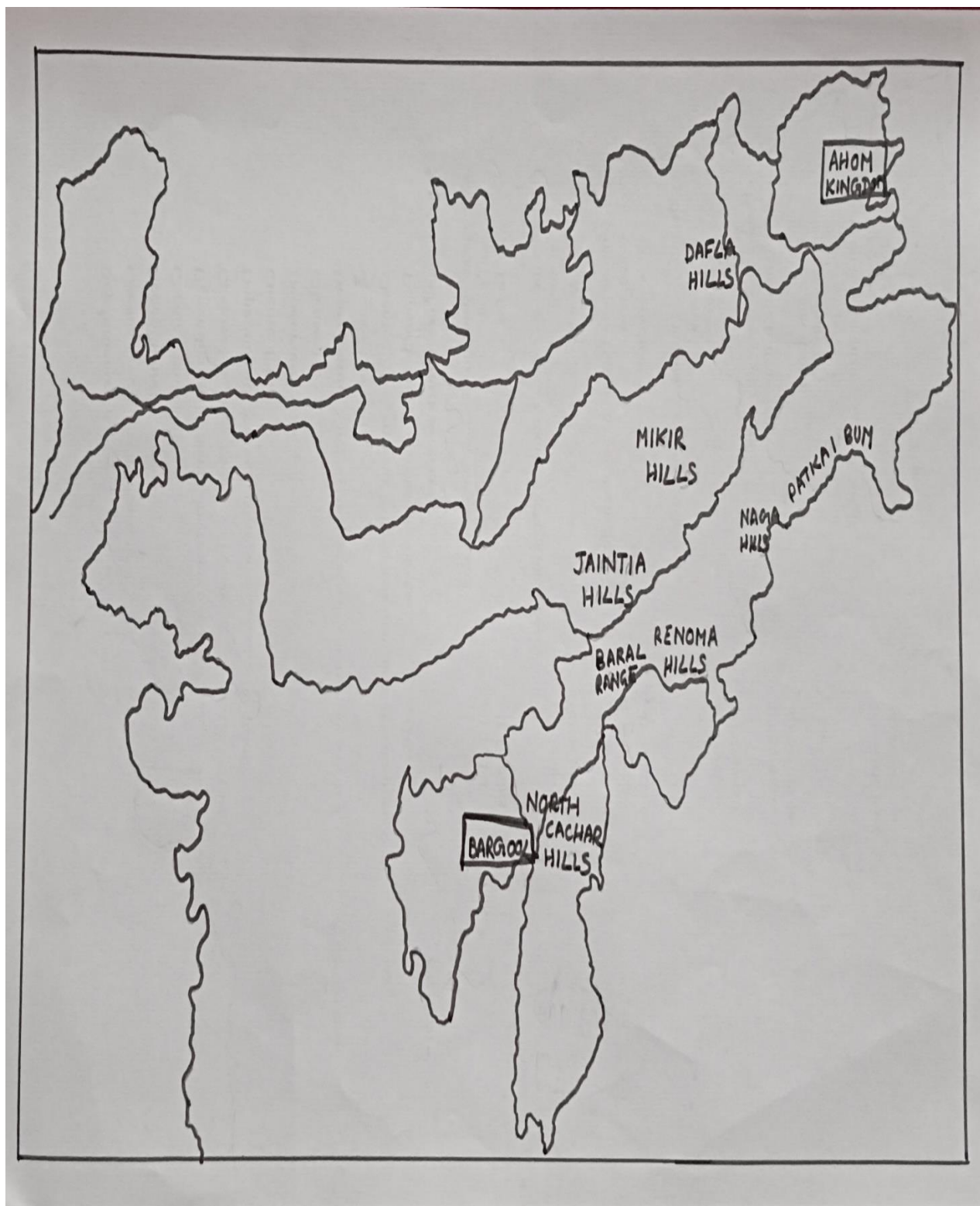
The south bank tributaries of Brahmaputra included – the Nao Dihing, the Buridihing, the Dibang, the Dikhow, the Dhansiri, the Kapili, the Digaru, the Dudhnai. While passing through the south bank tributaries, they happened to cross deep meandering channels which possess low silt charge. (Brahmaputra River- Map Tributaries Flow Bridges Tunnel, 2022)

As is evident from the geomorphic studies of the present generation, it can be assumed that the Karbi-plateau incorporated very old metamorphic rocks which were very hard, compressed and crystalline.

They might have entered Cachar through North Cachar hills which is situated in the north, through Manipur hills situated in the east and Mizoram hills situated in the south.

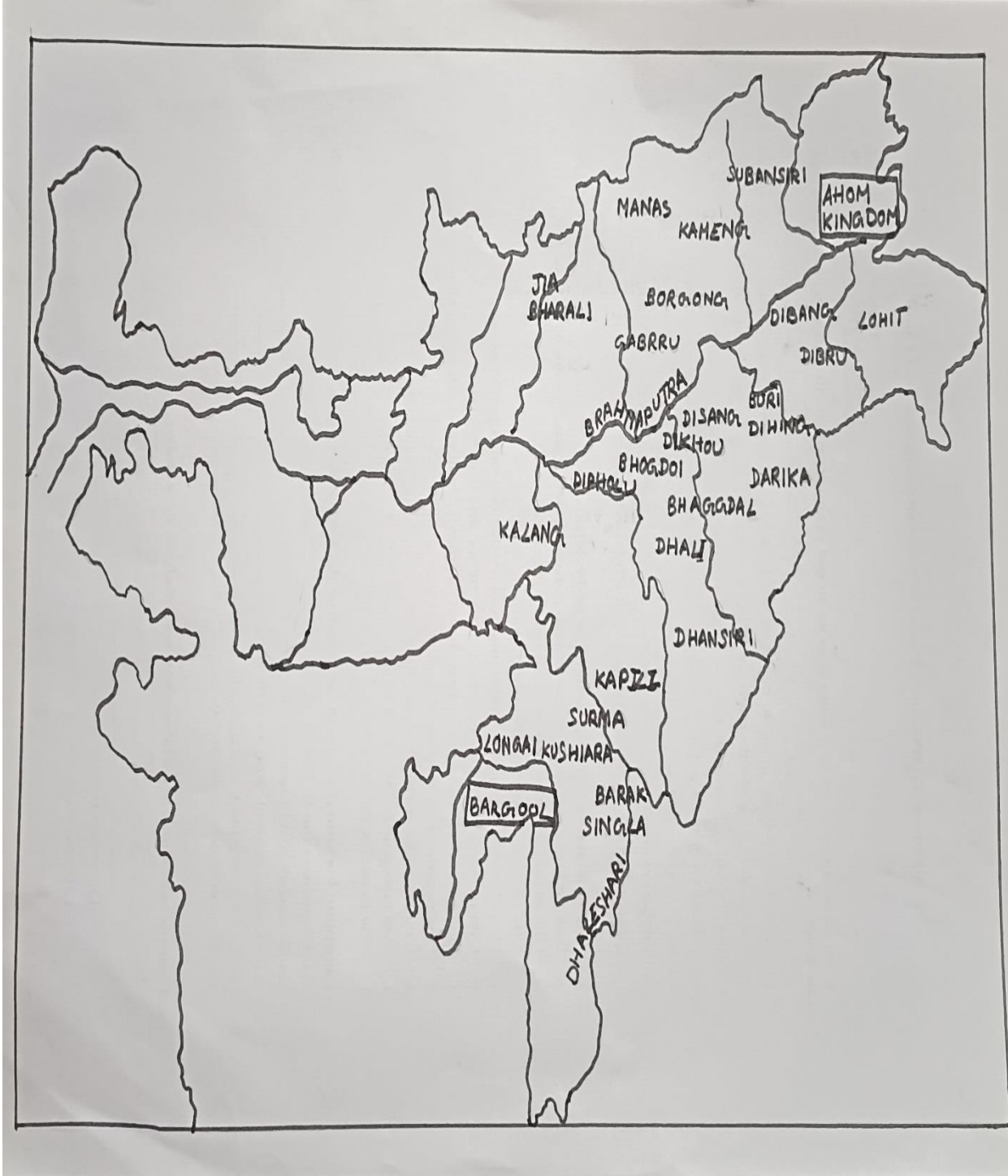
As the region from Brahmaputra to Cachar is full of rivers, rivulets, streams, ridges, Brahmaputra basin and Barak-Surma basin and also lower range of hills and plateaus, it seemed from these geographical traits of Assam that the Ahoms might have faced extreme hazardous circumstances while stepping into Cachar.

Cachar which lies in the southernmost part of Assam was and is still circumscribe by the Barail and Jayantia hill ranges on the north, state of Mizoram on the south and Hailakandi and Karimganj on the west. The Ahoms might have passed through Dafla hills, Patkai bum, Mikir hills, Naga hills, Jaintia hills, Renoma hills and eventually entering Cachar might have passed Barail range and North- Cachar hills to reach Bargool. It has been assumed that these hills might have provided them a safety zone to stealthily reach their destination.



MAP DEPICTING THE HILLS THROUGH WHICH THE LOWER STRATA OF AHOMS MIGHT HAVE PASSED TO REACH BARGOOL

They might have crossed through numerous small rivers flowing through Manipur, Mizoram and Dima Hasao district apart from Barak river. They navigated through Barak river along with its tributaries like – Jiri, Chiri, Madhura, Jatinga, Sunai, Kathakhal and others which flowed and still flows through the centre of the valley. They might also have passed between vast plains and low land featured with undulating topography and rugged hill terrain.(Barak River System, n.d.)

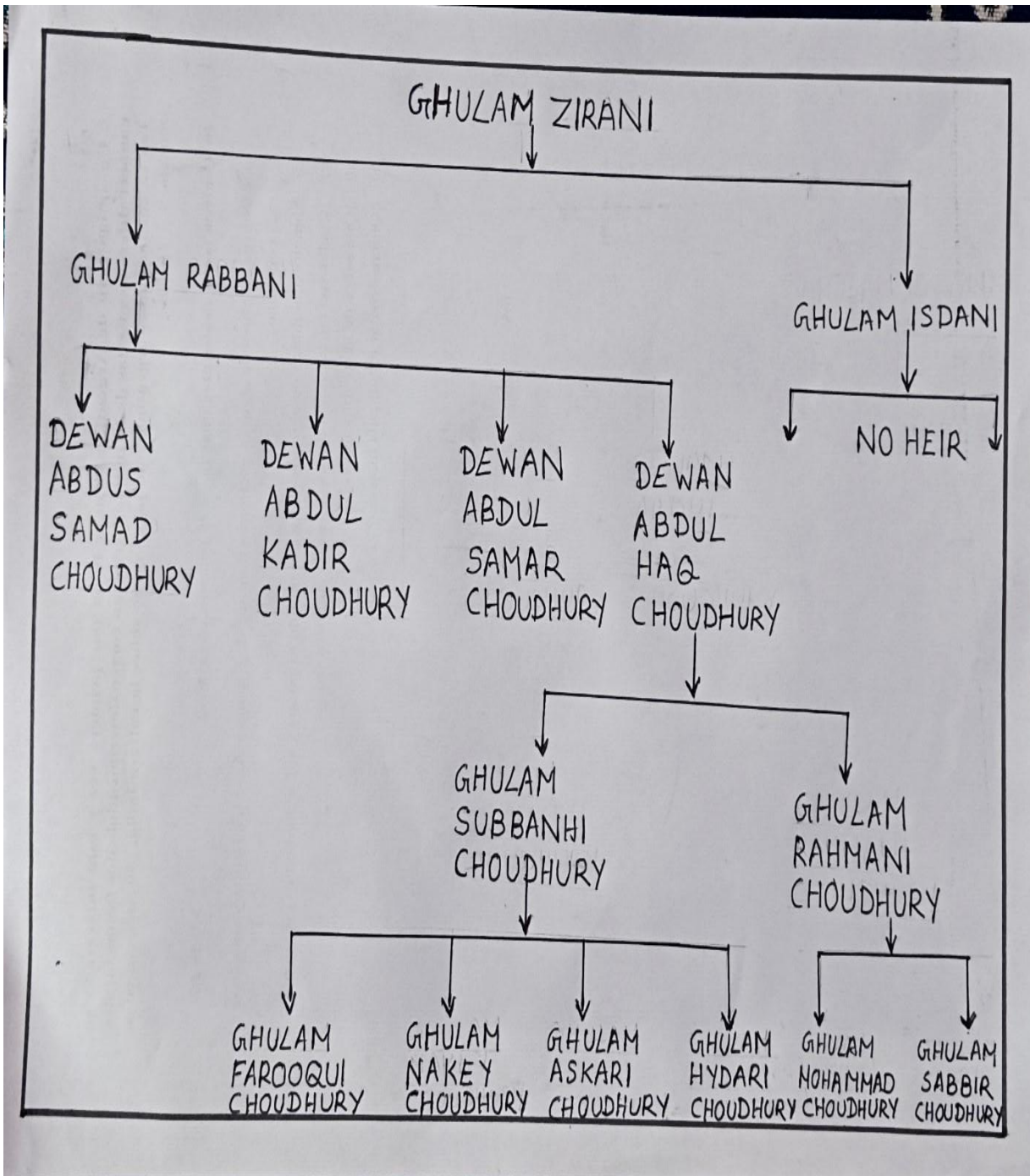


MAP DEPICTING THE RIVERS OF ASSAM THROUGH WHICH THE LOWER STRATA OF AHOMS MIGHT HAVE CROSSED TO REACH BARGOOL

SETTLEMENT OF MUSLIMS AS ZAMINDARS IN BARGOOL

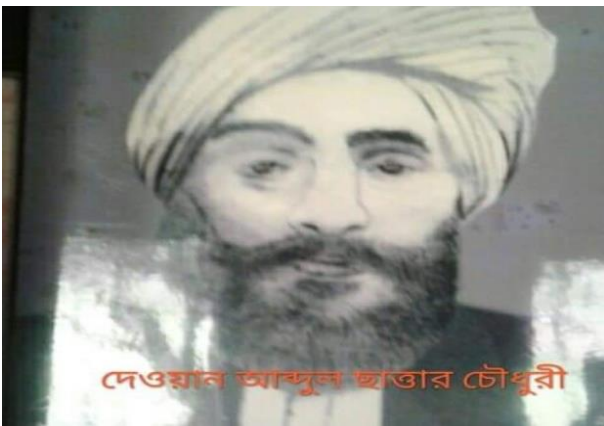
The zamindari system in Bargool began with the coming of a zamindar named Ghulam Zirani from Allahabad during the time in the latter part of 16th century when the Mughals defeated the Ahoms in undivided Sylhet. With this event the zamindari system began in Bargool, (Choudhury, 2023)

15 THE HIERARCHICAL ORDER OF THE MUSLIM ZAMINDARS OF BARGOOL IS DISPLAYED IN THE FOLLOWING DATA:





DEWAN ABDUL HAO CHOUDHURY



DEWAN ABDUL CHAWAR CHOUDHURY



GHULAM RAHMANI CHOUDHURY

DEWAN ABDUL CHAWAR CHOUDHURYGHULAM RAHMANI CHOUDHURY



GHULAM SHUBBANHI CHOUDHURY

The mansion of Ghulam Zirani, popularly known as ‘Mohammad Choudhury Bari ‘ in Hasanpur estate stood in an area of 144 bigha bearing a mosque. The breadth of the wall of the mosque is 4.5 feet. Its construction was started by Ghulam Zirani and was completed by Ghulam Rabbani. (Choudhury, Zamindari System of Bargool during the late 17th century, 2023)



MANSION OF ZAMINDAR GHULAM ZIRANI



MOSQUE CONSTRUCTED BY GHULAM ZIRANI

19

As per conversation with the zamindar, Ghulam Nakey Choudhury, the great great grandson of Ghulam Zirani, it can be assumed that these zamindars provided shelter to the Ahoms after being eloped from the Ahom kingdom. The Ahoms were appointed as tenants in the lands of the muslim zamindars in Bargool. Two types of tenants existed in Bargool during those days:-

- i) Nankar who paid tribute and were denied of paying any direct tax like- barber, laundry, farmer.
- ii) Ryots who paid tax and utilized the zamindari rights.

In Bargool, the zamindari rights were in the hands of the forefathers of Motinuddin and Moinuddin. Both of them received the zamindari patta as per British rule. But circumstances compelled them to settle in East Pakistan. As the zamindari patta were in the names of Motinuddin and Moinuddin, so people of Bargool, hitherto didn't receive any patta from the Government of Assam (Choudhury, Owner of land of Bargool during the 17th century, 2023)



INTERVIEW WITH ZAMINDAR GHULAM NAKEY CHOUDHURY



INTERVIEW WITH PARUL HAZARIKA . ONE OF THE LOCAL INHABITANT OF PRESENT BARGOOL

2011 Census Report of India gives a pellucid illustration of Bargool population of Karimganj (Assam). Total households that resides in Bargool is 43. Total population stands at 172. Male population comprised of 82 and female population consisted of 90. Population of children with age group (6 years) stands at 46. This is about 26.74 % of total population of the village.

Bargool village bears the literacy rate of 37.30%. Amongst, the literacy rate of male is 45.31% and that of female stands at 29.03%. Complete absence of schedule caste (SC) and Schedule Tribe (ST) can be seen in Bargool village. Bargool is enwreathed by some villages like – Adarkona, Alekargool, Alakulipur, Arengabad, Barthal.

Its distance from Karimganj is about 19.3 kilometers. Present Badarpur is the nearest town of Bargool village. Its geographical area is 28.61 hectares. The pin code and village code of Bargool village is 788712 and 3000069 respectively. (Bargool Village in Karimganj, Assam, 2024)

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN BARGOOL

The teaching – learning process started in Bargool in a cottage (made of tin and brick)bearing the name ‘‘ Krishna Guru Sevashram’’.It was like the then gurukul, where religious teachings were furnished to the children. The medium of instruction was Assamese. The dilapidated structure of the ‘‘ Krishna Guru Sevashram ‘‘ can still be seen in Bargool situated in the land opposite of the present ‘‘ Bargool Assamese High School ‘‘. This was later shifted to the land where present ‘‘Bargool Assamese High School’’ was established.(Das, 2023)



DILAPIDATED STRUCTURE OF ‘‘ KRISHNA GURU SEVASHRAM ‘‘

23

Bargool Assamese High School is a Government school established in 1976. The land of the school was donated by Monilal Hazarika. It was provincialised in 1991. It is managed by the Department of Education. It is located in Badarpur block which is a rural area in Karimganj district. Its medium of instruction is Assamese. The school code is 18220100104. It falls under the cluster of Anglabazzar.(Hazarika, 2023)

It bears the epithet as one of ‘‘ The oldest school ‘‘ of Bargool. Hitherto, 36 batches have successfully passed from past 36 years.



THE PRESENT FACULTY (2023) OF “ BARGOOL ASSAMESE HIGH SCHOOL “

FESTIVALS

The people of Bargool are greatly attached to their traditional festivals, i.e., Bihu. Three types of Bihu festivals are celebrated by the people of Bargool with pomp and show – Rongalibihu, Bhogalibihu and Kongalibihu. Apart from these, they also offer their prayers in Namgharhs. Sometimes Satsanghs are also performed by them.

Literally, Namgharh also called Kirtanghar is a prayer hall where the Assamese people conduct their religious activities in addition to various educational, cultural, religious and political activities.

The concept of Namgharh was introduced by Shankardev, the renowned Assamese polymath of Assam during 15-16th century, who initiated the practice of ‘‘ Eksarana Dharma ‘‘. The Namgharh in Bargool was established in 1826. The central point of the life of the local

inhabitants of Bargool is the Namgharh where they meet for religious activities. They meet in Namgharh for congregations, dramatic performances (Bhaona), practice naam (devotional songs), Bhakti (devotion to God). Generally, the people of Bargool meet every Saturday or Sunday in Namgharh, but during the month of Bhado(August – September) they meet everyday to offer prayer to Lord Krishna. This Bhado month is the birth month of Lord Krishna. They perform ecstatic religious bhakti geet towards Lord Krishna like – diha naam, tukari naam and so on.(Baruah S. C., 2023)





COMMUNITY HALL OF ‘ KRISHNAGURU ASHRAM ‘ AT BARGOOL



FOUNDATION STONE OF ‘ COMMUNITY HALL ‘

29

All these gives a clear picture of the state of harmony and peace that the local people of Bargool follow in their life.

Bargool is an agro-based village and its inhabitants earn their livelihood by rendering minimal services. While having conversation with the local inhabitants, I found that every household are practicing their traditional activities what their ancestors used to perform under the Ahom kingdom. Weaving, farming, agriculture, pisci culture, poultry, knitting (assamesegamusa, mekhlachador, assamese turban), horticulture, granary, blacksmith, goldsmith, silversmith, pottery, babysitting etc. Their economic condition is very deplorable and require immediate

government attention. Scope for higher education seems to be scarce. They still depend upon village headman for solving issues. Some portions of road are still kuccha and the people lack scope to earn money. The markets are also not sufficiently established to meet their needs. They need to move to Badarpur, Karimganj and Silchar to buy their necessary articles. Absence of private sector job makes them dependent totally on unskilled labour to earn their livelihood.

The significance of unskilled labour, absence of technology can be easily traced in Bargool. The agriculture and farming activities in Bargool are mainly meant not for commercial purposes, but only for self. Infact, Bargool follows a self-dependent self economy.

After their emancipation from Ahom kingdom, the lower class of the Ahom kingdom started surviving in Bargool under the shelter and protection of the Muslim zamindars. They worked as tenants in the land of Muslim Zamindars to earn their sources.

These Assamese inhabitants of Bargool, hitherto live in close proximity with the Muslims. Hitherto no collision is heard between Assamese and Muslims and they live enjoying each others company.

Noteworthy: Hitherto, the local people of Bargool didn't own their land because they didn't receive patta of the land after the zamindari system was abolished by the then British government and later on by the authorities of independent India.

[The Zamindari system was finally abolished in 1951 by the Constitution of India after which the state was allowed to modify and legislate "The Right to Property" on dissolution of "Zamindari System".]

For this specific reason the Assamese community in Bargool is not getting facilities upto the mark and the government is not extending its helping hand and the land where some of these communities have been living have not been given patta due to some disputes related to land revenue act.

The main objective of my Research Paper is to attract attention of the Government of Assam to start development work in Bargool and to grant government facilities to upgrade their livelihood, as this "BARGOOL VILLAGE" is one of the legacy of the "AHOM – MUGHAL CONFLICT" and one of the "ASSAMESE COMMUNITIES" of Barak valley.

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