

CHAPTER—III

THE DUARS

In this chapter, the details of the *Duars* numbering thirteen in all, which lay between Assam and Bhutan are dealt with. These *Duars* play crucial role in the determination of the relations between Assam and Bhutan. The term '**Duar**' literally meaning '**door**' in English, is used to refer to the areas below the foothills is equivalent to Bhutanese '**las-sgo**' (lit. work-door) which always carries the sense of a border mart at the foot of a pass and the area in its immediate vicinity.¹ Of these, five *Duars*, viz. Bijni, otherwise called Bagh Duar, Sidli, Chirang, Ripu and Guma, collectively known as the Eastern Duars, were situated between the river Manas on the east and the Sonkosh on the west. Five other *Duars* viz. Bijni, Chapakhamar, Chapaguri, Banska and Gorkola, together known as Kamrup Duar, were situated between the river Barnadi on the east and the Manas on the west. The remaining three *Duars* viz. Killing, Buriguma and Koriapar, known as Darrang Duars were situated between the Dhansiri on the east and the Barnadi on the west. Through these *Duars* excepting that of Koriapar, Assam had maintained its relations with Bhutan. The Koriapar Duar was held by the chiefs of the Monpas, known as the *Sat Rajas*, who were directly subordinate to the *Towang Raja*, a tributary to Tibetan government at Lhasa.²

The more southern portion of the *Duar* area is, by nature, singularly rich and fertile, and the soil is rich black and is thus suitable for rice cultivation.³ Further north of this tract to the foot of the mountains, the intervening space is generally occupied by dense and lofty forests of *sal*, *khair*, *sisu*, and other valuable trees and bamboo. In some instances it is covered with dense heavy grass.⁴ However, the most northern portion of the *Duar* that immediately borders the hills presents a rugged, irregular and sloping surface, occasioned by the spurse and inferior height. Deep valleys and open areas are found amongst these subordinate ranges. Thickest of vegetation extent through all the forested portions which swam with animals like, elephant, tiger, buffalo, pig, sambhor,

1 M Aris, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

2 M. L. Bose, *Historical and Constitutional Documents of North-East India*, p.32.

3 Eshly Eden, Memorandum, 21 April, 1864 ; Foreign Proceedings No. 45, p. 26.

4 Eshly Eden and others, *Political Mission to Bhutan*, comprising the Reports of the Hon'ble Eshly Eden, 1864, Captain R. B. Pemberton, 1837-38, with Dr. Griffith's and the Account by Baboo Kishen Kant Bose, p. 161.

deer etc. A variety of birds are found in this tract.⁵ The region has subtropical monsoon climate and is therefore hot and humid. Its annual rainfall is excessive.⁶

The important rivers which flow through the region are the Sonkosh, the Saralbhanga, the Ai, the Manas, the Pagladia, the Barnadi and the Dhansiri, all flow towards south into the Brahmaputra.⁷

Rice is the staple crop ; but other crops like barley, mustard, black gram grown in small quantity and long pepper is also cultivated.⁸

The tract was formerly inhabited by people, called Meches and Kacharis, the only classes apparently able to live in these malarial zone in consequence of the atrocities of the Bhutias.⁹ South from this, there is a plain which varies from 16km to 32km in width, and was chiefly occupied by Koches and Rajbongsis.¹⁰

All trade between Assam and Bhutan passed through the *Duars*. *Muga*, silk cloth, *endi* cloth, dried fish and rice were exported from Assam. Imports from Bhutan consisted of woollen cloth, gold-dust, rock salt, yaktails musk, ponies, blankets etc.¹¹

In 1838, Pemberton observed that “the *Duars* were most valuable of Bhutan territory” and “that the Bhutanese either directly or indirectly obtained almost every articles of consumption or luxury” from the trade with the *Duars*. A considerable revenue seems to have been collected from the *Duars* or custom houses of the eight *Duars* of Kamrup and Darrang.¹² The British government expected a revenue of between sixty and seventy thousand rupees per annum, whereas under the existing system, they yielded a revenue between eight and nine thousand; and it was lamented that this sum was annually becoming less, from the unabated perseverance in a system which ceases to demand only when the power to give is totally exhausted.¹³ Col. Houghton estimated the revenue of rice of the tract to two lakhs of rupees in the “first year” and an increase to six lakhs in a few years.¹⁴

5 W. W. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Assam*, p. 115.

6 B. J. Hasrat, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3.

7 *Ibid.*

8 W. W. Hunter, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-24.

9 Eshly Eden and others, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

10 Francis Hamilton, *An Account on Assam*, p. 67 ; A Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

11 S.K. Goswami, *A History of Revenue Administration in Assam*, p. 123.

12 R. B. Pemberton, *Report on Bootan*, p. 97.

13 Eshly Eden and others, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

14 *Friend of India*, July 13, 1865, p. 801.

The winter migration of large sections of the eastern Bhutanese towards the warmer areas of the south must have brought them into contact at an early date with the local tribes inhabiting the plains. The clan rulers of eastern Bhutan appear to have gradually won traditional rights of taxation over these border people during the weak days of the rulers of plains and they regarded themselves as the absolute owner of the *Duars*. This pattern recurs further to the east where other groups who were broadly Tibetan enjoyed a measure of control over the plains.¹⁵ As we have seen, the Monpas of Kameng gained authority over the Koriapar *Duar* and further east still there existed the Bhutias of Chariduar.¹⁶

In the history of Bhutan, the *Drugpa* or *Brugpa* (the inhabitants of Bhutan) were constantly colliding with the Tibetans for securing the land in western, northern and eastern frontiers. Under this situation it was natural for them to turn their attention southwards to the *Duars* which they found easy to take possession. With the establishment of a stable centralized political structure, the Bhutanese required a measure of economic surplus resources, which were not available in their bare mountain. The *Duars* provided the additional surplus resources and consumer articles such as rice, dried fish, meat, areca nut, tobacco, cotton and silk cloth for the use not only of the Bhutanese people but also in the *Dzong* (fortress) where a huge body of monks and the state functionaries reside.¹⁷

It is said that the *Khen* or *Khengpa*, the ancient people of central Bhutan (*Khen*, means "wild" or "orphan") were perverted cattle herders and warriors. For ages they used to bring their cattle and sheep down to plains for grazing in winter months and also to barter *yak* tails, blankets and other products against rice, dried fish, cotton and silk cloth etc.¹⁸

The north bank of the Brahmaputra was under the domination of the Bhuyans when the Ahoms entered Assam.¹⁹ Tradition records that the *Raja* of Kamatapur, named Dhurlab Narayan, went to war against Dharma Narayan or Goureswar, king of Gour

15 M. Aris, *op. cit.*, p. 110-11.

16 E. A. Gait, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

17 A. C. Sinha, *Bhutan Ethnic Identity and National Dilemma*, pp. 127-29.

18 *Ibid*, p. 127.

19 E. A. Gait, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

(part of the modern Sylhet now in Bangladesh), and defeated him. After a peace treaty concluded between them, Dharma Narayan sent seven families of Brahmin and seven families of *Kayastha* to Dhurlab Narayan, who settled them on the frontier as wardens and gave them land and slaves.²⁰

When Biswa Singha (1515-40) rose to power, the local chiefs, who ruled the country between the river Sonkosh and the Barnadi were subdued and the Koch occupied the *Duar* areas. Biswa Singha had established a considerable influence in Bhutan as well. In order to maintain regular communication with the plains for trading purpose through the *Duars* or passes, the Bhutias had to pay tribute to the Koch government.²¹

With division of the Koch kingdom in 1581 into two parts, the territory between the Sonkosh and the Bharali together with the passes passed under the control of Koch Hajo under Raghudeb, son of Chilarai. The territory lying to the west of the Sonkosh river together with the passes, passed under the control of Naranarayan.²² Consequently the Bhutias were compelled to pay tribute to both Koch rulers. The conflict between the two Koch kingdoms was taken advantage of by the Bhutias, and the Koch were pushed to their southern boundary across the hills proper into the plains.

In 1612, the Mughals invaded the kingdom of Parikshit, the son of Raghudeb and defeated him in 1614. This led to the annexation of his kingdom as far as the Bharali river to the Mughal empire. In the meantime one of the brothers of Parikshit Narayan named Bali Narayan, fled and took shelter in the Ahom kingdom. Ahom king Pratap Singha (1603-1641) extended assistance to him to recover the territory lying between the Bharali and the Barnadi from the hands of the Mughals. After the battle of Bharali in 1616, Bali Narayan was installed at Darrang as a tributary of Ahom king with the title of 'Dharma Narayan'. This brought the Ahoms on to the Bhutan frontier.²³

On the frontiers of the province of Darrang which came under the possession of the Ahoms, the Bhutia transgression was temporarily checked by the combined forces of

20 *Ibid*, p. 40.

21 L. Devi, *op cit.*, p. 196.

22 *Ibid*, p. 197 ; E. A. Gait, *op cit.*, p. 62.

23 S. K. Bhuyan (ed.), *Kamrupar Buranji*, pp. 25-30 ; N. C. Sarma (ed.), *Darrang Raj Vangsavali*, pp. 64-65 ; Khan Choudhury Amanulla Ahmed, *Koch Beharer Itihas*, pp. 90-115.

the Ahoms and the Koches and consequently the two important *Duars* on the frontier of Darrang, Buriguma and Killing remained in possession of the Ahom government.²⁴ On the otherhand, it is said that during the Ahom-Mughal wars in the middle of 17th century, the Bhutias attempted to take possession of the whole of the fertile plains south of their hills as the far as Gohain Kamal Ali.²⁵

During the reign of Jayadvhaj Singh (1648-1663 A.D.), the *Rajas* of Bhutan requested the transfer of the *Duars* to Bhutan. As a result of this, an agreement was drawn up with the usual formalities between the Ahoms and the Bhutias. In this way the control of the Darrang Duars passed into the hands of the Bhutias. The Bhutias agreed to pay an annual tribute for the ceded territory as far as the Gohain Kamal Ali which was prescribed as the limit. The Raja of Darrang was directed to receive the tribute and also manage all transaction with the Bhutias.²⁶ It was also provided that the Darrang Duars were to be annually surrendered to the Ahom government for four months from *Ashar* to *Aswin*.²⁷ (that is from the 15th of June to the 15th of October).

At that period, Kamrup was not under the Ahoms, and wars were fought between the Ahoms and the Mughals for Kamrup. By a treaty concluded between the Ahom general Momai Tamuli Barbarua and the Mughal Commander Allah Yar Khan, in 1639 A.D., the Barnadi on the north and the Asurar Ali on the south of the Brahmaputra near Guwahati were fixed as the boundary between the Ahom and the Mughal territories. For the next 20 years, the country to the west of this boundary line remained in possession of the Mughals.²⁸

It was in 1658-59, the Ahom king Jayadvhaj Singha wrested Kamrup from the Mughals. But in 1662, it was reconquered by the Mughals. The brief period of Ahom occupation did not afford the Ahoms to pay attention to the Bhutan Duars.²⁹ It is only after 1681 A.D., that the Manas river was fixed as the boundary between the territories of the Ahoms and the Mughals.³⁰

24 L. Devi, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

25 J. P. Wade, *An Account of Assam*, pp. 225-27.

26 L. Devi, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

27 A Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 10 ; L. Devi, *op. cit.*, p. 262 ; Colonel White, *Historical Miscellaney*, Vol I, p. 24-25.

28 E. A. Gait, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

29 L. Devi, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

30 E. A. Gait, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

The Ahom government now found the Bhutias in possession of the *Kamrup Duars*, including the plain district as far as the Gohain Kamal Ali,³¹ for which the Bhutias paid to the Ahoms 24 *tolas* of gold-dust, 36 ponies, 24 pieces of musk, 24 cow tails, 24 daggers, 24 blankets and 2400 rupees in cash, the value of which was estimated at Rs. 4785-1 *narayani* rupees.³² However, the Bhutias were not regular in their payment of tribute and, on the otherhand, the later Ahom government was too weak to enforce either regular or full payment of tribute. With the advent of the British in 1826 the payment of tribute in kind had led to endless troubles. But the British were too conscious of their rights. The British obtained the tribute from the Bhutias by public auction of the articles. If the stipulated amount (Rs. 4785-1) were not realised from the sale, the difference between the prices fetched and the amount due were reckoned as arrears.³³ In course of time the arrears mounted up, which the Bhutan government did not care to clear off. It is for non-payment of tribute some *Duars* occasionally attached and finally in 1841, the Kamrup and Darrang *Duars* between Assam and Bhutan were annexed by the British. And the British agreed to pay to the Bhutan government a sum of Rs. 10,000 annually as compensation for the loss of revenue of the *Duars*,³⁴ and in 1844, the Koriapar Duar was annexed by the British government on annual payment of Rs. 5,000 by way of compensation.³⁵

It has already been mentioned that before the Ahom occupation, passes leading from the hills to the plains were under the occupation of the Koch government and the Bhutias who came to the plain for trading purposes through the passes had to pay tribute to the Koch government. The officers in-charge of the *Duars* were known as *Subah*.³⁶ It is recorded that on the eve of expedition against the Ahoms in 1562, Naranarayan ordered the construction of a hill fort and a temple near Bhamarakund.³⁷ In it, Naranarayan placed an image of Goddess Durga and appointed a Kachari as its priest. He then collected all the Bhutias of *Duars*, the Kacharis and Meches living between the

31 L. Devi, *op. cit.*, pp. 261-62.

32 R. M. Lahiri, *Annexation of Assam*, p. 216 ; Political Consultation January 7, 1833, No. 82 ; S. K. Goswami, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

33 R. M. Lahiri, *op. cit.*, P. 217.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 222 ; Ashly Eden and others, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

35 A. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-20.

36 L. Devi, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

37 H. C. Goswami, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-65.

Bhutan hills and the Gohain Kamal Ali and ordered that the former could follow their tribal custom in the territory upto the Gohain Kamal Ali. The Bhutias were further instructed to pay him tribute of gold, horse, skins, musk and *kingkhap*.³⁸ So throughout the 16th century the Koches had considerable influence over the *Duars*.

After 1615, when Darrang came to the possession of the Ahoms, the two important *Duars*, viz. Buriguma and Killing remained in the possession of the Ahom government.³⁹ The Ahom government managed the *Duars* through the *Duarieas* appointed by the Ahom government. The Darrang *Duars* were jointly managed by the Ahoms and the Bhutias. The overall charge of revenue administration of Lower Assam was assigned to the *Barphukan*. His headquarters was at Guwahati. From the time of Gadadhar Singha his jurisdiction was extended to both Kamrup and Darrang districts.⁴⁰ The Ahom government appointed collectors as well as police officers for four months over the Darrang *Duars*.⁴¹ The Ahoms also maintained the *Duars* by the appointment of *Katakis*, who were very careful to see that they could not collect from the ryots more than their fixed dues. The Bhutias coming by one *Duar* was not allowed to pass to another *Duar* without prior permission from the *Katakis*. Besides certain men in the *Duars*, were entrusted with police duties, who were to carry out the order of the *Barphukan* only and were entirely exempted from Bhutias exactions.⁴²

On the otherhand, the *Duars* bordering Kamrup were under the occupation and administered by the Bhutias all the year round. However, the Bhutias were never able to obtain absolute possession of the Assam *Duars*, as they had of those of Bengal.⁴³

The Kamrup and Darrang *Duars* between the river Manas and Dhansiri were under the jurisdiction of *Tongso Penlop*.⁴⁴ Below the *Tongso Penlop* were *Subah* or *Jongpens*, and under the *Subah*, lower rank officers called *Laskar* or *Mondol*, or *Uzir* were appointed.⁴⁵

The British appointed a certain class of persons called *Sezawal*, by whom the

38 Khan Choudhury A. A., *op. cit.*, p. 107.

39 L. Devi, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

40 S. K. Goswami, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

41 L. Devi, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

42 W. Robinson, *A Descriptive Account of Assam*, p. 348.

43 Ashly Eden and others, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

44 Political Despatch to the Court of Directors, No. 56, 8 September, 1857, Para 187.

45 Eshly Eden and others, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

tribute was to be collected from the Bhutia officers, and then paid into the local treasuries.⁴⁶ In 1843-44, the northern *Duars* were brought under the assesment on the land tax.⁴⁷ In Kamrup each *Duar* were placed under the management of a *Choudhury*.⁴⁸

In Darrang district in 1841-42, *Duar Koriapar*, *Buriguma* and *Killing* were made altogether eight distinct divisions. *Chatgharee*, *Buriguma* and *Killing Duars* were placed under the management of Mr. Hudson, who was stationed at *Mongoldoi* and was vested with the powers of Deputy Collector.⁴⁹ A detachment of 2nd Assam Light Infantry was stationed at *Tezpur*, *Mongoldoi* and *Udalguri* numbering 293 men of all grades.⁵⁰ On the proposal of Lieutenant Vincent, a *Zamader* and twelve *choukidars* were entertained for the purpose of going through the *Duars*, and collecting information of what was going on the other side of the frontier for six months.⁵¹ Some stockades and outposts were also established at the *Duars* for protecting the ryots from the outrages of the Bhutias.

After the occupation of Bengal *Duars* by the Bhutias between the river *Durlah* and the *Manas* river, they went under the jurisdiction of the *Paro Penlop*, the Governor of the western division of Bhutan.⁵² Next to the rank of *Paro Penlop* was Bhutanese officer known as *Subha* or *Lashkar*. Below the *Subah*, an officer called them *Katma* appointed directly by the *Deb Raja* of Bhutan. They resided in the plain and exercised immediate control in the management of the *Duars*. Though subordinate in rank, the resourcefull *Katma* were the pivot of Bhutanese administration in the plains. The revenue of the *Duars* were most often appropriated by the *Penlop* for meeting the expense of administration. These were realised in kind, such as rice, oil, ghee, butter, dried fish and coarse cotton cloth etc. An ancient system called *Gaongiri* was prevalent in the *Duars*, by which, on payment of a stipulated sum the right to trade was granted to an inhabitant.⁵³

According to a later survey and settlement of the Western *Duars*, "Under the

46 *Ibid.*, p. 163.

47 A. J. Maffat Mill, *Report on the Province of Assam*, p. 321.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 318.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 339.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 49.

51 *Ibid.*

52 Political Despatch to the Court of Director, No. 56, 8 September, 1857, para 187.

53 Ashly Eden and others, *op. cit.*, p. 9 ; A. Deb, *Bhutan and India*, p. 113 ; B. J. Hasrat, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

Bhutan government land was left rent free for five years after the forests had been cut and was then assessed at area rates according to the *hal* or plough, a local measure of about five acres." There were also a "special cess on mustard seeds indicating the commencement of assessing the higher ground". A local rate of "one rupee a *hal* and 2 rupees per house was levied for *pujas*" (worship). There were other taxes like, the "dao tax" levied on those who temporarily squatted in the jungles, taxes on looms, licences to trade and to play boats.⁵⁴

After the annexation of the Western Duars in 1865, by the British, Mr. Tweedie, the first Deputy Commissioner found that the Bhutias realised the revenue of the Western Duars by *Tehsilders* direct from the *Joteders* and the *Joteders* were represented the original reclaimers of the soil. Their rights were hereditary and in fact passed through many generations. The *Joteder* was looked up on as the master overall; he managed the affairs of the whole state and used to let out the lands to the under-tenant and retained what he chose for his special use; his word was law.⁵⁵ Under *Joteders* there were "*Chukaniders*" "*ryots*" and the "*prajas*". Mr. Tweedie reported that the *Chukaniders* from whom they were distinguished only by the length of the terms for which they engaged. In British revenue these two classes were amalgamated under the name of *Chukaniders*. This was in pursuance of a policy aimed to settle the land in the western Duars with residents who would cultivate some or all their lands themselves.⁵⁶

The widespread prevalence of the system of unpaid labour had always been underlined. It appears that the Bhutanese officials in the *Duar* could not exercise anything like administrative control without restoring to the "*custom*" of unpaid labour. It is recorded that the *Totos*, a tribe who inhabited the lower slopes of the hills, used to give labour in lieu of rent for land. They used to carry the *Subah's* order from one place to another and built bridges annually.⁵⁷ Another tribe, the *Meches* paid rent in elephants' tusk, stag skin, etc.⁵⁸

54 A. Deb, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

55 *Ibid.*, p. 115.

56 J. A. Milligans, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operation in the Jalpaiguri District*, p. 135.

57 From Captain W. H. J. Lance to Col. Haughton, December 20, 1864, para 26, Bhutan Political Proceedings, No 37.

58 *Ibid.*, para 13.

A very common custom which was prevalent in the *Duars* was the feeding of the Bhutanese soldiers who happened to be there or passing through them on some kind or other official business.⁵⁹ The Bhutanese officials in the *Duars* used to receive payment for allowing their subjects the right to intra- *Duar* trade.⁶⁰

Most of the *Katma* and *Lashkar* were Kacharis, Assamese and Bengalis because no Bhutia settled in the *Duar* areas. These officers collected the revenue and had charge of the police.⁶¹ They were nominally appointed by *sanad* of the *Deb Raja*, but virtually at the recommendation of the *Penlops* in whose jurisdiction they were comprised, and without whose sanction they never be able to retain their situations even for an hour. These officers were the main incharges of the *Duars*.⁶²

The *Jongpen* or *Subahs* in charge of the different districts to which the *Duars* were attached, and who generally resided in the mountain and were chosen from amongst the most favoured class of Bhutia. The *Subahs* received no fixed salaries ; they naturally looked to the territories under their jurisdiction as a source of profit and almost every article of consumption was drawn from the *Duars* under the name of tribute.⁶³

After the British occupation of Assam due to many factors the Bhutias were compelled to surrender the area in 1865. The Guma, Ripu, Chirang, Sidli, Bijni *Duar* areas were formed into an independent district under the name of Eastern Duars under the charge of a Deputy Commissioner, who had his headquarters at Datma.⁶⁴ However, in December, 1866, the District of Eastern *Duars* was incorporated to Goalpara.⁶⁵ The Eastern *Duars* were excluded from the operation of the general regulation by the Act XVI of 1869.⁶⁶ The revenue administration was governed by the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation. The Regulation was also extended to the whole of Goalpara District including the *Duars*.⁶⁷

59 A. Deb, *op. cit.*, P. 117.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 118.

61 F. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, 69.

62 Ashly Eden and others, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

63 *Ibid.*

64 W. W. Hunter, *op. cit.*, 107.

65 *Ibid.*

66 *Ibid.*, (All suit relating to immovable property, revenue and rent are accepted from the jurisdiction of the civil court by Act XVI of 1869).

67 *The Assam Land Revenue Manual*, Vol.-I, p. XLII.

The first settlement of the Eastern *Duars* was made in 1872 by Mr. Beckett⁶⁸ and finally in the same year, the Eastern *Duar* together with the whole of the Goalpara district were transferred to the Chief Commissioner of Assam.⁶⁹

In 1874, Assam was constituted into an independent province under a Commissioner and the Eastern *Duars* had been permanently attached to Bengal. But the settled portion of Goalpara and Eastern *Duars* were under the control of a single officer,⁷⁰ and remained upto 1905, when in 1912, the portion of Bengal was again abolished, Goalpara along with the Eastern Duars was reverted to Assam.⁷¹

KORIAPAR DUAR :

Koriapar Duar lay to the east of Bhutan and it extended from the Doisam river to the Rowta river and was bounded to the north by Towang, on the south by the Gohain Kamal Ali, on the east by Chariduar and on the west by Buriguma *Duar*.⁷² This *Duar* is now in Kameng District of Arunachal Pradesh. During the Ahom days, this *Duar* was included in Satghari and was under the management of the *Sat Rajas*,⁷³ a group of chief.⁷⁴

The inhabitants of Koriapar Duar, though generally known as Bhutias, called themselves Monpas. They considered themselves subordinate to the chiefs of Towang who was subordinate to Tibet, whom Aitchison calls *Towang Deb Raja*.⁷⁵ The Monpas had well-developed village self-governing institutions at least for the last several hundred years. A *Tsorgon* was elected for a period of three years and each *Tsorgon* came to be in-charge of either a very large village or a group of small hamlets. These *Tsorgon* were known as *Rajas* to the people of the plains. It is known that this *Tsorgon* system was introduced in the 16th century.⁷⁶

68 B. C. Allen, *District Gazetteer*, p. 123.

69 W. W. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

70 *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol.-II, p. 330.

71 D. P. Baruah, *Goalpara District Gazetteer*, p. 66-77.

72 R. B. Pemberton, *Report on Bootan*, p. 117 ; E. A. Gait, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

73 The word '*Sat Rajas*' (seven chiefs) had perhaps not necessarily mean actual number of seven, The seven Rajas of Koriapar had been invariably recorded as pension holders.

74 W. Robinson, *op. cit.*, 292.

75 C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties Engagement and Sanad Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, p. 183.

76 G. S. Pillai, *Arunachal Pradesh Bulletin*, pp. 41-42.

Koriapar Duar was at first ruled by the Koches, followed by the Ahoms. During the Mughal invasions of Assam, the Bhutias infiltrated into the low land in the south.⁷⁷ After the Mughals were driven out, the Ahom king Pratap Singha (1603-1641) compelled them to enter into an agreement with the *Sat Rajas* of Koriapar Duar permitting them to hold the *Duar* for eight months in a year and the Ahom government retained their control for remaining four months.⁷⁸ This system was continued until 1839-1840. Koriapar was annexed to the rest of Assam in 1844 by the British, because of the misrule and failure to pay the tribute to the British.⁷⁹

In 1688, an Ahom, officer named Parbatrai, who went there to collect the taxes from the Kachari Moholias (i.e., traders in betel nuts) during the four months the Ahom government held jurisdiction over it, was prevented from collecting the taxes. When the *Barphukan* was informed about the matter, he sent an army. At a place, called *Ghoramara Choramar* where they encamped, the Bhutias suddenly attacked the fort at night and killed several men of the Ahoms. The Bhutias also took away four men from the outpost of Darrang Rajas three of whom escaped later. The dispute was settled when the Bhutias paid Rs. 2000 to the Ahom king and Rs. 1000 to the *Barphukan*.⁸⁰

In 1690, the Bhutias of Koriapar Duar killed Baidyanath Choudhury, the Ahom collector when he went to collect taxes from the Kachari Maholias. Later the *Duaria* captured the culprits who killed the collector and handed over them to the *Barphukan*. The Bhutias as well as the *Duaria* both confessed their guilt and paid Rs. 1000 as compensation.⁸¹

In 1691, again the Koriapar Bhutia prevented the collector from collecting the taxes from the Kachari Mahalias. The *Barphukan* suspected complicity of the Darrang Raja with these Bhutias, and accordingly charged the *Raja* to pay the amount due to the Ahom king. The *Darrang Raja* obeyed the direction and paid the money and informed the *Bargohain* and *Barphukan* that the Bhutias did not allow to collect the taxes and also transgressed their former boundary and had taken possession of the territory upto the

77 W. Robinson, *A Descriptive Account of Assam*, p. 292.

78 J. N. Choudhury, *Arunachal Pradesh from Frontier Tract to Union Territory*, p. 97.

79 A. J. Moffatt Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 401.

80 Assam Buranji, Tr. No. 78, Vol. 79, pp. 3-5.

81 L. Devi, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-6.

middle of the Gohain Kamal Ali, which they claimed as their boundary. After receiving the news, king Gadadhar Singha directed the *Darrang Raja* to construct a fort. While the construction work was in progress, the Bhutias killed several men of the *Darrang Raja*. On arrival of the reinforcement, the Bhutia fled away, and the tax was exacted. This ended the controversy over the collection of taxes from the *Duar* areas of Darrang frontier in the reign of Gadadhar Singha.⁸²

Koriapar Duar was ceded to the British when in 1843-44, the *Sat Raja's* in the company of the representative of Towang Durbar, had an interview with Captain Gordon, Assistant to the Governor-General's Agent and formally relinquished all the claims of the land of Koriapar Duar. A written Engagement (of a treaty) was made in consideration of an annual payment of Rs. 5,000, the amount which they used to realise from the tract by direct collection.⁸³

The Koriapar management was under the representative of Towang Monastery, named Shan Pradhar,⁸⁴ before the occupation of the Ahoms. It is believed that Shan Pradhar had settled down at Udalguri by the request of *Udalguri Raja*. It is also said that the Towang Monastery had the right to receive the *Posa* which in local term called "Si-bab".⁸⁵ Shan Pradhar or Shan Dongpetar was the associate of Tenpai Dornme, who was the contemporary of second Dalai Lama Credun Gyasto (1475-1543).⁸⁶

Koriapar Duar was also an important *Duar* for Assam and Tibet, as all the trade between Assam and Tibet passed through it. The traders from Assam passed through Koriapar, and also used it as a station for their commodities. For the better management of the *Duar*, there were also officers called *Sanzati*, whose duty was to realise the revenue. The duty was estimated upwards of Rs. 8000. This amount that accrued to the British government scarcely exceeded 350 rupees.⁸⁷ There were two *Gellongs* or Tibetan officials, appointed from Lhasa to supervise the local chiefs. Amratol was the

82 *Ibid.*

83 A. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-20 ; C. U. Aitchison, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

84 Shan Pradhar or Shan Dongpetar, was the associate of Tenpai Dornme, who was the contemporary of second Dalai Lama.

85 T. Lama, *A Religious Festival of Towang Monpas*, by Dr. P. C. Dutta ; Dr. D. K. Baruah, *Aspect of Culture and Custom of Arunachal Pradesh*, p. 164 ; Niranjana Sarkar, *Buddhism among the Monpas and Sherdukpens*, p. 6.

86 Niranjana Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

87 Robinson William, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

headquarters of the *Gellongs* in the cold season about half day journey across the frontier. As a rule the *Gellong* stayed at Amratol and only came to Udalguri on the occasion of visit from the chief Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner specially sends for them.⁸⁸ They always sent representatives, who were mere traders. The *Gellongs* were only for three years. He had the sole authority to receive the British Indian government pension and collected these from the annual fair at Udalguri, in addition seven pieces of broad cloth and four bottles of rums were given to certain *Rajas*. The broadcloth being given every year to different chiefs. Rupees 1,000 of the above mentioned sum went to the *Deb Raja* of Lhasa, and the balance was distributed between the *Rajas* and the *Gellongs*.⁸⁹

A *Khelwari* system was upheld in Koriapar till 1841-42 and in 1843-44 the *Mauzahari* system was introduced.⁹⁰ For the better management of the *Duar*, in 1852, a police station was established at Koriapar Duar and posted one *Darogah*, three *Mahuries*, one *Jamader*, ten *Taklas* and eight *Barkandazes*.⁹¹ In 1861, at Kariapar there were 70 men of military force to guard against possible attack of the Bhutias.⁹²

BURIGUMA DUAR :

At present it is partly under the jurisdiction of Udalguri and partly under Paneri of Darrang District. Buriguma Duar was bounded on the north by Bhutan, on the south by the Gohain Kamal Ali, on the east bounded by Koriapar Duar and west by Killing Duar.⁹³

Before the Ahoms, the *Duar* was occupied by the Koch in 1562.⁹⁴ But in 1615, when Darrang came under the possession of the Ahoms and consequently the two important Duars viz. Buriguma and Killing also came to the possession of the Ahoms⁹⁵ under the management of *Satghari*.⁹⁶ By the middle of 17th century, in the reign of

88 Foreign Proceedings, March 1885, No. 5.

89 Captain St. John Mitchell's Report, *Notes on the North-East Frontier of Assam*, p. 1 ; *Assam Administration Report*, p. 214.

90 A. J. Moffat Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 402.

91 *Ibid.*, p. 425.

92 Police Proceedings Bengal, December 1861, No. 180.

93 R. B. Pemberton, *op. cit.*, p. 117 ; N. C. Sarma (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

94 L. Devi, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

95 *Ibid.*, p. 255.

96 W. Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

Jaydhwaj Singha, the control of the Darrang Duars was ceded to the Bhutias for eight months by the Ahoms.⁹⁷

The Ahom Government directed the *Raja* of Darrang to receive the tribute and manage all transactions with the Bhutias.⁹⁸ In the time of Sunder Narayan, an officer known as *Guntia Baruah* was appointed and directed to receive the tribute and to manage all transactions with the Bhutias.⁹⁹ The Bhutias, on the otherhand, appointed a *Dzonpon* or officer-in-Charge at Buriguma Duar. In 1828, one Batitumpa was the incharge of Buriguma Duar.¹⁰⁰ The Bhutias also appointed a Revenue officer for the collection of revenue from the *Duar*.¹⁰¹ Buriguma Duar was under the immediate control of a Bhutia officer, called the *Doompa Raja*.¹⁰²

At the time of British occupation of Assam, Mohodor Baruah was the collector and police officer of the Bhutan Duars during the four months under the Ahoms rule.¹⁰³

In 1832, Buriguma Duar was included under the jurisdiction of Benker Subah, a Bhutanese official.¹⁰⁴ After the occupation of the *Duars* by the British, Duars Buriguma and Killing were placed under the fiscal management of an officer of the rank of Deputy Collector at Mongoldoi.¹⁰⁵

After the introduction of the *Khelwari* system which was upheld till 1841-42, a plough tax of Rs. 3 on each plough was levied. From 1843-44 the Mouzadari settlement was introduced.¹⁰⁶

KILLING DUAR :

Killing also known as Khalling Duar is situated 30 Km. north from Tongla under the Darrang District. Bhutiachang is the important market of the Duar. It has an area of 45 sq. Km. The important rivers that run through the *Duar* are the Barnadi, the Kulsi and the Nonoi.

97 L. Devi, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

98 *Ibid.*, p. 261.

99 J. P. Wade, *An Account of Assam*, p. 248.

100 A Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

101 Political Consultation, 14 August, 1834, No. 77.

102 Ashly Eden and others, *op. cit.*, p. 165.

103 L. Devi, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

104 Ashly Eden and others, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

105 A. J. Moffat Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 398.

106 *Ibid.*, p. 402.

Killing Duar was bounded on the north by Bhutan, on the south by the Gohain Kamal Ali, on the east by Buriguma Duar and on the west by Garkola Duar.¹⁰⁷

The Bhutanese tradition says that the whole of the area upto Khaling (Killing) in the east fell to the authority of Brugpa school founded by gTsang-pa rGya-ras-ye-shes rDo-rje about 1189. The monastery takes its name from the 'Thunder Dragon' (Brug).¹⁰⁸ It seems likely that for a time this continued to be controlled by the clans and later they ceded to the Government of Bhutan.¹⁰⁹ For the administrative purpose the Bhutan Darbar appointed several officers, called the *rGya-drung* to manage the *Duar*.¹¹⁰

Naranarayan occupied the Duars in 1562.¹¹¹ After 1615, when Darrang was taken possession by the Ahoms, it came under them. The Ahom king Jayadhwaj Singha, allowed the Bhutias to possess the *Duar* for eight months in a year.¹¹² The Ahoms managed the *Duar* through *Darrang Raja*. The latter appointed one *Guntia Baruah* to receive the tribute from the Bhutias and handed it over to the *Barphukan* at Guwahati. The *Baruah* also managed all transactions with the Bhutias.¹¹³

For the management of the *Duar*, the Bhutan *Darbar* appointed several officers called *rgya-drung*¹¹⁴ and over them there was a *Dzongpon* or officer-in-charge. There was also a revenue officer to collect the revenue from the *Duar*.¹¹⁵ In 1835, Gambhir Uzir or *Zinkaff*, an assamese by birth was the officer-in-charge of the Killing Duar.¹¹⁶

After the British annexation of the *Duar* in 1841, the *Khelwari* system was introduced there¹¹⁷ and *Choudhury*, *Patgiri* and *Zamadar* were appointed for its management. They collected the revenue and handed it over to the British treasury.¹¹⁸ The fiscal management of the *Duar* was placed under Mr. Hudson who was vested with the power of Deputy Collector at Mangoldoi.¹¹⁹

107 R. B. Pemberton, *op. cit.*, p. 117 ; N. C. Sarma (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

108 M. Aris, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

109 *Ibid.*

110 *Ibid.*

111 L. Devi. *op. cit.*, p. 279.

112 *Ibid.*

113 J. P. Wade, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

114 M. Aris, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

115 A. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 11 ; Political Consultation, 14 August 1834, No. 77.

116 Ashly Eden and others, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

117 A. J. Moffat Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 402.

118 *Ibid.*, p. 436.

119 *Ibid.*, p. 398.

GARKOLA DUAR :

Now situated under the District of Nalbari, the important markets of Garkola are Kumarikatta and Tamulpur. The important rivers are the Barnadi, the Pagladia and the Daranga (Lakhaitora) river. Garkola Duar was situated between the Pagladia and the Barnadi river, and bounded in the north by Bhutan, in the south by the Gohain Kamal Ali, in the east by Killing Duar and the west by Banska Duar.¹²⁰

During the time of the Ahoms, Garkola Duar was under the administrative jurisdiction of the *Pani Phukan* with his headquarters at Guwahati. But due to the weakness of the Ahom government in the declining days, the Kamrup Duar along with Garkola were handed over to the Bhutias in lieu of an annual tribute.¹²¹

In 1853, the *Duar* had 5 villages in a circle, with a cultivated area of 866 *Poorah* of land and the revenue was amounted to 1063 rupees and 13 annas with a population of 1387.¹²² The British appointed Bhukut Uzir Sazawal in 1853 as the officer-in-charge to the *Duar*.¹²³

BANSKA DUAR :

Modern Banska in 1976 is situated between the Pagladia and the Pahumara also called Pumara river and in the Nalbari District of Assam. It has an area of 40 sq. km. lying in the foot of the Bhutan mountain. Its population is about 4,086,470, and its main markets are Subankhata, Dhamdhama and now comprising Barama and Tamulpur, Banska is the most important borderline between India and Bhutan.¹²⁴

Banska Duar was bounded by Bhutan on the north, by the Gohain Kamal Ali on the south, Garkola on the east and Bijni Duar and Chapakhamar Duar on the west.¹²⁵

Brihadra Bhuyan, son of Gadadhar Bhuyam, the chief of Makhibaha in Barbhag was in possession of the eastern part of the country.¹²⁶ Brihadra was in charge of a couple of tracts lying in the border lines of Bhutan and Kamata. These two tracts known

120 R. B. Pemberton, *op. cit.*, p. 116 ; N. C. Sarma (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

121 L. Devi, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

122 A. J. Moffat Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

123 *Ibid.*

124 *Bungha* or *Banska* in Bhutanese means 'door'. Ashly Eden and others, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

125 R. B. Pemberton, *op. cit.*, p. 116 ; N. C. Sarma (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

126 N. N. Basu, *Social History of Kamrupa*, p. 24.

as Banska North Tangani (a group of villages) and Banska West Tangani.

The descendants of this family got the hereditary appointment in the *Bhuyanship* of the Nambarbhag, while other were vested with the charge of protecting the frontier provinces.¹²⁷ Koch king Biswa Singha subdued Banska Duar and gradually extended his rule as far as the Korotoya in the west and Barnadi on the east. He rose to power about 1515.¹²⁸ The power of Gadadhar Bhuyan was curtailed by the Koch kings, but their authority over Nambarbhag and Banska Tengani remained.¹²⁹

When the Ahoms annexed Kamrup as far as the Manas river in 1681, they turned the two Banskas as *Chamua* and the descendents of Gadadhara were appointed in the post of *Chamuadar*.¹³⁰

Banska Duar was under the immediate management of a Kachari officer called *Bura Talukdar*, and another Bhokut Uzir. They collected whatever tax was to be paid to the Bhutan government, and conveyed it to Dewangiri, the residence of the officer in the mountains who was their immediate superior ; and through whom all orders were conveyed to from the *Tongso Penlop*, the Governor of Eastern division of the Bhutan territory.¹³¹

After the annexation of Banska along with the other Kamrup and Darrang *Duars* by the British in 1841, the *Chamuadership* was kept in the tact for a period of about thirty years in possession of the descendants of the Bhutanese family.¹³² In 1853, Banska Duar was under the officer-in-charge named Bhokut Uzir. It had a cultivation area of 8252 *Poorah*, 1 *Doon*, and 2 *Kathas* and the revenue collected was amounted to 9840 rupees 13 annas and 2 paisas, with the population of 5981.¹³³

But during the *Mauzadership* of the Late Ganganarayan Choudhuri, Banska itself was turned into a *Mauza* and a second *Mauzadar* was appointed in charge of it.¹³⁴

127 *Ibid.*

128 E. A. Gait, *A History of Assam*, p. 48.

129 N. N. Basu, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

130 *Ibid.*

131 Ashly Eden and others, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

132 *Ibid.*

133 A. J. Moffat Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

134 *Ibid.*, p. 25.

KAMRUP BIJNI :

Bijni Duar at present, is under the Sarupeta Circle of Barpeta District. Its main rivers are the Beki and the Pahumara, and the main markets are Hudukata, Kumguri, Bhuyan-para and Ghoramara.

Bijni Duar was bounded on the north by Bhutan, on the south by the Gohain Kamal Ali, Chapaguri and Chapakhamar Duars, on the east by Banska Duar and on the west by Bijni Eastern Duar. The Kamrup Bijni Duar was situated between the rivers of the Manas and the Pagladia.¹³⁵ In 1853, Bijni Duar had 10 villages within its circle under the charge of an officer named Odhar Das. It had a cultivable area of 1337 *Poorah*, 1 *Doon*, 3 *Kathas* with an amount of 1457 rupees 4 annas with its population of 923.¹³⁶

In ancient times Bijni was the seat of *Kayastha Bara Bhuyan*.¹³⁷ And in 1515, Charu Bhuyan, the son of Rup Narayan of Bajali was the ruler of Bijni.¹³⁸ In the time of Koch king Biswa Singha (1515-1540 A. D.) Bijni was divided into two parts, southern and northern. The southern part was ruled by Venkatagiri and the northern part by Lakhinarayan which were subjugated by Biswa Singha. In the later days, the northern part was known as Bar Bijni and its capital was at Kardoiguri.¹³⁹ During the early 17th century the territory of old Kamarupa from the Sankosh to the Barnadi was annexed by the Mughals.¹⁴⁰ In 1658, when Shah Jahan fell sick and confusion prevailed in the Mughal empire Jayadhawaj Singh took advantage of it and the Koch were defeated and were driven across the Sankosh. The Ahoms now became the master of the whole of the Bhampaputra valley for nearly three years.¹⁴¹ In 1662, when Mir Jumla invaded Assam, Jayadhawaj Singha wanted to form a confederacy against the Mughals. For this purpose, he invited the rulers of the lower Assam and also the Bhuyans. Except the Bijni Bhuyan all the other Bhuyans helped the Ahom Raja. In 1671, the Ahoms defeated Ram Singha, the Mughal general, who retreated to Rangamati. The Ahoms then occupied Kamrup including Bijni. Gobinda Chandra, the Raja of Bijni fled to Bhutan, and later

135 R. B. Pemberton, *op. cit.*, p. 117, N. C. Sarma (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

136 A. J. Moffat Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

137 N. N. Basu, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 11.

138 Munindra Nath Sarma, *Bajalir Itibritya*, p. 12.

139 *Ibid.*

140 B. B. Hazarika, *Gazetteer of Kamrup*, p. 481.

141 E. A. Gait, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

with the help of the Bhutan government he recaptured Bijni. Bijni now turned into a tributary state of Bhutan.¹⁴² In the time of Naranarayan one Venkatagiri, a *Kayastha* became the Governor of Phulguri Bijni at the command of Naranarayan.¹⁴³

For the administrative purpose, the Bhutias divided Bijni into three parts viz. Bijni, Banska and Chapaguri, and Gobinda Chandra was appointed as the ruler.¹⁴⁴ When the Mughal annexed Kamrup, they brought the territory under their administration and created a *Vilayat* under the *Subedar* of Bengal with a *Fouzdar* at Hajo. This *Vilayat* was divided into four *Sarkars*. Each *Sarkar* was divided into a number of *Parganas* or *Mahals*. The four *Sarkars* were Kamrup, Dhekeri, Dakhinkul and Bangalbhum, and Bijni was one of the *Parganas* under Sarkar Kamrup.¹⁴⁵

Under the Ahom rule it was first placed under the authority of *Pani Phukan* appointed by the kings.¹⁴⁶

After the annexation of the *Duars* by the British in 1853, for the management purpose, an officer was appointed whose name was Odhar Das.¹⁴⁷

CHAPAKHAMAR DUAR :

At present Chapakhamar Duar is situated under Barpeta district. Its main markets are Shorbhog and Chapakhamar. Chapakhamar Duar was bounded on the north by Kamrup Bijni on the east by the Pahumara river on the south by the Gohain Kamal Ali and on the west by the Manas river.¹⁴⁸ In 1853, it had only 2 villages with a cultivable area of 133 *Poorah*, 3 *Doons*, 2 *Kathas* with a revenue of Rs. 134 annas 7. The officer in charge of the *Duar* was Luckenarayan.¹⁴⁹

CHAPAGURI DUAR :

It is now under the Bajali sub-division and is in Chapaguri mauza. It has three markets, Panimudra, Patacharkuchi and Rehabari ; the Pagladia is the important river.

142 Munindra Nath Sarma, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

143 N. N. Basu, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

144 Munindra Nath Sarma, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

145 B. B. Hazarika, *op. cit.*, p. 481.

146 S. K. Bhuyan, (ed.), *Kamrupar Buranji*, p. 111.

147 A. J. Moffat Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

148 R. B. Pemberton, *op. cit.*, p. 117 ; N. C. Sarma (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

149 A. J. Moffat Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

Chapaguri Duar was bounded on the north by Bhutan, on the south by the Gohain Kamal Ali, on the east by Banska Duar and on the west by the Pahumara river.¹⁵⁰ In 1853, it had 34 villages with a population of 4775 and its cultivable area was 4925 *Poorah*, 0 *Doon*, 4 *Katha* and 15 *Lecha*, and the revenue was amounted to 580 rupees and 7½ paise.¹⁵¹

In 1657, the Ahoms and the Koches jointly despatched army against the Mughal Subedar Mirza Nathan at Hajo. Mirza Nathan fled from Hajo when Bhabananda Kazi, the general of Koch king, proposed the Ahoms to divide the south and the north bank of the Brahmaputra between the Ahoms and the Koches. But the Ahom king Jayadhawaj Singha rejected the proposal and immediately occupied the important position in Kamrup. The Ahoms encamped at Chapaguri under Buduli Phukan and Lapeti Phukan and drove the Koches across the Mana river.¹⁵²

In 1671, after defeating the Mughals, the Ahoms occupied Kamrup and also captured Bijni. Gobinda Chandra, the Raja of Bijni fled to Bhutan, who latter recaptured his dominion with the help of the Bhutias. But Bijni came under the authority of Bhutan. For the administrative purpose, the Bhutan government divided Bijni into three parts viz. Bijni, Banska and Chapaguri.¹⁵³ In 1853, the British appointed Channah Ozir as the officer in-Charge of the *Duar*.¹⁵⁴

BAGH OR BIJNI DUAR (GOALPARA) :

At present Bijni Duar is situated under the District of Bangaigaon and the main market is Bijni. The Manas, the Kanamakra and the Ai are the main rivers of Bijni.

Bijni Duar was bounded on the north by Bhutan on the south by the Gohain Kamal Ali, on the east by the Manas river and on the west it was bounded by the Ai river.¹⁵⁵

According to the revenue survey of 1870-71, the total cultivable and uncultivable area of Bijni was 374 sq. miles (598.4 sq. km.) or 239,483 acres ; cultivable area was

150 R. B. Pemberton, *op. cit.*, p. 117 ; N. C. Sarma (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.

151 A.J. Maffat Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

152 S. K. Bhuyan, *Assam Buranji*, p. 139.

153 M. N. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

154 A. J. Maffatt Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

155 R. B. Pemberton, *op. cit.*, p. 116 ; N. C. Sarma (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68, Khan Choudhury, A. A., *Koch Beharer Itihas*, p. 107.

36 sq. miles (57.6 sq. km.)¹⁵⁶ and uncultivable area was 338 sq. miles (540.8 sq. km.).¹⁵⁷ But, on the other hand, according to the revenue survey of 1849-1854, the total area of Bijni Duar was 317 sq. miles.¹⁵⁸ The founder of Bijni dynasty was Chandra Narayan alias Vijit Narayan, the son of Parikshit Narayan (1603-1616). After the death of Parikshit Narayan, Chandra Narayan was given the possession of the tract between the rivers the Manas and the Sonkosh to rule over it as *de facto* ruler under the Mughal government.¹⁵⁹ Chandra Narayan was killed in 1637, when he joined the Ahoms against the Mughal.¹⁶⁰ In 1638, a peace treaty was concluded between the Mughals and the Ahoms by which the Bar Nadi on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, and the Asuror Ali on the south bank were fixed as the boundary between the Ahoms and Mughals.¹⁶¹ But the Bijni Raj remained within the Mughal territory and Joy Narayan, the son of Chandra Narayan was confirmed as the tributary chief under the Mughal Emperor.¹⁶² In the time of Joy Narayan, the Mughals sent an expedition under the command of Raja Ram Singha in 1669 against the Ahoms.¹⁶³ Ram Singha was warmly received and helped by Joy Narayan and also accompanied him to Guwahati. Being pleased with him, Ram Singha rewarded him with the title *Raja* and also exempted him from the payment of tribute (*Peshkash*). But in course of time, Joy Narayan was summoned to Dhaka together with his wife because of his inter-caste marriage.¹⁶⁴ They were confined at Dhaka by the Mughal authority. At Dhaka, three sons were born to them. They were Sib Narayan, Har Narayan, Dughdha Narayan. Due to absence of Joy Narayan from his estate a political confusion prevailed in Bijni, and the Bhutias taking the opportunity consolidated their position in the northern tract of the estate and one Chatur Singh was allowed to administer the mainland.¹⁶⁵ After Joy Narayan's death, the members of his

156 W. W. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Assam*, Vol. II, p. 124.

157 *Ibid.*

158 Revenue Survey Map No. 1 of 1912, produced by Santo Barman in *Zamindari System in Assam During British Rule*, p. 15.

159 E. A. Gait, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67; S. K. Bhuyan, *Anglo-Assamese Relations*, pp. 261-262; Khan Chowdhury A. A., *Koch Beharer Itihas*, p. 262.

160 E. A. Gait, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-115.

161 *Ibid.*, p. 118.

162 Santo Barman, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

163 L. Devi, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

164 T. P. Sen, *Bijni Rajbangsa*, pp. 52-69.

165 Ambika Charan Chowdhury, *Koch Rajbangsi Jatir Itihas Aru Sanskriti*, pp. 282-83.

family were set free. On arrival of Sib Narayan at Bijni, Chatur Singh was not inclined to vacate the estate. However, he succeeded to win over the favour of the *Deb Raja* of Bhutan and with his help he recovered his lost property, but he had to acknowledge suzerainty of the Bhutan government over Bijni Duar.¹⁶⁶ In 1865-66, Bijni Duar was annexed by the British India alongwith the Eastern Duars.

During the rule of Mughals, the Bijni Raj paid an annual tribute of Rs. 3486 annas 14 paisa 1. The tribute was afterwards commuted to annual delivery of 40 elephants, the price of each elephant was being fixed at *Narayani* Rs. 88 annas 14 paisa 0. In case of shortage of delivery of elephants, a *Sezwal* was sent by the *Nazim* into the *Raja's* Estate to take resort to make up the shortage.¹⁶⁷

During the Bhutan rule, Bijni Duar was amenable to the authority of the Chirang Subah in her relation with Bhutan.¹⁶⁸ It is said that the *Raja* of Bijni used to receive his title deed (*Sanad*) from the *Deb Raja's Teshsilder* of the produce of the land or the *Duar*.¹⁶⁹ The *Raja* of Bijni paid 1,300 *Narayani* rupees to the Bhutan government as tribute.¹⁷⁰ The tribute was paid through Chairang Subah, the agent of the very influential officer called *Wangdipoor Zimpen* or Governor of Wangdipoor, who exercised supreme control over the whole *Duars*.¹⁷¹

Towards the later part of 18th century, the connection between the *Deb Raja* and *Raja* of Bijni "constituted a sort of exchange of the productions of the two countries, which the Bhutia functionaries were pleased to describe as the payment of tribute, the advantage being considerably in their favour."

The *Deb Raja* presented annually to Bijni Raja eight horses valued at Rs. 820 ; Bhutan salt valued Rs. 40 totalling Rs. 860. The Bijni Raja presented annually to the *Deb Raja* *Manaka* cloth valued at Rs. 480 ; *Chick* (Chintz), Rs. 100 ; cotton 30 *mounds*, Rs. 100 ; thread Rs. 180 ; dried fish Rs. 520 ; oil Rs. 200 ; cash Rs. 60 ; a silverware Rs. 50 ;

166 T. P. Sen, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-76 ; Ambika Charan Chowdhury, *op. cit.*, pp. 282-83.

167 A Note by A. Forbes, Officiating Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara on paper received from the Board of Revenue, with Secy. to the Chif Commissioner, No 1846, 25 May, 1875, Assam 191, cited by S Barman, p. 16.

168 Francis Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

169 A. Deb, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

170 Santo Barman, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

171 Ashly Eden and others, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

a silver betel box Rs. 50 ; and a silver plate Rs. 50 ; total 1890 rupees.¹⁷²

After the annexation of the *Duar* by the British, the *Raja* of Bijni laid his claim on the Bijni *Duar* as he had been holding the *Duar* under the Bhutan king. So in 1867, the Bengal government decided that the *Raja* of Bijni should be regarded as “hereditary Zaminder” entitled to a settlement of the *Duar* as ‘Acknowledged Estate’.¹⁷³ In 1870-71, Bijni was settled with Khuntaghat and Habraghat, as per the *Raja*’s claim,¹⁷⁴ under the Court of Wards for seven years on behalf of the minor *Raja* of Bijni.¹⁷⁵

In 1882, the Government of Bengal decided to grant Bijni 1,30,000 acres of land of the *Duar* which was surveyed by Colonel Haughton, but the settlement, however, was refused by the *Raja*. So under the management of the Government for ten years, the *Raja* of Bijni received 7½% of the gross revenue as *Malikana* and was made *Khas*.¹⁷⁶ On the other hand, the portion of the Bijni *Duar* which was uncultivated and uninhabited was excluded from the Bijni Raj. There was no claim for the wasteland and forest between the *Duar* and the foothills of Bhutan,¹⁷⁷ was declared reserved in 1887 and extended upto 1914.¹⁷⁸ In 1901, Bijni *Duar* was settled with Rani Abhayeswari, the Queen of Kumud Narayan, for ten years of *Malikana* at a revenue of 80 per-cent.¹⁷⁹ Again in 1905-06, the land revenue assessed on Bijni *Duar* was raised to Rs. 41,480 and was settled permanently with the local rate, payable for Rs. 2,964.¹⁸⁰

In 1914, a further settlement for ten years’ terms was again offered to each landholder. However, tenants’ revenue were not enhanced and were not allowed to be enhanced during the period of resettlement. The assessment was made on the demand of 1913-14, being 80% in case of Bijni and was amounted to Rs. 34,670. After 4 years in 1918, the Bijni Estate came under the management of the Court of Wards and on being restored to solvency, was returned to the *Raja* with effect from 1st October 1944.¹⁸¹

172 Santo Barman, *loc. cit.*

173 *Gazetteer of Goalpara District*, p. 351.

174 D. D. Mali, *Revenue Administration in Assam*, p. 90.

175 B. C. Allen, *District Gazetteer of Assam*, Vol. II, p. 120

176 *Imperial Gazetteer of India, Eastern Bengal and Assam*, p. 525.

177 D. D. Mali, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

178 *Ibid*, p. 89.

179 *An Account of the Province of Assam and its Administration*, 1901-1902, p. 104.

180 *Assam District Gazetteer*, Goalpara, p. 62.

181 *Gazetteer of Goalpara District*, p. 353.

SIDLI DUAR :

At present Sidli is within the district of Bongaigaon. Sidli is the main market. The important river is the Ai which flows through the *Duar*. Sidli Duar was bounded on the north by Bhutan, on the south by the Gohain Kamal Ali, on the west by the Góurang river as on the east by the Ai river.¹⁸²

Writing in 1872, Hunter reported that the people living in the Sidli Duar were comparatively free from Hindu influences and they preserved their own language and custom. They claimed that they originally came from a place called Rongpoor on the south side of the Upper Valley of the Brahmaputra. They were mainly Kachari and Rajbangsi.¹⁸³

During the Mughal days, Sidli Duar constituted a small principality on the north of Rangamati. Since the Mughals were not interested in the *Duar*,¹⁸⁴ it lapsed into anarchy. At this situation, one Bhim Patgiri (Singh), who claimed himself a descendent of Biswa Singha, established himself there, and received recognition of the *Deb Raja* of Bhutan by promising to pay tribute.¹⁸⁵ After Bhim Singh, his adopted son Sikna Narayan Dev succeeded him. He was a *Rajbangsi*.¹⁸⁶ He transferred his capital from Numalpur (Sidli) to Bidyapur.¹⁸⁷ Francis Hamilton reported in 1809 that the chief of the *Duar*, Suryya Narayan claimed himself the descendant of God Siva. He was the tenth or the eleventh successor of the family of the original founder. Suryya Narayan lived at Sajinagram on the Koinbhur river.¹⁸⁸ He got a *sanad* from the Bhutan Durber which granted him the title '*Raja*' in return for payment of articles of the value of about 700 *Narayani* rupees. The successive *Rajas* received their authority from Bhutan through grant of *sanad*.¹⁸⁹ Sidli was dealt by the *Chirang Subah*, appointed by the Bhutan government.¹⁹⁰

The Sidli Raja paid 500 *Narayani* rupees, some quantity of oil, dried fish and

182 R. B. Pemberton, *op. cit.*, p. 116 ; N. C. Sarma (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68 ; Khan Choudhury A. A., *op. cit.*, p. 107.

183 W. W. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

184 A. B. Mazumder, *Britain and the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan*, p. 17.

185 *Assam District Gazetteer*, Goalpara, p. 119.

186 *Ibid.*

187 Ambika Charan Chowdhury, *op. cit.*, p. 277.

188 Francis Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

189 A. J. Maffat Mills, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

190 A. B. Mazumder, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

coarse cotton cloths yearly to the *Deb Zimpen*. He had also to pay a small portion of money to the *Chirang Subah* in-charge of the *Duar*, who also extracted money frequently under some pretence or another, and mostly by sending presents of *Dunguns*, or pieces of silk and demanding four time the value for them. Every *Zinkaff*, or other man in authority, who came down always got money in the same manner.¹⁹¹ In the hot and rainy season, the *Subah* usually resided at the fortress the mountain and in the cold season he descended to the lower hills, and often visited the plains, either to enforce obedience or invade the tract of the neighbouring states.¹⁹² In 1865, in the time of Gourinarayan, the British occupied the *Duar*. The *Raja* of Sidli claimed the Sidli *Duar* on the ground that he occupied it as hereditary proprietor from the Bhutan government. The British granted his prayer and a periodic settlement was made for the protection of the *ryots*.¹⁹³ In 1870-71, the British entitled Sidli as "hereditary Zaminder" and settled the *Duar* as 'Acknowledged Estate' and forming lease of seven years. But he proved himself as an incapable ruler and ultimately 20 percent of the collection was allowed to him as "Malikana"¹⁹⁴ and the *Duar* was brought under the Court of Wards on 30th April, 1877.¹⁹⁵ Sidli *Duar* was settled with the *Sidli Raja*. The Bengal government decided that Sidli be assigned 1,70,000 acres of land which was surveyed by Colonel Haughton, but the *Raja* refused to attach the land. When Sidli *Duar* was ceded to Sidli Raja, certain forest and waste land particularly the middle of the Sidli *Duar* which were uncultivated and uninhabited was excluded by the British government from Sidli Raja. The *Raja* also could not claim for the waste land and forests in between the *Duar* and the foot hills of Bhutan¹⁹⁶ and was declared reserved forest in 1883.¹⁹⁷

A new settlement was concluded with Sidli for a term of ten years in 1901. In this settlement an allowance of 30 percent consisting of 20 percent *Malikana* and 10 percent charge for collection was given to the *Raja*. But the rate of rent for the tenants was not changed. Before the commencement of the settlement Raja Bishnu Narayan died.

191 Ashly Eden, *op. cit.*, p. 181 ; Letter from the Koch Behar to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Lower Provinces, No. 2631, 8 September, 1868

192 Francis Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

193 D. D. Mali, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

194 *Assam District Gazetteer*, Goalpara, p. 119.

195 W. W. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

196 D. D. Mali, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

197 *Ibid.*, p. 89.

Ultimately his estate was taken under the management of the Government, and the minor Raja Abhoy Narayan was allowed 20 percent *Malikana* of the gross rental of the estate.¹⁹⁸ When the ten-year settlement expired in 1911, it was extended to 1914.¹⁹⁹ At the settlement of 1924, the rates of tenants' were for the first time raised. Though other terms were much the same as before, but because of the great progress made in settlement in Sidli by immigrants, the *Raja's* share of the land revenue had risen to high figure. This figure was very considerably reduced as a result of the immediate enforcement of the new settlement, the figure in full being about Rs. 104,000. A reduction of the Government demand by Rs. 25,000/- in 1924-1925 lessened by Rs. 5,000 a year till it disappeared in 1929-1930 was to be allowed.²⁰⁰

The *Raja* of Sidli refused settlement and the Estate remained under *Khas* management upto December 1945 during which period, the *Raja* received 20% of the rental demand as *Malikana* together with 30% of the gross proceeds from forest. The management of Sidli Duar was proposed to be made over to the *Raja* in 1944 on certain terms which he accepted, but making over and taking over of change spread over a period and was completed pending execution of the base of December 1945 ; the charge of forest portion of the Estate was made over in May, 1947.²⁰¹

CHIRANG DUAR :

At present it is situated within the District of Bongaigoan. Ranikanta and Garubasha are the important markets of the Duar ; and the Ai, the Saralbhangra and the Champamati are the main rivers of the Chirang.

Chirang Duar was bounded on the north by Bhutan, on the south by the Gohain Kamal Ali, on the west by the Gaurang river, on the east by the Aie river.²⁰²

The jurisdiction of the *Subah* of Chirang was very extensive. His authority extended over all the tract of the country lying between the Sonkosh and the Manas river. The residents of the *Subah* lived at Chirang in the mountains, midway between the

198 *Ibid.*, p. 122.

199 *Ibid.*

200 *Gazetteer of Assam*, p. 353.

201 *Ibid.*, pp. 351-353.

202 R. B. Pemberton, *op. cit.*, p. 116 ; N. C. Sarma (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68 ; Khan Choudhury A. A., *op. cit.*, p. 107.

celebrated castle of Wangdipoor, and a place called Kachubari to which the *Subah* occasionally descended in the cold season. Chirang stands at the head of the pass on the heights above the left bank of the Sankosh river and was four days journey from Kachubari.²⁰³ In Chirang Duar there were two chiefs, who claimed themselves as the descendents of the "God Siva" and who assumed the title Narayan under the Chirang authority. Francis Hamilton reports, "the hilly country between the mountain and the level, that is under the authority of the *Subah* of Chirang, also divided into two districts. The one that is north from Sidli called Nunmati, belonged to the chief called Chamukha. The other part north from Bijni comprehended Nichima and Hatikhura belonged to the chief called Mamudam. This hilly tract are cultivated by hoe and produce much cotton and the inhabitants are Kacharis".²⁰⁴

Chirang Duar was placed the management of the *Deka Penlop*,²⁰⁵ and the Chirang *Subah* was the agent of Wangdipoor Zongpen (the Governor of Wangdipoor),²⁰⁶ who also exercised jurisdiction over Sidli and Bijni Duars, in their relations with Bhutan.²⁰⁷

In 1865, Chirang Duar was annexed by the British along with the other Eastern Duars. In 1870-71, Chirang Duar was held *Khas* or was settled with the occupants in the possession.²⁰⁸ In 1872, Chirang was settled with the Gauripur Zaminder.²⁰⁹ Again in 1877-1878, resettlement was made, in which it was settled under the regular Assam Settlement System, by annual *Pattas* or leases direct to the cultivators through the representative of the villages.²¹⁰ In 1920, the Commissioner reported that the condition was changed, so the rate of the settled area was increased from 636 *bighas* in 1911-1912 to 14,682 *bighas* in 1921.²¹¹ Chirang was resettled for ten years with effect from 1st April, 1935. The term of the settlement of the area extended from time to time till 1954.²¹²

203 Ashly Eden and others, *op. cit.*, p. 181 ; Francis Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

204 Francis Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

205 A. Deb, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

206 Ashly Eden and others, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

207 A. Deb, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

208 W. W. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

209 *Gazetteer of Assam*, p. 351.

210 *Imperial Gazetteer of Bengal*, p. 331.

211 D. D. Mali, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

212 *Gazetteer of Assam*, p. 351.

RIPU DUAR :

Ripu Duar is at present within Bongaigaon district. The important markets are Sherphangguri, Kachubari or Kachugaon and Datma. The important river is the Gaurang. Ripu Duar was bounded on the north by Bhutan, on the south by the Gohain Kamal Ali, on the west by the Bagnye river and on the east by the Gourang river.²¹³

According to Francis Hamilton, the Governor of the Ripu Duar, whose jurisdiction was confined, in the plains, to a district called Raymana, which occupied the western bank of the Sankosh river. It appears to have been under the immediate management of descendants of the ancient Koch tribe.²¹⁴

After the annexation of the *Duar* by the British, it was settled with the estate of Chapar in 1870-71. Mr. Beckett first settled the *Duar* for seven years with fixed rate in 1872 and introduced Rs. 1 annas 8 pisas per acre of homestead or transplanted rice land and only 12 annas on all other kinds of land. After the expiry of 7 years term in 1877-78 it was not renewed but was settled as in Assam proper that was under the management of *Mauzader* and the rate of assessment was half of the rate than that of the Assam valley²¹⁵ Ripu Duar was the sole property of the British government ; it was managed under the *Ryotwari tract* of Assam.²¹⁶ In 1915 a new settlement was made and a scientific method of classification of land was introduced on the basis of "soil unit". The land was classified into four classes, named *basti* or homestead, *heonthian* or land growing transplanted winter rice, *bauri* or land growing broadcast winter rice, and *faringati* and the rate was settled as under.²¹⁷

		Rupee		Anna
Basti	—	1 — 0	—	0
Heonthian	—	0 — 11	—	0
Bauri	—	0 — 13	—	0
Faringati	—	0 — 10	—	0

A great change occurred in 1921, when the settled area of the Ripu Duar increased

213 R. B. Pemberton, *op. cit.*, p. 116 ; N. C. Sarma (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 67-68 ; Khan Choudhury A. A., *op. cit.*, p. 107.

214 Francis Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

215 *Assam District Gazetteer*, Goalpara, p. 112.

216 *Gezetteer of Assam*, p. 350.

217 D. D. Mali, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

from 36,864 *bigha* in 1911-12 to 92,322 *bigha* in 1920.²¹⁸ On 1st April, 1935, Ripu Duar was divided into 3 *mauzas* viz. Santal Colony, Ripu I and Ripu II for administrative purpose. Ripu I and Ripu II were settled for 10 years. The term of the settlement of these areas extended from time to time upto 31st March, 1954, when resettlement took place. On the otherhand, settlement of Santal Colony expired on 31st March, 1922, but its term had been extended from time to time till 1954. The same rate applied in that area, but only annual *pattas* were issued.²¹⁹

GUMA DUAR :

At present within the Bongaigaon District and have three important markets viz. Raymana, Guma and Malaguri. The two important rivers are the Gadadhar and the Madati.

Guma Duar was bounded on the north by Bulka and Ripu Duar, on the south by the Gohain Kamal Ali, on the west was bounded by the river of Gadadhar and on the east by the river of Bagney.²²⁰

It is said that, east from the Gadadhar river, which flows from the western capital of Bhutan, called Tassisudon and in the hill was known as the Tehinchoo river was the *Subah* of Bara Duar.²²¹ His authority extended over the Bhulka and Guma Duars both of which were on the eastern side of the Gadadhar ; and the lesser Guma, an insignificant tract which was a small territory west of Koyimari and surrounded on one side by Koch Behar and on the other by the British territory.²²² The *Duar* was managed by a chief, named Pran Singh, the son of Puran Singh.²²³

In the time of Lord Dalhousie (1848-1856) the *Duar* was ruled by Arun Singh, who was a hereditary *Raja*, and he evidently belonged to the family of Pran Singh,²²⁴ who was permitted to reside within the British territory for three years. He was abducted by the Bhutias by violating the British boundary. In the meantime, Captain Agnew

218 *Ibid.*, p. 121.

219 *Gazetteer of Assam*, p. 351.

220 R. B. Pemberton, *op. cit.*, p. 116 ; N. C. Sarma (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68 ; Khan choudhury A. A., *op. cit.*, p.107.

221 Ashly Eden and others, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

222 Francis Hamilton, *op. cit.*, p. 71 ; Ashly Eden and others, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

223 *Ibid.*

224 Despatch to the Court of Directors, No 97, September, 20th 1856, para 278.

reported that Arun Singh availed himself of the position, evaded the payment of the dues to the Bhutia authority and further admitted that Arun Singh ought not to have been permitted to remain on such term to the village where he had established himself, nor should have met with any direct encouragement from Col. Jenkins.²²⁵ When the Bhutan government was informed about the matter, the *Deb Raja* admitted the act of abduction and said "the person carried off was the servant of his own who had offended and no notice was taken of the demand for an apology."²²⁶ In 1859, the Bhutan government declared the death of Arun Singh.²²⁷

In 1865, Guma Duar was annexed to the British territory and in 1870-71, was declared the sole property of the Government and settled under the same system prevailed like the *Ryotwari tract* of Assam. The only difference was that except one cultivation was an entirely an annual leases and the revenue rate was lower than that in Assam.²²⁸ In Guma Duar all the cultivators are tenants at will. In the *Duar* only 96 number of husbandmen had obtained a small quantity of occupancy right. After the settlement, a record of the rights of the under tenants was made in Guma Duar.²²⁹

In 1871-72, Guma was settled with the Zaminder of Ghurla.²³⁰ In 1872, Mr. Beckett, first time settled the area who introduced Rs. 1 per acre for homestead or transplanted rice land and 8 annas per acre for all other kinds of land.²³¹ In 1877-78, the *Duar* Guma was settled on the basis of Assam system of settlement. In 1870-71 it was settled on the basis of 7 years, but in 1877-78 it was limited for a single year. It was done only for the inhabitants of the *Duar* and the shifting nature of cultivation.²³²

Another change introduced in the Duar when in 1893, the west of the Guma Duar forest was reserved and the rate was raised for the inhabitants of this forest to Rs. 3 per acre for homestead and Rs. 1-14 per acre for land growing transplanted rice and Rs. 1-8 per acre land under other crops.²³³

225 *Ibid.*

226 Despatch to the Court of Directors No. 56 dated September 8th 1856 para 184

227 S. S. Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

228 *An Account of the Province of Assam and its Administration*, 1901-02, p. 104.

229 W. W. Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

230 D. D. Mali, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

231 *Ibid.*, p. 119.

232 *Ibid.*, p. 120.

233 *Assam District Gazetteer*, Goalpara, p. 122.

Again in 1899-1900, the revenue rate in Guma was revised when the rate per bigha stood as follow .²³⁴

		Rupees		Annas
Basti	—	1	—	0
Rupit	—	0	—	10
Faringati	—	0	—	8

Another change was made in 1915, when the land was classified into four classes viz. *basti*, (homestead), *heonthian* (land growing transplanted winter rice), *bouri* (land growing broadcast winter rice) and *faringati*, and the rate per bigha was .²³⁵

		Rupees		Annas
Basti	—	1	—	0
Heonthian	—	0	—	11
Bauri	—	0	—	13
Farning	—	0	—	10

The land was mainly held by *Jotedars*, a class of middlemen and the cultivators were their tenants. The land revenue was increased from Rs. 22,195 to Rs. 26,562 or by 20% in 1915. The term of settlement was for twenty years and extended from time to time till 1954, when fresh settlement took place.²³⁶

234 D. D. Mali, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

235 *Ibid.*, p. 120

236 *Gazetteer of Assam*, p. 351.