

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER III

THE LOCALE OF THE STUDY

THE REGION :

Assam is the largest state among the seven North-Eastern states of the Indian Subcontinent. It extends from latitude $24^{\circ} 0' 0''$ to $28^{\circ} 0' 0''$ North to longitude $89^{\circ} 45' 0''$ $96^{\circ} 0' 0''$ East in the foot hills of Himalaya and Patkai range . Assam occupies a triangular area of 78, 483 sq. kms . The state consists essentially of two valleys, viz, the Brahmaputra valley in the North and the Barak Valley in the South. It has two international borders with Bhutan in the North and Bangladesh in the West. It is surrounded by West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland States of India (Manorama Year Book, 1995).

The population of Assam was 2,22,94,562 in 1991 . The density of population in Assam is higher (284 persons per sq.km) than the all -India average (257 persons per sq.km) . The decennial growth rate of the state was high (22.22 between 1981-91) in comparison to the all-India growth rate of 23.16 percent during 1981-91. The literacy rate was 53.42 percent in 1991 census (Manorama year Book, 1990 and 1992). Rain fall in Assam is one of the highest in the world. It varies between 178 cm and 305 cm. All this rainfall is concentrated in four months , from June to September. The concentration of the rainfall affects the state in two diametrically opposite ways viz flood and droughts.

The scheduled castes, scheduled Tribes and Backward classes together constitute about 43 percent of the total population of the state where as the tribal population of Assam constitute about 12.82 percent of the total population (1991 census) More than 50 percent of the tribal population resides in the hilly region, while around 66 percent of the total population of scheduled caste and Backward classes lives in the plains. (Bagchi, 1988).

The word Assam is interpreted by some scholars as a formation of Sanskrit derivation "Asoma" meaning peerless or unparalleled . But the opinion more widely accepted in academic circles today is that the term has come from the original name of the Ahoms, who had presided over the density of the land for a long and unbroken. Stretch of over six hundred years prior to its annexation by the British. Assam has a rich legacy of culture and civilization conjured by the name. Assam is in fact peerless judged by her exquisite natural beauty cultural richness and human wealth Being the homeland of different race of men. Austric, Mongolian Dravidian and Aryan that came to dwell in her hills and valleys. at different time since remote antiquity Assam has developed a composite culture of variegated colour.

Assam during the epic period was known as "Prag Jyotisha" or the place of Eastern astronomy and later as "Kamrupa Danava King Norakashura's son Bhagadutta took part in the Kurukshtra war of Mahabharata. The aged monarch of Pragjyotisha had participated in the Kurukshetra war as an ally of the Kuravas who was eliminated by Bhima, the second Pandava. The earliest epigraphic reference to

the Kingdom of Kamrupa is found in Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudragupta, Kammpa is mentioned as a Pratyanta or frontier state outside the Gupta empire but with friendly and subordinate relation to it. Hiuen-Sang, the Chinese Scholar pilgrim who visited Kamrup in about 743 AD on an invitation of its monarch Kumar Bhaskar Varman left a record of the Kingdom he called Kamorupa. Kamrupa also figured in the writings of the Arab historian Alberun in the 11th century . Thus, since the epic period down to the 12th century AD, the Eastern frontier Kingdom was known Krighout, the Arya Varta both as Pragjyotisha and Kamrupa and kings, called themselves 'Lord of Pragjyotisha'.

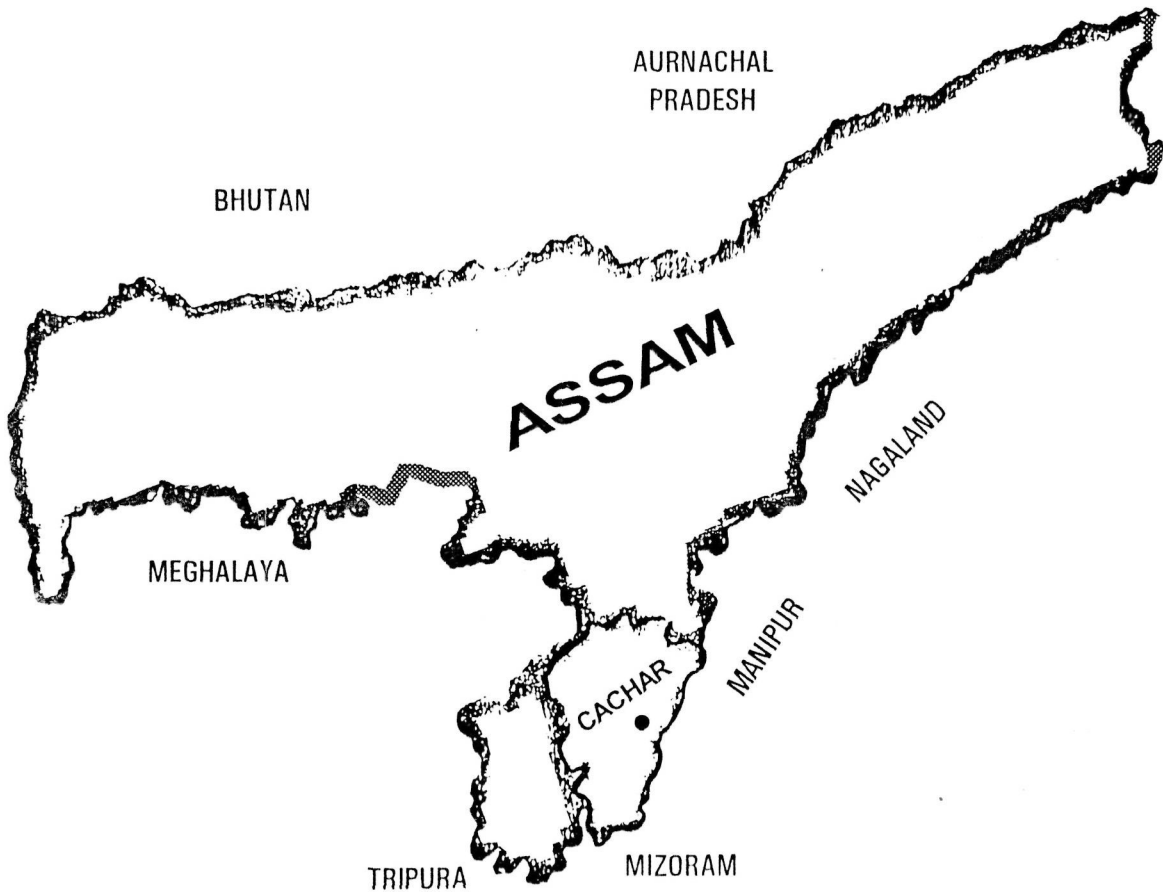
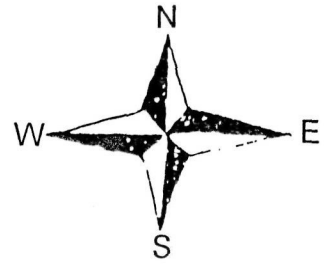
Advent of the Ahoms across the eastern hills in 1228 AD was the turning point in Assam history they ruled Assam nearly for six centuries. The Burmese entered through Eastern borders and overran the territory at time when court intrigues and dissensions were sapping the vitality of Ahom royalty. The British appeared soon in 1826 and by the Treaty of Yardabu, The Burmise ceded Assam to the British (India 1998).

Assam is very rich in mineral wealth . It holds a unique position in the production of mineral oil. The economy of Assam is mainly based on agriculture but it has not yet developed as a commercial enterprise. Amongst the agricultural products Tea occupies an important place. It contributes 15.6 per cent of the world's tea production and 55 percent of the country's tea out put (Manorama Year Book : 1995)

Assam is divided into two major valleys formed by two rivers namely

MAP OF ASSAM

SHOWING THE LOCATION OF
CACHAR DISTRICT



Brahmaputra and Barak. Earlier, Assam was consist of present seven states of India, these are Manipur, Mizoram , Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Tripura . Now it has been reduced into one third of its original size during last thirty years.

At present there are 23 scheduled tribes in Assam with a population of 2,874,000 and it is 12.82 per cent of the total population of the state . About 50 per cent resides in the hilly areas and recognised as Hill tribes , whereas the remaining tribal population comes under the category of plain tribes in term of their locational significance .Fourteen tribes found in two Autonomous Hill District, namely, Karbi Anglong and North Cachar Hills, are Chakma, Dimasa Kachari, Garo, Hajong, Hmar, Kashi, Jaintia Synting, War, Bhoi, Lyngngam, Kuki, Lakher, Man, Mizo Mikir, Naga, Dawi and Synteng. The others are plain tribes namely Barman, Boro - kachari, Deori, Hojai, Sonowal -Kachari, Lalung, Mech, Miri and Rava (L.P. Vidyarthi 1993)

THE BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY

The greater portion of the Assam is popularly known as Brahmaputra valley. It owes the name from the river Brahmaputra and consist of district namely Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, North Lakhimpur, Jorhat, Tejpur, Nowgong, Nalbari, Kamrup, and Dhubri, The total length of the river Brahmaputra from the source to the sea is 2900 km, with its drainage area about roughly 935, 500 sq. km: Southern side of he valley is bounded by Naga Hills, Karbi Hills and Meghalaya. While the river Brahmaputra flows through the middle of the valley right from Sadiya on the east and Dhubri on

the west. The Bodo speaking tribes are preponderant in the Brahmaputra valley from the extreme eastern to the western corner. They are mixed with the non-tribes and as there is little difference from others, they claim themselves to be Hindus. Some of them have been completely assimilated within the Hindu caste hierarchy and are quite indistinguishable from the Assamese peasants. The worth-mentioning tribal population of the valleys are Bodos of Goalpara, Darrang and Kamrup, the Ravas of Goalpara and Kamrup, the Lalungs of Nowgaon, the Sonowal Kacharis of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh, and the Chutiyas of Lakhimpur and Dibrugarh district. The most predominating constituent ethnic element of the tribal population is mongoloid and entered Assam from the north and the east where as the population come to the valley from the west are of Caucasoid origin. The researches reflect that a considerable amount of admixture took place between these two major ethnic groups in the valley (B.M. Das 1967).

THE BARAK VALLEY

At present the Barak valley consists of three districts, namely, Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi, It is one of the major valley of Assam. In Puranas it was identified as Kingdom of Hiramba mother of Vir Ghotathkoach of Mahabharata.

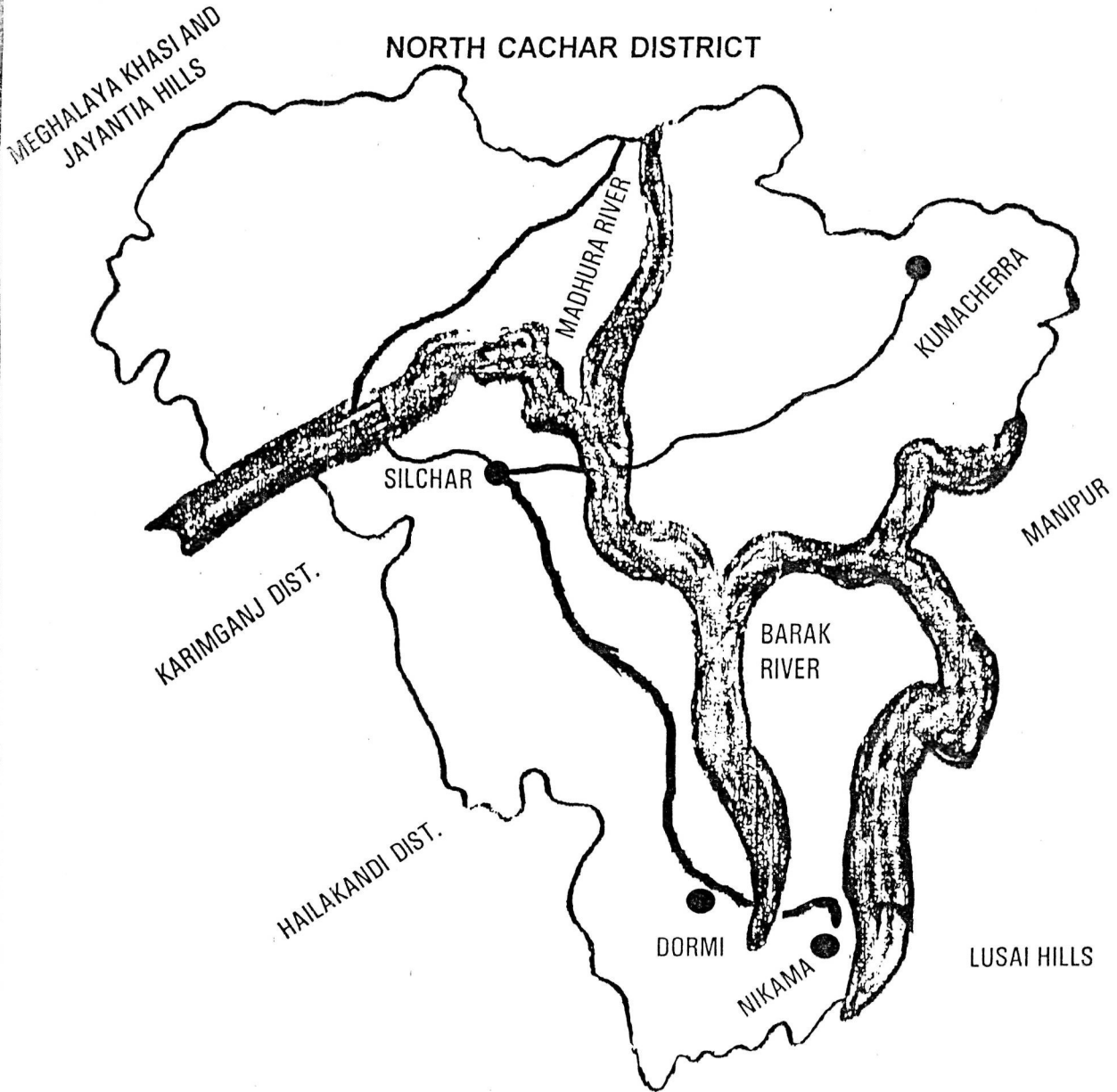
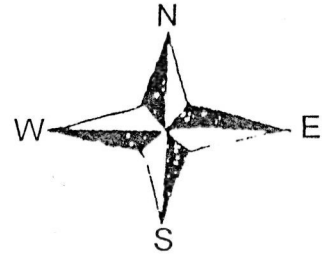
In 1832 the valley was annexed by the British. It covers an area of about 6,941.2 sq kms. The valley extends from latitude $24^{\circ} 8' 0''$ to $25^{\circ} 8' 0''$ North and longitude $92^{\circ} 15' 0''$ to $93^{\circ} 15' 0''$ East. It is bounded on the north by the North Cachar Hills district of Assam and Jaintia Hills district of Meghalaya. On the east, it

is bounded by Manipur, on the South by Mizoram and on the west by Tripura and the Sylhet District of Bangladesh. The population of the valley was 24,91,496 in 1991 census and the density of the population is 321 person per sq .kms where as the tribal population was 16,416 in 1991 census, and showing the less numbering of the tribal population in the valley. In Cachar district maximum number of the tribal population found in Lakhipur circle and followed by Sonai Circle (Statistics Office Silchar)

Earlier the Barak valley region consisted of the present Cachar and Hailakandi district, while the modern Karimganj district was in Surma Valley which covered the Sylhet district of present Bangladesh. Geographically, historically and ethnically the valley is an extension of Gangetic Bengal. But on the latter division it was dotted with hills. In addition to the southern belt of the Borail range with an average width of six or seven miles containing peaks between three and six thousand feet in height on the eastern frontier lay the Bhuban range , a continuation of the Lushai Hills that ran almost due north to the junction of the Jiri and Barak rivers and at places over 3,000 feet above the sea level, while on the west of Hailakandi the Chatachura hills stretched in continuous line to the Barak. In addition to Barak the other important rivers of the valley are Jiri, Chiri, Kushiara, Madhura, Sonai, Dhaleswari Katakhal. Most of these rivers were dried up during winters but in summer Barak and her tributaries would rise up in high spate and , as in these days, caused inundations almost every year. (J.B. Bhattacharjee 1977).

MAP OF CACHAR

DISTINGUISHING THE FIELD SITE = DORMI
NIKAMA AND KUMACHERRA



The Cachar

The Cachar district, a heterogeneous land both of high and low land and level plains stands at the extreme south east corner of the state. It lies between $92^{\circ} 15'$ and $93^{\circ} 16'$ east longitude and $24^{\circ} 8'$ and $25^{\circ} 8'$ north latitude. It is surrounded on north by North Cachar till district and Meghalaya state, on the south by Mizoram state on the east by Manipur state and on the west by Bangladesh and Tripura state.

The total area of the district according 1991 census was, 3786 sq. km. The population of the district as per the same census was 12,15,385 persons (629,196 males and 586,189 females). Among the districts of Assam, Cachar occupied the 7th place in respect of total population and place in respect of total population and place in respect of density in 1991 census. The district of Cachar underwent various changes since its formation. "In 1855, a rough census was taken which gave a total of 85,000 inhabitants. This estimate was apparently too low and ten years later Mr. Edger calculated that, including the collies, who had been imported in considerable numbers since that date, the total population is about 1,52,000 souls." (Allen, B.C. 1905 : 43). The first regular census in the district was taken in 1872 in which Cachar district accounted for 205027 persons in the plain and 30,000 persons in the Hills. The population in the plain increased to 293738 in 1881. The population in the plains of the district increased by 73804 during 1881-91 and by 47239 during 1891-1901 showing the percentage growth of 25.1 percent and 12.8 percent respectively. On the other hand Hills showed 5 percent decrease in the former decade and 8

percent increase in the following decade. The higher increase in the plains during 1872-81 was mainly due to vigorous immigration the natural growth rate being only 31.6 percent. In 1901 the total population of the district was 630302 persons. It has increased upto 895140 by 1941. Upto this time the Cachar included N.C. Hills sub-division but excluded Karimganj sub-division but after independence it excluded N.C. Hills sub-division but included Karimganj sub-division . The total population of the district in 1951 stood as 1,115,865 registering an increase of 2,20,725 (24.66 percent) due to the partition of the country in 1947. The trend of population growth continued in next decades also with 25.53 percent in 1951-61 and 24.39 percent in 1961-71. By 1971 the population of the district reached upto 17,13,318. In 1981 census could not be held in Assam. Therefore, the decadal growth cannot be calculated separately for 1971-81 and 1981-91. In these two decades the district was re-organised and two new district, namely, Hailakandi and Karimganj were carved out of it. Earlier Karimganj and Hailakandi were the sub-divisions of the Cachar district. All the three districts together constitute Barak Valley of Assam. Therefore, the decadal growth for this period can be compared between Cachar of 1971 and Barak Valley of 1991 which shows an increase of 45.42 percent population in these two decades. If we exclude the figure of Hailakandi and Karimganj districts from the population of the Cachar in 1971, we find that between these two decades the population of the present Cachar district increased from 823515 to 1215385, showing an increase of 47.59 percent during this period. The Cachar district has 90.19 percent rural population in comparison to 92.40 percent and 92.70 percent of the Hailakandi and Karimganj district respectively. The density of the population

is 321 which is relatively low in comparison to density of population in the other two districts of the valley (Hailakandi 338 & Karimganj 457). The density of the population in all the three districts of Barak Valley is high in comparison to 286 of the Assam and 277 of all-India level. Land-man ratio in Cachar district is 7964 persons per thousand hectares of cultivable land which is again high in comparison to the figure of state (6567) and country as a whole (4305). There has been a steady increase in the urban population of the district, 3.8 percent in 1941 to 9.8 in 1991 which is relatively low in comparison to rate of urbanisation of the state (11.1 percent) and the country's urbanisation trend (25.7 percent). There are only two urban units in the district, namely, Silchar and Lakhimpur. The work participation rate of the district is 31.85 percent, the percentage of the marginal worker in rural areas is 7.18 percent and in urban areas it is 2.17 percent. The overall percentage of marginal workers to the total workers is 6.73 percent. Among the marginal workers the percentage of females is very high with 29 percent for the district as a whole. In rural areas 30.10 percent females constitute this category while in the urban areas of the district 11.97 percent females constitute this category. The occupational distribution of the working population in the district shows that 69.40 percent of the working population is engaged in Primary Sector, 5.95 percent in Secondary Sector and 24.65 percent in the tertiary sector. The cultivators constitute 37.66 percent of the total working population while agricultural labourers are 17.34 percent of the total working population. In the Cachar district, the number of registered factories was 106 in 1993. Total road length in the district is 1135 km, of which only 265 km is

surfaced. The female literacy rate is 48.88 percent. The percentage of Scheduled Castes population in the district is 41.70 percent while the Scheduled Tribes are only 1.38 percent of the total population. In other two districts of the Barak Valley — Hailakandi and Karimganj, the percentage of Scheduled Tribes population is 0.16 percent and 0.17 percent respectively. However, the percentage of Scheduled Tribes population in the Barak Valley is 0.75 percent.

The total population of the Barman in Barak Valley is a little more than 19 thousands, according to 1991 census. However, in Barak Valley, most of the Barman population is inhabited in Cachar district as in Hailakandi and Karimganj district their number is in hundreds. The circlewise distribution of Barman villages in Cachar district is shown in the table 3.1

TABLE : 3 . 1

CIRCLEWISE DISTRIBUTION OF BARMAN VILLAGES IN CACHAR DISTRICT

SL. NO.	NAME OF THE CIRCLE	NAME OF THE VILLAGE		
1.	Borkhola	1. Barban 4. Dhumkar 7. Marwa	2. Bijoypur 5. Dolu 8. Ujannagar	3. Chandra 6. Koairbandh
2.	Katigorah	9. Andurgul 12. Gorerbhitur	10. Bagherala 13. Nathurbandh	11. Balirbandh
3.	Lakhipur	14. Bigajim 17. Diphu 20. Joypur 23. Koraibill 26. Laduma 29. Ludhi 32. Nagarbasti 35. Railung 38. Santipur 41. Thailu	15. Dharamnagar 18. Dolaicherra 21. Kalinagar 24. Krishnanagar 27. Langlacherra 30. Makhannagar 33. Narainpur 36. Raidilung 39. Sonpur 42. Watetung	16. Dighli 19. Harinagar 22. Kanakpur 25. Kumacherra 28. Lakhinagar 31. Mudri 34. Rakhaltilla 37. Salamatpur 40. Taipunagar 43. Zemboo
4	Sonai	44. Chekercham 47. Dolakhal 50. Kangla 53. Lantugram 56. Nikama 59. Sadagram 62. Zembroo	45. Dholai 48. Dormikhal 51. Kulicherra 54. Methnathal 57. Pancherra 60. Sewratal 63. Zibangram	46. Dhonip 49. Gojalghat 52. Lailapur 55. Mohanpur 58. Puni 61. Ujangram 64. Zoorkhal
5	Udharbandh	65. Amaranagar 68. Chintibill 71. Nayagram 74. Tikarpar	66. Bagherkhona 69. Leburbandh 72. Ratanpur 75. Thaligram	67. Chattacherra 70. Khashpur 73. Siberbandh

THE VILLAGES

DORMIKHAL

Dormikhal is situated in the South-East of the Silchar town. It is on the way of Silchar-Amraghat Road and it is about 40 kms away from Silchar. The village is bounded by the rivulet Dormi which passes through the middle of the village is given after the name of the rivulet . The village Dormikhal is under Sonai Police Station of Cachar district.

The village is surrounded by Bhuvandhar Tea Estate in the southern side which is populated by tea garden labourers. In the northern side, it is bounded by village Uzangram, the P.W.D. road passes through the western side of the village. On the Eastern side Kalyanpur and Rukni villages are situated.

The name Dormikhal emerged from two words namely ‘Dormi’ and ‘Khal’ ‘dormi’ comes from a Dimasa word ‘dermi’ and the word equated to Bengali word ‘Dumur’ , a particular type of flower offered to God Siva and the English term for ‘dumur’ is ‘fig tree’ . Figtrees are found in the banks of the rivulet abundantly so later on the name is given because it is rivulet or ‘Khal’ a Bengali term, where the fig trees are found probably the Dimasa word ‘dermi’ gradually become ‘dormi’ and the village is known as Dormikhal.

The village is well connected by bus routes. A number of buses are available to and from the village after a gap of every two hours. It is connected with Silchar

by a pitched road with slight variations here and there . From Silchar Bus Stand direct buses are available as well as the private car service is also available for the village.

The area enjoys a moderate climatic condition followed by heavy rainfall and scorching heat in summer days. The rainy season starts from early June and continues upto October During the summer it becomes extremely hot and temperature reach upto 38⁰ C . But in the rainy season, the atmosphere is highly humid, however, in the winter it is mild. The best period is winter which starts from early November and continues upto middle of February. The area experiences a heavy rainfall during the monsoon.

The village Dormikhal is rich in flora and fauna. Among, the flora, coconut , arecanut, battlenut, mango, jackfruit, sweetbarry, radish, cabbage, banana, brinjal are worth-mentioning. The various fauna found in the village are cow, buffalo, cattle, pig, hen, pigeon, duck and other avian species.

Major sources of the water in the village are private ponds and wells. In addition to these, they also fetch water from the Dormi rivulet. But in dry season i.e. from December to February all these sources become dry and the villagers face a lot of problems. Recently, the Public- Health Engineering Department has installed a scheme to supply safe drinking water and provided community hydrant points in the village. This supply points have solved the problem of drinking water to some extent.

The settlement pattern of the village is of a typical line village, the house

holds are located along the side of a road which passes through the middle of the village and as well as side by side of the Dormi rivulet. The households are arranged in both the sides of the road. The residences are, thus, closed and easily accessible to one another and at the same time are located on their respected farms. Most of the households in the village are organised in a typical 'Assam type' housing pattern. Every household has its own agricultural land farm in the backside of the main householding. In the front side of the house a kitchen garden is maintained. Pond and well are generally situated in the backside of the household and usually attached to the kitchen. The internal organisation of the house varies from family to family. The traditional Assam type house has been constructed in a peculiar way. The walls of the house are made up of bamboo plastered with alluvial clay. There is variation even in this pattern. Some houses have half bamboo wall while the other houses have full bamboo wall. A few families in the village have constructed Reinforced Concrete Cement houses in a modern style. However, they still maintain their old house as well.

Earlier the villagers were not conscious about sanitation and most of the households were used to deficate in the open fields. But as a result of education they are now becoming aware about sanitation and four families have constructed sanitary latrines in the premises of the households. However, due to financial problems, most of the families are not able to build up sanitary latrine and use kuccha latrine. But the drainage system of the village is well maintained and hygienic.

In the village Dormikhal the dead bodies are cremated near the bank of the rivulet Dormi. A particular portion of the Dormi rivulet is used for this purpose

and it is situated in the last corner of the village.

The village has only one L.P.School. It has six teachers. It fulfils the educational need of the villagers at primary level and after completion of primary level education students usually go to Rukni Village for the further studies. The Dormi L.P.School was established in 1961. The medium of teaching in the school is Bengali and majority of the students are Barmans, whereas the teaching staffs are non-Barmans.

There is one medical sub-centre in the village just before the entrance to fulfil the medical needs of the villagers but according to the villagers the work of the centre is not satisfactory. Authorities are not well aware about the centre as it is evident from the fact that they have not yet appointed a single nursing staff to the centre, only a wardgirl is looking after the work of the centre.

Both post office and police station are situated in Kabuganj which is located at a distance of 4 kms from the village. The Dormikhal market is well known in the nearby localities and it is in the northern side of the village. Although Wednesday is weekly market day but on other days also a few permanent shops open to meet the daily needs of the people. In the weekly market the villagers sell their agricultural products and also other items of consumption. In this weekly market the trading of domesticated animals is also done. The people from the neighbouring villages also participate in trading activities. This market, started during the British period, is more than hundred years old. Since 1974 the market has been under the jurisdiction of the Gaon Panchayat.

NIKAMA

The village Nikama is located in the south-eastern direction from Silchar town at distance of about 55 kms on the way to Ganganagar in the foot hills of Bhuvan range.

It is bounded by Thangkim Nagar in the North which is mainly inhabited by the Hindu Bengalis and Muslim Bangalis. In the western side, it is bounded by a P.W.D. road which leads to Motinagar. On the other side of the road is Kangla Basti, a village mainly populated by Barmans. Bhuvan Hills is found in the eastern side of the village while on the southern side, it is bounded by a road which goes to Bhuvan Hill Tea Estates.

The main road of the village is kuccha and in rainy season it becomes muddy and it is difficult to cross the road at certain points. But this un-pitched P.W.D. road is very important because it joins Sonai with Palanghat. From Silchar one regular bus goes to Ganganagar and it returns in the evening but this service is usually disrupted in the rainy season and only light vehicles can go upto the village.

Telephone facility is also available in the village. There are four telephone connections in the village. The weather conditions in the area varies in different season. In winter it is cold and normal temperature varies between 10 to 20 degree celsius. Similarly, in summer, the temperature normally goes upto 38 degree celsius. The average annual rainfall in this area is 228 cms. and, therefore, the area is affected by a series of flood during the monsoon season.

The village Nikama is rich in flora and fauna. It has mainly wild variety of vegetation but at the same time the villagers planted trees like orange, jackfruit, mango, bannana and different types of nuts, lemon, cotton and bamboo. As far as fauna is concerned, it is observed that in the village Nikama wild animals are not found, only domesticated animals and birds like, cow, buffalo, goat, pig, duck, pigeon, dog, cat are found in the village.

The safe drinking water supply is not available in the village Nikama. However P.H.E. department has proposed a plan to cover the village Nikama under A.R.W.S.P (Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme). At present for both drinking and daily use they depend on ponds and wells. The water of Nikama rivulet is used for irrigation and household works but for drinking purpose the villagers depend mainly on wells and ponds. Normally crisis of water is not found in the village because ponds and wells are always full of water but sometimes in winter season the water level goes down and, therefore, it becomes very difficult to take out water. In rainy season, Nikama rivulet overflows and both the side of the rivulet are effected by flood.

The settlement patterns of the village is linear. The households are arranged on the one side of the P.W.D. road, while on the other side of the road is another Barman village Kangla. From the P.W.D. road lanes and by-lanes go into the village. The households of the village are concentrated along the roadside. The agricultural fields are located along in the eastern most boundary of the village and spread upto the Nikama rivulet. The households are generally built up of bamboo wall plastered by mud with thatched roof. But at the same time, some reinforced

Concrete Cement houses and Assam type houses can also be seen in the village. Most of the households of the village have Kuccha latrine. However, in few houses sanitary latrine is recently constructed. No one in the village is used to go in the open field for this purpose. Drainage system is well maintained by the villagers themselves as the drains are constructed on the both sides of the lanes and by lanes. Therefore, there is no accumulation of water inside the village.

Both the Barman and the Bengali Hindus use the same field for the cremation of dead bodies. Cremation ground is an open field situated on the right Bank of the Nikama rivulet.

There are four educational institutions in Nikama village namely Nikama L.P. School (Lower Primary), Nikama M.E. School (Middle English), Nikama M.V. School (Madhya Vanga) and Nikama High and Higher Secondary School. Four schools are located in same buildings are established separately. The schools are situated just middle of the village.

Nikama L.P. School was started in 1929. At present, ninety nine (99) students are studying in the school and it has four teaching staffs including Head Master, Mr. Arun Das. He himself manages the accounts of the school because there is no provision of clerical posts in the lower level schools.

Both the Nikama M.E. and M.V. were started before independence. Nikama M.E. School started in 1936 and M.V. was started in 1930. Now three hundred forty (340) student studied in the M.E. School under the Principalship of Mrs. Prava Rani Barman. The school has fourteen teaching staffs. The same

number of teaching staffs are working in M.V. School with a student capacity of hundred only. The classes available in both the schools are from 5th standard to 7th standard.

Nikama High and Higher Secondary school has at present student capacity of three hundred. The classes starts from 8th standard to 12th standard. It has twenty four teaching staffs. Mrs. Prava Rani Dutta (Barman) is the Principal of the school.

All the four schools have Assam type building in the same campus. The Higher Secondary section is under construction and soon it will be completed. All the four institutions are well maintained . Due to availability of educational institutions within the village the literacy rate is high among the villagers. For college level studies they go to Amraghat, Sonai, Kabuganj or Silchar.

There is no medical sub-centre in the village, however, a medical sub-centre is located in the neighbouring village Ganganagar. Just one km. from the village. Whenever, the service is required they can contact Ganganagar sub-centre authority. But in case of immunization programme sometime it held on Nikama village and the schools are used as temporary medical camp. Like medical sub-centre, Police station, Post office, Market are also in Ganganagar village. There is one weekly market held in village on every Saturday. The agricultural products are mainly sold in this market.

With a short history, the name of the village came into existence. According to villagers, the name was given by their early settlers Shri Ganga Ram Barman

where rivulet Nikama is the main source of the naming of the village Nikama.

KUMACHERRA

Kumacherra village is located in the foot hills of Barail range. The most of the people of the village belong to Barman tribe. Kumacherra village is located at a distance of about 65 kms from the Silchar town in North-East direction on Silchar - Joypur road. It is surrounded by Barail range in the northern side, while on the southern side, the Jembrue village is located. The eastern side of the village is bounded by Manipur state, where as the western side is bounded by Baigejiam village. Diksha river which intersects the village is originated from N.C. Hill passes through the middle of the village.

The villagers believe that, the name 'Kumacherra' was given by an early settler Kakong about two hundred years ago, who came from N.C. Hill and settle down in the village. The villagers still maintain very close relations with the people of neighbouring district N.C. Hills, which is inhabited by Dimasa tribe .

To reach the village one has to take a private bus from Silchar to Harinagar, which is located at a distance of about 20 Kms. From Lakhipur town from Harinagar the Kumacherra village is only about 5 kms connected by a newly pitched road. Bus service on this route is only upto Harinagar and from there one has to take light vehicles.

The total geographical area of the village is 3.01 s.q. km. The village belongs to Rajabazar C.D. Block under Lakhipur subdivision of Cachar District.

The area experiences heavy rainfall during the monsoon, with an average rainfall of 309.16 cms. (data collected from I.T.D.P. Malugram Silchar). The rainfall starts from early June and continues upto October. The atmosphere is highly humid during the rainy season. In summer it become extremely hot, however in winter the weather is pleasant.

The village Kumacherra is rich with both flora and funna. The different types of wild animals namely Tiger, Leopard, Jungle dog etc. are found in the area and besides above the domesticated animals are also more common in the area. The villagers domesticate animal like dog, cow, buffalo, cat, goat, pig, duck, hen, pigeon etc. And moreover other few types of avian species are also found in the village Kumacherra.

The village forest produces both hard and soft timbers by which villagers earn good amount of money. The hard timbers found in the locality are teak, Sundi, Cham, Gammari Jarail and few other varieties. Similarly it produces soft timbers namely Tula, Kuma, Ramdala, etc. Bamboo and cane are found abundantly in the area. The villagers are specialised in rearing of Eri and Munga silk. Spinning and weaving of Eri and Munga is a common household activity by which the villagers earn a handsome amount of money.

The major sources of water in the village are wells and ponds, every household has its own water source. In the rainy season, there is no problem of water because the level of water in the wells is high and ponds are also full of water during this season. Moreover the Dikhas river also overflows at that time. But dur-

ing the winter season all the sources of water get dried up and the villagers face an acute shortage of water. The village has yet to be covered by Public Health Engineering Department under A.R.W.S.P. or any other water supply scheme.

The status of the health services in the area is very low. The primary Health centre is situated from the village at distance of about 5 kms in Harianagar. At present it has two doctors, one pharmacist, five nurses, three fourth grade staff. Recently one local Barman Girl has been appointed as 'Anganwadi' worker in the village. She is trying to generate health awareness among the villagers.

The village has one L.P. School and was established in 1985. At present the school has three teachers, two from the village and remaining one is from a neighbouring village. All the teachers belonging to Barman community. It fulfils the education; needs of the villagers at the primary level. The medium of instructions in the school is Bengali language. After completion of the primary education the students usually go either to Harinagar or to Joypur for further studies. The villagers trying for middle school in the village.

The settlement pattern of the village is typical in the sense that it is located in dense forest area. It is situated in the foothills of Barail range. The approach road of the village becomes a narrow passage as one enters into the village. At the point there is small market complex on the both sides of the road. This narrow passage between the two hillocks divides the village in two equal parts. The villagers have constructed their houses on slop of the hillocks. The passage goes in the east direction towards Tamenglong district of Manipuri along a seasonal stream origina-

ted from the hills. The agricultural field of the villagers are both in plane land as well as in the foothills located along the both sides of the road. The villagers whose agricultural fields are located in the plane areas only have constructed their houses on the both sides of passage near their agricultural field.

The house in the village are typical 'Assam type'. The walls of these houses are made up of bamboo and plastered with alluvial clay. Some of the houses in village are however have half pucca wall and half mud wall. The village has no proper drainage system. The villagers are not conscious about sanitation. Most of the households have kuccha pithole latrines.

The villagers cremated the dead bodies out side the village where Diksha River enter to the N.C. Hills district.

The villagers usually have to go for official purpose and as well as for marketing to Harinagar and Joypur, the sub-divisional headquarter where the most of the sub-divisional offices are located. However a weekly market also held in the village on every Tuesday. There are few permanent shops in the village from where the villagers purchase articles of daily use. The residents of the neighbouring villages also used to come to the market. One of the striking features of these weekly market is that the hand loom products are sold there. The recreation and welfare activities in the village are organised by a Youth club, '*Dimasa Jalaio Hosohom*'. It organises annual *Bushu* festivals of the Barman. The '*Kumacharra Weaving Co-operative Society*' is another organisation engaged in marketing of the handloom products collected from the womens of the village.