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## **DECLARATION**

I, Sanjib Kumar Chetry bearing **Registration No. Ph.D. 1615** dated **19/09/2011**, hereby declared that content of dissertation did not form basis for award of any degree to me or to anybody else to the best of my knowledge. The Dissertation has not been submitted in any other University/Institution.

Place: Assam University, Silchar

Date:

(Sanjib Kumar Chetry)

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## ABBREVIATION

ALAP	: Assam Legislative Assembly Proceedings.
ALCP	: Assam Legislative Council Proceedings.
Admn. Rep.	: Administration Report (Annual)
ASA	: Assam State Archives.
AICC	: All India Congress Committee.
AITUC	: All India Trade Union Congress.
ALAP	: Assam Legislative Assembly Proceedings
ALCP	: Assam Legislative Council Proceedings
ALECR	: Assam Labour Enquiry Commission Report.
AOC	: Assam Oil Company Limited
ARTC	: Assam Railways and Trading Company.
ASP	: Assam Secretariat Proceedings
ASR	: Assam Secretariat Records.
BEP	: Bengal Educational Proceedings.
BJP	: Bengal Judicial Proceedings.
BRP	: Bengal Revenue Proceeding.
F.R.	: Fortnightly Reports
FPP	: Foreign Political Proceedings.
GB	: Government of Bengal.
Home Poll	: Home Political Proceedings
HPA	: Home Department Proceedings A.
HPB	: Home Department Proceedings B.
ICHR	: Indian Council of Historical Research.
ICS	: India Civil Service

IHC	: Indian History Congress.
Judl.	: Judicial.
MSS	: Manuscripts.
NAI	: National Archives of India
NEIHA	: North East India History Association.
NEICSSR	: North East India Council for Social Science Research.
NMML	: Nehru Memorial Museum & Library.
PHA	: Political History of Assam.
Pt., Pts.	: Part, Parts.
T.E.	: Tea Estate

## GLOSSARY

<i>Abkaree:</i>	Excise revenue.
<i>Acre:</i>	A measured area of land three times a bigha.
<i>Adalat:</i>	Court.
<i>Anna:</i>	Sixteen part of a rupee.
<i>Arakasia:</i>	Sawyers.
<i>Arakati:</i>	A labour recruiting agent.
<i>Aus:</i>	Summer paddy.
<i>Babus:</i>	Staff.
<i>Banuwa:</i>	Labour.
<i>Barua:</i>	An officer of rank having superintendent over a department or a Khel.
<i>Bari:</i>	Homestead.
<i>Basti:</i>	Habitat.
<i>Bazar:</i>	A daily market.
<i>Bhakat:</i>	A Votary of a deity, especially a votary of Vishnu residing in religious institution in Assam.
<i>Bhasa:</i>	Language.
<i>Bhoral:</i>	A corn-house, a store-room.
<i>Bil:</i>	Marshy land.
<i>Bigha:</i>	A measured area of land, one third of an acre approximately.
<i>Borah:</i>	A supervisor of twenty <i>pykes</i> .
<i>Brahmottar:</i>	Rent-free tenure given to the Brahmins for religious services and in recognition of meritorious deeds.
<i>Buragohain:</i>	The Chief of the three ministers of the Ahom cabinet.
<i>Chapari:</i>	A high land formed by silt deposit on the bank of a river.
<i>Chaprasi:</i>	A peon or an orderly.
<i>Chaukies:</i>	A frontier out-post.

<i>Chaukidar:</i>	Watchman.
<i>Coolie:</i>	Labourer.
<i>Dakshina:</i>	Honorarium given to a priest, religious teacher.
<i>Daroga:</i>	Superintendent of police.
<i>Debottar:</i>	Land assigned for the maintenance of the temple and worship of the deities.
<i>Desh:</i>	Country.
<i>Dewan:</i>	Revenue Collector.
<i>Dhoti:</i>	Traditional Indian male lower garment.
<i>Duar:</i>	A mountain pass, a region adjoining to a hill or a mountain.
<i>Endi or Eri:</i>	A species of silk worm reared on the leaves of castor oil plant.
<i>Gadhan:</i>	A poll tax.
<i>Ganja:</i>	Camibus, Indicus, the Indian hemp.
<i>Gaonburah:</i>	Village headman.
<i>Ghat:</i>	A landing place on the bank of a river.
<i>Gohain:</i>	A title usually given to the descendants of the Ahom Kings.
<i>Golah:</i>	A shop.
<i>Gorkhati:</i>	A tax on timber.
<i>Gossain:</i>	A spiritual guide.
<i>Goth:</i>	Bathans.
<i>Gurkha:</i>	A generic term employed for the Nepali soldiers in the British colonial army.
<i>Guru:</i>	A spiritual preceptor.
<i>Hat:</i>	A periodical market.
<i>Havildar:</i>	A non-commissioned officer, corresponding to a sergeant.
<i>Hazarika:</i>	An officer entrusted with the supervision over thousand <i>pykes</i> .
<i>Jalkar:</i>	A tax on fisheries.

<i>Jamadar:</i>	A non-commissioned military officer, a head man of public menial servants.
<i>Jhum:</i>	Shifting cultivation by burning forestry.
<i>Kala-azar:</i>	Black fever.
<i>Kani:</i>	Opium.
<i>Kania:</i>	Opium eater.
<i>Nibarani Sabha:</i>	Prohibition committee.
<i>Keya:</i>	Merchants from Marwar.
<i>Khar:</i>	A kind of carbonated potash.
<i>Khat:</i>	An estate.
<i>Khel:</i>	A unit or division of people made by the Ahom rulers for specific profession.
<i>Kheraj:</i>	Full assessed revenue land.
<i>Killa:</i>	A fort.
<i>Lakheraj:</i>	Revenue free land.
<i>Lathi:</i>	A stick or club.
<i>Lixos:</i>	A labourer granted to an officer as remuneration.
<i>Madak :</i>	A kind of wine.
<i>Malikana Satva:</i>	Ownership right.
<i>Maund:</i>	80 pound weight.
<i>Mel:</i>	A tribunal, an assembly.
<i>Mirasdar:</i>	Owner of an Estate.
<i>Moamoria:</i>	Disciples of Mayamora <i>Satra</i> .
<i>Mohsirdar:</i>	An officer dealing with graziers, collecting revenue and enumeration.
<i>Mouza:</i>	Fiscal Unit.
<i>Mouzadar:</i>	A fiscal officer in charge of a mouza.
<i>Mohurrir:</i>	A Supervisor or Clerk.

<i>Mufassil:</i>	Rural.
<i>Muga:</i>	A kind of silk worm or cloth.
<i>Muhammedan :</i>	Muslim.
<i>Namghar:</i>	A place of worship of the Vaisnavas of Assam.
<i>Nisfkheraj:</i>	Half assessed revenue land.
<i>Nullas:</i>	Small area watered by river or rain.
<i>Pan:</i>	Betel leaves.
<i>Pucca:</i>	Concrete.
<i>Pargana:</i>	A revenue division.
<i>Pahar:</i>	A small Hill.
<i>Pat:</i>	White silk of the mulberry-fed silk worms.
<i>Patta:</i>	Titled deed, leased deed.
<i>Patit:</i>	Fallow land.
<i>Patwari:</i>	Surveyor of land.
<i>Phukan:</i>	Superintendent of a <i>Khel</i> whose jurisdiction extends up to 6000.
<i>Pura:</i>	One is equal to 3.5 Bengal <i>Bigha</i> or 5877 Sq. yards
<i>Paik:</i>	An Assamese <i>ryot</i> under the Ahom Kings whose duty was to render service to the King and State at fixed period of the year.
<i>Raiyatwari:</i>	Name of a settlement.
<i>Raj:</i>	A country.
<i>Ranuwa:</i>	Soldier.
<i>Rayot:</i>	Tenant, a peasant whose main occupation is cultivation.
<i>Rupit:</i>	Arable land or land on which winter crop or transplanted paddy is grown.
<i>Saikia:</i>	A supervisor over 100 <i>pykes</i> .
<i>Sardar:</i>	Chief.
<i>Satra:</i>	A Vaisnavite monastery.

<i>Satradhikar:</i>	Religious head of <i>Satra</i> .
<i>Satyagraha:</i>	Peaceful non-cooperation.
<i>Swargadeo:</i>	The God of heaven, a title ordinarily applied to the Ahom Kings in Assam.
<i>Tahsildar:</i>	Head of the revenue office.
<i>Tamul:</i>	the Areca nut.
<i>Tangait:</i>	Axeman.
<i>Thana:</i>	A police station.
<i>Thikadar:</i>	Contractor.
<i>Zamindar:</i>	Landlord.

## PREFACE

Assam is often called a land of colours- a land of colourful nature with multi-ethnic society. Assam has always been a meeting ground of different races that were migrated Assam at various points of her history. An important movement of people into Assam was that of Nepalis. In the pre-colonial times the flows of Nepalis into Assam were smaller and the people assimilated imperceptibly into the host society. Colonial intervention in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Assam and under the aegis of the colonial state created conditions, through the commercialisation and industrialisation of the economy served to stimulate the natural migratory movement of the people. Having treaty relationship with the British Government in India, people of the Nepal were sponsored to migrate into the subcontinent. During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Nepalis were came to Assam primarily in search of living as soldiers, porters, herdsmen and marginal farmers. Assam, which earlier was thinly populated and land abundant both in the plains and hills and was ideal for grazing and cultivation, served as encouraging factor for the Nepalis to migrate into the province. As the population movement on such a significant scale in northeast India did not take place before the colonial period, this forms an important aspect of study.

The task of reconstructing a full-fledged history of the Nepalis in Assam is not an easy task. The dearth of corroborative recorded events and scattered and fragmentary source of information are some of the basic problems in the study of the history of Nepalis in Assam. However, in this work, an attempt has been made to handle carefully the available sources and correctly interpret the events.

In the present work of study efforts has been made to study the community objectively, which neither demands full credit for new discoveries nor is a major break-through in the study of Nepalis in Assam. It is a humble effort to re-search the Nepalis in Assam, which in some point is fully introductory in nature, and shows some scope of the study in future.

The scheme of the present work has been organised as follows: chapter I is devoted to a survey of literature, scope, significance, problems, methods and the sources. It



also discusses concisely the geographical, ecological and ethnological background, cultural similarities, caste and religion, marital relation between Nepal and Assam. Here an attempt has been made to study sparsely population and vast waste lands and colonial sponsored through the treaty relation with Nepal, encouraged poor Nepalis to migrate into Assam. In the second chapter where efforts has been made to trace out the colonial notion against the native Assamese as indolent and lazy and most of them were opium addicted, which served as cause of labour importation into the province. Chapter III deals with the Nepalis labour employed in the coal mines, is the continuation of chapter II. Large numbers of Nepalis were imported through the agencies and recruiting depots. Attempt has been made to look into the working condition in the coal mines, mode of recruitment, payment etc. Chapter IV is the study of Nepali graziers into the province, where study has been made to the causes of the growing number in the profession of grazing. It also deals with the government policies regarding the grazing taxes, where people graze their cattle freely in to their neighbouring forest. Attempt has also been made to study the land policies of the colonial government and the migration land hungry East Bengali cultivators into Assam, Line System, Grow More Food campaign, encroachment of grazing land and clashes etc. Chapter V deals with the oil exploration and early survey operations and genesis of Assam Oil Company labour unrest in Colonial Assam. Attempt has been made to trace out the ground causes of strained relationship of AOC management and labour from 1928-29 and the strike of 1939, when the labour AOC organise a strike lasting for several months. Chapter VI, the conclusion, collates and reveals the connection between all other chapters and attempts to present, as far as possible, the overall picture of the importation of Nepali labours, their contribution in the economy and society, their role in the India's independence and labour movement and also the unity of the mother country Assam.