



**Department of History**  
**Jadhunath Sarkar School of Social Science**  
**ASSAM UNIVERSITY, SILCHAR**  
**(A Central University Constituted Under Act XIII of 1989)**  
**Silchar- 788011, Assam, India**

## **DECLARATION**

I, **Khalil Ahmed Mazarbhuiya** bearing Registration No. Ph. D./2466/14, Dated. 24/03/2014, hereby declare that the subject matter of the thesis entitled “**History of Trade and Commerce in the Colonial Surma-Barak Valley**” is the record of work done by me and that the contents of this thesis did not form the basis for award of any degree to me or to anybody else to the best of my knowledge. The thesis has not been submitted in any other University or Institute.

Place: Silchar  
Date:

**Khalil Ahmed Mazarbhuiya**  
Ph. D. Scholar  
Registration No. - 2466/ 2014  
Department of History  
Assam University, Silchar

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The study of Trade and Commerce in the Colonial Surma-Barak Valley has not received adequate attention until the last quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Although the study is made on the different aspects of the history of the Surma-Barak Valley before this work by different scholars. But the trade and commerce of the Surma-Barak Valley did receive scant treatment from these scholars, report writers and others. In the colonial Surma-Barak Valley with the gradual development of communication, both external and internal trade of the Valley grew up and the volume of trade began to expand. The internal trade was carried on the markets, the principal ones being Janiganj Suburb of the civil station of Silchar, Barkhala, Udharband, Lakhipur, Sonai etc. There were petty bazaars in almost every tea garden for convenience of the imported tea garden labourers. The Bengali traders brought to these places commodities like rice, salt, tobacco, Brass-ware, beads, clothes etc. which were exchanged for caoutchouc, cotton, ivory, bea-wax, Agar etc. The staple export was tea, the quantity of which was more than five million pounds annually. The chief articles of import were rice brought from Sylhet, cotton goods both European and native manufacture, salt, hardware's and various articles of luxury mostly required by the European tea planters. Actually, there was not much improvement in the trade position of the Valley during the subsequent years till independence except in case of the import trade. The growth of population in the district and negligence of the foreign rules towards the indigenous industries were the causes for the increase in the volume of import trade. Foreign articles such as Mill made clothes and yearns oil and others flooded the local markets and sold at cheaper rates and become more popular. The import trade remained generally in the hands of foreigners who carried the articles by steamer though the Barak and by rail.

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