

probably in the vicinity of Doigrung or Murphulani. It shows that Assamese as a language at the time under review was fully developed and it attained the highest form of development.

In the cultural realm, the significant feature of the land of Doyang-Dhansiri is that it became the meeting place of cultures of the plain and the hill. Friendship, goodwill were assiduously cultivated by the Ahom rulers with the Nagas who lived at the upper course of the rivers Kakodonga, Doying and Dhansiri. The Nagas of this part used to frequent the plain for various reasons. Those who frequented the plain by using water-way were known as Panibotia and those who used land-routes were called Tarbotia. There is instance to show that two thousand Panibotia Nagas worked at Paik under Marangi Khowa Gohain. The Tarbotia Nagas worked under Dayangia Rajkhowa. Another section of Nagas who lived to the east of Panibotia or Tarbotia Nagas were called Dopdaria Nagas who had to assist the royal officers in the hilly parts of the frontier contiguous to the Naga Hills. The instances cited above make it ample clear that the Nagas who lived in close proximity with the people in the plains in the Doyang-Dhansiri Valley were almost a part of the Assamese society. The astute Ahom rulers by their policy of conciliation and by efficient frontier administration could bring the Nagas of this region near to the Valley dwellers. The Nagas and the Assamese of the Doyang-Dhansiri Valley lived harmoniously, worked together and mingled to form a single entity irrespective of any hill-plain complex. Thus the ground for the hill-plain amity and friendship was prepared more deeply first in the land of Doyang-Dhansiri under the political leadership of the Ahoms. As hinted earlier, the Turk was the first batch of Muslims to settle near Bokakhat. They too soon became very much *Assamised* in their manners and habit and mood of living.

The Valley of Doyang-Dhansiri is well known for its rich historical treasures. In 1826 AD the Britishers took possession of Assam by defeating the Burmese invader. In 1833 AD Swargades Purandar Singha was placed in charge of administration of upper Assam, but soon the whole area was annexed to the British territory on the pretext that Raja Purandar Singha had failed to pay tribute to the company. In 1833 AD, the area was divided into two districts

of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur by East India Company and a proposal for the formation of two sub-divisions one at Joypur and the other at Golaghat was first considered.

W.W. Hunter wrote in his "*A Statistical Account of Assam*" that Golaghat as a sub-division came into being in 1846 AD. On 23.10.1997 AD, Golaghat has been elevated to the position of a District of Assam by the Government of Assam. At present, the district of Golaghat consists of three sub-divisions being Golaghat, Bokakhat and Dhansiri.

Freedom Struggle of India and Golaghat

Golaghat played a significant role in the freedom struggle of India. Not to speak of the four valiant martyrs viz Kushal Konwar, Kamala Miri , Biju Vaishnav and Dwariki Das, a good number of men and women, both from urban and rural areas, jumped in the struggle for independence and suffered a lot while doing their duty towards the nation.

The '*POLITICAL HISTORY OF ASSAM*' edited by a group of eminent historians of Assam speaks highly about the role of Golaghat. As per the records available in the book, the number of women volunteers in 1932's Civil Disobedience Movement was highest in Golaghat. Besides, the event of hoisting Congress flag in the court building in broad daylight could be achieved in only four places in Assam and Golaghat was one of them.

The glorious role of Golaghat in the struggle for independence dates back to the first freedom struggle of India in the year 1857 popularly known as Sepoy Mutiny. During the period a camp of sepoys hailing from U.P. and Bihar were stationed in a village named 'NOGORA' about 12 km South of Golaghat town with two of its outposts at Jamuguri and Borpathar. Piyali Barua, a close associate of Moniram Dewan, came to this camp to stir the minds of the sepoys against the British in the line adopted by their colleagues in the northern India. The sepoys were aroused accordingly and they raised the first banner of revolt openly on 29th August 1857. This is reckoned as the first incidence in Assam where the sepoys serving under British rulers raised their voices against their rulers. This place was recognized in the golden jubilee year of Indian's independence by the Golaghat administration.

Besides these martyrs, many other freedom fighters of Golaghat played significant role in the state and national levels. Sankar Chandra Barua, was a front ranking freedom fighter and his fame shot up during 42's rebellion for his role as an underground leader for four years. The British declared an award of Rupees Ten Thousand for his head during that period. Stalwarts like Joy Prakash Narayan, Aruna Asaf Ali, Ram Monohar Lohia kept close contacts with him during the period of 42's rebellion.

Geographical Characteristics

The District of Golaghat is located at the North East of Assam. The boarders of the district are Brahmaputra river in the north, Karbi-Anglong district and Nagaland in the south, Jorhat district and Nagaland in the east, Nagaon district and Karbi- Anglong in the west. The district of Golaghat consists of an area of 3502.00 Sq. Km. The number of sub-division-3, revenue circles-5, police stations-8, development blocks-8, towns-6 to villages-1086 and Gaon Panchyats-102 in the district are there.

Demographic Characteristics

As per 2011 Census, had a population of 1,058,674 of which Male-539,949, Femal-518,725. Sex Ratio (Female per 1000 Male) is 961; Literate Person in the district is 728,513 of which 399,525 belong to Male and 328,988 to Female. Decadal percentage variation in Population since 1901 AD at Golaghat district compared to the state of Assam is as follows. 1901-1911: (16.55/16.99), 1911-1921: (19.83/20.48), 1921-1931: (18.29/19.91), 1931-1941: (1.27/20.40), 1941-1951: (19.76/19.93), 1951-1961: (.26.04/34.98), 1961-1971: (30.85/34.95), 1971-1991: (58.12/53.26), 1991-2001: (14.27/18.92)

SC & ST Population as per 2001 census

- (a) Scheduled Caste Population in the district was 51169, Male-36277, Female-24892; Percentage to total was population-5.41.
- (b) Schedule Tribe Population is 93920, Male-48189, Female-45731; Percentage to total was population-9.93.

Population by Religion as per 2001 census

Population by religion in the district are Hindus-813263 (85.94%), Muslims-74808 (7.91%), Christians-52277 (5.53%), Sikhs-1063 (0.11%), Budhists-3230 (0.34%), Jains-403 (0.04%).

Golaghat Town

The name Golaghat ('Gola' which means shop and 'Ghat' meaning the landing point of river ferry) originated from the shops established by the 'Marwari' businessmen during Mid Part of 20th century AD at the bank of river Dhansiri near present Golaghat town. Golaghat Town is the Headquarter of the district Golaghat. It is situated at the bank of river Dhansiri and located at 26°31'N 93°58'E, and 26.52°N 93.97°E. It has an area of 7.36 sq. km. as per 2001 Census, the Golaghat Municipal area has a population of 33,201. Males constitute 53% of the population and females 47%. Golaghat has an average literacy rate of 82%, higher than the national average of 59.5%: male literacy is 84%, and female literacy is 79%. In Golaghat, 11% of the population is under 6 years of age. The major religion is Hinduism followed by Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, and Budhism. Communities that inhabit Golaghat Town include the Brahmin, Kayastha, Kalita, Chutia, Ahom, Konch, Keot, Kachari, Mising, Kaibartta, Bodo, Muslim, Bengali, Marwari, Nepali, Ex-Tea Garden labourer, Bihari.

The people of Golaghat town speak Assamese language. Apart from the Assamese language the other commonly spoken languages are Bengali and Hindi. Popular festivals in Golaghat town are Bohag Bihu festival, Magh Bihu festival, Srimanta Sankardeva Jonmotsava, Durga Puza, Ras Purnima. Other major festivals celebrate in Golaghat town include Basanta Utsav, Diwali, Christmas and Id.

Golaghat Amateur Theatre Society is a Theatre cum Local Town Covention Hall for more than a century that is located at the Centre of the Town. Most of the seminars, conferences, theatres, meetings and other workshops are conducted in GATS Hall.

Golaghat Baptist Church, one of the oldest and biggest Baptist Churches in Assam, which celebrated its Centenary Jubilee in 1999, came into being in December 1898. The

pioneering man in this Great Venture was Dr. O. L. Swanson, a missionary from America, who had come to Assam in 1893 along with his wife. Dr. Swanson was assisted by a number of local people.

The direct and indirect results of Western education proved partially good enough in heralding modernization in Golaghat. Schools of Golaghat town are either conducted by the state government or religious organizations with Assamese, Bengali and English as their medium of instruction. The use of Hindi is also stressed. Government Bezborua HS School (1886 AD), Mission Girls' High School (1925 AD), Dandadhar Girls' High School(1940 AD) are important schools established before independence at Golaghat town. Under the leadership of Late Dhyandas Sarma Golaghat Town Hindi High School was established in the year 1935 AD to educate the children of Hindi speaking people living here. Post-Independence period a large number of schools have been established and contributed towards the growth of modern education in golaghat.

Deb Raj Roy College (1949 AD), Hema Prova Borbora Girls' College (1969 AD), Golaghat Commerce College (1972 AD) and Golaghat Reliance College are major higher educational institutions existed in the town in post-independent period.

Mass Media has a great impact on the Golaghat town. It has got quite a variable number of News Paper subscribers. Apart from the Assamese daily News Papers, The Telegraph, The Assam Tribune, The Hindustan times, The Statesman, The times of India, The Hindu, there are Hindi and Bengali publications also. The World Space satellite television has started transmission in Golaghat. It receives almost all the television channels available in the rest of the country. Apart from the state owned terrestrial network, Doordarshan, cable television serves a section of the homes of the town. Satellite television is common at large number of households. Internet cafes are available in the main market area, connected through broad band, provided by BSNL, Reliance, Vodafone, Aircel, Tata Indicom, Airtel and Infocom.

All these historical facts impel to take an understanding about the social background, the impact of mass media on the present people living in Golaghat town.