



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 5.2
IJAR 2017; 3(3): 564-569
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 21-01-2017
Accepted: 22-02-2017

Tarun Kr Halder
Research Scholar,
Department of History,
Gauhati University, Guwahati,
Assam, India

Towns, market centers and trading networks in medieval Assam

Tarun Kr Halder

Abstract

This paper attempts to analyze development of towns, market centers and trading networks in medieval Assam. It studies the establishment towns and small markets by the monarchs in various parts of the kingdom. The monarchs built their capital towns in such places which were excellent from the point of protection and security. These were humming with activities during the period of being the seats of royal residences. The capitals assumed political importance for a certain period and relapsed into their original rural status as soon they had ceased to be royal seats. The towns and small markets naturally pulled the attention various professional groups such builders, artisans, craftsmen, manufacturers, traders and many others, who come into touch of new economic opportunities and prospects. There were many places which acquired prominence owing to their strategic locations, trade and commerce, religious and political activities. The frontier outposts enabled to carry commercial transaction with mountainous tribes and Bengal. Many gateways and toll gates were built in order to raise taxes of imports and exports and to check the activities of people for the purpose protection as well as these constituted the security of the kingdom from the invasion of the outsiders.

Keywords: Towns, market centers, trading networks

1. Introduction

The present inquiry related to economic aspect of Assam, especially studies towns, market centers and trading networks in medieval Assam. A few scholars have worked on the economic history of medieval Assam but discussion of towns, market centers and trading networks is limited in their works. Thus purpose of the study is to analyze development of towns, markets and trading networks in medieval Assam. The medieval period in many respects is very important and a turning point in the history of Assam. In later phase of twelfth century with the fall of Pragjyotish-Kamrupa, a lunatic political condition occurred in Assam, which leads to development of many small kingdoms and chieftainships. On the other hand constant attacks of Muhammedans remained a matter of concern. In beginning of thirteenth century, Sui-Ka-Pha, a Tai-Shan prince came to Assam and established a small sovereign kingdom. Ahom ruled Assam for nearly a long period of six hundred years, a period which is unprecedented in the history of world. During this phase significant changes took place with the introduction new administrative and land revenue system, which had to a great extent determined the economy of Assam. The monarchs placed different *khels* such as *sonowal khel*, *moriya khel*, *kalita khel*, *sonari khel*, *potiya khel*, *katani khel*, *duliya khel*, *sonsowa khel*, *kamar khel*, *kumar khel*, *kukurapohiya khel* etc. under *paik* system and established many villages for them. Gradually these villages become important place of manufacturing, trade and commerce (Sarbananda: 2000:161) ^[17]. The *khels* were organized under royal supervision on professional basis to supply necessary commodities and weapons to royal store. As crafts carried under guild system thus trade in association with variety of articles remained a usual matter (Baruah: 2007:433) ^[3]. The Ahom monarchs were the maker of towns and *hats* (small markets). They promoted local trade by making small markets and encouraged long distance trade under some limitations for internal security. The monarchs built their capital towns in such places which were excellent from the point of protection and security. There were many places which acquired prominence owing to their strategic locations, trade and commerce, religious and political activities (Gait: 2001:301) ^[12]. The economic activities such as manufacturing, crafts and industries, markets, trade and commerce shifted partially to the towns.

Correspondence
Tarun Kr Halder
Research Scholar,
Department of History,
Gauhati University, Guwahati,
Assam, India

The monarchs, royal families, nobilities, priests, clergy, bureaucracy lived in capital towns. The towns naturally attracted various professional groups such builders, artisans, craftsmen, manufacturers, traders and others, who come into touch of new economic opportunities and prospects (Basu: 1970:180)^[2].

2. Method and Materials

So far as the methodology is concerns, the Historical method has been adopted in the procedure of the composition. The work has been accomplished through both primary and secondary source materials collected from different books, edited books and unpublished theses. Thus, attempt is made to make the paper rational as far as possible on the basis of both primary and secondary source materials.

3. Results and Discussion

The Ahom monarchs built their capital towns in such places which were excellent from the point of protection and security. The monarchs, nobilities, priests, clergy, bureaucracy lived with their families in towns. The towns naturally attracted various professional groups such builders, artisans, craftsmen, manufacturers, traders and others, who come into touch of new economic opportunities and prospects. These capital towns were humming with activities during the period of being the seats of royal residences. These capitals assumed political importance for a certain period of the history and relapsed into their original rural status as soon they had ceased to be royal seats. Sui-Ka-Pha, a Tai-Shan prince reached to Brahmaputra Valley in 1228 A.D. and formed a sovereign kingdom in eastern part of Assam. At the outset of his reign he established capital town at Mung-Klang-Sekhru, then he built his capital towns respectively at Habung, Ligorigaon, Simaluguri and finally in Che-tam-doi (Charaideo) in A.D. 1253. In 1397 A.D., Bamuni Konwar shifted his capital to Sarguwa. It remained capital town of the Ahom monarchs for ninety years long. In A.D. 1497 Dihingia king Suhungmung shifted capital to Bakata. From this place Suhungmung initiated several attacks on Chutiyas, Kacharis and Bhuyans, annexed these territories in Ahom kingdom and encountered the constant invasions of Muhammedans. The most remarkable town of Ahoms was Garhgaon. The king Suklenmung Garagna Raja built capital at a place called Hemenbari located near right of Dikho river. Later on the king named it Garhgram. This is from where the Ahom monarchs ruled for long 250 years. Many roads, tanks, temples, forts, walls, *chowki*, *hat*, *phat*, *ghat*, *satra* and houses were made in systematic order. The monarchs established many highly educated persons, artist, traders and others professional community. Art and architecture was developed, trading intercourse flourished with other countries. Cultural exchange was done with other Indian states and foreign countries and practice of literature reached to its zenith. There were thick habitants and a narrow market road on the both banks of Dikhu river. Shihab-ud-din Talish noticed a bazar at Garhgaon in A.D. 1660. The traders of the *hat* or market were only the betel-nut sellers, who used to sit beside a narrow road (Rajkumar: 2000:274-276)^[17]. Outside the palace, neat and pure mansion has been built for the residence of the king and the nobles have built very nice and strong houses near the royal palace. Sir Wade observes in his influential book "A Geographical Sketch of Assam" that Garhgaon was the real capital town of Assam and Rangpur

was military centre (Sharma: 1972:348)^[20]. Gadadhar Singha (1681-1696 A.D.) built a town at Barkola. It was situated nearby Karenghar and a part of greater Garhgaon (Rajkumar: 2000:278)^[17]. Rangpur was important capital town of the Ahoms built by Rudra Singha in first decade of eighteenth century. It served as the capital of Ahom monarchs for eighty years long and due to the frequent attacks of Moamaria insurgents the capital shifted to Jorhat during the reign of Gaurinath Singha (Sarma: 2001:76-77)^[19]. The Jayasagar Sadasiva Temple inscription states about a town at Meteka known as Rangpur and fort at Teji which were built by Rudra Singha. Then he built tanks and *doulas* and placed with idols of gods and goddesses (Neog: 1974:90)^[16]. Jorhat was another important flourishing town established by Ahom monarch Gourinath Singha in A.D. 1789 on the bank of Dichai river. Purnananda Buragohain, the minister of Gourinath Singha built two markets on the both banks of Bhogdai river (Gogoi: 2002:153)^[10]. J.P. Wade states the town is eight miles in length and six miles in breadth. The town is bounded by the Desoi river in the east, Dhuli on the west, Kuntiapota in the north and a high way on the south. A road to Manipur, Naga Mountains run through this place (Sharma: 1972:347)^[20]. Biswanath was a thickly populated place and was very important due to political, commercial and religious activities. It was the capital of king Arimatta of the fourteenth century and prominent religious place. In this temple the higher officials and small chieftains, tributary monarchs would take oath of allegiance to their master. It is recorded that Tamradhvaja, the Kachari king and Rama Simha, the Jayantia king took oath of allegiance to Rudra Singha here. Trade was carried from this point to the neighbouring areas (Sarma: 2001:79)^[19]. Gauhati has been the capital of Assam since the early times. Several kings of several dynasties built their capitals because of its strategic location. It is covered by hills both in the east, west and south and greater Brahmaputra in the north. Thus its suitable location helped to some extent in containing the invasions of the outsiders. The Brahmaputra follows adjacent the town helped in water warfare as well as in trading activities (Choudhury: 1992:84)^[9]. There are two theories regarding the origin of the name of Gauhati. Some scholars say that the name Gauhati or Guwahati derived from 'Guha' (cave) and 'hati' (a row), that is a city with a row of caves (Bhattacharyya: 4). While the others state that the name Gauhati perhaps derived from two words say 'Guwa' and 'hati'. 'Guwa' refers to betel-nut and 'hati' refers to a locality or a row of houses of a village or town. Thus we can consider Gauhati as a town full of areca-nut grooves (Choudhury: 1992:84)^[9]. The inscription of Balavarman of Kamrupa, states of areca-nut trees wrapped with betel creepers- *Tambula-Valli parinaddhapurgam*. Maheswar Neog states undoubtedly Gauhati situated on the bank of Brahmaputra and associated with *Tambula* or betel-nut (Bhattacharyya: 4). Beside betel-nut others articles sold and purchased here. This is evident as Shihab-ud-din Talish observes under the order of king a group of traders of Bengal used to come to Assam and would trade near Gauhati. They would give articles like salt, sulphur and other products in exchanged for gold, pepper, silk cloth, musk, aloe wood and spikenard (Gogoi: 2002:148)^[10]. It was the capital of Lower Assam and seat of Viceroy or Barphukan, assembly of ministers and chamber of councilors thus administrative facilities such as judiciary, law and order and civic facilities were much available than

other places (Neog: 1974:153) ^[16]. It is well fortified by nature i.e. great Brahmaputra and hills on either side. There are as many five entrances, large fortifications, mounds, ditches, beautifully finished slabs, temples, tanks etc (Basu: 1970:183) ^[2]. The stone plate of west Gauhati contains record of several *duars* (gateway) of Gauhati viz; Panru *duar*, Joy *duar*, Latasil *duar*, Fatasil *duar*. Perhaps the *duars* and fortifications were built in order to raise taxes of imports and exports and to check the activities of people for the purpose protection as well as the fortifications constituted the security of the kingdom from the invasion of the outsiders (Neog: 1974:153) ^[16]. Mc Cosh observes that Gauhati was thickly populated and one of the largest towns of the Ahoms. Most of the houses were made of mats and bamboos. A few of them were built brick and mortar and contained walls and roofs (Mc Cosh: 2000:269) ^[15]. Considering from all respects it was a fortified town. Prominent historian Paromita Das also observed and testified that Gauhati was a fortified city in medieval period. Barnagar was an important town and capital of Koch-Hajo. It was built by Koch king Raghudev on the bank of Manah river (Neog: 1974:143) ^[16]. The Yogini Tantra states about a sacred city named Apunarbhava. Later on the scholars have identified it with Hajo of modern Kamrup (Barua: 2003:83) ^[1]. In A.D. 1626, a Jesuit father in his letter states Hajo as a very populous and rich town and capital of Cocho' (Roychaudhuri; Habib: 1984:499) ^[18]. In A.D. 1627 Stephen Caella, a Portuguese traveler also depicted Hajo as one of the most important and populated towns (Gogoi: 2002:152) ^[10]. Hajo has been a famous place of pilgrimage both for Hindu and Muslim people because it contains Madhava-Hayagriva temple and famous mosque named Poa-Macca. In the first half of seventeenth century Hajo served as the seat of the *thanadar* of the Mughal (Sarma: 2001:79) ^[19]. It was also well known for activities of bell metals. Activity of bell metal basically flourished under the royal patronage. The Ahom monarchs appointed bell metal workers (*kahar*) to temples for the supply of bell metal utensils (Barpujari: 1994:116) ^[3]. As it was a very important religious centre hence many religious festival and fairs like Buddha-*purnima mela*, Id-ul-Fitr etc. were organized and imports and exports continued for many days together in all these fairs (Gogoi:2002:152) ^[10]. Rangamati was another important town which attained significant status from the political and commercial point of view. It was two miles in breadth and five miles in length. It came into importance in A.D. 1606, when two churches built and some Portuguese family began to reside here. It became the capital and headquarters of Mughal *faujdar* by the end of seventeenth century. Considerable amount cotton of Garo hills would at first come to Rangamati then it would send to Bengal (Roychaudhuri; Habib: 1984:499) ^[18]. Sadiya was the capital of Chutiya monarchs and consequently with the annexation to Ahom kingdom it became the seat of Sadiya-Khowa Gohain under Ahom rule. It was a very important trade centre of the tribes residing in extreme east and prominent for transactions with neighbouring hill tribes (Sarma: 2001:78) ^[19]. There was a salt mine in Sadiya which did not claim extensive selling value but meet the needs of local inhabitants. A considerable trade flourished over the article (Goswami: 1986:108) ^[11]. Marangi, Salal and Kaliabar came into prominence due to political and administrative point of view. Marangi was seat of Marangi-Khowa Gohain under the rule of the Ahoms.

Marangi-Khowa Gohain was posted at Marangi and would rule the regions to the west of Dhansiri river up to the eastern boundary of Salal. Another high officer named Salal Gohain posted at Salal would administer the Salal region. Marangi was also important centre of transaction between the plain and the tribes of hills. The tribal people from Naga hills, Mikir hills as well as the Kacharis would come down for trading purpose. The Gohain not only administered the region but also looked after the relation with the neighbouring hill tribes. Raha and Jagi, the frontier outposts attained their prominence due to political and commercial activities. These two outposts were administered respectively by Rahiyal Barua and Jagiyal Barua. They were mainly posted with the duty to look after the relation with the adjacent tribes (Sarma: 2001:79) ^[19]. The *Deodhai Assam Buranji* states that Kritichandra Barbarua, minister of Ahom monarch Rajeswar Singha built a market at Raha. Different commodities were brought to the market for sale. The market was mainly visited by frontiers people like the Kacharis, the Nagas, the Karbis and the Syntengs. A tax collector called *Hatkhowa Barua* was appointed by the monarchs in order to collect tax on different commodities (Bhuyan: 2001:142) ^[7]. The Jagiyal Barua was entrusted with the duty to maintain relation with the Jayantias and looked after their entry and exit to the Ahom territory. Being border outposts these two places naturally worked as trade centers between the people of plains and the hill tribes. Taxes and tributes for different commodities were released at these outposts in cash or kind. Being frontier outposts these contained strong military base. Goalpara situated on the south and Jogighopa on the north of Brahmaputra were two important outposts of Bengal from last half of seventeenth century to the end of the Ahom rule. According to Montgomery Martin, Goalpara and Jogighopa were thickly populated towns. These towns contained several streets and shops. These were important trade centers from where the merchants carried trade between Assam and Bengal (Sarma: 2001:79-80) ^[19]. The centre of trade in respect of Bengal was Hadira or the Assam *chaki*. The administration of this post and adjoining regions was entrusted to an officer called the Kandhar Barua (Bhuyan: 2010:50-51) ^[5]. The check post was built in order to control relation with Bengal and to look after the activities of traders as well as the outsiders. A considerable amount of taxes and tributes on commodities was released from this choky. Ahom monarch posted a frontier custom officer named Duariya Barua along with a number of assistant officers. He maintained cordial relation with Bengal and released taxes on import and export commodities and in the later phase it attained commercial importance (Hamilton: 1963:42-46) ^[14]. The *Jayantia Buranji* states about many other trading places like Phulguri, Hatiyamukh, Sonapur and Hatarenga. The tribes of Jayantia hills and the Syntengs used to come in these places for commercial purpose, where they sold and purchased various commodities (Bhuyan: 2012:61-62) ^[6]. There were many others *hats* and *phats* in some frontier places Phukanarhat in North Lakhimpur, Kacharihat and Nagaphat in Dayang valley, Khitlurphat in the bank of river Kakdonga and Holarhat at Diphalu. The markets located in frontier areas facilitated commercial transactions with the adjacent hill tribes such as the Kacharis, the Nagas, the Syntengs and the Karbis. The tribes of these areas used to come into these places for commercial

purpose, where they sold and purchased various necessary commodities (Sarma: 2001:126)^[19]. Trade was chiefly carried on by means of permanent markets as well as periodical *hats* and annual trading fairs. In many villages like Barapara, Dij Bogai, Jaipur, Sakumuri, Hakim-hat, Malapara and at many places adjoining to the foot of the Khasi hills weekly markets were organized (Hunter: 1998:42)^[13]. A considerable level of trade carried in these frontier markets. Market taxes (*hatkar*) were collected by officials called *Hatkhowas* at a percentage of the price of good as fixed by the king. There were several frontier markets both in northern and southern frontier of Kamrupa. Some of the important markets in the south were Sonapur-hat (Dimorua), Beltola-hat (Beltola), Rani-hat (Rani), Bari-hat (Palasbari), where Khasis, Jayantiyas and Garos would come down from southern hills in large number with their hill products. To collect duties and to control illegal transportation of goods *chaukies* or *chokies* (toll gate) were established at strategic locations. The Ahom monarchs not only to grant certain right to border tribes in the adjoining plains but also set up *hats* and fairs for exchange of commodities at convenient places. The trade with Bhutan carried through frontier outposts generally known as the *duar*. The seven *duars*, on the north of Kamrupa were Chappakhmar, Buksa, Bijni, Chappaguri, Gorkola, Buriguma and Kalling. The Assam-Bhutan trade was controlled by an officer titled Ujir Barua posted at Simaliyabari (Barpujari: 1994:124-26)^[3]. Dhubri was an important fortified place in the extreme west of Assam. The Mughals referred it as *qasbas*; which indicates respectively a town, market and port. Unlike Dhubri Ghila was also a fortified town with a market and a port (Roychaudhuri; Habib: 1984:498)^[18]. Bisnupur was primarily famous for disposal of valuable woods. Traders from Pabna, Mymensingh, Kumilla, Dhaka, Rangpur of modern Bangladesh came here for purchasing woods. After collecting wood they used to set return voyage through Brahmaputra river (Shastri: 2010:5-6)^[21]. Barpeta acquired its importance primarily for crafts and peddling trade. It is recorded that the population of this place is more than Gauhati or any other town of the Brahmaputra valley. There were many artisan villages in Barpeta situated around the campus of Vaishnava monastery (Roychaudhuri; Habib: 1984:499)^[18]. It is recorded that Tantikuchi in Barpeta was such type of village where Nara Narayan, the Koch king, established guild of weavers. Apart from cotton, varieties of silk cloths were produced and sold in the markets for considerable rate of prices (Gogoi: 2002:147)^[10]. Palasbari was mainly famous for weaving of silk cloth. It is recorded that more than one hundred and sixty weavers (*tanti*) worked at Palasbari and produced silk cloth for the Mughal emperor. Later on the Ahom monarch shifted and settled them down in the south bank of Brahmaputra river (Goswami: 1986:110)^[11]. Sarthebari, Sualkuchi and Ramdia were situated in rural settings but were important trade centres which owed their prominence respectively for bell metal, silk weaving and oil-crushing industries. These activities basically flourished under the royal patronage. The Ahom monarchs appointed bell metal workers (*Kahar*), weaver (*tanti*) to temples for the supply of bell metal utensils and cloths (Barpujari: 1994:116)^[3]. Lakharpara was noted for trade during the medieval period primarily fine and skillfully embroidered cloths. A consideration was carried neighbouring regions from this place (Gogoi:

2002:147)^[10]. Pandu has been situated adjacent to Brahmaputra thus it served as a military and naval base. Stephen Cacella, a Portuguese tourist states that Pandu was a populous place. Many administrative, military officials resided here with their families and ordinary military men (Baruah: 2007:433-34)^[3]. There were many shops near by the entrance of Kamakhya temple. The objectives of the shops were disposal of ritual articles, idol, statue etc. Apart from daily market, a fair named *Ambubachi mela* was organized on account socio-religious festivals. Imports and exports continued for many days together in this fair (Gogoi: 2002:152)^[10]. Nagaon was important for trade and manufacturing of cotton thread. The area was famous for articles made of Bamboo and betel-nut. Perhaps materials made of bamboo and betel-nut was common commercial commodities. It is recorded that at Nagaon during reign of Rudra Singha every man was required to plant bamboo and betel-nut tree and was to make baskets of bamboo. Simultaneously every woman was to prepare a roll of cotton thread (Goswami: 1986:110)^[11]. Kaliabar was the seat of Viceroy or Barphukan. Consequently, in the middle of seventeenth century with the annexation of some regions of western Assam the seat of Barphukan shifted to Gauhati (Sarma: 2001:78)^[19]. Kukuriya was an important frontier trading place. A considerable commercial transaction took place between the Garos and the people plains of Assam (Gogoi: 2002:152)^[10]. Nazirahat was a small commercial point situated very adjacent to capital Garhgaon. Outside the city gates of Garhgaon at a place called Nazirahat women sellers brought head-loads of various provisions for sale (Raychaudhuri; Habib: 1984:489)^[18].

The Ahom monarchs promoted internal trade by making *hats* or markets at convenient locations. Suhungmung or the Dihingia Raja made mart centre at Dalauguri. Then his son Suklenmung established settlement after clearing the jungles of the two banks of the Dikhow River. Hats or markets also flourished in this place for the growing population. Pratap Singha or Susengpha established two markets at Dopdar and Borhat to encourage exchange of goods with the Nagas. Sutyinpha or Nariya Raja in his short reign even set up hat in order to trade with Kacharis. Gadadhar Singha set up two markets called Chakihat and Rajahat. Rudra Singha also set up a market at Gobha for commercial purpose. Along with regional trade he also encouraged foreign trade. It is recorded that he encouraged extensive trade with foreign countries especially with Tibet. The marts were made in order to meet the growing demand of regional trade, where permanent, weekly, periodical markets were organized and imports and exports of commodities was chief feature (Barpujari: 1994:121-22)^[3]. Apart from these the Ahom monarchs built marts at various places of the country like Dihing, Kacharihat, Barhat, Namchang, Abhaypur, Narayanpur etc. where various types of commodities including birds and animals and even slaves were bought and sold. Markets were established at the foot hills in order to carry on trade with the hill tribes. The most important of these marts was at Sadiya which was the central market for all hill tribes residing the extreme north-east. To this mart the Khamtis and the Singphos brought their swords and spears medicinal plants and ivory, copper and silver which they collected from China and the Adis and the Miris presented their spicy vegetables, madder, wax and cotton blankets, which they exchanged for the products of the plains. The Nagas and the Garos mainly brought salt and

cotton; the Khasis and the Jayantiyas would present iron implements and honey. With the increase in population many other internal markets rose up in order to meet the requirements of the people (Baruah: 2007:185) [3]. Some places such as Moranhat, Cacharhat, Dihinghat, Darangihat, Nagahat, Sonpurahat, Borhat etc. perhaps indicated markets for specific areas or tribes as the word *hat* in Assamese refers to markets. Imports and exports of vivid commodities continued in these places. Though these were perhaps trading place of distinct places or tribes but traders of others places also allowed to import and export of commodities (Barpujari: 1994:122) [3].

4. Findings

The Paik system which was the key of Ahom state machinery made remarkable contribution towards the growth of craft industries. The *khels* were organized under royal supervision on professional basis to supply necessary commodities and weapons to royal store. As crafts carried under guild system thus trade in association with variety of articles remained a usual happening.

The Ahom monarchs built capital towns and *hats* (small markets). They promoted local trade by making small markets and encouraged long distance trade under some restrictions for internal security. The capital centers were not only seat of royal activities but these also contained least one markets nearby. Some of the capitals also contained two markets.

The monarchs built their capital towns in such places which were excellent from the point of protection and security. These capital towns were humming with activities during the period of being the seats of royal residences. These decorated with many tanks, temples, *douls*, walls, forts etc. These capitals assumed political importance for a certain period of the history and relapsed into their original rural status as soon they had ceased to be royal seats.

There were many places which acquired prominence owing to their strategic locations, trade and commerce, religious and political activities. The economic activities such as manufacturing, crafts and industries, markets, trade and commerce shifted partially to the towns.

The monarchs, royal families, nobilities, priests, clergy, bureaucracy lived in towns. The towns naturally attracted various professional groups such builders, artisans, craftsmen, manufacturers, traders and others, who come into touch of new economic opportunities and prospects.

The frontier outposts enabled to carry trade with mountainous tribes and Bengal. Many *duars* and *chokies* were built in order to raise taxes of imports and exports and to check the activities of people for the purpose protection as well as these constituted the security of the kingdom from the invasion of the outsiders.

5. Conclusion

In sum up it can be said that capital centers were not only seat of royal activities but these also contained least one markets nearby. Some of the capitals also contained two markets. As these were residence of several groups of peoples; so some trade and commercial transaction was a usual matter of concern. Owing to security reasons foreign trade was not encouraged rigorously; but local trade was promoted by establishing several *hats* or markets (daily, weekly and bi-weekly) nearby towns and in many frontier outposts. The custom officers appointed by Ahom monarch

had to maintained cordial trade relation with neighbouring states and released taxes on import and export commodities. Along with maintaining peace with the neighbouring regions they had to check the activities of the people or outsiders for internal security and peace. Therefore check posts gained commercial importance and for which these become meeting place of various trading groups. The overall economic condition of medieval Assam was not satisfactory because trade potentiality of Assam was not utilized properly. Most of the Ahom monarchs seem to have adopted policy of isolation and forbade outsiders to enter and did not allow them to settle in Assam for the purpose of security. In fact the people of Assam also did not allow leaving country and settling outside territories. Therefore, they considered local trade as an integral organ of economy and perhaps to pay less important in long distance trade. Several marts or hats have built under royal patronization, but this did not have much impact on the rural people. Small townships that grew covering small areas were concentrated within a few people. Even after fifty years of the beginning of British rule we cannot observe any town population in Assam.

6. References

1. Barua BK. A Cultural History of Assam (4th edition). Bina Library: Guwahati, 2003.
2. Basu NK. Assam in the Ahom Age (1st edition). Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar: Calcutta, 1970.
3. Barpujari HK. (ed). The Comprehensive History of Assam (1st edition), vol-iii. Publication Board of Assam: Guwahati, 1994.
4. Baruah SL. A Comprehensive History of Assam. M.M. Publishers Pvt. Ltd: New Delhi, 2007.
5. Bhuyan SK. (ed). Assam Buranji (4th edition). Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies: Guwahati, 2010.
6. Bhuyan SK. (ed). Jayantia Buranji (3rd edition). Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies: Guwahati, 2012.
7. Bhuyan SK. (ed). Deodhai Assam Buranji (4th edition). Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies: Guwahati, 2001.
8. Bhattacharyya NN. A Study in Urban Geography of Gauhati Town. Unpublished M.Sc. Thesis, Geography, Gauhati University, 2001.
9. Choudhury RD. Asomot Puratattik Adhyayanor Agragati (1st publication). Parbati Prakashan Press: Guwahati, 1992.
10. Gogoi Nath, Jahnabi. Agrarian System in Medieval Assam (1st publication). Concept Publishing Company: New Delhi, 2002.
11. Goswami SK. History of Revenue Administration in Assam (1st published). Spectrum Publications: Guwahati, 1986.
12. Gait Edward. A History of Assam (reprinted). Bina Library: Guwahati, 2001.
13. Hunter WW. A Statistical Account of Assam (reprinted), vol-i. Spectrum Publications: New Delhi, 1998.
14. Hamilton Francis. An Account of Assam. Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies: Gauhati, 1963.
15. M' Cosh John. Topography of Assam (2nd reprinted). Logos Press: New Delhi, 2000.

16. Neog M. Prachya-Sasanavali (1st edition). Publication Board of Assam: Guwahati, 1974.
17. Rajkumar Sarbananda. Itihashe Soara Chasata Bachar (1st edition). Banlata: Dibrugarh, 2000.
18. Raychaudhuri Tapan, Habib Irfan (ed). The Cambridge Economic History of India (reprinted). Orient Longman Limited: New Delhi, 1984.
19. Sarma SN. A Socio-Economic and Cultural History of Medieval Assam (reprinted). Bina Library: Guwahati, 2001.
20. Sharma Benudhar (ed). An Account of Assam (2nd impression). Assam Jyoti Suwagpur: Guwahati, 1972.
21. Shastri RK. Parbat Jowarat Mahamaya (10th edition). The Exbow Printers: Dhubri, 2010.