

CHAPTER-VII

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“History is the record of what one age finds worthy to note in another “
(Burckhardt)

In the foregoing pages an attempt has been made to present a comprehensive history of *Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti* or Assam Research Society from its formation till 1993. The study is intended to carry-out a detail investigation based on the available sources so far not touched or undertaken by the scholars.

It is a fact that the discovery of India’s past and its revelation to Europe in the eighteenth century was largely the work of the Jesuits in India and of the Europeans in general employed by the East India Company and outstanding among them were Sir William Jones, Francis Gladwin, Nathaniel Halhead, Jonathan Duncan, Henry Colebrook, James Prinsep, Charles Wilkins and so on. They established the Asiatic Society in 1784 in Calcutta that become in course of time a reputed centre of indological research and studies in India. They not only established the research society at the same time encouraged the Indians for historical research. Though there was a motive behind such initiative, one cannot deny its importance in the present days. After the establishment of the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad*, Calcutta, the process was further accelerated and more Indians

particularly the scholars and intellectuals of Bengal oriented towards historical research. In course of time a number of voluntary organizations took initiative and established regional historical research institution under the patronage of scholars and common people with the support of the Government. These institutions not only collected and preserved the historical materials, at the same time made valuable publication which has changed the earlier generalization made by the scholar administrators of East India Company. The details have been discussed in Chapter- I.

Though many important documents were collected throughout the nineteenth century on various aspects of Indian society and religion somehow there were some lapses in incorporating them in any book form. It is a pity that even Sir Edward Gait's pioneer work, a very inadequate and often superficial study of the whole history of Assam in one handy volume, has to be relied on. North East India particularly *Pragjyotisa-Kamarupa* found mention in the epics, the *Puranas* and the *Arthasastra* of the later period, there was hardly any serious historical investigation before the advent of the British. It may be noted that the Asiatic Society of Bengal and *Bangiya Sahitya Parishad*, Calcutta were constant inspiration to the academics of Assam and the importance and necessity of such research institution began to hunt their mind on many occasions. The fifth conference of the *Uttarbanga Sahitya Sanmelan* held at *Kamakhya* (Guwahati) on 7th April, 1912 brought a rare opportunity to them and decision was taken to establish a 'Samiti' with a sole aim to carry-out research on the history and allied

subjects on Kamarupa (i.e. present Assam and adjoining regions including North Bengal, Kamata-Cooch Behar). This has been discussed in detail in Chapter-II.

After the establishment, the Samiti was organized like any other voluntary organization. The necessity of a permanent site with own building was felt and government was approached for that. A prospectus was published and circulated to generate public interest for research activities. Rules were framed and a written constitution was adopted. Members were enrolled under different categories. Funds were generated through various means. The government also sanctioned a recurring grant from the year 1915. The contributions of the members, patrons and Government have made the Samiti a front rank research institution of India. Detail information is provided in Chapter- III.

The institution has brought a revolutionary change in reconstruction of the history of the region and since it's beginning in spite of its many constraints, it has been promoting various research activities on Assam and her neighbours. It is still engaged in many research activities through its members and in many ways it caters to the need and demand of the scholars and researchers. The Samiti contributed to fill-up the gap in the history of India with its new interpretation through a systematic study, which was in the dark to the historians of India. No doubt, the Samiti had faced many ups and down in the long run of its existence, but its activities were going on without a halt. The details are appended in Chapter- IV.

To fulfill the objective, the Samiti, from the beginning, was actively engaged in its multidimensional activities. The contribution of members, patrons and Government helped the Samiti in many ways. Under the able leadership the Samiti could reach the climax. This achievement can be observed through its administrative set up, the academic pursuits, the Samiti's impression as a national institution and as a pioneer institution, which encouraged to grow similar institution engaged in the field of research. Establishment of a museum by its own collection is no doubt a remarkable episode. However due to certain unforeseen situation the Samiti could not sustain its position at the same footing. The details have been discussed in Chapter- V.

During the period of our study, it is observed that the Samiti has passed through various stages. At the initial stage it was founded with thirteen members and interestingly the first donor was a Bengali gentleman from Calcutta. Subsequently its activities were increased with more participation of members including high placed government personage. At a time it reached its climax and slowly started declining. During fifties the Samiti faced numerous difficulties. The financial crisis hampered research activities. The initiative and interest of the public and government started declining. In spite of such condition the missionary zeal and untiring effort of the members have continued to engage in research activities and cater to the needs of the scholars and researchers of the present time for the reconstruction of history of Assam and to fill up the gaps in national history. Historical investigation and reconstruction of local history at various

localities have already started and collection and preservation of source have resulted establishment of Museum at district, Sub-division, academic institutions and interestingly at village level too. A good number of local histories have been published in recent years. These are no doubt the positive outcome for which the Samiti may feel proud of.

A history of the Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti is justified not only by its centenary, but also by the existence of an unusually complete series of records. The unstructured zeal, which from time to time purged the Samiti library of 'useless' books, some of which would be rare and valuable, now, was seldom turned against the office papers; neglect as much as care has ensured their preservation. These records fall roughly into four classes. First, there are the copies of 'letter issued' from the Samiti mainly to the government of Assam, the controlling educational authority and the similar institutions outside. The earliest document found was an official correspondence to the chief Commissioner of Assam dated 4.10.1913. All the old records of the Samiti are not available in the office due to certain possibilities. These may be, there was no permanent house of the Samiti till 1917. The secretary maintained all official correspondence and there was no permanent office staff for its preservation. The Samiti house was gutted in an accidental fire in 1944 when almost old records were either burnt or damaged. In spite of all such handicaps the journals of the Samiti, the archival records and the available records in Samiti office helped us to bring out some very interesting information, which may be helpful for further research.

The emergence of Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti is no doubt a breakthrough in the history of educational growth in Assam but surprisingly it failed to draw any special attention from the scholars and academics. Some articles about the Samiti have come to our notice and most of them were published either in local dailies or journals, which hardly could throw new light on the institution regarding its origin, growth and development and the present condition of the Samiti. The dissertation may be a humble attempt to fill up the gap to present a comprehensive history of the Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti based on the source materials so far not touched or undertaken by the scholars.
