

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

1.1: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Women have constituted half of the human dominion through out the annals of history. Therefore, women are called as better half or half of the sky. It is without the share in all types of activities the human civilization can never progress. Therefore the participation of woman in all sectors of works through out the ages can never be ignored. The participation of woman in house hold activities, social reforms, political events is the factors that exhibit the status of woman of a country or a society.

Assam is situated in "One of the greatest routes of migration of mankind. Throughout the ages she received people of different stains particularly the Indo Chinese, Mongoloids, Pouring into India who added new elements to the country's population and culture complex. Assam is situated in the extreme North-east frontier of India in between 28^o and 24^o North latitude and borders on the hill states of Bhutan, Arunachal, Nagaland, Monipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Meghalaya in the vicinity of china and Tibet on the north of Burma on the east and the south and of Bangladesh on the West.

Among the three period of Assam history Ancient Assam history roughly covers the period from the days of the epics to the every part of the thirteenth century.

Medieval Assam history may be said to have begun with the coming of the Ahoms to this land in the early part of the thirteenth century and covers the entire period of their rule till the formal inauguration of the British rule in 1826 begun the Modern Assam covers till India became independent in august 1947 and thereafter.

The Medieval Assam was absolutely ruled by the Ahoms who hailed from Maulong, established their political supremacy in the year 1228 A.D. Gradually they expanded and consolidated their position. The Ahoms ruled over the country for a long period of 600 years when they had to subdue in the hands of British East India Company in 1826. The Ahoms while hailed to the Country did not accompany any women with them. They made matrimonial relations with the local people and thus survived their generations. In course of time they assimilated themselves with the local tribes and formed Greater Assamese society. The Ahom rulers as well as the Ahom nobles paid high status to the women folk both in political and social matters.

1.2: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

History is the evidence that this Ahom Dynasty, during their whole period of reign paid due honour and status to their women counterparts. Their social status was high, they received important places in the royal court, they even participated the royal discussions during the time of emergency. Thus Women played important role and enjoyed dignified status during the rule of Ahom dynasty. But unfortunately very few research works has been carried out on this important subject matter, hence the present researcher has undertaken a humble attempt to explore this unexplored zone of the Ahom Dynasty.

1.3: REVIEW LITERATURE

In our period of discussion the objectives of our study is to find out the forces and factors that were at work for which the women of medieval times took part in the socio-political affairs. But no systematic study in this field has yet been done by any scholar. Stray references to our study have been found in the work of certain scholar like U.N. Gohain's

Assam under the Ahoms, E.A. Gait's A History of Assam Published in 1905, N.N. Acharyas "History of Medieval Assam, S.L.Baruah A comprehensive history of Assam, S. Raj Guru's Medieval Assamese Society, N.K. Basu's Assam in the Ahom age (1970), Dr. A Guha's medieval and early colonial Assam (1991) is one of the valuable work in this time. Here an attempt has been made to focus some aspects of Socio-economic life of medieval Assamese society. But he has not covered the entire problem systematically on the wider political scenario of the time. Under such "circumstance, the present project has been undertaken to make a detailed and systematic study of the role of women in medieval politics of Assam.

1.4: OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Our work aims to study the status women during Ahom Rule and how they directly or indirectly played political role in different times, their contribution to the state administration and development of political relation with other states. Besides, how they played role to socio-cultural aspect and their contribution to the society is also most important in this regard. Moreover the socio political status of Woman during Ahom reign will also be studied. .

1.5: PERIOD OF STUDY

The period of the work is confined to the Study of status of women in political, social, religious and economic aspects of Assam of the period from the first half of the 13th century A.D. till 1826, the Treaty of Yandaboo. But casual references have been made on the history of ancient India to understand the contents of the Subject matter in a clear way.

1.6: SOURCES OF STUDY

Major sources of our study has been taken from the contemporary chronicles, biographical and genealogical works of medieval period of Assam a (both Published and unpublished) the contemporary foreign accounts. Besides, we will use a number of British records which were written in the last part of the Ahom rule while collecting our study materials we will approach many of educational institutions like the Universities of Assam, the Department of Historical and Antiquarians studies of Assam, and of the Kamrup Anusandhan Samiti, Guwahati, Assam. With all these sources, best efforts will be made to present our problem as objectively as possible with a forwarding of analytical treatment.

1.7: METHODOLOGY

Taking all relevant and available sources, the Methodology will no doubt be empirical, theoretical and historical. All the sources will be consulted and their authenticity will properly be examined and the problem will also be analyzed.

1.8: HYPOTHESIS

1. It was assumed that during Medieval Assam Woman Played very important Role in Political and Social affairs of the status.
2. It was assumed that Woman of Medieval Assam enjoyed dignified status.
3. It was assumed that during Ahom Rule woman participated in the social-economic, cultural and religious activities of the state.

1.9: CONCLUSION

In this way the study has been completed within a very short period of time. Humble efforts have been made to go to depth of the subject matter, Sometimes beyond the jurisdiction of time framework to understand the contents in a very clear way.