INTRODUCTION

Here, in the introduction mention may be made why, when and how this research work is started. It requires mentioning the importance of the work under study, reasons behind its choice, purpose of the work and the probable findings of the same. So, it may be better represented under the following headings:

(I) Historical and Geographical Background of Assam, the Barak Valley as well as the Surma Valley

(II) Importance of the Research Work.

(III)Reasons behind the Choice of the Research Topic.

(IV)Purpose of the Study on the Research Topic.

(V) Findings of the Research Work.

(I) Historical and Geographical Background of Assam, the Barak Valley as well as the Surma Valley:

(a) Historical and Geographical Background of Assam:

It is an Indian province situated in the north - east corner of the Republic of which Barak Valley is a part. It is an area of 53,226 square miles. It lies between the twenty-second and twenty - eight degrees of north latitude and between eighty -ninth and ninety -seventh degrees of east longitude. It is divided in to three natural divisions, which are the Brahmaputra Valley or Assam proper, the Barak Valley or Surma Valley and the intervening hills known as the Assam Range, which form the watershed of the two valleys. The hilly region forms the Burmese border at right angles and lies almost due east to west. At the western end, they are broken up in to scattered ridges and deep valleys covered with forests. On its southern part, the hills rise like a wall of the plain. On the east of it the hills are dressed with thick forests. The Surma valley is a flat plain situated on both sides of the river, Surma. It is about one hundred and twenty five miles long having a breadth of about sixty miles. The Brahmaputra Valley is a flat plain situated on both sides of the river, the Brahmaputra with a length of about one hundred and twenty five miles and with a breadth of about sixty miles. The Surma Valley and the Brahmaputra Valley are watered mainly by the rivers, the Surma and the Brahmaputra

respectively and also by their tributaries. Assam, being naturally surrounded by mountain-like walls remains practically isolated from the rest of the country in communication and other privileges. Of course, the river, Brahmaputra itself was a great means of communication and navigation. But before the age of stream water -communication and voyage was always uncertain and often hazardous for the rapidity of its current. Some of its tributaries are snow-fed and some others particularly those on the South depend on the monsoons for navigable water.They are dried up in the winter and swollen up inundating their banks in the rainy season & causing heavy floods in Assam.

Assam is a museum of different races. In different periods of times different races of people came through different routes and settled here. Different racial elements came in Assam through the mountain paths of it especially in the north and the north-east including Tibeto-Burmans of the Indo-Chinese stock, Aryan, Negro and Austro-Asiatic. The physical features, cultures, rites and other aspects of their lives are the clear indications that most of the people of either hills or plains of Assam are Tibeto-Burmans and the Indo-Chinese family. One of the races is the Khasis who are believed to be one of the earliest migrated races from the South Pacific. The other great divisions of people are the Kacharis, the Dimasas, the Bodos, the Rabhas, the Garos, the Lalungs, the Daflas, the Miris and the Muslims. One third group of these people is the Lushais / Mizos, who came from the South of it and seem to be related with the Manipuris & the Nagas the food & culture of whom differentiates them from other hill tribes. The people of the Surma Valley are consisted mainly of Bangalese while that of the Brahmaputra valley is mainly Assamese. Besides, in the Surma valley there are Manipuris, Assamese, Biharese, Barmans and so on as the Bangalese, Boros, Maimonsingese, Rabas & the likes in the Brahmaputra valley.

Over and above these, people of different religions as the different languages are found here and there in both the Surma and Brahmaputra valleys. Of course, the Hindus and the Muslims are the two major religious segments who consisted more than 90% of its population. The 3rd major religion in Assam is the Christians.But the hilly region of Assam is consisted of more than 90% of the Christian people. Besides, there are many followers of Baisnab religion of Sri Sankar Deva.

The early Muslim settlement in Assam is traced back as early as to 1206 AD

when the Turks were defeated in their attack on Kamrup. Tugril Khan attacked Kamrup in 1257AD but could not conquer it.

Though he was defeated, could build the first mosque in North Kamrup of Assam.Of course, Nawab Hussain Shah of Gour succeeded in 1498AD to trace his entrance in Kamatapur and his son is appointed by him to administer Hajo. Now there is a famous shrine in Hajo called Poamecca established by Gyas Uddin Aulia accompanied with Hussain Shah. The Muslim population increased since then with every Mughal attack. Mirzumla attacked Assam in 1661AD.

The Muslim is socially divided in to two groups, which are the indigenous Muslims and the immigrant Muslims. The indigenous Muslims are a privileged class of the society for not only accepting the Assamese culture but also being relatively early settled in Assam in the Pre-British era.

They also entered in the stream of modernization much earlier as compared to the immigrant Muslims. They are traders by profession and not cultivators like the immigrant Muslims. Their social status is a bar in their matrimonial relations, customs and traditions in spite of being from the same religious faith. The immigrant Muslims are more advanced to them in the control and possession of land and exploitation of labourers. The indigenous Muslims are Assamese by their mother tongue but the immigrant Muslims are Bengalese or Moimunshingese or Nawakalies who came from the various linguistic regions of Bangladesh.

In the economic development of Assam, the immigrant Muslims have a lion's share in the upliftment of its agriculture and productivity of agricultural goods though their miserable illiteracy confined them to depend on Matebbars and Dewans.

In the field of politics there had never been any unity between these two groups in spite of their oneness by faith. This is in fact for the fear of the Assamese Hindus; the indigenous Assamese Muslims in spite of knowing the danger could not dare to advance for the help of their Muslim brothers.

The latter is also divided into two groups of Muslims. The indigenous

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1. Assam Muslims Politics and Cohesion Mittal Publications, Delhi, p. 2 Dr. Bimal J. Dev and Dr. Dilip K. Lahiri

Muslims are Bangalese by their mother tongue like the indigenous Hindus. Their social status is far better than the immigrant Muslims. They are landlords and some educated and some traders. But the immigrant Muslim is consisted of Sylhatese and the Hindustani Muslims.They are Bangalese and Hindustanis respectively. There is matrimonial relation of the Bengali immigrant Muslims with the Bengali indigenous Muslims in most of the cases. But this matrimonial relation is very rare in the Bengali indigenous or immigrant Muslims and the Hindustani immigrant Muslims. The indigenous Muslims are mostly converted. Their social status is not behind any one. But the immigrant Muslims' social status is not up to the mark. The Bengali immigrant Muslims came from Sylhet. They speak local Bengali, which is Sylhati Bengali like the indigenous Muslims, which gave them a chance to adjust with the indigenous converted Muslims. But the immigrant Hindustani Muslims came from Bihar. Their mother tongue is Hindi. They are down trodden people in the society. They are mostly poor and have no position in the society.

The past history of Assam or Kamrup is quite obscure. It is wrapped up with mythological and legendary stories. It is found and taken from the Puranas, Epics and religious legends of Gangetic India.The political history of Assam as known from the legends begins sometime before Naraka who killed Ghataka of the Danav dynasty and established himself in Pragjyotishpur. Thirteen rulers of the Barman dynasty from Pusya Barman to Baskara Barman ruled the land from 100 to 150 AD as it is learnt from epigraphic records and narrations of Hiuen Tsang.Again from 650 to 990 AD the land is ruled by Salastambha, a clusteral branch of the Barmans. It is a dynasty founded by one Brahmapala and succeeded and ruled the land up to 1138 AD.

Arimatta kings succeeded them and ruled the land from 1138 to 1228 AD. Then the Ahoms, a human race of South - East Asia entered and penetrated in to the south-east corner of the province and established Ahom kingdom in the present Sibsagar district in the early thirteenth century. The expansion policy of the Ahoms like the new comers caused a collision of them with the Mughal in the west. The continuous Ahom - Mughal conflicts

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1. Assam Muslims Politics and Cohesion, Mittal Publications, Delhi, p. 1 Dr. Bimal J. Dev and Dr.dilip K.Lahiri

with occasional breaks throughout the seventeenth century resulted to expulsion of the Mughal and extension of the Ahoms.

The Ahom rule was in a moribund condition in the middle of the 18th century. Many weak and worthless rulers succeeded the Ahoms and their courts became mere a place of intrigues and conspiracies. The political insurrections and repeated invasions of the Burmese followed this. The invaders established themselves in Assam and caused a threatening to the British Govt. then ruled in Bengal. This caused the 1st Anglo - Burmese war that ultimately caused plunder, devastation, murder and desecration and the likes among the people.There were wholesale depopulation, deindustrialization, agricultural backwardness and undeveloped trade. Neo-Baisnabite influence, contribution of the Sanskrit Scholars and the indigenous learning and the likes were on the wane during this period of confusion.

(b) Historical and Geographical Background of Surma Barak Valley: -

The History of Surma Barak Valley is a peculiar and diverse one since pre-historic period. It is as peculiar as the history of India rather more than that. There were so many smaller to smallest kingdoms in Surma Barak valley as well as Assam during the Brahmin rules. This is because of wars among the kings on the one hand and lack of peace and tranquility in those kingdoms on the other hand. Some such kingdoms of this region were Goar, Gauda and Hirimba and Kachari kingdoms.

But during the Muslim rule, there were comparatively greater administrative regions which were because of their greater power on the one had and unpopularity of those kings on the other hand and their just, popular and responsible administration too.

In 1842 AD British came in Assam for the first time ending the Muslim rule. During their regime Shillong became the capital of Assam in 1874 AD on the pretext of better administration of the two different valleys of Assam from there. But in 1905 AD, Assam was amalgamated with Eastern Bengal and Dacca became its capital. In 1912 AD Assam became a separate province with Sylhet of present Bangladesh as a part of it. Again, after the independence of India in 1947 AD and partition of the country, Sylhet excluding Karimganj went to Pakistan.

It is again found that in 1198 AD, Bakhtiyar Khilji, the first Muslim

conqueror attacked Assam and it was Nawab Shah who extended his power up to Hajo of Brahmaputra valley of Assam while on the other hand he first conquered Bengal in 1205 AD with which Surma Barak Valley of Assam had more relation than the Brahmaputra valley of it due to linguistic coincidence and facilities on the one hand and advantages of transport and communication on the other hand.

Besides, present Barak Valley was a part of Greater Bengal Bhumi and present Bangladesh or Surma Valley up to 1874 AD. The British Govt. cut this north-eastern part of Bangladesh and included it under the province of Assam under the pretext of more profitability of the land and also made it an independent district under the name of Cachar. But the people of the region objected vehemently to go to an unknown and unacquainted place leaving their familiar place but in vain. Thus the province, Assam was bound with Bengal in administration up to 1911 AD. Actual administrative works of Assam practically started since 1911 - 12 AD. But this long reign of Assam could not cut up the social relations of the Bangalese and compelled them to create social relations with the Assamese.

The people of Surma Barak Valley are mainly the Bangalese and a partner of the old Bengali culture and tradition. From the geographical point of view this is the neighboring part of greater Bengal. So, geographically, socially and culturally it is related with Bengal.[1] Barak Valley or the past Cachar District is a part of Surma Valley. Once, the undivided Cachar district or the Barak Valley was the land of Hiramba and descendants of Gatath Coch son of Hiramba Bhimsen and hence the land was known then as Hiramba kingdom. In the history of Cachar, Cachar king is said to be the descendants of Gatath Coch. So, the land is called Hiramba and the king is known as Hirmbeshshar. Chachemfa was the king of the Kacharis.[2] It is said in a gazette that there lived a king to the east of Kamrup in the name of Hiramba and according to his name the land is called Hiramba.[3]

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1. Bangla Tumicar, Calcutta 1997 pp. 78-79 & Bangla Barta. Coudhury Shashata

2. Kachari Buranjee, chapter - 2, p.3 Bhuya Surjakanta

3. Bengal and Agra Guide and Gazette, 1841 vol-2 p. 97.

According to Acharia Sunitikumar Chattopadhay, Chachemfa son of Gatathcoch was the king of the tribal and the Kachari king & he was from the Hiramba blood [1]

The Kacharis came here from Dimapur. They came Maibong from Dimapur and then to Khashpur. On their way, they also halted in Haritikar and Dudpatil. Maibong, Khashpur and Haritikar were the residing places of the Kachari kings and so these are regarded as their capitals. Some historians call Dimapur as Hirimbapur. The first part of the word became Hirimba due to the change in the Syllable while Dima and pur remained unchanged. Such a change is possible in a language but not in this case. Dimasa is the name of the Kacharise language and their original name is also the same. The term means the children of much water. Cha is a native word meaning children. Cha is an Indo- Mongolian word accepted by the Austric people. The Austric people of Chotonaghpur use the word.

Dima means much water or Brahmaputra and Dimapur came from this and no doubt, these people coming by the bank of the Brahmaputra reached Dimapur and where from to Cachar. This is a branch of Kirat genealogy and they are Melechcha to the Aryans like the Shabar and Pulindas.

The land of Barak Valley can be divided into four categories, which are high land, low land or plains, tillas and beels or hawors. Of these high land is almost barren having only some plantations of jume cultivation, low lands or the plains are thickly populated areas having most of its productive capacity, tillas are nowadays used mainly for home purpose due to influx of refugees and scarcity of land and the beels or hawors are occupied mostly by the refugees for being convenient for catching fishes and boru cultivation.

In the Barak Valley, Khashpur was the capital of the ancient Hirambha kingdom. After the occupation and possession of the British it was named first Cachar. In 14th August 1832 AD, the British included this kingdom in its regime after the assassination of King Gobindo Chandra and Lieutenant, Fisar was appointed its first superintendent. In the survey map of 1837-40 AD Cachar was mentioned the occupied region of the Cachar king, Gobinda Chandra. The north part of the Hirambha kingdom was not in this survey for being in the possession of the General Tularam. In the north of the Hirambha

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1. Kiratjanakriti P. 123

Kingdom was the Kamrup province and Dharampur. The Ahom kings occupied the north part of the Hirambha kingdom for which the Hirambha king was not pleased with the Ahoms.

During the reign of king Paran Chandra Narayan, grandfather of king, Gobindra Chandra, the Ahom occupied region was re-occupied and included in the Hirambha Kingdom once again by the general Tularam.Thenceforth, they were the king family of Nowgong and the North Cachar. Of course, the British latter on, occupied the Kingdom. Still to day there are historical monuments of Hirambha kingdom, its culture and religion in Khashpur.[1] Kamrup and Dharampur are in the north of Hirambha kingdom, Manipur in its east, Madhura (Manthara) river in its south and Shialtek (Shialcoat) in its west.

According to the Census of the year 1971AD the total population of the Barak Valley is 17,43,400 of which 80% were Bangalese Hindu and Muslims and 13,32,200 by number. Besides, 1,93,200 people were Hindi speaking 68,400 Meitai Manipuri, 33000 Bishnupuria Manipuri, 9,200 Dimasa and 6,800 Assamese. Most of these Assamese people were residing here temporarily for service purpose and the rest were the permanent inhabitants of this valley. They came here in the 16th century during the raid of Koch general, Chila Roy from the Brahmaputra valley and were known as Deyan. Deyan Kamal Narayan established first the independent Khashpur province.[2]

Some more people of the Deyan class came here in the first part of the 19th century during the great rebellion of Assam. The Dimasa king, Krishna Chandra (coming from Maibong to Cachar) was willing to declare rebellion against Assam Govt. and also took shelter in Cachar, the present Barak Valley.[3]

Besides, some Assamese families came and settled in Assam during the Man (Burmese) attack of Assam. Similarly in 1750 AD when Dimasa

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1. Bangla Tumicar, Calcutta 1997 pp. 78-79 & Bangla Barta. Choudhury, Shashata

2. Census Report 1971

3. Tungkhangia Buranjee, Gauhati, 1932 P. 137

(Hiramba) state's capital was shifted from Maibong to Khashpur about 50 families of Dimasa came and settled here along with the royal family.[1]

During the reign of Maharaja Gobindra Chandra when a rebellion took place in the North Cachar under the leadership of Tularam some more Dimasa families came to settle in this plain. They are the predecessors of the Barman family of the Barak Valley.

The Manipuris both Maitai and Bishnapuria took shelter in Cachar, Sylhet and Tripura in 1818 AD when the Burmese attacked and occupied Manipur. Though most of the refugees returned Manipur after the Burmese battle (1824 - 26 AD) some settled in this valley permanently. Due to the long turmoil and break of peace in Manipur, the Manipuris came and settled here in the following days too, under the encouragement of the British regime to do so.

Mizo Pahar and the Naga populated area of Manipur faced acute internal collision and break of peace. So, some Mizo (Kuki) and some Nagas took shelter in the plains of Cachar in 1831 AD and the British ruler, Thomas Fisher gave them asylum in the bordering area of Cacahr and also helped them financially.

The Burmese battle compelled most of the inhabitants of Cachar to leave home who took shelter in Sylhet. But they returned in the Barak Valley gradually when the British administration was established here.[2]

One report of the British ruler, G.G. Burns of the year 1837 AD says that the then population of Cachar was only 50 thousands of which only a few were Dimasa (Kachari) but the most of them were Bengali Hindu and Muslims. Besides, some of them were Manipuri immigrants. There were also a few Kuki and Nagas in its bordering areas.[3]

According to the Census of 1951 AD the total population of the Barak Valley was 85,522 of which 60,281 were Bengali Hindu and Muslims 10,723 Manipuri 276 Assamese 62 Europeans 6,320 Kuki 5,645 Nagas & 2,215 Dimasas.[4]

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1. A Historical Descriptive Account of the Kachari Tribes in the North Cachar Hills, Shillong 1885 P. 5 C.A. Soppit

2. Foreign Political Proceedings (FPP) 14 May 1832 p.p. 106-109

3. Cachar District Records (CR), 1837 p. 91

4. Cacahr District Records (CR), 1851 p. 69

A revolutionary change took place in the population trend of the plain Cachar or Barak Valley in the year 1855 AD when the tea industry introduced first and the Hindi speaking people came first in Cachar from the North India. Throughout the end of the century labourers continued to come here along with the expansion and development of tea-industry. According to the census of the year 1901 AD 61% of its total population is Bengali, 21% Hindi speaking people 11% Manipuri and 7% others. [1]

In 1832 AD, Pembart Saheb in his report remarking about the inhabitants of Barak - Surma says, "In physical figures, culture and language all the people of Cachar and Sylhet are indifferent." In his language, "..... the people in Sylhet and Cachar are identical in every respect - appearance, customs and language." [2]

Keeping in mind the people of Cachar (Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi of today), the first superintendent of Cachar, Fisher Saheb said, in 1834 AD, "And Bengali should be made the medium of instruction of this district." In his language, "The entire instruction in the district is to be conveyed in the Bengali language." [3]

The famous Genman priest, Becker remarks that the main language of the Surma valley is Bengali. But the language of Surma Valley is little different from that of Bangladesh and so this language is famous as Sylhet - Bengali language. In the language of Becker, "The principal language of the Surma Valley is Bengali. Bengali as spoken in the Surma Valley differs to some extent from that of the province of Bengal and it is called therefore, Sylhet Bengali."[4]

Why the language of the Barak Valley is a little different from that of Bangladesh regarding which Sunitikumar said, "It is not a problem of Silchar or Cachar district. These new words came from the East Bengal's Sylhet and Moimonsing dialects.[5]

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1. Assam District Gazetteers, Vol. 1 (Cachar), Allahabad, 1905 p. 44 B.C.Allen
2. Foreign Political Proceedings (FPP), 14 May 1832 p. 109
Cachar District Records, Silchar 1969 P. 2 Dutta, D. B. C. Allen
3. Cachar District Records, Silchar, 1969 P. 2 Datta, D.
4. History of the Catholic Missions in North East India (First German Edit. 1923) tr. G. Stadler & S. Karotemprel, Shillong, 1980 pp. 94-95 C. Becker.
5. Barak Upattaakar Dukhkhini Barnamala.Choudhury, Sujit

The people of the plain of Cachar are indifferent from the people of Sylhet, which is always known to the people of Cachar. In 7th January 1926 AD the representative of Cachar, Maulana Rashid Ali Laskar said in the Legislative Assembly of Assam, "The people of Cachar did not come from the Assam Valley nor they came from the hells or from the heavens rather they are the descendants of the Sylhet- people."[1]

"As for the Cachar people, they have not migrated from the Assam Valley or from the hells nor have they been dropped from the heaven. The Cachar people are descendants of Sylhet." [2]

It means the people of Cachar under Sylhet were from the Bengali-blood. In spite of the arrival of Hindi- speaking tea -labourers and Manipuris, Allen Saheb remarking on the census of 1901 AD said that Bengali was the language of the common people of Cachar.

In the language of Allen Saheb, "Bengali is the common language." It means the migrated people are from Sylhet and along with that they accepted the regional language of Cachar with their Bengali language.

As soon as India became independent the major portion of land of the Surma Valley included in the territory of Pakistan and the Cachar district consisted of its remaining part. So, the land did not require to any specification with certain geographical identity. Up to 1983 AD, the land was known as a separate district of Assam province. In 1983 AD Karimganj of the Cachar District became a separate district. So, the land required a separate identity and at last the Cachar and Karimganj districts were known as the Barak Valley according to the main river of the land. In 1989 AD Hailakandi subdivision of the Cachar district was developed as a separate district. So, the common geographical name of the land became more perfect. To speak of the Barak Valley now is the three subdivisions of the Cachar district subsequent to the independent of India. In 1947AD after the separation of India, the Cachar district consisted of four subdivisions, which are Silchar, Hailakandi, Karimganj and the North Cachar. In 1952AD North

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2. Assam Legislative Council Proceedings, (ALCP) vol-6, 1926 p. 85

Statement of Maulana Rashid Ali Laskar,

3. Jatibad (1353 Falgun) p. 137 - 38 Sen, Kritimohan

Cachar & the Mikir pahar became a separate district reducing the number of subdivisions of the Cachar district in to three.

After partition, the influx of refugees from the East Pakistan accelerated the number of population of the Cachar district. The resettlement of the refugees and migration of some of the people of the Cachar district to the East Pakistan necessitated the new census. The social condition of recently independent India necessitated writing of history of the Cachar district. On the other hand, Cachar or the Barak Valley being a district of Assam has an indispensable touch with the history of Assam. But as regard the culture it has no similarity / unity rather insimiliary and inequality with Assam which formed its separate historical identity.

In 1874 AD when the Sylhet and the Cachar districts were included in the Assam province, the people of Assam could not accept it happily. The lawyers of the Sylhet district protested against this. The Sylhet and the Cachar district congress committee also condemned this and they did not co-operate with the Assam Congress Committee rather formed a joint Bengal Congress Committee. Both the Sylhet and the Cachar districts of it continued this motto up to 1947 AD. On the other hand, intelligent persons of the Brahmaputra Valley feared the Bengali sentiment due to the inclusion of Bengali dominated Cachar and Sylhet districts in Assam. In 1937 AD when Jawaharlal Nehru visited Assam, Nilmoni Phukan and Ambikagiri Roy Choudhury submitted a memorandum in favour of the committee named save Assam requesting for the separation of the Sylhet and the Cachar districts from Assam and for not allowing the Bangalese to settle in Assam which attracted the mind of the Assamese to join their hand with the congress. In the election of 1945-46 AD Assam provincial congress committee in its election manifesto gave words to separate Sylhet from Assam. In February 1946 AD Gopinath Bardalai wrote to Sardar Patel - It seems that Maulana Azad had decided that the only alternative of these affairs is to separate the Bengali dominated Cachar and Sylhet districts and to adjoin these districts with Bengal which the Assamese had been expecting for long 70 years.[1] It is clear enough that the administrative unification of the Surma and the Brahmaputra Valleys for a

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1. Sardar Patel Correspondence, 1945-50. Vol-III

Pp.194-96 Ahmedabad 1972

long period from 1876 to 1946 AD could not unify the people of these two valleys mentally. This became clear from the lecture/speech of the Governor and high officials of Assam Legislative Assembly after the independence of India.

In November 1947, after independence the session of Assam Legislative Assembly was held. The congress Government under the leadership of Gopinath Bardalai was formed & the Governor Sir, Akbar Haidari delivered speech in Nov. 5th 1947 AD which cleared the attitude of Assam Government. "The native of Assam are new masters of their own house. They have a Government, which is both responsible and responsive to them. They can take what steps are necessary for the encouragement and propagation of Assamese language and culture and of the languages and customs of the tribal people who are their fellow citizens and who also must have a share in the formation of such policies. The Bangalese has no longer the power, even if he had the will to impose anything on the people of these hills and valleys, which continue Assam. The basis of such feeling against him as exists is fear, but there is no cause for fear. I would therefore, appeal to you to exert all the influences you possess to give the stranger in our midst a fair deal, provided, of course, he in his turn deals loyally with us."

The joy of the ruling class of Assam perhaps expressed in the Governor - speech of Assam due to the inclusion of a major portion of Bengali dominated Sylhet in Pakistan. It likely happens that the people of Assam forgot the Bengali sentiment of the Bangalese of the Barak Valley and danced with joy and merriment. But the Bangalese of the Cachar District showed their general relation and protest against this.

In 1948 AD a proposal was placed before the Govt. of India to form a new state including the Cachar district with Manipur and Tripura, which is known as 'Purbanchal proposal.'

The people of the Brahmaputra Valley did not leave this tendency and in 1960 AD the Assam Legislative Assembly voted in favour of Assamese as a state language, which is reacted warmly by the Bangalese of the Barak Valley. In 19th May 1961 AD they called a general strike in whole the Barak Valley in protest of it. The police fired at the agitators in Silchar Railway station and killed 11 young stars along with a girl. As a result this law was amended and Bengali was recognized as an official language of the Barak

Valley. People welfare Council was set up in Cachar in 1967 AD. It raised a proposal with three alternatives.

These are to constitute a state with Cachar and its adjoining hilly areas or to constitute a state with Cachar, Mizoram and Meghalaya or to make itself a union territory. But it could not successfully do anything due to lack of sufficient support. In 1970 AD union Territory Demand Committee was formed which gave memorandum demanding union territory in 1970, 1980, 1986 & 1991 AD. But it can not be materialized due to lack of adequate support. To protect the culture and education of the Barak Valley Cachar District Education Protection Committee was formed in 1972 AD and a conference on Barak Valley Bengali Literature and Culture was held in 1977 AD, which are continuing its function still now.

(c) Historical and Geographical Background of Present Barak Valley:

Present Barak Valley is in fact, a part of the Surma Valley of British-ruled Assam province of 1896AD.Geographical position of the present Barak Valley is a consequence of the partition of India in 1950 AD. North Cachar district's hilly area is in the north, Tripura and the hills of Mizoram is in the South, Manipur and Nagapahar is in the East i.e. the valley is surrounded by hills from its three sides and the plain of Bangladesh is in the West. In other words, it is the plain of the southern part of Assam. It is divided at present in to Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj districts having the main river, the Barak and its two tributaries - Surma and Kushiara. This valley consisting of three districts has no independent administrative region but in spite of it, its geographical position has made it automatically a separate region of Assam from within it. The tunnels of uncrossable north Cachar hill's railway line and the risky road of the Meghalaya hilly state are the only means of communication of this valley with the rest of the country. From the geographical point of view, it is the eastern most part of Bengali-speaking undivided Bangladesh and culturally it is within the perimeter of bigger Bengali culture.

Before partition of India this valley was bigger than it is now. The large part of Sylhet of present Bangladesh and the hilly region of the North Cachar district of present Assam was known as the Surma Valley under the British Assam. As Silchar, at present is the main town and centre of this valley so

also Sylhet was the greatest town and centre of the then Surma Valley.[1]

From the explanation of the history of the Barak Valley since the pre-historic period still 1400 Bangla it appears that historically the three districts of the Barak Valley were not in the same tie. So also the social growth and development of the people of these three districts is not of the same nature. Though the pre- historic incidents of these three districts or the Barak Valley are not discovered still now, it can be said that the history of east India like the other regions of India is a prolonged and unstable one. In the historical period it was included in Kamrup state, Tripura state, Sylhet state etc. In the medieval period, present Karimganj district was under the regime of Turk, Afghan and Mughal respectively.

The present Hailakandi and Cachar districts were from within the Tripura state, under the regime of local kings, the extended regime of the Coach Rajas and were also established the rule of Dimasa kings. During the rule of Dimasa kings, Ahom kings extended their jurisdiction in these two districts of the Barak Valley but it was only temporary. Present Karimganj district went to the Mughal rule of Sylhet but in 1765 AD when the East India Company came in power of Bengal, the Sylhet district including Karimganj went to the rule of East India Company. Of course, the southern region of the present Karimganj district is occupied by the East India Company much later and after much struggle and obstacle. In the southern Karimganj and the Pratapghar Rajya there was a rich and influential businessman named Radharam who possessed the Nawab title and ruled this region independently up to 1786 AD until and unless the soldiers of the east India Company fought with him and conquered.

On the other hand, the Dimasa kings independently ruled present Cachar and Hailakandi districts up to 1832AD. Karimganj district in 1789AD and the Cachar and Hailakandi districts in 1832 AD came first under the rule of the East India Company and in 1874 AD still its inclusion in Assam, in the present Barak Valley, Cachar, Hailakandi and North Cachar hilly district of Assam consisting of Cachar district and Sylhet district including Karimganj

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all were under the Dacca Division of the British India. In 1977AD when Assam was developed as a Chief Commissioner-ruled province both the Cachar and Sylhet districts were included in Assam for the economic development of these two districts and henceforth these two districts were known as the Surma Valley.

II) Importance of the Research -Work

As a fact, the Research Topic under work is very important from different angles and also from different points of views.

It is, so far we know a historical fact that the Arabian prophet, Hazrat Mohd, May Allah bless him and grant him peace in general, influences the Muslims and the faith, Islam that again has been directly influenced by the Arabic language as there can be no Muslim or believer in Islam without learning Arabic and without recitation of the Quran, the scripture written in Arabic and the book of Allah which can never be translated or interpreted in any of the world languages keeping its complete, all inclusive and all exclusive sense and so can never be recited in a language other than Arabic.

The Muslim-conquerors ruled India for more than 200 years extending its territory, spreading Islam and converting people who lived a social and amicable life here. They, by converting people of India and ruling the land compelled them to know and learn Arabic at least to some extent. The administration of the foreign Muslims for long compelled themselves to learn Indian languages as compelled the Indians to learn at least some administrative terms of the foreign Muslims and also to be acquainted with some Perso-Arabic terms. As an instance, it may be said that the 2nd important pillar of Islam, Salat or prayer which a Muslim has to perform five times in a day can never be performed without learning at least some Arabic and some chapters of the Quran written in Arabic. As soon as one embraces Islam, one is taught the very first pillar of Islam preferably in Arabic along with its sense and also made preparation and arrangement to teach the Quarnic chapters from the day of his embracement.

Thus Arabic, in brief is a part and parcel of a Muslim who can never avoid its study at least for the sake of Islam and the Indians, in general can never neglect administrative terms of the Muslim sultans and thus the Muslims had to learn it for the religious purpose and the people in general for being the subjects of the foreign Muslim sultans and for being it a language

of the rulers. Besides, Arabic is the best and the mother Semitic language. It is the strangest language of the world being written from the right hand side and the sweetest one being the language rhythmical in sound and also for being it the language of the Quran and the Hadith. Even many non-Muslims are often attracted to learn this language or the meaning of some of its words and sentences. Thereby it can be quite natural for Arabic to have its some elements in Bengali.

It may also be that two or more neighboring languages or two languages of a particular region are affected and influenced by each other as the character of neighboring people is affected by each other due to their common co-existence for many decades.

Over and above all these, Arab countries are rich enough in mineral resources especially in petroleum-like liquid gold for its vast use in modern age of science and technology. It has, beyond all these, vast scope of employment facilities and can afford lakhs of foreigners to be appointed and engaged in different fields of employment and as its money value is higher than ten times in comparison to the money value of India, it generally attracts the Indians like many others to go to a gulf country and engage some where and for this purpose even many non-Muslim Indians learn Arabic which has no exception in the Barak Valley too.

Thus, Bengali Muslims had to learn Arabic for religious purpose and the Bengali non-Muslims had to be acquainted with some of the Arabic terms especially administrative used by the Muslim Sultans and their officials. The Bangalese in general had to learn Arabic language for employment purpose and better job facilities in the Arab countries. So, why Arabic language will not be learnt at least for some extent by the Bangalese and why some Perso-Arabic elements be not found in the Bengali language in general.

Under the above circumstances, it is quite important for an Arabic-learned Bengali scholar to find out after scientific study which Perso-Arabic elements are mingled in Bengali. He should also sort out how and when these elements entered in to Bengali along with all the possible reasons behind it.

III) Reasons behind the Choice of the Topic:

In this regard mention may be made that I have some colleagues and even some teachers most of whom non-Muslims and enthuseous to know Arabic specially one form among them is lecturer by profession who used to

ask almost every day he meets me meaning of this or that Arabic word heard form the masses or the programme of T.V. or from any other media. Besides, he used to collect Muslim names 99% of which is purely Arabic and asks me the meaning of these names and I used to reply him according to my capacity and even after consultation of dictionary if the situation demands.

Over and above this when I, as a Bangali, read a Bengali book preferably literary book or a magazine or a News paper and find an Arabic word during the course of my study or during conversation when the second person speaks using an Arabic word or a judicial term like Suleh Nama, Faisala, Nikah it strikes my ears or an administrative term like Hukum, Adalat I listen, I become enthuseous and can not but think over which ultimately encouraged me to find out the cause of this admixture of perso-Arabic words in Bengali and these finally lead me to choose the topic for my research work as from the primary enthusiasm to know on the subject leads me to see that there are ample materials for such a work.

Besides all these, the history of this region specially the arrival of the Muslims, the Sufi- saints' Shah Jalal in special in this region in 1303 A D and the conquest of Sylhet by Shah Jalal in 1348 A D and also his miracles and his large scale conversion and the happenings like these encouraged me to know more details of the Muslims' arrival here and their versatile influence on this region which also assists me to choose and select the topic.

As soon as I met some of the scholars and consulted with them on the subject they, almost all encouraged me to go ahead and do the work. This was also a positive step, which helped me to start the work on the aforesaid subject.

Besides, the coincidence of cultural events and conflicts of them in between the Hindu-Muslim culture, rites and customs are not lees important a factor to strike my mind and lead me to this work.

Over and above these, studies like Arabic elements in Malayalam, Urdu, and Persian and so on gave the idea of this work which I took in my hand after mature thought and taking opinions of the scholars and experts in this line.

IV) Purpose of the Study on the Research Topic:

The purpose of this study is to ascertain how and when the Muslims

nipped their bud here. It is to find out the perso-Arabic elements which are being used by the Bangalese and found in their language and literature due to the common co-existence of the Bangali Muslims and non-Muslims in a common platform for long and also for their close and intimate social, political, economical and other relations in these and other fields of activities. It also attempts to highlight on the advent of Muslims, their purpose as well as the advent of Arabic language here in the Barak Valley along with the origin of Bengal and the angalese. Thus it is to reveal when and how the Arabs, the Muslims and the Arabic language came and when and how the Arabic teaching and learning started here along with its different forms and also with its elements found in the Bengali language and literature of the Barak Valley and their general impacts on the Bangalese. It is to enchain the two languages Arabic and Bengali by studying scientifically the different aspects of these two languages and showing the admixture of these two and influences of Arabic in Bengali on the one hand and the social relation of the Bengali Hindu Muslims on the other hand. Thus it is to make a relation and comparison between Arabic and Bengali by showing Arabic elements like Arabic words, subject matters, Arabic themes and Arabic influences in the Bengali language and literature & also a comparison to the rites, customs, traditions and social conditions of the people of the Barak Valley prior to Muslim arrival to the post Muslim arrival in the Barak Valley.

It is in short, a valuable work and an attempt never done before to enchain both the languages, Arabic and Bengali which will exhibit scientifically which perso-Arabic elements are available in the Bengali language and literature of the Barak Valley and how and when these elements mingled in the Bengali language of this valley.

V) Findings of this Research work:

Every work should have some findings which may help the mankind someway or the otherwise.

This work under study is not free from it. It will help us to find out those Arabic words which are being used in Bengali language and literature. It will reveal the Arabic elements used in Bengali and by the Bangalese. It will exhibit which Arabic words, Arabic subject matters, Arabic themes and Arabic vocabulary are used in Bengali.

Besides, it will point out some cultural relations in between the Muslims and the Hindus with special reference to the influence of Islam and the Muslims. It will help us to know the socio-cultural changes among the Bangalese due to the advent of Islam.

It will also help to know the linguistic changes of Bengali comparing the Pre-Islamic and post Islamic Bengali and the Bangalese.

Thus, it will act as a mirror of reflecting all the linguistic & socio-cultural images of the Bengali language and the Bangalese respectively along with the history of Arabic, its commencement, its teaching and learning and its different impacts on the Bengali language, the Bangalese and their culture and tradition.

Thus, it will help us to broaden our knowledge as to the arrival of the Muslims here as well as the commencement of Arabic studies and Islamic education of various forms here. It will help us to record and enlist the Arabic words and Islamic influences found in Bengali broadening the scope of our knowledge.

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