

# **POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE GAROS OF GOALPARA- KAMRUP OF ASSAM**



**Dr. Milton S. Sangma.**

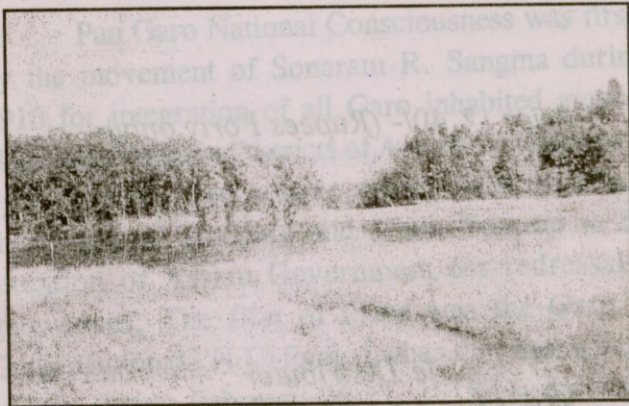
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# POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE GAROS OF GOALPARA - KAMRUP OF ASSAM



**Dr. Milton S. Sangma,**

**And**

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## INTRODUCTION.

Traditionally, the Garos had no political party. Their socio-economic and political interests were taken care of by the village Assembly under the leadership of the traditional clan chief known as NOKMA. Some of these Nokmas of Goalpara District became powerful and were able to secure the absolute right of ownership of plough lands under the Lakhiraj system during the British times, while some of the Nokmas of South Kamrup rose to be the petty kings tributary to the Ahom kings.

Pan Garo National Consciousness was first created by the movement of Sonaram R. Sangma during 1899-1916 for integration of all Garo inhabited areas of Garo Hills and Goalpara Districts of Assam <sup>(1)</sup>. This was followed by formation of successive non-political organisations by the Garos of Goalpara and South Kamrup to focus the attention of Assam Government for redressal of their grievances. The first of these was the Garo National Congregation (G.N.C) formed when they met at Nishangram village during February 26-27, 1915, in order to protest against the move of Assam Government to bring the Garo schools of Goalpara under Goalpara Local Board <sup>(2)</sup>. In 1918, another organisation known as the Garo National Club (G.N.C.) was formed with a view to demand for their Socio-economic developments and for a High English School <sup>(3)</sup>. The Laskers and Nokmas of Garo Hills and Goalpara submitted a memorandum to the Indian Statutory Commission known as Simon Commission in 1928 for restoration of their rights and privileges <sup>(4)</sup>. Another non-political organisation was formed in 1931 when they met at Nishangram known as the Garo National Conference

(G.N.C.) <sup>(5)</sup>. Yet another organisation was founded under the name and style of the A·chik National Tom·ani (A.N.T.) when they met at Nishangram in 1935 <sup>(6)</sup>. All these organisations had similar objectives, that is, to retain their culture and language and for their Socio-economic development.

On the eve of independence of India, the Garo leaders were greatly concerned as to what will be their position and identity in free India. It was to consider all these issues that a conference of all Garo leaders of erstwhile Assam was summoned at Tura on February 7-8, 1946 under the name of Garo National Conference (G.N.C.) <sup>(7)</sup>. The First General Annual Conference was held at Tura Town Hall on October 15-16, 1947 in which, many important issues, such as, opening of G.N.C. units all over Assam, registration of G.N.C. as a political party, demand for inclusion of the contiguous areas of Goalpara and Kamrup districts of Assam with Garo Hills District and their Socio-economic developments were discussed <sup>(8)</sup>. In the same year, the Garo National Conference submitted a memorandum to the Bordoloi Sub-Committee, in which, one of the demands was that the boundaries of Garo Hills district should be so re-adjusted on linguistic basis so as to include the adjacent areas of Goalpara and Kamrup of Assam mainly inhabited by the Garos <sup>(9)</sup>. In the annual conference of Garo National Conference held at Tura in 1948, it was changed to Garo National Council, in which, among other issues, it was decided to demand for delimitation of Garo Hills Autonomous District Council and amalgamation of the Garo dominated areas of Assam contiguous to Garo Hills District <sup>(10)</sup>.

Since 1947, G.N.C. units have been formed in Goalpara and Kamrup districts of Assam and it was these

G.N.C. units which have been spearheading the movement for the amalgamation of the Garo inhabited areas of Assam contiguous to the present State of Meghalaya till 2004 <sup>(11)</sup>.

After the granting of Scheduled Tribe Status to them on January 7, 2003, the G.N.C. of Goalpara and Kamrup of Assam reconciled to their lot and firmly resolved to stay in Assam with certain amount of autonomy so as to enable them to preserve and protect their racial, cultural and linguistic identity. <sup>(12)</sup>.

Dated :- Tura, May, 2012.

Milton. S Sangma.



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## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.

The Garos are one of the original settlers in the North-East India. They not only settled in Meghalaya but also in all the States of North-East India, as far as west Bengal including Bangladesh. Ethnically and linguistically, the Garos belong to the great Bodo family, which at one time, occupied a large part of the Brahmaputra Valley and were probably driven from the plains into the hills by early Aryan invaders from Northern India. The Bodos are a section of the Tibeto-Burman race of the Tibeto-Chinese family whose cradle is said to have been the North-Western China between the upper waters of Yang-Tse-Kiang and Hoang-ho. The Tibeto-Burmans sent forth successive waves of emigrants who spread down the valley of the Brahmaputra and the Chindwin, the Irrawadi and the Mekong in Burma <sup>(13)</sup>.

According to the tradition widely current among the Garos, they have originally come from Tibet in search of better place for their living. They came down under the leadership of Jappa-Jallinpa and Sukpa-Bongepa and lived in Koch Behar for about 400 years. Thence, they wandered to Rangamati (in present day Bangladesh) and then to Dhubri and Jogighopa and wandered along the bank of the Brahmaputra as far as the Kamakhya hill near Guwahati. As the local king was hostile, they wandered back and settled in the neighbourhood of Boko in Kamrup District of Assam. Here, the local tribal chief named Arambit or Arimata was attracted by the beauty of a Garo maiden named Jugi-Silche and subsequently married her and used the Garo warriors as his main fighting force. Archaeological remains

of his palace and other buildings along with the stone inscriptions are still preserved by the Garos of that ancient kingdom till today at a village called Kinangaon about 8kms South of Boko. However, subsequently, they were ill-treated by the ruler and so many of them retraced their steps along the Brahmaputra to the West and settled at the Habraghat pargana in present day Goalpara District of Assam. Here, they are said to have become prosperous and founded a Garo kingdom, of which, the first king was Habrasen or Abra Usengpa as the Garos called him. But in course of time, dissensions sprang up among them and a section of them set out on their travels again and entered the hills now called as the Garo Hills <sup>(14)</sup>.

It is the consensus of opinion among the Indologists that in Sanskrit, the term "Kirata" represented the Non-Aryan tribes living in the Himalayas and in the North-Eastern areas of India, who were of Mongoloid origin and members of the Tibeto-Burman speech family.. The word "Kirata" is mentioned in the Vedic literature, the Epics, the Puranas and the Yogini Tantra and also in the foreign writings of The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea and in Ptolemy's Geography. Most probably, long before 1000 B.C. some of these early Tibeto-Burmans had penetrated within the frontiers of India either along the southern slopes of the Himalayas through Assam or by way of Tibet, going up the Brahmaputra and then crossing the Himalayan barrier into Nepal and Garhwal-Kumaon <sup>(15)</sup>.

#### MOGHUL PERIOD.

During the Moghul days, the Garos have taken part

in a contest for mastery of Assam. During Mirza Nathan's campaign in Assam between 1608-1624, the Garos in thousands joined in attacking the fortress "at Amjonga and fortress of Rongjuli" within the Goalpara District of Assam <sup>(16)</sup>. The other was in 1671, when the Garo subjects of Raja of Rani in the Kamrup District of Assam, helped the Ahoms in expelling the Muhammedans invasions led by Raja Ram Singh <sup>(17)</sup>.



## BRITISH PERIOD.

### (A) THE GAROS OF KAMRUP DISTRICT OF ASSAM.

Francis Hamilton at the instance of the Governor-General-in-Council, conducted a survey of Assam between 1807-1809. According to him, most of the Rajas of Kamrup, that is, the territory lying between the Brahmaputra and the present Meghalaya State were of Garo origin. The Rajas and their territories are as follows :

1. Barduar : The Raja is a Garo and he lived in his capital at Bhogpur. It lies to the South-West of Guwahati. He pays tribute to the Ahom king for his plainlands.
2. Lukiduar : This territory lies West of Guwahati on the Koilas River. This Raja also has usurped another adjoining territory called Samuria near present Boko.
3. The chiefs of the territories of Pantan and Bongram are related to the Raja of Lukiduar.
4. Vagduar is another territory, South of Pantan and its Chief is a Garo.
5. Dumuria : This territory lies close to the Garo Hills and he is adept in powerful incantations.
6. Raniduar : The Raja is a Garo though he has adopted the worship of Vishnu. He used to furnish to the

Ahom king 621 paiks or labourers and make presents annually to the value of about Rs. 5000/-.

Thus the Southern parts of the Kamrup District of Assam adjoining the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya belonged to the Garo Chiefs who ruled over them <sup>(18)</sup>. It may be stated here that the descendants of these ancient Garo rulers are still living in those areas.

Dr. Jiten Das, an Assamese scholar of repute and former Director of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam and former Secretary to the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council, has the following to say about the petty kings/ rulers of South Kamrup of Garo origin :-

The Hana Garos of Kamrup established two kingdoms, one with capital at Ramrai and the other with capital at Ouphula. At Ouphula, human sacrifices were in vogue and CHANARAM of 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century was its first king. It was located at the vicinity of South-Western part of Chaygaon, a village situated about 8kms towards the South of Bamunigaon. The local Garos identified near Santipur Garo village where some ruins of old palace are still visible. They also claim that a Garo Sub-Clan, "Raja" (R) of Marak clan is a direct descendant of the Raja of Ouphula.

The king of Ramrai was called "Ramrai Garo Raja" in the Mill's Report of 1874. The Queen Bhogoda was the first widow of Nayan Singh, the Garo King of Ramrai. After the demise of her husband, her kingdom was annexed to the British territory. After that she shifted her residence to the Duar Chaygaon. Then the British Government granted her the Land-grant, vide Government order No. 85 of 19<sup>th</sup> April, 1847 which was approved by the Commission's letter

No. 185, dated 29<sup>th</sup> April, 1849, saying, "owing to the demise of Raja Nayan Singh, son of Garo Raja, the wife and daughter of the former have received for life this land rent-free for their support". Hence, the Garos of South Kamrup have written history at least from 1830.

In the battle of Saraighat in March, 1671, the Garos along with the Raja of Rani came to the assistance of Lachit Barphukan, the Ahom General to expel the Muhammedan invasion led by Raja Ram Singh, the Moghul General of Emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707), when the Muhammedans were defeated.

The Raja of Rani originated from the Heramdo State of the Garos in South Kamrup and as such, the Raja of Rani was a Garo. The Garo Queen Dharmayanti established this Rani kingdom and her younger sister, Ayanti established another kingdom of Barduar.

During the tyrannical rule of Ahom King Lara Raja or Sulikpha (1679-1681), Gadapani who later became Ahom King (1681-1696) with Hindu name of Gadadhar Singh and Ahom name of Supatpha, had been living in concealment in the house of a Garo woman of Rani kingdom, wearing the garb of a common peasant and working in the field like an ordinary cultivator. By giving shelter to Gadapani without knowing who he was, the Garo woman helped to free the people of Assam from the tyrannical rule of Lara Raja.

Luki was a village State located at the North-Western part of Boko, South Kamrup. The Luki State could be traced back from about 1500A.D. During the Burmese invasion in 1817-1822, the King of Luki named Haradatta Singha took refuge with his family in one of the royal houses of

Garos near Malangkona which is approachable from Bondapara. After the annexation of Lower Assam by the British in 1826, Haradatta Singha returned to his Luki State retaining good relationship with his Garo counterpart. However, this relationship was snapped when the Garos attacked Luki by killing the Prime Minister Jaysing at Malangkona and Luki was plundered by the Garos sometime in 1830<sup>s</sup> or 1840<sup>s</sup>. However, peace was made by them later on and lived with mutual respect.

Sankardeva (1449-1568), the great Neo-Vaisnava Saint of Assam happened to meet Govinda, a Garo at the bank of the Brahmaputra in Lower Assam. According to the Assamese Charit Puthis of 16th-19th centuries, Govinda Garo accepted the Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankardeva and became one of his strong disciples. Legendary sources also stated that Govinda was a Trader by profession before he met Sankardeva on the bank of the Brahmaputra. Both Govinda and Sankardeva made night halt at the same ghat. Hearing the religious discourses of Sankardeva that night, Govinda decided to become the disciple of Sankardeva. However, Govinda continued his business for sometime mostly by boats through rivers Kulsi, Boko and Singra besides Brahmaputra. The legend says that Govinda was born at Gimerimura village located at South-West of Boko. But after his marriage, as per Garo custom, he lived in his wife's place at Larubama village located at the South-West of Chaygaon. After some years of his acceptance of Vaisnavism, Govinda lived at the Chamariya Vaisnava Satra located about 15kms from Boko town where he died in the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. According to Katha-Gurucharit, it was Govinda Garo who first supplied Ink for

preparation of Assamese books or Manuscripts. It was mentioned that once Govinda brought "Mahi" or Ink from Chamariya to Barpeta for Madhavdev sometime in 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century. (19).

In recognition of the fact that the Garos were the original settlers and also for their acknowledgement of his sovereignty over them coupled with a promise to pay him tributes in silken clothes that the Burmese Commander, San Ban directed that these Garo Rajas should never be oppressed. The order of the Burmese King was written on Bamboo Plate in Burmese script and language in November, 1822 which is still in my custody. The English version of the manuscript is in Annexure A.

In this way and in various other ways, the Garos of South Kamrup of Assam have contributed towards the political stability of Assam and enrichment of Assamese culture.





## COALITION BETWEEN TIROT SING AND THE KAMRUP GAROS AGAINST THE BRITISH :

In 1829, when a war broke out between Tirot Sing, Raja of Nongkhlaw and the British, the Garos joined hands with Tirot Sing against the British <sup>(20)</sup>.

On the 5th May, 1829, a party of Khasis aided by the Garos perpetrated what is known as the Nongkhlaw Massacre in which Lieutenant Bedingfield and a number of Bengalis living in the Sanatorium at Nongkhlaw lost their lives under the most brutal circumstances. Tirot Sing made elaborate preparations to drive out the English and having selected the most intelligent prisoners from among the captives taken at Nongkhlaw, he sent them off under the escort of the Garos to the Ahom King, Chandrakanta, to the Bhutias and to the Singphos with suitable presents inciting them to throw off the British yoke. In a special message sent through the Garos, Tirot Sing exhorted Chandrakanta to rise and assist them, now that the English had been driven from the hills. He sent secretly another batch of Garos to Guwahati and to other places to ascertain carefully the military strength of the English. The intelligence gathered was minute in details.

A rumour spread that the Garos were descending in large numbers which caused alarm in Guwahati and the respectable portion of the population including the officers of the Government took shelter in boats ready to sail away at a moment's notice at the approach of the Garo hordes.

Subsequently, it was reported to Captain White, Assistant to the Agent, to the Governor General of Bengal that seven to eight thousand Garos under the instruction of Tirof Sing were guarding the passes leading to Assam. In order to crush these combined forces, Captain white planned to bring atleast five companies of soldiers and a number of mountain guns, howitzers and rockets, but as the Garos and the Khasis threatened to invade the plains below the Khasi and the Garo Hills, Captain White had to send reinforcements in these directions from his own detachment at the urgent solicitations of the Magistrate of Goalpara. With his army thus thinned to a considerable extent, he did not venture to penetrate into the Khasi Hills from the Assam side.

On the following day of the Nongkhlaw Massacre, Tirof Sing sent four thousand Garos towards Cherrapunjee to apprehend David Scott, Commissioner and Agent to the Governor-General of Bengal, and his followers. But just about the time, when David Scott was about to fall back from Cherrapunjee to Mawsmoi, Lieutenant Egerton and Captain Lister arrived and gave him the much needed help. Thus, the timely arrival of Captain Lister and Lieutenant Egerton with their armies salvaged David Scott from disgraceful defeat and surrender.

Despite their unsuccessful attempt to drive away the British from Cherrapunjee, the Khasis and the Garos have not given up their determination to regain their own territories. Towards the third week of January, 1831, the situation assumed very serious dimensions when a large number of Khasis and the Garos under the leadership of their respective Chiefs and rulers made a desperate bid to

re-occupy the Western portion of Lower Assam from the hands of the British. They suddenly poured into the plains below and simultaneously attacked the Police and Revenue Stations in Lower Assam. After killing a number of Officers and destroying the Government Offices, they successfully routed a detachment of Assam, Light Infantry sent against them and proceeded towards the interior of the plains. Their easy success struck terrors into the hearts of the British subjects living in the neighbourhood of the Duars, many of whom joined the invading Khasi and Garo forces. But at this stage, the Khasi and the Garo forces were successfully encountered by the Sebandy Corps sent from Goalpara and they retired to the hills behind the Duars <sup>(21)</sup>.

Thus from the above, it is quite obvious that the Garos living in the present Kamrup District of Assam bordering the Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya, were one of the original settlers and had greatly contributed to the awakening of National Consciousness against the British and had sacrificed a lot in defending the Independence of their Motherland.



## (B) THE GAROS OF GOALPARA DISTRICT OF ASSAM.

The Garos are one of the aboriginal tribes of the present day Goalpara District of Assam. Their habitations are concentrated on the plains below the Garo Hills.

The Garos held those plainlands from time immemorial. However, under the Moghuls, these lands have gone under the Zamindery estates and the Zaminders of Mechpara and Bijni received recognition from the Moghul as the Zaminders of these Garo lands. The Zaminders while paying a small tribute to the Muhammedan Faujdar at Rangamati (in present day Bangladesh) as acknowledgement of fealty, were, to all intents and purposes independent. They were bound, in fact, merely to supply a certain number of elephants or a small quantity of aghur (precious wood) to support certain petty garrisons and, to contribute to the maintenance of the Dacca Artillery park<sup>(22)</sup>.

Francis Hamilton also mentioned that during 1808-1809, there were three Garo Chiefs whose parts of the estates were in the Habraghat pargana of the present day Goalpara District, and which have been forcibly occupied by the Bijni Zaminder. They were the Chiefs of Raumari, Amjonga and Damra. The Chief of Damra named Digman alleged that "he had been deprived not only of his estates in the low lands, which amounted to almost half of Habraghat, but had been robbed of a great part of his private property, consisting of cattle and slaves"<sup>(23)</sup>.

Taking advantage of their independence, the Mechpara and Bijni Zaminders took every opportunity of extracting all kinds of tributes from the Garos. Thus, when the British appeared on the scene, they found the continual disputes between the Garos and the Zaminders. The Garos appealed to David Scott, the first Civil Commissioner and Agent to the Governor-General of Bengal for North-East Frontiers. But before any action can be taken, Scott was called away to deal with the Anglo-Burmese war which broke out in Assam between 1824-1826 <sup>(24)</sup>.

Inspired by the Anglo-Khasi war in 1829-1831, in which, thousands of Kamrup Garos participated, the Garos of Northern Garo Hills and South Goalpara also made a bid to shake off the control of the British and the Zaminders in 1831. The British deputed Ensign Brodie with a picked party of 42 soldiers equipped with arms and ammunitions and nearly accomplished in three weeks what several companies of sepoys had been unable to attempt even in three months. But in the midst of these warfares, Brodie fell a victim to the unsuitable climate of the hills <sup>(25)</sup>.

Thus, though pressed by the Anglo-Khasi war, David Scott turned his attention to these Garos. The Garos alleged that the Zaminders of Mechpara and Bijni had been trying to oust them from the lands they held at the passes into the hills. Accordingly, in 1831, David Scott made a written document under which the Bijni Zaminder made over 21 plots of lands to the Garo clans concerned through their Chiefs or Nokmas whom the British called Laskers. The list of 21 plots of land granted to 18 (eighteen) clans is given in Annexure - B <sup>(26)</sup>.

Between 1836 and 1866, there had been widespread killings and raids all along the foothills now formed the Goalpara District of Assam against the tributes collected from the Garos and against interferences in their way of life <sup>(27)</sup>.

Besides, during these years, the Garo Chiefs of the foothills were constantly summoned by the British Officials of Goalpara to account for their failure in checking the raids on the plain villages by the upper hill Garos, which duty was entrusted to them earlier. The British Officials suspected that these raids were committed in connivance with the plain Garo Chiefs.

The Garo Chiefs were also constantly summoned to explain their irregularity in payment of their revenues. This was another source of bitterness between the Garos, the British and the Zaminders. There were also constant dispute among the Garo Chiefs about the boundaries of their territories <sup>(28)</sup>. In order to put an end to all these disturbed situations and to separate the Garos from the plains of Goalpara by creating a separate Administrative unit for them, the boundaries between Goalpara and Garo Hills were laid down for the first time between 1849-1854 by the Revenue Survey under Mr. Kelso and his assistant, Mr. Bedford <sup>(29)</sup>.

According to this Survey Map, a boundary was shown between Goalpara and the Garo Hills, passing in many places far within the hills and including in Goalpara District, many purely Garo villages. However, this boundary was not settled by any authoritative proceedings. Rather it was quite obvious from the map that the boundary shown was merely laid down on paper and was never demarcated on

the ground. However, the Garo Hills continued to form a part of the Goalpara District for administrative purposes till 1867<sup>(30)</sup>.

The Zaminders of the adjacent estates in Goalpara took advantage of this fictitious demarcation to claim as part of their permanently settled estates, all the hilly lands on the Goalpara side of this boundary and further asserted rights over several villages still further within the hills<sup>(31)</sup>. The Garo Chiefs also, on their sides filed suits in the Goalpara Court against inclusion of their ancestral lands in the Goalpara Zamindari estates<sup>(32)</sup>.

The Government of Bengal accordingly decided that it was necessary to revise the boundary and to demarcate it properly. Therefore, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal in 1873, directed that under section 10 of Act XXII of 1869, an Officer should be appointed to lay down "the best and most practical general boundary between the two districts of the Garo Hills and the Plains and to fix that as the boundary between the two districts of Garo Hills and Goalpara"<sup>(33)</sup>. Thomas Beckett, Assistant Commissioner was then appointed in December, 1873 to lay down the jurisdictional boundary of the Garo Hills District from the district of Kamrup right round to the Sylhet boundary. The new line ran as a rule to the North of Kelso's line, following as closely as possible the natural features of the ground so that the hill lands might remain within Garo Hills district and all the lands in the plains be included in Goalpara. This demarcation again left both the Zaminders and the Garos of the plains discontented. The Zaminders filed suits against the government for including the hill portions of their lands within the Garo Hills district which was compromised by a

payment of compensation in 1878 <sup>(34)</sup>. The Garo Chiefs of the plains including all the Chiefs to whom David Scott granted 21 plots of Lakiraj lands in 1831, filed suits against the Zaminders of Bijni, refusing to pay any rent to him. This excited the Bijni Zaminder, who filed a case against the Garo Chiefs demanding back all the 21 plots of lands granted by David Scott on the plea that they have failed to perform their duty in guarding the passes into the hills against the Hill Garos, which, according to him, was a part of the condition in granting the Lakiraj lands. The British Government, however, in their judgement in 1877 refuted this claim of the Bijni Zaminder.

In 1899, the Zaminders further asked that Beckett's boundary should be properly laid so that they might know the Southern boundary of their khas lands. This was sanctioned by Sir Henry Cotton. The survey work was entrusted to O' Donel who carried on his work without giving notice to anyone. He also left the officials of the Bijni Zaminder to set up their own marks after he had gone away. This greatly excited the Garos. They got the impression that the Bijni was again going to move forward and take over the Garo villages. As they were already discontented with the Zaminder's administration, they decided to obstruct the proceedings of the surveyors.

In protest against this survey in 1901, the Garos destroyed the boundary marks erected by the surveyors. It was at this time that Sonaram R. Sangma took up the cause of the Garos. Between 1902 and 1905, Sonaram R. Sangma submitted ten memorials to the Viceroys and the Chief Commissioner of Assam on the question of (1) The Nazarana lands, that is, the plain lands lying between the Kelso's



boundary survey in 1849 and Beckett's boundary of 1873, which became a bone of contention between the Garos and the Zaminders; (2). The Habraghat Pargana - the plain lands lying between the Garo Hills and the Brahmaputra in the Goalpara district, which Sonaram R. Sangma claimed that the Garos are the absolute owners of this Pargana; (3). The question of Forest Reservation, that is, to restore the lands converted into Reserved Forest in Garo Hills and (4). To abolish the system of forced labour in Garo Hills. In 1903, the Government tried to make compromise with the Garo Chiefs by granting them 25% of the land revenue of the Nazarana lands. But the chiefs refused the offer and stuck to their demand for the Habraghat Pargana.

In 1906, the Government appointed J.C. Arbuthnot, Commissioner for Surma Valley and Hill Districts to enquire into the complaints of the Garos. After enquiry, he submitted his report in 1907. With regard to the demand for Habraghat Pargana, he pointed out that the real difficulty is in finding a satisfactory boundary line so as to include all the Garo villages along the North-Eastern border.

As regards the encroachment of the Bijni Zaminder on the Garo lands, R.W. Carlyle, Secretary to the Government of India conveyed the Government's view in 1908 that the Garos had suffered a loss of some territory under the British rule, but that, if any injustice had been done, it was impossible to rectify it, since whatever right the Garos might have originally possessed over the areas now forming part of the Bijni Zaminder, the title of the Zaminder was now good, and the Garos had no legal claim. However, Sonaram R. Sangma continued to pursue the

matter by filing a case against the government in the Court till his death in 1916 <sup>(35)</sup>.

In 1911, 1921 and 1928, the Garo Chiefs submitted Memoranda to Sir Lancelot, Finance Member of Government of Assam and to the Secretary, The Indian Statutory Commission respectively, demanding back the Nazarana and Lakiraj lands and to free them from the clutches of the Zaminders. Thereafter, the Garos continued their struggle to recover the Nazarana and Lakiraj lands until the Second World War under the leadership of Singgan Shira <sup>(36)</sup>.

### POST INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT.

In 1946, the first Garo political party known as "The Garo National Conference" was formed. After India achieved her independence, the Garo National Council submitted a Memorendum on the 22nd June, 1947 to the Constituent Assembly Sub-Committee under the Chairmanship of the late Gopinath Bardoloi for the amalgamation of the areas bordering the Garo Hills and the Khasi Hills Districts predominantly inhabited by the Garos with the Autonomous District of Garo Hills, (Annexure C). But the Bardoloi Committee expressed its inability to take up the matter as the matter fell outside the terms of reference of the Committee. The Committee, however, assured the Garo National Council that the question of redemarcation of inter-district boundaries could be taken up separately and at a later stage. In persuance of this assurance and having realised the need to redemarcate the inter-district boundaries of Assam, the Bardoloi Committee had recommended and

caused the incorporation of Clause (a), (d) and (g) of Sub para (3) of the Sixth Schedule to the constitution of India. Under these clauses, the Government of Assam had been empowered either to include any area in para-A of the Table appended to the Sixth Schedule, or to increase the area of any autonomous District, or to define the boundary of any autonomous district separately.

In accordance with these Constitutional Provisions, the representations have been submitted to the Government of Assam and the Governor just before the creation of the District Councils for the inclusions of the contiguous areas mainly inhabited by the Garos in the proposed Autonomous District of Garo Hills. But the then Governor of Assam informed the then General Secretary, Garo National Council that the question of readjustment to the boundaries of the Garo Hills District, via-a-vis those of the Goalpara and Kamrup have been carefully examined, but His Excellency regrets that it is not opportune to effect any change in the district boundaries at present<sup>(37)</sup>.

In spite of the strong opposition of the Garos of Goalpara, the Educational authorities of Goalpara District of Assam officially resolved in 1950 to introduce Assamese in the Garo Primary Schools as medium of instruction replacing their own mother tongue (Ref. Memo No. 101-160, dated Goalpara, the 26<sup>th</sup> May, 1950, issued by the Secretary, School Board, Goalpara). This resolution was opposed tooth and nail by the Garos under the leadership of Meckenson Rongmithu, Lipson Sangma and Elwin Sangma, and the last two were arrested for opposing the said resolution.

Thereafter, several memoranda have been submitted to the Government of Assam, the Government of India and various Central Commissions to include the contiguous Garo inhabited areas of Goalpara and Kamrup districts in Garo Hills district. In response to one of the memoranda, dated the 31st January, 1956 submitted to the President, the Prime Minister and the Home Minister, the Government of India, Ministries of Home Affairs in their letter No. 5/16/56-BC, dated 5-4-56; stated that "the adjustment of boundaries of the Garo Hills District is the concern of the State Government of Assam".

The introduction of Assamese as the sole official language of the State in 1960 left the Garos of Goalpara and Kamrup no other alternative than to join hands with the All Party Hill Leaders' Conference (A.P.H.L.C.) in the struggle for a separate Hill State with the hope that their areas would be included in the New State. The A.P.H.L.C. in its third Session held at Haflong from the 16th - 18th November, 1960 under the Chairmanship of late J.B. Hagjar, M.P. adopted a plan for the creation of a separate State wherein specific mention was made that "The State shall also include any other area or areas geographically contiguous to the autonomous districts mentioned in the above paragraph (i.e. para 20 of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India) and predominantly inhabited by Hill Tribes, such as the contiguous Tribal areas of the districts of Goalpara and Kamrup . . . . .". The resolution of the Sixteenth Session of the A.P.H.L.C. held at Tura on 18-1-67 reiterated its demand that ". . . . .the Government of India take an immediate step to meet the legitimate aspiration of the people of the Goalpara and Kamrup districts and of

the other areas contiguous to the Hill areas”.

After the formation of Autonomous State of Meghalaya, the A.P.H.L.C. in its 22<sup>nd</sup> Session held at Shillong on the 19<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 1970, decided that “Having considered the question of the inclusion in Meghalaya of areas contiguous to it and predominantly inhabited by the Hill people now reiterates its stand that these areas be included in the State of Meghalaya.”

### NEW PHASE OF THE MOVEMENT.

A new and full-fledged State of Meghalaya came into being on January, 21, 1972. The contiguous Garo areas of Goalpara and Kamrup districts of Assam were not included in it. The Garos of Goalpara and Kamrup were very much upset and disappointed and temporarily resigned to their lot. The steady pressure of the Assam Government to immediately introduce Assamese as the medium of instruction in Garo Schools (Letter No. 989362, dated Gauhati, the 16<sup>th</sup> December, 1972) to correspond in Assamese language in High and Higher Secondary Schools (Letter No. 1588-758, dated Dhubri, the 19<sup>th</sup> December, 1972); supply of Lower Primary Teachers, salary receipt forms, daily students attendance registers, official seals and maps in Assamese script and language have created among the Garos a real sense of danger to the very survival of their own language and culture. And also, deprivation of Garo pupils of merit scholarships; denial of employment avenues to the educated Garo youth and sudden and unwarranted changes in school system in Assam depriving Garo pupils of their privileges

of joining the Garo neighbouring schools in Meghalaya have made the Garos all the more restive and agitated.

The recent imposition of language policy by the Assam Government on the Garos stirred them to start once again another phase of the movement. Accordingly, Council of Action of the Goalpara and Kamrup G.N.C. was formed. The Council of Action sent a three member delegation to meet the Prime Minister in December, 1972. The delegation could meet only Shri K.C. Kant, the then Minister of State for Home Affairs. The hon'ble Minister told the delegation that it is still too early to think of changing the status quo in Assam. Dissatisfied with the outcome of the talk at New Delhi, the Garos, sensing the danger of the existence of their own language and culture, resolved to continue their struggle until their areas are included in Meghalaya.

In April, 1973, six member delegation met the Assam Chief Minister. The Chief Minister told the delegation that the Garos will have to learn Assamese as it is the official language of Assam. This unsympathetic and inconsiderate attitude of the Assam Government left the Garos with no other alternative than to go ahead with their movement. Thus, the year 1973 was spent in holding public meetings and collecting funds to send another delegation to New Delhi.

In September, 1973, an incident took place at Hahim H.E. School, a school started and run by the Garo Public. During the first terminal examination, five Assamese students of the School, after having arranged with the Assamese Students' Union and the Assamese public, entered the Examination Hall and snatched away the answer script of

one Nepali student for his writing in English. This led to a clash between the Assamese and the Garo students in which three Garo students received injuries. Two hours later, hundreds of Assamese students from other parts proceeded to Hahim to attack the Garo students but further clashes were avoided due to timely intervention of the Assam police and the C.R.P.

In October, 1973, the Garo National Zonal Council of Action (G.N.Z.C.A) was formed comprising all the G.N.C. Primary Units of Goalpara and Kamrup Districts of Assam for better and effective co-ordination and control of the merger movement.

Accordingly, the Garo National Zonal Council of Action chalked out different lines of action by unanimous resolutions. On January, 30, 1974, the boundary was demarcated in the areas demanded by the G.N.Z.C.A. to be merged with Meghalaya by planting trees along such areas in Goalpara and Kamrup Districts of Assam. The Nishangram Gaon Panchayat Office was occupied by the G.N.C. volunteers on the same day. The other Gaon Panchayat Offices falling within the demanded areas were subsequently occupied by the G.N.C. volunteers. On January 31, 1974, 18 (eighteen) G.N.C. volunteers were arrested from the Nishangram Gaon Panchayat Office and detained in Goalpara Jail. This arrest is important as being the first of a series of arrests in later stages.

On February, 4, 1974, mass procession was staged at Goalpara town, Krishnai, Dudhnoi and Rongjuli of Goalpara district and Guminimura, Boko, Umkiam and Rani of Kamrup district demanding merger of their areas with

Meghalaya and unconditional release of the arrested G.N.C. volunteers from the Goalpara jail. On February 5, 1974, twenty G.N.C. volunteers including the President of the Kamrup District G.N.C. were arrested and detained in the Gauhati Jail.

In continuation of their movement for merger and unconditional release of political detainees, "Twelve Hours' Token Hunger Strike" was launched at Goalpara and Gauhati on February 11, 1974. The strike was peacefully launched at Gauhati. But at Goalpara it resulted in police firing leaving one G.N.C. volunteer and one policeman dead. The dead G.N.C. volunteer was Ronsing Momin of village Bhimajuli aged forty six. He became the first martyr among the Garos of Goalpara and Kamrup for the cause of merger movement.

This sad incident took place at Baladmari, a Garo village in the outskirts of Goalpara town where twenty thousand G.N.C. volunteers encamped since the previous evening. This happened because the Assam police did not allow the volunteers to proceed to Goalpara to launch the strike. When the volunteers pleaded for permission to proceed, the Assam police on a small pretext started indiscriminate beating of the volunteers. Women and girl volunteers were molested and severely beaten by the police. As this had gone beyond the power of human toleration, clash broke out and the police fired without warning.

In Kamrup district, 700 volunteers being unable to proceed to Gauhati due to police intervention, launched the Hunger Strike at Gohalkhona, a Garo village. But the Assam police surrounded them and took them to Boko Police Station



(9 miles distance) on foot. Realising their strong determination, they were released half way.

These incidents were immediately followed by the indiscriminate arrests and police atrocities. Thus, the total number of arrests so far rose to 866.

While the Token Hunger Strike was going on, a three member delegation met the Assam Chief Minister at his Assembly Office. The Chief Minister told the delegation that they will have to live in Assam.

After the police firing at Baladmari on February 11, 1974, the Assam Government posted police at several places in the Garo inhabited areas. The Assam police while patrolling along the Garo villages entered their compounds, harassed the people, arrested many of them and beat them up mercilessly on mere suspicion and forced them to cut big logs of wood for firewood the whole day and sent them away. In all such police outposts, they even dug trenches and erected bunkers as if they were going to fight a great war. The trenches are covered now with earth but signs are still visible.

The search for the leaders from every village compelled the male members to leave their houses. This was taken advantage of by the Assam police and the non-Garo public to molest the womenfolk and to loot their property. Thus the womenfolk and girls of Baladmari, Chamaguri and Bhalukdubi were raped by the Assam police personnel and the non-Garo individuals. The Chamaguri, Sagunbari and Komri villages of 34, 8 and 10 families respectively including their churches were burnt. The Baladmari village was demolished including their church. The Godhalburi village

with 15 families were evicted by a truckload of Assam police.

The student community was also the object of police suspicion. The police chased and arrested the students while going to schools. This left all the eight H.E. Schools within the demanded areas empty.

As result of intimidation, harassment and atrocities perpetrated upon by the Assam police and their agency, more than a thousand Garos have taken refuge in the neighbouring villages in Meghalaya, uncared and unfed by any Government or organisation.

In April, 1974, two member delegation met the Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha, Prof. G.G. Swell; the Minister of State, Shri. Ram Newas Mirdha; the Union Home Minister, Shri Uma Shankar Dikshit and a number of M.Ps. While Shri Mirdha promised to examine their problems, Shri Dikshit assured the delegation that he will soon be sending an officer from the Home Ministry to enquire into their demands. He further told the delegation that he will consider their case in consultation with Shri KC. Pant and the Governor Shri L.P. Singh. He also assured the same thing to the members of the Lok Sabha.

Though the Home Minister, Shri Uma Shankar Dikshit promised on the floor of the Lok Sabha to institute a Committee to enquire into the problems of the Garos of Goalpara and Kamrup in 1974, he never sent an Enquiry Committee. As a result, the problems faced by the Garos remained unattended. Despite these negligences, the Garos of Goalpara and Kamrup continued to pursue the matter and sent representations to the Home Minister of India on

the 18th April, 1979, the Prime Minister of India on the 28th August, 1980, the Industry Minister Shri P.A. Sangma on the 3rd May, 1981 and submitted Memoranda to the Chief Ministers of Assam and Meghalaya, to mutually adjust the boundaries of their states so as to include their areas in the Meghalaya State.

Memorandum was also submitted to the Prime Minister of India Shri Rajiv Gandhi on the 6th May, 1986. Despite all these pleas and approaches for redress of their basic problems, the Government of Assam in their letter No. SEBA/AC/SYYL/1185-86/1, dated Guwahati, the 28th February, 1986, introduced Assamese as a third language compulsory subject starting with Class VIII from this Session in all non-Assamese Schools, so that their students will be examined in the subject for the H.S.L.C. Examinations of 1989 onwards.

A three member delegation also met the Chandrachud Committee at New Delhi on the 16th June, 1986 and submitted a Memorandum urging upon the Committee to include these areas as an agenda in their considerations.

Thus from the history of the movement of the Garos of Goalpara and Kamrup districts of Assam living contiguous to the Meghalaya State, the following points have emerged :-

- (1). The Garos of Goalpara and Kamrup have been struggling to free themselves from the clutches of the Zaminders, the British and the Government of Assam;
- (2). They have been struggling for the integration of

all the compact Garo areas and come under one administrative umbrella;

- (3). They have been opposing tooth and nail the imposition of Assamese language on them;
- (4). They have been demanding to include them in the list of Scheduled Tribes, which they have achieved in 2003.
- (5). They have been demanding for job opportunities, for separate members in Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assembly and even Garo Panchayat Constituencies and for socio-economic developments;
- (6). The Garos of Goalpara and Kamrup are the same people with the Garos of Meghalaya; and
- (7). Despite their delegations, appeals and peaceful movements, time without number, most of the problems mentioned above, has not been attended to by the Central Government, nor by the State Governments.

However, with the achievement of the status of Scheduled Tribe (Plains) on January 7, 2003, the Garos of Goalpara and South Kamrup Districts of Assam reconciled to their lot and resolved to stay in Assam, (in Annexure D). But the granting of Tribal Autonomous Councils to other Plain Tribals of Assam prompted them to demand for Tribal Autonomous Council in place of Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council <sup>(38)</sup>. If this is not conceded to, the Garos of Goalpara and South Kamrup may be compelled to speed up their

demand for similar political status as other similar tribal people of Assam.

The areas predominantly inhabited by the Garos of Goalpara and South Kamrup of Assam contiguous to the Meghalaya State are approximately 762 (Seven hundred sixty two) square miles, with a Garo population of about one lakh only.



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## ANNEXURES.

### ANNEXURE - A

#### **BAMBOO INSCRIPTION.**

*(Extracted from Garo Bandhab, issued in November, 1822.)*

Certain document, which is an inscription on a bamboo, was shown by a man. It was written in Burmese language. I sent the same to a Missionary residing in Burma with a view to decipher its contents. The said Missionary wrote to me in English, a translation thereof which is set forth below :-

To the memory of the king of Burma, San Ban, a Chief of the Garos, who are the aboriginal mountaineers and thus recognised as "Chinese", with a desire to get favour from the Burmese Government, came on the 15th Thangsanmong Jarambong, 1184, to pay respect to the Burmese Government (Lutkhai), and indicated by self-control and obedience, a motive to be free from the extreme tyranny in the hands of Burma.

At length, at the sight of the respectful manners expressed by the individual Garos, the said representative ordered not only the Burmese, but the people of Bhesali, that they should far from maltreating the said Garos, be well with them and teach them to be civilized, and their

Chief San Ban to pay as tribute to the Burmese Government silken clothes, and further directed that the Rajas or Chief of the said tract, Garos should never be oppressed or insulted or never-obstructed in their ways. The above document on Bamboo plate was written, it is said, by Duahati, in November 1822. The Burmese call all the people of Assam and the mountainous tract on the north thereof as China. The Burmese Representative residing in Assam, named Lutkhai San Ban, is therefore so widely known there. Bhesali Province is on the north of Burma. This is the tract through which the people of Assam had to pass on their way to Burma. The inscription was so recorded by the Burmese Representative Duahati (meaning two elephants). The name arises from the fact that the Representative used to catch elephants and the Burmese Government used to give him two out of the animals caught. The bamboo inscription is an ancient document in the nature of a patta. The Garo Chief or Raja having expressed obedience to the Burmese Representative, the said Representative directed, the Garos should never be oppressed and enjoined upon all his Burmese people and their headman, that those who would be going to make payment of Revenue to the Burmese Government, should no way be obstructed, on the contrary, every facility should be given for their journey.

Hence, I conclude that the bamboo inscription was in Burmese character as Burma was in possession of Assam. That about this time the Chieftain of Garos having shown subjugation to the Burmese power, got freedom from all oppression, this document is the best evidence.

*Rev. E. G. Phillips*  
American Baptist Mission.

## ANNEXURE - B

*Bibhagnamapatra.*

**D. SCOTT.**  
*Commissiner.*

Seal of the  
Collectorate,  
Goalpara.

Stamp.  
Eight annas.

**Copy.**  
**A. DAVIDSON,**  
*Offg. Commissioner.*

**True copy.**  
**W. AGNEW,**  
*Collector.*

The Bighnagma of lands, together with lands for dwelling belonging to Laskars, Sardars and Maharis of the Duars in pargana Habraghat, dated the 10th May 1831, corresponding to 28th Baishak 1236 B.S.

Serial letter of Duar.	Serial No. of plots.	Names of Duars.	Names of Garo Maharis.	Names of Laskars.	Rupit lands.	Total area.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
A {	1.	Duar Athiabari ...	Bolsal Mahari ... ..	Rencheng Laskar ... ..	4¼	¼	4½
	2.	Ditto ... ..	Janbal " ... ..	Ramban " ... ..	4¼	¼	4½
	3.	Ditto ... ..	Mingkrak " ... ..	Debaru " ... ..	4¼	¼	4½
	4.	Ditto ... ..	Keju " ... ..	Shindo " ... ..	4¼	¼	4½

B	5.	Duar Ambook ...	Jagalgri "	Jangjan "	2	Not legible	2
C	6.	" Chekwari ...	Rinkhing "	Aktu "	6	...	6
	7.	" Rangjuli ...	Koksi "	Hira "	3 $\frac{3}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	4
D	8.	Ditto ...	Jakgitchet "	Thajak "	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
E	9.	Duar Darrangiri ...	Galde "	Chengdhan Laskar of Rahumari	3 $\frac{3}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
	10.	Ditto... ..	Do-gring "	Saleng Laskar of ditto ...	3 $\frac{3}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
	11.	Duar Rahumari ...	Gandim "	Bathan Laskar,	5	...	5
F				the nephew of			
				Chanki Laskar, of			
				village Gandim.			
	12.	Ditto ... ..	Megam "	Mala Laskar of	2	...	2
				Matchokgiri			
G	13.	Duar Amjonga ...	Bangshal "	Gandi Laskar ...	22	1	23
	14.	Ditto ... ..	" "	Shibram "	10	1	11
	15.	Ditto ... ..	" "	Khatbang "	3 $\frac{3}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	3
H	16.	Duar Damra ...	Gabil "	Maljin "	14	$\frac{1}{2}$	15
	17.	Ditto ... ..	" "	Khesul "	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	5
I	18.	Duar Dilma ...	Koksi "	Asel Laskar's nephew			
	19.	Ditto ... ..	" "	Dingman Laskar	41	1	42
J	20.	Duar Kongkal ...	Kongkal "	Bangam Laskar ...	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	1
	21.	Ditto ... ..	Chongdik "	Maraf "	7	$\frac{1}{2}$	7 $\frac{1}{4}$
				Gase "	3 $\frac{3}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	4

The 12th February 1903.

F.E. JACKSON,  
Offg. Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara.

I. E. JACKSON,  
Offg. Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara.

ANNEXURE - C

**A MEMORANDUM**

**Regarding Redemarcation of the present Garo Hills District on the Linguistic Basis to include many Garos on its borders in the New Constitution of India, By the Representatives of the Garos.**

**Submitted to the President of the Constitution Assembly, the Government of India, New Delhi.**

**Dated Tura, Garo Hills, the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1947.**

Sir,

The undersigned humble representatives of the Garos most respectfully beg to approach your honour with a prayer that the redemarcation of the Present Garo Hills District be affected on its borders, such as Goalpara, Kamrup and Mymensingh Districts.

In this connection the humble representatives respectfully beg to state that the representatives of the Garos from the Districts referred to above have expressed their sincere most desire before the Advisory-Sub-committee of the constituent Assembly to the effect that the areas on the borders of Garo Hills where the majority are the Garos be included in the proposed Garo Hills Union.

The humble representatives are of considered opinion that the redemarcation of the present Garo Hills District on the linguistic basis is the most essential and inevitable for safeguarding their Brother Garos in the adjoining Districts

where they form only minority and as such they are at a great disadvantage in matters of social, economical and political activities. The humble representatives are also of the opinion that the Garos referred to, have greater advantage and firmer footing as they can have a full play for developing their national propriety in all spheres of life if they could be brought to the same administrative area, as they belong to the same stock of people, speak the same language and have the same social laws, customs and manners quite peculiar and different from other hills and plains peoples.

The humble representatives, therefore earnestly pray that your honour may be so good as to kindly accord your honour's most sympathetic consideration and to include the item of redemarcation of the present Garo Hills District in the Agenda of the Advisory Committee for which act of kindness the humble Representatives will ever remain grateful.

We have the honour to be,  
Sir,

Your obedient servants,

1. Sd. Mody Marak, Ex-MLA,  
President  
Garo National Conference.

2. Sd. Emonsing M. Sangma,  
General Secretary,  
Garo National Conference.

3. **Sd. Singdon K. Sangma,**  
**Joint Secretary,**  
**Garo National Conference.**

4. **Sd. Jobang D. Marak,**  
**Vice-President,**  
**Garo National Conference.**

**Copies to :**

1. **Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru,**  
**Vice President,**  
**Interim Govt. of India.**
2. **The Govt. of Assam.**
3. **The Govt. of Bengal.**
4. **Hon'ble Bjt. Gopinath Bardoloi,**  
**Premier of Assam**  
**Chairman of the Advisory Sub committee,**  
**For Minorities of Assam.**
5. **Hon'ble Minister Rev. J.J.M. Nicholas Roy,**  
**Member of the Advisory Sub committee**  
**For Minorities of Assam.**
6. **The Deputy Commissioner,**  
**Garo Hills, Tura.**

ANNEXURE - D

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM  
DEPARTMENT OF WELFARE OF PLAIN TRIBES &  
BACKWARD CLASSES  
DISPUR : GUWAHATI - 781006.

No. TAD/BC/212/2000/21      Dated February 1, 2001.

From : P.P. Varma,  
Commissioner & Secretary to the Government  
of Assam.

To : Shri S. K. Panda,  
Joint Secretary to the Government of India,  
Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment,  
Shastri Bhawan,  
New Delhi - 110001.

Sub : Information on proposal for revision of SC/ST  
list, Assam.

Sir,

Kindly refer to your DC No. 12016/17/81 - SCD  
(S.E. Cell) of 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2000 regarding information  
on proposals for revision of SC/ST list of Assam. As desired,  
the following information is furnished for your immediate  
consideration while the information regarding the remaining  
communities mentioned in your letter is being collected and  
would be furnished in due course :-



**A. Autonomous district Areas :**

(i). The State Government has earlier recommended inclusion of Bodos, Lalungs (Tiwas) and Sonowals residing permanently in the Autonomous Districts of the State in the list of ST for Autonomous Districts vide letter No. TAD/BC/188/97/13 of 9.1.93. While enclosing a copy (Annexure-I) of this letter I am directed to reiterate the views contained in it for your consideration. It is confirmed that a substantial number of people of these communities live in this districts.

(ii). Further, the synonyms of Man (Tai speaking), Mizos and Mikirs as mentioned in the report of the Director, APRTSC (copy enclosed at Annexure-II) are also recommended for inclusion as synonyms of these tribes in one list of ST for Autonomous Districts of the State.

**B. Plain Areas (other than Autonomous districts) :**

(i). The State Government has recommended the inclusion of Chutia, Motok, Moran and Tai Ahom communities for inclusion in the list of ST in the State including Autonomous Districts vide TAD/ST/110/93/12 of 3.7.93. In addition to this, the recommendation for inclusion of Tea and Ex-Tea Garden communities and Koch Rajbongshi community into the same list had been made vide TAD/ST/76/92/28 of 3.7.93

and TAD/WPT/98/92/88 of 3.7.93 respectively. These proposals have been confirmed again on 15.5.95 vide TAD/ST/110/93/23. Copies of these letters are enclosed at Annexure-III, IV & V. In respect of Koch Rajbongshi community, the Government of India had issued ordinance earlier, but at present there is no ordinance to that effect. The State Government reiterates its earlier recommendations and request early notification of these communities as ST in Assam excluding Autonomous District areas.

(ii). The State Government recommended inclusion of Mikir (Karbis) and Dimasas living permanently in the areas outside the Autonomous Districts as ST of those areas vide TAD/BC/188/97/13 of 9.1.98, a copy of this letter is enclosed at Annexure-I as mentioned above. It is confirmed that a substantial number of people of these communities live in these districts.

(iii). The State Government recommends synonyms of Garos, Karbis and Lalungs for inclusion in the list of ST for the entire State as follows :-

- Garos - Synonyms - A·chik Mande.
- Mikir - Synonyms - Arleng, Karbi.
- Lalung - Synonyms - Tiwa.

State Government is examining the queries in respect

of the other communities mentioned in your letter and pending submission of information on those, you are requested to expedite action on the proposals mentioned above.

Yours faithfully,

Commissioner & Secretary to the  
Government of Assam.



of the other communities mentioned in your letter and pending submission of information on these, you are requested to expedite action on the proposals mentioned above.

These letters are enclosed at Annexure-III, IV & V. In respect of Koch Rajbongshi community,

the Government of India had issued ordinance earlier, but at present there is no ordinance to

that effect. The State Government reiterates its earlier recommendations and request early

notification of these communities as ST in Assam Government of Assam excluding Autonomous District areas.

(ii). The State Government recommended inclusion of Mikir (Karbis) and Dimasas living permanently in the areas outside the Autonomous Districts as ST of those areas vide TAD/BC/188/97/13 of 9.1.98, a copy of this letter is enclosed at Annexure-1 as mentioned above. It is confirmed that a substantial number of people of these communities live in these districts.

(iii). The State Government recommends synonyms of Garos, Karbis and Lajungs for inclusion in the list of ST for the entire State as follows :-

Garos - Synonyms - A'chik Mande.

Mikir - Synonyms - Arleng, Karbi.

Lajung - Synonyms - Tiwa.

State Government is examining the queries in respect

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