

Report of the Sub-Committee
on
**CULTURAL IDENTITY OF
INDIGENOUS ASSAMESE MUSLIMS**

Constituted by the Government of Assam
Vide Notification No. WMD.62/2021/Pt/7
dated 31st July 2021

Wasbir Hussain
Chairman

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Wasbir Hussain
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To

Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma

Hon'ble Chief Minister

Assam

Dated: Guwahati, December 2021

Dear Sir

Kindly find herewith the Report of the Sub-Committee on Cultural Identity of indigenous Assamese Muslims that was constituted by the Government of Assam vide notification No WMD.62/2021/Pt/7 dated 31st July 2021 in pursuance of the decision taken at the 'Alaap Alochana' (Interactive Session) held on 4 July 2021 in Guwahati under your initiative.

The Sub-Committee is hopeful that the recommendations proposed in this Report would receive your personal as well as the Assam Government's due consideration for the overall development and uplift of the indigenous Assamese Muslim community which is an integral part of the greater Assamese society.

With warm regards

Sincerely yours

(Wasbir Hussain)

Journalist & Commentator

Chairman

Acknowledgement

The Sub-Committee would first like to thank the Hon'ble Chief Minister Assam, Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, for trying to understand the hopes and aspirations of the State's indigenous Assamese Muslim Community. Thanks are due to the various district administration officials for arranging meetings with community representatives and Members of the Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee would like to record its deep appreciation for the efforts of all those community representatives for taking time out to come and attend the meetings and for enlightening the Members on their expectations. Thanks are also due to the officials at the Welfare of Minorities & Development Department for taking care of the logistics. The Sub-Committee would like to place on record its thanks for the services rendered by Shri Abu Meraj Hussain from the Assam Minorities Development Board who was always available for record-keeping, liaising with the stakeholders and for being the key link between the Sub-Committee and the community members.

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Introduction

This Sub-Committee was constituted vide Notification No. WMD.62/2021/Pt/7 dated 31st July 2021 in pursuance of the decision taken at the 'Alaap Alochana' (Interactive Session) held on 4 July 2021 in Guwahati. The Interactive Session was held under the initiative of Hon'ble Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma. In the meeting, discussions were held with over 150 intellectuals, writers, educationists, doctors, cultural workers, historians and people from different walks of life representing the indigenous (*tholua* or *kbilonjia*) Assamese Muslim community. The Hon'ble Chief Minister wanted to know about the concerns, hopes and aspirations of the community and invited the participants to speak. Various participants presented their views relating to the identity, culture and heritage of the indigenous Assamese Muslims and their contribution to the overall progress and development of the greater Assamese society.

Later, as part of this initiative, the Assam Government constituted a total of 7 (seven) Sub-Committee/Groups to undertake studies on Population Stabilisation, Healthcare, Cultural Identity, Education, Financial Inclusion, Skill Development and Women Empowerment of the Indigenous Assamese Muslim Community of Assam.

This Report is of the Sub-Committee on Cultural Identity. This Sub-Committee consisted of 4 (four) members, including the Chairman and Member-Secretary.

The Notification is reproduced below:

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
WELFARE OF MINORITIES AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
DISPUR
ORDERS BY THE GOVERNOR OF ASSAM
NOTIFICATION

Dated Dispur the 31st July, 2021

No. **WMD.62/2021/Pt/7**: In partial modification of this Department's earlier Notification No. WMD.62/2021/Pt/6 dated 9th July, 2021, and in pursuance of decision taken in 'Alaap Alochana' (Interactive Session) held on 04/07/2021 at Assam Administrative Staff College, Khanapara, Guwahati-22, the following Sub-Groups/Committee are hereby constituted to undertake thorough

studies on Population Stabilisation, Healthcare, Cultural Identity, Education, Financial Inclusion, Skill Development and Women Empowerment of Indigenous Assamese Muslim Community of Assam:

A. Sub-Group/Committee on Population Stabilisation:

Name & Address	Designated as	Contact No
1. Dr Ilias Ali (Padmaashree)	Chairman:	9864061796
2. Akabor Ali Ahmed , Retd. Professor, BN College, Dhubri	Member	9678109177
3. Dr Tanvir Alam 4. Tezpur Medical College	Member	9706037060
5. Sahabuddin Ahmed Journalist, Mukalmua	Member	8638919139
6. K.J. Hifaly, ACS, CEO, GMDA	Member-Secretary	9435080266

B. Sub-Group/Committee on Health:

Name & Address	Designated as	Contact No
1. Dr Syed Iftikhar Ahmed (Anti-AIDS Campaigner & Social Activist)	Chairman	8723950583
2. Dr Javed Ali, Professor, GMCH.	Member	
3. Dr. Aftab Ali Ahmed (Assistant Professor, Jorhat Medical College)	Member	9957100114
4. Zahid Chistle, ACS, Joint Secretary to the Govt. of Assam, Personnel Deptt.	Member-Secretary	9435055161

C. Sub-Group/Committee on Cultural Identity:

Name & Address	Designated as	Contact No
1. Wasbir Hussain (Editor-in-Chief, Northeast Live TV & Commentator)	Chairman	9864265980
2. Imran Hussain (Writer and Academic)	Member	9435608844
3. Nurul Sultan (Film producer and Cultural Activist , Dergaon)	Member	9435092888
4. Mahmud Hassan, ACS, Addl. Secretary to the Govt. of Assam, Forest Deptt	Member-Secretary	9435027583

D. Sub-Group/Committee on Education:

Name & Address	Designated as	Contact No
1. Dr Adil Ul Yasin, Retd Prof Dibrugarh University, Political Science	Chairman	9435735840
2. Sheikh Hedayetullah (Prof of English, Ratnapith College, Chapar, Dhubri. President, Deshi Jonogoshiya Mancha, Assam)	Member	9435616079
3. Moinul Haq, Writer & Poet	Member	9957860880
4. Inamul Hussain, ACS, Joint Secretary to the Govt. of Assam, Personnel Deptt.	Member-Secretary	9435023966

E. Sub-Group/Committee on Financial Inclusion:

Name & Address	Designated as	Contact No
1. Ms Nafifa Ahmed, IAS Retd.	Chairperson	7086070962
2. Dr Nissar Ahmed Barua, Prof of Economics, Gauhati University	Member	9864034527
3. Safiur Rahman, Retd Jt Director, Economics & Statistics Dept & P&RD Assam	Member	9207001289
4. Fayek Azad (Deputy General Manager, Assam Financial Corporation)	Member	9435101171 / 9859916509
5. Syed Ishfaqur Rahman, ACS, Secretary to the Govt. of Assam, Finance Deptt.	Member-Secretary	9435156139

F. Sub-Group/Committee on Skill Development:

Name & Address	Designated as	Contact No
1. Mr Mujibur Rahman, Head Mechanical Engineering Dept, Dibrugarh Polytechnic	Chairman	8474074803
2. Dr. Nekib Hussain (Entrepreneur and NGO)	Member	9435017680
3. Md Rashid Arif Hussain, Oil Industry Professional, Technical Expert, NRL.	Member	7053204241
4. Sazzad Alam, ACS, Joint Secretary to the Govt. of Assam, Industries & Commerce Deptt.	Member-Secretary	7002238965

G. Sub-Group/Committee on Women Empowerment:

Name & Address	Designated as	Contact No
1. Dr Nazrana Ahmed, Industrialist & Lawyer	Chairperson	9435031080
2. Dr Naseem Farhin Akhtar, Director, Centre for Womens Studies Dibrugarh University	Member	9435004378
3. Dr (Mrs) Jishan Ahmed, Head, Surgery, Assam Medical College Dibrugarh & Rotarian	Member	
4. Farida Samsul, ACS, Director, Char Area Development Assam	Member-Secretary	9435024034

1. The Sub-Groups/Committee will submit detailed report/Recommendation to the Welfare of Minorities and Development Department within 3 months for taking further necessary action.
2. The Chairman and Members of the Sub-Groups/Committee will be entitled for a sitting allowance of Rs. 2500/- (two thousand five hundred only) each.
3. Each Sub-Group/Committee can undertake tour and meet different stakeholders, if required.

Sd/-

Commissioner & Secretary, to the Govt. of Assam
Welfare of Minorities and Development Department
Memo No. WMD.62/2021/ Pt/7-A

Dated Dispur the 31st July, 2021

Methodology Adopted by the Sub-Committee

The Sub-Committee at the first instance had discussions amongst the members. After such discussions, the Committee decided to obtain views and suggestions of the stakeholders on the issues relating to cultural identity of indigenous Assamese Muslims.

The Sub-Committee then drafted a Public Notice to solicit views from the citizens. Public notice was issued in various newspapers of the state, seeking responses in the form of representations, memorandums, appeals etc. The Notice was published both in Assamese and English language. The lists of newspapers with dates of issuance of public notice therein is in **ANNEXURE-A**. Apart from such public notice and responses thereof, the Committee also held discussions with various stakeholders from all walks of life including social organizations, eminent persons from the field of Art, Culture & Literature, Community Leaders, Islamic Scholars, among others. A list of such stakeholders is in **ANNEXURE-B**.

Pursuant to the Public Notice, various representations, memorandums and suggestions have been received from various stakeholders, groups, organizations and individuals. The Committee also extensively travelled to various parts of the state to interact face-to-face with members of the Community. Few Video Conferences too were held with the stakeholders. The Committee had a total of ten sittings. The date and the place of the meetings of the Committee is indicated in **ANNEXURE - C**.

Indigenous Assamese Muslims: A Brief History

Assam – also fondly called *Sankar-Azaanor desh* (land of philosopher-saint Srimanta Shankaradeva and Islamic Sufi preacher Azaan Fakir) – is a land where people from different religion, caste and ethnicity have lived together in harmony for centuries. Muslims form an integral part of this land, with almost one-third of Assam's population being the followers of Islam. The Muslim population in the State can be divided into two broad categories – the indigenous Assamese-speaking Muslims and the Bengali-speaking Muslims. This Report specifically deals with the indigenous Assamese-speaking Muslims. The terms, 'Assamese Muslims' and 'indigenous Assamese-speaking Muslims', are used interchangeably in this Report and both terms denote the same. There are five sub-groups of Assamese Muslims in Assam: Syed, Goriya, Moriya, Deshi and Julha.

The history of Muslims in Assam can be traced to early thirteenth century. It began after the invasion of Kamrup by Bakhtiyaruddin Khalji around 1205 AD¹. Bakhtiyaruddin Khalji, also known as Ikhtiyar al-Din Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khilji, was a Turko-Afghan military general who led the Muslim conquests to eastern India as well as Tibet. As mentioned in the *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, an elaborate history of the Islamic world written in Persian by Minhaj-i-Siraj Juzjani (completed in 1260), Bakhtiyar Khilji lost the war in Kamrup.

Muslim settlements began to appear in Assam soon after. The anthology titled *Aitibasis Patabhumit Asomor Aitijyamondita Islamdharma Kokol* (Muslims in the Historical Landscape of Assam) mentions several strands of Muslim settlement after this invasion. This fact is also corroborated in the *Kanai Barashi Bowa Sil* inscription found in North Guwahati, which was issued after the invasion of Bakhtiyar Khilji. In this inscription, Muslims are referred to as Turuksha. During Khilji's invasion, one of the tribal chieftains of the Mech tribe converted to Islam. He was named Ali Mech. The indigenous roots of this group of Assamese-speaking Muslim community can, therefore, be traced to Ali Mech. Today, the descendants of Ali Mech are called *Deshis*.

The conversion of the Kamata ruler Chakradhvaj (1455-1485) to Islam is another event regarded by historians as a milestone that provided a fillip to the spread of Islam in Assam. He converted to Islam after his defeat to Sultan Barbak Shah of the kingdom of

1 Gait, Edward, *A History of Assam*, Thacker Spink, Calcutta (1933)

Gauda (in present day West Bengal)². Ibn Battuta, a famous fourteenth century scholar and traveller, in his *Rihla* or travelogue, mentions his meeting with a Sufi *pir* and his followers in Kamrupa during his travel to China³. In the Ahom *buranjis*, Muslims were referred to as *Goriya* and they lived in the midst of other groups in the Ahom kingdom. By the sixteenth century, Muslim communities were established and this is recorded in the *Vaishnava* literature of Assam⁴.

The settlement of the Muslims in the eastern region of Assam started from 1530, when the Muslim army under Turbak Khan, a Turkish general of Delhi Sultanate, invaded Assam. He had some initial success but the Ahom army under King Suhungmung (c. 1497–1539) defeated him and Turbak was killed in battle. Those who were taken as prisoners (around 1000 of them) were settled in and around Kaliabor, in present day Nagaon district⁵. In this regard, Edward Gait remarks that the Muslims who were taken as prisoners by Suhungmung were the earliest Muslim settlers in the eastern valley of the Brahmaputra⁶. This group of Muslims later came to be known as the Moriyas.

Sir Edward Gait also mentions the Mughal-Ahom war during the reign of Emperor Aurangzeb (1615) as the pivotal moment of Islam spreading its roots in Assam. Noted Assamese historian, S.K. Bhuyan, on his part, says the Muslims in Assam can mostly be traced to the defeated and abandoned soldiers of the Mughal army. Many do not accept this narrative in totality and point out that Mech chieftain Ali Mech was a son of the soil (*bhumiputra*) and that his conversion to Islam and the tree that branched thereafter cannot be ignored.

Sometime around 1630 AD, a group of enlightened people who swore by the ideals of Sufism, set off from the banks of the Tigris, traversed through Iraq and Afghanistan, and entered India after crossing the Khyber Pass that connects Kabul with Peshawar. The pass has historically been the gateway for invasions of the Indian subcontinent from the northwest. But this group of people, 700 of them according to some accounts, were not warriors. They were Muslim preachers and reformers, who had made up their mind to spread the tenets of Islam in distant places.

One of them was Syed Moinuddin Baghdadi. The other names by which he is referred to includes Shah Milan or Shah Miran. The group arrived in Ajmer, at the Dargah of Khwaja

2 Saikia, Mohini Kumar, *Assam-Muslim Relation and its Cultural Significance*, Luit Printers, Golaghat (1978)

3 Nath, R.M., *The Background of Assamese Culture*, Data Baruah & Co., Garwahati (1948)

4 Saikia, Yasmin, *The Muslims of Assam: Present/Absent History*, April 2017, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325297526>

5 Gait, Edward, *A History of Assam*, Thacker Spink & Co., Calcutta (1933)

6 *Ibid.*

Moinuddin Chisti, by far the most famous Sufi saint in South Asia. The Khwaja was one of the most outstanding figures in the annals of Islamic mysticism and was the founder of the Chistiyya order in India. Soon, Syed Moinuddin Baghdadi, and sixteen others from the group, set off for Assam, apparently after receiving a directive from the Khwaja in a dream.

After spending time in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Kolkata, the group headed for Assam arrived in Hajo, near Guwahati, at the Dargah of Hazarat Giasuddin Aulia. According to some accounts, he reached Assam in 1636 AD. This hill-top Dargah at Hajo is popularly known across Assam as 'Poa Mecca' or one-fourth of Mecca. Syed Moinuddin Baghdadi and his group interacted with people in the nearby villages, learnt the local Assamese language and got themselves acquainted with the Vaishnavite culture as propagated by Srimanta Shankaradeva.

One morning, after spending a few years in Hajo, Syed Moinuddin Baghdadi and his group, that included his brother Shah Nabi, set sail on the Brahmaputra in two boats. Some accounts say that the boats, named 'Sukula' and 'Paroi', brought them to Sunpura village near Gargaon, the capital of the Ahom kingdom. This was during the reign of Ahom king Pratap Singha (r. 1603-1641).

When he arrived in Sunpura, he realised he has enough work to do. The Muslims there had strayed away from the principles of Islam, and were living a life without direction. Some of them were even pagan in their outlook. Syed Moinuddin Baghdadi started work with a simple agenda — stabilizing Islam in the area, and at the same time build up a harmonious relationship between the local Muslims and Hindus. He began by saying the Azaan five times a day to call the faithful for prayer. He had to teach and inspire the local Muslims to follow the path of Islam and, most importantly, teach them the procedures involved. He came to be called Azaan Pir or Azaan Deo Sahab, the saint who recited the Azaan. He also gained the trust of King Pratap Singha, who donated 120 bighas (40 acres) of land at Suraguri Chapori, 25 km from the town of Sivasagar, for the saint to stay along with his family and 120 followers.

Thus, as it was destined to be, Syed Moinuddin Baghdadi travelled to the east of Assam, changed the Muslim society there, and got himself his new and most popular name—Azaan Fakir. Most importantly, he got his name etched in Assam's history as a great humanist and a unifier of people and cultures through his work, teachings and philosophy.

One of the most valuable contributions of Azaan Pir to the Assamese culture is the Zikir. Sung in colloquial Assamese language, Zikirs involve singing the glory of Allah and Islam in highly lyrical terms. The themes of these devotional songs revolve around the tenets of Islam as well as the harmonious co-existence between Hindus and Muslims in the state.

The Pir is believed to have composed a total of 160 Zikirs, and they have been able

to build a bridge in ensuring the harmonious relationship between Islam and Hinduism, particularly Vaishnavism. Azaan Pir was adept in Arabic and Persian and was a great poet in his own right. He is said to have learnt Urdu in India, and Assamese upon arrival in Hajo and then in Sunpura.

Aside from Vaishnavite music, Azaan Pir was greatly influenced by the regional music in Assam, particularly *Oja-pali* and *Deh Bichar geet*. Some say, he had brought a Rabab, a slide instrument used in Afghanistan and Persia, along with him. This got transformed into the *ek-tara* (*tokari* in Assamese) and the *do-tara*, one and two-string instruments. The Zikirs came to be sung to the accompaniments of some of these simple instruments—the *ek-tara*, *kor tal* (a traditional bamboo instrument), and the *lohona* (nothing more than a modified can). The tune of the Zikirs bears resemblance to the Vaishnavite *Mangalik Naam* where the *kehol* (drum) and *tal* (cymbal) are used. The exception, however, is the Bor Zikirs (the main or big Zikirs) sung at the beginning of any formal function. No musical instruments are used while singing the Bor Zikirs.

Apart from the Zikirs, there are also the Jari songs of the Assamese Muslims. These are songs of lamentation based on legends relating to Muslim heroes Hasan ibn Ali and Husayn ibn Ali, grandsons of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and other members of his family at Karbala. The Deshi Muslims too have their own devotional songs, which are similar to the *Goalpariya Lokogeet* (folk song) of Assam. Many of these songs depict the century-old trade of capturing wild elephants. The people who were engaged in the art and skill of taming of the captured elephants belonged to both Hindu and Muslim communities and the songs too are performed by people of both these communities. *Oja-pali* is also popular among Muslims of lower Assam.

Muslims are now a part of the greater Assamese society. According to organisations representing Assamese Muslims, of the 1.18 crore Muslim population in Assam, nearly 42 lakh (35 per cent) belong to these indigenous Assamese-speaking communities. But, in the absence of any census of these groups, it is difficult to arrive at an authentic population figure of the indigenous Assamese Muslims. But one thing which is clear is that the Assamese Muslims have been living in this land for centuries and are son of the soil (*bhumiputra*). During the several rounds of discussions held while formulation of this Report, the people who gave their views and suggestions reiterated the fact that most of the Assamese Muslims are converts from Ahoms, Rajbongshis and other local Hindu communities.

Below are brief sketches of the five Assamese Muslim sub-groups:

(a) *Syed*: Azaan Pir is celebrated for his efforts in unifying the people in the Brahmaputra valley as well as for being the creator of Zikirs, which are now a part of the Assamese cultural milieu. When Azaan Pir came to Assam, several more preachers, who were descendents of

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), also entered Assam. These people and their descendents are known as Syeds.

Most of the Pirs and Faqirs, who pursued missionary activities in South and Southeast Asia, belonged to the Syed class. The first Sufi saint of the Hanifi Syed order, who came to Assam to propagate Islam, was Shah Syed Khusbul⁷. According to some, he came from Helal, a historically important place in present-day Syria; while some say that he came from Medina. Another school of thought claims that the first Sufi Syed to land in Assam was Syed Badiuddin Shah Madar⁸. That is why he was known as Madar Pir. He was also known as Balikotia/Baligoti Pir Shah Syed Khusbul. He came to Assam in the Year 1497 during the regime of Ahom king Shuhungmug. Balikotia Syeds have spread all over Assam over the years⁹.

The most illustrious among the Syed Pirs was Azaan Pir. There was a time when the Syeds tried to maintain their sectarian 'purity' through marriages among themselves only and strictly disapproving inter-community marriages, despite the fact that Azaan Pir himself married a non-Syed, as also an Ahom lady. This is no longer in practice among the community.

Syeds are known to be well-versed in Islamic theology and they used to play an important role in educating Muslims of Assam on matters of their religion and religious practices. In the olden days, in many places of Assam, the Syeds were invited to settle in Muslim villages to take charge of Mosques. They used to lead congregational namaz and maqtab, where *talim* and *tarbiyah* were imparted to the children of the locality. On certain issues, such as, nikah, inheritance and divorce and even small disputes, the concerned parties respected their opinion. With their pre-eminent position in the community, they exerted considerable influence in keeping the fellow Muslims within the boundaries of Islamic tenets and practices. The Syeds are now an important section of the Assamese Muslims of the state.

(b) Goriya: Between 1615 and 1682, the Mughals attacked Assam seventeen times. During that time, several soldiers that fought for the Mughals had become prisoners-of-war. The Ahom Kings allowed these soldiers to stay in Assam. Many of these people belonged to Gaur, the ancient Muslim capital of Bengal; hence they got the name 'Goriya'. These people settled in Assam and married local women and gradually became a part of the Assamese society.

According to Edward Gait, "the ordinary Muhammadans of Assam call themselves Garia, an indication of their claim to have come originally from Gaur, the ancient

7 Ahmed, Abu Nasar Saied, *Islamic Heritage in India's Northeast: Assam and Manipur*, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi (2018)

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

Muhammadan capital of Bengal¹⁰.

During the Ahom reign, several people were ostracized from the society if they were involved in extra-marital relations or if they got married against societal norms. Several such people used to settle down in a new place and set up a new village. Those villages were known as Goriya Gaon. Azaan Pir took many of these 'left out' and socially ostracized persons under his tutelage and taught them the tenets of Islam. Thus, these people, who had become the followers of Islam, were once again able to establish themselves in the society. Several tribal families too had converted to Islam during those days. In this way, several Hindu people too became followers of Islam and were subsequently known as Goriya.¹¹

The fact that Goriyas are a very old community of Assam can be established by looking at the use of the word 'Goriya' in several old folk songs as well as proverbs (*folklore-juzana*) prevalent in the Assamese society. The word finds mention in *biya naam* and *kheri geet* of the Assamese, which shows that this community has been living together with the Assamese Hindus.

The Goriyas are now spread all across Assam, especially in the Brahmaputra Valley. Though they are followers of Islam, their language, dress and many rituals are similar to that of the local Assamese community. Use of traditional Assamese devotional and folk songs like *Aai Naam*, *Biya Naam*, *Dheki Geet*, among others, are common among the Goriyas. They are equally involved in Assamese cultural festivals like Bihu and several Goriya families have been historically associated with some of the temples in Assam.

(c) *Moriya*: After the defeat of Turbak Khan during the reign of Ahom king Shungmung, the prisoners of war were settled in and around Kaliabor. These soldiers, around 1000 in number, later on married local Assamese women and came to be known as Moriyas. As most of the captured soldiers were of Turkish origin, therefore, they were also known as Turuk. There are references to the Turuk community in the compositions of Srimanta Shankaradeva too.

These soldiers were engaged to cut grass for royal elephants but they were found to be unfit for the job mainly because the warriors could not perform the job of grass cutters. They were then employed as cultivators and were allotted agricultural land in Kaliabor area to grow food. This area, where the new settlement of the captive soldiers grew, was once known as Turukhati. Some were also relocated in Morongi Mouza in present day Golaghat District. In the initial stage, there was little success achieved from using them as cultivators. However, it was found that many of them were experts in making brass items.

10 Gait, Edward, *A History of Assam*, Thacker Spink, Calcutta (1933)

11 Gogoi, Leela, *Assam Sanskriti*, Bonlota, Guwahati (5th Ed) (1994)

As Edward Gait mentions - "Tradition says that they (the captured soldiers) were at first ordered to cut grass for the king's elephants, but were found quite unfit for this work. They were next employed as cultivators, but their ignorance of agriculture was so great that they carried mud to the paddy seedlings instead of ploughing land and planting the seedlings in it. They were then left to their own devices, took to working in brass, an occupation which their descendants, who are known as Moriyas, carry on to this day."¹²

The village where they were settled was later renamed as Moriya Gaon by the British. The name remained so till 1978, when Golap Barua, the local Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA), renamed it Jayantipur¹³.

Moriyas were found to be adept at moulding brass sheets of various sizes and shapes in indigenously-made furnaces. Later on they acquired the skill of gun-making as well. In all these activities they used heavy hammers to give shape to their products. Hence, the name 'Moriya', which came from the Assamese word 'Maar' meaning to beat or to strike. There is another interpretation of the word. As the community had close cultural relations with the Bodo community and used to offer Maroi puja (which is of Bodo origin) it is said that they came to be known as Moriyas.

Many of the well-built former soldiers were also recruited by the Ahom kings for their valour and fighting spirit. One such warrior, Laidhan Khan, was said to be a close associate of the legendary Ahom general Lachit Barphukan.

The Burmese invasion of Assam (1817-26) led to the migration of people belonging to all sections of the society to safer places. The Moriyas also had to leave the places of their earlier settlements. As a result, they are now to be found in different parts of the Brahmaputra Valley. The leaders of the Moriya community claim that Moriyas have a total population of around two lakhs, spread over several districts, such as, Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Lakhimpur, Sonitpur, Darrang and Nagaon¹⁴.

There are also some similarities in the architectural style of Mosques built by the Moriya community with that of *Naamghars*. In Jayantipur, a Mosque was built by the community around 1570. It is known as Bor Masjid. It is one of the oldest Mosques of Assam and was built even before the Jama Masjid of Delhi or the Taj Mahal. The arch and other structures of this Mosque are built in style of typical Islamic architecture, but it has a unique top (*kalashi*) which is like a *Naamghar*. Another Mosque (called Horu Masjid) was

12 Gait, Edward, *A History of Assam*, Thacker Spink & Co., Calcutta (1933)

13 Ahmed, Abu Nasar Saied, *Islamic Heritage in India's Northeast: Assam and Manipur*, Alkansha Publishing House, New Delhi (2018)

14 Hussain, Moniral, *Moriya: Asomiya Musalmanor Anya Ek Starikaran in Anubhuti*, Centre for Islamic Studies, Dibrugarh (2009)

also built in the same village a few years later and its roof too was built in the Vaishnavite style of architecture. These Mosques also have a *lai khuta* (the main pillar) like a *Naamghar*. Thus, both these Mosques display an amalgamation of Islamic architecture and local architectural style. In the Bor Masjid, a canon from the Ahom era and several big brass utensils can still be found.

The Moriyas also have a distinct dialect (locally called *duan*), which they use to communicate among themselves. This dialect is similar to the Bodo language, which indicates that the community had regular interaction with the Bodo community in the earlier years.

Moriyas have now assimilated into the greater Assamese community and have adapted its language, customs and culture. They are now classified under the More Other Backward Classes (MOBC) category by the Government of Assam.

(d) *Deshis*: Deshis are believed to be among the first batch of people in Assam to have embraced Islam. They trace their lineage to Ali Mech, the Koch-Rajbongshi chieftain who converted to Islam during the invasion of Bakhtiyar Khilji.

Deshis are mostly concentrated in and around the Goalpara district of Assam. During the time of the Ahom-Mughal conflicts, Goalpara was the easternmost tract where the Mughals had consolidated their presence. It is believed that some of the Deshis are descendants of the early Muslim hordes, who chose to stay on after the war and married local girls before settling down. In the Linguistic Survey of India, by Sir G.A. Grierson, it is mentioned that large numbers of Rajbongshis had become Muslims.

In his book, *A Study of the Folk Culture of the Goalpara District of Assam*, Birendranath Datta mentions that Goalpara came in contact with Islam much earlier than the rest of Assam. He writes - "The fact that the district was for a considerable period of time under the Muslims also points to the possibility that Islam had established itself more securely in the area than elsewhere in Assam. The large percentage of Muslims and the large number of old mosques and other Muslim holy places found in the district confirm this."

Birendranath Datta also mentions that the local Muslims of Goalpara call themselves 'Deshi' (local) and they use the term 'Bhatiya' to designate the 'down river' Muslims from erstwhile East Bengal. To differentiate from the Bhatiyas, Muslims in this part preferred to be known as Deshis.

The word "Deshi" also found mention during the times of Koch King Naranarayana in the 16th century. It is said that Naranarayana's brother and military commander Chilatai had asked court poet Pitambar to translate Markandeya Chandi into Deshi language.

Many of the beliefs, rites and ceremonies of the Deshis are similar to the Hindus, especially the Rajbongshis. For example, in the *Madarer Bas* ceremony there are bamboos

representing Hindu Gods and Goddesses. The farmers of the community perform several seasonal and agricultural rites with Hindu religious overtones. There are similarities in marriage rituals with the use of banana plants, vermilion marks, conch-shell bangles, turmeric, bands and marriage songs. Some married women even sport *sindoor* on their foreheads. The use of *maab-halodhi* (turmeric-green gram paste) is also considered auspicious at Deshi weddings. When paddy is kept in the granary, when the plough is used for the first time in fields, then too *sindoor* is used. The custom of using *sindoor* has stopped due to some objections by Islamic clerics over the years. But people are yet to do away with the practice totally. Instead, they symbolically use a cosmetic colour now. Some of the marriage customs prevalent among the local Rajbongshis, like divorce, widow-marriage and marriage with a divorcee, are very much similar to Muslim practices of Goalpara.

People of Goalpara also celebrate a local version of Diwali called *Gasa Laga*. The Deshis also celebrate it but call it *Diya bati* or *Chorat*. Just like the Boisagu of Bodos and the Boishu of Rabhas, the Deshi Muslims also have their own Bihu which they call Beshoma. It is also called Bishma or Chait-Boishne. As Deshi Muslims are mainly converts from Rajbongshis, the rituals of Beshoma are very similar to the celebrations of Rajbongshis, which they call Bishma or Bishuma.

At present, it is estimated that there are about 20 lakh Deshi Muslims in Assam, spread across the districts of Goalpara, Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Kamrup (Rural), South Salmara and Kamrup (Metro)¹⁵.

(e) *Julha*: The Julhas (also called Jolha or Jolaha) are a small Assamese Muslim community found in some parts of Eastern Assam. The Julhas were originally from undivided Bihar, Odisha and West Bengal, and are believed to be converts from Adivasis. There were two phases of migration of the community to Assam. First, during the time of the Ahom kings, who brought them to work as weavers; and the other towards the end of the 19th century, when a large number of Julhas were brought by British tea planters to work in the tea gardens.

In the 1891 Census Report, Julhas were described as Muslim weavers. According to the Report, there were 2180 Julhas in Assam, of which 624 were in Cachar, 558 in Sylhet and 252 in Sivasagar.

The descendents of these migrants now form the Julha community and can be found in certain localities of Eastern Assam. For example, the Julha community formed during the Ahom rule can be seen in Moran, Nazira and Dimow areas of Sivasagar. Those brought by the British have a small concentration in Balibat, near Dergaon (Jorhat district), and Misamara

15 Nofil, Zafri Mudasser, *The Identity Quotient: The Story of the Assamese Muslims*, Har-Anand Publications, New Delhi (2021)

in Golaghat District¹⁶.

In Assam, they are listed as More Other Backward Classes (MOBC) and are part of the Tea Tribe community. Most of the customs of the Julhas are similar to the Tea Tribe community of Assam. Jhumur, the traditional dance of the Tea Tribe Community, is also popular among the Julhas. The dialect they speak too is similar to the one used by the Tea Tribe Community. The Julhas are also said to have taken part in *saaper puja* (snake worship) during the earlier times, as the snake was considered a protector of their paddy and livestock.

16 Ahmed, Abu Nasar Saied, *Islamic Heritage in India's Northeast: Assam and Manipur*, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi (2018)

Contribution to Nation Building

Assamese Muslims, an integral part of Assam's socio-cultural milieu, have contributed immensely for the development of this region and have been a part of the nation building process for centuries. During the Ahom rule, Muslims were given titles like Hazarika, Phukan, Barua, Saikia, Bora, etc. by the Ahom Kings and they fought for the Ahoms. The most famous among these Assamese Muslim military officials is Ismail Siddique, who was given the nomenclature of 'Bagh' Hazarika by Ahom king Chakradhwaj Singha because of his strength and valour.

Bagh Hazarika was known for his heroics during the Ahom-Mughal war in the 17th century. He had fought alongside Lachit Borphukan in the historic Battle of Saraighat in 1671. During the preceding days of the war, Bagh Hazarika also commanded a battalion of special forces of the Ahom soldiers, called the *Sur-bosa*¹⁷. Under his leadership, the Ahom soldiers had entered the Itakhuli fort, occupied by the Mughals, at night and poured water on the cannons and gunpowder, rendering them useless¹⁸. This was a pivotal action in terms of the war and this helped the Ahoms retake Guwahati from the hands of the Mughals. Bagh Hazarika was also rewarded by the Ahom King Udayaditya Singha, who allotted him a vast tract of land at Goriajan near Sunpura in Sivasagar¹⁹.

Ahom King Rudra Singha also had brought in several Muslim workers to Assam who were skilled in trades like architecture, painting, tailoring, black smithy, etc. One of the best known illustrated manuscripts of Assam, *Hastividyarnava*, written by Sukumar Barkaith, and commissioned under the patronage of King Siva Singha, had several paintings done by a Muslim painter.²⁰

Assamese Muslims also played an important role in the Indian independence movement. One such person from the community was Bahadur Gaonburah, who was part of India's first war of independence in 1857. He was a close aide of Maniram Dewan and

17 Barpujari, H. K. (ed.), *The Comprehensive History of Assam Vol. II - Medieval Period: Political From Thirteenth Century A.D. To the Treaty of Yandabo 1826*, Assam Publication Board (1992)

18 Ibid.

19 "Call to keep alive Bagh Hazarika's heroic legacy", *The Assam Tribune*, 15 September 2010, <https://assamtribune.com/call-to-keep-alive-bagh-hazarikas-heroic-legacy>

20 Dev, Bimal J. & Lahiri, Dilip Kumar, *Assam Muslims: Politics & Cohesion*, Mittal Publications, India (1985)

Piyali Baruah. Dewan had entrusted Bahadur with the task of mobilising support among the Muslim community against the British²¹.

Born in 1819, Bahadur's real name was Sheikh Bahadil. He was a village headman in Titabar in Jorhat district of Assam; hence, the nomenclature Gaonburah. He became known as Bahadur for his courage. Bahadur Gaonburah was also a well know craftsman of ivory products and several of his hand-made creations are still preserved at the Auniati Satra in Majuli.

He became a part of the independence movement and was arrested by the British. He was put on trial for treason, along with Maniram Dewan and a few others, in 1858. He was sentenced to life imprisonment in the Cellular Jail (also known as Kala Pani) in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. His sentence was commuted later on and he returned to Titabar, where he died in 1891²².

Another Assamese Muslim, Farmud Ali, too was sentenced and incarcerated in the jail along with Bahadur Gaonburah for his part in the independence movement. Farmud Ali was also from Jorhat and he was also a village headman. He was an expert tailor as well as an accomplished musician. After being sentenced to jail by the British, he spent 14 years of his life in the Cellular Jail in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Bahadur Gaonburah and Farmud Ali are shining examples of involvement of Assamese Muslims in the Indian independence movement. Bahadur Gaonburah was also a very good friend of Krishnakanta Deva Goswami, the then Satradhikar of Kamalabari Satra. This friendship also demonstrates the type of camaraderie that existed in the Assamese society for centuries.

Another Assamese Muslim who made his mark in pre-independence India was Sir Syed Muhammad Saadulla. He was the Prime Minister (as the post was known then) of Assam for three different terms - 1 April 1937 to 10 September 1938; 17 November 1939 to 25 December 1941; and 24 August 1942 to 11 February 1946. He was also the chairman of Gauhati Municipality in 1919 and Minister-in-Charge of Education and Agriculture for Assam from 1924 to 1934. His family is believed to be descendent of Azan Pir.

Syed Muhammad Saadulla was also involved in the process of drafting of the Indian Constitution as a Member of the Constituent Assembly. In fact, he was the only person from Northeast India to be a part of the Constitution Drafting Committee.

Syed Muhammad Saadulla was knighted by the British in the 1928 Birthday Honours and appointed a Knight Commander of the Order of the Indian Empire (KCIE) in the 1946

21 Dutta, Ajit K, *Maniram Dewan and the Contemporary Assamese Society*, Anupoma Dutta, Jorhat (1990)

22 Ibid.

Birthdays Honours.

Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed is another prominent figure from among the Assamese Muslim community who went on to become the President of India. Till date, he is the only Assamese to hold that post. He was a member of the Indian National Congress and had actively participated in the Indian Freedom Movement. In 1940, he was imprisoned for one year for offering individual *satyagraha*, and immediately after his release, he was detained as security prisoner for 3 years till April 1945²³.

Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed was a member of the Council of Ministers when Gopinath Bordoloi was the Prime Minister of Assam (before Indian independence). He served as the Minister of Finance and Revenue during that tenure. After independence, he was elected twice to the Assam Legislative Assembly (1957-1962 and 1962-1967). During these tenures, he served as the Minister of Finance, Law, Community Development, Panchayats and Local Self Government. He was elected to the Lok Sabha twice (in 1967 and 1971). He held several important portfolios as part of the Central Cabinet and was Minister of Power; Irrigation; Education; Food, Agriculture, Community Development & Co-operation; Industrial Development & Company Affairs. He was also a two-time member of the Rajya Sabha (1952-53 and 1962). An accomplished lawyer, he was also the Advocate General of Assam (1946-1952).

Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed became President of India in 1974. Chosen for the presidency by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, he was elected as President on 20 August 1974. He became the second Muslim and the first Assamese to be elected President of India. During his tenure as the President, several Assam-related events were organized at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The Annual Bihu event of Assam Association, Delhi, was also organized in the Rashtrapati Bhavan premises when he was the President.

His father, Col. Zalnur Ali Ahmed, too was a distinguished personality from the Assamese Muslim community. He was the second Assamese to enter the Imperial Medical Service (later renamed as Indian Medical Service) and the first Assamese to receive an M.D. degree from London.

Another well-known figure from the Assamese Muslim community, who played an important role in the independence movement, was Maulana Mohammed Tayebulla. An academically brilliant person, he was practising law in Guwahati when he responded to a call from Mahatma Gandhi to join the Non-Cooperation Movement. He gave up his legal practice and plunged into the movement in 1921.

23. Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, Members Bioprofile, Lok Sabha, http://loksabhaph.nic.in/writersdata/biodata_1_12/1702.htm

During the independence movement, he came in close contact with leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel and several others. In 1926, he was appointed as the General Secretary for the All India Congress Committee (AICC) session held at Pandu in Guwahati. He served as the General Secretary of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) from 1926 to 1931 and as its President from 1940 to 1948.

Mohammad Tayebulla was jailed several times for his participation in the independence movement. He was first jailed in 1921, soon after he had joined the non-cooperation movement. He was jailed again in 1931, 1936, and then for five years from 1941 to 1946. In all, he was imprisoned for almost seven years during the freedom movement.

Mohammad Tayebulla had the honour of hoisting the national flag on 15 August 1947 at Judge's field in Guwahati as part of celebration of India's first Independence Day. After independence, he became a Cabinet Minister in the Gopinath Bordoloi ministry and was in charge of departments like Excise, Publicity and Jail. He was also elected to the Rajya Sabha twice – in 1952 and 1958.

Mohammad Tayebulla also played a very important role in ensuring that Assam remains a part of India after independence. He fought against the efforts of the Muslim League to make Assam a part of East Pakistan. He was even ostracized by a section of the then Muslim community for his anti-Muslim league stance.

Mohammad Tayebulla was one of the few prominent leaders of Assam who took part in all the important events leading to India's freedom, like the Non-Cooperation Movement, Quit India Movement, among others.

Another luminary from the Assamese Muslim community who made a mark in the State's socio-political sphere was Syeda Anwara Taimur. She is the first and only woman Chief Minister of Assam. She was also the first Muslim woman Chief Minister of any state of India.

Syeda Anwara Taimur was Chief Minister of Assam from 6 December 1980 to 30 June 1981. Her term was cut short when the State was put under President's Rule. She was elected four times to the Assam Legislative Assembly (1972, 1978, 1983 and 1991). In 1988, she was nominated to the Rajya Sabha; and then in 2004, was elected to the Rajya Sabha.

Another woman, who holds the distinction of being the first woman Member of Parliament (MP) from Assam, was also from the Assamese Muslim community. She was Begum Mofida Ahmed, who was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1957. This has been an unique feat because she was elected from a general constituency and not a Muslim dominated one. She was also one of the first few Muslim women to become a MP in India. She also contributed several articles in Assamese journals. Her published books include *Biswadi-Bapuji* and *Bharatar-Nehru*, the former being a book on Mahatma Gandhi and the latter on

Jawaharlal Nehru

Two persons from the Assamese Muslim community also were the first Assamese in the central police services of India. Imdad Ali was the first Assamese to be inducted into the Imperial Police Service in 1937. Yamin Hazarika was the first Assamese woman (and also the first from Northeast India) to be selected for the central police service. She was selected for the Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu Police Service (DANIPS) in 1977. Imdad Ali was also the first Assamese Director General of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). In 1974, he was appointed as Indian Ambassador to Yemen; thus becoming the first Assamese and the first Indian Police Officer to become India's Ambassador to a foreign country.

Assamese Muslims have also made immense contribution to Assamese literature. This includes writers like Syed Abdul Malik, Mafizuddin Ahmed Hazarika, Moidul Islam Bora and Imran Shah, among others.

Syed Abdul Malik is regarded as one of the most popular and influential writer in Assamese literary circles. For his writings, he has won several awards and recognitions, including Padma Bhusan, Padma Shri, Sahitya Akademi Award, Srimanta Sankaradeva Award, among others. He was also the president of the Asam Sahitya Sabha in 1977.

Mafizuddin Ahmed Hazarika was a renowned poet and a president of the Asam Sahitya Sabha in 1930. Moidul Islam Bora was the first Assamese doctorate degree holder. He obtained his PhD from University of London in 1931. He was also the first lecturer from Assam to teach at the Dhaka University. Imran Shah is an Assamese poet, novelist, and scholar, who was bestowed with the Padma Shri in 2021 for his contributions to literature and education. He also had been the President of the Asom Sahitya Sabha.

There was also mass participation from the Assamese Muslim community during several important social agitations in Assam like the Language Movement (*Bhasa Andolan*) (1960), Medium of Instruction Movement (*Madhyam Andolan*) (1972) and the Assam Movement (*Asom Andolan*) (1979-1985). An Assamese Muslim, Muzammil Haque from Mangaldoi, was the first Martyr (*swabheed*) of the *Madhyam Andolan*. He achieved martyrdom at the age of 12 in 1972, while participating in a protest organized by the All Assam Students Union (AASU). In 2021, the Assam Sahitya Sabha decided to celebrate 6 October as 'Mother Language Day' in memory of Muzammil Haque. During the Assam Movement, at least twenty members from the Assamese Muslim community laid down their life for the cause of the movement. This includes Nekibuddin Ahmed and Imtiazuddin Ahmed from Sivasagar, Ataur Rahman from Jorhat, Mofizur Rahman from Dhemaji, Sarifuddin Ahmed from Barpeta, Azizur Rahman from Hajo, among others.

The list of contributions of Assamese Muslims to the state's socio-political sphere goes

on and on. The names of each and every one cannot be covered in one single Report. With their contribution, the community has helped in the nation building process in the region. They have always been an integral part of the greater Assamese community and will forever be considered as such.

An Integral Part of Assamese Society & Culture

The Assamese Muslims have been an integral part of Assam's cultural and societal sphere. They have been living in this land for ages and have totally assimilated with its culture. Their cultural icons and personalities do not only represent the Muslim community but the whole of Assam. The Assamese Muslims are generally regarded as practitioners of cultural Islam and have a liberal outlook. Religion aside, there are hardly any difference in the way of life between the Assamese Muslims and the Assamese Hindus.

There is also a duality of representation of the socio-cultural icons of Assam. One cannot think of Azaan Pir without thinking about Srimanta Shankaradeva. The valour of Bagh Hazarika is closely associated with the military exploits of Lachit Borphukan. The contribution of Bahadur Gaonburah in the Indian Independence Movement is intertwined with the struggle of Maniram Dewan. This very fact was also voiced by almost all stakeholders during the discussion sessions that the Committee Members held in course of their task in writing this Report.

Azaan Pir had alluded to Srimanta Shankaradeva in several of his Zikirs, which indicates how much he was impressed by the great Assamese saint and thinker. The Assamese Muslims too share this respect for Srimanta Shankaradeva and his teachings. Even today, Assamese Muslim families are associated with several Sattras of Assam.

A famous Muslim disciple of Srimanta Shankaradeva was Chand Sai. His real name was Chand Khan but was popularly known as Chand Sai. He was the royal tailor of King Naranarayan. He came into contact with Srimanta Shankaradeva when the King asked him to stitch a jacket for the Saint. Soon he became a disciple of Srimanta Shankaradeva and later went with him to Patbausi in Barpeta, where the former had set up a Sattrā.

Assamese cultural icon Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhupen Hazarika has acknowledged the contribution of Assamese Muslims in several of his songs. His songs mention Azaan Pir, Bahadur Gaonburah, Farmud Ali, Mofizuddin Ahmed Hazarika, among others. In one of his songs, he also mentions how Srimanta Shankaradeva respected Islam. Famous Assamese Litterateur Jyoti Prasad Agarwala too mentions the unity between Hindus and Muslims in Assam in his poems.

The Assamese Muslim community also has close ties to three famous temples of

Assam. These are the Shiva Dol, Vishnu Dol and Devi Dol situated in Sivasagar district. This connection is through the Daullah family of Sivasagar. The ancestors of this family were expert drum players and they played the *Negera* (a type of drum) at these Dols during the reign of the Ahom Kings. Kerkon Goriya is said to be the first drummer from the family to play *Negera* at these Dols. The drums were beaten before the commencement of the Puja and continued till the arrival of the Ahom King.

During Durga Puja, animals (mainly goat and duck) are sacrificed at the Devi Dol as an offering to the Goddess Shakti. This is a 300 year-old tradition which continues till today. Every year, the Dol Committee offers a sacrificial goat to the Daullah family. They are offered the goat, a *xorai* and *Prasad* after prayers at the Devi Dol. This is an example of how the Hindus and Muslims of Assam are bound together for ages in this land.

The Patharughat Uprising of 1894 is another example of unity between Hindus and Muslims in Assam. In that uprising which took place at a place called Patharughat in Darrang district of Assam on 28 January 1894, thousands of unarmed villagers (both Hindu and Muslims) revolted against the British to oppose the unjust increase in land revenue²⁴. According to official records, as mentioned in the Darrang District Gazette 1905, edited by B.C. Allen, the number of casualties in the Patharughat incident was mentioned as 15 killed and 37 wounded. But, unofficial sources claim it was a much higher number. During this incident, the Hindus and Muslims have fought together, which displayed the camaraderie shared by the two communities in the State.

The Assamese Muslims have also played an important role in preservation of Bihu and its rituals. During the discussions held by the Sub-Committee, it was brought into notice that two youths from the Assamese Muslim community in Sivasagar played an important role in preservation and promotion of Bihu in Assam.

The socio-cultural-religious practices of the Deshi community are also an example of how much the Assamese Muslims are closely associated with their Assamese Hindu brethren. As already mentioned in Chapter 2 of this Report, the Deshis are mainly converts from the Rajbongshis and are descendents of Ali Mech, who can be said to be first local Assamese to be converted to Islam.

All these facts establish one thing clearly and that is – Assamese Muslims are an indigenous community of Assam, who have integrated with the larger Assamese Community and have played an integral part in the formation and development of Assamese Society and Culture.

24 "Patharughat Explained: The forgotten peasant uprising of Assam in 1894", The Indian Express, 28 January 2021, <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/assam-patharughat-1894-peasant-uprising-martyrs-column-7165125/>

Assamese Muslims: Present Status & Concerns

Assam has a sizeable Muslim population. As per Census of India 2011, the population of Muslims in Assam is 1.06 crore (or 10.6 million), which accounts for 34.22 per cent of the State's total population. Out of the 27 districts of Assam (during 2011 Census), nine districts had more than 50 per cent Muslim population (see table below).

Table: District-wise population of Muslims in Assam (Census 2011)

Sl. No.	District	Total population	Muslim population	Percentage
1	Baksa	950,075	135,750	14.29%
2	Barpeta	1,693,622	1,198,036	70.74%
3	Bongaigaon	738,804	371,033	50.22%
4	Cachar	1,736,617	654,816	37.71%
5	Chirang	482,162	109,248	22.66%
6	Darrang	928,500	597,392	64.34%
7	Dhemaji	686,133	13,475	1.96%
8	Dhubri	1,949,258	1,553,023	79.67%
9	Dibrugarh	1,326,335	64,526	4.86%
10	Dima Hasao	214,102	4,358	2.04%
11	Goalpara	1,008,183	579,929	57.52%
12	Golaghat	1,066,888	90,312	8.46%
13	Hailakandi	659,296	397,653	60.31%
14	Jorhat	1,092,256	54,684	5.01%
15	Kamrup	1,517,542	601,784	39.66%

16	Kamrup Metropolitan	1,253,938	151,071	12.05%
17	Karbi Anglong	956,313	20,290	2.12%
18	Karimganj	1,228,686	692,489	57.36%
19	Kokrajhar	887,142	252,271	28.44%
20	Lakhimpur	1,042,137	193,476	19.57%
21	Morigaon	957,423	503,257	52.56%
22	Nagaon	2,823,768	1,563,203	55.36%
23	Nalbari	771,639	277,488	35.96%
24	Sivasagar	1,151,050	95,553	9.30%
25	Sonitpur	1,924,110	350,536	17.22%
26	Tinsukia	1,327,929	48,373	3.64%
27	Udalguri	831,668	105,319	12.66%
	Assam (Total)	31,205,576	10,679,345	34.22%

However, the population figures here do not reflect or categorize the Muslim population between Assamese Muslims and the Bengali-speaking Muslims. This is a composite figure which reflects both the communities.

There is no official data on the number of Assamese Muslims in the State; neither is there a district-wise break up. According to organisations representing Assamese Muslims, there are about 42 lakh people belonging to the community, which is a little above one-third of the total Muslim population of the State. They are mostly concentrated in the districts of eastern Assam (Upper Assam) and North bank districts of the State.

In April 2021, the Janagosthiya Samannay Parishad (JSPA), an umbrella body of more than thirty indigenous organisations in Assam, launched a website to conduct a "census" of Assamese Muslims in the State²⁵. A website, www.jspacensus.com, has been launched where the indigenous Assamese can upload their details. This process is still ongoing and details are awaited.

25 "Online 'census' for Assamese Muslims launched by indigenous associations", The Indian Express, 16 April 2021, <https://indianexpress.com/article/north-east-india/assam/online-census-for-assamese-muslims-launched-by-several-indigenous-associations-7275481/>

Major Concerns

There are several issues of concern faced by the Assamese Muslim community currently. During the discussions held with the people while preparing this Report, several such issues came to the forefront. The major points of concern are briefly mentioned below. The Chapter 6 of this Report presents in details these concerns as well as suggestions of the Assamese Muslim community.

a) **Lack of Political Representation**

The Assamese Muslims have a significant population in Assam and are spread all across the Brahmaputra Valley. But, there is no political representation from this Community. There are very few persons from the Assamese Muslim community who have been given tickets by major political parties to contest elections to the Assam Legislative Assembly, Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha. This has resulted in low number of Assamese Muslim persons in these houses.

b) **Lack of Distinct Identity**

The Assamese Muslim community does not have a distinct ethnic identity. They are bracketed as Muslims, along with the Bengali-speaking Muslims. But, due to the lack of a separate identity bestowed upon the Assamese Muslims, they are bracketed together simply as Muslims.

c) **Lack of Preservation of Zikirs & other folk songs**

As mentioned earlier in this Report, Zikirs are the creation of Azaan Pir and hold a special place in the cultural sphere of Assam. But, there is lack of scientific preservation of these Zikirs. There are also concerns of corruption of the way Zikir is sung and presented today by some artistes. Similarly, the lack of preservation of other folks songs like Jati, Morsia geet, Deshi geets, too are a point of concern for the Community.

d) **Low Number of Theologists & Imams among Assamese Muslim**

During the discussions, a very pertinent fact was pointed out by several members of the Assamese Muslim community. There has been a steady decline in the number of Assamese Muslim theologians and Imams in the State. As such, in several Mosques in Assamese Muslim-dominated areas, the Mosques are being headed by non-Assamese speaking Imams. These Imams, mostly Bengali (and also Bihari), have very little understanding of the way of life and culture of Assamese Muslims. Their teachings too vary from what the Assamese Muslims have seen and learnt over the years. As such, this has been causing a friction within the Assamese Muslim community.

e) **Radicalization**

Another sensitive issue which came forward during the discussions was the matter of radicalization. With increased penetration of organizations that go against the liberal outlook of the Assamese Muslims, a section of the Muslim population is getting influenced by its radical teachings. This is more notable in case of Bengali-speaking Muslims in lower Assam and Barak Valley but there are concerns that it may seep among the Assamese Muslim community too. This, the people fear, may break the centuries-old bonhomie between Assamese Muslims and Hindus.

Thematic Representation of Views/ Suggestions from Stakeholders received during meetings with Committee Members and written Submissions

While preparing this Report, the Sub-Committee met people from all walks of life including social organizations, eminent persons from the field of Art, Culture & Literature, Community Leaders, Islamic Scholars, among others. These people and organizations provided their views and suggestions as to how to conserve, protect and promote the cultural identity of the Assamese Muslims. While it is not possible to mention all the views and suggestions in this Report, they have been bracketed under several themes. Below is the thematic representation of these views and suggestions that the Sub-Committee received.

1) An Welcome Initiative

- The People were largely thankful for the initiative taken by Hon'ble Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma and welcomed it whole heartedly.
- It was mentioned that this initiative is an indication that the Assamese Muslims have been recognized as a distinct entity and as an integral part of the Assamese community.
- People believed that this initiative will lead to an inclusive development of the Assamese Muslim community.

2) Duality of Representation

- One cannot think of Azaan Pir without thinking about Srimanta Shankaradeva.
- Similar is the case with Bagh Hazarika and Lachit Borphukan; and, Bahadur Gaonburah and Maniram Dewan.
- These are mutually connected just like the Assamese Muslims are connected with the other Assamese communities in this land.
- People also suggested that naming of important landmarks, bridges, roads, etc, may

be done by using the combined names of icons from both the communities, For example, the name of the under construction Jorhat Flyover can be *Shankar-Azaan Setu*.

3) **Political Representation**

- There is lack of representation of Assamese Muslims in Assam Legislative Assembly and Parliament.
- Very few people from the Assamese Muslim community are given ticket by major political parties to contest election.
- A delimitation exercise may be carried out to carve out indigenous Assamese Muslim majority areas so that the community gets a better political representation.
- A seat may be reserved for a person from the Assamese Muslim Community in the Rajya Sabha.

4) **Upper House**

- An Upper House i.e. Legislative Council may be set up in Assam too.
- Specific Number of Seats may be reserved for Assamese Muslims in the Legislative Council.
- Just like Article 333 of the Indian Constitution, a clause may be added that if the Governor of a state is of the opinion that the Assamese Muslim Community is not adequately represented in the state assembly; he/she can nominate one/two members to the Legislative Assembly.

5) **Distinct Identity**

- Recognition of Assamese Muslims as an indigenous Assamese community is needed.
- People agreed that no community can move forward without a distinct identity and this identity will help the Assamese Muslim community to preserve their culture and heritage.
- Several people also said that it will be difficult to imagine a separate identity as most of them identify themselves as Assamese first but that they are now forced to look for a separate unique identity so as to differentiate themselves from non-Assamese Muslims.
- A identity card may be provided to the Assamese Muslims indicating their distinct identity.

6) **Directorate for Assamese Muslims**

- A separate Directorate may be set up for the welfare and development of the indigenous Assamese Muslim community.
- This Directorate may provide necessary documentation to the people of the Assamese Muslim community to reflect their distinct identity.
- The Directorate may organize Cultural Festivals to showcase the culture and traditions of the Assamese Muslims.
- It may produce documentary films as well as provide funds for research on the Assamese Muslim community.
- Publications on Assamese Muslim culture, heritage, as well as leading personalities of the community may be published by the Directorate.
- It may provide Scholarships to students from the community.

7) **Azaan Pir**

- Steps should be taken to preserve the legacy of Azaan Pir.
- Research and Documentation on the life and works of Azaan Pir. The publication may be translated into other Indian languages as well.
- Preservation and Renovation of Azaan Pir Dargah. A museum may be opened at the Dargah where personal belongings of the Pir may be showcased. The Legacy of Azan Pir too can be presented in this Musuem.
- The life and works of Azaan Pir may be included in the syllabus of State Education Board of Assam (SEBA) so that school students know about the great Saint.
- The Azan Pir Award was introduced by the State Government in 2004 to honour persons of eminence for their contribution in the field of promotion of commul harmony, peace and public welfare. The Award was last given in 2013. This may be revived by the state government.
- Azaan Pir Chair may be created in Gauhati University, Dibrugarh University, Tezpur University, Assam University.
- An Azaan Pir Kalakshetra may be established in Assam. The same Kalakshetra may house Auditoriums, Library, etc, in the name of other prominent Assamese Muslim personalities. For example, Bagh Hazarika Auditorium or Ali Mech Library.

8) Zikir & Jari: Conservation & Promotion

- Azaan Pir created 160 zikirs. These needs to be conserved and promoted.
- A digital archive of these Zikirs may be created.
- The Zikirs may be published as a book. It may also be translated to English and other languages.
- There has to be standardization of the Zikir tune so that it is not corrupted in the name of modernization.
- There are two strands of Zikirs – old and new – both of these needs to be preserved.
- Zikir Workshops may be organized to popularize them among the youths.
- Zikir troupes may be formed in each district. Government may provide financial assistance to these troupes.
- Zikirs available in the All India Radio (AIR) archives should be preserved.
- All India Radio (AIR) may once again start broadcasting Zikirs in Radio.
- Zikir exponents like Rekitabuddin Ahmed and Karimuddin Ahmed should get due recognition from the government. Badaruddin Ahmed, a veteran Zikir singer, is yet to receive Silpi Pension from the state government.
- A Music Award may be constituted in the name of Rekitabuddin Ahmed.
- Similar steps should also be taken for the Jari songs.
- Zikir and Jari may be recognized as cultural folk song of Assam and may be performed at state government functions, including Independence Day and Republic day.
- Just like Zikir and Jari, other folk songs of the Assamese Muslim community like *Marsia Geet*, *Deshi gaan*, as well as *biya naam*, *deh bisar geet*, etc, needs to be preserved and promoted.
- A compendium on Zikir, Jari and other folk songs of Assamese Muslim community may be published.

9) Ali Mech and Preservation of Deshi Culture

- The Deshis are facing an identity crisis with many equating them with migrant-origin Bengali-speaking Muslims. This issue needs to be resolved by proper conservation and promotion of Deshi culture, tradition and language.
- A Deshi Development Council may be set up
- A cultural centre may be set up in Goalpara and a cultural officer appointed by the

state government to promote and preserve the Deshi culture.

- The memory of Ali Mech needs to be preserved. A Museum or Cultural Complex may be built in the name of Ali Mech.
- An Award may be constituted in the name of Ali Mech
- Efforts should be made to preserve the Deshi language. A Deshi Language Centre may be set up in Gauhati University. The Centre may conduct research on Deshi language and culture.
- Deshi language programmes may be broadcast in TV and radio.
- Government may organize an annual cultural competition on Deshi community
- The Deshi culture and traditions may be included in the school syllabus
- Training/Workshop may be organized on Deshi songs as well as Deshi folk instruments
- The Assamese Muslim villages in Goalpara needs to be identified and due recognition given.

10) Bagh Hazarika

- The bravery and valour of Bagh Hazarika should be preserved in the form of books, plays, documentary, etc. These can be translated to other Indian languages.
- Some people say that Bagh Hazarika is an imaginary figure. This misconception should be cleared by proper documentation and scientific research on Bagh Hazarika by studying historical facts.
- A Bravery Award may be constituted in the name of Bagh Hazarika.
- The tale of Bagh Hazarika may be included in the school syllabus
- A statue of Bagh Hazarika may be built and installed

11) Census for Assamese Muslims

- Government should undertake a Census to identify and document the Assamese Muslim community.
- After the Census, those included in the Census should be certified as an indigenous inhabitant of Assam.

12) Bhoomiputra

- Almost all the stakeholders reiterated the fact that Assamese Muslims have been living in this land for centuries and are son of the soil (bhumiputra).

- It was mentioned that most of the Assamese Muslims are converts from Rajbongshis, Boros-Kacharis and other local Hindu communities and have been living here for ages.
- 13) **Reservation in Jobs and Medical/Engineering Colleges**
- There may be reservation for Assamese Muslims in government jobs
 - Reservation of seats may also be there in the Medical and Engineering Colleges of Assam for students belonging to the Assamese Muslim Community.
- 14) **Popularize Prominent Assamese Muslim Personalities**
- Prominent Assamese Muslim Personalities may be popularized through books and articles on them. This includes people like Azaan Pir, Ali Mech, Chand Sai, Bagh Hazarika, Farmud Ali, Bahadur Gaonburah, Mofizuddin Ahmed Hazarika, Moidul Islam Bora, Syed Abdul Malik, Dost Habibur Rahman, among others, who have contributed immensely to the field of art, culture, education, sports, political and other spheres of Assam.
 - Awards, Roads, Bridges, etc. may be named after these persons.
 - The role of Assamese Muslims in Indian Independence Movement may be documented; so can be their role in Assam Politics.
- 15) **Preservation of Historical Sites and Monuments**
- There are about 107 archaeological monuments related to Assamese Muslims. These need to be preserved, developed and promoted. They can be converted to tourists spots.
 - This includes Azaan Pir Dargah, Pothorughat Swahid Venue, Panch Pir Dargah, Panbari Masjid, Bor Masjid, Horu Masjid, among others.
 - Archaeology Department of Assam may be consulted in this regard.
- 16) **Dress & Cuisine**
- There used to be a loom in almost every Assamese Muslim family in the earlier days. The women of the community weaved their own clothes and *Mekhela Chador*, *Riha*, etc. were a common dress for the Assamese Muslim women.
 - The Deshi women used to weave bedsheets with various designs as well as blankets called *nakshi ketba* in their homes.
 - This culture needs to be revived. Government may provide assistance to set up looms as well as provide training to the womenfolk for weaving.

- The weavers may also be market linked should that they can also sell their products.
 - The traditional cuisine of the Assamese Muslim also needs to be preserved and promoted. For example, the Deshi cuisine include food items like *sidol*, *pelka*, *nelpa*, *nalipata*, etc, should be promoted.
 - The Julhas too have their own traditional dress and cuisines. These too needs to be preserved.
- 17) **Revival of Brass Metal Industry**
- The Assamese Muslims, especially the Moriyas, are closely associated with the brass metal industry of Assam.
 - However the industry is facing a decline and the artisans involved with it are facing financial hardships.
 - Government may provide assistance to this industry for its revival.
- 18) **Preservation of Language and Dialect**
- The Deshi language needs to be preserved; so as the Moriya dialect (*Duan*).
 - The use of this language and dialect needs to be popularized and promoted.
- 19) **Madrassa Reform**
- There has to be reforms in the way of running of the Madrasas in Assam.
 - The private Madrasas needs to be regulated and registration with the government made mandatory.
 - Subjects like Science and Mathematics needs to be a compulsory part of the Madrasa syllabus
 - The Madrasa students needs to be provided a choice after Class VIII, wherein they would decide whether to continue studying in the Madrasa or shift to a regular school.
- 20) **Need for more Assamese Muslim Theologists/Imams**
- There has been a steady decline in the number of Assamese Muslim Theologists and Imams in the State. As such, in several Mosques in Assamese Muslim-dominated areas, the Mosques are being headed by non-Assamese-speaking Imams.
 - These Imams, mostly Bengali and Bihari, have very little understanding of the way of life and culture of Assamese Muslims. Their approach too is usually different from what the Assamese Muslims have seen and learnt over the years.
 - Many less educated and poor people from the Assamese Muslim community are influenced and are abandoning their age-old practices linked with Assamese Culture.

- As such, need is felt for more Assamese Muslim Theologists and Imams in Assam.
- 21) **Muazzins in Community Service**
- The Muazzins (assistants of Imams) in the Mosques may be involved in community service during their free time.
 - This will help them get close to the community they are serving in and may also help them earn some extra income.
- 22) **Authority to Settle Dispute in the Community**
- A Body/Authority may be created to provide suggestions as well as mediate disputes in cultural matters among the Assamese Muslim community.
 - The state government may give recognition to this Authority like it gives to Sadar Kazis.
- 23) **Preservation of Julha Culture**
- The Julhas are categorized as tea tribes but they do not get any benefits under the schemes meant for tea tribes. This issue needs to be addressed.
 - A Julha Development Council may be set up to work towards the development of the Julha community.
 - Efforts need to be made to preserve and promote their history, culture and tradition.
 - People from the Julha community want the word 'tea' to be prefixed before the name of the community, so that they get a distinct identity.
- 24) **Development of Syeds**
- Set up Assamese Syed Development Council
 - Include poor members of the Assamese Syed community in priority basis for getting homes under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and Apun Ghar scheme.
 - Set up quota for Syeds in the Haj Committee and Assam Board of Wakfs.
 - Scholarships for students and low interest loans for entrepreneurs of Syed community.
- 25) **Others**
- A compendium on Dargahs of Assam may be published.
 - Distinct cultural similarities between Assamese Muslims and Hindus may be studied and documented.
 - Awareness needs to be created to stop child marriage among Assamese Muslims, particularly among the Moriyas and Julhas.

- Acres of land under the Waf board have been encroached. This issue needs to be addressed,
- A separate display on Assamese Muslims may be included in Sankaradeva Kalakhetra.
- A separate publication board may be set up for Assamese Muslims.
- A Samannay Samity (Coordination Committee) may be created to act as bridge between all the Assamese Muslim communities
- A compilation of all the literary works of Syed Abdul Malik may be published. His house in Nahoroni may be turned into a Media Centre as well as a Tourist Spot.
- The Syed Abdul Malik Literary Award was given only once in 2015. It needs to be revived.
- Digitize and archive all genres of music of Assamese Muslim Community.
- Set up a Museum to display dress, ornaments and cuisine of Assamese Muslims.
- A website with all information on Assamese Muslims may be created
- Trusts may be set up in memory of leading Assamese Muslims, which can then work towards preservation and promotion of the works of these persons.

Recommendations by the Committee

Based on oral and written submissions made by various groups and individuals from across Assam and extensive discussions among the Committee Members, besides own research by the Members, the Committee puts forward the following recommendations. The Recommendations have been divided into two categories – one, in which the Government may take direct action, and, second, in which the Government may provide assistance to Community initiatives.

A. Recommendations with Direct Government Involvement

1. Recognition of indigenous Assamese Muslims as an Indigenous Assamese-Speaking Community of Assam

The Assam Government, through a Notification, may recognize the Assamese Muslims as an Indigenous Assamese-Speaking Community of Assam. The five sub-groups of Assamese Muslims – Syed, Goriya, Moriya, Deshi and Julha – should be clearly mentioned and recognized in the Government notification. This recognition will go a long way in helping the community preserve their culture and heritage.

2. Political Representation

- a) Representation of Assamese Muslims in Parliament and Assam Legislative Assembly has continued to be negligible and as such it has been suggested that this issue be addressed by the Government.

In this regard, a provision similar to Article 333 of the Indian Constitution may be made applicable in Assam. The Article 333 speaks about the representation of Anglo-Indian community in legislative assemblies of states. It states that, *"Notwithstanding anything in Article 170, the Governor of a State may, if he is of opinion that the Anglo Indian community needs representation in the Legislative Assembly of the State and is not adequately represented therein, nominate one member of that community to the Assembly."*

A similar provision may be enacted in case of Assam, through which the Governor of Assam may nominate one or more member of the indigenous Assamese Muslim community to the Assam Legislative Assembly. It may state,

"The Governor may, if he or she, is of opinion that the indigenous Assamese Muslim community needs representation in the Legislative Assembly of the State and is not adequately represented therein, nominate one or more members of that community to the Assembly."

- b) An Upper House (Legislative Council) may be created in Assam as per Article 169 of the Indian Constitution. This Article states that, *"Notwithstanding anything in Article 168, Parliament may by law provide for the abolition of the Legislative Council of a State having such a Council or for the creation of such a Council in a State having no such Council, if the Legislative Assembly of the State passes a resolution to that effect by a majority of the total membership of the Assembly and by a majority of not less than two thirds of the members of the Assembly present and voting."*

The Assam Legislative Assembly had passed a resolution on 14 July 2013, as required under Article 169 of the Constitution, for the creation of Legislative Council in the state. The Union Cabinet, chaired by then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, had approved a proposal to create a Legislative Council in Assam on 28 November 2013. The Assam Legislative Council Bill, 2013, was presented in the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha in 2014. But, it is still pending and not yet passed.

A parliamentary committee that went into the Bill had cleared the proposal, but struck a cautionary note. It wanted a national policy on having an Upper House in State legislatures to be framed by the Union government, so that a subsequent government doesn't abolish it. Hence, such a policy needs to be formulated by the central government at the earliest, so that Assam could get its Legislative Council.

Once the Legislative Council is formed, specific number of seats may be reserved for indigenous Assamese Muslim community in this Council (Upper House).

3. A Separate Directorate/Authority for Assamese Muslims

- a) A separate Directorate or an Authority may be set up by the Assam Government for the welfare and development of the indigenous Assamese Muslim community. This Directorate may provide necessary documentation to the people of the Assamese Muslim community to reflect their distinct identity. It may be in the form an identity card or a certificate.
- b) Books on Assamese Muslim culture, heritage, as well as leading personalities of the community may be published by the Directorate. The Directorate may also be given the responsibility of preservation and promotion of historical monuments

and sites associated with the Assamese Muslim community.

- c) The Directorate may organize Cultural Festivals to showcase the culture and traditions of the Assamese Muslims. It may produce documentary films as well as provide funds for research on the Assamese Muslim community. It may also provide Scholarships to students from the community.
- d) The Directorate can be made responsible for the preservation and promotion of Zikir, Jari, songs and culture of the Deshi, Moriya and Julha communities.

4. Preservation of Memory of Azaan Pir

- a) An Azaan Pir Kalakshetra may be established in Guwahati. This Kalakshetra would showcase the life and works of Azaan Pir. A Museum may be a part of the proposed Kalakshetra where personal belongings of Azaan Pir, currently in possession of various people, may be kept and displayed. It is important to keep the history and ideals of Ali Mech alive—the personality considered as the progenitor of the Deshis of Assam. The Azaan Pir Kalakshetra may house Auditoriums, Library, etc, in the name of other prominent Assamese Muslim personalities. For example, an **Ali Mech Library** or a **Bagh Hazarika Auditorium** may be established in this proposed Azaan Pir Kalakshetra.
- b) Assam Government may provide financial grant for the preservation and promotion of the Azaan Pir Dargah at Saraguri Chapori in Sivasagar as a historical and tourist site. The funds may be provided to the Dargah Committee for the purpose. The Sivasagar District Administration may be given the responsibility to ensure the proper utilization of the funds.
- c) The Azaan Pir Award was introduced by the Assam Government in 2004 to honour persons of eminence for their contribution in the field of promotion of communal harmony, peace and public welfare. The Award was last given in 2013. This Award may be revived by the state government.
- d) Books on the life and works of Azaan Pir may be published by Assam Prakashan Parishad (Assam Publication Board). The publications may be translated into other Indian languages as well.
- e) The Assam Government may provide financial assistance/scholarship for carrying out research and documentation on the life and works of Azaan Pir.
- f) A Chapter on Azaan Pir may be included in the syllabus of State Education Board of Assam (SEBA).
- g) An Azaan Pir Chair may be created at either Gauhati University, Dibrugarh University,

or Tezpur University.

5. Preservation and Promotion of Zikir, Jari and other folk songs

- a) A cultural centre may be established in Sivasagar for the promotion and preservation of Zikir, Jari and folk music of the other Assamese Muslim communities.
- b) A digital archive of the Zikirs created by Azaan Pir may be created by the Cultural Affairs department of the Assam Government.
- c) The Cultural Affairs department may also organize or provide funds for organizing Zikir Workshops across the state. Zikir troupes may be formed in each district and the department may provide financial assistance to these troupes.
- d) The Zikirs may be published as a book by the Assam Prakashan Parishad. It may also be translated to English and other languages.
- e) The department may also liaise with the authorities at All India Radio (AIR) so as to preserve the Zikirs available in the AIR archives. It may also request the AIR authorities to once again start broadcasting Zikirs.
- f) Zikir exponents like Rekitabuddin Ahmed and Badridduin Ahmed may be given due recognition from the government. For example, a Folk Music School may be constituted in the name of Rekitabuddin Ahmed at Balibat in Golaghat district, his birth place. Zikir exponent Badaruddin Ahmed may be given Silpi Pension by the state government.
- g) Similar steps may also be taken for the preservation and promotion of Jari and other folk songs of the Assamese Muslim community.
- h) Zikir and Jari may be recognized as cultural folk song of Assam and may be performed at state government functions, including Independence Day and Republic day.
- i) A compendium on Zikir, Jari and other folk songs of Assamese Muslim community may be published.
- j) A Cultural Centre may be established in Darrang district for the development of Seradhek and Darrangi culture and other Assamese Muslim folk music.

6. Ali Mech and Preservation of Deshi Culture

- a) A Museum or Cultural Complex/Centre may be built in the name of Ali Mech at Goalpara. A cultural officer may be appointed by the Assam government at this Complex/Centre to promote and preserve the Deshi culture.
- b) The State Government may name the newly constructed Dhubri-Phulbari Bridge in the name of Ali Mech.

- c) A Deshi Language Centre may be set up in Gauhati University. The Centre may conduct research on Deshi language and culture.
- d) The Cultural Affairs department may organize or provide funds for organizing Workshops on Deshi songs as well as Deshi folk instruments
- e) The Deshi community may be granted OBC Status considering the fact that the community is still backward and generally poor.

7. Preservation of Memory of Bagh Hazarika

- a) The Assam Prakashan Parishad may publish books on Bagh Hazarika. These can be translated to other Indian languages as well.
- b) The Cultural Affairs department may provide funds for staging plays or making documentary on Bagh Hazarika.
- c) Financial Assistance/Scholarships may be provided by the Cultural Affairs department for proper documentation and scientific research on Bagh Hazarika by studying historical facts.
- d) Assam Government may constitute a Bravery Award in the name of Bagh Hazarika.
- e) SEBA may include a chapter on Bagh Hazarika in the school syllabus.
- f) Financial Assistance may be provided to build and erect a statue of Bagh Hazarika. It may be installed within the premises of Baghdhora Pukhuri High School in Sivasagar district.

8. Census of Assamese Muslim Community

Assam Government may undertake a Census to identify and document the Assamese Muslim community. After the Census, those included in the Census may be provided with a documentary proof certifying them as an indigenous inhabitant of Assam.

9. Preservation of Historical Sites and Monuments

The Assam Government may initiate measures to preserve, develop and promote historical sites and monuments associated with the Assamese Muslim community. This includes sites and monuments like Azaan Pir Dargah, Pothorughat Swahid Venue, Panch Pir Dargah, Panbari Masjid, Bor Masjid, Horu Masjid (both in the Kaliabor area), among others. Archaeology Department of Assam may be consulted in this regard. These places may also be developed as tourists spots in association with the Tourism department of Assam. According to some estimates, there are more than 100 (one hundred) major historical sites linked to the indigenous Assamese Muslims across Assam. Of these, the

Panbari Masjid in Dhubri district deserves special and urgent attention for restoration and development. In fact, the Panbari Masjid should be recognized as a Heritage Site.

The protection, preservation and conservation of these sites and monuments need to be carried out following the "Conservation Manual of the Archaeological Survey of India" and following the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act of 2010 (AMASR Act).

10. Preservation and Promotion of Traditional Dress & Cuisine

- a) Assam Government may provide assistance to set up looms as well as provide weaving training to the interested womenfolk of the Assamese Muslim community. This may be done through the skill development centres across the state. The weavers may also be market linked so that they can also sell their products. The Directorate of Handloom & Textiles of Assam Government may be involved in this process.
- b) The Cultural Affairs department may organize or provide funds for organizing food festivals to display the traditional cuisine of the Assamese Muslim. For example, the Deshi cuisine, which includes food items like sidol, pelka, nelpa, nalipata, etc, may be promoted through food festivals across the state or country.

11. Establishment of a School of Islamic Learning

A School of Islamic Learning for Assamese Muslims may be set up with the assistance of the Assam Government. Those who study and pass out from this school may be appointed as Imams in Mosques in the Assamese Muslim dominated areas. During discussions held with this Sub-Committee, several people suggested that the liberal views practiced and propagated by the Assamese Muslims since time immemorial should be allowed to continue for which such schools of Islamic learning are important. Islamic clerics trained in a School of Islamic Learning for Assamese Muslims would be more appropriately suited for the community in Assam, they suggested.

12. Popularizing Prominent Assamese Muslim Personalities

- a) Any upcoming University may be named after Sahityasarjya Syed Abdul Malik.
- b) Assam Government may initiate efforts to popularize prominent Assamese Muslim Personalities. This includes personalities like Azaan Pir, Ali Mech, Chand Sai, Bagh Hazarika, Farmud Ali, Bahadur Gaonburah, Mofizuddin Ahmed Hazarika, Moidul Islam Bora, Syed Abdul Malik, Dost Habibur Rahman, Parashu Ojah, Tafazzul Ali, educationist Ashraf Ali, Abdul Majid, Ali Haidar, Sehîdur Rahman, a soldier of the Azad Hind Fauj, among others, who have contributed immensely to the field of art, culture, education, sports, political and other spheres of Assam. This may be done by naming Awards, Roads, Bridges, etc, after these persons.

- c) Naming of important landmarks, bridges, roads, educational institutions etc, may also be done by using the combined names of personalities from both the Assamese Muslim and Hindu communities. For example, the under construction Jorhat Flyover may be named *Shankar-Azaan Setu*. An educational institution may be named after the first Swahid of the Assamese language agitation Muzammil Haque.
- d) The role of Assamese Muslims in Indian Independence Movement may be documented, as also their role in Assam Politics.
- e) A compilation of all the literary works of Syed Abdul Malik may be published by Assam Prakashan Parishad.
- f) The State Government should provide assistance and recognition to the Syed Abdul Malik Research Centre currently run under the auspices of the Dergaon Sahitya Sabha.
- g) The Syed Abdul Malik Literary Award was given only once in 2015. It may be revived.

13. **Preservation of Language and Dialect**

In Assam, language is the uniting force which has bound the communities together, rather than religion. Whether it is a Hindu or a Muslim, the Assamese language is the common unifying factor which has defined the socio-cultural landscape of this region. And, this is the very reason why there have been no clashes on communal lines in Assam.

Though Assamese is the main language of the Assamese Muslim Community, the Deshis have their own language and the Moriyas too have a distinct dialect (*Duan*). The use of this language and dialect needs to be preserved, popularized and promoted through research, documentation and workshops, which may be organized with support of the Assam Government.

- 14. **Institutions of Higher Education may be set up in Assamese Muslim dominated areas.**
- 15. **Benefits for Julhas under Tea Tribe Schemes**

The Julhas are categorized as tea tribes but they do not get any benefits under the schemes meant for tea tribes. This issue may be addressed by the Assam Government by passing a notification which entitles the Julhas to receive all the benefits meant for the tea tribes of Assam. The Julhas are categorised as MOBC but the government needs to examine whether the community is able to derive the benefits availed by the tea tribe community who belong to other religions.

16. **Uplift of Moriya Community**

- a) PMYG Housing schemes must be specially considered for the poorer section among the Moriya community.
- b) Backward Moriya villages may be taken up as Adarsha Villages.

17. **Revival of Brass Metal Industry**

Assam Government may provide financial assistance to the artisans associated with the brass metal industry of Assam. This is a major demand of the Moriya community.

18. **Freeing of Wakf property from encroachers**

A lot of Wakf land and Wakf property across Assam are under the illegal occupation of encroachers/illegal occupants. These may be freed and recovered and the financial returns from rent etc from these properties can be utilized for the benefit of the poor among the community.

B. Recommendations that the Government May Assist:

1. **An Authority to Deal with Cultural Issues**

A Body/Authority may be created to provide suggestions as well as deal with cultural issues, including disputes, among the Assamese Muslim community. The state government may give recognition to this Authority like it gives to the Sadar Kazis.

2. **Muazzins involvement in Community Service**

The Muazzins in the Mosques may be involved in community service during their free time. This will help them get closer to the community they are serving in and may also help them earn some extra income.

3. **Standardization of Zikir Tune**

There has been several complaints about corruption of the Zikir tune by modern day singers. This issue may be resolved by initiating efforts to standardize the Zikir tune, which may be done through consultations with renowned Zikir exponents as well as with the involvement of the Cultural Affairs department of Assam.

4. **Other Recommendations**

- i. A compendium on Dargahs of Assam may be published.
- ii. Distinct cultural similarities between Assamese Muslims and Hindus may be studied and documented.
- iii. A separate display on Assamese Muslims may be included in Sankardev Kalakshetra at Guwahati.

- iv. A Samannay Samity (Coordination Committee) may be created to act as bridge between all the Assamese Muslim communities.
- v. A website with all information on Assamese Muslims may be created.
- vi. Trusts may be set up in memory of leading Assamese Muslims, which can then work towards preservation and promotion of the works of these persons.

CONCLUSION

With the recommendations provided in Chapter 7, the Sub-Committee on Cultural Identity of Indigenous Assamese Muslims concludes its report with the expectation that the Assam Government under the leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma would give due consideration to the recommendations and suggestions and initiate appropriate measures for the overall growth and uplift of the State's indigenous Assamese Muslim community.

Endorsed and signed on this day of December, 2021, at Guwahati.

(Wasbir Hussain)

Chairman

(Mahmood Hassan)

Member Secretary

(Imran Hussain)

Member

(Nurul Sultan)

Member

ANNEXURE

ANNEXURE – B

List of Organizations / Individuals who submitted written suggestions /
recommendations

Sl No	Name of the Organization / Individual
1	Abdul Sajeed, Advocate/Conscious Citizen, Dibrugarh
2	Aminul Haque Jwadder
3	A.N. Salehuddin Ahmed Hazarika, Chairman, Bir Bagh Hazarika Memorial Foundation & Arifa Begum, Acting Secretary, Dibrugarh Progressive Muslim Forum
4	Nazir Hussain, President, All Assam Goria Parishad, Naharkotia Anchalik Parishad & Arifa Begum, Secretary, All Assam Goria Parishad, Naharkotia Anchalik Parishad
5	Dr. Sumsun Noor Choudhury, Asst. Professor (Department of History), Nilambazar College, Karinganj
6	Dr. Sanjan Hazarika, Retd. Professor, Jorhat Engineering College
7	H. M. Farook, Goalpara
8	Karishma Begum, Guwahati
9	M. Enamul Hussain, Sonari, Saraideo
10	Minhajuddin Abulkhair Mazumder
11	Monowar Hussain, President, GMDJP, Bilasipara Zila Samity
12	Muhibul Hussain, H/No.74, F.A.A. Nagar, Six Mile, Guwahati
13	Md, Mujammil Ali
14	Atiqur Rahman Barbhuyan, President and Munim Pervez Barbhuyan, General Secretary, Society for Indigenous Muslims of Barak Valley, Shanti Path, Darandha, Khanapara, Guwahati – 22
15	Dr. Munirul Hussain, Kakojan, Jorhat
16	Fayek Azad, On behalf of the Tayebulla Family, 41, Md.Tayebulla Road, Dighalipukhuri par Guwahati-781001
17	Nekib Ahmed, Sivasagar
18	Dr. Ohi Uddin Ahmed, MA, Ph.D., Asst. Teacher, Digorkal High School, Kalaincherra, Cachar
19	Sri Raj Kumar Mech, Dihajan, Thaora, Sivasagar
20	Rafiqul Hussain, Ex-Founder Secretary, Ujani Axom Muslim Kalyan Parishad, Bokakhat
21	Samsuddin Ahmed, Zikir Artist (Radio & Doordarshan). Golaghat

- 22 Shalim Ahmed, Chariman, Mymal Development Council, Govt. of Assam
- 23 Syed Md Bakir Secretary General, Hazrat Ajan Peer Sahebor Smriti
Songrakhyan Samity, Assam, Guwahati – 22
- 24 Taheruddin Ahmedf, Jalukbari, Guwahati-781013
- 25 Nikumoni Hussain, D/o Tabiul Hussain, ACS (Retd.), Namghar Path,
Panjabari, Guwahati – 781 037
-

ANNEXURE – C

Place and Dates of Meetings held by the Sub-Committee

Date	Place
24/08/2021	In the Conference Room of GMDA, Guwahati
28/08/2021	In the Conference Room of GMDA, Guwahati
08/09/2021	In the Conference Hall of New Circuit House, Goalpara
22/09/2021	In the Conference Room of GMDA, Guwahati
28/09/2021	In the Conference Hall at Jorhat Circuit House
29/09/2021	In the Conference Hall at Sivasagar Circuit House
07/10/2021	Video Conference through Google Meet
11/11/2021	In the office Chamber of Chairman of the Sub-Committee at Hatigaon, Guwahati
30/11/2021	In the office Chamber of Chairman of the Sub-Committee at Hatigaon, Guwahati
06/12/2021	In the office Chamber of Chairman of the Sub-Committee at Hatigaon, Guwahati

- No

11.1.22
Addendum
(7)

The Hon'ble Chief Minister
Assam, Dispur

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MINISTER
ASSAM, DISPUR
EGR NO.....796395/2022.....
DATE.....14/05/2022.....

Dated Guwahati, May 14, 2022

Sub: Memoranda from Indigenous Assamese Muslim organizations for addition to the Cultural Identity Sub-Committee Report

Sir

As you are aware, reports of all the Sub-Committees set up by the Assam Government to undertake studies on various aspects of the Indigenous Assamese Muslim communities have been submitted in your august presence on April 21, 2022.

Thereafter, a few organizations representing the indigenous Assamese Muslims communities have expressed certain reservations regarding the history of the 'Goria' community as cited in the report.

These organizations (Sadou Asom Goria-Moria-Deshi Jatiya Parishad; Sadou Asom Goria Jatiya Parishad, Asomiya Muslim Parishad and Asom Goria Parishad) have since submitted memoranda addressed to you wherein they have provided the Goria history and inputs on few other issues. These may be considered as addendum to the Sub-Committees report on Cultural Identity.

I am hereby submitting these memoranda for your kind perusal.

With warm regards

Yours Sincerely

Wasbir Hussain
(WASBIR HUSSAIN)
Chairman, Sub-Committee on Cultural Identity
of Indigenous Assamese Muslims

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19/05

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Chief Minister
Assam



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জনা আহি অসম
সদৌ অসম গৰীয়া জাতীয় পৰিষদ
Sadou Asom Gorias Jatiya Parishad



Registration No. : RS/GOLA/239/G/26 of 2021-2022

(under the Society Registration Act XXI of 1860)

মুখ্য কাৰ্যালয় : মইনাপাৰা, গোলাঘাট (অসম), পিন- ৭৮৫৭০২

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MINISTER
ASSAM, DISPUR
EGR NO. 796403/2022
DATE 14/05/22

Date : 8/5/2022



The Honorable Chief Minister, Assam

Through The Chairman, Sub-Groups/Committee, Cultural Identity.

Sub : Submission of objection and suggestion on the report of Sub-Group/Committee of Cultural identity.

Sir,

Most respectfully begs to state that Sadou Asom Gorias Jatiya Parishad is an Association espousing the causes of the people of Gorias ethnic groups of Assam which is an indigenous locally grown up community of Assam. The Sadou Asom Gorias Parishad offered its gratitude to Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam for the kind steps which has been taken up for upliftment and to mitigate the grievances of the Gorias People.

We are very grateful that for the first time this Government has taken up steps in true sense for analyzing the problems and grievances of Gorias ethnic Community as well as other Indigenous Communities who profess Islam as their religion and are part of Assamese nation by constituting 7 sub-committees and we are aspiring that on the basis of the reports of those sub-committees which has already been submitted to the Government prolific steps will be taken for upliftment of the people of Gorias Community and for solving the burning problems of the Community.

The said 7 Committees including the Committee of Cultural identity submitted its report before the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam on 21/4/2022. We got a copy of the said Report and after going through the report we found some statement in the report derogatory to the Gorias people and found that the identity of the Gorias People is ignored and the Gorias people are discriminated in respect of recommendation of the Committee. Most importantly etymology of Gorias people has been wrongly presented. Therefore, Sadou Asom Gorias Jatiya Parishad raised its objection on those aspect of the Report and further begs to offer some suggestion on its behalf to the Government to include the same with the Report by modification as well as addition.

The cause of objection in some aspect and suggestion of Sadou Asom Gorias Jatiya Parishad to correct / modify the same has been presented before your honour in a separate sheets appended herewith.

(Moinul Islam)
President
State Committee
সদৌ অসম গৰীয়া জাতীয় পৰিষদ

Sincerely Your's

(Mir Afiz Ikbal Hussain)
General Secretary
State Committee
সদৌ অসম গৰীয়া জাতীয় পৰিষদ

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Sadou Asom Gorias Jatiya Parishad



"স্বদেশ, স্বজাতিব স্মৰ্ত্ত"

Registration No. : RS/GOLA/239/G/26 of 2021-2022-

(under the Society Registration Act XXI of 1880)

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Date: 8/5/2022

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Objection and Suggestions

(Objection of Sadou Asom Gorias Jatiya Parishad on some points in the Report submitted by the Sub-Group/Committee of Cultural Identity before the Government of Assam and some suggestions on behalf of the Sadou Asom Gorias Parishad for modification in some points as well as addition in the Report.)

Sadou Asom Gorias Jatiya Parishad is a registered Association espousing the causes of the people of Gorias ethnic groups of Assam which is an indigenous locally grown up community of Assam. The Sadou Asom Gorias Jatiya Parishad offered its gratitude towards Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam for the kind steps, which has been taken up for upliftment of the community and also to mitigate the grievances of the Gorias people.

We are very grateful that for the first time this Government has taken up steps in true sense for analyzing the problems and grievances of Gorias ethnic Community as well as other Indigenous Communities who profess Islam as their religion and are part of Assamese nation by constituting 7 sub-committees and we are aspiring that on the basis of the reports of those sub-committees which has already been submitted the Government will take prolific steps for upliftment of the people of Gorias Community and also for solving the burning problems of the Community.

It is in our knowledge that on 4th July 2021 the Government of Assam under the initiative of Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam called up a Meeting under the banner "Alaap Alochana" wherein 150 numbers of intellectuals, writers, educationist, doctors, cultural workers, historians and people from different walks of life representing the Gorias and other indigenous ethnic groups of Assamese community professing Islam as

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জন আহি অসম

সদৌ অসম গৰীয়া জাতীয় পৰিষদ Sadou Asom Goria Jatiya Parishad

"সদেহ, স্বজাতিৰ স্বৰ্গত"



Registration No. : RS/GOLA/239/G/26 of 2021-2022-

(under the Society Registration Act XXI of 1860)

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religion are invited. In the said Meeting the State President of Sadou Asom Goria Jatiya Parishad Mr. Moinul Islam, President of Kamrup (M) District Committee of Sadou Asom Goria Jatiya Parishad Mr. Golam Ruhul Amin Muqtadi and the President of Biswanath District Committee of Sadou Asom Goria Jatiya Parishad Mr. Aftabuddin Ahmed etc were also invited and they participated in the said Meeting. In the said meeting it is decided to constitute 7 (seven) Sub-Committees/ Group to study on Population Stabilization, Healthcare, Cultural Identity, Education, Financial Inclusion, Skill Development and Women Empowerment of Goria and other indigenous ethnic groups of Assamese people who profess Islam as their religion and to submit reports. These committees are constituted to give report on their survey so that the Government can take appropriate steps for upliftment of the communities mentioned.

Accordingly, the Hon'ble Governor Assam was pleased to issue Notification dated 31st July, 2021 vide No. WMD.62/2021/PL/7 to constitute Sub-Group / Committee of Cultural Identity along with 6 other such committees for deferent arena.

The said 7 Committees including the Committee of Cultural identity submitted its report before the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam on 21/4/2022. We got a copy of the said Report and after going through the report we found some statement in the report derogatory to the Goria people and found that the identity of the Goria People is ignored and the Goria people are discriminated in respect of recommendation of the Committee, most specifically the etymology of Goria people has been wrongly presented.

The Sadou Asom Goria Jatiya Parishad hereby raised its objection on some aspect of the Report and further begs to offer some suggestion on

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Sadou Asom Gorias Jatiya Parishad



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its behalf to the Government to include the same with the Report by modification as well as addition.

The Sadou Asom Gorias Jatiya Parishad hereby offered its view Para-wise herein below:-

1. The Sadou Asom Gorias Jatiya Parishad offered its objection on the use of the nomenclature "Indigenous Assamese Muslim Community of Assam" for identifying Gorias, Morias, Deshis and Julhas Ethnic Groups. The use of the said nomenclature will create problems in future for the said ethnic groups.

The problems of using the nomenclature " Indigenous Assamese Muslim Community of Assam:-

1. ~~The term "Indigenous Assamese Muslim" is not a historically supported word. The Gorias people are identified in History as Gorias not as Indigenous Assamese Muslim, therefore the Gorias people will lose its ethnic identity due to the use of the term "Indigenous Assamese Muslim" which is not the purpose of the Government while constituted the said Committees.~~
2. ~~The Assamese society is based on language and ethnicity and not on religion. Therefore, the use of the word "Indigenous Assamese Muslim" will divide the Assamese People on religious line which is dangerous for the Assamese Society.~~
3. The Constitution of India in its preamble stated as follows "WE THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to Constitute India into a [SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC]. As the Constitution of India identified the Country as Secular, therefore, by substituting

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Sadou Asom Goria Jatiya Parishad



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Ethnic Identity no community can be tagged with a religious identity and if done the same is ultra-virus to Constitution. *That apart in its several Judgments, the Hon'ble Apex Court has already clarified and observed that the State cannot compel a citizen to disclose his/her religious affiliation. Therefore terming the Goria people as Indigenous Assamese Muslim is an act of substituting historically defined ethnic Identity with religious identity which is ultra-virus of Constitution as the Goria people are identified on the basis of its religion in the report instead of ethnicity. On the basis of religious identity the Government cannot implement any welfare benefits and cannot provide any rights and protection to a certain people except the rights envisaged under Article 25 to 30 of the Constitution of India. Therefore, the recommendation which is proposed by the Committee of Cultural Identity cannot sustain in judicial scrutiny if ever placed before the Court of law for scrutiny because of the identity which is proposed for Goria and other ethnic groups in the report which is totally base on religion.*

4. Who is Assamese is also a matter of hot debate in Assamese Society. Clause 6 of Assam Accord speaks about providing constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people. To implement the said clause the Government of Assam Constituted a Committee for Implementation of Clause 6 of Assam Accord. The said Committee also entrusted with the duty to define who are Assamese. The said Committee has already submitted its Report to the Government. Although, the said report is not made public

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Sadou Asom Goria Jatiya Parishad

"স্বদেশ, স্বজাতিৰ স্বার্থত"

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till date, but from the News reports circulated we have apprehension that 1951 will be make as cut of date to identify Assamese people and in such case every people who is an inhabitant of Assam prior to said cut of date will be included in the definition of Assamese people. In that case the term "Assamese Muslim" will be vulnerable against the influx of those Migrated Muslim who came to Assam from 1826 to 1951 as they also become Assamese in legal words and then the Assamese Muslim word became as a substitution of the word Muslim minority which will have a dangerous consequence for Goria people.

5. The word Indigenous has not been yet defined by the law in India. Therefore, the use of the word Indigenous Assamese Muslim to defined Goria and other people always vulnerable to legal suit and in such case because of using the said word/ term the Goria people will suffer severely.

6. Furthermore, although there are some linguistic and cultural similarity between the Goria and Moria Ethnic groups, but there are genetic differences between these two ethnic groups. So far Deshi and Julha ethnic groups are concerned there are no similarity in language, culture and human genes of these two groups of people with the Goria. Therefore, they cannot make up a group with a single identity. Furthormore, clubbing them together in a single identity because of their religious affiliation is unconstitutional.

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Suggestion:-

Instead of the term " Indigenous Assamese Muslim" the Sadou Asom Goria Jatiya Parishad suggested / requested for identifying the Goria , Moria , Deshi and Julha people with their historically supported ethnic identity such as Goria, Moria, Deshi and Julha.

Indigenous Assamese Muslims : A brief History:-

Under the said headline in the report a brief history of the Goria, Moria , Deshi and Julha community has been projected. In the said report, so far the Goria Ethnic Community is concerned it is projected that the word Goria and Muslim is inter changeable which is not correct. History tells us that the existence of Goria people in Assam is far more before the advent of Islam in Assam. Furthermore, it is seen that in the report it is projected that the word Goria is derived from the word Gauda which is the name of the Guada Empire, an ancient Hindu kingdom of India now in West Bengal. The word Goria derived from an Assamese Word "Goria Pora". In the History of Assam existence of Goria people found in the year 1228 when Tai Prince Chaulong Chu-Ka-Phaa put his foot in Assam's soil after crossing the Patkai mountain when he encountered a man named Chengsai Goria ['Ahomr Din' page No. 28, Hiteswar Barbarua]. Chengsai Goria is not a muslim therefore, it is not correct to say that some people converted to Islam and that conversion gave them the identity of Goria.

Under the said Headline it is seen that under the umbrella of the word " Indigenous Assamese Muslim" the early Muslim of pre Colonial Assam are divided into 5 Sub-Groups which are Syed , Goriya, Moriya , Deshi and Julha under the sub-headline "below are brief sketches of the five Assamese Muslim sub-groups" and thereby a short history of the communities are narrated. Under clause (b) of the said sub-headline the

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definition and etymology of Gorias people are described. The Sadou Asom Gorias Jatiya Parishad vehemently objected the documentation made under clause (b) regarding the Gorias people which is derogatory towards the Gorias people. In the said documentation it is projected that the most of the Gorias people are descended of the prisoner of war and many of them belongs to Gaur and for which they are called Gorias and further in the third paragraph of Clause (b) it is stated that several people were ostracized from the society if they were involved in extra-marital relations or if they got married against societal norms. Several such people used to settle down in a new place and set up a new village. Those villages were known as Gorias Gaon. Thereby it is trying to project that apart from coming from Gaur second portion of Gorias people are those who are social ostracized due to their bad works. By this definition and documentation the status of Gorias people are derogated. Such documentations are not corrected. The descendent of Prisoner of war are identified as Morias or Morias and the said facts are narrated in paragraph 2 of page NO.7 of the report. Therefore, in this regards the view of the Committee contradicted each other.

Furthermore, it is found that during the Ahom Rules many Gorias people are given high post in the Ahom Court some such Gorias's are Rupai Dadhora, Bagh Hazarika, Ramjan Kha Hiloidhari Boruah and many more. Socially ostracized people cannot be given such patronage as the people did not accept them in the society. Therefore, the definition of socially ostracized community does not found grounds on the basis of social atmosphere of that time.

In this regard the Sadou Asom Gorias Jatiya Parishad after analyzing the social atmosphere of the time as well as after going through many historical accounts documented etymology, history and contribution

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of Goria people in the Assamese society which is published in its mouth piece "Chongsai" in its first edition and which is also found in Wikipedia of Assamese version which is uploaded by the Sadou Asom Goria Jatiya Parishad. We beg to place the same before the Committee for replacing the same with the documentation in Clause (b).

Etymology, History of Goria people documented by Sadou Asom Goria Jatiya Parishad:

GORIA PEOPLE OF ASSAM

Goria (English : Goria) is an indigenous community in Assam. The behaviour, culture, traditions of this community is not different from other indigenous communities of Assam. Apart from the religious aspect, no Muslim in India and the world has any cultural, linguistic and traditional similarities with the Gorias.

GORIA

Total Population

Regions with significant populations

India (Assam)

Language: Assamese

Religion: • Islam (Sunni) predominantly, a small portion profess Christianity.

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Related ethnic groups:-

Ahom, Moran, Matak, Chutia, Deori, Koch, Kalita, Kachari, Rabha, Garo, Miching, Deori, Maria etc.

Ethomology: - "Goria" is an Assamese word. According to modern Assamese dictionary, the word Goria means to be excluded, curve improperly, unable to improve or developed, rice which is not frying well or karya, etc. Chandrakanta dictionary and Saraighat dictionary published by Gauhati University explains in the same way. It is also interpreted in the Hemkokh as "Yovan" or "Muslim", but it is explained therein as, "there is no similarity of opinion to the essence of this word. Some say that because of Mohammed Ghauris companion, that name is derived. According to some, the king (Swargadeo) of Assam brought some Muslim Tailors from Gaur Country, who were called as Gaudiya by the local people and from that word the word "Goria" come out. However, the meaning of the word Goria in the Hemkosh does not match that of other Assamese dictionaries. Murshidabad and Malda district of West Bengal are the present geographical area which once constitutes the ancient Gaur Country or State. The kings and subject of that Gaur Country were all Hindus and the existence of the said Gaur Country ceased to exist before the advent of Islam Assam in the year 1206. Therefore, the views put forward in Hemkosh that the Goria Islamic Community of Assam came from Gaur Country has no Historical and scientific basis. Some practical

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sentences supported by the dictionary meaning of the word “Goria” have been prevalent in Assamese Society, such as Goria rice, Pithaguri Goria, Goria Pora etc.

History: - The word “Goria” for the first time introduced in Assam’s history in the 13th Century. When the Tai Prince Choulung Chu-Ka-Phaa set foot on the Soumarpeeth of erstwhile Assam after crossing the Patkai mountain, he met a man of Goria community named Chengsai on the way and settled him under his administration. Chengsai’s family later on known as Bakatiyal. Chengsai Goria was not a Muslim. This is mentioned in “ Abomr Din” written by Hiteshwar Barbarun at page 28. Earlier the Gorias belongs from various ethnic groups of Assam like Moran, Matak, Barahi, Chutia, Koch, Ahom, Kachari , Mesh etc. In ancient time Soumarpeeth was home to various ethnic groups like Chutia, Borahai, Moran, Matak, Kachari etc. and all of them practice Tantrik religious practices. Later on one by one these ethnic groups converted to classical Hinduism when Hinduism expanded in Assam. But inspite of that some people in one village remained in a position to worship the nature and practice their earlier faith as before and did not converted to Hinduism as their fellow villagers did. Gradually those people became excluded in their own society. As a result they left their residences and settled near their former villages or far away. The people of their former villages called them “Goria Pora” (people who are excluded) and the word “Goria Pora” (People

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who are excluded) gradually converted to the word "Goria" which gradually became used to understand a particular population. Initially the Gorias neither practiced Islamic faith nor were they Muslim. They were the people who did not converted to classical Hinduism and did not assimilated with the *Aryanization* process, they are the people who were excluded from the society and locally came to known as Goria pora i.e. people who are excluded. But later on in advent of various Islamic Sufi saint to the land of Assam, these excluded Assamese people (Goria Pora) being attracted with their teaching, converted to Islam. A large number of Goria people converted to Islam especially being attracted by the Islamic message preached by Azan Fakir (Shah Milan) a 17th Century Sufi saint came from Baghdad , present day Iraq. This Sufi Saint - Azan Pir Saheb has made an outstanding contribution to Assamese culture by creating devotional songs called "Jikir" and "Jari". This is how Goria ethnic community swells from "Goria pora" (People who are excluded) people in Assam. Although earlier Goria's were not Muslim , but presently almost all of the people of Goria Ethnic groups practiced Islamic faith with some exception who practice Christianity and Hinduism due to inter religious marriage and other caus , one example is the Pastor of Panbazar Bepstist Church. Being attracted with the message propagated by Sufi Saints many local people from Hindu faith were also converted to Islam. Those who converted to Islam from Hinduism were expelled from their village

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society. Those newly converted people also assimilated with the Gorias people.

The Ahom Swargadeo (King) brought many Muslim artisan and people skilled in various field to Assam for doing various works. Those people assimilated with the Gorias people by establishing marital relations. Apart from that, Sufi saints who came to Assam at different times also get married to local girls of Assam and stay in Assam. Their descendent also assimilated with the local Gorias community at one point of time. Many of the descendents of those sufi Saints who came to Assam use the word " Syed " before their names and therefore they are also known as " Syed". In addition Ahom Swargadeo (King) Rudra Singha brought eight houses of people from different places to Assam for improving the Technical aspect in the kingdom. Those eight houses of people are – 1. Persipariya , 2. Akharkatiya, 3. Shilakatiya, 4. Gunakatiya, 5. Khanikar, 6. Tailor, 7. Negaria and 8. Jolha (Not the tea tribo muslim Jolha). Although these people were brought to Assam for improvement in technical field, but later on they were assimilated with the local Gorias community through Goriazation and thus become an essential part of Gorias Ethnic community. 90% people of Gorias ethnic groups are people who converted to Islam after being excluded (Gorias Pora) from different local ethnic group of Assam and the remaining 10% are from the families brought to Assam for various reasons during the days of Ahom Swargadeos (Kings).

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Like Soumarpeeth (Upper Assam), the lower Assam is also one of the habitations of the Gorias people. A large part of Lower Assam including Guwahati was under the rule of Delhi Sultanate and Mughal empire for nearly 70 years. At that time, a large number of Sufi saints came to that part of Assam. Attracted by the religious messages they preached a large number of locals converted to Islam. For Example Kalitakuchi village near Hajo is one such converted village. They were called locally as Gorias. This is mentioned in the book named "Asomiya Manuhor Itihash" written by Dr. Nagen Saikia, former President of Assam Sahitya Sabha. Hazrat Giasuddin Auliyas Mausoleum (Mazar) and Puwa Macca mosque of Hajo were built during that period. Another example is the Mausoleum (mazar) of Hazrat Rangman Aulia located between Haldhibari village and Dandua village of Morigaon district. This Mausoleum is located in the midst of a completely indigenous Hindu settlement. One thing can be inferred from that, many tribal and non-tribal people of that area converted to Islam when they came in close proximity to Sufis.

Demography and population:

Goria people mainly living in the District of Tinsukia , Dibrugarh, Sivsagar, Charaideo, Jorhat, Golaghat, Nagaon, Lakhimpur , Biswanath, Sonitpur, Darrang, Morigaon, Kamrup , Kamrup (M), Nalbari, Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Baksa and Goalpara. All these districts are situated in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam. The Gorias are majority among the Muslim

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in Golaghat, Darrang, Jorhat, Sivsagar, Charaideu, Dibrugarh, Nalbari and they have a sizable population in Kamrup, Kamrup (M), Morigaon, Nagaon, Sonitpur.

Language: - Goria is an indigenous community of Assam and they all are speaking Assamese language. Goria people are one of the essential parts of Assamese speaking people of Assam.

Notable people: The Goria's have a remarkable contribution towards the Assamese society and Assamese national identity. Even though the Goria's are Muslim, during the Mughal invasion of Assam they armed themselves against the Mughals in the interest of their country and their own country man, although the Mughals practiced the same religion as like that of the Goria's i.e. Islam. Because of this Character of the Goria's, Sahabuddin Talis, who accompanied the Mughal General Mir Jumla in his invasion of Assam being annoyed, referred the Gorias Muslim in their name only. Some of the notable Goria are -

Gendhela Goria - The manufacturer of the biggest Ahom Cannon Ripunjay.

Ramjan Kha Hiloidhari Barua - The last General of Ahom Kingdom, Died in the battle of Mohgar , 1822.

Sultan Goria - Who tried to resist Mir Jumla, the Mughal general on his capture of Gorgaon was a Goria people.

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Bagh Hazarikia @ Ismail Siddique , Laidhan Kha, Bhakuwa Goria, Petua Goria – Warrior who fought the battle of Saraighat. Sheikh Farmud Ali and Bahadur Gaonbura @ Bahdil- two main conspirator of 1957 mutiny in Assam.

Abdul Majid- The first Assamese judge of High Court, he is the first Assamese person elevated to judge at Calcutta High Court.

Dr Moidul Islam Bora- The first Assamese to receive the title of Doctorate.

Nawab Sahidur Rahman - The only Assamese martyr of Azad Hind Fauj.

Fakruddin Ali Ahmed- Former President of India and the only Assamese to get that top post of the nation.

Colonel. Jalnur Ali Ahmed- The first Assamese person to get the degree of M.D. and the father of Fakruddin Ali Ahmed.

Muzzamil Hoque- The first martyr of Medium movement of 1972,

Nurul Amin- The ex-president of All India Football Federation and the only person who led Assam in Cricket and football in two major events i.e. Ranji Trophy and Santos Trophy

Syeda Anowara Taimur- The one and only female Chief Minister of Assam,

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Begum Mofida Ahmed · The first female Member of Parliament (MP) elected from Assam from Jorhat Constituency:

Alvis Ali Hazarikia :- The first swimmer of North East India who cross the English channel.

Sir Sayed Sadullah :- The first Prime Minister of Assam and the only Assamese of Constituent Assembly.

Sk. Chand Mohammad :- The former speaker of Assam Legislative assembly

Four Goria persons also elected as president of Assam Sahitiya Sabha

Moulana Mofizuddin Ahmed Hazarikia · Golaghat Session (1930)

DR. Moidul Islam Bora · Jorhat Session (1940)

Syed Abdul Malik – Abhayapuri Session (1977)

Imran Shah – Barpeta Session (2013)

Contribution towards the field of Education:-

At the advent of British when they started to propagate modern education in Assam and established schools, the Goria people also anticipated in such process and establishes many schools in their localities in those earlier days. Some of those schools are Naharani L.P. School established

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at village Naharani, Dergaon, Golaghat in the year 1875, Jorhat Muktab Adarsha L.P. School established at Jorhat town in the year 1896 and Ghahigaon Government Junior Basic School established at Ghahigaon of Sootea, Biswanath in the year 1889 are most notable.

OBJECTIONS REGARDING SEPARATING SYED FROM GORIA

Furthermore, in the said documentation the people with the Surname Syed has been shown as separate Sub-Group which is not supported by history. The Syed are an essential part of Goria Community [Maniram Dewans Book]. That apart during the glorious Ahom reign, the Assamese Syed were called/termed as "Goria Gohain", which further itself solidify the motion that the Assamese Syed is an integral part of Goria Ethnic group. It is undisputable that the Syed are the descendent of Sufi saints who came to Assam. In this regards it is pertinent to mention here that hundreds of Sufi saints came to Assam and many to present day Bangladesh i.e. erstwhile East Bengal, to profess Islam. They married girl from the locality. Most of the saint in Brahmaputra Valley married Assamese Girls of Goria Origin and thereby there descendent are assimilated with Goria in general and Assamese in particular. But the Sufi saint who went to Barak Valley and Bangladesh they married Bengal Girls and their descendent identify themselves as Bengali and many of them now migrated to Brahmaputra Valley during colonial era. Therefore, all Syed are not Assamese and they does not make up one ethnic groups

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with single culture, rather they are separate groups with different culture and identity and the Assamese Syed's are a part of Goria ethnic groups like the Bengali Syeds are part of Bengali community. Therefore, showing them as separate sub-group will open a flood gate to those migrant Syed in the fold of Assamese Syed and which will ultimately hamper the Assamese Syed and they will usurpe the rights of Assamese Syed as now happening under the umbrella of Minority. Therefore, Sadou Asom Goria Jatiya Parishad opposed the classification of Syed as separate sub-groups and suggested to classify them as an integral part of Goria Ethnic group.

GORIA IS NOT A SUB-GROUP

Furthermore, the Goria is not a sub-Group, rather it is a full fledge main ethnic groups with distinct culture. Therefore, in place of sub-group, the Goria may kindly be documented as main group in the Report by modification.

Contribution of nation Building:-

Under the said headline the contribution of Goria and other communities mentioned in the Report has been narrated. The Sadou Asom Goria Jatiya Parishad has no objection on the said narration as the same are historically correct documentation of facts. But the Sadou Asom Goria Jatiya Parishad suggested inclusion of name of Nawab Sahidur Rahman (belong from Goria ethnic group) the only Assamese martyr of Azad Hind

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Fouj and Ramjan Kha Hilaidhari Barooah (belongs from Goria Ethnic groups) the Assamese General who fought and died in the battle of Mahgarh in the year 1822 fighting the Burmese occupier and whose grave is lying near by 37 National Highway near Numaligarh. And further suggested to use the ethnicity of the people mentioned therein in place of the term Assamese Muslim.

An Integral Part of Assamese Society and Culture:-

The Sadou Asom Goria Jatiya Parishad supported the documentation under the said headline in the Report submitted by the Sub-group/ Committee of Cultural Identity.

ASSAMESE MUSLIMS: PRESENT STATUS & CONCERNS:-

The Sadou Asom Goria Jatiya Parishad agreed with the view and concern express by the Sub-committee. The only thing is that we are opposing the word Assamese Muslim and rather we suggest using individual ethnic identity of the community.

THEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF VIEWS/ SUGGESTIONS FROM STAKEHOLDERS RECEIVED DURING MEETINGS WITH COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND WRITTEN SUBMISSION:-

From Annexure B we found that written Submissions/ recommendations of 25 individual and organization are considered. But from the list we

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found that suggestions of 4 person/ organization from Barak valley who are Bengali are taken into account which is very dangerous. Those people are not stakeholders of Goria and other people for whom this report is prepared and this Committee and the report submitted by it is not included the people they represent. Therefore, we have doubt on their suggestion the etymology and History of Goria people are derogated. Hence we oppose their suggestion.

That apart we found that in the views and suggestion although specific recommendation has been made for Moriya, Deshi and Julha People as separate ethnic groups, but it is matter of regret no specific recommendations for Goria people has been made. Therefore, we requested to include our recommendation in the report and thereby mitigate the grievances of the Goria people.

Recommendation of the Committee: (Suggestion of Sadou Asom Goria Jatiya Parishad)

A. Recommendation with Direct Government Involvement

1. Recognition of indigenous Assamese Muslims as an Indigenous Assamese-Speaking Community of Assam:

We opposed the term Assamese Muslim to identify Goria, Moria, Deshi and Julha with a Single Identity. All of them are separate and distinct ethnic groups having own culture and ethnic base,

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therefore, these groups cannot be identified with a single identity which will create problem in future as mentioned herein above. Rather we suggest identifying these communities with their distinct ethnic identity like Gorias, Morias Deshi etc.

2. Political Representation :-

(a). Deshi People already have representation in Legislative Assembly as there are many Constituencies wherein Deshi People are in majority. But Gorias people don't have any such representation. *Therefore, representation with the name Assamese Muslim will not help the Gorias people, therefore recommendation for political representation should be based on ethnic identity and in that case all the ethnic groups mentioned in the report will get fair representation in political arena.*

(b) Regarding clause (b) We are agreed but the only suggestion we put forward is that representation in claimed Legislative Council should be ethnicity base, not with the term Assamese Muslim Community otherwise there is a fear that marginalized and under privilege community of the groups mentioned in the Report will be deprived of from fair representation.

3. A. Separate Directorate/ Authority for Assamese Muslims:-

We are agreed with clause (b) and (c) and so far clause (a) is concern we suggested instead of Assamese Muslim the

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Directorate can be named with the ethnic identity of the Community i.e. like Directorate of Gorias, Morias and Deshi people for which the said Directorate is proposed to establish and further we suggest to make separate branches for each and every community of the schedule of the report.

4. Preservation of memory of Azaan Pir:-

We are agreed with the recommendation of the committee.

5. Preservation and promotion of Zikir, Jari and other folk songs:-

We are agreed with the recommendation

6. Ali Mech and Preservation of Deshi Culture :-

We are agreed / with the recommendation

7. Preservation of memory of Bagh Hazarika:-

We are agreed with the recommendation.

8. Census of Assamese Muslim Community:-

We are agreed with the recommendation, but oppose the term Assamese Muslim and we suggested that the census should be made on the basis of ethnicity of each groups and the people may be identified with their ethnicity not with the term Assamese Muslim.

9. Preservation of Historical Sites and Monuments :-

We are agreed with the recommendation.

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10. Preservation and promotion of Traditional Dress & Cuisine :-

We are agreed with the recommendation

11. Establishment of a school of Islamic Learning :-

We are agreed with the recommendation.

12. Popularizing prominent Assamese Muslim personalities:-

This is a good suggestion, we just want to suggest that in the name of Nawab Sahidur Rahman and Ramjan Kha Hiloidhari Barooah Sodou Asom Goria Jatiya Parishad has offered two awards in its establishment date on 28th January, 2022. Our Request is that the Government may take up these awards and take initiative to give the said awards by itself.

The Grave of Ramjan Kha Hiloidhari Barooah is lying at Numaligarh near 37 National Highway. We are suggested to send a proposal to the Government to erect a monument in the place and reserve the Grave and declared the same as historical monument and further include syllabus on him in the school books.

Nawab Sahidur Rahman is the only Assamese martyr of Azad Hind Fouj. We are suggesting for a proposal to Government to make a place for his portrait in Assam legislative Assembly and further include a syllabus on him in the school books.

মূল দাবী- সুধীয়া জৰীপৰ দ্বাৰা চিনাক্ত কৰি ৰাজনৈতিক, অৰ্থনৈতিক আৰু শৈক্ষিক ক্ষেত্ৰত সংৰক্ষণৰ ব্যৱস্থা কৰা

০.৪



জয়া অহি অসম
সদৌ অসম গৰীয়া জাতীয় পৰিষদ
Sadou Asom Goria Jatiya Parishad



Registration No.: RS/GOLA/239/G/26 of 2021-2022

(under the Society Registration Act XXI of 1860)

মুখ্য কাৰ্যালয় : মইনাপাৰা, গোলাঘাট (অসম), পিন- ৭৮৫৭০২

মাণ্ডলিক কাৰ্যালয় : মিছপুৰ, কামৰূপ- ৭৮১০১৯ আৰু চতিয়া, বিন্ধ্যনাথ- ৭৮৪১৭৫ আৰু মৰিগাঁও টাউন, মৰিগাঁও- ৭৮২১০৫ (অসম)

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13. Preservation of Language and Dialect:-

We are agreed with the recommendation

14. Institution of Higher Education may be set up in Assamese Muslim dominated areas:-

We are agreed with the recommendation

15. Benefits for Julhas under Teac Tribe schemes :-

We are agreed with the recommendation

16. Uplift of Moriya Community :

We are agreed with the recommendation.

17. Revival of Brass metal Industry :-

We are agreed with the recommendation

18. Freeing of Wakf property from encroachers:-

We are agreed with the recommendation.

B. Recommendations that the Government may Assist:-

Under the said headline 4 recommendation are given we supported all recommendation.

After perusal of the Report of Committee of Cultural Identity we found that for Moriya's , Deshi's and Julhas separate recommendations are made on ethnic lines, but no such recommendation has been made separately for Goria People . Hereby we suggest some recommendations

মূল দাবী- সুকীয়া জৰীপৰ দ্বাৰা চিনাক্ত কৰি ৰাজনৈতিক, অৰ্থনৈতিক আৰু শৈক্ষিক ক্ষেত্ৰত সংৰক্ষণৰ ব্যৱস্থা কৰা

(33c "A)



জয়া আহি অসম
সদৌ অসম গৰীয়া জাতীয় পৰিষদ
Sadou Asom Gorias Jatiya Parishad



"স্বদেশ, স্বজাতিৰ স্বার্থত"

Registration No. : RS/GOLA/239/G/26 of 2021-2022-

(under the Society Registration Act XXI of 1860)

মুখ্য কাৰ্যালয় : মইনাপাৰা, গোলাঘাট (অসম), পিন- ৭৮৫৭০২

স্থানিক কাৰ্যালয় : সিহপুৰ, কামৰূপ- ৭৮১০১৯ আৰু চতিয়া, নিখনাথ- ৭৮৪১৭৫ আৰু মৰিগাঁও টাউন, মৰিগাঁও- ৭৮২১০৫ (অসম)

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for consideration and hope those recommendations may be included in the report.

Preservation of Gorias culture and rights:-

- a. Gorias Culture and identity be preserved.
- b. Reservation be made for Gorias students in Government Colleges and schools as well as in professional field,
- c. Landless Gorias people may be allotted with land.
- d. Job opportunity shall be created for Gorias people.
- e. The Gorias people living in Tribal Belt and Block shall be given political as well as land rights.
- f. Foreigners cases registered against Gorias people shall be withdrawn.
- g. The word "D" inserted against the name of Gorias People (although few in numbers) in the electoral Roll shall be deleted.
- h. Ancient Mosque, Dargah, and other monument shall be protected.
- e. The Gorias Community shall be granted OBC status.

মূল দাবী- সুকীয়া জৰীপৰ দ্বাৰা চিনাক্ত কৰি ৰাজনৈতিক, অৰ্থনৈতিক আৰু শৈক্ষিক ক্ষেত্ৰত সংৰক্ষণৰ ব্যৱস্থা কৰা

(34)



ভাৱ অহি অসম
সদৌ অসম গৰীয়া জাতীয় পৰিষদ
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Registration No.: RS/GOLA/239/G/26 of 2021-2022

(under the Society Registration Act XXI of 1880)

মুখ্য কাৰ্যালয় : মইনাপাৰা, গোলাঘাট (অসম), পিন- ৭৮৫৭০২

মাওলিক কাৰ্যালয় : বিহপুৰ, কামৰূপ- ৭৮১০১৯ আৰু চতিয়া, দিছপুৰ- ৭৮৪১৭৫ আৰু মৰিগাঁও টাউন, মৰিগাঁও- ৭৮২১০৫ (অসম)

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(M. Anant Islam)
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 সদৌ অসম গৰীয়া জাতীয় পৰিষদ
 তা: ৪/৫/২০২২

সম্পাদক
 সদৌ অসম গৰীয়া জাতীয় পৰিষদ
 তা: ৪/৫/২০২২

মূল দাবী- সুকীয়া জৰীপৰ দ্বাৰা চিনাক্ত কৰি ৰাজনৈতিক, অৰ্থনৈতিক আৰু শৈক্ষিক ক্ষেত্ৰত সংৰক্ষণ ব্যৱস্থা কৰা

প্ৰতি,

মাননীয় মুখ্যমন্ত্রী, অসম চৰকাৰ
দিশপুৰ, গুৱাহাটী-৬

তাৰিখ- ০৫/০৫/২২

বিষয়: অসমীয়া মুছলিম পৰিষদ, অসম আৰু অসম গৰিয়া পৰিষদে
নিৰ্দ্ধাৰণ কৰা গৰিয়া তথা অসমীয়া মুছলিমৰ সংজ্ঞা।

গৰিয়া শব্দ : গৰিয়া এটা প্ৰাচীন অসমীয়া শব্দ। ইয়াৰ অভিধানিক অৰ্থ - বাদ পৰা, বৰ্জিত, এলাগী বা নিম্নমানব। বয়বস্তু আৰু সমাজৰ এটা গোটৰ লোকক বুজাবলৈ অসমীয়া (খলুৱা) লোকে প্ৰাচীন কালৰে পৰা ধাৰাবাহিকভাৱে গৰিয়া শব্দটোৰ প্ৰয়োগ কৰি আহিছে। যেনে- পিঠাগুৰিৰ গৰিয়া, হালধীৰ গৰিয়া, মাহ-মচুৰ আদি শস্যৰ গৰিয়া, দুবাৰ গৰিয়া আৰু গেঙ্কেলা গৰিয়া, গৰিয়া চুবা, গৰিয়া পাৰা, মাহমুদ গৰিয়া আদি। অসমীয়াৰ বাহিৰে অন্য ভাষাৰ লোকৰ মুখত গৰিয়া শব্দৰ প্ৰচলন প্ৰায় শূণ্য।

গৰিয়া লোকৰ উৎপত্তি :- প্ৰাচীন অসমৰ ধৰ্ম বিশ্বাস, ৰীতি-নীতি, পৰম্পৰা, ঐতিহ্যৰ ৰোষত পৰি অসমীয়া (খলুৱা) লোক সমাজ বা বংশ-পৰিয়ালৰ বান্ধোন /সংহতিৰ পৰা কিছু লোক নিজ নিজ বংশ, পৰিয়াল বা সমাজ গোটৰ পৰা সমাজচ্যুত হ'বলগীয়া হৈছিল। এনেদৰে সমাজচ্যুত লোকক বুজাবলৈ মূল সমাজৰ লোকসকলে গৰিয়া শব্দটো ব্যৱহাৰ কৰিছিল। সমাজচ্যুত অৰ্থাৎ গৰিয়া লোকসকলে পাচলৈ মূল অসমীয়া গাঁও বা চুবাৰ পৰা কিছু দূৰত্বৰ ব্যৱধান ৰাখি ঘৰ বান্ধি বসতি কৰিবলৈ ধৰে। তেনেদৰে গৰিয়াপাৰা, গৰিয়া চুবাৰ আৰম্ভ হ'ল। মুঠতে খলুৱা ভাষা (অসমীয়া), কৃষ্টি-সংস্কৃতি, পৰম্পৰাৰ অধিকাৰী প্ৰাচীন অমুছলিম সমাজৰ পৰা গৰিয়া সমাজখন সৃষ্টি হয়। সেই কাৰণে গৰিয়াসকলে বসবাসৰ নিৰ্দিষ্ট বা এক চেতিয়া বাসস্থানৰ অঞ্চল নাই, স্বতন্ত্ৰ ভাষা, কৃষ্টি, সংস্কৃতি, পৰম্পৰা বা ইতিহাস নাই। মূল অসমীয়া (অমুছলিম) লোকৰ ভাষা, কৃষ্টি, সংস্কৃতি, পৰম্পৰা, খাদ্যাভাষ আদিয়ে গৰিয়া লোকৰো ভাষা, কৃষ্টি, সংস্কৃতি, পৰম্পৰা আদি। মূল অসমীয়া সমাজৰ বসতি অঞ্চলেই হ'ল গৰিয়া সকলৰো বসতিস্থান। উদাহৰণ স্বৰূপে খলুৱা অসমীয়া শিপিনী সকলে নিজ হাতে তৈয়াৰ কৰা ফুলাম গামোছাখন আজিও গৰিয়া তথা অসমীয়া মুছলিম সকলৰো আদৰ, সম্ভাষণৰ প্ৰতীক। গৰিয়া-অসমীয়া ভাষা, কৃষ্টি, সংস্কৃতি, পৰম্পৰা বা ঐতিহ্যৰ ওপৰত ভিত্তি কৰি সৃষ্টি হোৱা এটা প্ৰাচীন সমাজ গোট বা সম্প্ৰদায়। গৰিয়া সমাজখন ৰাতিৰ ভিতৰতে গঢ়া সমাজ নহয়। গুৰুত্বপূৰ্ণ কথাটো হ'ল - গৰিয়া সকল উৎপত্তিৰ নৃতাত্ত্বিক উৎস অসমীয়া ভাষিক খলুৱা অমুছলিম লোক সকল।

ধৰ্ম :- প্ৰায় সমস্ত গৰিয়া লোক ইছলামধৰ্মী যদিও অসমত প্ৰথমজন মুছলিম লোকে পদাৰ্পণ কৰাৰ শ শ বছৰ পূৰ্বে পৰা গৰিয়া সমাজখনে বসবাস কৰি আহিছে। চমুকৈ ক'বলৈ গ'লে আজান পীৰ (চাহেব) যুগৰ শ শ বছৰ পূৰ্বে গৰিয়া সমাজখন অমুছলিম হিচাবে জীৱন-যাপন কৰি আহিছে। আজান পীৰ (চাহেব) প্ৰমুখ্যে মহান পীৰ পয়গম্বৰ সকলৰ সান্নিধ্য পায় কালক্ৰমত সমস্ত গৰিয়াই ইছলাম ধৰ্মত দীক্ষিত হয়। উল্লেখ্য যে বৰ্তমানৰ গৰিয়া সমাজখন ইছলামলৈ ধৰ্মান্তৰিত নহয়। যিহেতু ইছলাম গ্ৰহণৰ পূৰ্বে গৰিয়া সকল হিন্দু ৰীতি-নীতি, পৰম্পৰা, ধৰ্মবিশ্বাসৰ পৰা বঞ্চিত হৈ জীৱন-যাপন কৰা লোক আছিল।

অসমীয়া মুছলিম :- যিসকল অসমীয়া (গৰিয়া) লোকে ইছলাম গ্ৰহণ কৰিলে তেওঁলোকেই পিছলৈ অসমীয়া মুছলিম বুলি সামাজিক মৰ্যদা পাবলৈ ধৰিলে। অসমীয়া মুছলিম আৰু গৰিয়ালোকৰ সাদৃশ্যৰ হাৰ প্ৰায় ৯৯%। সেইবাবেই গৰিয়া বা অসমীয়া মুছলিম সকল অসমীয়া জাতিৰ মূলসূঁতিৰ অবিচ্ছেদ্য অংগ।

Ali

বহমচা আলী
সভাপতি

অসমীয়া মুছলিম পৰিষদ, অসম

৭০৮৬৯৭৯২৬৬

President
Asomiya Muslim Parishad, Asom

Date.....
05-05-22

Abdul Hamid

আব্দুল হামিদ
সভাপতি

অসম গৰিয়া পৰিষদ

৯৪৩৫৯০৬০৮০

০৫/০৫/২২

(১০ জনগণের মতামত সংগ্রহের জন্য)

(32)

Head office - Hailegeon, Anupam Nagar (H. No. 2), Ghy-38
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Ref. No.

Date 25/02/2016

গোঁড়া উন্নয়ন পরিষদে সভাপতি পদে নিয়োগ
করা হওক

গোঁড়া উন্নয়ন

সভাপতি পদে নিয়োগ

করা হওক

গোঁড়া উন্নয়ন পরিষদে সভাপতি পদে নিয়োগ

করা হওক

গোঁড়া উন্নয়ন পরিষদে সভাপতি পদে নিয়োগ

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গোঁড়া উন্নয়ন পরিষদে সভাপতি পদে নিয়োগ

To

Sjt. Tarun Gogoi
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Assam
Assam Secretariat, Dispur, Guwahati-6

Sub : Prayer for Chairman appointment of Proposal
Goria Dev. Council, Assam.

Sir,

We, the Goria Development Council Demand Committee kindly request you to consider to appoint Abdul Hamid to the post of Chairman, Goria Development Council, Assam. Sri Abdul Hamid is the president of All Assam Goria Youth Council and Goria development Council Demand Committee.

In this regard your kind action is highly desired.

With regards,

Abdul Ahmed
Abdul Ahmed
President
Goria Dev. Council
Demand Committee

Rahamsha All
Rahamsha All
Vice-President
Goria Dev. Council
Demand Committee

*Minister
Place
Chief Minister
Assam*



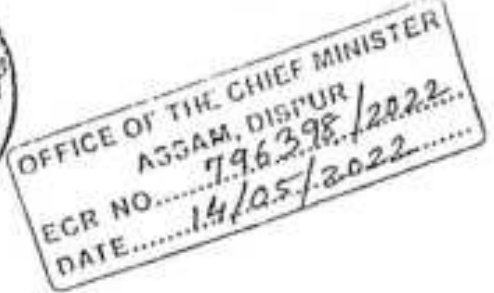
সদৌ অসম গৰিয়া-মৰিয়া-দেশী জাতীয় পৰিষদ
SADOU ASOM GORIA · MORIA · DESHI JATIYA PARISHAD

(An Indigenous Assamese Muslims Body)

Head Office : Hatigaon Chariali, Guwahati- 38

Ref No: Mem/Chairman/cul sub commi
GMOJP/7/5/2022

Date: 14.05.22



To
The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam,
Dispur, Guwahati-6.

Through Mr Wasbir Hussain, Chairman, Cultural Sub- Committee.

Sub: Prayer for review and rectification on the report of the Cultural Sub. Committee regarding definition of Goria etc.

Respected Sir,

This has immediate reference to the subject cited above for your Kind consideration for taking necessary action for reviewing and rectifying the definition of Goria as follows .

"Goria" is a pure Assamese word. The word 'Goria' in modern Assamese dictionary means 'to be excluded', curve improperly, unable to improve or develop, rice which is not frying well, Muslims etc.(Ref Chandrakanta dictionary by Gauhati University and Saraighat dictionary). Some people say Muslims who migrated Assam from Gaud Country (Murshidabad an Malda district constitute the ancient Gaur) are called 'Gaudia'

However , derivation of the word 'Goria' from Gaudia can not be accepted for the Gaur Country existed till 625 A.D. and on the contrary, Islam came to Assam in 1206.

From the meaning of the dictionary, the word "Goria" has been established in Assamese Society to call a particular group of people who were excluded ('Goria Pora' in Assamese) from the main society or villages for disobeying the rules of Society.

Historically Goria was revealed in 13th century while Choulung Sukafa set foot on the Soumarpeeth of erstwhile Assam after crossing the Patkai mountain, he met a Goria named Chengsai on the way.(Ref. Ahomor Din, Hiteswar Barbara) .

Initially the Gorias (People who are excluded) were not Muslims. But later on in advent of various Islamic Sufi saint to this land of Assam , these excluded Assamese people (Goria Pora) being attracted with their teaching converted to Islam.

A large number of people converted to Islam especially being attracted by the Islamic message preached by Azan Fakir (Shah Milan) in 17th Century and included themselves in the group of Goria (Goria pora).



সদৌ অসম গৰিয়া-মৰিয়া-দেশী জাতীয় পৰিষদ SADOU ASOM GORIA - MORIA - DESHI JATIYA PARISHAD

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On the other hand, a few number of people who entered Assam in different phases of time during Ahom Koch regime were also assimilated to this Goria Group by marrying local Assamese girls. Among these people were a few numbers of war prisoners or left out soldiers of invaders in different period of time, Muslim artisans and skilled people brought by Ahom Kings for doing various works such as Persipariya, Akharkatiya, Shilakatiya, Gunakatiya, Khanikar etc.

Many of the descendents of sufi Saints who came to Assam are known as Sayed. They use the word "Sayed" before their names and they were also called Goria Gosai (Priest of Goria) during the Ahom period (Ref. Biporjosta Khilonjia asomiya Musolman Aru bipanna Axom by Rafiul Hussain Barua.) In other words they held a respected position among Gorias.

Thus with around 95% people of converted to Islam from various ethnic groups, the Goria has emerged as an ethnic group of Assam as being an integral part of Assamese society along with other ethnic groups of Assam. It is important to be noted that even though Goria assumed to be consisting of 100% Muslims, a few number of people from this community at present has converted to other religion either by their own choice or by marrying non Muslims. Hence, Goria can not be identified on the basis of religious identity by calling them Assamese Muslims or any other religious definition whatsoever. They are an integral part of Assamese by calling themselves as Goria.

Reference:

1. Asomiya Manuhor Itihash. P. 357 by Dr. Nagen Saikia.
2. Ahomor Din. p. 28, Hiteswar orborua.
3. Osomor Sanskriti, P 167 by Lila Gogol.
4. Itihase xowora soxota bosor by Sarbananda Rajkower.
5. An Imperial History of India. p. 34 by K.P. Jayaswal,
6. Tabakat-i-Nasiri by Minhāj - i- Sirāj Jūzjānī, translated by Major H.G Raverty,
7. 'Deodahal Osom Buranji', P.95 by Surya Kr Bhuya.
8. Adhunik Asomiya Abidhan by Maheswar Neog,
9. Chandrakanta Abhidhan by Guwahati University.
10. Biporjosta Khilonjia osomoya Musalman aru Bipanna osom by Rafiul Hussain Barua.

Thanking you.

With regards,

Hospital
G. S. J. J. J.
G. M. D. J. P.
(All Assam)

সদৌ অসম গৰিয়া-মৰিয়া-দেশী জাতীয় পৰিষদ

সভাপতি

সদৌ অসম গৰিয়া-মৰিয়া-দেশী জাতীয় পৰিষদ
হাৰিষ

7-5-22

H. S. J. J. J.
G. S. J. J. J.
(All Assam)



সদৌ অসম গৰিয়া-মৰিয়া-দেশী জাতীয় পৰিষদ SADOU ASOM GORIA · MORIA · DESHI JATIYA PARISHAD

(An Indigenous Assamese Muslims Body)

Head Office : Hatigaon Chariali, Guwahati- 38

Ref No: Mem/Chairman, cul/sub

Comm, 7/5/2022

CMDJP

Date: 7.5.22



Deshi: - Deshi are believed to be among the first batch of people in Assam to have embraced Islam. They trace their lineage to Ali Mech, the Koch Rajbongshi chieftain who converted to Islam during the invasion of "BAKHTIYAR BHILJI" in the year of 1202. They are not the successor of early Muslim Hordes.

Deshis are mostly concentrated in and around the undivided Goalpara District of Assam. Now the old Goalpara District is bifurcated into six Districts namely – Dhubri, Goalpara, South Salmara-Mankachar, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Chirang.

Assamese historian Surjya Kumar Bhuyan found traces of Muslim settlements in the thirteen century in western of Assam. W.W. HUNTER in his "A statistical Account of Assam" mentioned as Deshi Muslim as Musalman Koch. Therefore, Deshi Muslim are the indigenous community of Assam. These people have been living in this region for centuries. They speak a certain languages known as Deshi, Kamatapuri, or Rajbongshi which is phonetically distinct but linguistically related to Assamese language. Thus the Koch Rajbongshi and Deshi Muslim speak a common language and there are lots of similarities in their culture, customs, food habits etc. In the Linguistic Survey of India, by Sir G.A. Grierson, it is mentioned that large numbers of Rajbongshi people had become Muslims. In his Book A Study of the Folk culture of the Goalpara District of Assam, Birendra Nath Dutta mentions that Goalpara came in contact with Islam much earlier than the rest of Assam. He writes – "the fact that the district was for a considerable period of time under the Muslims also points to the possibility that Islam has established itself more securely in the area than elsewhere in Assam. The large percentage of Muslim and the large numbers of old Mosques and other Muslim holy places found in the District confirm this".

The word "Deshi" also found mention during the times of Koch King Naranarayana in the 16th century. It is said that Naranarayana's brother and military commander Chilarai had asked court poet Pitambar to translate Markandeya Chandi into Deshi language.

Many of the beliefs, rites and ceremonies of the Deshis are similar to the Hindus, especially the Rajbongshis. For example, in the *Madarer Bas* ceremony there are bamboos representing Hindu Gods and Goddesses. The farmers of the community perform several seasonal and agricultural rites with Hindu religious overtones. There are similarities in marriage rituals with the use of banana plants, vermilion marks, conch-shell, turmeric, bands and marriage songs. Some married women even sport *sindoor* on



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SADOU ASOM GORIA - MORIA - DESHI JATIYA PARISHAD

(An Indigenous Assamese Muslims Body)

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Date: 7.5.22

their horseheads. The use of *maah-haladhi* (turmeric-green gram paste) is also considered auspicious at Deshi weddings. When paddy is kept in the granary, when the plough is used for the first time in fields, then too *sindoor* is used. The custom of using *sindoor* has stopped due to some objections by Islamic clerics over the years. But people are yet to do away with the practice totally. Instead, they symbolically use a cosmetic colour now. Some of the marriage customs prevalent among the local Rajbongshis, like divorce, widow-marriage and marriage with a divorcee, are very much similar to Muslim practices of Goalpara.

People of Goalpara also celebrate local version of Diwali called *Gasa Laga*. The Deshis also celebrate it but call it *Diya Bati* or *Chorat*. Just like the Boisagu of Bodos and the Boishu of Rabhas, the Deshi Muslims also have their own Bihu which they call Beshoma. It is also called Bishma or Chait-Boishne. As Deshi Muslims are mainly converts from Rajbongshis, the rituals of Beshoma are very similar to the celebrations of Rajbongshis, which they call Bishma or Bishuma.

At present, it is estimated that there are about 20 Lakh Deshi Muslims in Assam spread across the districts of Goalpara, Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Kamrup (Rural), South Salmara and Kamrup (Metro), Bongaigaon and Chirang and some parts of Tezpur district.

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G.S. (Joint)

Handwritten signature
G. Ser. (Joint)

Handwritten signature
(SHAH NAWAS HUSSAIN)
President

Contact No. 7002779887

সভাপতি

সদৌ অসম গৰিয়া-মৰিয়া-দেশী জাতীয় পৰিষদ
হাতিগাঁও চাৰালি

7/5/22



সদৌ অসম গৰিয়া-মৰিয়া-দেশী জাতীয় পৰিষদ

SADOU ASOM GORIA - MORIA - DESHI JATIYA PARISHAD

(An Indigenous Assamese Muslims Body)

Head Office: Chariali, Guwahati-38

Ref No: Mem/Chairman, C.N.G. Union
7/5/2012

Date:.....

গৰিয়া/গৰীয়া/গড়িয়া:

GMDR



গৰিয়া বা গৰীয়া বা গড়িয়া অসমৰ খলুৱা ইছলাম ধৰ্মৰ এটি জনগোষ্ঠীৰ নাম। 'গৰিয়া/গৰীয়া' এটা খলুৱা অসমীয়া শব্দ। ইয়াৰ অৰ্থ বাদ পৰা, আলাগ হোৱা, সমাজ চ্যুত হোৱা, বাহনিত নুঠা ইত্যাদি। সাধাৰণ সাধাৰণ কথাতে কু সংস্কাৰ, আন্ধবিশ্বাসৰ বলি হৈ এনেদৰে এলাগী বা সমাজচ্যুত হোৱা লোকসকল খেল মেলৰ বাহিৰ হৈ অৰ্থাৎ গৰিয়া পৰি একেলগ হৈ মূল গাঁৱৰ পৰা নিলগত একোখন গৰীয়া গাঁও পাতিছিল। অসম সাহিত্য সভাৰ প্ৰাক্তন সভাপতি, গৱেষক পণ্ডিত ড॰ লীলা গগৈয়ে 'অসমৰ সংস্কৃতি শীৰ্ষক গ্ৰন্থত (পৃষ্ঠা ১৬৭) এই বিষয়ে বৰ্ণনা দি লিখিছে, "মূল অসমীয়া গৰীয়া শব্দৰ অৰ্থ বাদ পৰা বা সমাজচ্যুত। আহোম- শাসনত খেল-মেলৰ অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত নোহোৱা মানুহৰ গাঁৱক গৰীয়া গাঁও বোলা হৈছিল। ...যেনেকৈ সুতকুলীয়া মানুহৰ সুকীয়া গাঁও হৈছিল, সেইদৰে সমাজচ্যুত মানুহৰো সুকীয়া গাঁও বহিছিল আৰু এনে গাঁৱক গৰীয়া গাঁও বুলিছিল। পিছলৈ আজান শীৰে ইছলামলৈ দীক্ষিত কৰাত পুনৰ সামাজিক মৰ্যাদা পাই প্ৰতিষ্ঠিত হৈছিল। সকলো (খলুৱা) মুছলমানকে গৰীয়া বুলি ভবাৰ ধাৰণাটো ইয়াৰ পৰাই জন্ম হৈছে।"

ড॰ লীলা গগৈৰ লিখনিত এইটো স্পষ্ট হৈছে যে ইছলামত দীক্ষিত হোৱাৰ পূৰ্বে একাংশ সমাজ বিচ্ছিন্ন লোকে গৰীয়া নাম পাই পৰিস্থিতিৰ জগিদাত ধৰ্মান্তৰ হ'বলৈ বাধ্য হৈছিল। কোনো কোনোৱে কোৱাৰ দৰে গৌড় দেশৰ পৰা অহা বাবেই মুছলমান সকলক গৌড়ীয় বা গৌড়ীয়া বা গৰীয়া বোলা কথাষাৰৰ গ্ৰহণ যোগ্যতা নাই। গৌড় দেশৰ পৰা অনেক হিন্দু লোকে আহিছে, কিন্তু তেওঁলোকক সেইবাবেই গৰীয়া বোলাৰ নজিৰ নাই। তাৰ বিপৰীতে গৰিয়া সমাজৰ ৯৫ শতাংশতকৈয়ো অধিক লোক ভূমিপুত্ৰ কোঁচ-মেচ, বড়ো-ৰাভা, আহোম, টিৱা, কলিতাকে ধৰি বিভিন্ন খলুৱা জনজাতি, জনগোষ্ঠীৰ পৰা ধৰ্মান্তৰিত লোকক গৌড় দেশীয় যুদ্ধ বন্দীৰ অপৰ্যায় দি সেইবাবেই তেওঁলোকক গৌড়ীয় বা গৰীয়া বোলাটো গ্ৰহণীয় নহয়। এই ক্ষেত্ৰত অসম সাহিত্য সভাৰ প্ৰাক্তন সভাপতি গৱেষক পণ্ডিত ড॰ নগেন শইকীয়াই অসমীয়া মানুহৰ ইতিহাস গ্ৰন্থত (পৃষ্ঠা ৩৫৭) কোৱা কথাখিনি প্ৰণিধানযোগ্য: "মুছলমান সকলক 'গৰীয়া' বুলিও সাধাৰণ মানুহে পৰিচয় দিয়ে। যদিও অনেকে গৌড়ৰ পৰা অহা মুছলমান সকলক 'গৌড়ীয়া'ৰ পৰা গৰীয়া বুলিবলৈ লোৱা বুলি কয়, আনসকলে সেই ব্যাখ্যা গ্ৰহণ কৰিব নোখোজে। ...গৌড়ৰ পৰা অহাৰ বাবে গৰীয়া বোলা হ'লে গৌড়ৰ পৰা অহা হিন্দু সকলো গৰীয়া নামেৰে পৰিচিত হ'লহেঁতেন। সি যি কি নহওক গৰীয়া শব্দটোৰে আন ঠাইৰ মুছলমানক বুজোৱা নহয়। এই (গৰীয়া) ব্যাখ্যাটোৱেই অসমীয়া মুছলমান সকলৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত অধিক প্ৰযোজ্য।"

ত্ৰয়োদশ শতিকাৰ পৰা আৰম্ভ কৰি বিভিন্ন সময়ত বিভিন্ন পৰিস্থিতিত বৰুণশীল সমাজৰ কোপদৃষ্টিত পৰি গৰিয়া পৰা লোকসকলে গৰীয়া গাঁও পাতি থকাৰ পিছত অসম ভূমিত ইছলাম ধৰ্ম প্ৰচাৰ কৰিবলৈ অহা ছৈয়দ সকলকে ধৰি চুফী সাধক শীৰ আউলিয়া দৰবেজ সকলৰ সান্নিধ্যলৈ আহি সহজ সামাজিক স্বীকৃতিৰ বাবে ইছলামত দীক্ষিত হৈ অসমৰ সমাজ জীৱনত 'গৰীয়া' নামৰ এটা মিশ্ৰিত গাঁঠনিৰ নতুন জনগোষ্ঠী জন্মৰ বিপৰীতে লগত তিৰোতা লৈ নহা এইসকল ধৰ্মপ্ৰচাৰক আৰু মোগলকে ধৰি বিভিন্ন মুছলমান শাসকগোষ্ঠীৰ হৈ যুদ্ধ কৰিবলৈ আহি বৈ যোৱা মুষ্টিমেয় বন্দী (এই সকলৰ সবহ সংখ্যকেই কৰ্মসূত্ৰে মৰিয়া নামৰ অইন এটা জনগোষ্ঠীত পৰিণত হয়) আৰু আহোম আৰু কোঁচ যুগত কাৰিকৰী খনিকৰী কামত বজাই অনোৱা লোকসলে এই গৰীয়া জনগোষ্ঠীৰ অধবা অইন খলুৱা জনজাতি জনগোষ্ঠীৰ লগতে বৈবাহিক সম্বন্ধ স্থাপন কৰি অসমীয়া, গৰীয়া জনগোষ্ঠী তথা অসমীয়া সমাজ জীৱনত মিলি যায়।



সদৌ অসম গৰিয়া-মৰিয়া-দেশী জাতীয় পৰিষদ

SADOU ASOM GORIA - MORIA - DESHI JATIYA PARISHAD

(An Indigenous Assamese Muslims Body)

Head Office : Hatigaon Chariali, Guwahati- 38

Date:.....

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গৰিয়া সকলৰ ৯৫ শতাংশৰ পৰা ৯৮ শতাংশই অসমৰ বিভিন্ন জনজাতি জনগোষ্ঠীৰ পৰা ইছলামত দীক্ষিত হোৱা লোকৰ বংশধৰ, বাকী ২ শতাংশৰ পৰা ৫ শতাংশ ছৈয়দকে ধৰি ধৰ্ম প্ৰচাৰক, যুদ্ধত বোৱা লোক আৰু কাৰিকৰী খনিকৰী কামত অনোৱা লোকৰ বংশধৰ। সামগ্ৰিকভাৱে খিলঞ্জীয়া মুছলমানৰ প্ৰায় ৭৫ শতাংশ লোকেই গৰিয়া জনগোষ্ঠীৰ।

ছৈয়দসকল গৰিয়া সমাজৰ পৰা পৃথক নহয়। বৰঞ্চ ছৈয়দ সকলক গৰিয়া গোসাইকপে জনা যায়। পূৰ্বৰে পৰা ছৈয়দসকল গৰিয়া জনগোষ্ঠীৰ অভিন্ন অংগ হিচাপে পৰিগণিত হৈ আহিছে। এই কথাৰ প্ৰমাণ পোৱা যায় প্ৰথিতযশা অসমীয়া সাহিত্যিক, ঔপন্যাসিক স্বনামধন্য ছৈয়দ আব্দুল মালিক ছাৰৰ বিভিন্ন সাহিত্য ৰাজিৰ জৰিয়তে। তেখেতে নিজকে নজহা, নপমা গৰিয়া হিচাপে সাহিত্যৰ মাজেদি ঘোষণা কৰিও গৈছে। তেখেতৰ "ক'লৈ পলাবি তই" নামৰ কবিতাই ইয়াৰ উৎকৃষ্ট উদাহৰণ।

ত্ৰয়োদশ শতিকাৰ প্ৰথম ভাগত জন্ম হোৱা গৰিয়া জনগোষ্ঠীত ঊনবিংশ শতিকাৰ আগভাগলৈকে এই ৬০০ বছৰীয়া সুদীৰ্ঘ পৰিক্ৰমাত বিভিন্ন পৰিস্থিতিত বিভিন্ন সময়ত বিভিন্ন কাৰণত অসমৰ বিভিন্ন জনজাতি জনগোষ্ঠী যেনে বড়ো, বাভা, কোঁচ কলিজ, নাৰ্থ ঘোঙ্গী, আহোম, টিৱা, ডিমাচা, গাৰো আদিৰ লোক একাংশই ব্যাপক হাৰত ইছলামত দীক্ষিত হৈ গৰিয়া জনগোষ্ঠীৰ শ্ৰীবৃদ্ধি কৰে। সেয়ে অসমৰ বিভিন্ন সম্প্ৰদায়ৰ লোকক লৈ গঠিত এই মিশ্ৰিত জনগোষ্ঠীৰ জনগোষ্ঠী 'গৰিয়া' অসমীয়া জাতিৰ স্ক্ৰম সংৰক্ষণ বুলি নিসন্দেহে ক'ব পাৰি। ঊনবিংশ শতিকাত অসম বৃটিছৰ অধীনলৈ যোৱাত অসমত ইছলাম ধৰ্মৰ প্ৰচাৰ প্ৰসাৰ হ্ৰাস হোৱাৰ বিপৰীতে খ্ৰীষ্টান ধৰ্মৰ প্ৰচাৰ প্ৰসাৰে ব্যাপকতা লাভ কৰে আৰু সমাজৰ দুৰ্বল শ্ৰেণীৰ মাজত ধৰ্মান্তৰ প্ৰক্ৰিয়াই অন্য মোৰ লয়।

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কেন্দ্ৰীয়-উপদেষ্টা
সদৌ অসম গৰিয়া-মৰিয়া-
দেশী জাতীয় পৰিষদ