

# The Social and Economic aspects of the Reign of Ahom King PratapSingha

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## ABSTRACT

In the history of Assam the reign of the Ahom king PratapSingha can be considered as very significant. From the socio economic perspective his reign remark the growth of Paik system under MomaiTamuliBarbarua, PratapSingha'sposa system towards the hill tribes, establishment of hats or markets, promoting trade, introduction of new officials, revenue system etc.all these had remarkable impact on the consolidation of the Ahom State . This article made an attempt to study the socio economic aspects of these reforms of Ahom King PratapSingha.

## 1. Introduction

In the history of the AhomsPratapSingha occupied a significant place. He was a mighty and efficient king of the Ahoms who ruled from 1603 A.D. to 1641 A.D. He was also known as BuddhiSwarganarayan for his intelligence and wisdom. The economic and administrative reforms of PratapSingha had tremendous impact on the consolidation of the Ahom state. The present article made an attempt to study the socio economic aspects of the administrative reforms and policies of PratapSingha.

## 2. Discussion

### 2.1 Organization of Society and Paik System:

Social organization during the reign of PratapSingha had crucial impact. It was MomaiTamuliBarbarua, with whom the Ahom king introduced the Paik system. MomaiTamuli was asked to take a census before organizing the paiks. It is said that the King brought man to measure land and make census of the people. The man who took survey and census were known as *Kakoti*. New settlements were established by transferring people from thickly populated areas. Around eight thousand families were transferred from upper Assam to Marangi region. To reduce the power of the Bhuyans they were sent to Dakhinkul from Uttarkul .MomaiTamuliBarbarua united the people of Bosa, Doyang and Nagaon and established two villages and two *khels*. In Kamrup also he transferred weavers from south bank and established them in Suwalkuchi. The oil pressers were settled at Ramdiya. After the resettlement of the people MomaiTamuliBarbarua organized the *paiks*(adult between the age of 16 to 50). Four paiks formed a unit called *got*.*Paiks worked* under different officials. There were twenty *paiks*under a Bora, hundred *paiks* under a Saikia, thousand *paiks*placed under Hazarika and six thousand *paiks* placed under a Phukan. On the other hand, different *gots* had to perform works rendered to them. This system was called the Khel system.

### 2.2 Posa System:

The Ahoms introduced the *posa* system in order to give protection from the inroads of the hill tribes. Ahom king PratapSingha brought the Bhutias of Chariduar, Aka (Hazarikhowa), Dafalas and Miris under the *posa* system. On

the basis of this system these hill tribes received some villages in the frontier area. The *paiks* of these areas had to supply their goods to the hill tribes annually. The Ahom state had given some relaxation in the revenue for these paiks. During the Ahom reign the Bhutiyas used nine mountain passes or *duarto* enter into Assam. These were Chariduar of Darrang, Kariyapar, Burhiguma, Kalling and Gharkola of Kamrup, Baksa, Chapaguri, Pekhumar, Bijni etc. Of these the Bhutiyas conducted trade relations with the Ahoms through Kariyapar and Chariduar.Ahom King PratapSingha gave special right of collecting *posa* to the ChariduarBhutias and rest eight duars were given away uptoGohain Kamal Ali. The Bhutiyas agreed to give in exchange weapons, gold, deer musk, horse and goods produced in the hills.Another hill tribes with whom the Ahoms had *posa* system was the Hazarikhowa Akas. The hazarikhowas could obtain the agrarian goods and cloths for women, cotton thread and *gamosa* from the village area near to them. The Dafalas had committed atrocities in the Ahom occupied areas. They looted the people and cows . King PratapSingha in order to avert their inroads had built a rampart called Dafalagarh. As they were too strong to control they received *posa* from PratapSingha at a high rate. The *posa* system was imposed on the Miris also. In the *duar* region the Miris were allowed to collect *posa*. In exchange the Miris had to give taxes annually and become subordinate to the Ahom king.

### 2.3 Trade and Market:

Ahom king PratapSingha had established market at Dupgarh and NamchangBorhat. In the chronicle of KashinathTamuliphukan it is mentioned that Ahom king PratapSingha had given the responsibility to an officer known as BharaliBarua to determine the rate of tax or duty levied on commodities supplied for sale in the market of Namchang and Borhat.The King established check post or *chokys* at strategic point to regulate illegal supply of goods. A custom house was established at Solalpath in Darrang to collect tolls from the Dafalas. It was collected by SolalphaliaBarua. PratapSingha also established *Chokys* at Kajali,Jagi,Marangi and Raha. RohiyalBarua was appointed at Raha to maintain relations with the Kachari. Jagi was placed under JagiyalGohain whose duty was to maintain relations with the Jayantiyas. To collect information from Jayantiya and DimaruaKajalimukhiaGohainwas appointed. In the year 1555

sakaBhadhoraChetia was appointed as MarangiKhowaGohain. But regarding external and foreign trade the king was always suspicious. The king did not allow the political intervention of the merchants in state affairs.

### 3. Conclusion

In the conclusion we can say the reign of Ahom king PratapSingha was very significant from the socio economic perspective. The organization of paiks, settlement of villages, posa system, establishment of market and check post, construction of roads and ramparts, appointment of new officials, war with different countries all these had tremendous impact on the history of the Ahom state. The organization of paiks and khels systematized the Ahom society and consolidated the economic system. Also the settlement of new villages with professional class in the thinly populated area brought crucial changes in the economy. But sometimes new settlement was followed to reduce the power of the people

such as the Bhuyans. The Ahom king in order to know about the culture of different countries appointed Boiragis. Longtaboiragi was appointed to collect information from different countries. He had to present before the king about the custom and dresses of the people of foreign land. Through the Boiragis the king came to know about other countries and their culture which made him reform the administrative system. Also the relation with Koches during his reign had influenced the demography and economy as the Koches gave some professional classes to the Ahom king. PratapSingha settled them at Bhatiyapar. It brought changes in the economy. Through the posa system the Ahom king could maintain good relation with the hill tribes. In the field of revenue administration new officers like *kakotis* were appointed and it was under his rule the grant of Devottar and Dharmottar to the religious institution had its beginning. Thus we can conclude that the administrative reforms of PratapSingha had tremendous impact on the consolidation of the Ahom territory.

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