

DAVID SCOTT & HIS ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

WHO WAS DAVID SCOTT ?

David Scott was the first and foremost British administrator in Assam, who, after the annexation of Assam, as per the Treaty of Yandabo, brought some significant changes in Assam's administration. He worked in Assam as the Agent to the Governor general of India and as Commissioner of Assam.

How did the British establish themselves as the ruler of Assam ?

- It was mainly because of the assistance sought by the Ahoms from the East India Company for which British entered into Assam.
- After that the Burmese invasion created a situation in Assam, for which East India Company got a chance to interfere in the politics of Assam.
- After defeating the Burmese, the Company Government became the master of the entire Province including the Frontier regions.

- **After the defeat of the Burmese, the Ahoms, and the entire frontier tribes considered the British as their protector, and it was the British who was waiting for an opportunities to annex the entire North eastern part of India.**

SETTLEMENT WITH FRONTEIR TRIBES AFTER ANGLO-BURMESE WAR

- **The British East India Company took the opportunity of the weaknesses the Ahoms and the adjoining tribal states of the region and restoration process under the British initiative started.**
- **In the first place- David Scott restored Raja Gobindra Chandra of Cachar in his former position in lieu of an annual tribute of Rs. 10,000/-**
- **Next, reinstated raja ram Singha of Jayantya in his former position on simply agreeing of accepting British suzerainty.**
- **In the like manner, Raja Gambhir Sing was placed in throne by maintaining an army in his state.**

- **David Scott was also made arrangement with the Singphos, the Khamtis and the Matakis in the border security reason.**
- **These tribal states were give their autonomy on the agreement that they will not enter in any alliance with other power without the consent of the British.**

Annexation of Assam

- **After annexation of the frontier tribes, the Company was in a dilemma about the future of Assam .**
- **Regarding Assam, their intention was to annex the whole part, but they were waiting for an opportune moment.**
- **Moreover, since, upper Assam was greater victim of Burmese invasion, and more prone to the attack from neighboring hill tribes, hence the Company did not think about the annexation of Upper Assam to their dominion.**

Annexation of Lower Assam

- Since, as per the British assumption, Upper Assam was much prone to political crisis, hence they did not think of its annexation.
- At the same time Lower Assam was comparatively a peaceful area and yielding good amount of revenue, hence David Scott thought of annexing Lower Assam first to Company' Territory.

Restoration of Upper Assam to a Ahom Prince

The British East India Company decided to restore an Ahom prince in the Upper Assam region from Biswanath to Burhi Dihing.

Considerations:

- Before restoration, the Company decided to ascertain the resources of Upper Assam.

- **Moreover, restoration without any binding might create complications with frontier tribes.**
- **They thought that restored Prince might ally with tribes against the Company.**
- **On the basis of above consideration, the Bengal Government instructed David Scott to implement a system that prevalent in the Rangpur District, known as Non-Regulated system.**

As per the Non-regulated system:-

- **Territories were to be governed by an executive composed of partly of civilians and partly by soldiers.**
- **Accordingly, the Agent was to administer civil and criminal justice , to supervise the collection of revenue, and the Superintendence of Police.**
- **All other branches was to look after by the spirit and principles of the existing regulations.**
- **The Prince also authorized to conduct British relation with the frontier tribes.**

Division of Assam

➤ For administrative purpose Assam was divided into two Parts:-

1. Upper Assam:
2. Lower Assam:
3. Each division was placed under the control of a Chief commissioner.
4. David Scott was placed as the In-Charge of Lower Assam with its headquarter at Guwahati and he was declared as Senior Commissioner.
5. On the other hand, Colonel Richards was appointed as Junior Commissioner with its headquarter at Rangpur.
6. For running the administration, David Scott was assisted by Captain White and Davidson.

- David Scott entrusted the responsibility of defence of the state to the Rangpur Corps consisted with Sylhet Local Crops and Assam, Light Infantry and withdrew the regular troops.
- A cantonment (permanent) was established at Biswanath region.

OUTLINE OF HIS ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

MAIN AIM:-

- David Scott did not bring any radical change while organizing the administration.
- With some minor changes, he retained the old Aristocracy in service to fulfill the colonial interests.

Reforms in Revenue Department:

- As part of Revenue reform, David Scott retained *Khel* system, but replace personal service.
- Janardan Barbarua was placed In –Charge of Revenue Department.
- In Lower Assam, the charge of revenue collection was given to Choudhury by signing an agreement with him on the basis of the records available in the *Pera- kagaz. (a register of survey)*

REVENUE REFORMS CONT.....

- **The Choudhuries, in lieu of their service, were allowed rent free land along with a number of *Paiks*.**
- **Again, the Choudhuries while collecting revenue, will be assisted by Patwaries (Accountant), Thakurias (Subordinate Collectors), etc.**
- **the charge of revenue department of Lower Assam was given to a Sheristadar.**
- **Nagaon and Raha was made a separate revenue unit and placed in charge of two farmers of revenue, Aradhan Rai and Lata Pani Phukan.**
- **Again, a separate settlement was made with Raja Vijayanarayan of Darrang with a revenue of 42,000/-**
- **Again, with the rulers of Beltola, Rani, Dimarua and Naduar, it was agreed to accept what they voluntarily offered.**

DIFFERENT TYPES OF TAXES IMPOSED

- Rs. 2.00 was imposed as *Ga-dhan*, on every *paik* in Lower Assam in return of which every *paiks* were entitled to enjoy three *puras* of arable land.
- In Kamrup, a new tax was imposed known as *kharikatana* or *poll –tax* and was extended to Nagaon and Darrang. The same was collected as plough tax in Kamrup, as hearth-tax in Darrang and as capitation tax at Nagaon.
- Besides that, the rent free lands were brought under taxation system.

Professional Taxes

- Professional Taxes were imposed on gold-washers, fishermen, braziers etc.

JUDICIAL REFORMS

In the Judicial Department, the changes introduced by David Scott were :-

- 1. In Lower Assam, he heads of the *Khels* and *Parganas* (Choudhuries) authorized to decide minor cases with help of *mels* or Panchayats.**
- 2. In Upper Assam, Lombudar Barphukan was appointed to look after the trial of civil cases.**
- 3. Lambodar Barphukan was assisted by a co-adjutant, Janardan Barbarua.**
- 4. Criminal cases were tried by Junior Commissioner and after 1828 by Political Agent.**
- 5. Barphukan was entrusted to pass sentences and heinous crimes were judged by the Juries with help of Barphukan as president.**

JUDICIAL REFORMS CONT.....

In Lower Assam, a senior Commissioner was give charge to try civil & criminal cases.

Three Courts were established to look after the civil cases.

Out of three court, two were to be look after by Rajkhowa & Barphukan

Mofussil panchayats were established in the populated areas of Nowgong, kaliabar and Charduar.

From 1828, a *bar panchayat* was established consisting of three local judges, two pundits and six assessors.

POLICE REFORM

For the establishment of law and order, David Scott introduced some sorts reforms in Police department.

A police establishment, consisting of a Daroga, a Jamadar and with a few constables maintained at headquarters under British supervision.

On the other hand, the Mofussill police were left under the charge of the Local Chiefs and the Revenue Officials.