A Study on the Toponymy of Lower Assam with Special Reference to the South Kamrup Region

Manab Choudhury
Research Scholar,
Krishna KantaHandiqui State Open University
Assam, India.

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Abstract

Generally the study of place names is regarded as 'Toponymy'. The Encyclopedia Britannica describes 'Toponymy' as the taxonomic study of place names based on etymological, historical and geographical information. A place name is a word or words used to indicate, denote or identity of a geographic locality. It provides a glimpse of social, political, economic condition of a particular period on a particular region. 'Toponymy' helps us to understand about the development of human civilization through ages.

From ancient time onwards, Kamrup played an important role in the socio-political, economic, religious, cultural life of Assam. During the rule of East India Company, British Officer A.J. Moffat Mills extensively visited Kamrup and in his "A Report on the Province of Assam", divided this region into two distinct divisions. The northern part of the mighty Brahmaputra River was named as 'North Kamrup; while the southern region of the Brahmaputra was known as South Kamrup. Though the geographical boundary of the 'South Kamrup' region was changed from time to time, yet people in this area played an important role in the linguistic and cultural unity and oneness.

The 'South Kamrup' region is situated nearest the city of Guwahati, the Gateway of North- East. But still very limited research works has been done in this region especially in the Toponymistic study. Therefore, through this paper an attempt has been made to focus on the study of the place names of the South Kamrup region. For this various primary and secondary data will be used. However these data will be utilized only for the purpose of this paper.

Keywords- *Toponymy*, *Kamrup*, *South Kamrup*.

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1.0. Introduction:

The subject which categorically deals with the place names is known as 'Toponymy'. The English word 'Toponymy' is derived from the two Greek words *topo*smeaning place followed by *onom*a meaning name. The discipline which studies the place names is called 'Toponomatics'. A 'toponymist' is the one who studies 'toponymy'. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word *toponymy* was incorporated into English vocabulary in 1876. This word has subsequently been used in lieu of 'place names' in academic discourse by researchers and scholars (Sarmah, 2017, p.1). However, the proper definition of *Toponymy* is given by *Encyclopedia Britannica* in which it describes-

''Toponymy is the taxonomic study of place names based on etymological, historical and geographical information. A place name is a word or words used to indicate, denote or identity of a geographic locality.''[i]

Toponymy divides place names into two broad categories- 'habitation names' and 'feature names'. A 'habitation name' denotes a locality that is peopled or inhabited, such as, a hamlet, village or town and usually dates from the locality's inception. 'Features name' refer to natural or physical features of the land scope and are sub divided into 'Hydronyms' (water features), 'Oronyms' (relief features) and places of natural vegetation growth (meadows, glades, groves) (Bhattacharjee, 1987, p.33). 'Toponymy' itself is a part of 'Onomastics' which studies all kinds of names. The term 'Onomastics' is derived from two Greek words 'onoma' means 'name' and 'stics' means 'description'. 'Onomastics' thus implies description or scientific interpretation of names (Sharma, 2017, p.5). 'Onomastics' is such a vast subject which includes many branches like 'Epononymy' deals with the place names deriving from personal names and 'Hodonymy' is the branch that is connected with the study of names of roads and ramparts. 'Chrematonymy' on the other hand is the study of names of things while 'Microtoponymy' deals with smaller places (Borah, 2000, p.6).

In every societies of the world, most of the habitation places were named after gods, humans, birds, beasts, castes, markets, towns, temples, flowers, fruits, plants etc. Again, place names are suggestive of the geographical features such as hills, mountains, rivers, islands, ponds, tanks etc. This naming process is firmly rooted with a language. It speaks about the geographical peculiarities as well as historical and cultural legacy of peoples of a specific region. Place names do speak when history become silent. Place names disclose the pages of vast knowledge, interest and wonder not only for a keen observer of nature but to the laymen also. This has no barrier of dialect, region and time.

2.0 Review of Literature:

From early ages, giving names to the animated as well as inanimate objects is the oldest practice of the civilizations and cultures. The human beings of ancient times started naming things of geographical features. This later attested to the various stories of creation with different religions and cultures. From Eighteenth century onwards Toponymy became an academic discourse in the west. But references of place names were reflect in various early sacred books. Among them the first place name referred in the holy book 'Bible (Genesis 2, 8) is Eden, the garden planted by God which is equally equated with Paradise (Kadmon, 2000, p.4). However, the idea of Onomastics was seen in the "The Odyssey" of Homer. The writings of Socrates and Plato also deal a lot with Onomastics (Sharma, 2017, p.7). In the modern times, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz popularized the study of place names in the western world and hence he was called as the founder of Toponymy. Various works relating Toponymy was accomplished in different countries of Europe. Among them J.J. Eglig's work was remarkable one and for his contribution towards place names study Eglig was often regarded as the 'doyen of study of English place names' (Phukan, 2001, p.7).

Compared to the western world, the systematic study of place names in India started later than them yet references of it are often notice in Rig Veda.[ii] In the tenth *mandala* of Rig Veda, one verse informs that name constitutes the basic structure of language and it is "the primary speech which those who were bearing the name initially

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[i]"Toponymy"- Encyclopedia Britannica. Encyclopedia Britannica online. The Editors of EncyclopaediaBritannica,April18th,2017.https://www.britannica.com/science/toponymy/additional-info/history.

[ii]Rig Veda: It is one of the sacred books of Hindu tradition. The Rig Veda contains the world's oldest surviving texts. It is divided into ten *mandalas* which had a collection of 1028 hymns.

motivated" (Phukan, 2001, p.10). Some Puranas specially the "MatsyaPurana", "Vayu Purana", "MarkandeyaPurana" etc refers some ancient dynasties and their kingdoms as well as extension of the boundaries of them. Apart from the texts, several inscriptions, seals etc also reflect various place names of ancient cities of India. In the medieval period "SthalaPurana" contains some legendary stories of place names. In present time, Ramakamal Sen mention some references related to the study of toponymy in the preface of his work ''Dictionary in English and Bengali''. In regional level some notable works has been done in the field of toponymy.

In Assam, British officer John M'Cosh in his ''Topography of Assam'' first systematically started the study of place names. Dr. BaniKantaKakati in his book "Assamese: Its Formation and Development" deals one chapter on the study of Assamese place names. But it was Dr. Sarat Kumar Phukan who in his book "Toponymy of Assam" made immense contribution in the toponymic study of Assam and set a milestone in this field. In this context, Sarat Kumar Phukan could be called the doyen of toponymy in Assam (Sharma, 2017, p.9). However, in most of the place names studies of Assam is basically deal with only in the Upper Assam and Middle Assam region, therefore in this paper attempts will be made to look after about the toponymy of Lower Assam, especially the South Kamrup region. It is worth mentioning that South Kamrup is not an administrative division rather than it is a geographical identity of the people who settled in the southern bank of river Brahmaputra in the Kamrup (Rural) district. Though in January 2016, the government declared district status as 'South Kamrup' by covering the area of Palashbari, Chhaygaon and Boko Revenue Circles but due to lack of infrastructure issue this plan was scraped in October of the same year.

3.0 Significance of the study:

The identification of a region where people settle down from centuries has a name. The name of a place not only provide the geographical and topographical features but also reflects a glimpse of light about the socio-political, economic, religious, cultural and historical information of the region. Infact Place Names are the "expression of the intellectual genius and cultural tendencies of a people" (Gowda,1980,p-5). From generations, people naming a place according to its specific characteristics. Apart from the geographical peculiarities and topographic nature, other aspects like myths, legends, ballads, annals, superstitions, beliefs, customs etc also become the basis through the study of place names. With the study of place names one can understand the habits of the ancient people and their ways of life, their knowledge about the local environment and even their poetic way of thinking in naming the places (Bhattacharjee, 1984, p2).

The South Kamrup is one of the oldest settled areas of Assam where tribes like Bodo, Rabha, Kacharietc along with other non tribes lived. Their different religious faiths, cultural traditions, and ways of life provide great significance in the study of toponymy.

The hill tribes specially the Garo and Khasis played pivotal role in the formation of socio- economic life of the South Kamrup region. As most the area of South Kamrup was under the rule of the Garo and Khasi chiefs in different times, therefore Garo and Khasi elements also played important role in the formation of place names in this region. Henceforth multi cultural characteristics of South Kamrup provide immense potential for the study of toponymy.

4.0 Objectives of the study:

Basically, this paper aims to explore about the evolution of place names in the South Kamrup

region from ancient to present times. Apart from that other objectives are-

• To examine the changes of the name of the places of South Kamrup region.

• To study about the origin of place names from the linguistic, historic, geographic and sociological point of view in the South Kamrup area.

• To study about what kind of ideas, beliefs and historical consciousness are reflected of the South Kamrup region through place names.

5.0 Methodology of the study:

While preparing this paper, a comprehensive analysis is conducted. Apart from that various books and journals of different times are also used for the collection of data. However, these data are analyzed and utilized only for the purpose of this paper.

6.0 Background of the South Kamrup Region of Assam:

In ancient times, Assam was known as *Pragjyotisha* and *Kamrupa*. Dr. BaniKantaKakati connects the word *Pragjyotisha* with topographical features of the land and deduce its origin from an *Austric* phase '*Pagar- juh(jo)-tic (c'=ch)*' meaning a region of the extensive hills. While *KalikaPurana*[iii]associate this name with astronomical importance of the country. According to this holy book, God Brahma made the first calculation of the stars in *Pragjyotisha*. (Baruah, 2009, p.71) In this context Sir Edward Gait pointed out "*Prag*means former or eastern, and *Jyotisha*, a star, astrology, shining. *Pragjyotisha* may, therefore, be taken to mean the 'City of Eastern Astrology'." (Gait, 2001, p.15)

Some legends mention that around Second Century BC, one conqueror of Mithila (present

Bihar) Naraka by name with the help of Lord Sri Krishna, defeated the successors of MahirangaDanava, the ruler of Pragjyotisha , established a new kingdom there and renamed the region as Kamrupa. (Kumar, 2004, p-Ka) The word Kamarupa has been derived from an Austric formation like 'Kamru' or 'Kamrut', the name of a lesser divinity in Santali which justifies the association of the land with magic and necromancy (Kakati, pp-53-54). The word symbolizes a new cult, namely the worship of the mother goddess Kamakhya and in exaltation of it, the land was rechristened. The word *Kamakhya* too has been derived from an Austric formation such as *Kamoi* (demon) in old Khmer, *Kamoit* (devil) in Cham, *Kamet* (corpse) in Khasi, *Kamui* (grave) or *Komuoch* (corpse) in Santali (Kakati, pp-53-54). The word *Kamakhya* is a Sanskritised form of *Kamakhs'* or *Kamalakhi*, the female deity of the Mongoloid tribes of ancient Assam. (Baruah, 2009, p.72). The origin of the name *Kamarupa* is mythologically explained in the *Gopatha Brahmana*[iv]as-

"When*Sati* died of vexation at the discourtesy shown to her husband *Siva* by her father *Daksha*, *Siva*, overcome by grief, wandered about the world carrying her dead body on his head. In order to put a stop to his penance, *Vishnu* followed him and lopped away the body piecemeal with his discus. It fell to earth in fifty one different pieces, and wherever each piece fell, the ground was held to be sacred. Her organs of generation fell on *Kamagiri*, i.e. the *Nilachal hill* near *Guwahati*, and place was thenceforth held sacred to *Kamakhya*, the Goddess of sexual desire. As *Siva* still continued to do penance, the other Gods became afraid that he would thereby acquire universal power, and accordingly dispatched *Kamdeb*, the Indian Cupid,to make him fall in love again, and thereby break his penance. He

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[iii]Kalika Purana: One of the oldest texts composed in ancient Assam around 10th Century which describes various places of ancient Kamarupa.

[iv]Gopatha Brahmana: It is the only Brahmana text describing the Vedic rituals associated with Atharvaveda.

succeeded in his mission, but so enraged was *Siva* at the result, that he burnt him to ashes by a fiery glance from the eye in the centre of his forehead. *Kamdeb* eventually recovered his original form and the country where this took place became known as *Kamarupa*"(Gait, 2001, p.12).

As Naraka was considered as one of the important figure from the Mahabharata times, hence all the ruling families of ancient Assam claimed themselves as the descendents of *Bhauma*[v]*-Naraka* family. These royal families started worshiping mother Goddess Kamakhya which was associated with Naraka. Perhaps from that time onwards the word Kamarupa was popularized as a land where Goddess Kamakhya was worshiped. (Sharma, 2002,p-40). During the rule of Varmana dynasty, *Kamarupa* flourished as one of the powerful kingdom of ancient India.R.S. Tripathy in his book "History of Ancient India" mentions that in the 'Allahabad Pillar Inscription' of Samudragupta, the kingdom of Kamrupa was mentioned as 'PrantiyaRajya' i.e. the frontier kingdom of the mighty Gupta empire (Tripathy, 2006, p-244). The mighty river Lauhitya i.e. Brahmaputra flows through the middle of the Kamarupa kingdom. The area located in the southern bank of the river Lauhiitya was known as 'DakshinKul'. The term 'DakshinKul' was first mention in Kautilya's"Arthasastra", where the king of north India established commercial relation with DakshinKul of LauhityaSagar through the Kiratas. (Sharma, 2002, p-86)

Twelve Century witnessed the disintegration of the Kamarupa kingdom due the weakness of the Central Power. Taking advantage of this situation several independent principalities were emerged where some tribal feudal

principalities were also came into existence. Almost eighteen rajyas or principalities independently rule in the *DakshinKul*region which was situated in the areas from Goalpara in the west to river Kapili of Nowgong in the east on the south bank of river Brahmaputra. (Neog, 2008, p-111)Boko, Rani,Bangaon, Pantanetc were some of the independent *rajyas* which immensely contributed in the history of DakshinKul. (Hamilton, 1987, p-31)

The fifteenth and sixteenth century witnessed the political changes in the history of Assam where the Mughals as well as the Ahoms tried to establish their political hold in the south Kamrupa region. Mirza Nathan in his book"Baharistan- i- Ghaibi" mentioned that most of the South Kamrupa region was successfully occupied by the Mughals from the Ahoms as well as the Koches. As a result of that introduction of new Mughal administrative system became necessary requirement for those newly acquired areas of Kamrup. (Bhuyan, ed,1936, p-591) During the reign of Jahangir the *ParganaSystem*[vi]was introduced in Kamrupa and as a result of that the entire region was divided into four *Parganas* or *Sarkars*. From then the southern part of the Kamrupa region was known as 'Sarkar DakhinKul'. The new Sarkar DakhinKulregion covered the area of the south bank of the river Brahmaputra i.e. from Dimoria and Gova to Nagarbera. (Kumar, 2004, p-Ka)

The term South Kamrup was first coined by the British government officer A.J. Moffat Mills. In his "A Report on the Province of Assam", Mills defined the boundary of South Kamrup as such- North – Brahmapootra River, East – The River Kullung which divide it from Nagaon and JayantiaMahel, South – The Cossiah Hill and West – HabraghatPergunah belonging to

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[v]Bhauma: King Naraka was also known as '*bhauma*'. According to legends, Naraka was born in the womb of mother Earth (Bhumi) and hence he was also called as *Bhauma*. Later all the political dynasty of ancient Assam connected themselves with Naraka and called them as descendents of *Bhauma- Naraka* dynasty.

[vi]Pargana System: It was an administrative unit of Mughal Kingdom. It consists of several villages for the revenue collection. The Kamrupa region was also divided into several *parganas* where southern part of the river Brhmaputra was known as *Pargana Dakhin Kol.*

Goalpara(Mills,p316). However, the present boundary of the South Kamrup region is much narrow compared to earlier one. In the 1996-97 issue of PalashbariSahitya Sabha's annual magazine "DakhinKol" a demarcation about the boundary of SouthKamrup region was published. In this magazine the present boundary of South Kamrup is described as that the Brahmaputra river lies in the north while Meghalaya in the south. Its east boundary touches the Nagaon district while western portion reached uptoGoalpara district (DakhinKol, 1996-97, p-07-09).

7.0 Findings

The following sections focus on the results regarding the name of South Kamrup.

7.1 Names of some places of South Kamrup related to 'Oronymy':

Like other parts of North- East India, South Kamrupregion is also filled with several hills and mountains which provide important information about the religion and history of the region.

Nagarberra hill is situated in the Boko Revenue Circle under Samaria AnchalikGaon Panchayat. The name Nagarberra is derived from compound of a town, a hill on the western most border of Kamrup district close to the river Brahmaputra. This hill referred frequently in medieval history of Assam especially with various expeditions made by Rabha chief Parsuram[vii] against the Mughals in seventeenth century, later in the reign of Ahom king GaurinathSingha. (Phukan,2003,p.9)

Mirza Pahar, an important place of the Palashbari Revenue Circle, derived its name from the powerful Mughal General Mirza Nathulla or Nathan. Before attacking the Rani kingdom, Mirza Nathan built a fort in the Mailata hill, on the south bank of the river Brahmaputra and later

occupied a vast territory in the nearby areas. To commemorate the victory, his followers named that hill as Mirza Pahar.(Kumari, 1995, p.10)

RangamatiParvatis situated in the Palashbari Revenue Circle of the Kamrup district. The word 'Rangamati' means a hill with red earth. There are few natural stone caves in this hill where yearly 'Maroi Puja'[viii] is performed (Phukan, 2003, p.265).

Rani Paharis situated in the West Guwahati Constituency of the Kamrup district. Earlier this region is known as 'Deshrani'. According to "KamruporBuranji", Ahom king GadadharSimha gifted the region near Beltolarajya to a Garo Queen who was descendent of Raja Arimatta. As the Queen ruled this kingdom therefore this region is called 'Deshrani' and its adjacent hill is known as Rani Pahar.(Nath,2005, p.119)

NakkatiPaharis situated in the north side of the Mirza Pahar. According to some legends, the people of this region worship the Goddess *Nijeswari*. One day a thief entered one village a stole the cows of a villager. The Goddess awakened the people from sleep and helped the villagers to grab the thief. The thief became angry and subsequently cut the nose of Goddess *Nijeswari*and died. As her nose was getting cut therefore the Goddess knows as *Nak- Kati*. Later this entire region and the hill where Goddess *Nijeswari* was worshiped are known as the 'NakkatiPahar' (Kumari, 1995, p.49).

7.2. Names of some places of South Kamrupconnected to Religious and Cultural Shrines:

The religious and cultural shrines in the form of Temples, Devalayas, Thans, Satras, Dargahsand Churches play an important role in the gradual growth of a place and its naming. The

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[vii]Parsuram: He was the Rabha chief which Mirza Nathan frequently mention in his book "Baharistan-i- Ghaibi". He fought very bravely in the Battle of Tiniduar against the Mughal forces.

[viii]Maroi Puja: The people of South Kamrup worship Goddess Manasha to relieve them for the fear of serpent, epidemics and other natural calamities in this puja which is generally followed in the fifth day of the new moon of the Sravan month

primitive believes of different forms as wellas the early medieval believes of Sakta- Saiva cult and finally the Vaisnavite movement contributed to the growth of a number of shrines. The initial establishment of a religious shrine followed by the cultural activities makes a place important (Phukan, 2001, p-231).In early and medieval periods cultural activities were exercised and performed in the religious shrines. In the surroundings of these shrines several villages grew up and a new set of activities attached in which led to naming of a place and its importance. Actually an unknown place got its prominence after the affixation of the religious shrines.

Aunihatiis situated in the Palashbari Revenue Circle of South Kamup. During the reign of Ahom King PramattaSimha, various lands were gifted to the Satradhikaras of Majuli in different parts of Assam. Once king PramattaSingha also granted lands to the Satradhikara of AuniatiSatra in the South Kamrupa region and constructed a 'hati' or 'dol' there and hence from that time onwards this entire place is known as 'Aunihati'. (Kalita, 2005, p-21).

Samaria is situated in the Boko Revenue Circle of Kamrup district which is 12 KM away from Boko. Once upon a time this place was inhabitant by the Rabhas. According to the Rabhalanguage 'sai' means salt and 'ria' means scarcity. Therefore, 'Sairia' was 'the place where people face the scarcity of salt'. Later this 'Sairia' came to be known as Samaria (Nath, 2005, p.42-43). However another legend informs that when Madhaba Deva visited the South Kamrup region for the spread of Vaishnavite religion once he stayed for sometimes in this region. In the middle of the village he and his followers taking some rest in a Sam tree. Madhaba Deva mentions that when Sri Krishna visited Kamarupa to defeat King Naraka, he stayed for sometime in this holy tree. Later Madhabadeva established a Satra in that holy Sam tree and hence this place is known as Samaria (Adhikari, 2003, pp-19-20).

Chandikais situated in the Chhaygaon Revenue Circle of Kamrup district. According to Purana, another name of Goddess Durga is Chandika. Goddess Durga assumed her another Chandika incarnation to destruct the AsuraMahisha. People naming the region where Goddess Durga assumed her Chandika form and constructed a devalaya where devotees pray and the place is now called as Chandika (Das, 1998, p.17).

Sikarhatiis now situated in the Palashbari Revenue Circle of Kamrup district which is almost 12 km away from Palashbari. Earlier this place was known as 'Silpota' because when Madhabdeba visited South Kamrup for the spread of Vaishnavism, once he stayed in this place and tied up his boat in a huge sil (stone) therefore this place was earlier known as Silpota and the Satra named as SilpotaSatra. During the reign of Ahom King Shiva Singha this satra got the Devottar land and a dol i.e. Hati. Therefore, this Satra was later named as Sikarhati in the memory of Shiva Singha and his gifted Hati i.e. ShivarHati>Sikarhati (Choudhury, 2002, p.12).

Khoraparais situated in the Palashbari Revenue Circle. Here in these region two brothers namely Khora and Ani first established a satra. As this satra was first construct by Khora, therefore in his memory this village is known as Khorapara and entire satra is known as KhoraparaSatra (Das, 1980, p.45).

7.3. Names of some places of South Kamrupconnected with History:

In some cases historical events, incidents, wars etc also played an important role in formation of naming process in a particular region. From centuries South Kamrup region remains as a centre of political events where Ahoms, Koches, Mughals along with the local chieftains tried to established their influence there. Therefore these events or activities where it happens, people of that area connected it with

those historical events or the heroes of those particular happenings.

Lukiis now situated in the Boko Revenue Circle of South Kamrup. Once it was an independent feudal state of Assam. According to some legends, the earlier name of Luki was Kulung. The last king of the Kulung kingdom was Pokajaluk. Due to the affairs with his own sister, Pokajaluk was criticized by his subjects. Therefore, one day he left his kingdom. As the king was suddenly hide, hence his kingdom was popularly known as Luki (Adhikari, 2003, pp-32-33)

Moniariis at present situated under the Palashbari Revenue Circle. 'Baharistan- i- Ghaibi' of Mirza Nathan describe that when Nathan prepared to attack Deshrani and Barduar kingdom he constructed several military forts in the present Palashbari region. One such fort was constructing three kilometer away of present Mirza area. This fort was named as 'Minari'. The Persian word 'Minari' means fort. When the Mughals lose a battle in 1619 in the hands of Ahoms, they left this fort. As this fort was abundant forever by the Mughals, the local people first called this place as 'MinariEri'. Later it is known as Moniari. (Kalita, 2002, p-31)

7.4. Names of some places of South Kamrup related to Water-bodies:

Jiyakuris situated in the Chhaygaon Revenue Circle of Kamrup district. In Lower Assam 'kur' means a pond or a tank. It is said that this village was established in the remote past centering a big 'kur' which is still there. It is called 'jiya' means alive and so the village where the pond is situated known as Jiyakur (Kumari, p-55)

Rajapukhuriis situated in the Nahira region of Palashbari Revenue Circle. The legendary King Arimatta during his reign constructs various ponds in his kingdom for public welfare. One big pond was also constructed in the Nahira region. As the king construct the pukhuri means pond hence this

pond and its adjacent place is called as Rajapukhuri (Nath, 2002, p-34)

Gangapukhuriis situated in the Rangamati area of the Palashbari Revenue Circle. King Arimatta also constructed a pond in this region. As its water is pure like mighty river Ganga hence this pond and the region is called as Gangapukhuri (Nath, 2002, p-37).

7.5 Names of some places of South Kamruprelated to Flora and Fauna:

Since the very beginning i.e. from hunting gathering age, mankind and nature has closely connected with each other. The evolution of hunter-gatherers to agricultural societies contacts humans with the plants and animals. Therefore a large number of place names are associated with the flora and fauna from the very beginning. Various place names of South Kamrup region is also derived from the flora and fauna.

7.5.1 Flora:

Once South Kamrup region was covered with plenty of forests and trees, hence people of that area naming their living villages with various kinds of trees. Such as-

Palashbariis situated 26.9 km away from Guwahati and one of the important commercial as well as historical places of South Kamrup. From medieval period this place was considered as one of the commercial spot where tribes of Garo hills purchase and sell their products with the people of plains. Apart from that this place was one of the important strategic point which resulted several rounds of wars took place between the Ahoms, Mughals and Koches and later with the British. Regarding the toponymy of Palashbari, the word itself comprises two words i.e. 'Palash' means a tree which bears reddish flowers (Scientific Name-Butea Frondosa) and 'bari' refers to a land of settlement. A availability of large 'Palash' trees in the vicinity of the region indicates that people

of this might naming this place in the name of those trees (Sharma, 2005, p-63).

Jharobori is situated in the Palashbari Revenue Circle of Kamrup (Rural) district which is 34.4 km away from Guwahati. The word Jharobari is the combination of two Assamese words i.e. 'Jhar' means 'jungles or forests where reeds are grows' and the 'bori' means a 'wastelands'. Before the human settlement, this place was remains as wastelands which are covered by reeds and jungles. After establishing village this place is named as Jharobari (Nath, 2002, p-43).

Jambari is situated in the Chhaygaon Revenue Circle of Kamrup (Rural) district. The Assamese word Jambari is comprises of two words 'Jam' means Jamun tree (Scientific name-SyzygiumCumini) and 'bari' refers to 'a land of settlement'. The existence of Jamun trees in this village indicates that people might naming this place as 'Jamorbari' which later corrupt the word as Jambari (Rabha, 2018, p-22).

7.5.2 Fauna:

The utility of the animal world to mankind is obvious. From the wild stage of humankind, animals had close connections with human beings as a source of foods, predators etc. After the domestication of animals the link between animal world and human beings became even closer. People carried agriculture with the help of animals from early times. as region like Assam is mostly dependence on farming and agriculture, hence animal world lent profusely in the naming of places (Bhattacharya, 1984, p-56). Like other parts of Assam, people of South Kamrup also naming their habitual place with animal world.

Koamari is located in the Chhaygaon Revenue Circle. The word Koamari is the combination of two words i.e. 'Koa' and 'mari'. In South Kamrupi dialect the 'Kawoi' fish is called as 'Koa'. 'Kawoi' is a muddy fish which scientific name is *Anabas* and the word 'mari' refers to catch and kill. When DakshinKuliyaAtoi stayed in

this area for the spread of Vaishnavism, one rainy night a huge number of Kawoi fish entered in their tent. The disciples of DakshinKuliaAtoi catch those fishes and eat them. When Atoi get to know about this incident he was very unhappy and later named this area as Kawoimari. With the passes of time this name was later denotes as Koamari (Kalita, 2002, p-02).

Sapartari is situated in the Palashbari Revenue Circle of Kamrup (Rural) district. The word Sapartari is the combination of two words i.e. 'Saap' meaning snake and 'tari' refers to small settlement. Legends indicates that Goddess Manasha[ix] trained all her disciples i.e. the snakes in this place before attacking the capital city of ChandoSadagar[x] i.e. Champak Nagar. As this small area was used for training the snakes henceforth it was named as Sapartari (Thakuria, 2019, p-24).

8.0 Conclusion:

By summarizing the above works it is clear that the place name studies of the South Kamrup region reveals a number of points in the social, political, economic, religious as well as the linguistic influence of the area. This work provides a glimpse of light about the geography of the South Kamrup region through the ages. Apart from that it reflects how the hills and the mountains speak the geographical as well as strategic importance of the region from centuries through the study of 'oronymy'. The development of *Satra* institutions and *Sakti Pithas* helps us to understand the religious influence of the region through the study of the place-names.

The place names like Mirza Pahar, Rani Pahar, Luki, Moniarietc of South Kamrup reveals the history of the region. Without studying the

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[ix]Goddess Manasha: Manasha is the goddess of snake and also the daughter of Lord   Shiva.
[x]Chando Sadagar: Legendary merchant of Champak Nagar i.e. present Chhaygaon. His fighting with Goddess Manasha as well as the episode of Beula- Lakhinder influenced the history of South Kamrup.

toponymy of Mirza and Rani, people might lose the importance of the culture and history left by the Mughals as well as the Ahoms into this area.

Assam is often called as the 'Land of rivers'. The South Kamrup region is not exception of this. The place names like Gangapukhuri helps us to understand the faiths and beliefs of the people of South Kamrup as this place is connected with holy river Ganges. Apart from that it also reflects the culture and history of the area that flows from generation to generation.

The coexisting of humans with the animal worlds is inseparable from the evolutions of human beings. This co-habitation is also reflects in the place names. The place names like Kowemari, Sapartarietc proves the influence of animals in people's life of the South Kamrup. It also shows how human beings depend on the animal world. It helps in connecting the dark history of the region which comes out only through the place name study. It provides a window through which we can see the whole history of human settlement of the region. In this regard George R. Stewart rightly mentions that "the place names are passed from one generation to generation, even without the aid of writing."

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