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## **From Summit to Valley: The Centennial Journey of Assam Secretariat's Metamorphosis**

**Dr. Mohd. Shakir Hussain Choudhury**

Assistant Professor, Department of History, Karimganj College, Karimganj, Assam, India

Email: [shakirtameem@gmail.com](mailto:shakirtameem@gmail.com)

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### **Abstract**

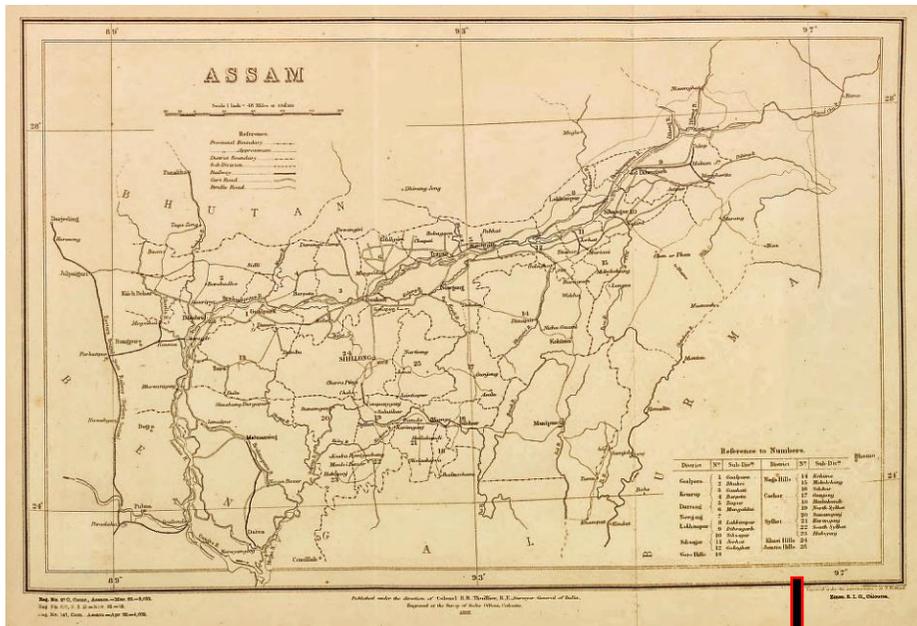
*Over the past century, the Assam Secretariat has witnessed a profound metamorphosis, symbolized by its transition from a summit to a valley. This paper explores the historical trajectory of the Assam Secretariat's administrative evolution, tracing its journey from its inception atop a hill to its present-day existence in the plains. Initially established at a high point, serving as the nucleus of governance amidst panoramic vistas, the secretariat embodied the region's administrative aspirations. However, as time progressed, factors such as accessibility, infrastructure demands, and political shifts prompted a reevaluation of its geographical placement. This paper explores the historical relocation and subsequent evolution of the Assam Secretariat, tracing its administrative metamorphosis from the plains to the hilltops. The evolution of the Assam Secretariat's administration unfolded in five distinct stages from 1874 to 1947, each reflecting the political and constitutional growth of Assam. The paper delves into the strategic decisions and socio-political dynamics that influenced the relocation of the Assam Secretariat to a valley, symbolizing a shift in perspective and operational ethos. Through archival research, historical accounts, and scholarly analysis, it elucidates the catalysts behind this transformative process, highlighting the interplay between geography, governance, and societal needs. Furthermore, it examines the implications of this metamorphosis on administrative efficiency, public engagement, and regional development. By contextualizing the Assam Secretariat's journey within broader narratives of state-building, territorial governance, and urban development, the paper sheds light on the complex interrelations between physical space and bureaucratic functionality. It underscores the significance of adaptability and foresight in navigating the challenges of governance across temporal and spatial landscapes. Finally, this paper contributes to a nuanced understanding of administrative evolution in the context of regional history, governance paradigms, and socio-cultural dynamics.*

**Keywords:** Assam Secretariat, Summit, Metamorphosis, Evolution, Governance, Administrative History.

**Introduction:** Assam, which was officially divided into Bengal and Assam, saw its first Burmese invasion between 1823 and 1824 under the Provincial Government era. David Scott was a key figure in these turbulent times as the first Commissioner of Revenue and Circuit and the Governor General's agent on the North East Frontier. With the signing of the Treaty of Yandaboo in February 1826, which brought an end to the Burmese war, Assam was easily included into British Indian dominion. David Scott became the Commissioner of Assam again in 1828 and was also the Civil Commissioner of North East Rongpur. During the British Indian rule, David Scott set up two important offices in Guwahati, one for revenue and judicial concerns and the other for preserving political ties with Native Tribes. This demonstrated the extent of his authority [1].

During the Orissa Famine of 1866, the administrative environment came under close examination, highlighting the shortcomings of the then-current provincial government structure. The Secretary of State for India responded by suggesting a different organizational structure for these regions. In 1868, Governor General Sir John Lawrence again proposed the Chief Commissionership for Assam and Cachar, but on the basis of simplicity and economy. Jurisdiction in Assam is governed by four Acts that warrant consultation: Act VIII of 1874, which established the Commissionership of Assam; Acts I and VI of 1835, which respectively subjected Assam and Cachar to the authority of the Calcutta High Court; and Act XII of 1874, which brought Sylhet under the administration of the Chief Commissionership of Assam. The territories specified in the attached schedule have been placed under the direct administration of the Governor-General in Council, forming the Chief Commissionership of Assam, with the appointment of a Chief Commissioner. This Act aims to ensure the exercise of powers previously held by the Lieutenant-Governor and Board of Revenue of Bengal within these territories. All powers within the said territories, previously held by the Lieutenant-Governor or Board of Revenue under any law or regulation at the formation of the Chief Commissionership, are hereby transferred to the Governor-General in Council. The Governor-General in Council retains the authority to delegate any or all of these powers to the Chief Commissioner, with the ability to revoke such delegations as needed. This Act does not impede the Lieutenant-Governor's ability to finalize ongoing arrangements, particularly concerning compensation to Zamindars or other parties under Act No. XXII of 1869, Section Seven [2].

The announcement in the Indian Gazette on February 7, 1874, of distinct administration under a Chief Commissioner who reported directly to the Government of India, marked a momentous shift in the history of the region. The Chief Commissionership was taken over by Colonel R. H. Keatinge, V.C., C.S.I., Bombay Staff Corps, and the Commissioner's office was renamed the Secretariat. The establishment of the Assam Secretariat, with its headquarters located in Gauhati, signaled a significant turning point in the administrative history of the area.



(Source Report on the Administration of the Province of Assam (1892-93))

Fig 1: Jurisdiction of Assam Commissionerate, 1891-92 (Published under the direction of Colonel

H.R. Thuillier, R.E., Surveyor General of India. Engraved at the Survey of India Offices, Calcutta. 1891) [3]

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this study is to explore the historical foundations and the evolution of the Assam Secretariat from its establishment in 1874 to the eve of India's independence in 1947. The study aims to investigate the decision-making process behind the relocation of the Assam Secretariat from Guwahati to Shillong in 1874 and to analyze the subsequent impact of this strategic relocation on the administrative landscape of Assam. Through a comprehensive examination of the five distinct stages of evolution, the study seeks to understand how the Assam Secretariat adapted to the changing political and constitutional environment, reflecting the evolving philosophy and needs of the times.

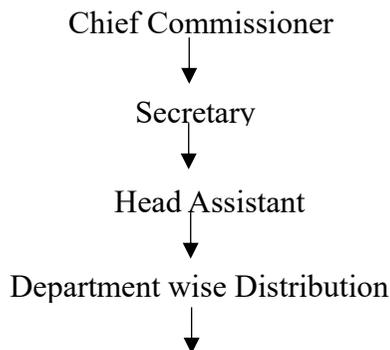
**Objectives:**

- 1) To evaluate the decision to move the capital in the broader context of Assam's administrative history, highlighting how it reflected both practical considerations such as accessibility and climate and a forward-looking approach, considering Shillong's potential for growth and development.

District	N <sup>o</sup>	Sub-Division	District	N <sup>o</sup>	Sub-Division	
Goalpara	1	Goalpara	Naga Hills	14	Kohima	
	2	Dhubri		15	Mokokchang	
Kamrup	3	Gauhati	Cachar	16	Sitchar	
	4	Barpeta		17	Gunjong	
Darrang	5	Tezpur	Sylhet	18	Hailakandi	
	6	Mangaldai		19	North Sylhet	
				20	Sunamganj	
				21	Karimganj	
22	South Sylhet					
23	Habiganj					
Nowgong	7		Khasi Hills	24		
Lakhimpur	8	Lakhimpur				
	9	Dibrugarh	Jaintia Hills	25		
Sibsagar	10	Sibsagar				
	11	Jorhat				
	12	Golaghat				
Garo Hills	13					

- 2) To trace the evolution of the Administration of the Assam Secretariat from 1874 to 1947, examining the five distinct stages and their reflection of the political and constitutional growth of Assam.
- 3) To analyze each stage of the Assam Secretariat's evolution, including the primary focus, significant changes in structure and functions, and the response to changing stratagems and state philosophies.
- 4) To assess the constructive role of the Assam Secretariat in state affairs, particularly the transition from a focus on maintaining order to a more active and constructive role in state matters, as reflected in the evolving administrative landscape.

**Assam Secretariat: From Inception to Operation:** In 1873, the Government of India decided to separate the districts, now constituting the Assam Province, from the administration of the Government of Bengal, forming them into a Chief Commissionership. Mr. HOBHOUSE, member council of the Governor General of India, proposed a Bill (known as Assam Chief Commissioner's power Bill) to transfer the powers previously held by the Lieutenant-Governor and Board of Revenue of Bengal to the Chief Commissionership of Assam. He clarified that the Bill was largely procedural, as the establishment of the Chief Commissionership was based on executive authority. However, certain authorities held by the Lieutenant-Governor and the Board of Revenue were governed by existing laws or regulations. Therefore, passing a law was necessary to fully implement the establishment of the Chief Commissionership of Assam. Consequently, the Chief Commissioner began working with a Secretariat that was composed of a single secretary and thin finance. In 1874, the Secretariat consisted of three departments: General, Judicial, and Revenue, in addition to two auxiliary departments, Native and Records. Only 33 people, ranging from Head Assistant to Sweepers, were authorized to work for the Assam Secretariat at Gauhati. The Secretariat was set up in 1874 as follows [4]



**Table 1: Initial Structure and Departments**

General Department		Judicial Department		Revenue Department	
Name	No of Post.	Name	No. of Post	Name	No. of Post
Head Clerk	01	Clerk	02	Head Clerks	01
Assistant	04	Hospital Assistant	01	Assistant	04
		Duftries	03	Sheristadar	01
		Jamadar	01	Mohurirs	04
		Peons	08		
		Bhistee	01		
		Sweeper	01		

**Relocation to Shillong: Reasons and Implications:**

The Assam Secretariat's relocation from Guwahati to Shillong in 1874, a mere 41 days after its establishment, was a decision rooted in multiple considerations [5].

- 1) The decision to relocate the Assam Secretariat from Guwahati to Shillong in 1874 was primarily driven by the geographical proximity of Shillong to other northeastern regions, facilitating better accessibility and connectivity.
- 2) The relocation aimed to enhance accessibility, making it easier to administer the entire region from Shillong, as opposed to the relative remoteness of Guwahati.
- 3) The move was anticipated to bring about significant communication improvements, streamlining administrative operations and governance in the region.
- 4) Shillong's salubrious climate played a significant role in the decision-making process, offering favorable conditions for the administrative hub.
- 5) Shillong's strategic advantages, including its potential as a sanatorium and its political significance, played a vital role in the decision-making process, contributing to the Assam Secretariat's relocation.
- 6) The relocation aimed to create an administrative hub that would better serve the needs of the region, thereby enhancing administrative efficiency.

The shift prompted an immediate need for additional staff, resulting in a continuous increase in the Assam Secretariat's establishment, from the initial 33 to 39 within the first ten months, underscoring the significance of Shillong as the chosen administrative hub. The decision to move the capital not only reflected the practical considerations of accessibility and climate but also showcased a forward-looking approach, considering Shillong's potential for growth and development. This strategic relocation marked a transformative moment in the administrative history of Assam, laying the foundation for the Assam Secretariat's continued evolution and adaptation to the changing needs of the region.

**Table 2: Establishment Snapshot: Assam Secretariat Provincial Office as of April 30, 1874, Operational from May 1, 1874**

General Dept.	Judicial Dept.	Revenue Dept.	Record Dept.	Copyists	Secretary's Orderlies	Servants	Assistant Secretary's Orderlies
Head Assistant	Head Assistant	Head Assistant	Record Keeper	One Copyists	One Jamadar	Book Binder	Three Chaprassies
Head Clerk	Head Clerk	Head Clerk	Assistant Record Keeper Recorder	Two Copyists	Three Chaprassies	Two Duftries	
Second Clerk	Second Clerk	Second Clerk	Registrar	Four Copyists		Six office Chaprassies	
Third Clerk		Third Clerk	Assistant Registrar	Hospital Assistant		One Sweeper	
		Fourth Clerk	Despatcher			One Classi	
		Fifth Clerk	Draughtmen				

In February 1874, a significant administrative reorganization occurred in Assam, bringing several districts under the direct authority of the Governor-General in Council. This move aimed to streamline governance and improve management efficiency. The inaugural executive administration of the Assam Commission was established shortly after, with officers appointed to oversee the governance of ten districts, including Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar, Lakhimpur, and others. Lieutenant-Colonel R. H. Keatinge, V.C., C.S.I., became the first Chief Commissioner, leading the newly formed Chief Commissionership. Subsequent proclamations and notifications expanded the province, incorporating Sylhet, thereby completing the province's contemporary territorial framework. These districts encompassed a total area of 41,798 square miles and had a population of 4,132,019 [6].

**Provisional Arrangement of the Assam Commission:** Each of the ten districts within the province is overseen by a Deputy Commissioner serving as its principal executive officer, supported by Assistant Commissioners and Extra Assistant Commissioners. Their roles mirror those carried out by officials with similar titles in other provinces. Furthermore, there is the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, primarily responsible for overseeing all survey and settlement activities. Additionally, they are tasked with gathering trade and agricultural data, managing survey schools, and handling related responsibilities [7]. The Assam Commission was initially organized with the following officers:

- 1) 1 Chief Commissioner
- 2) 1 Judicial Commissioner (or judge) of Upper Assam
- 3) 10 Deputy Commissioners for the ten districts, with the Chief Commissioner's Secretary placed on the 3rd grade
- 4) 12 Assistant Commissioners

The sanction for transferring the district of Sylhet to the chief commissionership of Assam was received, finalizing the territorial boundaries of the new province. Attention turned to determining the permanent administrative structure for the entire chief commissionership and identifying necessary additions to the Commission's strength. The Governor-General in Council had decided to maintain the existing arrangement, whereby the High Court at Calcutta oversaw the administration of justice, serving as the Supreme Court of Appeal. Given Assam's characteristics—limited revenue, sparse population, and light general workload—there was no need for a Judicial Commissioner. The Chief Commissioner, expressing a willingness to undertake departmental inspection duties, would oversee the entire administration directly. The Deputy Commissioners would report directly to the Chief Commissioner, without the involvement of a Judicial Commissioner or Commissioners of Divisions. To alleviate minor administrative burdens on the Chief Commissioner, the Secretariat staff would be reinforced by adding an Assistant Secretary. To address the executive administration needs of Sylhet, the Commission has made the following additional appointments [8].

**Table 3: Appointments and salaries for the executive administration of Sylhet in Commission.**

Position	Grade	Salary		
		Rs.	A.	P.
<b>Deputy Commissioner</b>	1st grade	1,833	5	4
<b>Assistant Commissioner</b>	1st grade	800	0	0
<b>Magistrate Collector</b>	2nd grade	Rs. 1,800		
<b>Joint Magistrate</b>	2nd grade	Rs. 700		

The judge for Sylhet and Cachar was selected by the Governor General in Council from among the covenanted civilians in Bengal who had opted for the judicial career path, as outlined in Home Department letter No. 1452, dated April 8, 1873. The position was held by a first-class judge, whom the Chief Commissioner wished to retain. Consequently, the salary was set at Rs. 2,500 temporarily, with one appointment deducted from the 1st grade judgementships in Bengal as compensation. However, upon the incumbent's departure, the salary was to be reduced to Rs. 2,000.

The Chief Commissioner emphasized the need for additional staff officers in Cachar. Consequently, the Governor General in Council approved the addition of one appointment to the number of assistant commissioners of the 2nd grade. This officer would replace the joint magistrate typically assigned to a regulation district and participate in civil judicial responsibilities. Additionally, to facilitate the Chief Commissioner in filling temporary

vacancies from his own reserve, the Governor General in Council directed an increase in the establishment of assistant commissioners of the 3rd grade from three to seven. With these adjustments, the sanctioned complement of the Assam Commission would comprise thirty-three officers, excluding the Chief Commissioner [9].

**Table 4: Administrative Roles and Personnel**

Position	Name	District	
<b>Chief Commissioner of Assam</b>	Col. R. H Keatinge		
<b>Secretary to the Chief Commissioner</b>	H. Luttman Johson		
<b>Assistant Secretary to the Chief Commissioner</b>	Vacant		
<b>Judge of Upper Assam</b>	Col.W. Agnew		
<b>Judge of Sylhet</b>	Mr. H Muspratt C.S		
<b>Deputy Commissioner: Grade I</b>	Col. H.S Bivar	Khasi Hills	
	Lt. Col. A.K Comber	Goalpara	
	Lt. Col. J. M Graham	Darrang	
	Mr. A.L Clay	C.S	
<b>Deputy Commissioner: Grade II</b>	Lt. Col. T. Lamb	Kamrup	
	Major J.F. Sherer	Nawgong	
<b>Deputy Commissioner: Grade III</b>	Major A. E. Campbell	Sibsagar	
	Major W. C.S. Clerks	Lakhimpur	
	Mr. O.G.R. Mcwilliam	Naga Hills	
<b>Deputy Commissioner: Grade IV</b>	Captain W.J. Williamson	Garro Hills	
	Captain J. Butler		
<b>Assistant Commissioner</b>	<b>Grade-I</b>	<b>Grade-II</b>	<b>Grade-III</b>
	Captain A. N Phillips	Mr. P.T. Carnegie	Captain J. Johnstone
	Major W.H.J. Lance	Captain M.O. Boyd	Mr. H. R. Mathews
	Mr. W.O.A. Beckett	Captain H.J. Peet.	Mr. J.K. Wight-C. S
	Mr. Arthur Forbes-C. S	Captain T. B Michell	Mr. G. Godfrey-C. S
	Mr. A.C Campbell	Mr. G. H. Damant, C. S	Lt. W.A. Holcombe
		Captain E. N. D. LaTouche	Lt. H. St. P. Maxwell
			Lt. M.A. Gray

*(Source: Compiled from Allen, William H., and Co. Allen's Indian Mail and Official Gazette, 1875)*

**The Administrative Evolution of the Assam Secretariat (1874-1947):** The evolution of the Administration of Assam Secretariat unfolded in five distinct stages from 1874 to 1947, each reflecting the political and constitutional growth of Assam.

- 1) Inception and Pragmatic Growth (1874-1905)
- 2) Continued Pragmatic Growth (1905-1912)
- 3) Transformation Period (1912-1921)
- 4) Further Changes in Structure (1921-1937)
- 5) Period Leading to Independence (1937-1947)

Throughout these stages, the Assam Secretariat emerged not as a product of individual wisdom but as an evolving entity reflecting the changing philosophy and needs of the times, particularly transitioning from a focus on maintaining order to a more constructive role in state affairs.

**Stage 1: Inception and Pragmatic Growth (1874-1905):** During its initial stage, spanning from 1874 to 1905, the Secretariat underwent gradual development, aligning itself with the prevailing philosophy of individualism and laissez-faire. Throughout this period, the primary emphasis was placed on police functions, maintaining law and order, and safeguarding individual property. These 31 years were characterized by exploratory efforts, aimed at shaping the Secretariat into a more defined entity. Between 1885 and 1894, the recorded receipts and issues ranged from 22,397 to 50,767, respectively, while the Secretariat employed between 30 to 46 clerks. Notably, during this period, the Secretariat underwent a reorganization of its procedures in 1890-91, replacing the Bundle system with a flat file system modeled after the foreign office of the Government of India. This transition was facilitated by the assistance of the Record-keeper from the Record Department, which was deemed sufficient to manage the new workflow within the Assam Secretariat [10].

From the establishment of the province in 1874 until 1880, Assam did not have any Commissioners. However, in June of 1880, a commissioner was appointed for the six districts of the Assam Valley, with the position being merged with that of Judge in these districts. The Commissioner was granted the powers typically held by a Commissioner of Division in Bengal. In the remaining districts of the province, including the Surma Valley and the Hill districts, the Chief Commissioner personally carried out the responsibilities of a Commissioner of Division [11]. In 1880, the nucleus of the intermediary function emerged with the creation of the post of Superintendent, who assumed overall control of the Secretariat office establishment. This development replaced the Head Assistant System and served as the primary channel of communication between officers and assistants within the department. By 1896, the Assam Secretariat had expanded its clerical staff from 46 to 60, incurring a total monthly expenditure of Rs. 4,777. It was notable that during this period, the working strength within the Assam Secretariat exceeded that of the Central Provincial Secretariat, which operated on a two-tiered structure comprising an upper and lower tier. The upper tier consisted of officers directly linked to the lower tier of assistants, with the Head Assistant serving as the liaison. Notably, the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary functioned as two independent officers for all practical purposes.

In 1890-91, the Government of India proposed transferring the Chittagong Hill Division from Bengal to Assam. This proposal resulted in the creation of an enlarged province called Eastern Bengal and Assam, with Lt. Colonel appointed as its head and Dacca designated as the capital. Chittagong served as the subsidiary headquarters. This administrative reorganization effectively brought together the tea-growing districts of Bengal and Assam under a unified administration. In 1905, the position of the Registrar was established, endowing him with increased responsibilities, powers, and functions to support the Superintendent. Consequently, prior to the merger of the Assam Secretariat, its composition consisted of one Superintendent, six Head Assistants, and fifty Clerks. The new province was established with the status of Lt. Governorship, encompassing the Chittagong, Dacca,

and Rajshahi Divisions of Bengal, along with the District of Malda, the State of Hill Tipperah, and the existing Chief Commissioner of Assam. It was decided that Darjeeling would remain part of Bengal, and thus, the province was named "Eastern Bengal and Assam". Covering an area of 106,540 square miles and a population of 31 million, of which 18 million were Muslims and 12 million were Hindus, the province had a Legislative Council and a two-member Board of Revenue. It was divided into two compact self-contained provinces, Bengal and Assam. In accordance with this, the then Chief Commissioner of Assam, Sir Bamfylde Fuller, reorganized the Secretariat for the proposed administration on October 16, 1905[12]. The total strength of the new Secretariat administration comprised 97 clerks and 84 menials. Table 5. provides a chronological overview of the Chief Commissioners who governed Assam during the specified periods, showing transitions and changes in leadership over time [13].

**Table 5: Chief Commissioners of Assam (1874 - 1905)**

Name	From	To	Remarks
<b>Colonel R. H. Keatinge, V.C., C.S.I.</b>	7th February 1874	21st June 1878	
<b>Sir S. C. Bayley, K.C.S.I.</b>	22nd June 1878	1st March 1881	
<b>Mr. C. A. Elliott, C.S.I.</b>	2nd March 1881	7th July 1883	
	7th July 1883	7th October 1883	Officiating
<b>C. A. Elliott, C.S.I.</b>	7th October 1883	23rd February 1885	
<b>W. E. Ward</b>	23rd February 1885	31st October 1887	Officiating
<b>D. Fitzpatrick, C.S.I.</b>	31st October 1887	15th July 1889	
<b>J. Westland, C.S.I.</b>	15th July 1889	22nd October 1889	
<b>J. W. Quinton, C.S.I.</b>	22nd October 1889	24th March 1891	
<b>Brigadier-General Collett, C.B.</b>	24th March 1891	27th May 1891	Officiating
<b>Mr. W. E. Ward, C.S.I.</b>	27th May 1891		
<b>William Erskine Ward</b>	1891	1896	
<b>Sir Henry John Stedman Cotton</b>	1896	1902	
<b>Sir Joseph Bampfylde Fuller</b>	1902	1905	

**Stage 2: Continued Pragmatic Growth (1905-1912):** During the second stage, spanning from 1905 to 1912, the Assam Secretariat continued to experience pragmatic growth, adapting to the evolving needs of the state. However, it soon became evident that the existing strength of the Secretariat was insufficient [14]. By 1906, the number of clerks had increased to 85, and the number of support staff, known as menials, rose to 41. The Issue, Recording, and Library sections remained distinct, as before. Additionally, the new Secretariat office was divided into three departments, including the Chief Secretary along with three Registers. In July 1906, P. C. Lyon was appointed as the first Chief Secretary. Under his leadership, the number of clerks increased to 95, and the number of menials rose to 54. There was no further increase in staff strength until 1912 when the partition was annulled. However, the division of the Secretariat establishment between Dacca and

Shillong proved to be disadvantageous, as Shillong was ultimately abandoned as its headquarters in 1911-12. Table 6 summarizes the lieutenant governors of East Bengal and Assam during the period from 1905 to 1912. These individuals served as the chief executive officers of East Bengal and Assam during the region's partition and subsequent governance under British administration. Before 1874, Assam was under the administration of Bengal. However, in that year, it was established as a distinct Province with a Chief Commissioner. This setup continued until 1905 when Lord Curzon divided Bengal and created a new Province by merging Eastern Bengal with Assam, appointing a Lieutenant Governor [15].

**Table 6: Chronology of Lieutenant Governors: East Bengal and Assam (1905–1912)**

<b>Lieutenant Governor</b>	<b>Term</b>
Sir Joseph Bampfylde Fuller	1905–1906
Lancelot Hare	1906–1911
Charles Stuart Bayley	1911–1912

**Stage 3: Transformation Period (1912-1921):** The third stage, from 1912 to 1921, marked a significant period of transformation as the Secretariat responded to changing stratagems and state philosophies. The state's constructive role became more pronounced, although not fully realized, particularly during and after the Second World War in 1939.

Beginning April 1st, 1912, Assam underwent reconstitution as a distinct province, with Sir Archdale Earle, K.C.I.E., assuming the role of Chief Commissioner. Recognizing the necessity for the province's proposed development, it became evident that the existing administrative staff was insufficient [16]. Consequently, the number of Government Secretaries was increased from two to three, along with augmenting the number of Department Heads and overall staff expansion. These measures proved prescient as the subsequent rapid development of the province validated their effectiveness [17]. After the capital was moved from Shillong to Dacca, W. J. Raid, the Chief Secretary of Eastern Bengal and Assam, provided an annual ad-hoc fund of Rs. 1.00 crores for the Assam Secretariat's expenses. The grading of clerks into Upper Division and Lower Division based on the nature of their duties and responsibilities was implemented. Additionally, a system was established comprising two Secretaries and one Registrar for the entire Secretariat, with a pay scale of Rs. 400-20-600. The minimum pay for the Nazir and Librarian positions was set at Rs. 40 per month. The staff for the new Assam Secretariat was recruited from among clerks of the Eastern Bengal and Assam Secretariat. Between 1913 and 1914, both receipts and issues saw significant increases across all branches. The offices of two Commissioners, Inspector General, and Inspector of Civil Hospitals were reinforced. In 1915, following recommendations from the Second Secretary A. W. Botham and Chief Secretary B.C. Allen, the Finance and Municipal Departments were strengthened. On October 25th, under the Municipal Department, three main branches - Education, Local Boards, and Municipalities - were established. Additionally, one Upper Division Assistant for the Financial Department, one Lower Division Assistant for the Municipal Department, and two Lower Division Assistants, one each for the Record and Recording Sections, were sanctioned. By 1919,

there were 6 Head Assistants, 18 Upper Division clerks, and 45 Lower Division clerks, totaling 69 ministerial staff across all departments of the Assam Secretariat. The Secretariat included a Chief Secretary, a Second Secretary, two Under Secretaries, and a Registrar. Table 7. provides details on the individuals who served as chief commissioners and their respective terms of office during this period.

**Table 7: Chief Commissioners of Assam Province (1912–1921)**

Chief Commissioner	Term served
Sir Archdale Earle	1912–1918
Sir Nicholas Dodd Beatson-Bell	1918–3 Jan 1921

**Stage 4: Further Changes in Structure (1921-1937):** During the fourth stage, spanning from 1921 to 1937, significant changes were implemented in the structure and functions of the Assam Secretariat to accommodate the evolving administrative landscape. This period marked the eve of Dyarchy, during which four manilas were appointed for each Member and Minister, along with four stenographers for the four Members of the Government, to meet the increased workload of the Legislative Council.

The implementation of Dyarchy necessitated the reorganization of the Secretariat for efficient management. As a result, the Secretariat was divided into six departments in 1937:

- 1) **Appointment and Political Department:** This department handled subjects related to appointments, political matters, Assam Rifles, military affairs, passports, and certificates of identity.
- 2) **Judicial and General Department:** Responsible for the administration of justice, transfers, powers of Munchis and Magistrates, civil police, jails, forms, Arms Act, explosives, excise, animals, holidays, newspapers, and printing press.
- 3) **Revenue Department:** Dealt with settlement, forests, wards estate, mines and minerals, fisheries, factories, books, and maps.
- 4) **Finance Department:** Managed accounts, budgeting, re-appropriation, loan accounts, pensions, local audits, income tax, stamps, salt, and customs.
- 5) **Local Self-Government and Industries Department:** Oversaw municipalities, local boards, agriculture, veterinary services, industries, cooperative societies, trade, and statistics.
- 6) **Education and Sanitation Department:** Handled education, European education, portfolios, medical services, sanitation, lunatic asylums, registration, ethnography, census, circuit houses, dak bungalows, stores, ecclesiastical matters, and gazetteers.

Additionally, new posts were created, including two Head Assistants, three Upper Division Assistants, two Lower Division Assistants, one typist, four peons, and two record suppliers. These changes aimed to streamline the operations of the Assam Secretariat to better serve the administrative needs of the region. The introduction of Constitutional Reforms in 1921 placed significant strain on the Assam Secretariat. For instance, the volume of issues and receipts surged from 55,000 to 73,000. The Legislative Council Questions and Resolutions further burdened the Secretariat. Consequently, after the implementation of Constitutional Reforms, the Chief Secretary assumed responsibility for

all reserved subjects, while the Second Secretary primarily handled transferred subjects, along with the revenue and forest departments. The increased number of development schemes necessitated by the reforms added to the workload of the Second Secretary. To address this, Governor J. H. Kerr and the Chief Secretary sanctioned the creation of a post for a Third Secretary. A. Phillipson, an officer of the Indian Civil Service (ICS), was appointed to this role on Special Duty in the Finance and Revenue Department on March 9, 1927. This led to the redistribution of work, resulting in the reorganization of the Finance Department into two departments: Budget and Account, including Statistical, and Finance Establishment. However, in 1928, the Finance Department was once again divided into two: Budget and Audit Department. In 1931-32, both the Retrenchment Committee and the Assam Resources and Retrenchment Committee of 1938-39 proposed the amalgamation of the Civil and Public Works Department (P.W.D.) Secretariats. This move aimed to alleviate the workload of the Chief Engineer of P.W.D. who also served as Secretary to the Government of Assam. However, the amalgamation of these two Secretariats was delayed until July 27, 1936, when it was agreed upon during a conference of Secretaries held in Shillong. This decision paved the way for the amalgamation of staff and created ample opportunities for promotion for Senior Assistants and capable junior clerks [18].

**Stage 5: Period Leading to Independence (1937-1947):** The fifth stage, spanning from 1937 to 1947, marked the period leading up to India's independence, characterized by ongoing adjustments in response to political and constitutional changes. During this period, the Secretariat of the Government of Assam was organized into offices, departments, and branches. Each department was overseen by a secretary, while branches, which were subdivisions of departments, were managed by the Head Assistant, who consulted with the Registrar. In 1937-1947, several departments were established under the Statutory Rules, including Home, Judicial and General, Revenue, Education, Finance (Audit), Finance (Budget), and Local Self-Government. On April 1, 1937, the Governor of Assam appointed a Secretary to the Government of Assam for each department. Additionally, an Excluded Areas Department was formed, increasing the number of secretaries from three to four. With the onset of Provincial Autonomy, the Governor himself was relieved of his special responsibilities under the Government of India Act 1935 and established a Civil Secretariat for the Governor, now known as the "Governor Secretariat".

A meeting of secretaries was convened on July 27, 1936, in Shillong to discuss the reorganization of the Assam Secretariat before the introduction of Provincial Autonomy. The following principles were agreed upon:

- 1) Minimize the distribution of subjects.
- 2) Assign each department to a minister.
- 3) Avoid increasing staff unless absolutely necessary in any department.
- 4) Transfer political works, especially those related to Excluded Areas and Natives, from the Chief Secretary to the Governor Secretariat.
- 5) Designate the Political Department as the Home Department, responsible for appointments, law, and other subjects.

After agreeing upon the above principles, the workload inevitably centered primarily around Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, Under Secretaries, and Assistant Secretaries. This led to an increase in the number of Assistants and clerical staff, resulting in significant and gradual expansion of administrative responsibilities, law and order enforcement, welfare initiatives, and other tasks across all departments. Consequently, the volume of work surged in all 17 departments of the Assam Secretariat, including Home, Judicial and General, Revenue, Education, Finance (Budget), Finance (Audit), Local Self-Government, and various branches such as Record, Issue, Establishment, Forms, Library, Confidential, Translator, Stenographer, Telephone, and leave reserve sections. On the Civil side, there were three Secretaries: Chief Secretary, Transferred Department Secretary, and Finance and Revenue Secretary. Additionally, there were two Under Secretaries and an Assistant Secretary in the Finance and Revenue Department. In April 1937, C. S. Mullan was appointed as the Secretary in the Education and Local Self-Government Department. In the Police branch of the Judicial Department, the post of Joint Secretary was initially created in the Assam Secretariat, later renamed as Joint Secretary in the Home Department. Mr. T. E. Furze became the first Joint Secretary in the newly created Home Department. Consequently, Agriculture, Cooperation, Industries, Veterinary, Registration, and Education were placed under the Secretary of Local Self-Government and overseen by three Ministers. Sri Siddeheswar Gohain, a Senior Extra Assistant Commissioner of Assam Civil Services from the Assamese community, was appointed as the first Deputy Secretary in the Department of Education and Local Self-Government through Notification No. 7039 H dated November 13, 1937. Additionally, the Assam Public Service Commission was established in 1937. During World War II, the surge in activities related to essential commodities, particularly in the field of Sericulture, prompted the creation of an Additional Secretary post in 1943, who also served as the Director of Industries. Simultaneously, in 1943, a new Supply Department was established with its own Secretary to oversee its operations [19].

To manage and coordinate post-war reconstruction and planning efforts, the Reconstruction Department was formed in 1944, led by a secretary. This department was later reconstituted as the Planning and Development Department in 1947. In response to wartime demands, a Joint Secretary post was established within the Home Department in 1944, with responsibilities including Civil Defense oversight. Additionally, a Deputy Secretary position was designated for the Supply Department. By 1947, the Supply Department was further reinforced with the creation of Under Secretary and Second Under Secretary roles. On August 13, 1947, the post of Additional Chief Secretary was introduced, with S. P. Desai appointed to the position. With India's attainment of independence in 1947, opportunities for rapid economic development emerged. Consequently, in October 1947, the Transport and Industry Department was established, led by a secretary. Furthermore, in December 1947, the Coordination Department was formed under a secretary, later transitioning into the Development Commissioner's office. The table 8 provides a chronological overview of the governors who served in Assam Province from 1921 to 1947, including any acting appointments, along with their respective terms of office [20].

**Table 8: Governors of Assam Province (1921–1947) [21]**

<b>Governor</b>	<b>Term of Office</b>
<b>Sir Nicholas Dodd Beatson-Bell</b>	3 Jan 1921 – 2 Apr 1921
<b>Sir William Sinclair Marris</b>	3 Apr 1921 – 10 Oct 1922
<b>Sir John Henry Kerr</b>	10 Oct 1922 – 28 Jun 1927
<b>Sir Egbert Laurie Lucas Hammond</b>	28 Jun 1927 – 11 May 1932
<b>Sir Michael Keane</b>	11 May 1932 – 4 Mar 1937
<b>Sir Robert Niel Reid</b>	4 Mar 1937 – 4 May 1942
<b>Henry Joseph Twynam (Acting)</b>	24 Feb 1938 – 4 Oct 1939
<b>Sir Andrew Gourlay Clow</b>	4 May 1942 – 4 May 1947
<b>Frederick Chalmers Bourne (Acting)</b>	4 Apr 1946 –?
<b>Henry Foley Knight (Acting)</b>	4 Sep 1946 – 23 Dec 1946
<b>Sir Muhammad Saleh Akbar Hydari</b>	4 May 1947 – 15 Aug 1947

**The Post-Independence Period (1947-1955):** During the post-Independence period from 1947 to 1950, the Assam Secretariat underwent significant organizational changes. Initially, in 1874, there was only one Secretary and 33 clerks for the entire Assam Secretariat. However, by 1947, this number had increased to nine Secretaries in the Civil Secretariat, including P.W.D. and the Governor Secretariat. In 1874, there were only three departments in the Secretariat, but by 1947-50, the number of departments had significantly increased. In 1955, the Secretariat of the Government of Assam was further divided into offices, departments, and branches, including Secretariat, General Administration, Printing and Stationery, Relief and Rehabilitation, Secretariat Administration, Town and Country Planning, and Tribal Areas and Welfare of Backward Classes Department. Each of these comprised two or more departments and was overseen by a secretary. The distribution of work within each department or branch was left to the discretion of the Superintendent, who reported to the Under Secretary, Assistant Secretary, or Registrar for confirmation of the specific duties assigned to each assistant. The Registrar served as the channel of communication between the office and the officers in all matters affecting office management, procedures, and routine affairs. The entire office establishment of the Secretariat was under the control of the Chief Secretary, with the Registrar directly in charge. The Registrar typically initiated all proposals, through whom all proposals for appointment, transfer, leave, etc., of non-gazetted ministerial and grade 4th staff were passed. These processes were regulated by rules published under notifications numbered APP. 31/51/14, APP. 31/51/17, and APP. 31/51/12 dated August 3, 1951, known as the Assam Secretariat Service Rules. Additionally, there was a Confidential Department under the Chief Secretary, with the Superintendent of the Confidential Branch responsible for safeguarding all confidential matters of the government. Therefore, until 1955, the distribution of ministerial staff in the Assam Civil Secretariat with departments was as outlined above. The provided data in table 9, presents the distribution of staff positions within the organization, along with their classification as permanent or temporary, and the

corresponding total number of positions. Additionally, it includes the scale of pay associated with each position [22].

**Table 9: Staff distribution and scale of pay**

Name of Post	Permanent	Temporary	Total	Scale of Pay
Superintendent	33	12	45	
Upper Division	130	130	260	Rs.200-10-240-(E. B)-20-300
Lower Division	215	160	375	Rs.75-6-105-(E. B)-7-140-(E. B)-7-175
Stenographer (Grade-I)	1	-	1	Rs.150-8-190-(E. B)-10-290-(E. B)-12-350
Stenographer (Grade-II)	8	23	31	
Selection Grade				
Typist	6	2	8	Rs. 100-5-110-6-140
Ordinary Typist	44	64	108	
Receptionist	-	1	1	Rs.100-6-130-(E. B)-7-200. Plus, special pay Rs.30
Record Suppliers	5	3	8	Rs.45-2-65
Record Sorters	2	-	-	Rs.32-2-45

The data in table 10. provides information about the distribution of staff positions within the organization, specifying the number of permanent and temporary positions for each role of Public work Department.

**Table 10: Staff Distribution of Permanent and Temporary Positions of Public work Department**

Name of Post	Permanent	Temporary	Total
Jamadar	1	3	4
Duftry	2	2	4
Office Peons	20	45	65

**Evolution of various Departments:** Until 1968, there were a total of 32 Departments. In 1953, the Forest Department was established, followed by the creation of the Veterinary Department in 1958, which was separated from the Agriculture Department. The Appointment Department underwent bifurcation into two entities known as Appointment (A) and Appointment (B) in 1955. The Organisation and Methods Division was established in October 1954, initially falling under the purview of the Planning and Development Department. By 1956, it came under the supervision of the Appointment Department, and starting from April 1958, the Commissioner Hill Division assumed control over this division. Eventually, in August 1963, the Organisation and Methods Division came under the leadership of a Director and subsequently took on the responsibility of managing the Secretariat Training School. Additionally, this division was tasked with providing secretarial support to the Administrative Reforms Committee and other similar committees [23].

The Co-operation Department was founded in 1958 as a separate entity after separating from the Rural Development Department. The Rural Development Department, established in 1947, led to the creation of the Community Development Department in 1952. Consequently, the Rural Development Directorate was established in 1957, later renamed as the Panchayat Department. However, with the enactment of the Assam Panchayat Act of 1959, the Rural Development Department and the Community Development Department were merged in 1960 into a single entity known as the Development (Panchayat and Community Development) Department. The Education Department was established in 1905. However, in 1956, it underwent a split into two separate entities known as the Education (General) Department and the Education (Technical, Publicity) Department. The Legislative Department was formed in 1948 to conduct the first General Selection. Initially, it was placed under a Reforms Commissioner. Subsequently, in 1953, this branch was renamed as the Election Branch, and the designation of Reforms Commissioner was changed to Chief Election Officer of Assam. By 1958, it had evolved into a full-fledged Department of the Secretariat. The Excise Department came into existence in 1958. In 1965, the Tourism Department was incorporated into the Excise Department, leading to the formation of the Excise, Registration, and Tourism Department. The Finance Department has its origins as early as 1903. However, finance (APF) was established in 1948 to handle matters such as audit, pension, fund management, travelling allowances, and other related issues. Finance (Budget) was introduced in 1950, but in 1954, it was split into Finance Expenditure Control-I, Finance Expenditure Control-II, and Finance Expenditure Control-III, respectively. The Finance (Economic Affairs) Branch was created in 1956 to oversee plan resources and the five-year plan. Additionally, Budget-I and Budget-II were established in 1957. In June 1967, a new branch called the Integrated Hill Plans Branch was created to specifically address the development expenditure in Hill Districts. Finally, in April 1968, the Finance Department underwent a reorganization, led by a secretary along with subordinate officers and staff. The General Administration and Forest Department, originally a branch of the General and Judicial Department in 1874, were later established as separate Departments. The General Administration Department (GAD) was constituted as an independent entity in 1950, while the Forest Department was established in 1954. The Health (A) and Health (B) Departments were formed in 1937. Civil Defense emerged as a department in 1962, followed by the establishment of the Industries Department in 1958, the Labour Department in 1951, and Craftsman Training in 1964. The Law Department was established in 1959, Municipal Department in 1964, and Passport Department in 1952. Planning and Development took shape in 1944, Political (A) and (B) Departments in 1959, Power Department in 1958, and Geology and Mining in 1955. Printing and Stationery were established in 1951, while the Public Works Department (P.W.D) originated in 1880. P.W.D. (Road and Building) was formed in 1965, and Border Road in 1962. In 1967, the Irrigation Department and Flood Control Department were created. Additionally, the Relief and Rehabilitation Departments were established in 1950 with the objective of rehabilitating displaced persons from Pakistan who came to Assam. Revenue General and Revenue

Settlement were created in 1949, and separate posts of Secretary were introduced. In 1950, Revenue (LR), Revenue (S), and Revenue (Reforms) Departments were established [24]. The Secretariat Administration Department originally operated as part of the establishment branch within the Finance Department. In 1930, there were merely five Secretariat Departments and a handful of branches, with a clerical staff comprising 35 Upper Division Assistants and 124 Lower Division Assistants, all under the supervision of five Head Assistants functioning under the administrative oversight of the Registrar. With the advent of the Second World War and the subsequent attainment of Independence, the workload significantly escalated. Moreover, the establishment of several new Departments necessitated the creation of a separate Secretariat Administration Department in 1952. This new entity comprised two branches: SAD (Establishment) and SAD (Accounts). Consequently, the Nazarat, Issue, and Dak Sections were later incorporated into the SAD (Estt.) Department. The Record Section, Recording Section, and the Secretariat Library were under the direct control of the Under Secretary SA (Accounts) Department, supported by the Keeper of Records, now referred to as the Officer-in-charge of Records since 1979. Below presents the staff strength of the SAD (Estt.) Department as of 1952 [25].

**Table 11: Staff Distribution and Categories in Various Sections of the Secretariat (1952) [26]**

Category of Staff	Under Secretary Establishment					Under Secretary Accounts			
	Establishment Branch	Nazarat Section	Issue Section	Dak Section	Reception Section	Account Branch	Recording Section	Record Section	Library
Superintendent	1					1			-
Receptionist					1				
Record Keeper							1	1	
Assistant Secretariat Library									2
Assistant Superintendent		1				1	1		
Upper Division Asst.	5	4				9	1	3	
Lower Division Asst.	5	2				16	6	6	1
Typist	3	1	14			2	1		
Record Supplier				2				8	
Book Binder								1	
Record Sorter/Mender									

The data in table 11. illustrated a structured distribution of staff across different categories and sections within the organization, reflecting a clear emphasis on administrative organization and task allocation. Key positions such as superintendent, receptionist, and assistant superintendent are strategically assigned to specific sections to facilitate efficient operations. Upper division assistants are primarily concentrated in the Establishment Branch, suggesting a central administrative focus, while lower division assistants are more

evenly distributed, with a notable concentration in the Account Branch. The allocation of typists, record suppliers, and book binders aligns with the operational needs of their respective sections, demonstrating a functional approach to staffing. However, the absence of specific assignments for record sorter/menders raises questions about potential gaps in workflow management or oversight within the organization. Overall, the data underscores a deliberate effort to optimize staff deployment and streamline operations across various sections and branches, albeit with potential areas for further refinement or clarification.

The Sericulture Department was established in 1957, while the Supply Department originated in 1941 under the Appointment Department. By 1943, it had evolved into a fully-fledged Department with two branches: Supply (A) and Supply (B). The Town and Country Planning Department came into being in 1955, whereas the Transport and Commerce Department was established in 1949 following a resolution adopted in the Assam Legislative Assembly on September 27, 1948, aimed at the gradual Nationalization of Motor Transport Service. Additionally, the post of State Transport Commission was established in 1951. In 1950, the Tribal Area and Welfare of Backward Classes Department was established to address matters concerning Autonomous Hill Districts. The Veterinary Department was formed in 1958, and the Fishery Department followed suit in 1965. Consequently, by 1968, a total of 45 departments were operational within the Assam Secretariat [27].

**Table 12: Ministerial Establishment Distribution in Civil Secretariat [28]**

Department	Department	Department
Appointment	Local Self-Government.	Community Projects.
Agriculture.	Medical.	Passport.
Confidential.	Printing and Stationery.	Supply 'A'.
Education (General).	Revenue (G)	Supply 'B'.
Education (Technical, etc.).	Secretariat Administration.	Textile.
Forest.	Tribal Areas 1.	Elections.
Finance (E)	Tribal Areas 2.	Chief Minister's Secretariat.
Finance (APF)	Revenue (S).	Record and Library.
Finance (T)	Planning and Development.	Recording.
Finance E.C. (1).	Transport and Industries.	Nazarat.
Finance E.C. (2).	Labour.	Steering Committee.
Finance E.C. (3).	Legislative and Judicial.	Special Officer for Compilation of the History of Freedom Movement.
General Administration Department.	Relief and Rehabilitation.	Minister Education.
Home.	Rural Development.	Issue Branch.
Special Officer, Labour	Leave Reserve	

*(Source: Archivum, 2011, Sonowal)*

**Impact of Meghalaya's Statehood on Assam Secretariat:** With the acceptance of Meghalaya as a full-fledged state by the then Prime Minister on November 10, 1970, it

became necessary for Assam to search for a new site to locate its capital. This decision was made with a long-term perspective on the development trends of culture, commerce, and industries in the state, aiming to establish a new focal point of activities in the North Eastern Region of India. It was deemed essential that the chosen site for the new Capital of Assam be equipped with a well-knit complex, serving as the center of governmental activities and catalyzing all-round development. The capital complex was envisioned to include the Governor's residence, the Legislature, the Executive and Judiciary buildings, the Secretariat, and other government offices, strategically located within the site of the Capital to accommodate foreseeable patterns of future development. Consequently, the Site Selection Committee's decision was ratified in the Cabinet on November 18, 1970 [29].

The site selection process for the new capital of Assam commenced in 1971 through Government Notification No. GAG. 209/70/60 dated May 28, 1971. A Site Selection Committee was constituted, comprising the following members [30]:

- 1) Shri S. K. Mallick, ICS, Additional Chief Secretary.
- 2) Shri R. K. Bhuyan, Chief Engineer (R&B), P.W.D.
- 3) Shri C. S. Chandrasekhara, B.Sc., B.E., M.C.R. (Harvard), A.M.T.PL, F.L.T.P., Additional Chief Planner, Town and Country Planning Organization, Govt. of India.
- 4) Shri C. R. Krishnamurthi, IAS, Secretary, Revenue Department, Govt. of Assam.

The Selection Committee initially identified four sites for the new capital of Assam:

- 1) Sonapur Circle, Gauhati Sub-division in the district of Kamrup, covering 23,358 Bighas of land (Notification No. RLA. 178/71/1 dated May 18, 1971).
- 2) Sonapur and Gauhati Circles, Gauhati Sub-division in the Kamrup district, covering 19,386 Bighas of land (Notification No. RLA. 179/71/1 dated May 18, 1971).
- 3) Gauhati circle, Gauhati Sub-Division, in the district of Kamrup, covering an area of 23,609 Bighas of land (Notification No. RLA. 180/71/1 dated May 18, 1971).
- 4) Kaliabor Circle, Nowgong Sub-division in the district of Nowgong, covering an area of 29,366 Bighas of land (Notification No. RLA. 181/71/1 dated May 28, 1971).

Following proper field investigations into the relative merits and demerits of the aforementioned four sites, the order of preference was established as follows [31]:

- 1) 1st Position: Amchang-Panikhathi-Chandrapur.
- 2) 2nd Position: Sonaighuli, Dakhin gaon, Kamrup.
- 3) 3rd Position: Sonapur-Digar, Kamrup.
- 4) 4th Position: Silghat-Koliabor, Nowgong.

The birth of Meghalaya as an Autonomous State on February 10, 1970, marked the culmination of the fulfillment of the political aspirations of the people of two Hill districts, namely United Khasi and Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills. This development compelled Assam to take on additional responsibilities in bringing about its all-round development and administration [32]. In 1971, Parliament passed the North Eastern Areas Act of 1971, which separated NEFA from Assam and converted it into a Union Territory of Arunachal Pradesh. K.A.A. Raja was appointed as the Chief Commissioner, later becoming the first Lt.

Governor of Arunachal Pradesh. On January 21, 1972, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi formally inaugurated the new full-fledged statehood of Meghalaya. Following the constitution of the Site Selection Committee for the New Capital of Assam via Government Notification No. GAG.209/70/60 dated May 28, 1971, the process of shifting the capital from Shillong to Dispur was initiated. This process continued until January 26, 1974, during the term of the then Chief Minister of Assam, the late Sarat Ch. Singha, and was completed sometime in 1976 [33]. Currently, with about a hundred departments and more than five hundred officials from top to bottom, the Assam Civil Secretariat stands as a testament to the rapid growth and development of the present Assam Secretariat. Assam now stands independent as an organic constituent of the Sovereign Republic of India, occupying a strategic position with 27 districts and a well-established political setup, with the permanent Capital established in 1996 at Dispur [34].

**Conclusion:** The Assam Secretariat's evolution from its inception in 1874 to its current status as a modern administrative complex showcases a dynamic journey of organizational growth and adaptation. Starting with its strategic relocation to Shillong in 1874, the Secretariat adapted to changing needs through pragmatic growth, transformation periods, and structural adjustments. These changes, driven by shifting state philosophies, constitutional reforms, and global events like the Second World War, positioned the Secretariat as a vital administrative hub. Its transition from merely maintaining order to actively participating in state affairs highlights its adaptability to complex socio-political realities. Ultimately, the Assam Secretariat's journey serves as a testament to the resilience and flexibility of administrative institutions, offering valuable insights into the evolution of governance structures in regions undergoing profound transformations. Initially comprising only a few departments, it expanded over time to encompass a wide array of functions, responding to changing socio-political needs. Key milestones such as capital relocation and state formation highlighted the region's evolving governance landscape. The meticulous site selection process for the new capital exemplified a commitment to strategic planning. Today, the Assam Secretariat stands as a symbol of administrative efficiency and resilience, reflecting the state's progress and its significant role in northeastern India's socio-economic development.

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