

CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL LIFE OF RAJA-MAYONG

The Political life of Raja-Mayong is related to traditional institution of monarchy on the one hand and the growing power of the people conferred by democracy in the form of various social, as well as, political organizations, such as, *khel* organization, *Gayar mel* and *Gaya rajj*. The area of Mayong has a long history of active participation in the national freedom struggle, community movement, co-operative movement, voluntary organization and electoral politics. In this chapter, an attempt is made to highlight the changes that have taken place in the political life of Raja-Mayong village.

According to the genealogy of the Kings maintained in the family of the king, which is known as the Raja Ghariya Goid, the kings of present dynasty of the kings of Raja-Mayong have been ruling the little kingdom of Mayong since 1538 AD. Prior to that, the rulers of the Pal dynasty ruled the Mayong area.¹

The kingdom of Mayong consisted of some of the villages in the Marigaon area. After the death of king Mrigangka in 1440 AD, who died issueless, the most powerful among the villagers, who had a considerable amount of arable land, became the village chief or the Bhuyan. Such Bhuyans who were known as belonging to the Khan dynasty became the kings in Kamatapur.² Finally, the Koches took over

the administration of the kingdom of Kamatapur. The rise of the Koches created a peculiar type of administration in the village area of Assam. The village chieftains, who belonged to the Koch caste, were appointed as the Deka Raja or Saru Raja.³ Such type of kings came to be known as Powali Raja i.e. a petty king. The village was the territory of the petty king. Even some family members of the Koch caste used the term (Raja as the title) in the area of Raja-Mayong. The king assumed the authority to collect taxes from the fishermen and farmers. Of course, after collecting the tax in the form of grains the king of Raja-Mayong distributed it among his subjects. The king used to collect taxes from the traders and village headmen. The king ruled the villages in the Mayong area.⁴

To some extent, the king ruled the neighbouring villages also. The king left the former village if the agriculture was not suitable for his administration. Besides these, the king controlled the disputes in his area and led battles. The king recruited able-bodied persons in the time of battle from among the villagers.⁵

The traditional pattern of the settlement of the village of the area of Mayong was peculiar. The residential settlements were on a comparatively higher land than their agricultural fields. The swamps and ponds are within or by the side of the village. Villages were set up with an eye on the agricultural and marketing facilities. Temples were there in the villages. The temple acted as a binding force on the people as well as protectors from misfortunes.⁶

The kingdom of Raja-Mayong was a repertoire of traditions and culture. Prior to the advent of the British administration in Assam, kingdoms were ruled by petty kings. The best example of this is the

Mayong kingdom. The people accepted the supremacy of the king. More than 72 vassal kings ruled in Assam under the Koch and Ahom dynasty. 19 of them were from the Mayong Area.⁷

In course of time, the village became an administrative unit during the British regime. Under the Local Self Government Act 1915 the Government could declare any area to be a village for local government purpose.⁸ Prior to that the village administration in medieval period was carried out by the chief or king. The village was the capital as well as kingdom itself. The kings belonged to different communities like the Koch, Mikir, Tiwa etc.

“In the development of the village administration in Assam, the *Khel* and *Paik* system developed during the Ahom and Koch rule appears to have influenced to a considerable extent. By the early 17th century, the whole male adult population of the state, excepting the nobles, priests and persons of high castes and their slaves were divided into various “*Khels*” with specified duties to be rendered by them to the state, e.g. boat-building, fishing, road-building, house building, revenue collecting etc. Each *Khel* was like a guild comprising of 100 to 3000 able-bodied persons between the age of 15 to 50 years.”⁹

The village Namghars (the place of collective worship), also played a dominant role in the socio-political life of the people of Assam. The Namghar is a decentralised replica of the Sattrā institution introduced by Sankardeva in the 15th century. Besides being a place for culture of spiritual development, the Namghar has also been a centre of different socio-political activities of the village. David Scott considered it to be a little Parliament.¹⁰

The village king did command respect from the subjects. He collected the revenues or contributions from the people as and when

there was a need. He performed the sacred duty of inaugurating almost all the social functions in his village or area concerned.¹¹

Monarchy:-

“The institution of Kingship developed in Britain among the early Angles and Saxons who came first to ravage and then to settle in the country in the ninth century A.D. They drove the original people who had become weak and defenseless after the Romans had departed westward from the Island, and occupied the greater part of England. The Victorious Anglo-Saxon-Tribes established Seven Districts or Kingdoms which are historically known as “Heptarchy”. The seven kingdoms were - East Anglia, Mercia, North Umbria, Kent, Sussex, Essex and Wessex.”¹²

The important contribution of the Anglo Saxon times is the local Government. The mass of the population in those days lived in villages and their principal occupation was agriculture. Each village, with the land belonging to it formed a Tunship or Township. Each Township led to a corporate life, social, political and economic.¹³ The villages of the area of the proposed study are also associated with the kingdom, Purgana, Mouza, village Panchayat and a village.

Generally, the eldest son of the king is the legal heir to the throne. In absence of a natural heir, the elders exercised the right to choose a king from amongst the important families of the kingdom. The principle of succession to the throne in Raja-Mayong, Beltola, Dandua and Darrang was akin to that of the Koch kingdom under Maharaja Naranarayan, i.e. the eldest son succeeded after the death of his father.¹⁴

The person of the king must be purified through certain rituals, which contain a ritual bath, offering obeisance to the deities over a fire, which is known as *homa* and *yajna*. This is followed by a royal feast.



The Coronation Ceremony of the
King of Mayong in 2005

The King, Tarani Kanta Singha

The king must be a man of character and good conduct. He must have certain qualities. He must be good looking and of sound health, a good warrior, and a competent judge. The subjects held him in high esteem. The king must have military knowledge and he must not work alone for his own living nor is he expected to do any physical labour. The person destined to become king received all sorts of required training before being the king of a particular kingdom.¹⁵

The king was the head of all departmental activities within the kingdom. He was the highest executive of the land. He kept a strict vigil on the day to day functioning of every official of the land. He must look in to the needs and requirements of the subjects and to redress their grievances. There was no written law. His verbal instructions were treated as the law of the land.¹⁶ the king of Mayong also did enjoy such powers and functions in the past.

The Coronation Ceremony is regarded as one of the most important festivals in the kingdoms of Mayong area. The Coronation Ceremony was not the same everywhere. The day before Coronation Ceremony was a day of fasting and prayer for the crown prince in some kingdoms. The women folk, singing ceremonial songs and accompanied by players of drums and cymbals, would bring water from the river or tank for ablution before his accession to the throne. Garlands of flowers were prepared before hand to decorate him in a befitting manner and style. The sacred rites of “Hom” “Yajna” are done by the priests and another Vashnavite rite, Nam-Prasanga is chanted by the people. Thereafter, the official called *bishaya* places the various ornaments on his body. Then the official, called *Medhi*, places the crown on the head of the heir apparent. The officials of the king and the people present, then bow down their heads before the new king to show their respect and the king in turn gives gifts and presents to them according to their rank and status. Great feasting and merriment mark the ceremony.¹⁷

The principal duty and responsibility of the king was to safeguard the interests of his subjects, to protect them to provide security and defend the kingdom. The king appeared to be the prime mover in the field of learning and advancement of culture. He appeared to be the patron of learning. He made land grants to the Brahmins and priests for educational and charitable purposes. For example, Ananta Ata established the Kalsila Sattrā at Mayong under the patronage of the king of that kingdom. Acharya, Shiromoni established the Shildubi Damodariya Sattrā under the patronage of the king of that kingdom.¹⁸

The traditional monarchy of Raja-Mayong has undergone a lot of changes throughout the years. The parliamentary system has replaced monarchy in India. The people can elect their representatives through election. Now, the King of Raja-Mayong has become only a symbolic social institution. Yet, the Royal family plays an important role in creating harmony and peaceful environment in the region. The people of Raja-Mayong still show esteem to the king's family specially, during the annual functions of the Pancha Gossain Mela Utsav. They bow down their heads in obeisance to the king.

The government of Assam also has accorded recognition to a total of 23 kings in the area which includes the king of Mayong also. The government for first time has offered a Raj Bhatta of rupees nine thousand in the beginning of the year 2009.

The above is a brief resume of the development of the indigenous institution involving the political life of people in the village of Raja-Mayong. An attempt is made, with the above background to discuss below the political life of the people of Raja-Mayong, their participation in political socialization.

According to Hemkosha, Khel Was a fraternity, a guild, a division of the people made by the Raja for specific purpose A Khel was a body of person tracing their descent from a common ancestor. During

Ahom period, important officials were associated with the Khel system. It was categorically organized as paik (one Person) got (three person) Borah (Sixty Person) Saikia (One hundred) and Hazari (One Thousand).

Besides these, there were Khels of the same status as inter-dined, intermarried and professed same religion and same vocation. There were Vocational Khels of Kamar (Black Smith) Kumar (Potter) Hira: etc. “There were Mels consisting of officers whom the King consulted on important matters. The important officials like Bar-Medhi, the Bayan or the head musician were the member of the Barkhel. The Gaonburha was also Member of the Mel.”¹⁹

Besides these Mels there are separate Mels for female and male members. The female Mels in Raja-Mayong are “Gabharu Mel”, i.e. the mel of the unmarried young girls, Buri Mel, i.e. the mel of the old women, Bowari mel, i married women, and Bioni Mel, i.e. the informal discussion in the gatherings of women. In Gabharu Mel, young girls or spinsters take decision regarding their participation in various social functions and observances of certain worships such as the Lakshmi Puja etc. In Burhi Mel, the old women discuss their issues like the Gabharu Mel. In the same way, married women discuss their issues of rites and festivals of the village. Bioni mel is for chatting. Of course, these are different from the female Mels of Ahom Administration. In Ahom Woman Mels, Rani or Queen’s representative is essential to constitute a Mel.²⁰

Raj Sabha or the King’s court is merely a cultural organisation in Raja-Mayong village. This Raj Sabha i.e. the court is held in the kings House or the temple only on the auspicious day of Pancha Devata Festival.

In Raja-Mayong, evidences are there that the *khel* and clan systems were prevalent in the 16th century. The Koch king, Charachha Chandra Sinha settled the Katanees i.e. the weavers, members of twelve Mikir clans, people of the Hira community, the Bar Koch, and the Medhis. These were regarded as khels and phoids. For settling the people of various khels and phoids he made endowment of lands to the Ganesha temple at Hatimuria hills, Uma-Shiva temple at Kachasila hill, Durga-Ganesha-Shiva temple at Chanaka hill, Ganesha temple at Burhamayong village, Gobhali village, Baha hills and Burha-Burhi hills. The king of Raja-Mayong appointed the priests and Medhis with a view to looking after the royal festival since 16th century.²¹

The *khel* system of Raja-Mayong village is sub-divided in to Jak and Chakee viz-Barua Jak, Panisara Jak, Kana Jak, Goda Jak, Nowa Jak, Bayan Jak and Raja Chokee. The Nath community is regarded as one Jak and Raja Chakee comprises only of the Koch caste. Bishaya *khel* comprises of the men only of the respective Bishaya of the Koch caste. The term *khel* is sometimes used to denote a community also.²²

Occupation plays an important role in the *khel* system of Raja-Mayong. Every Jak or *Khel* has a Medhi or Rajmedhi, a Pathak or gayan i.e. expert singer with rites of the Gita or Bhagabata or Kirtan Ghosha, Bargeet, etc. and a Bayan who plays the Mridong or Khol in ritual ceremonies. The members of a *khel* pay obeisance to the guru, who is their chief adviser of the religious issues in the first place and secondly they pay obeisance to the Pathak, Medhi, Gayan and Bayan. Medhi or Pathak plays the role of mediators in resolving the disputes in the respective *khel*. The Namatees are the singers of the devotional songs and they also take part in important decision makings in the *khel*.²³

The people of Raja-Mayong sometimes use the word “*khel*” to denote caste or clan also, such as Nath *khel*, Koch *khel*, Keot *khel*, Mikir *khel*, etc.. Nath *khel* consists of only the Nath people on the other hand

Koch *khel* is liberal in nature as they accept the membership from the Ahom and Keot caste. The Koch *khel* of Raja-Mayong is called Rajagharia *khel*. Within the Koch caste, there are two khels the one in which there is more members is known as the “Dangar” *khel* and the one having smaller number of members is known as the Saru *khel* ²⁴

Traditionally, the Head man or Medhi, Namati and Pathak in Raja-Mayong led the *khels*. At present, every *khel* has a committee to manage the yearly and monthly rites of the *khel*. The term of this committee is generally one year, of course, it may be changed or remain unchanged according to the will of the people. ²⁵

The committee system of the *khel* is democratic in nature as the members are elected or nominated from among the members present in the meeting. A man who has not been initiated into the religious fold with a process called Sharan or a young man has no bar in becoming the president or secretary to the respective committee of the *khel*. This committee looks after the rituals of the *khel*. It collects contributions from the households of the *khel* for the annual or any ritual activities of the *khel*. The committee must place the budget and detailed expenditure statement in an open meeting of the *khel*. ²⁶

The organisation of the *khel* can be divided in to two forms *Gaya Raij* and *Mel Gaya Raij* is called upon for general discussion of the issues or problems of the village society. The *Gaya Raij*, which consists of all the villagers, is also called the Borkhel. When many *Borkhels* sit together, it is called *Chowkhelia* or *Anchalik Mel*.

The Borkhel or Chowkhelia acts as a disciplinary committee amongst the villagers. It has socio-religious and socio-political function also. The *khel* leads the village institutions, which are essential to develop of the village society. The *khel* can resist the evil doers and wrong doers. The *khel* can impose the punishment to the wrong doers

without seeking the advice of the judicial court. The punishment consists of social boycott and fine.

The *khel* looks after the day to day affairs as well as the rites and rituals to be observed by the people of that particular *khel* and also the developmental activities of the village. On the other hand, *mel* is called upon for settling disputes. *Mel* has two forms, one is Village *mel* and the other is the *Barmel* or *Choukhelia mel* or *Anchalik mel*. The presence of the Gaonburha of the village is necessary in any *mel* convened by any party which are normally related to offences. If any dispute cannot be settled in a village *mel* then it is referred to the *Barmel* or the *Cowkhelia mel*. If the *Barmel* also fails to settle the dispute then only matters reach the police or the court. These *mels* are very effective in solving dispute for which there are very little record of police cases or court cases from these villages. In the settlement of a dispute by the *mels* unanimity was a primary requirement. Alternatively, majority opinion was always necessary. If the accused man does not obey again the decision of the *Choukhelia*, it decides to excommunicate the whole family of the convict. This is mostly done in case of heresy and adultery.²⁷

Women are also prosecuted in the *Bormel* or *Mel*. If she is convicted of adultery, then half-inch of her hair is shorn off. She has to undergo a process of expiation called the *prayachitta* in front of the priest. In same way, if a male member of the society commits incest or any other sexual crime such as adultery; he has to undergo such a process of expiation. They have to pay fines in terms of money also.

Under the Ahoms, the Panchayats also need to function as a body only for settlement of minor civil and criminal disputes in the villages and they were known as “*mels*” these *mels* were presided over by officials like the Choudhuries and the *Khelders* as the case might be.²⁸

The village *mel* as well as the *chowkhelia mel* were so powerful that they could pass orders for excommunication to influential, rich, powerful and the poor alike. Even the family of the king of Mayong had to face such an order of excommunication, which was later withdrawn after the family acted as per the dictates of the *mel*. In this instant case, the youngest son of the king of Mayong fell in love with a girl from a poor family but the king's family opposed to their marriage. The girl's family approached *chowkheliya mel*. After the punishment proclaimed by the *mel*, the case was settled as the boy married the girl. The *khels* play an important role in the social life of the villagers. They cannot go against the set norms of the *khels* in their day-to-day life or religious and social observances. The fear of excommunication has led to the maintenance of peace and tranquility in the village life to a great extent.

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Mayongiya Raij: -

Traditionally, the king did his political functions with his office bearers Viz-Dekaraja(looked after the shrines), Purohit(looked after the worshipping of the deities), Medhi(assisted the purohit), Bangthai(military cheiftain) , Pator(assisted the king as a minister), Bishayas(the heads of the *khels*), Thakuria(looked after fishing and the royal court) and Bayan(played the *khol* for the king). These office bearers comprised the Raj-Sabha i.e. the Royal court. The important department of the kingdom viz - defense, economy, societal and religious are distributed to the respective office bearers. The activities of the king and his officials continued till 1960 A.D., a significant change has taken place in the political life of Raja-Mayong in that year when a committee known as Mayong Unnayan Committee, also known as Mayongiya Raij, was formed to take over many functions of the king particularly the works related with the development of the area. Even in post independence period, the king and his office bearers directed the society of Mayong. The people of Raja-Mayong sought the participation of the king in social works, royal festivals, annual rites, fishing and

meetings of the area. The collective fishing was the most interesting function of the village. The general fishing was started when the king commanded. The king presided over meetings held in the Raja-Mayong village.³⁰

The Raja-Mayong village is far away from the district headquarters of Kamrupa, Morigaon and Nagaon. Hence, the king played a vital role in village administration. The late king, Baneswar Sinha was the jury member of the district court of justice in undivided Nagaon. He was also the Overseer of the Barbari Tea-Garden at Hahara Pahar, which was established by the British. He was awarded a golden ring for his commendable service. After the death of the king Baneswar Sinha in 1960 A.D., the position of the king of Raja-Mayong deteriorated gradually.³¹

For the overall development, of the area, the “Mayong Unnayan Committee” also known as the Mayongiya Raji was formed by the general people in 1962 and it was given a formal shape with definite powers and functions. Another samiti under the name of “Raja-Mayong *Mela Samiti*” was formed with a definite purpose of conducting the village rituals like the “Panchagossain or Devata, *Mela Utsav*” which has retained the importance of the king of Mayong as a cultural symbol and giving him the highest position as the king in this cultural event.³²

Late Rasadhar Deka, the pioneer leader of the Mayong area was the first president of the “Mayong Unnayan Comittee”. He was the Govt.No-1 village Headman during British administration in 1942 A.D. After independence, collective efforts were made by the the king Baneswar Sinha, the ex-minister Motiram Bora, Rasadhar Deka, Dhirai Bishaya and Phatik Nath for the overall development of the village. But these collective efforts without a committee were not enough to solve the problems of Mayong. In the mean time, a committee was established to look after the High School headed by Rasadhar Deka, as the president and Rati Saikia as the secretary in 1960. This committee looked after the

developmental activities of Mayong. Two year later; this committee was renamed as Mayong Unnayan committee in 1962. Late Rasadhar Deka and Mr Rati Kanta Saikia were the president and secretary of this committee respectively.³³

The committee consisted of one president, one secretary, twenty-one executive members and general members. The members were selected in the general meeting of the committee for a term of two years. Since 1962, the names of the members of the committee have been proposed and seconded for selection. Though it is the matter of selection, it seems to be a process of direct democracy. The general people attend the meeting and participate directly in the selections of the members. It is really democratic in the sense that a simple village man, irrespective of social status and wealth can propose the name of the president or secretary. The time of selection of the president and secretary is very crucial. It is crucial because a capable person above controversy has to be selected which may not be possible at times.³⁴

Of course, presently it is clear from the general practice that the person for the secretary or the president must be popular workers of the area of Raja-Mayong. Sometimes names of two persons may be proposed for the same post as in the year 2000. In such cases, voting also becomes necessary.

Thus we have seen that Raja-Mayong has two local committees. Though there is, a statutory Panchayat approved, the local committee, which is formed by the people has more acceptability among the people of the locality than the statutory one

The office of the Mayong Unnayan Committee is located at the community hall of Mayong near the Mayong police station. It has steel Almirah, a cashbook and register book. A peon is appointed for running on errands. All transactions of the committee are made through cheques.

The fund of the Mayong Unnayan committee is raised by auctioning the fish of the local swamps around Raja-Mayong. These swamps are Dubatali, Bengdubi, Bhasamahal and Chanaka Bhereni. The swamps known as beels are allotted to the highest bidders. After announcement of the highest bidder, the bidding amounts are collected on the same day in cash and are deposited in the State Bank of India, Raja-Mayong branch.

The time of tender is generally in June or July as fishing is prohibited till 15th August. After selling of the swamps, the secretary of the committee convenes a general meeting for preparation of the budget. The budget is prepared, basically for financial assistance to the non-government institutions, such as, Mayong Anchalik College, Raja-Mayong M.E. School, Hatimuriya Girls' M.E. School, Madhya-Mayong High and M.E. School and Burhamayong High and M.E. School. Some amount of the fund is spent for other specific social institutions and contingency a list of which is given below.

The approximate rates of auction are as under:-

(1) Dubatali _____	Rs.2,00,000/-
(2) Bangdubi Bhasa _____	Rs.1,50,000/-
(3) Chanaka Bhereni _____	Rs.1,00,000/-

The total amount collected in the auction are disbursed in following ways

Non-government institutions	Allotted amount in rupees.
(1) Mayong Anchalik College _____	1,70,000/-
(2) Raja-Mayong M.E. School _____	20,000/-
(3) Hatimuria Girls M.E. School _____	30,000/-
(4) Madhya Mayong High and M.E. School _____	30,000/-
(5) Burhamayong High and M.E. School _____	25,000/-
(6) Others specific expenditure (Rongali Bihu, (Pancha Devata Mela, communication) etc.____	50,000/-

The allocation depends mostly on the amount collected. The term of the committee is two years. During their term, the Unnayan Committee looks after the development of the area of the village. Formerly, the term of the committee was only one year.

If the circumstances demand, the committee holds discussion on general issues also. The members of the committee take part in the meetings very actively. The meeting held for the formation of the new committee virtually becomes the village parliament. A common villager can express his opinions on the activities of the committee and can choose the new candidate for the president and the secretary.

There is provision for refund of the amount paid by any bidder also. Sometimes, the Mahalders or traders complain that they had to incur loss due to various reasons. If it is accepted in the general meeting, up to 20% percent of the amount paid is refunded, alternatively the Mahalder in question is given preference in the next years bidding.

The Unnayan Committee also does Social Services in the Raja-Mayong area. It has done a major work for the people of the area in development of paddy field in the Garanga Swamps on the West side of the Pabitara range about one and a half k.m. from Raja-Mayong. It makes ad-hoc improvements of the non-metalic roads of the area. The committee looks after the Socio- religious activities of the village also. The committee takes urgent steps in the event of any accident or human tragedy. It acted immediately in an accident where ten people were killed on October 18, 2005 on the auspicious day of Lashkipuja. The Unnayan Committee sponsored the collective Adya-Shradha for the peace of the souls of those ten people at the spot in No. 2 Murkata village by the roadside. The committee took lead and mobilised the local people to protest against the delay of the deputy Commissioner of the District of Morigaon in responding to the incident. The O.C of the

Mayong police Station resorted to Blank Fire to disperse the protesters. It is, therefore, regarded as a strong force of the Raja-Mayong village.³⁵

The Mayong Unnayan Committee has been subdivided into smaller committees after the division of the Mayong Mouza into Manaha, Mayong and Pokoria mouzas. Even after the division of the Mouza the Committee continued to work for the whole area for some time. Within the Mayong mouza also there were differences of opinion. Dissatisfaction among the people of other areas started brewing as the Major portion of the funds was spent within the radius of Mayong G.P. at first. The people of Kajali Kamarpur Sildubi and Buraburi alleged that the people of Mayong do not have interest in others' areas. Hence they formed their own committees and came out from the Mayong Unnayan Committee. Because of that, the sources of income of the committee decreased. It has few big swamps in the name of the committee, which are tendered in public. This is also reserved for the college as, otherwise this swamps would be taken over by the Govt.

The present beneficiaries covered under the Mayong Unnayan Committee include the villages of Raja-Mayong, Hatimuriya, Kal-Sila, Lonmati, Ouguri, Hiloikhunda, Chanaka, Satibheti and Burhamayong. From 1962 to 2007, the Unnayan Committee, according to the area people of the area has not been able to work to fulfill the aspirations of the people. The people want the committee to be more dynamic and progressive. It is also a public allegation that some leaders of the Unnayan Committee work for vested interests.

Mayong Kamarpur Co-operation Committee:

Mayong Kamarpur Co-operation Committee was formed in the year 1973 with a total of 3435 members which rose to 5742 at present. The first president of the committee was Sri Dipan Chandra Nath. The election of the president is regarded to be an important political activity among the people of the area. The President is elected from among the members of the co-operative society The poorest of the poor are

benefitted from the co-operative society as they provide the rice at subsidised rate under the below poverty line, Antodaya Anna Yojana and Annapurna schemes of the govt.³⁶

Mayong College Committee:-

Mayong Anchalik College came into being on August 13th, 1992. It is situated in the centre of Raja-Mayong village about 1 k.m. from Mayong Chariali. Mr. Kali Charan Pator, the Principal of Mayong Higher Secondary School was the president of the college and Mr. Dipen Chandra Nath, retired teacher from Raja-Mayong is the secretary of the Managing Committee of College since 1992. Mr. Rati Kanta Saikia a retired teacher of Mayong Higher Secondary School was the vice president of the M.C.C. The Managing Committee of the College is considered to be important in the political life of Mayong, as the leading people of the area are included in the body.

Mayong Bazaar Committee:-

The formation of the committee of the Mayong market is also a landmark in the field of trade and commerce of the area of Raja-Mayong. The place for marketing was selected in the village of Kuchiyanee around the year 1952. But this location did not suit the the business men. Therefore, it had been shifted to the south-west side of Raja-Mayong at the bank of Hadug swamps. After a few years, the businessmen felt inconvenience and hence, it was again shifted to the Raja-Mayong Chariatee on the north side of the village in 1958. The first president and secretary were Late Raghubar Nath and Sri Gopal Nath from Raja-Mayong respectively. The Bazaar committee observed the Lakhi puja for the first time in 1968, which has become one of the most popular annual festivals of the area of Raja-Mayong at present.³⁷

Mayong Krira Santha :-

The Mayong Krira Santha was established in 1978 A.D. The Krira Santha, which is a sports body, is an important organisation for the

young generation in the area of Raja-Mayong. This association is not only related to the affairs of the games and sports but also related to the formation of the modern institutions of Raja-Mayong. The Krira Santha has collectively constructed the Lakshmi temple, the public stage and the library. The Santha has its own property and holds annual game of football inviting the various teams of the area. It has its own playground near of the roadside at Mayong-Manaha road. The first president and secretary of the Santha were Mr. Hiranya Bora and Mr. Hari Prasad Bora respectively.³⁸

Mela Committee :-

This Committee is formed to celebrate the Pancha Devata Mela or festival of Raja-Mayong village. The president is Mr. Dipen Chandra Nath, retired teacher and the secretary is the king of Raja-Mayong, Sri Taranee Kanta Sinha, the assistant head master of Swarna Bidyapith High School. The committee holds the Pancha Devata Mela in the month of Bohag, i.e. the middle of April. This is a significant committee as it looks after the festival for three days. The committee also invites the distinguished guests to the festival.

Raja-Mayong Unnayan Committee :-

Raja-Mayong has an Unnayan Committee, which looks after the development of the village. It looks after the temples and venture institutes of the village. The Unnayan Committee earns some money by auctioning the local swamps and from contributions. The swamps of Amaramul and Hadugbori on the south side of the village are auctioned by the committee and money collected thus is spent on developmental activities.

Other Organisations:

Another social organization is Mayong Heeta Sadhini was initially named Mayong Heeta Sadhini Meen Samabay Samity and it worked for the welfare of the fishermen. This was established in the year

1960. Later it was renamed as Mayong Heeata Sadhini Krishi Samabay Samitee in the year 1987. It consists of 42 members and it works for general welfare of the village. The committee has generously donated to all the institutions and organisations established in the area. They have 35 bighas of land an office of their own at Gobhali. Recently, Nehru Yubak Vikash Kendra has been setup. It delivers voluntary service for the well-being of the people of Mayong.

Besides these, two N.G.O.s namely Pragati and Mayong Pabita Conservation Committee working for the welfare of the area. Pragati was established in the year 2004. they have a permanent office and six staff members. They have been working in the field of rural banking. They maintain 778 recurring deposits and have given loans to 250 persons till date. They have also taken up plantation of trees, Training in yogasana holding health camps and survey work in the field of education in the locality. as their have been setup viz Dolphin, Green Hill, N.I.S.I. for social work like plantation, capacity building, training amongst the younger generation.

Mayong Pabitara Conservation Committee was established in the year 2005 with the king ofd Mayong as its President. The main objective of this N.G.O. is to create awareness among the people towards conservation of wild life, as the village is adjacent to the Pabitara wild life sanctuary. The forest department of Govt of Assam has extended all necessary help to this N.G.O. for carrying out its activities.

Many self-help groups also have been setup in the area of Raja-Mayong. Women are pioneers in forming self-help groups. They have been working mainly as thrift societies. They raise money through grants and subsidies from the government and loans from the banks to form the capital, which again is lent to its members on low rates of interest. The member use these loans for being economically self sufficient by rearing pigs, poultry, carrying out agriculture, weaving clothes and the like jobs that can be done in the village itself with small

capitals. They maintain their register book, cashbook and the run the bank account. They meet monthly in a formal procedure to discuss the problems of the groups. After the functioning of the self-help groups, both men and women have become socio-politically and economically conscious. Of course, they do not get adequate facilities from the state authorities for carrying out their work.³⁹

The young generation of Mayong appears to be politically very conscious as they are associated with various regional and national political parties. They read newspapers, listen to the radio, view television, etc. The youth of Mayong also have taken the initiative of seeking alternatives in which their needs and aspirations will become a reality. The youths of Mayong are also are “slowly understanding the realities of their problems and starting to react against the present direction of state politics because unemployment and under employment, galloping population growth, mal-nutrition, inequalities between the rich and poor,” and hence have lost some amount of enthusiasm.⁴⁰

Participation of Raja-Mayong in the Freedom Movement:

The people of Raja-Mayong had actively participated in the freedom movement of India. The president of the district Congress committee visited Raja-Mayong to mobilize the people during the “quit India movement”. Much before that, in 1857 also the King of Raja-Mayong along with the *Sato raja* and *Pacho raja* prepared for the revolt. Maniram Dewan one of the pioneers of the freedom movement in Assam organised a meeting in Raha and the petty kings of the area were invited to the meeting. The king of Mayong also attended the meeting.⁴¹

In the non-co-operation movement, the students of the district of Nowgong played an important role. Assamese students mainly studying in Banaras, Calcutta and Gauhati came first under the spell of Gandhi. They spread the message in Assam and launched the school-boycotting

campaign. The students of Nowgong boycotted the Government English High School on April 20, 1921.

The people of Mayong also actively participated in the non-cooperation movement. Mainly, Rasadhar Deka from Mayong Kamarpur Baneswar Sinha, the king of Raja-Mayong, Ahina Konwar from Konwargaon and Har Nath Borkakoti from Konwargaon, organised the people of Mayong against the British administration in 1922 very secretly.⁴²

In Assam, Nowgong and Morigaon played the most important role in the quit India movement. A big "Santi-Sena" organization was set up under the leadership of local congressmen. Following the instructions of the congress socialists, a few young Congressmen of the district like Mahendra Nath Hazarika and Lakshmi Prashad Goswami built up an underground resistance movement. A "Mrityu Bahini" or death squad was formed under the leadership of Mahendra Nath Hazarika. The party seized about seventeen Shot-Guns. This squad carried out some serious acts of sabotage through out the district, in the second half of August, 1942.⁴³

On 14 August, 1942, Mahendra Nath Hazarika, the district president of Congress, Nowgong, visited Morigaon at the office of "Sipinee sangha" (presently the location of Morigaon Girls High Secondary School). At least 200 workers of Santi-sena accompanied him. In the public meeting held at the field of Morigaon Gandhi Bhaban, Mahendra Nath Hazarika spoke mostly to sacrifice the life in the name of Swaraj of India. Amongst the listeners, Suchendra Nath Deka Adhinayak of Marigaon branch of the Congress Committee resigned his service and heartily joined in the Santi-sena.⁴⁴

The next day, a volunteers rally in consisting of 200 members was taken out from Morigaon to Baghara and Bhakatgaon. The leader of the students was Sarbbeswar Bora in the rally. They shouted slogans,

“Bande Mataram” “Mahatma Ganghi ki joy”; “do or die”; “Engligh men quit India” etc. In a public meeting held at puja mandap at Bhakatgaon, Madhab Chandra Chakraborty, the head master of Bhakatgaon High School resigned his head-post in the name of motherland. ⁴⁵

On 16th Aug. 1942, Morigaon branch Congress Committee was formed under the leadership of Lt. Debendra Nath Bora with these portfolios-

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. | Baparam Barkakati, Borangabari- | President. |
| 1. | Rajendra Nath Mahanta, Rojagaon- | Secretary. |
| 3. | Dharm Kanta Deka, Gacharguri- | Assistant Secretary. |
| 4. | Suchendra Nath Deka, Rajagaon | Adhinayak |
| 5. | Sarusing Tamuli, | Assistant-Adhinayak. |

Adhinayak, Suchendra Nath Deka head immediatly organised and formed the twelve camps of Santi-sena. He also appointed the Nayaks or unit captains of the respective camps. They were -

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Nayak - Sanchit Chandra Deka - | Anhataguri. |
| 2. | Nayak - Sudhan Chandra Pator - | Sidhabari. |
| 3. | Nayak - Gopal Chandra Medhi - | Dorani. |
| 4. | Nayak - Tilak Das - | Manipur. |
| 5. | Nayak - Santaram Bora - | Barangabari. |
| 6. | Nayak - Sasimohan Deka - | Komoraguri. |
| 7. | Nayak - Kalikanta Sharma - | Kanhibari. |
| 8. | Nayak - Harendra Nath Deka - | Doloishuba |
| 9. | Nayak - Rajendra Deka - | Solmari. |
| 10. | Nayak - Upendra Nath Mahanta - | Bakarigaon. |
| 11. | Nayak - Kalicharan Choudhuri - | Nalbari. |
| 12. | Nayak - Bhogram Das - | Sidhabari. |

These above Nayaks did several secret and sabotage activities. They did all activities under the leadership of the Adhinayan Suchendra Nath Deka who visited all the camps and suggested to do or die in the name of motherland.

Major activities carried out by the Santi sena are destruction of Marigaon inspection Bungalow, burning down of Manaha inspection Bungalow by Abali Kochoni, damage of the bridge between Dharamtul and Silchang, Kachadhora Bridge, and damage of the bridge between Bachnaghat and Oujuri. Besides these, the members of the Mrityu Bahini sank down a lodging boat of British Army food and supply. A strike had been launched at the market place (then, location of present Bihutali on that very ground, the following persons had been arrested and kept them in the jail for at least six months. They were *namely* Suren Hazarika from Torabari, Rajkhowa Mahanta from Morigaon Lothabori, Kam Dev Mahanta and Purna Chandra Mahanta from Bakarigaon.⁴⁶

Another direct action of the movement in the district of Morigaon was the gheraoing of the British police station situated at Morigaon. This non-violent step was taken on 9.10.1942. For this act, 150 members of the Mrityu bahini and twelve Nayaks had been appointed to collect the people or Satyagrahis. They collected above five thousands people on 10.10.1942. Five thousand people along with 162 members of the Santi-Sena gheraoed Morigaon British police station. Md. Latif Choudhuri was the incharge of the police station. But he, on that very day, went to Nowgong to submit a report on the area. He handed over the charge to a young police officer in his absence. This police officer by tactfully requested the leaders to go for self arrest. Accordingly, 14 person were arrested. Of these 14 persons, Harendra Nath Bora was in jail for at least six months and other 13 persons were released after three months.

Inspite of that, the Adhi-Nayaks and Nayaks, under the leadership of Mahendrea Nath Hazarika, nicknamed Deolaga Manuh, (the haunted man) had collected guns and took out a procession in the district of Morigaon. He was finally arrested and thereafter the camps of the volunteers became scattered.⁴⁷

Mayong played the most important role in the quit India movement in the area. A strong Santi-Sena organisation was established under the leadership of Mahada Nanda Goswami, the former Sattradhikara of Doipora Sattrā. Other distinguished religious leaders of Mayong also played an important role in involving the people in the quit India movement. Mahadananda Goswami was the branch president of Mayong division of the congress. His brother, Dr. Golok Chandra Goswami popularly known as Goda Gossain, was the assistant captain of the Santi-Sena of the Mayong division. Benudhar Deka was the main captain or district adhinayak of the erstwhile district of Nowgong. Lakshmi Goswami was the District Organizer of Congress of the Santi-Sena. They came to Mayong to organise a weeklong training camp of the "Santi-Sena" at the temple of Bilimara. Benudhar Deka and Umesh Lahan visited the training camp. Goda Gossain was selected as the assistant captain (Sahadhinayak) of the Santi-Bahini, in the western part of the district of Nowgong in this very camp. The camp ended successfully. Two persons namely Dadhiram Bordoloi from Konwargaon and Madhu Keot from Barhampur were selected in the camp. They moved from village to village to form the Santi-Sena and had succeeded in mobilizing the villagers.⁴⁸

Goda Gossain and his colleagues had immediately formed a training camp at Raja-Mayong village in front of the field of the M.E. School for a week. At that time, Narayan Chandra Bordoloi, of Puranigudam was the Head-master of Raja-Mayong M.E. School. Baneswar Sinha, Hara Kumar Bishaya, Rati Saikia participated and took active part in the weekly camps. The village people of Mayong participated in the camp.

The Mayong training camp was directed by Adhinayak, Benudhar Deka and the assistant Adhinayak was Gada gossain. The members of Santi-Bahini from Dimoria, Hahara Kumarkuchi took lessons about the movement from the camp.

Gada-Gassain and his two colleagues went to Hahara-Komarkuchi to organise the Santi-Bahini. He addressed at Komarkuchi about the necessity of the Congress Santi-Bahini. At the end of the training camp of Mayong, a rally of Santi-Sena was taken out from Mayong to Kajali.

The leading Congress men of Mayong proper were the king of Mayong (Baneswar Sinha) and his brother Minaram Sinha Raja, Hari Chandra Gogoi, Bhuban Chandra Medhi, Mahendra Bishaya, Mahendra Nath, Dhiraj Bishaya, Sitaram Bishaya, Haliram Deka, Harakumar Bishaya etc. King Baneswar Sinha had actively participated in all the activities of the congress such as the training camp and any organisation of functions of the party.⁴⁹

Formation of death squad in Raja-Mayong:

In the training camp of Raja-Mayong, Adhinayak Benudhar Deka told about the formation of the death squad in Assam. "Are there any volunteer to join the squad in Mayong also?" said Benudhar Deka. Thereafter several young members of the "Santi-Bahini" namely Sri Bhogram Deka and Dadhiram Bordoloi from Konwargaon; Madhu Keot from Brahamapur, Bikaram Deka from Kachari Gaon, Birahu Medhi from Mayong Sildubi, Bhagirath Roja and Bhuban Chandra Medhi, Raja-Mayong and Hatimuriya, Dinaram Deka from Kachari Gaon and Sri Benudhar Deka from Chatabari and Sri Mahadananda Goswami from Doipara volunteered. In this way, Benudhar Deka organised the death squad in Mayong. He was the first person to propose to derail train.⁵⁰

The people of Mayong area joined the congress. They participated in the freedom movement in full swing. Joining in the congress as well as in the death squad had completely changed the outlook of the indigenous people towards their country. They learnt the ABC of politics from the leaders of the congress. The people of Mayong were familiar with monarchy only.⁵¹

In the derailment of train between Kampur and Jamunanukh and Puranigudam on the night of August 24, there was no casualty on the British side. The leaders of the district congress committee were not satisfied at this. Therefore, the leaders of the congress took further steps to derail train at the station of Panikhaiti with the help of the death squad of Mayong. Laskhi Goswami, the former (D.O.C.) District Organiser of Congress, of Nagaon, sent three persons with a letter viz Manik Bora, Dhanpur Lashkar and Bhibiram Bora to the branch president of congress, Mahadananda Goswami, suggesting him to derail at the Panikhaitee station. They were sent to Mayong on 20.11.42.⁵²

The active members of “Mrityu Bahini” and the “Santi-Sena” of Mayong derailed train at the Panikhaiti station on 24th Nov. 1942 (14th Aghon) which was a danger signal for the British. Benudhar Deka, the captain of the district of the undivided Nowgong raised the proposal for derailment at Panikhaiti.⁵³

Three persons arrived at the village of Hahara-Kamarkuchi. They were Benudhar Deka (District Adhinayak) from Sunaruguri, Rupram Sut and Kameswar Bordoloi from Charaibahi. They were sent to Mayong by the district president of the congress committee. Thus, 11 persons in total reached the Amlung Ashram on 23.11.42, which was established by Mahadananda Goswami.

The next morning, i.e. on 24.11.1942, the 11-member death squad set out on their secret mission to Panikhaiti and reached Panbari at 12 noon. They took lunch and went in search of a suitable place for derailment. They found a suitable place in the track between Panbari and Pnikhaiti where the railway track was covered by long grass. They waited there till midnight. They removed the fishplate in the track with help of their instruments. Dhanpur and Bhibiram Bora were experts in this; Layram and Madhu guarded with guns. Mahadananda Goswami looked after the whole operation. On the otherhand, Bhagirath Raja was

suggested to keep a boat ready for crossing the river Kolong after accomplishing their task.⁵⁴

According to Mahadananda Goswami, he went to Guwahati on 21.11.42. to enquire about the train timings. He got information that one passenger train would leave Guwahati around 12 midnight with the British soldiers towards Dimapur. He stayed there in his uncle Nagen Kotoky's house at Uzan Bajar, Guwahati. On 22.11.42, he returned and informed the members of death squad in Raja-Mayong. On that day, all the members were present at the Doipara sattra. They were Dadhiram Bordoloi and Bhogram Deka from Konwar Gaon, Bhibiram Bora, Dhanpur Lashkar and Manik Bora from Kampur; Madhu Keot from Barhampur and Layram Medhi from Mayong Sildubi. The next morning, they reached Amlung Ashram. They waited there until midnight and caused the historic incident on 24.11.42. Immediately, after the incident, the eleven members of the death squad had fled Via-Kolong-Kajolee Mayong-Sildubi and reached Doipara where Mahadananda Goswami resided. The Govt No.1 Gonburha under the British administration, Late Rasadhar Deka said that at least 700, white soldiers were killed in this incident.⁵⁵ But according to the Political History of Assam edited by A.C.Bhuyan the number of dead were 6 and the number of injured were 41.⁵⁶

On 26, November, police atrocities began in the area of Raja-Mayong as a consequence of the derailment. A group of British police personnel from Kamrup and the O.C. of the Morigaon police station, Md. Latif Choudhury and his group gathered the innocent people of Mayong in the field of Mayong M.E. School. The police officer had seized the Guns from the village people and arrested Ghanakanta Sinha, who later became the king of Mayong and Bhuban Saikia. They were kept in the District Jail. Dhanpur Lasker and Manik Bora were arrested at Charaibahi next day. Bhibiram Bora and some others were also arrested. A Garo woman of the village and some Nepali people from

Barbila near of Panikhaiti, were also sent to Nowgong Jail. No evidence that they were involved in the incident could be established.⁵⁷

Mahadananda Goswami evaded arrest by disguising himself though arrest warrant was issued in his name. The bearded guru shaved his beard and went on hiding in places like Nalbari, Puthimari and Suwalkuchi. There he met Sanskrit scholars like Manoranjan Shastri and Gopal Shastri and spent some of his time in the study of Sanskrit in the Sanskrit Tols. He came back to Mayong after the situation in his own village had cooled down. So, there is a popular saying -

“Panbarit Bagarile Gari,
Babajiye khurale Dari.”

“Mayongat Lagil Dhar-pakar,
Mahada gossain uthil jrar.”

“Barthakurar Dabi, Mahada gossainr chabi;
Hara Kantai Duwana Pai;
Ahina Konwar Ahe Aru Jai.

(Meaning: the train derailed at Panbari, the babaji shaved his beard, search began in Mayong, Mahada gossain’s temperature shot up, the demand of the Barthakur, the keys of Mahada gossain, Harakanta gets two anas, Ahina Konwar comes and goes.)⁵⁸

Some other freedom fighters of Roja Mayong were Mahendra Bishaya, Mayaram Deori, Harichandra Gogoi, Ghana Kanta Konwar, Bhagirath Raja, Meda Nath, Sangiram Nath and the then king of Mayong Baneswar Sinha.⁵⁹

The various ethnic groups of Mayong area played an important role in quit India movement. In this regards, the name of Arihina Konwar could be mentioned. He was very active in the programmes of the Congress. He was a teetotaler and a devout Vaishnava. Other active members of the village of Barukata, were Ghana Kanta Deka, Kamala Deka, Phatik Deka, Sanjoy Deka, Bharat Chandra Konwar, etc.

Dutiram Bangthai from Ghagua Garmari, Mayaram Deori from Panbari, Ghana Deka from Ghagua Kalbari, Bhumi Kanta Deka and Dinaram Deka Manaha Kacharigaon Rameswar Bordoloi, Dadhiram Bordoloi, Padmeswar Bordoloi and Hara Kanta Borkakati from Manaha Konwargaon, Jayram Deka, Yugananda Goswami, Tingara Medhi and Rama Kanta Debasharma from Doipara, Mahendra Deka, Nabin Goswami, Sandhiram Medhi and Loyram Medhi from Mayong Sildubi, Madhu Keot and Labaram Nath from Hatianeebheta, etc. were some of the freedom fighters from the area. Another freedom fighter, Kolaram Deka from Kalbari was an active volunteer of congress since 1921. He was coordinator of the party in the district of Morigaon. He looked after the needs of Gandhiji at the Ashram of Sharaniya Hill during Civil-Disobedience Movement in 1934-35 This ashram is known as the “Gandhi Ashram” at Saraniya.⁶⁰

During the Quit India Movement, women also took active part. A woman from the Koch community named Abolee Kochoni was the lone female martyr in the district of Morigaon. Out of 325 freedom fighters, she was the second female martyr in Assam. Originally she belonged to the village of Mayong Sildubi. Her husband was Bharaghar Medhi. She had two sons named Tengera and Khadou and a daughter named Bhutuki. She worked as an informer of the Santi Sena for which she was killed by the British after the burning down of the inspection bungalow in September, 1942.⁶¹

It may be noted that Tilak Deka the first and only martyr of the area laid down his life for the Country on the 28th August 1942

The above discussion about the participation of Mayong in the Freedom Struggle shows that the people of Mayong were involved in Freedom Movement since 1857. The king of Mayong led the people to fight against the British Regime.

Mayong Koch Sanmilan:

A movement had begun in the late sixties for the inclusion of the Koch community in the list of scheduled tribes of the Indian

Constitution all over Assam. Since a large number of Koch people inhabit the Raja Mayong Village, they also joined this movement under the banner of the District Koch Sanmilani in 1980. Hemchandra Deka the President of the Branch Committee of Raja-Mayong Koch Sanmilani and Babul Hazarika were members of the deputation to Delhi in 1997 for observing Dharna and presentation of a Memorandum to the Prime Minister of India.⁶²

The Koches have a state level organisation named Sadou Asom Koch Sanmilani with Durlabh Chamua as its president at present. Apart from this central Body the Koches have a State level women's organisation named Sadou Asom Koch Mahila Sanmilani and a youth organisation named Sadou Asom Koch Yubak Sanmilani. The student wing of the Koches is All Assam Koch Rajbongshi Students Union. All these organisations are quite active in Raja-Mayong village also.⁶³

The demands of the Koch community include a separate homeland for the Koches, recognition of the language of the Koches apart from demanding the inclusion of the community in the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. The various organisations of the Koches have united under one name called the "Kamata Pancha" and they reiterate their demands from time to time in various platforms.⁶⁴

The government recognizes the Koch Rajbonshis as Other Backward Classes. It had included the Koch Rajbonshi in the list of Scheduled Tribe of Assam on 28th January 1996, through an ordinance for a period of six months. But after the expiry of six months the ordinance was not extended any further. The Koches are regarded to be original inhabitants of Assam.⁶⁵

Nath Sanmilan:

The Nath community, also known as the yogi community, has a rich heritage of culture and literature. They have organized an all India Yogi Pracharanee Mahasabha to collect and publish their literary works.

The former President, V. V. Giri was the Chairman of this Mahasabha in 1953. Yogi of Prayag., Mahadip Giri was the Secretary and he came to Assam to inspire the Nath people to be united. The 81st session of all Assam Yogi Sanmilani formed the Nath Sahitya Parishad at Majuli in 2002 to preserve and publish the Nath literature.⁶⁶

The Naths have an All India Organisation, which have their respective state units. The state units have district level and regional or local organisations. At present the Marigaon district level organisation of the Naths cater to the needs of the Nath people of Raja-Mayong. The district Sanmilani of Yogi Caste of Morigaon was established 1976. The Nath people of Raja-Mayong have been in leading position in the District level body also. Gopal Nath, a retired L. P. School Teacher of Raja-Mayong village was the Vice President of the District Yogi Sanmilani for 2002-2006. Akan Nath of Raja-Mayong was also Vice President of the District Yogi Sanmilani.⁶⁷

An organisation named Morigaon Zila yogi Rajanaitic Sacheton Mancha was established in 2004 headed by Gopal Chandra Nath, Marigaon, to accelerate development of the yogi people in the district of Morigaon. Parallel to that organization, Morigaon Zila Yogi Sanmilani Yobak Sacheton Mancha is also established for the unity of yogi society. There are local committees of these two organisations in Raja-Mayong also.⁶⁸

Keot Sanmilani :

The political role of the people of the Keot caste is significant in the mayong G.P. Election. There are only 370 Keot families with a total population of 2255 (22.36%), in the area of Mayong Gaon Panchayat. These people have been socio-politically organized by the Mayong Anchalik Keot Sanmilani, which was established in 2004. Mr. Puneswar Saikia is the present president and Mr. Haren Saikia is the general secretary of the Mayong Anchalik Keot Sanmilani. All the members of

the Mayong Anchalik Keot Sanmilani are the Executive members of the Sadou Asom Keot Sanmilani. Sadou Asom Keot Sanmilani was established on 13.3.94 headed by Dr. Chandra Kt. Talukdar as President and Sri Ramesh Deka, as the secretary.⁶⁹

The main purpose of the keot Sanmilani is to unite the Keot people living in Assam. The organization has an annual publication named *Khetrajyoti*. Beside this, the Sadou Asom Keot Sanmilani Yuba Parishad has been organized headed by Sri Hansadhar Deka. Through the organization the Keot people of Assam have been trying work for all round development of the community and to secure reservation under the sixth schedule of the Constitution of India.⁷⁰

All the community-based organisations have a common goal of obtaining more facilities for their community and work for the development of their own community.

Changes in Panchayati Raj:

“The village is linked through the system of Panchayati raj to other villages and larger organs of local government. The village has certain territorial divisions and social values are attached to this.”⁷¹

“To effect sustainable development in rural areas, the solutions to the problems of poverty and underdevelopment in rural India need to emerge from the villages itself. Panchayati Raj System therefore becomes vital not only self-governance at grassroots but also for socio-economic development of villages.”⁷² Assam has a very strong historical background of local self-government. The villages in Assam had a strong organisations similar to that of the Panchayat in different names or forms since long past.⁷³ In the Post-Independence period, a two-tier system of Panchayat administration was introduced in Assam under the Rural Panchayat Act of 1948. Under this Act, rural Panchayats were

constituted with an area co-terminous with that of a Mouza or the revenue area and primary Panchayats in each village with a population not exceeding two thousand five hundred. According to the Act, all adult persons in the primary Panchayat area would have the right to vote. The Act empowered the primary Panchayat to set up an executive authority. Accordingly each primary Panchayat had an executive body comprising minimum of 9 and maximum of 15 members including the President and the Vice President of the Primary Panchayat. A Rural Development Officer under the Deputy Commissioner of the District looked after the functioning of these Panchayats both at village level and also at mouza level.⁷⁴ Under the Act, 422 mouza Panchayats and 2656 primary rural Panchayats were constituted till 1957. In early times, the local boards had to administer the developmental works in the rural areas. After the execution of the Act, many of the functions of the local boards were transferred to the Panchayats. But the Panchayat Act of 1948 could not function properly for mainly two reasons. Firstly, all the rural Panchayats and the primary Panchayats were not established in the village areas. The paucity of fund was also a vital point in this respect.

Mayong Gaon Panchayat:

Raja-Mayong had a rural Panchayat constituted under the 1948 Act. According to this Act, each Primary Panchayat had an executive body comprising of minimum of 9 and maximum of 15 members including the President and the vice President of the Primary Panchayat. A rural development officer under the deputy commissioner of the district looked after the functioning of these Panchayats both at the village level and also at Mouza level. The then secretary of the Rural Panchayat was Uttam Deka, Baha Barjhari. Mayong Mouza was as big Mouza and consisted of three present Mouzas - viz-Mayong, Manaha and Pakaria. The first Mouzadar was Narayan Sinha, the king of Mayong Kingdom in 1855 AD.⁷⁵

In 1953, The Government of Assam appointed a committee to study the working of Panchayats in the rural areas of Assam. It

suggested that the Panchayat should be established all over Assam within a period of two years. Further, the total number of primary Panchayats should be between 5 and 15. In 1955, an amendment bill incorporating the recommendations of the committee was introduced in the Assam Legislative Assembly. Later, it was abandoned.⁷⁶

In 1959, as per recommendations of the Balwantrai Mehta Committee, The Government of Assam enacted the Assam Panchayat Act, 1959. This Act provided for a scheme of three-tier Panchayati raj system in Assam, i.e. Mahkuma Parishad at the Sub-divisional level, Anchalik Panchayat at the intermediate level and the Gaon Panchayat at the village level. But all the units were organically linked up. There were 2,574 Gaon Panchayats, 121 Anchalik Panchayats and 20 Mahkuma Parishads in the plains districts of Assam.⁷⁷

Raja-Mayong had one Gaon Sabha with its executive body i.e. the Gaon Panchayat under the Assam Panchayat Act of 1959. The Gaon Panchayat consisted of not more than 11 and not less than 9 members. The members of Gaon Panchayat were elected on the basis of adult franchise in direct election. The term of Gaon Panchayat was 4 years. The two women members and two representatives of SC and ST communities are co-opted to the Gaon Panchayat. Under the new Act of 1959, Harichandra Gogoi the first President of the Mayong Gaon Panchayat hailed from the Raja-Mayong village followed by three more presidents until 1972.⁷⁸

The Mayong Gaon Panchayat was large Panchayat Under the Act of 1972. Under the Act of 1972 the Government of Assam wanted to abolish the intermediate level Anchaklik Panchayat and centralize more and more power at the subdivisonal level Panchayat called Mahkuma Parishad. Accordingly a two tier Panchayat system having Mahkuma Parishad at the Sub-Divisional level and the Gaon Panchayat at the lower level was introduced.⁷⁹ The Mayong Gaon Panchayat had a population of 18500 and its area included 42 villages in 1972. The Gaon

Panchayat had 15 elected members with the President directly elected and two members were nominated from the S.T. and S.C. communities and Co-Operative Societies. Lt. Mahendra Bishaya was elected as the President of Mayong - Kamapur Gaon Panchayat which was newly formed under the new Act of Panchayati Raj 1972. After his death, Jogen Roy became the acting president of Mayong - Kamapur Gaon Panchayat in 1976. He was succeeded by Chandi Sarkar. During this period (From 1976 to 1978) other two acting Presidents - Ramacharan Sarkar from Gobardhan and Haren Roy from Borpak were Presidents of Mayang Kamapur Gaon Panchayat. The working of the Panchayat was very limited and received very little fund from the Govt.⁸⁰

Brojen Deka was elected President of the Mayong - Kamapur Gaon Panchayat for the term 1979-1983. He did certain public works for the area of Raja-Mayong. But these were not enough in improving the communication system of the area. The villagers had to walk long distances in the absence of other alternatives.⁸¹

Assam Panchayati Raj Act of 1986 replaced the Assam Panchayati Raj Act of 1972. The numbers of Gaon Panchayat members were reduced to 10 and reservation provided for the members of the S.C./S.T. population was more than 33.33 percent. Under the provision of the new Act, election to the Panchayati Raj bodies were conducted in February 1992. The new rule of the Act changed the Mayong - Kamapur Panchayat into Mayong Gaon Panchayat with 10 members from 10 wards including 33% women reservation and S.T./S.C. members. Sri Pitshing Konwar from Raja-Mayong was the contestant for the post of the President of Mayong Gaon Panchayat. His rival was Mr. Adhan Nath from the same village. Both were young contestants from the same village but the former won the election with the help of the O.B.C. (general) votes. The latter candidate who was Nath by caste could not mobilise the voters of the Koches and Keot caste. Finally, Mr. Pitshing Konwar was elected as the President of Mayong Gaon Panchayat. He

completed the term of five years. But he could not satisfy the people of Raja-Mayong as the villagers expressed in interviews.⁸²

The erstwhile Mayong Kamarpur Gaon Panchayat was divided into Mayong, Borpak and Paschhim Mayong in 1992. The population under Mayong Gaon Panchayat is 10,081 according to 2001 census, of whom SC and ST constitute 26% and 2.46% respectively. On the other hand, the population of Mayong Gaon Panchayat. was 7551 in the last census report in 1991 of whom 18% of SC and a small population belonged to ST Category.⁸³

Table-I

Population of Mayong G.P., Census Report, 1991

Sl.No.	Name of Villages	SEX		Total	S.C.	S.T.
		Male	Female			
1.	Burhamayong	219	228	447	20	40
2.	Burhamayong Pahar	NP	----	----	---	---
3.	Gamariguri	117	110	227	---	---
4.	Chanaka	128	122	250	250	---
5.	Bahaitari	62	58	120	26	---
6.	Kalsila	NP	---	----	----	---
7.	Kachasila	120	112	232	228	---
8.	Lommati	544	493	1037	----	---
9.	Hatimuria	503	426	929	186	4
10.	Murkata No-1	352	304	656	656	---
11.	Murkata No-2	184	170	354	254	---
12.	Rajamayang	811	707	1518	12	1
13.	Pabitara P.G.R	174	105	279	17	16
14.	Sildubi	545	467	1012	144	111
15.	Hatigarh V.G.R	90	63	153	----	2
16.	Kajali Pathar	N.P.	----	-----	----	---
17.	Chengmarigaon	N.P.	----	-----	----	---
18.	Chengmari Pahar	N.P.	----	-----	----	----
19.	Dhakiabari	174	163	337	----	----
Total	19	4023	3528	7551	1793	174

Source:- Office of the Mayong Development Block

For the year 2002 the post of President of Mayong Gaon Panchayat was reserved for women and as such Mrs. Telimai Bora, a resident of Lonmati village was elected as the President of Mayong

Gaon Panchayat. Edhan Nath, a person from Raja-Mayong village was elected as the A.P. member. One women ward member named Sumitra Devi belonged to Raja-Mayong village. The vice President belonged to Chanaka village.⁸⁴

It has become a convention that if the president is from Raja-Among then the Anchalik Panchayat member is chosen from other villages and vice-versa. The member belonging to the scheduled caste category was elected from Hatimuria village. The village Raja-Mayong has been playing a decisive role in the Panchayat elections with highest number of voters(30%).⁸⁵

The financial condition of the Gaon Panchayat has been weak since the year 1974 to 1983 the sources of revenue was poor. Besides, during this period, Mayong Kamapur Gaon Panchayat was the biggest Panchayat in the District of Morigaon. At present, Mayong Gaon Panchayat has only the revenues of the state Executive Fund of Contingency grants and a little amount of local revenue from Ghats or Mahals as shown under the headings as the secretary report

Year	Executive Fund of Contingency.	Ghats or Mahal
2003 - 04	70,000.00	20,000.00
2004 - 05	77,000.00	21,000.00
2005 - 06	1,10,000.00	22,000.00
2006 - 07	1,00,000.00	23,000.00
2007 - 08	77,000.00	21,000.00

These above amount of annual revenue towards a Panchayat is not a considerable amount and it cannot do anything more for the development of the rural people with this meagre amount.⁸⁶

The benefits offered by the Raja-Mayong Gaon Panchayat the people below the poverty line has been shown in Chart I below which shows that the benefits offered till now is not sufficient for the uplift of the people.

Chart (I)

Distribution of allotted items to the B.P.L. Beneficiaries

Name of Item	MAYONG G.P.	Rajamayong	Till 2006-07
	Numbers		
Old Pensions	243	45	"
Cylinders(L.P.G.)	43	11	"
Tube Well	66	26	"
Widow Pension	15	2	"
Toilet	300	25	"
J.A.Y Houses	250	20	"
B.P.L Beneficiaries	1500	203	"
	2407	430	

Source-Secretary, Mayong G.P.-2006

The main sources of income of the Gaon Panchayat consisted of the proceeds of taxes, cess or fines, fees, contributions from Government including the share of land revenues, local rates, contributions from Mahkuma Parishad and the sale proceeds of pounds, ghats and markets. Mayong Gaon Panchayat is mainly dependant on the sums received from the Mahkuma Parishad. It received more than 70% of its income from the latter. The highest percentage of amount received under this head was in the year 2005-06, i.e. 85.0%. The highest percentage of amount spent in development work was 59%, i.e. 65000 in the year 2005-06. The Gaon Panchayat's own income consists of the proceeds of auction of the cattle pounds and the proceeds of taxes on Cycle, Rickshaw, Hand pulled, Bullock and Buffalo carts, Ghats, motorised boat or (Bhoot - Bhooti). Mayong Panchayat has operated only Ghats and Bhoot-Bhooti. Revenue form other sources are collected by local public Organisations. For example, swamps are sold by the Mayong Unnayan Committee and Mayong bazaar is in the hands of the puja Committee of Mayong. The area of Raja-Mayong is flood-prone area and as such the D.C. of the district of Morigaon has not taken over the swamps. The administration of Mayong Panchayat receives 21 thousand rupees from the local sources of Ghat and Bhoot - Bhooti annually.⁸⁷

The Gaon Panchayat has spent the highest part of its revenues on the payment of salaries to the employees of the office. The Mayong Gaon Panchayat has only 5 employees, viz. 1 secretary, 1 road Mohorer,

1 Tax collector, 1 Peon and 1 Chowkidar. The secretary of the Gaon Panchayat is paid his salary directly by the Mahkuma Parishad by deducting the amount from the share of local rates and land revenue payable to the Gaon Panchayat. The other employees are to be paid from the rest of the amount. No amount can be spent from assigned grants for payment of salary to its employees. At present, the ward members are also paid by the office of Gaon Panchayats. The amounts allotted for payment to members are Rs. 2000.00 to the President including all allowances, Rs. 600.00 to the vice-President and Rs. 300.00 each to the ten members. Thus, the Gaon Panchayat has to bears about Rs. 38,600.00 for the salaries of the members annually. So, in the last five years, Rs. 1,90,000.00 had been spent in the name of the salaries of the selected members. The Panchayat receives an annual grant of 15-16 lacs from the Government. ⁸⁸

The Panchayats are mostly allotted earth-filling works for building roads, which get de-linked in the floods repeatedly. However, 76.99% of the people are not satisfied with the functioning of the Panchayat as revealed in their answers to questions of the questionnaire.

Table II
Allocation of Various Schemes of Mayong G.P

For Last Three Years					
SI No.	Name of Schemes	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Total
1	Roads Const.	958400	511815	416168	1886383
2	Agril Bondh	50000	160000	240000	450000
3	Earth Filling	80000	186388	205000	471388
4	Krishti Sora/Stage	100000	150000	50000	300000
5	Renovation/Repairing	0	0	219900	219900
6	Kitshan Shed	75000	0	0	75000
7	Health Centre	50000	50000	0	100000
8	Natya Mandir	70000	70000	70000	210000
9	Temple Guest House	100000	60000	75000	235000
10	Building Construction	60000	99000	160000	319000
11	Latrin	0	0	121000	121000
12	Cycle Stand	40000	40000	0	80000
13	Fisher Tank	0	65000	45000	110000
	Total	1583400	1392203	1602068	4577671

Source: The report of Mayong G.P.

Panchayat Elections:

The last Panchayat election, which was held in 2007-08, shows that the dominance of the candidate from Raja-Mayong village has decreased as he lost the post of president of the Mayong Gaon Panchayat. Previously, the post of president was in the hands of the candidate of the Raja-Mayong village from 1992-1997. Next to that from 2002-2007, though the Raja-Mayong village lost the president post, yet, the Anchalik Panchayat Member was an inhabitant of Raja-Mayong village. But in the last Panchayat election for the years 2007-08, the Raja-Mayong village lost two posts – the president and the Anchalik Panchayat Member. The president was elected from adjacent village called Hatimuria village. The candidate for the post of the

president was an independent candidate belonging to the Koch caste.⁸⁹ The respondents of the Raja-Mayong village said that the village representative was not popular. The villagers say that the former Anchalik Panchayat Members of the village did hardly anything for the development of the village. Besides these, the rival candidate for the post of the president also did not have a good track record. Hence, the voters of Raja-Mayong village had casted their votes against the village candidate and supported the rival independent candidate from Hatimuria village.

Another major seat, the post of Anchalik Panchayat Member has gone to the hands of Mr. H. Sarkar from No.2 Murkata who belongs to the Namashudra caste after a decade, the people of Namashudra of the Mayong G.P. have been able to win their caste representative. Raja-Mayong has three ward members out of which the two belonging to Ward No. 4&5 are women. Community wise one is a Koch, one Nath and the third is a scheduled caste.⁹⁰ Table-III

Results of Mayong G.P (20 No),Panchayat Election 2007-2008

S.L.	Name of Candidate	Name of Village	Post	Votes	Result
1.	A. Nath	Rajamayong	President	1053	Lost
2.	P. Bhuyan	Satibheti	"	1708	Lost
3.	D. Nath	Rajamayong	"	280	Lost
4.	R.C.Medhi	Hatimuriya	"	1813	Won
1.	H. Saikia	Satibheti	A.P.M.	1260	Lost
2.	H. Sarkar	Murkata No 2	"	2428	Won
3.	K. Bishaya	Kalsila	"	206	Lost
4.	L. Bora	Hatimuria	"	768	Lost
1.	Ms. R. Medhi	Hatigorh-No.1	W.M.	206	Won
1.	J. Sarkar	Sildubi-No.2	W.M	200	Won
1.	S.Nath	Rajamayong- No-3	"	188	Won
1.	Ms. N. Deka	Rajamayong- No-4	"	244	Won
1.	Ms. S. Sarkar	Rajamayong-No-5	"	292	Won
1.	N. Bishaya	HatimuriaNo-6(A)	"	216	Won
1.	A. Biswash	HatimuriaNo-7(b)	"	222	Won
1.	B. Singha	Barhaitari-No-8	"	180	Won
1.	R. Saikia	Lonmati(A)No9	"	279	Won
1.	B.Keleng	BurhamayongNo-10	"	196	Won

Source 1-Election Office, Dist Marigaon

The electoral politics of the village used to have its impact on the traditional institutions also. It is interesting to note that the last Panchayat election of 2007-08 created fragmentation on the traditional

khel system in Raja-Mayong. For example one woman ward member of ward No. 1 Hatigarh is the winner of this constituency. The fact is that, the villagers of this constituency decided in a meeting to caste their votes unanimously in favour a particular party. But some voters of the constituency did not abide by the decisions of and supported the other candidate. Therefore, they were expelled from the *khel*. Because of that, the expelled members formed a new *khel* within the same village.

Besides these, voters took bribes from certain candidates in the last Panchayat elections. The justification that the villagers put forward is that the winners have not done any public welfare. So, it is better to take whatever they get in cash or kind as they are not going to get any thing once the candidate has won. On the other hand the winners claim that the voters demand money for voting in their favour. Hence, there is no question of working for them in addition to giving them money for their votes.⁸⁹

The above facts regarding the elections in the locality show that the voters do not apply their voting rights in a right manner. They pay more importance to individual stake than welfare of the community as a whole. The most remarkable thing that has been observed in case of the minds of the common people is the lack of faith on the government machinery, which is manifested in the form of the Panchayat at the rural level. The people have openly castigated the elected members for not delivering the goods and a certain section of the poor voters have resorted to taking of bribes directly. It appears that it will be very difficult to change this trend and accelerate development in the village unless drastic measures are adopted for restoring faith of the common people in the democratic system.

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The Present King of Mayong, Tarani Kanta Singha