Human Resource Management in the Ahom Period (1228-1641AD) : An Analytical Study

By Nipon Panging

Introduction- Medieval Assam during the period of the Ahom rule (1228-1826AD) witnessed a certain degree of development in the fields of society, polity, economy, religion and culture. Land and man were the main sources of revenue in the state. In this development process the role and contribution of the people, known as paiks, are remarkable. The Ahoms were more agricultural than raiding conquerors as the founder of the kingdom, Sukapha (1228-1268 AD), himself engaged in agricultural activities. The Ahoms had an improved mode of production such as wet rice cultivation compared to the existing tribes of the Brahmaputra valley. The local tribes were subjugated through the introduction of exacting personal service from them. Virgin lands were brought under cultivation from time to time under royal supervision during the Ahom period (1228-1826AD). With the extension of the power from its foundation in 13th century AD to 17th century AD the existing system of exacting personal service from the subjects to be elaborated and reorganized. The political condition contributed in the growth of common identity among the rulers. During the period of Ahom king Pratap Singha (1603-1641 AD) Momai Tamuli Barbarua resettled the old villages and settled new ones on the basis of the Paik or Khel system.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Medieval Assam during the period of the Ahom rule (1228-1826AD) witnessed a certain degree of development in the fields of society, polity, economy, religion and culture. Land and man were the main sources of revenue in the state. In this development process the role and contribution of the people, known as paiks, are remarkable. The Ahoms were more agricultural than raiding conquerors as the founder of the kingdom, Sukapha (1228-1268 AD), himself engaged in agricultural activities. The Ahoms had an improved mode of production such as wet rice cultivation compared to the existing tribes of the Brahmaputra valley. The local tribes were subjugated through the introduction of exacting personal service from them. Virgin lands were brought under cultivation from time to time under royal supervision during the Ahom period (1228-1826AD). With the extension of the power from its foundation in 13th century AD to 17th century AD the existing system of exacting personal service from the subjects to be elaborated and reorganized. The political condition contributed in the growth of common identity among the rulers. During the period of Ahom king Pratap Singha (1603-1641 AD) Momai Tamuli Barbarua resettled the old villages and settled new ones on the basis of the Paik or Khel system. This system proved to be the most efficient system and became the backbone of the socio-political organization of medieval Assam. Through this system the kingdom held the authority over man and land and utilized the manpower by exacting personal services from them. The aim of this paper is to study the management of the human resource i.e. the Paik system of the medieval Assam and the role of Momai Tamuli Barbarua. The organization of the society of medieval Assam and management of the workforce began from the days of the founder of the kingdom Sukapha. With the extension of the Ahom kingdom, the administration and to meet all the internal exigencies, besides to build up a resistance against the Mughals, Momai Tamuli Barbarua under the patronage of the king Pratap Singha reorganized the Paik system effectively. Land and people were considered as property of the state and they paid revenues in terms of physical labour. Under the Paik or Khel system every able bodied individual of the age group 16-50 yrs was registered as a Paik or revenue paying unit. To know the actual number of the resources Momai Tamuli Barbarua conducted the survey of land and census of population. He strictly took all these measures to furnish the state with actual data required for fixing the land revenue due to the fact that the revenue amount depended on the size of the population. The male between twelve and sixteen years, were undergo a training and known as chengra Paik. To meet the demand of the state and to ensure the exacting of service from each and every able bodied people Momai Tamuli Barbarua resettled the old villages by breaking the big families and made it sure that every Paik would render service to the state. Four Paiks called as got was formed and they rendered service to the state in rotation i.e. one paik was to serve for a period of three months in a year during the monarchy. A number of got formed a Khel for a particular kind of work for the state. In times of peace the paiks were the labourers doing all productive works and in times of war they were the soldiers. On the basis of their actual roles, they divided into two classes namely-Kanri-the paik and Chamua-the apaikans. To look after the paiks officials were created over twenty number of paiks to number of six thousand and more. Moreover, the paiks could demand for the change or replacement of their officers. A paik was allotted two puras of cultivable land for which no cash revenue was charged. The land was neither hereditary nor transferrable and in fact the land belonged to the khel and allotted only by that particular community.

The Paik system was a very effective system for the state as it ensured the service of the every individual. The system provided equal shares of work and equal remuneration to the Paiks. There prevailed a strong bonding and a sense of responsibility among the paiks. The system supported a socialist view in terms of distribution of the land and also a kind of democracy by allowing them to act against incapable officials. The role of obstruction to the possible growth of the guild system and the trade, developing a class struggle within the system and fixation of a particular work for a particular khel were seemed to be some demerits of the Paik system. From the study, the competency of Momai Tamuli Barbarua in the management of the human resource can be assessed. Some of the basic elements of human resource management, such as the strategic
planning, the organization of the skilled workers, developing a better environment among the workers, responsibility of the individuals of a group towards each other and the most important, the maximum utilization of the manpower for the parent body etc. were seen in the paik system and thus make it a relevant topic of study.

REFERENCES Références Referencias

3. Ibid p 252.