

Bir Lachit Borphukan, the Unsung Hero of Medieval Bharat: A Critical Study

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Abstract:

Lachit Borphukan is the pride and example of patriotism of Bharat who give the greatest example of sacrifices for country by which he inspires and motivates every person of Assam for the supreme sacrifice for our nation if it need. He was born on 24 November 1622 to Momai Tamuli Boabarua and Kunti Moran at Charaideo to a Ahom family. After completing his study in humanities and military strategies, he was appointed as the Saladhara Barua (as Private Secretary) of Ahom King. He was also appointed to other important positions like the superintendent of stable Royal Horses and superintendent of house guards. King Chakradwaj Singha was impressed by his duty, honesty and discipline and made him the commander in chief of Ahom army i.e Borphukan. As a warrior he holds a special place in history. Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb sent Mughals under the leadership of Ram Singha to seize Assam in 1671 and Lachit Borphukan defeated them at the battle of Saraighat. Assam was nearly captured by Mughal, but his Captainship prevented them to do so. His patriotism, bravery, dutifulness, and determination are enshrined in the history of Assam also motivate and inspire every person of Assam. Such a great hero of Ma Bharati should be remembered by each and every person of the country. His life and works can be a source of inspiration to all.

Keywords: Bir Lachit Borphukon, Ahom, Unsung Hero, Inspiration.

1. Introduction:

The Ahoms belong to the Tai or Shan race inhabiting in Southern Siam and Southern China happened to be the early settler of Eastern Assam of the Brahmaputra Valley. Noted historian Edward Gait mentions that in the early part of 13th century they established their state in the eastern division of the Assam State where from the actual ruling of the Ahom dynasty started. They ruled over six hundred years (1228-1826 AD) with a reasonable stable government, and their kings governed till the British's annexation in the 1st half of 19th century. It is true that they had efficient political and administrative system for which they could establish their dynasty and ruled for six hundred years. The decay and fall of the ancient kingdom of Pragjyotisha-Kamrupa of the Brahmaputra valley by the mid 12th century AD witnessed a period of political decentralization throughout the valley. Various tribal states and feudal territories at the hands of the members of the old aristocracy began to crop up in different parts within and outside territorial jurisdiction of the old kingdom. The Bhuyans, they carved out their respective "territories which are currently the districts of Kamrupa, Darrang, Nagaon and Lakhimpur. Along with the rise of the Ahoms, the other tribal states like Chutiyas, Kacharis, Koches and also the Bhuyans rule were ended. The first Ahom king Sukapha(1228-1268 AD) who migrated from Mong Mit in the modern

Shan states of Burma, crossed the Patkai hills in 1228 AD and established the first Capital of the Ahoms at Charaideo in 1253AD. After him the later Ahom kings ruled for nearly 600 years and resisted successfully the Mughal expansion in Northeast India. In the history of Ahom Dynasty and Ahom Kingdom the story of bravery of Bir Lachit Borphukon cannot be ignored. The story of his valor and indomitable courage will always act as a source of inspiration for the people of India. He was a general of the Ahom Dynasty who fought bravely against the Mughal Empire and was successful in stopping them from taking control of the entire Ahom kingdom. He was born on 24th November 1622 and died on 25th April 1672.

2. Statement of the Problem:

Lachit Borphokan is the pride and example of patriotism of Bharat who give the greatest example of sacrifices for country by which he inspires and motivates every person of Assam for the supreme sacrifice for our nation if it need. Because of his dedication to his duties, he was made the Commander in Chief of Royal Army by Ahom King Chakradwaj Singha. As a warrior he holds a special place in the history. Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb sent Mughals under the leadership of Ram Singha to seize Assam in 1671 and Lachit Borphukan defeated them at the battle of Saraighat. Assam was nearly captured by Mughal, but his Captainship prevented them to do so. Such a great hero of Ma Bharati should be remembered by each and every person of the country. But, there are not lots of focus in that direction. Through this study attempt has been made to focus on the greatness and valor of this unsung hero of medieval India.

3. Significance of the Study:

There are tales of valor in every state or community. Assam as well as Assamese community is also not different from it. The mighty Ahom General Lachit Borphukan was a unmatched hero of the medieval India who fought bravely against the Mughals and resisted them successfully. He even killed his maternal uncle for neglecting the duty assigned to him saying, "Dexot koi Mumai Dangor Nohoi" (My uncle is not more precious than my country). Furthermore, he was suffered from severe fever attacks during the final battle against Mughal commander Ram Singha. In spite of his illness, he joined the war. His soldiers were inspired a lot and started to fight with full motivation and defeated Ram Singha. The Mughals had to leave Assam. But, the magnificent Ahom General Lachit Barphukan died just after the victory because of his illness at the age of 50. His patriotism, bravery, dutifulness, and determination are enshrined in the history of Assam also motivate and inspire every person of Assam. Such a great hero of Ma Bharati should be remembered by each and every person of the country. His life and works can be a source of inspiration to all.

4. Objective of the Study:

The objective of the study is to focus on the greatness and valor of the life and works of mighty Ahom General Bir Lachit Borphukon. As a warrior he holds a special place in history. There are tales of valor in every state or community. Assam as well as Assamese community is also not different from it. But he is not known in the national level as a great hero. The main focus of the study will be will be to explore the heroism and valor that the unsung hero of Assam bears who defeated the Mughal army with his dedication, discipline and self sacrifice.

5. Methodology:

Research methodology is the most important aspect of any study. It facilitates the materials and provides reliability and validity to it. The information collected for the purpose of the study is based on secondary data only. Secondary data have been collected from various published and unpublished sources like relevant literature, historical documents, news papers, journals, scholarly articles, related websites, social media and others. It is analytical and descriptive in nature.

6. Discussion on Findings:

The Ahoms belong to the Tai or Shan race inhabiting in Southern Siam and Southern China happened to be the early settler of Eastern Assam of the Brahmaputra Valley. In the early part of 13th century they established their state in the eastern division of the Assam State where from the actual ruling of the Ahom dynasty started.(Gait 2013:38) They ruled over six hundred years (1228-1826 AD) with a reasonable stable government, and their kings governed till the British's annexation in the 1st half of 19th century. It is learnt that they had efficient political and administrative system for which they could establish their dynasty in entire Assam. In the process of the establishment of the dynasty there were lots of contributions various heroes of the community. Bir Lachit Borphukon was among them. He was born on 24 November 1622 to Momai Tamuli Boabarua and Kunti Moran at Charaideo to a Ahom family. After completing his study in humanities and military strategies, he was appointed as the Saladhara Barua (as Private Secretary) of Ahom King. He also appointed to other important positions like the superintendent of stable Royal Horses and superintendent of house guards. King Chakradwaj Singha was impressed by his duty, honesty and discipline and made him the commander in chief of Ahom army i.e Borphukan. As a warrior he holds a special place in history. Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb sent Mughals under the leadership of Ram Singha to seize Assam in 1671 and Lachit Borphukan defeated them at the battle of Saraighat. Assam was nearly captured by Mughal, but his Captainship prevented them to do so. The day before the battle he erected a substantial boundary of sand and soil to block the roads which is known as Lachit Garh situated at present day Guwahati. This was erected so that the Mughal army could be force to march through the river Brahmaputra's waterways. In order to complete the job within one night, Lachit Borphukan assigned the task to his maternal uncle. Lachit Barphokan found his uncle somehow neglected his duties and so he beheading his uncle with a sword and saying, "Dexot koi Mumai Dangor Nohoi" (My uncle is not more precious than my country). Furthermore, he suffered from severe fever attacks during the final battle. Mughal commander Ram Singha want to take the advantage of this situation and he nearly succeeded in breaking the defence system of Ahom soldiers through a naval fight on the Brahmaputra River at Saraighat. Lachit Borphukan instantly ordered his fellowman to mount his bed on the boat. In spite of his illness, he joined the war. His soldiers were inspired a lot and started to fight with full motivation and defeated Ram Singha. Ram Singha had to leave Assam. But, the magnificent Ahom General Lachit Barphukan died just after the victory because of his illness at the age of 50.

Lachit Borphokan is the pride and example of patriotism of Bharat who give the greatest example of sacrifices for country by which he inspires and motivates every person of Assam for the supreme sacrifice for our nation if it need. The people of Assam remember this great soul of the land by observing Lachit Divas. It is celebrated every year on the birthday of Lachit Borphukan, i.e 24th November. It is an expression of honor to the bravery and extraordinary efforts put in by him in winning

the battle of Saraighat. The main idea behind celebrating the Lachit Divas is to encourage the principles of Lachit Borphukan who was a legend in his own way. He was the brave commander-in-chief of the Ahom army who truly led by example and led his kingdom to victory.

In the same way 'Lachit Borphukan Gold Medal' is awarded to recognize and commemorate the bravery of Lachit Borphukan in all the battles that he fought for his kingdom including the Battle of Saraighat. This medal is awarded to all those cadets of the National Defence Academy who perform at their highest level that came into existence since 1999. It is a reminder of Lachit's sacrifices and the amount of dedication and bravery he displayed being the commander of the Ahom army. It is a step towards inspiring and encouraging the defense personnel to give their best for their country. Apart from the gold medal, a 35 feet statue of the legendary Lachit Borphukan was also inaugurated in 2016 in the middle of the river Brahmaputra by the state government.

But this great hero of India did not get the proper place in the national level during the past years because of some unknown reasons. There should have been some special initiatives for establishment of this great hero of Ma Bharati in all spheres of the society. It cannot be ignored that there are recent initiatives by the present government regarding the establishment of this great hero in the national level by various activities. The country is celebrating the 400th birth anniversary of this brave heart. On February 25, 2022 President Ram Nath Kovind kick started the 400th birth anniversary celebrations of the 17th century Ahom general Lachit Borphukan and laid the foundation for a war memorial and a 150-foot bronze statue of the commander in Assam. Along with the statue, the memorial will also feature a 100-ft-long 'Hengdang' (Ahom sword). According to him such celebrations are important for our future generations. The youths will get inspiration of patriotism from his life and works. It is also the duty of the academics to put emphasis on the life and works of this great hero of Assam so that his patriotism, bravery, dutifulness, and determination can be celebrated through nationwide and beyond that. It is also true that we must do lots of works to establish this unsung hero in all spheres so that the future generation can acquire inspiration from his dedication, bravery and self sacrifice towards the well being of the own country.

7. Conclusion:

In conclusion it can be opined that Bir Lachit Borphukan's patriotism, bravery, dutifulness, and determination are enshrined in the history of Assam also motivate and inspire every person of Assam. Such a great hero of Ma Bharati should be remembered by each and every person of the country. His life and works can be a source of inspiration to all. The story of his valor and indomitable courage will always act as a source of inspiration for the people of whole country. The youths will surely get inspiration of patriotism from his life and works. Former President of India rightly said that the youths will get inspiration of patriotism from his life and works. It is also the duty of the academics to put emphasis on the life and works of this great hero of Assam so that his patriotism, bravery, dutifulness, and determination can be celebrated through nationwide and beyond that. Further study on the life and works of this great soul of our country will surely put a detailed light on him. There is lots of scope for studying his contributions with multidisciplinary approach within the purview of different branches of social science.

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