

Chapter IV

The Koch Kingdom: Consolidation, Segmentation and Continuity.

Visvasimha's kingdom got the final task of transformation to a 'centralized and consolidated state system' with the beginning of rule of King Nara Narayan (Malladeva) in 1540 A.D.¹ Together with his brother Sukladhvaj (Chilarai), Nara Narayan continued the policy of aggressive warfare initiated by Visvasimha. But division of the kingdom between the successors of Nara Narayan and Chilarai and internecine strife between two branches eventually reduced the Koch territory. But the Koches of main branch (Cooch Behar) continued the warfare for its own defence against the Ahoms, Mughals and the Bhutense and maintained its independent status till 1772 A.D.

4.1. Warfare and Territorial Formation.

In his lifetime Visvasimha distributed the offices of the state to his all sons.² Malladeva was elected as *Yubaraj* (king) and Sukladhvaj as the general of army. But they were engaged in Sanskrit studies in Benaras³ while Visvasimha was in the deathbed. So Narasimha, eldest son of Visvasimha, had assumed the kingship. But he fled from the capital when Malladeva and Sukladhvaj got back from Benaras. Narasimha had been roaming for political shelter in Eastern Nepal which was under the control of tribal people and their polity came to be identified as Morung or Vijaypur.⁴ Due to the matrimonial relations between Visvasimha and Nepal,⁵ Narasimha got shelter in Morung. But Malladeva and Sukadhvaja defeated the army of Morung. Narasimha fled from Morung and eventually took shelter in Bhutan and established his control in certain tracts of Bhutan.⁶ Internal dissension did not continue for a long time and Malladeva was coronate as Nara Narayan in 1540 A.D. and Sukladhvaja was appointed as military general.

Endangered territory of the Tista-Brahmaputra valley with a center of power at Kamatapur, a tribal militia and a rudimentary administration without regular income inherited by Nara Narayan essentially led the Koches to continue the warfare for the consolidation of the emerging state. So Nara Narayan and Chilarai had strengthened the Koch militia by modernizing and introducing new techniques and sections in the

army like - a standing army (although small in size), spies, elephantry, navy ⁷. constructing forts ⁸ and developing the transport system⁹. The peasantry and the artisans of the kingdom were also brought under the state control to render military service as *paik*. By the *paik system*, an able-bodied man (*paik*) from peasantry and professional castes like- Teli (oilmen), Mali (gardeners), Dhoba (washer man), Kahar (palanquin bearer), Kamar (iron smith), Sonari (gold smith), Patni (boatmen) and Chamar (tanner): were allotted 3 *puras* (12 *bighas*) of rent- free land¹⁰ in terms of rendering obligatory military service to the state particularly in times of requirement .It increased the strength of the Koch peasant-infantry to 425000.¹¹ Moreover, Nara Narayan appointed few Rajput and Afghan soldiers in his militia for leading the infantry and cavalry.¹² At the same time, the tribal force was maintained as an essential part of the militia. Before any warfare, Nara Narayan had to host a grand dinner for the Kachari, Mech, Koch, Bhutia and other tribes of the northern bank of the *Brahmaputra*.¹³ So, Nara Narayan and Chilarai resumed the aggressive warfare with this 'tribal peasant-militia'¹⁴.

4.1.1. Aggressive Warfare

Emergence of the Ahom state in Upper Assam and its expansion towards the Lower Brahmaputra valley were the great hindrance for further growth and development of the Koch kingdom. So Ahom-Koch conflict was the 'inevitable outcome of inter-tribal contest for controlling the Eastern Brahmaputra valley from where other tribal states of Northeast India could be controlled easily'. Visvasimha did not get any success against the Ahoms rather he accepted the Ahom suzerainty. He advised his sons to continue the warfare against the Ahoms.¹⁵ The Ahoms on the contrary, attacked the Koch territory at Sala in the south bank of the *Brahmaputra* in 1543 A.D.¹⁶ Koch prince Dipa Singha, along with two Koch generals, named Hemadhar and Ramachandra were killed by the Ahoms in 1546 A.D.¹⁷ So the Koches sent an organized invasion against the Ahoms in 1547 A.D. but suffered a heavy defeat and around 500 Koch soldiers were massacred.¹⁸

Nara Narayan, however, tried to establish good relations with the Ahoms by diplomatic means. So he sent a diplomatic mission headed by Satananda Karzi, Ramesvar Sharma, Dhuma Sardar, Udbhanda Chaonia and Shyamrai, in 1477 *Saka* (1555 A.D.) to the court of Ahom king, Sukhampha (1552-1603).¹⁹ But the Ahoms

replied most harshly with instigating comments.²⁰ So a serious conflict broke out between these emerging states. The Koch naval fleet commanded by Tepu²¹ and

Table 4.1: Warfare and resource collection by Nara Narayan and Chilarai.

State	Year	Result(s)	Condition of Treaty/ Amount of indemnity	First Installment
Ahom	1562-63	The Ahoms were defeated	60 elephants, 60 pieces of cloths, a large amount of gold and silver	60 elephants, 60 pieces of cloths and a large amount of gold and silver
Kachar	1564	Submission of Kachar	Annual tribute @70000 silver coins, 1000 gold coins and 60 elephants.	24 elephants and large amount of gold and silver.
Meitei	1564	Submission of Manipur.	Annual tribute @ Rs. 20000, 300 gold coins and 10 elephants	Rs. 20000, 10000 gold coins, 40 elephants
Jayantia	1564	The Koches installed a pro-Koch king in Jayantia.	Annual tribute @ 70 horses, Rs.10000, 1000 gold coins and 100 swords.	100 horses, Rs 10000, 1000 gold coins and 100 swords.
Tripura	After the Jayantia invasion	King was killed and the Koches installed a new king.	@ 9000 gold coins.	10000 silver coins, 100 gold coins and 30 war-horses.
Khairam		Submission.	@ Rs.15000, 900 gold coins, 50 horses and 30 elephants.	60 horses, 40 strong tuskers' .Rs 40000 and 1000 gold coins.
Dimrua		The king of Dimrua was defeated.	@Rs.7000.	-----
Sylhet		The king was killed and a new king was installed.	@300000 silver coins, 10000 gold coins, 100 elephants and 200 horses.	100 elephants, 180 horses, Rs300000 and 10000 gold coins.
Gauda	Chilarai was defeated	Chilarai was imprisoned and released later on	-----	-----
Total@			First Installment.	
Elephants: =260,			Elephants=264,	
Horses: =320,			Horses=370,	
Swords: =100,			Swords=100,	
Silver coins (Rs.): = 422000			Rupees=380000,	
Gold coins: =22200,			Gold coins =22100,Others = Valuable goods.	
Other: = Valuable goods.				

For his outstanding performance against the Ahoms Sukladvaj got the appellation 'Chilarai'. The Ahom king fled to the Charai Khorang hill and eventually proposed for peace by offering valuable gifts consisting 60 elephants, 4 pots of silver, 2 pots of gold and few pots of jwelleries.²² The Koches agreed with the proposal of the Ahoms and kept few representatives of the Ahom King as hostages ²³. So the Koches established their supremacy over the most powerful enemies in the eastern frontier.

The victory over the Ahoms had opened a new chapter in the history of the aggressive warfare of the Koches. After the Ahoms, Chilarai was looking towards Kachar which was already sacked by the Ahoms in 1535-36 A.D.²⁴ Chilarai with 52000 tribal army and other generals like- Bhimbai, Bahubai,²⁵ Rajendra Patra, Damodar Karzi and Megha Makdum²⁶ had proceeded towards Maibang, the capital of Kachar. While the Koch army halted at Marangi, the King of Kachar submitted to the Koches in 1564 A.D. with 28 elephants and large amount of gold and silver and agreed to pay Rs.7000, 1000 gold coin and 60 elephants to the Koches as annual tribute .²⁷ To confirm tribute in the subsequent years, Nara Narayan appointed Kamal Narayan, a Koch prince, as the *Dheyan/ Dhean* (governor) at Khaspur of Kachar²⁸.The king of Kachar, however, enjoyed the political autonomy.

On hearing the success of the Koches against the Ahoms and the Kacharis, Ripu Singha (1561-1579 A.D.), the king of Manipur willingly surrendered to the Koches. He paid 20000 silver rupees, 1000 gold coins and 40 elephants to the Koches and Rupees 20000, 300 gold coins and 10 elephants had been fixed as the annual tribute ²⁹.

Unlike Kachar and Manipur, Jayantia king (Bargohain 1548-1564 A.D.) took the challenge of the Koches but was slain in the battlefield. The Koches installed a new king (Vijay Manik c1564-80) ³⁰ in the throne of Jayantia who paid 1000 silver coins, 1000 gold coins, 100 horses and 100 swords. The *Darrang Raj Vamsavali* describes that the king of Jayantia was allowed the right of minting and enjoying political autonomy on the condition of paying annual tribute @ Rupees 10000, 1000 gold coins, 70 horses and 300 *Nakaidao* (knife) to the Koch king.³¹

Tripura, another tribal state of considerable strength, situated in the extreme corner of Northeast India, offered a serious challenge to the Koch invasion. The *Darrang Raj Vamsavali* claims that king of Tripura was slain and his brother

surrendered to the Koches and paid a tribute of Rs.1000, 100 gold coins and 30 horses. Tripura also agreed to pay 9000 gold coins as annual tribute.³¹

The chieftdom of Khairam centered in the Khasi-Jayantia hill with its capital at Nongkhreen near Shillong and headed by Viryavanta (*Raja*) had submitted to the Koch king with valuable gifts. The *Darrang Raj Vamsavali* narrates that the chief of Khairam was allowed the right of autonomy on the terms of payment of annual tribute to the Koches @ Rupees 15000, 900 gold coins, 50 horses and 30 elephants. He was, however, allowed to mint coins, bearing the name of Nara Narayan (Malladeva).³³

The *Darrang Raj Vamsavali* also narrates the further invasions of Chilarai to Sylhet which was under the control of the Sultan of Bengal in the 16th century. As Sylhet denied the tribute claimed by Nara Narayan, Chilarai invaded Sylhet. Sylhet resist the Koch invasion but being defeated finally compelled to pay huge amount of silver rupees (Rs. 300000), gold coins, elephants and 180 horses to the Koches. The annual tribute was also very high.³⁴ On their way back from Sylhet, the Koches also defeated a small chieftdom called Dimrua. The king was imprisoned and finally released.

The continuity of 'warfare' with tribal militia under the commandership of Chilarai resulted into the expansion of Koch territory in the east and southeast of the kingdom inherited from Visvasimha. The collection of indemnity of total Rs.380000, 22100 gold coins, 264 elephants, 370 horses and other valuable goods considerably encouraged the warfare of the tribal state and fattened the treasury (*bhandar*) of the state. As in the initial stage, 'the only source of income of the Koch kingdom' was booty, the first installment of total Rs.380000 had significantly contributed to the economic development of the Koch kingdom. Role of 'tribal peasant militia' and local help, rendered by the cognate tribes eventually confirmed an annual tribute of Rs.422000, 22200 gold coins, 320 horses, 260 elephants and other valuable goods for the Koches. It accelerated their state formation process. As a whole 'aggressive warfare against the tribal states of Northeast India, theoretically proves the importance of warfare as a major dynamic of state formation.'

4.1.2. Defensive Warfare

Nara Narayan did not provincialise the conquered territories. On the contrary, the Koches did not have sufficient standing army to provincilize the conquered territories.

So the questions of defence of the conquered territories and consolidation of the kingdom had motivated the Koches to move towards defensive warfare against the probable and traditional aggressors, i.e. the Ahoms and Bengal.

The Afghans and the Mughals of Bengal did not tolerate the emergence of a tribal power under the Koches just in the immediate proximity of Bengal. Sulaiman Karrani, the Afghan Sultan of Bengal (1565-72 A.D.), after conquering Orissa (1567-68),³⁵ marched towards the Koch kingdom and reached as far as Koch capital but got back to his own capital at Tanda without permanent political result.³⁶ The Koch chronicles and the genealogies on the contrary, have narrated that Chilarai invaded Bengal and inspite of his outstanding performance he was defeated and imprisoned by the Sultan and eventually released.³⁷ This defeat of the Koches had instigated the Sultan of Bengal for further invasions to Tista-Brahmaputra valley. And it was under the commandership of Kalapahar, the Sultani army invaded Brahmaputra valley and devastated the temples of Hajo and Kamakshya and got back to Bengal without permanent political result.³⁸ This conflict eventually compelled Nara Narayan to change the aggressive warfare into a defensive one. Even Chilarai (form the jail of Bengal) had instructed Nara Narayan to form a defensive alliance with the Ahoms.³⁹

Table 4.2: Defensive warfare and defensive alliances of Nara Narayan.

State	Year(s)	Relation(s)	Consequence(s)
Sultan of Bengal	1565-68 A.D.	The Afghans defeated the Koches.	It broke the traditions of aggressive warfare of the Koches.
Ahom	1565-70 A.D.	The Koches tried to establish a friendly terms with the Ahoms after their defeat in Bengal.	Koch attitude towards the Ahom became defensive.
Mughal	1574-87 A.D.	A treaty of friendship was concluded between the Koches and the Mughals.	It was the beginning of the Mughal hegemony in the Koch politics.

Realizing the hostility of Bengal and weak defence of the Koch territory, Nara Narayan released the hostages of the Ahoms⁴⁰ taken after the victory of the Koches 1563 A.D.⁴¹ The Ahoms, on the contrary, began to re-conquer their lost territories from the Koches. However, the Koches renewed the warfare. But the Ahoms successfully repulsed the Koch naval attack commanded by Tepu and captured Mahun Laskar, Koch naval officer (*Barua*).⁴² So Nara Narayan did not continue the aggressive

warfare against the Ahoms: He merely wanted the defence of his own territory from the further inroads of the Ahoms.

The establishment of the Mughal supremacy in Bengal in 1576 A.D.⁴³ was a new development in the southwestern proximity of the Koch state. The Mughals with their aggressive design in Northeast India first came into contact with the Koches. The Koches, instead of aggressive warfare took moderate and pragmatic view towards the Mughals i.e. 'friendly relation'. First step of the Koch-Mughal friendship was the refusal of the Koches to provide political shelter to the Afghan rebels in 1574 A.D..⁴⁴ Friendly attitude between the Koches and the Mughals turns into a 'defensive alliance' since 1578 A.D.⁴⁵ The Koch chronicles and genealogies categorically mentioned that a defensive agreement was concluded formally between Nara Narayan and the Mughal Emperor Akbar.⁴⁶ But the Persian source has constructed this relationship with a different version that Nara Narayan sent a formal mission with valuable gifts to the court of Akbar in 1578 A.D.⁴⁷ Again Nara Narayan did cooperate with the Mughals in 1583 in quelling the Afghan rising in the vicinity of Mughal-Koch frontier.⁴⁸ It is often argued that Nara Narayan had accepted the Mughal vassalage⁴⁹ but the available sources do not prove the vassalage status of the Koches rather place them in equal footing with the Mughals. The Mughal-Koch understanding was essentially a defensive one⁵⁰ for both the parties.⁵¹

So the 'stage of aggressive warfare' of the Koches was transformed into a 'phase of defensive alliance' particularly after 1570 A.D. Territorially Koch kingdom rose to its zenith administered directly from the core area, comprising the whole Tista and Lower Brahmaputra valley, and had indirect influence over the Northeast Indian tribal states including Bhutan. But transition from 'aggressive warfare' to 'defensive alliance' had stopped the plunder of booty. Hence instead of collection of booty through warfare, the Koches proceeded to exploit the revenue from the internal domain to maintain the 'state system' that became more complicated and elaborate.

4.2.Segmentation

Unlike the segmentary state,⁵² the Koch kingdom became a centralized political entity without provinces and local zones and less capability of controlling the conquered territories. Hence, segmentation was inevitable, unless or until 'centrality is imposed from above' to the administrators of the conquered territories. Kamal Narayan

(Gohain Kamal) who was appointed as *Dheyar* for taking care of the political affairs of Kachar and collecting tributes from the tribal states, practically became independent and established the Khaspur state which remained in existence till 1745.⁵³ Even before his death (1587 A.D.), Nara Narayan was compelled to divide the centralized kingdom into two separate branches. It opened the new phase in the state formation process of the Koches which eventually resulted into the gradual decrement of the territories and establishment of Mughal-Ahom hegemony over the Koch state.

4.2.1. Division of the State

The genealogies, chronicles and the Persian works have categorically described the division of the Koches during the last decade of the reign of Nara Narayan. These sources claim that Nara Narayan remained childless for a longtime due to his late marriage⁵⁴ and Raghudeva Narayan, son of Chilarai was chosen as the heir apparent or *Patkumar*.⁵⁵ But with the birth of Lakshmi Narayan and being instigated by the kinsmen and some bureaucrats of Nara Narayan, Raghudeva decided to stay at Ghila Vijaypur (Barnagar)⁵⁶ and declared him as the ruler of the eastern part of the Koch kingdom. Nara Narayan tried to pacify him but by no means Raghudeva was willing to return. Realizing the contemporary political situation of Northeast India Nara Narayan eventually granted the territories, marked by the *Sankosh* river in the west to the eastern most corner⁵⁷ to Raghudeva in 1581 A.D.⁵⁸ This division of the kingdom marked the beginning of internecine strife between the eastern part or Kamarupa or Koch-Hajo (Eastern Koch kingdom) and western part or Kamata or Cooch Behar (main branch).⁵⁹

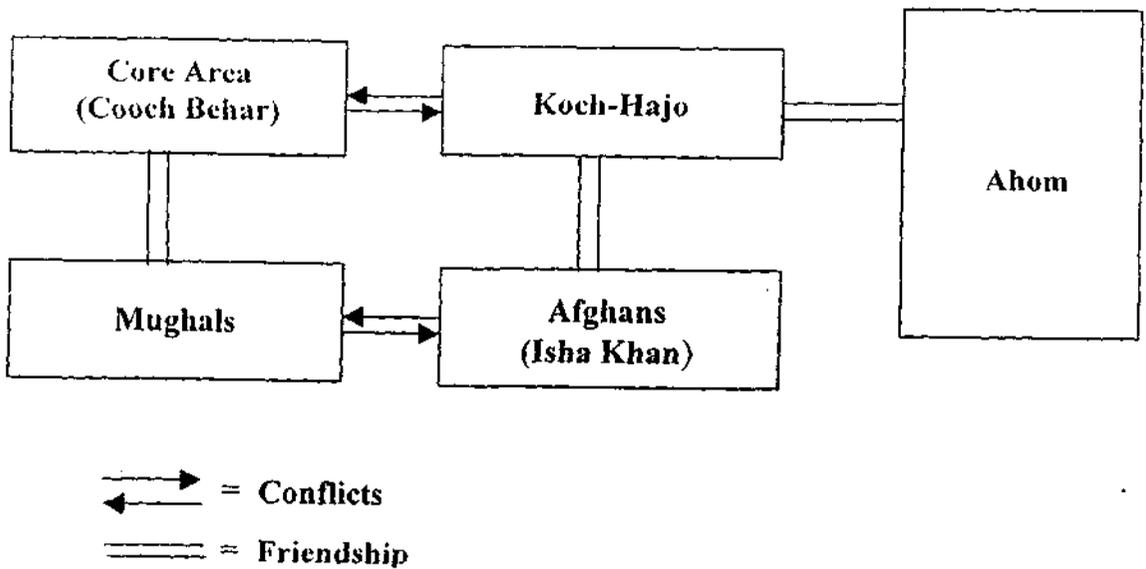
4.2.2. Beginning of Intra-Koch Conflicts.

Raghudeva Narayan although acknowledged the supremacy of Nara Narayan⁸⁰ but when Lakshmi Narayan became the king of Cooch Behar in 1587A.D., he placed himself as the independent king of Koch-Hajo or Kamarupa. 'Two branches' now began to attack each other in order to establish single power hegemony.

Intra-Koch conflicts had allured Isha Khan, a *Zamindar* of considerable strength of Bhati to attack the territory of Raghudev lying south of the *Brahmaputra*⁶¹. But eventually a peace was established between them. It was essential for both the parties. At the same time Isha Khan was a sleepless enemy of the Mughal power of Bengal. Being afraid of Mughal expansion he needed an alliance with such a power that could

be the natural enemy of the Mughals. Defensive alliance between Cooch Behar and the Mughals had placed Raghudeva as the natural enemy. Raghudeva on the other hand, wanted to destroy the power of Lakshmi Narayan for which he formed an alliance with Isha Khan⁶². It compelled Lakshmi Narayan to establish a deep relation with the Mughals. Lakshmi Narayan, by offering his sister to Man Singh, the governor of Bengal, and his personal submission to the Mughal in 1596⁶³ secured the Mughal assistance ⁶⁴against the alliances of Raghudeva Narayan and the Afghans. So the policy of 'defensive alliance' perused by Nara Narayan turns into a subordination of the Koches and intra-Koch conflicts now crossed the regional boundary and involved two other mutually conflicting powers of Bengal.

Figure 4.1: The Tista-Brahmaputra valley in the 17th century.



Good terms with Isha Khan had instigated Raghudeva to attack Bhitband, ⁶⁵ most coveted region of the core area of the Koches, which was captured by him in 1597 A.D. This success of Raghudeva led him to attack Lakshmi Narayan. But Lakshmi Narayan with the Mughal help defeated Raghudeva ⁶⁶ and brought his royal insignia to Cooch Behar⁶⁷. At the same time Isha Khan, after some initial success against the Mughals and the Koches in 1597 eventually submitted to the Mughal Emperor Akbar ⁶⁸ and died in 1599 A.D.

Being isolated and friendless Raghudeva now shifted his attention towards the Ahoms for continuing enmity with Lakshmi Narayan. He offered his daughter Mangaldai ⁶⁹ to Pratap Singha (1603-1641 A.D.), King of the Ahoms, by which

Raghudeva secured the assistance of the Ahoms against Lakshmi Narayan backed by the Mughals. But this attempt of Raghudeva Narayan had opened the road of future encroachment of the Ahoms.

Parikshit Narayan became the king of Koch-Hajo after the death of Raghudeva Narayan in 1603 A.D. and ensued the rivalry with Lakshmi Narayan. Parikshit Narayan attacked Bahirband⁷⁰ which eventually placed the two branches of the Koches into a direct confrontation. Lakshmi Narayan was defeated by Parikshit⁷¹ and compelled to return the royal insignia⁷² brought earlier from Raghudeva Narayan. Thus Lakshmi Narayan personally submitted in 1609 to Islam Khan, governor of Bengal⁷³, to secure the Mughal support against Parikshit Narayan. It confirmed Mughal assistance but Lakshmi Narayan's political status was reduced to a vassal from a sovereign ruler. It also placed Koch-Hajo as a closer enemy of the Mughals.

Parikshit Narayan now attacked by two immediate neighbors i.e. Mughal and Lakshmi Narayan. Islam Khan sent an expedition against Parikshit Narayan under the commandship of Mukhram Khan who was accompanied by the Raja of Sushung⁷⁴. Parikshit Narayan got some success against the Mughals but lost the Dhubri fort to them.⁷⁵ Parikshit Naryan finally agreed to conclude a peace proposed by the Mughals. He offered a lucrative gift to Shaykh Kamal, a Mughal general and agreed to pay a huge tribute of Rs.300000, 300 elephants, 300 *tangan* horses to the Mughals.⁷⁶ But Islam Khan did not ratify the terms of the peace because he wanted the personal submission of Parikshit Narayan to Jahangir, the Mughal Emperor.⁷⁷ So hostilities broke out once again. The Mughals and Lakshmi Narayan conjointly attacked Dhubri and Khuntaghat respectively, two important strategic points of Parikshit Narayan. Parikshit fled to Pandu and finally surrendered to the Mughals in 1612 A.D.⁷⁸ Thus southern part of Koch-Hajo became a part of the Mughal Empire. At the same time Bali Naryan, brother of Parikshit Narayan, fled to the Ahom territories and subsequently became a tributary ruler of Darrang under their protection⁷⁹. So the Ahom hegemony was established in the northern part of the Eastern Koch kingdom.

For the continuity of the intra-Koch conflicts, Koch kingdom was reduced to a small territory, extended from the *Tista-Karatoya* to the *Sankosh* including some portion of Dhubri. Lakshmi Narayan although got rid from the intra-Koch conflicts but 'lost his entity as an independent king'. Both Lakshmi Narayan and Parikshit Narayan

were taken to Dacca and thence to the imperial capital of the Mughal where they were confined for few years. Parikshit agreed to pay Rs.700000 as war indemnity to Jahangir⁸⁰ and return to Dacca in 1617. But Ibrahim Khan Fatejang, governor of Bengal, did not agree with the emperor and again Parikshit was sent to Delhi⁸¹. Eventually Parikshit Narayan managed to release from the Mughal court but on his way to Koch Kingdom he died at the bank of the *Ganges*, near Allahabad (1618 A.D.)⁸². Lakshmi Narayan was also allowed to return from the imperial court in 1618 A.D. after exchanging certain gifts.⁸³ He maintained the relationships with the Mughals as an obedient vassal⁸⁴ that was followed by the next Koch king, Bir Narayan (1627-32 A.D.).

4.2.3. Consequences of the Intra-Koch Conflicts.

Intra-Koch conflict eventually resulted into the loss of eastern Koch kingdom to the Mughals and the Ahoms. On the other hand, the Koches of the main branch were demoted to the vassalage of the Mughals for few years particularly up to 1632 A.D. having political autonomy and certain other requisite of an independent state.

It is very difficult to determine the exact amount of annual tribute paid by the Koches to the Mughal court. The *buranjis* mentioned that Parikshit Narayan was agreed to pay Rs.700000⁸⁵ and with other subsidiary goods per annum which, however, did not transform into practice. But regarding Lakshmi Narayan did neither the local sources nor the Persian works mention the exact amount. The *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, a Persian work of the 17th century, merely mentions that Lakshmi Narayan offered a suitable *peshkash* (tribute)⁸⁶ to Islam Khan, the Mughal governor of Bengal, and rendered military services to the Mughals in times of their war against Parikshit Narayan. Occasional payment of 500 *muhars* as gift to Jahangir in 1618 A.D.⁸⁷ cannot be counted as annual tribute. However, the *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi* recorded that after 1618 A.D. Lakshmi Narayan's *peshkash* payable to the Mughals was Rs.100000.⁸⁸ But this source does not highlight any point about the fixed rate of annual tribute. Contrarily, military service rendered by Lakshmi Narayan was the primary cost of the subordinate alliances with the Mughals.

Historical works on the Koches. done so far have over-emphasized the vassalage status of the Koches due to the disappearance of the centrality in the Koch kingdom.⁸⁹ But maintenance of the vast army for both serving the Mughals and protection of the

kingdom, occasional payment of tribute and with the continuity of certain traditions initiated by the early Koch kings; had stimulated the Koch state to search for more alternatives for its existence. In the absence of Lakshmi Narayan in capital, the prince (*Patkumar*) handled the administration of the state for several years. Even after his return from the Mughal court, Lakshmi Narayan had been in the charge of administration of Mughal occupied Koch-Hajo for pacifying the anti-Mughal sentiments of the subjects of that land⁹⁰. The *Patkumar* continued the rule from the capital. Stephen Cacella, a Jesuit traveler, found the Prince (*Gobursa*) as the ruler of Cooch Behar during his visit to Koch kingdom in 1627 A.D..⁹¹ So the Koch kingdom witnessed a parallel rule from two centers and obviously for two opposite purposes which was however, not identical with the segmentary state system.

4.3. Internal Strife and Pressure from Outside.

A new phase in the process of state formation of the Koches had been started with the accession of Prana Narayan as king Cooch Behar in 1632 A.D..⁹² The Koch state began to revive its political status under his leadership because he resumed the aggressive warfare and made new administrative arrangements to cope with the contemporary situation. But it led the beginning of another stage of encroachment of the Mughals, Ahoms and Bhutan.

4.3.1. Koch -Mughal and the Koch-Ahom Conflicts.

Prana Narayan being an ambitious Koch king (1632-1665) was determined to restore the prosperity of kingdom. Thus he looks towards former Eastern Koch kingdom where Bali Narayan, a feudatory king of Darrang, had been fighting against the Mughals till his death in 1638 A.D.. The anti-Mughal warfare was continued by his son Chandra Narayan with the assistance of the Ahoms.⁹³ Mughal occupation in Kamarupa and their conflicts with the Ahoms⁹⁴ did not permit Prana Narayan to make any agreement with the Ahoms against the Mughals. Rather, the bondage of military service to the Mughals and contemporary situation of Northeastern India had compelled Prana Narayan to cooperate with the Mughals in their Assam campaign in 1637 A.D. But the Ahoms defeated the Mughals in 1638 and eventually both the parties concluded a peace in 1639 A.D.. The Ahom had formally accepted the Mughal authority in Kamarupa while Ahom supremacy was also recognized in the territories occupied by them and they moved towards establishing a commercial relation.⁹⁵ So

Prana Narayan also tried to make a good relation with the Ahoms through diplomatic means ⁹⁶.

Prana Narayan, however, got an opportunity to curve the Mughal pressure when Mughal empire was suffering from a 'fratricidal struggle among the successors of Shah Jahan' in 1657 A.D.. Shah Sujah, viceroy of Bengal, by leaving the Mughal-Koch frontier unprotected, had set out to participate in the 'contest for the throne of the Mughal Empire'. This opportunity had strengthened the position of Prana Narayan for which he denied to pay *peshkash* to the Mughals and he attacked the Mughal controlled territories.⁹⁷ Ghoraghat, an important center of contemporary politics, and the Dinajpur-Raj were regular victims of his aggression.⁹⁸

Prana Narayan's aggression was more diplomatic than the early Koch rulers. In order to re-conquer the former Koch-Hajo (now Mughal controlled territories), he sent a mission to Durlabha Narayan, the Koch Zamindar of Budhanagar and a vassal of the Mughals, with a request to expel the Mughals from his ancestral kingdom by joining him. However, Durlabh Narayan refused this proposal and remained faithful to the Mughals. Thus Prana Narayan sent a troop commanded by Bhaba Nath Karzi ⁹⁹ who occupied the territories of Durlabh Narayan. Durlabh Narayan took shelter to the Ahom king, Jayadhaja Singha (1651-1665 A.D.). ¹⁰⁰ This triumph of Prana Narayan revived the old policy of aggressive warfare of the Koches.

Mir Lutfulla, Mughal *faujdar* (commander) at Guwahati, had tried to check the advancement of Bhabanath Karzi towards Hajo. But Bhabanath Karzi easily recaptured Hajo, another important center of Northeast India's contemporary politics¹⁰¹. Prana Narayan now requested the Ahom king, Jayadhaja Singha to pressurize over the Mughal commandants to evacuate Assam.¹⁰² So Being afraid of conjoint attack of the Koches and the Ahoms, the Mughal *faujdar* fled to Jahangirnagar (Dacca) in 1658 A.D.¹⁰³

Flight of the Mughal commandants from Pandu and Ghoraghat enabled the Ahoms to capture Guwahati without trouble. But it became a direct challenge for further advancement of Prana Narayan to the Brahmaputra valley. Peaceful negotiations of Prana Narayan was cancelled by the Ahoms on the ground that the Koches did not support the Ahoms in their conflicts with the Mughals in the 1630's.¹⁰⁴ So the Koch-Ahom conflicts became inevitable. The Ahoms defeated Bhabanath Karzi

and his son, Aniruddha Karzi fell in the battlefield. The Ahoms now advanced as far as the *Sankosh* in the west ¹⁰⁵ and placed the kinsman of the ruling family of Koch-Hajo as the feudatory chiefs of different places of the Brahmaputra valley under their protégé. Chandra Narayan, grandchild of Parikshit Narayan, was placed at Ghila Vijaypur, the former capital of Raghudeva Narayan. Durlabh Narayan was appointed as the administrator for a part of Beltola and Gandharbha Narayan, son of Bir Narayan was given Beltola under the Ahom protection by 1659 A.D. ¹⁰⁶ This advancement of the Ahoms as far as the *Sankosh*, the western boundary of former Koch-Hajo, and feudatory arrangements with the successors of Parikshit Narayan in the Brahmaputra valley had stopped the possibility of reunification of the Koch kingdom under the leadership of Prana Narayan. Jay Narayan, a Koch *zamindar*, alone was motivated to establish a peaceful understanding between the Ahoms and the Koches but could not materialize it and compelled to leave his feudatory estate in 1659 A.D. ¹⁰⁷

So the aggressive warfare led by Prana Narayan in the Brahmaputra valley was a failure but it could not stop the continuity of warfare. Prana Narayan himself attacked the Mughal *faujdar* at Dhubri for which the Mughals left Dhubri. But the booties including Mughal arms and naval fleets plundered by the Koches could not be carried to Cooch Behar because the Ahom force immediately captured Dhubri including the plundered materials. ¹⁰⁸ Prana Narayan, now compelled to return to his capital without economic incentives and diplomatic gains. 'His leadership could have united the Koches as a resistance force against the Mughals and the Ahoms but dispersed feudatory chiefs of the Koches of the Lower Brahmaputra valley had their tie-up with the Ahoms not with the independent of Koch state of the main branch'.

Prana Narayan could not enjoy the independent status for a long time. New Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb (1658-1707) had revived the Mughal imperialism in Northeast India. Mir Jumla, an ambitious and competent Mughal general, set out for Northeast India to reconquer the lost territories and confirm the vassalage of the Koches. He captured Cooch Behar in 1661 A.D. and reached as far as Yok Duar near the Bhutan frontier ¹⁰⁹. Prana Narayan fled from the capital and took shelter in Buxaduar, ¹¹⁰ a mountain pass to enter into Bhutan. The Mughals concluded a peace with Vishnu Narayan ¹¹¹, Prince of the kingdom. A gigantic amount was fixed as tribute ¹¹² and administration had been left in charge of Isphandar Beg and Qazi

Samuisuja, two Mughal officials, with adequate military strength.¹¹³ Mir Jumla's Cooch Behar campaign was, however, merely a disastrous episode for the Koches because Prana Narayan got down from Buxaduar and expelled the Mughals from his capital who were compelled to take shelter in Ghoraghat.¹¹⁴

Fathiya-i-Ibriya, a 17th century Persian work, clearly emphasizes that the inapplicability of 'Mughal revenue assessment' in Cooch Behar and antagonism of the peasantry were responsible for the unpopularity and easy expulsion of the Mughals.¹¹⁵ It is to be noted that the Koches gradually established their hold over the peasantized economy of the plains of northern Bengal and had the control over the 'Indo-Bhutan hill trade' carried through the region which enabled the Koch kingdom to solidify its economic base even with moderate rate of land revenue. So the Mughal *jamabandi* (land revenue assessment of the Mughals) was not acceptable to the peasants of the Koch kingdom. At the same time the Mongoloid tribes of the Western Duars had their natural support to Prana Narayan. Moreover, Mir Jumla's sudden death in 1663 A.D. and futility of his Assam campaign had strengthened the position of the Koch king. However, Prana Narayan could not enjoy this situation for a long time. Shaistha Khan, new governor of Bengal, was convicted to re conquer Cooch Behar and other territories. But Prana Narayan preferred to avoid the direct conflict with the Mughals and agreed to pay an amount of Rs.550000 as indemnity, which was deposited to the Mughal court in 1665 A.D.¹¹⁶

So the Koches could not overthrow the alien control from their state inspite of Prana Narayana's best effort against the Mughals. But he was successful to maintain the territorial limit of the kingdom extended from Bhatgaon of Morung in the west to Khutaghat in the east and from Bhutan frontier to Tazhat and Baharband *parganas* in the south.¹¹⁷

Prana Narayan was succeeded by Moda Narayan (1665-1680 A.D.) who beared the bondage of vassalage by assisting the Mughals in their Assam campaign under the commandership of Ram Singh. Subsequent Koch rulers, like Mahindra Narayan (1682-1693 A.D.), Rup Narayan (1693-1714) and Upendra Narayan (1714-1763) had to face the frequent Mughal raids. These attacks were mostly motivated with the plunder, as the Mughal Empire had been suffering from an economic crisis in its internal domain

The Mughals, however, failed to subdue the Koch kingdom into a permanent feudatory state. Shaistha Khan was busy with the Mughal state affairs and there was no Mughal pressure to the Koches at least for two decades (1665-85 A.D.). But Mahindra Narayan's reign (1682-1693 A.D.) faced a Mughal attack which according to Harendra Narayan Chaudhuri, had 'compelled the Koches to surrender three *chaklas*, of Fatepur, Kajirhat and Kakina to the Mughals in 1687 A.D.'¹¹⁹. The Koch officials at Tapa, Manthena, Jhori and other Parganas of southern frontier of the state, taking the advantages of the internal dissensions and weaknesses of the central authority of the state, established tributary relationship with Bengal *subha* of the Mughals.¹²⁰ At the same time *Pargana* Boda, Patgram and Purbabhag were captured by Jabardast Khan, *Subhadar* (governor) of Bengal in 1711 A.D. But these territories were not annexed to the Mughal Empire. King Rup Narayan (1693-1714) had retained the possession of these *parganas* by paying a nominal amount of tribute. As it was considered derogatory to pay tribute by a King of an independent status, the lease of these *parganas* were taken in the name of *Nazir Deo* (commander-in-chief and head of the military affairs).¹²¹ After a gap of two decades, being invited and instigated by Dina Narayan (the adopted son of the king), the Mughals attacked the Koch territory in 1737-1738 A.D. under the commandership of Muhammad Ali Khan, *fauzdar* of Rangpur. The defeat of the Koch army had compelled the king Upendra Narayan (1714-1765) to conclude an agreement with Bhutan which had already established her political hegemony over the Western Duars. With the help of the Bhutanese, the Koches compelled the Mughal force to leave the Koch territory forever¹²².

4.3.2. Internal Dissention and Intervention of Bhutan (1676-1773 A.D.).

Koch kingdom began to face a new challenge after the death of Prana Narayan as he could not check the pressure from outside. Along with it, internal feuds gradually placed the state in a stage of continuous struggle between the bifurcated power centers, the king and the important state officials. So further changes were inevitable in the state politics. *Chatra Nazir/Nazir Deo*, *Dewan Deo/Dewan* (head of the civil administration) and *Raikat* (who in the beginning was the frontier guard and the first authority in the installation of the new king with full responsibilities of defence of the state but now independent *zamindar*) were the three offices which came forward to

establish their respective authority over the kingdom which was endangered with the occasional Mughal raids and increasing Bhutanese influence.

The *Raikat* of Baikunthapur practically became independent from the Koch state affairs from the reign of Bir Narayan (c1626-32 A.D). Even he broke the compulsory tradition of holding royal umbrella (*chhatra*) over the new king. Hence, Mahi Narayan, the then *Nazir*, was placed as the alternative of the *Raikat* and for holding the *chhatra* on the occasion of coronations of Bir Narayan and Prana Narayan; he came to be designated as *Chhatra Nazir*¹²³. It made him a significant center of power with the leadership in military affairs for which he became a challenge for authority of the king. On the other hand, *Raikat* got the chance to detach his responsibility from the state and paid more attention for its own territorial interest. *Dewan Deo*, taking the minority of the king also came forward to participate in the struggle for power.

Internal conflicts within the state had been started since the last years of the reign of King Prana Narayan. The *Chhatra Nazir* (Mahi Narayan) after hearing the news of illness of the king, reached to the capital and killed two *mantris* (ministers) of the state.¹²⁴ But after the death of Prana Narayan (1665), four sons of the said *Nazir* tried each his best to become the king. Realising the possibility of more enhancement of internal conflicts among his sons, the *Nazir* installed Moda Narayan, second son of Prana Narayan; as the Koch king (1665-1680). But Mahi Narayan as *Nazir* and his sons as the kinsman of the *Nazir* had established their control over the militia and civil administration. However, Moda Narayan somehow managed a section of the army in his favour and killed one trouble-creating son of the *Nazir*. The *Nazir* fled from Cooch Behar and had been roaming as *gossain* (mendicant) in different places of the state and eventually was killed at the territory of the *Raikat*. However, Darpa Narayan and Jagna Narayan, two sons of the *Nazir*, with other relatives took shelter in Bhutan. With the Bhutanese help they tried to control the state affairs particularly after the death of Moda Narayan in 1680 A.D. But the sons of Mahi Narayan again began to fight among themselves for the throne¹²⁵. In such a situation Bhutan plundered the capital of the Koches and carried the *hanuman danda* (royal scepter), *chhatra* (royal umbrella) and other royal insignias to Butan.¹²⁶ This was the first time that the Bhutanese had intervened over the Koch kingdom.

In such a critical situation, the *Raikat* was invited to install the new king. *Raikat* brothers Jagna Deva and Bhuj Deva reached to the capital at their earliest and had installed Vasudeva Narayan, only surviving son of Prana Narayan, as the new king (1680-1682 A.D.). The *Raikat* revived the tradition of holding *chhatra* over the head of the new king and proved his role in the state making process. But it was a pause of two years only. Once again Jagna Narayan comes down from the hills of Bhutan and with the Bhutanese assistance he killed the king in 1662 A.D.¹²⁷ So the conflict between the *Raikat* and the *Nazir* was almost inevitable. The *Raikat* had installed Mahindra Narayan as the Koch king (1682-1693 A.D.) and checked the ambition of Jagna Narayan. But the *Raikat* could not curtail the influence of Jagna Narayan. Even he was appointed as the *Chhatra Nazir* because of his good terms with Bhutan as Bhutanese assistance was almost essential for the kingdom to check the Mughal raids of 1780's as mentioned earlier.

After the death of Jagna Narayan, his nephew Shanta Narayan was appointed as the *Chhatra Nazir* and Satya Narayan was appointed as *Dewan*¹²⁸. They became so powerful that after the death of Mahindra Narayan they installed Rup Narayan, a member of the family of the *Nazir*, as king (1693-1714) for the Koch throne. The *Raikat* resented¹²⁹ this arrangement but he failed to cancel it. At the same time, the *Raikat* was worried about the Mughals of Bengal with whom he had already concluded an agreement in 1687 A.D. to pay annual tribute for enjoying his land.¹³⁰ Thus the contest of supremacy between two centers of the state affairs to control the king eventually ended with the success of the family of the *Chhatra Nazir*. The *Raikat* now practically became isolated from the main state politics.

The *Dewan*, another office of the state affair, became a powerful center of politics during the last decade of the 18th century. While the *Nazir* and King Upendra Narayan (1714-63 A.D.) have conjointly proceeded to resist the Mughal invasion in 1737-38 A.D., *Dewan Deo* did not cooperate with them.¹³¹ Again the *Dewan*, became the controller of the state affairs during the reign of Dharendra Narayan (1765-70 A.D.). No step could be taken without the consent of the *Dewan*. But the king murdered the *Dewan*, which initiated a new phase in the process of state formation.

Internal struggle for kingship and other important offices of the state in the 18th century had weakened the prestige of the Koch king and the authority of the state

politics was decentralized into three centers, viz, the state capital, Balarampur (main office of *Nazir* or military affairs) and Baramkhana (the resident of the *Dewan*).¹³² Both the *Nazir* and *Dewan* had nominal offices in the capital. Moreover, the revenue was also tripartite. *Nazir* himself taken the possession of revenue produced in Mathabhanga and Gitaldah *parganas* for the expenditure of the military department.¹³³ *Dewan* also had enjoyed land for its own expenditure.

In such a critical situation Bhutan initiated her aggression towards the Koch kingdom .It has already been observed that in the last quarter of the 17th century *Chhatra Nazir* had opened the road of easy access for Bhutan to Cooch Behar. The Bhutanese crossed the hilly region and extended their sway in the plains of present Jalpaiguri district particularly in Alipurduar Sub-Division during the reign of Upendra Narayan (1714-1763). It was not possible for the Koch king to check the Bhutanese encroachment as Upendra Narayan had expelled the Mughals from the Koch territory with their help¹³⁴. Thus fear of the Mughals compelled the Koch king to bear the Bhutanese hegemony. Influence of Bhutan was so high that during the reign of Devendra Narayan (1763-65) Bhutan placed her representative in Cooch Behar with a garrison. Bhutan also enhanced her hegemony by introducing a tradition of annual ceremonial exchanges of gifts at Chechakhata of Buxaduar by which Bhutan used to get almost double from Cooch Behar what she offered to the Koches.¹³⁵It was obligatory for Cooch Behar.

Direct confrontation between Bhutan and Cooch Behar begun in 1765 A.D. when King Debendra Narayan was killed (1665 A.D) by Ratikanta Sharma, a follower of the *Rajguru* (royal priest)¹³⁶, Ramananda Gossain. Bhutan arrested Ramananda Gossain for this offence and executed him at Punakha and installed Pensu Toma as her representative in the Koch capital ¹³⁷. Bhutan also annexed Jalpesvar, Mandas and other territories of present Malbazar Subdivision of Jalpaiguri district from the Koch kingdom during the period between 1765-1770.¹³⁸

But most disastrous fate was waiting for Cooch Behar. When the king murdered Ram Narayan, *Dewan* favoured by Bhutan, Bhutan took immediate steps and had taken king Dharendra Narayan (1765-1770 A.D. & 1775-83 A.D.) and new *Dewan* (Surendra Narayan) as captive to Bhutan in 1770 A.D. A new king, Rajendra Narayan (1770-1772 A.D) was installed by them ¹³⁹. Pensu Toma, with the Bhutanese force,

became the practical ruler of the kingdom. However, death of Rajendra Narayan in 1772 A.D. once again raised the question of selection of new king. Cooch Behar authority handled by *Nazir* and *Rajmata* (mother of the King) had coronet Dharendra Narayan in the throne (1772-75). Bhutan did not accept it and came down from the hill with a big force and captured the whole Cooch Behar except Rahimganj Pargana. Zimpe, Bhutanese general, had fortified the kingdom and installed Bijendra Narayan as the 'alternative Koch king' at Chechakhata.¹⁴⁰ Thus a parallel kingship was created in Cooch Behar for the intervention of Bhutan.

The *Nazir* and other Koch officer found that it is not possible for them to expel the Bhutanese from Cooch Behar without external help. Accordingly, after a long negotiation with the East India Company, the **Anglo-Cooch Behar Treaty** was concluded in 1773 A.D. by which Cooch Behar accepted the feudatory status.¹⁴¹ Although the Bhutanese were expelled from Cooch Behar but this treaty eventually established British control over the Koch kingdom and since then Cooch Behar enjoyed the 'Native State' status to the end of the British rule in India.

4.4. Observations.

The foregoing description on the Koch kingdom reveals that the consolidation of the kingdom was rested on the warfare of both 'aggressive' and 'defensive' categories. Leadership of the king in the warfare appears as the essential requisite of state formation. The territories conquered by the Koches were, however, not provincialised. On the contrary, it created the situation of the internal conflicts. So contest with similar aggressive powers and the internal struggle had entangled the kingdom in a stage of ceaseless warfare till the last day of its independence. Formation of defensive alliances and taking military assistance from the neighbours were also common in the kingdom. Although the Koches lost their conquered territories to the dominant neighbours but maintained its independence till 1772 A.D.

Notes and References.

1. The date of Nara Narayan's accession is debatable. But the year 1540 A.D. has been accepted by most of the scholars as the date of his coronation.

2. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, vs. 255-264, pp.50-52.
3. *Ibid.*, vs. 285-291, pp. 59-60.
4. Iman Singh Chemjong: *History and Culture of the Kirata People*, (2 vols.), 3rd ed.,(Kathmandu, Nepal Printing Press, 1967), vol.II, p.88; also, Raja Ram Subedi and Durga Parajali: *Historical Entity of Vijaypur State*, (Seminar paper presented in the International Seminar on 'North Bengal Throughout the Ages', April 8-10, 2004, Maldah, West Bengal), p.2.
5. Visvasimha had 18 wives from different castes and kingdoms of Northern and Northeast India. Queen Ratnakanti (from Nepal) was Narasimha's mother. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali.*, v. 231, p.46, v.240, p. 48.
6. *Ibid.*, vs. 295-301, pp. 60-63.
7. Koch navy was small in size and did not have more than 1000 war boats .The navy was placed under a *Barua* (officer).
8. A Fort was constructed at Narayanpur at the Ahom-Koch frontier. Unlike the pre-Koch rulers of Kamarupa-Kamata, the Koches did not construct big forts. But the **Chilarai Kote** (fort built by Chilarai at Tufanganj) was considerably big in size, which has been now perished. After the partition of India in 1947 the East Bengali refugees have been given rehabilitation in the area of the *Kote*.
9. At the instance of Nara Narayan, Gohain Kamal constructed a road (*Gohain Kamal Ali*) extended from the Koch capital to Narayanpur fort for the easy movement of the militia.
10. *Raja Vamsavali*, Ms. (N.B.S.L. Ms.no.4), f. 9.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 120-121.
12. *Rajopakhyan*, p.20.
13. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, vs. 327-338, pp. 66-68.
14. For details about the route of invasion led by Nara Narayan and Chilarai, see Map 2.
15. *Kamrupar Buranji*, p.11; *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, v.266, p.42.
16. S.K.Bhuyan(ed): *Assam Buranji or Sri Sri Swarga Narayandev Maharajar Janma Charita*, reprint ed., (Gauhati, DHAS, 1960), pp.25, 29.
17. *Deodhai Assam Buranji*, pp. 30-31.

18. S.K.Datta(ed): *Assam Buranji (1668-1681)*, 2nd ed., (Guwahati, DHAS, 1991), henceforth *Assam Buranji (1668-1680)*, p.25.
19. Cited in Khan Chowdhury Amanatulla Ahmed: *Koch Bihar Itihas, vol.1*, (Cooch Behar, The Cooch Behar State Press, 1936), p. 104; also *Historical Letters of the Ahom Period: A Collection of 44 Letters Exchanged between the Koch and the Ahom Kings*, Transcript No.18, vol. V, Part-VI, DHAS.
20. The letters exchanged between the Ahom king and Nara Narayan have been reproduced in different works .For example, see Khan Chowdhury Amanatulla Ahmed :*op.cit.*, p.155.
21. *Deodhai Assam Buranji*, p.34.
22. *Deodhai Assam Buranji*, pp. 34-35; *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, vs.362-363, p.73.
23. Hem Chandra Goswami (ed): *Purani Assam Buranji*, reprinted., (Guwahati, Lawyears Book Stall,1977),henceforth *Purani Assam uranji* , p.52.
24. *Deodhai Assam Buranji*, pp.17-22.
25. Upendra Chandra Guha: *Kacharer Itibritta*.,reprint ed.,(Gauhati, Assam Prakashan Parishad ,1971), pp. 29-30.
26. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, v. 390, p.78.
27. *Ibid.*, vs. 397-403, pp. 79-81.
28. Upendra Chandra Guha: *op.cit.*, p.31.
29. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, vs. 405-09, p. 82-83.
30. E.A.Gait: *A History of Assam*, p. 313.
31. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, vs. 415-420, pp. 84-86.
32. *Ibid.*, vs. 424-429, p.86-87.
33. *Ibid vs432-439*, pp. 88-89.
34. *Ibid*, vs. 468-486, p. 96-100.
35. R.C. Majumdar: *History of Medieval Bengal*,(Calcutta, G.Bharadwaj &Co., 1973), pp.73-74.
36. *Riyazu-s-Salatin*, p.152.
37. *Kamrupar Buranji*, pp.12-13; *Purani Assam Buranji*, p.52.; *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, vs. 496-507 and vs. 531-534, pp. 102-104, 108-109.
38. R.C.Majumdar: *op.cit.*, p.74; *Darrang Raj Vamsavali* , v.542, p110 ; *Rajopakhyan* p.23.

39. *Purani Assam Buranji*, p.52.
40. *Deodhai Assam Buranji*, p.36.
41. *Purani Assam Buranji*, p.52.
42. *Deodhai Assam Buranji*, pp.37-38.
43. S.N. Bhattacharyya: *A History of Mughal Northeast Frontier Policy*, reprint ed.,(Calcutta, 1994), p.94; R.C. Majumdar: *op.cit.*, p.79.
44. S.N.Bhattacharyya :*Ibid.*, p.96.
45. *Ibid.*, pp.97-99.
46. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, vs. 565-85, pp.115-119.
47. S.N.Bhattacharyya :*op.cit.*,p. 97.
48. *Ibid.*, P. 103.
49. Charles Stewart: *The History of Bengal*, reprint, ed., (Delhi, Oriental Publishers, 1971), p.166.
50. S.N. Bhattacharyya: *op.cit.*, p.98.
51. Continuity of Afghan rising in Bengal after the fall of Daud Karrani in 1576 A.D., had provoked the Mughals to maintain a friendly terms with the Koches because there was every opportunity for the Afghan to utilize the Koch territory against the Mughals. At the same time the Afghans were the most powerful enemy of Koches as the Afghans defeated them. So the Koches realized that establishment of a new power in Bengal is stronger than the former one. Hence defensive attitude was quite natural.
52. Segmentary state had several political domains with autonomy and authority of coercive power but sovereignty remained to the king. The medieval South Indian states had been identified as the segmentary state system. Burton Stain: *The Segmentary state: Interim Reflection*, in Hermann Kulke (ed): *The State in India 1000-1700*, (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.134-161; R.G. Fox has applied the concept to the Rajput State of Northern India too. R.G. Fox: *Kin, Clan, Raja, and Rule: State Hinterland Relations in Pre-Industrial India*, (Barkley, University of California Press, 1971). Basic political units in the segmentary state was a local territory (*nadu* in South India), these localities were grouped into zones, these into several major subdivisions and the latter into the macroregion or state. Ronald Inden: *Ritual Authority, and Cyclic Time in Hindu*

Kingship, in J.F.Richards (ed): *Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1998), p.41.

53. Upendra Chandra Guha: *op.cit.*, p.31; J.B.Bhattacharjee: The Pre-Colonial Political Structure in Barak Valley ,in Milton S.Sangma (ed):*Essays on North-East India* ,(New Delhi ,Indus Publishing Company ,1994), p.72; *Idem* :*Cachar Under the British Rule in North East India* ,(Delhi ,Raj Publications ,1977),p.7.
54. King Nara Narayan had his chief queen (Bhanumati) from the family of the Vaisnava saint Sankaradeva.
55. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, vs .614-617, pp.125-126; *Kamrupar Buranji*, p.13.
56. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, vs.623-27, p.127.
57. *Kamrupar Buranji*, p.14.
58. The date of division of kingdom is a subject of debate. But most of the scholars accepted 1581 A.D. as the date of partition of the state. E.A.Gait (*A History of Assam*, 1963,p.57), Khan Chowdhury Amanatulla Ahmed (*Cooch Biharer Itihas*, 1936, p. 121) and D. Nath (*History of the Koch Kingdom*, 1989,p.85).
59. The Persian sources have described the Eastern Koch kingdom as **Koch-Hajo** or **Hajo**. The Western part was known as **Behar** or **Nijbehar** or **Kamata** or **Kamata Behar**. King Nripendra Narayan, simply Anglicized the name as *Cooch Behar* in 1896 to remove the differentiability in nomenclature.
60. Before the death of Nara Narayan (1587 A.D.), Raghudev showed his loyalty and paid tribute to Nara Narayan.J.P. Wade: *An Account of Assam*, edited by Benudhar Sharma, (Lakhimpur, Madhupur Tea Estate, 1927), p.210.
61. E.A.Gait: *op.cit.*, p.63.
62. Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed: *Cooch Beharer Itihas*, p137.
63. *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p.362.
64. Acceptance of Mughal suzerainty in 1596 by Lakshmi Narayan is often over-emphasized as the sudden transformation of Koch kingdom into Mughal vassalage. Charles Stewart (*History of Bengal*, reprint ed., 1971.), E.A.Gait (*A History of Assam*, 1963) and subsequent works on this subject, relying on the authority of statement of *Akbarnama* marked the 1596 A.D. as the beginning of the Koch vassalage to the Mughals.

65. S.K. Bhuiyan (ed): *Padsha Buranji or Annals of the Delhi Badshahate*, (Gauhati, DHAS, 1947), p.185; *Kamrupar Buranji*, p.14.
66. S.N.Bhattacharyya: *op.cit.*, p.112.
67. *Kamrupar Buranji*, p.14.
68. S.N.Bhattacharyya: *op.cit.*, p.114.
69. *Purani Assam Buranji*, p.56.
70. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, v. 734, p.147.
71. *Kamrupar Buranji*, p. 15.
72. *Ibid.*
73. Mirza Nathan: *Baharisthan-i-Ghaybi* translated into English by M.I.Borah (Gauhati, DHAS, 1936), (2vols) (henceforth *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*), vol. I, p.40.
74. *Baharistani-Ghaybi*, Vol.I, vol. I, pp.222-239.
75. *Ibid.*, pp. 229-239.
76. Gift offered to Shaykh Kamal, Mughal general, was a gigantic one of Rs.100000, 100 elephant and 100 horses, *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, vol. I, p.240.
77. *Ibid.*, p.241.
78. *Ibid.*, pp.245-53.
79. *Ibid.*, p.405.
80. J.P.Wade: *An Account of Assam*, p.218.
81. *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, vol. II, p.521.
82. *Kamrupar Buranji*, p.18; J.P.Wade: *Account of Assam*, p.219.
83. Lakshmi Narayan had offered 500 *Muhars* (gold coins) to the Mughal Emperor Jahangir to confirm his loyalty to the Mughals. Jahangir accepted this submission and conferred one Iraqui horse, elephants and other valuable gifts. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri or Memoirs of Emperor Jahangir*: translated into English by Alexander Roger; edited by Henry Beveridge, reprint ed., (Delhi, Munshiram Monaharlal, 1968), vol. I, pp.43-444 and vol. II, p.2.
84. *Baharistan-i-Bgaybi*, vol. II, pp.703-708, 723.
85. *Kamrupar Buranji*, p.19; *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, vol. II, 521; J.P. Wade: *op. cit.*, p. 218.
86. *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, vol. II, p.40.
87. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, p.443.

88. *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, vol. II, p.522.
89. E.A. Gait: *A History of Assam* revised ed., (Calcutta, 1963); S.N. Bhattacharyya: *A History of Mughal Northeast Frontier Policy*, reprint ed., (Calcutta, 1994); K.L. Barua: *Early History of Kamrupa* (Shillong, 1933); N.N. Acharyya: *History of Medieval Assam*, reprint ed., (Guwahati, 1984) and D. Nath: *History of Koch Kingdom* (Delhi, 1989). These works have over-emphasized the vassalage status of the Koches without paying adequate attention to the last years of Lakshmi Narayan's reign and Bir Narayan's rule. They retained their independent status in their territory including minting coins, maintenance of administration and militia.
90. C.Wessels: *Early Travelers in Central India (1603-1721)*, reprint ed., (Madras, Asian Educational Service, 1992), pp.122-123. Although Eastern Koch kingdom was placed under the direct control of the Mughals but the kinsmen of Raghudeva and Parikshit Narayan like-- Bali Narayan, and tribal chiefs of hills area formerly subjected by Nara Narayan, had resented the Mughal administration. *Baharistan-I-Ghaybi*, vol. I, pp.409-10.
91. C.Wessels: *op.cit.*, p.131.
92. Official historians of Cooch Behar State are not unanimous about the date of accession of Prana Narayan and his coronation ceremony. According to the *Rajopakhyan* Bir Narayan ascended to the throne in 112 *Raja Saka* (*Rajopakhyan*, p.28). Harendra Narayan Chaudhri (*The Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlement*, Cooch Behar, 1903,p.234) puts the date as 1625 A.D., while Ananda Chandra Ghosh (*Cooch Bihar Itihas*, edited by Ananda Gopal Ghosh and Narayan Chandra Saha, Darjeeling, 1990,p.15) and Khan Chowdhury Amanatulla Ahmed (*Cooch Bihar Itihas*, Cooch Behar, 1936,p.154) have fixed it as 1632 A.D. .We have fixed it on the basis of *account* of Stephen Cacella who found that Lakshi Narayan was died before 1627 A.D..
93. *Kamrupar Buranji*, p.24.
94. The Ahoms inflicted a crashing defeat to the Mughals. By 1636 A.D., they conquered vast territories from the Mughals including Pandu, Sarai Ghat, Sualkuchi, Hajo, Dakhinkul, Karaibari, etc. But in the next year, the Mughals re-

- conquered the lost territories. However, naval victory of the Ahoms in 1638 A.D. against the Mughals led both the parties to conclude peace in 1639.
95. *Purani Assam Buranji*, pp.113, 170-172; J.P.Wade: *An Account of Assam*, pp.285-86.
 96. Details of the diplomatic letters exchanged between Prana Narayan and the Ahom king have been given in the *Kamrupar Buranji*, pp.69-84.
 97. S.N. Bhattacharyya: *op.cit.*, p.299.
 98. *Ibid.*
 99. S.K.Dutta (ed): *Assam Buranji (1648-1681A.D.)*, 2nd ed., (Guwahati, DHAS, 1991), pp. 13-14; *Kamrupar Buranji*, p.52.
 100. *Kamrupar Buranji*, p.52; *Assam Buranji (1648-1681)*, p.14.
 101. *Kamrupar Buranji*, p.52.
 102. *Assam Buranji (1648-1681)*, p.15.
 103. Khan Chowdhuri Amantulla Ahmed: *op.cit.*, p.157.
 104. *Ibid.*,p.158.
 105. *Assam Buranji (1648-81)*, p.16.
 106. *Ibid.*p.17
 107. *Kamrupar Buranji*, pp.53-.54.
 108. *Assam Buranji (1648-1681)*, p.17.
 109. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
 110. *Kamrupar Buranji*, p.69.
 111. Vishnu Narayan had no good term with his father Prana Narayan he is said to have converted to Islam. H.Blochmann: Koch Behar, Koc Hajo and Assam, *JASB 71.1(1872)* p.67; also, Stewart: *op.cit.* p.289. But *Rajopakhyan* and other official history produced in the Koch court do not rely on it.
 112. According to the *Assam Buranji (1648-1681)* it was Rs.200000. *Assam Buranji (1648-1681)* p.19.
 113. H.Blochmann: Koch Bihar, Koch-Hajo and Asham in the 16th and 17th centuries, *JASB 71.1(1872)*, p.68.
 114. *Ibid*, p.87.
 115. *Ibid.*

116. Jadu Nath Sarkar: *History of Aurongzeb, (5 vols.)*, reprint ed.,(Calcutta, Orient Longman Ltd., 1972), vol. III, pp.126, 218.
117. See Map 3.
118. Satish Chandra: Review of the Crisis of the Jagirdari System, in Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (eds): *The Mughal State 1526-1750*,(New Delhi ,Oxford University Press, 1998), p.350.
119. Harendra Narayan Chaudhuri: *op.cit.*, p.240.
120. *Ibid*, also *Rajopakhyan*, p.36.
121. *Rajopakhyan*: pp.37-38; Harendra Narayan Chaudhuri: *op.cit.*, p.241.
122. *Rajopakhyan*, pp.39-40.
123. *Ibid.*,pp. 31-32; Harendra Narayan Chaudhuri :*op.cit.*p.236.
124. *Ibid*.
125. Mercer and Chouvet: *Cooch Behar Select Record Vol. II, or Mercer and Chouvet's Report on Cooch Behar in 1788* (Cooch Behar, The Cooch Behar State Press, 1869), henceforth *Mercer and Chouvet Report*, pp. 19.20, 29, 169-70.
126. *Rajopakhyan*, p.33.
127. *Ibid.*, p34.
128. *Mercer and Chouvet Report*, pp. 170,180.
129. *Ibid*, p.180.
130. Jagadindradev Raikat: *Raikat Bangsha O Tahader Rajjyer Sanschipta Bibaran*, edited by Nirmal Chandra Chaudhuri(Jalpaiguri, 1982),p. 23.
131. *Rajopakhyan*, p.40.
132. *Ibid*, p.37; *Mercer and Chouvet Report*, p.170.
133. *Rajopakhyan*, pp. 41-44; Rev.J.Long: *Selection from Unpublished Records of Governement for the Years 1748-1776*, edited by Mahadev Prasad Saha,(Calcutta ,Firma K.L.Mukhopadhaya,1973),p.715.
134. *Ibid.*,p.40 ;Aranvinda Deb: *Bhutan and India: A Study in Frontier Political Relations 1772-1865*, (Calcutta, Firma KLM Pvt.Ltd., 1976), p.74.
135. It was a common practice of the Koch state that it had to host an annual party for the Bhutanese at Chekakhata, a village in the Koch -Bhutan frontier. Both the

parties used to exchange gifts, which, however, from economic point of view was burdensome for the Koches.

136. *Mercer and Chouvet Report*, p.170; Harendra Narayan Chaudhuri: *op.cit.*, p.243.
137. Harendra Narayan Chaudhuri: *op.cit.*, .p.244.
138. *Rajopakhyan*, p.45.
139. Harendra Narayan Chaudhuri: *op.cit.*, .p.244
140. *Rajopakhyan*, pp.49-53; *Mercer and Chouvet Report*, pp.170-171.
141. C.U.Aitchison: *A Collection of Treaties and Sanadas Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, (14 vols.) reprint ed., (New Delhi, Mittal Publications, 1983), vol. II, pp. 189-192; Rev.J.Long: *Selection from Unpublished Records of Governement for the Years 1748-1776*, edited by Mahadev Prasad Saha, (Calcutta, Firma K.L.Mukhopadhaya, 1973), p.720; also see *Appendix E*.