

Chapter VI

Centralization of Power, Institutionalization of Leadership and Administration.

Establishment of law and order, integration of the state, protection of the state from the external aggression and linkage with a divine origin of the kingship are essential prerequisite of pre-colonial Indian states¹. In the Koch kingdom, these causatives were materialized by a process of gradual elimination of tribal control over the chieftom. Simultaneously controlling the ruled, including tribe and non-tribe; by a small ruling section comprising the chief and the tribal village leaders; had enforced the process of centralization of power. Legitimization of kingship through 'an imaginary divine link', formation of an organized bureaucracy, maintenance of sovereignty and centralization of power in the capital had virtually transformed the tribal chieftom of the Koch and Mech tribes into a state system. Transition of the tribal chieftom to a state had initiated the process of hierarchical sociopolitical stratification in the less-stratified tribal society.

6.1. Centralization of Power.

Prior to their state formation, traditional structure of the tribal society of the Koches and Meches was based on the clan villages connected through lineage and kinship. The clan-village leaders were dependent to their chief for overall progress of the tribe. Reciprocity in relationships between the tribe and the village leaders and redistribution of collected tributes by the chief through rituals had typologically placed the Koch and Mech tribes in a pre-state stage where chief was controlled by the clan, kin and lineage. Mech chief used to be selected by the village leaders and the chief had to host a great feast for the tribe² and the Koches had a similar tradition. Leadership of Haria Mandal as chief and integrator of the Mech tribe and appropriation of contemporary political situation of the Tista-Brahmaputra valley had led the tribe to form a chieftom of visible entity. Haria Mandal was successful to begin the process of institutionalization of leadership at least to elect his son Visu as the next chief.

Territorial expansion, collection of booties, defence and management of the territory had raised the question of managerial function of the emerging state. Chief and his allies came forward to assume the responsibility of management. Visu, as the chief of the tribe had acquired support from the autonomous tribal villages. His leadership in the warfare against the Bhuiyans³ had enhanced more prestige to him. The clan leaders were appointed as *karzi* or officials and ministers.⁴ Brother of Visvasimha was employed as the protector of the fort or *Raikat*. These institutions of *kingship*, *karziship* and *raikatship* were declared hereditary which constitute a ruling section within the tribe. Ruling section gradually centralized more power into its fold. So the tribal control over the clan leaders and the chief begun to replace by the ruling section's control over the tribe. So 'it was a symbiosis of state formation process and formation of a ruling section within the tribe.'

6.1.1 Origin of the Kingship

According to the *Rajopakhyan*, Chandan (c1510 A.D.) was the first Koch king but no description of his coronation has been found in other literary sources. On the contrary, Visu was declared as 'king Visvasimha',⁵ after performing the rituals of coronation at per pre-modern king of India. Such declaration, however, was not unquestionable. Unlike the pre-Koch dynasties of Kamarupa (which connected their kingship with the traditional heroes, like -- Naraka and Bhagadatta), the Koch kings attached their kingship with Lord Shiva. A number of miraculous tales about Visvasimha's extraordinary origin were grown up. He was declared as the son of Lord Shiva, not of humble Haria Mech. The Brahmins were invited and endowed with land and honour by Visvasimha⁶ who had rewarded him the high sounding titles and recognized him as *kshatriya* ruler. The chronicles and *vamsavalis* have fairly mentioned the following myths to prove the miraculous progeny to the Koch kings.

"One day Haria Mandal, chief of twelve villages of Chikina hill of Lower Assam, after hard working in the *jhum* field (shifting cultivation) was waiting for food and drink to be brought by his wife Hira. But in her way, Hira was cheated by the duplicity of Lord Mahadeva, and had an intercourse with him. She was embarrassed while hungry Haria Mech blamed Hira for not bringing the food for him. Haria was puzzled but got the solution in dream while Mahadeva told him

that 'I enjoyed your wife and as a result a great child will be born who will be famous as Visvasimha'.⁷

Thus real patrimony of Visvasimha was exaggerated and attempts were also made to propagate myths to popularize his kingship.

'Visu used to be protected from the hit of sunlight by a poisonous snake in the jungle of Chikina hill while he was engaged in cattle rearing'.⁸ And 'Visu had sacrificed a tribal boy to the goddess Bhagavati only by using a wild leaf as sword'.⁹

These myths and tales had justified the ability of leadership of Visvasimha as king. The tale of snake which is equally connected with the Khena king of the same region and many other tribal kings of Eastern and Northeast India;¹⁰ had the easy access to the common psychology of the subject. The sacrificial story was further carried out which got attachment with Nara Narayan and Chilarai.¹¹

Visvasimha's kingship having a divine connection did not face any challenge from the ruled. But further warfare, territorial expansion and centralization of power carried out by Nara Narayan also required his divine qualities. Thus all the chronicles and genealogies of the Koch kings categorically mentioned that

'being jealous to Nara Narayan, Chilarai, general of the Koch militia, decided to overthrow the king. But surprisingly, he found that goddess Bhagavati was protecting the king. Chilarai got repentance for this offence and explained the incident to Nara Naryan. Nara Narayan was surprised and puzzled but pacified in the dream when Bhagavati appeared before him and advised him to propagate her worship in the region with a special form'.¹²

It is likely that the propagation of such myths had given a meaning to the concept of kingship that was essential for an emerging sovereign power. By the reign of Nara Narayan, kingship of the Koch rulers got natural acceptance from the ruled as no miraculous tale is attached to the subsequent rulers.

Coronation of the king in Hindu style had elevated the tribal identity to the kingship as per Indian tradition. As the Brahmins had sole right of defining caste status of the Hindus, encompassed by the Brahmans i.e., *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* and *Shudra*; the Koch kings were rewarded high seconding title by the Brahmins. For example,

Visvasimha and his successors had the access to be compared with the popular gods like *Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, Indra, Aditi, Vayu, Varuna, Kuvera* and *Ganesh*.¹³ The Brahmins also upgraded the status of the Koch kings and in this matter Nara Narayan was fortunate when he was mentioned in some inscriptions of the Koch kings at par with the epic heroes of ancient India like-- Arjuna, Dadhichi, Karna and Kandarpa.¹⁴ As a matter of fact in addition to a superior status, the Brahmins were rewarded with the 'rent-free land grants' and higher posts in the state bureaucracy¹⁵.

Transformation of tribal chiefship into a kingship had delinked the king from the tribal control. On the contrary, the king established his control over the tribe. So the first stage of centralization of power was the creation of fictitious divine kingship attached to the Koch kings. Adoption of Hindu titles such as *Simha* and *Narayan* and coronation ceremonies performed by the Brahmins had elevated the social status of the tribal ruler to the ruling caste status i.e. *kshtriya*.

The king had the topmost position in the administrative hierarchy. He was the integrator of the tribal and non-tribal subjects, defender of the state and promoter of the civil administration. The king, by his administrative organs like--*Chhatra Nazir, Raikat, Dewan* and *Karzis* maintained his control over the militia and civil administration.

6.1.2.Raikat

Raikat was the essential part of the ruling section of tribe and next to the king in importance. Charge of defence of the kingdom was entrusted to the *Raikat* with considerable military strength. Protection of the frontiers, security of forts and commanding the army were his main duties. His office was established at Baikunthapur situated in the western frontier of the Koch kingdom.

First *Raikat* was Sisvasimha,(brother of king Visvasimha)¹⁶. Afterwards the *Raikat* was also described as prime minister in the colonial records¹⁷ but he had the direct control over the king. It was compulsory for the early Koch kings to get permission of the *Raikat* in their coronation. It became a tradition that the *Raikat* would hold the *Raja Chhatra* (royal umbrella) in the coronation of the king. So the institution of the *Raikat* was a negative side for the concentration of political power by the king.

Military power of the *Raikat* placed him as an emblem of challenge to the king. After the death of Lakshmi Narayan, the *Raikat* did not hold the *chhatra* during the

coronation of the next king Bir Narayan (1627- 1632 A.D.?).¹⁸ On the contrary, *Raikat* himself become independent from the king's control and even established his influence on the state politics during the internal strife in the ruling house.¹⁹

The post of *Raikat* became hereditary to the successors of Sisvasimha. No other tribal chief or any member from the ruling family could become *Raikat*. The military services rendered by the *Raikat* had contributed to the territorial extension, protection of the conquered (and core) territory. *Raikat*, on the other hand enjoyed hereditary office and few estates were allotted for his maintenance. So it was a symbiotic relationship between the kingship and the *Raikatship* in the process of centralization of political power.

6.1.3.Karzis

Questions of managerial functions of the extended territories and core area led to the formation and growth of another vital group of institutions in the Koch state which were filled by the leaders of the clan villages of the tribes who were the active participants in the aggressive warfare of Visvasimha. After the declaration of the tribal chief as the king these leaders were appointed in the services of the state with responsibility, dignity and power and were designated as *Karzi*.²⁰ They were Bhakura Karzi, Paro, Nichila, Churchal, Satananda, Megha, Purandra, Bhota, Biru, Sharanam, Harish Chandra and Ripurjay Karzi.²¹ *Karziship* became hereditary to their family.²² The *Karzis* served the state as ministers and the important state offices. Supports of the *Karzis* to the king had strengthened the process of centralization of power because the *Karzis* had their control over the clans living in the grassroots level. So the office of the *Karzi* and its functions were instrumental in enhancing the state control over the subject.

6.1.4.Nazir

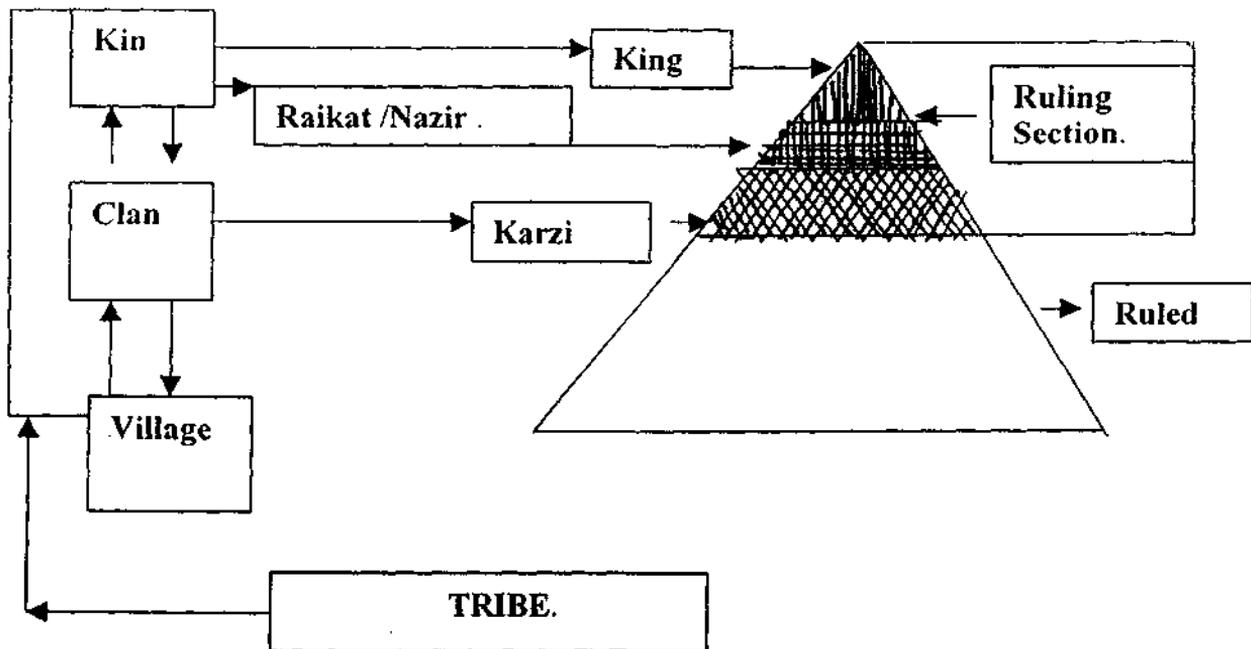
The post of *Nazir* in the administration was an innovation of the Koches. In the early years of the Koch state formation, the *Nazirs* were appointed from the Brahmin caste.²³ King Lakshmi Narayan had appointed his son Mahi Narayan to the post of *Nazir*.²⁴ Since then the *Nazirship* was enjoyed by the ruling family.

The *Nazir* had the duties to look after the military affairs of the state. When the *Raikat* denied to perform his assigned duty to hold the *chhatra* and ceased the military

duty to the state the *Nazir* began to perform the services of the *Raikat*. Hence, for holding the *chhatra*, the *Nazir* came to be designated as *Chhatra Nazir*.²⁵

Since the reign of King Bir Narayan (1627-1632 A.D.), *Chhatra Nazir* became the 'king maker'²⁶ and military department begun to be controlled by him. However, King Prana Narayan (1632-65 A.D.) restored the king's control over the *Nazir*. But *Chhatra Nazir* Mahi Narayan and Yagna Narayan had their coveted eyes to the Koch throne. Hence, with the Bhutanese help, they tried their best to capture the throne in the last quarter of the 17th century A.D.. After the death of King Moda Narayan (1665-1680) Jagna Narayan as the *Chhatra Nazir* attempted to capture the Koch throne²⁷ in 1680. But timely intervention of the *Raikat* had expelled him from the kingdom. After the death of King Mahindra Narayan (1682-93) without issue, the *Chhatra Nazir* once again aspired to ascend to the throne. But due to the opposition of the Koch army, instead of the *Nazir*, his nephew Rup Narayan was installed as king²⁸. So this single incident was a landmark in the history of the Kamata-Koch kingdom because the accession of Rup Narayan had broken the tradition of selection of the king from the royal blood.

Figure 6.1: Tribe, ruling section and the ruled.



The *Chhatra Nazir* had his office at Balarampur and control over the army as the commander-in-chief. The *Nazir*, being a salaried officer, enjoyed vast tract of land for the maintenance of state-army²⁹. During the survey of land (after the conclusion of the Anglo-Cooch Behar Treaty in 1773 A.D.), the East India Company found that the *Nazir* had direct possession of the *Parganas* like Dakurhat, Gitaldah, Rampur and Chakla Purbhabhag Rahimganj³⁰ which were subsequently treated as *Naziran land*.

6.1.5. Dewan

Civil administration of the kingdom had been entrusted to the *Dewan*, which was next to the king in dignity and position. First *Dewan* of the state was Chilarai whose designation was *Chhoto Raja*.³¹ But the *Dewanship* was not confined to the ruling family only. Nara Narayan appointed the *Dewans* from the *Kayastha* caste who proved their efficiency in that post.³² Prana Narayan appointed Kavi Sekhar and Kavi Narayan as the *Dewan* for the civil administration of the state who continued to serve the state during the reign of Moda Narayan (1665-1680 A.D.) too.³³

Death of King Mahindra Narayan (1682-93) without successor had created an internal conflict in the ruling section of the kingdom. Finally the family of *Chhatra Nazir* established its domination and *Dewanship* was entrusted to Satya Narayan, a member of the *Nazir* family. Since then *Dewanship* became the monopoly of the ruling tribe and his office at Baramkhana became a sub-centre of political power³⁴

6.2. Centralization of the Power: Role of the State Capital.

The Koches and the Meches although started their political formation in the Lower Assam but Cooch Behar and its vicinity was the nucleus of the polity. After the division of the kingdom in 1587A.D., eastern part was virtually annexed to the Ahom kingdom. So Cooch Behar always remained the main capital of the Koch kingdom.

Kamatapur, being the capital of the pre-Koch ruling tribe (Khenas), had its situational advantages as the political center of the Tista-Brahmaputra valley. Visvasimha shifted his capital from the hilly region of Khuntaghat (Lower Assam) and Hingulabus³⁵ (Western Duars) then to Kamatapur.³⁶ Transfer of capital from the circumscribed hill tracts to the plains of the Karatoya -Brahmaputra valley had extended the political control of the Koches. It also facilitated the concentration of the agricultural surplus and stimulated the state formation process.

Further warfare and territorial expansion from Kamatapur by Nara Narayan had raised the question of practical control over the conquered territories. Accordingly, Khaspur (Kachhar) was preferred as an 'administrative center' to look after the political affairs of the tribal states of Northeast India subdued earlier by the Koch's.

The division of the kingdom (in 1587 A.D.) had created an alternative of Kamatapur at Hajo (Ghila Vijaypur).³⁷ Inter-Koch conflicts ultimately compelled King Lakshmi Narayan to build a new capital at Atharakota (Cooch Behar), which was maintained by King Bir Nara Narayan.³⁸ Since then, Cooch Behar became the permanent political center of the state.

Capital (*Bihar* or *Nija Bihar*) was the nucleus of the state with a *Dewan*, treasury, mint and offices of the others institutions. Although, in the early 18th century, the *Nazir* (*Chhatra Nazir*) and *Dewan Deo* had their separate offices at their residences (beyond the capital), they kept their branch offices at the capital for smooth and easy communications. The policy of establishing head quarters or semi head quarters for administration other than the capital was a unique phenomenon of this kingdom as these measures were taken up to ensure the defence and security of the state as a whole.

6.3. Institutionalization of Leadership and State Formation.

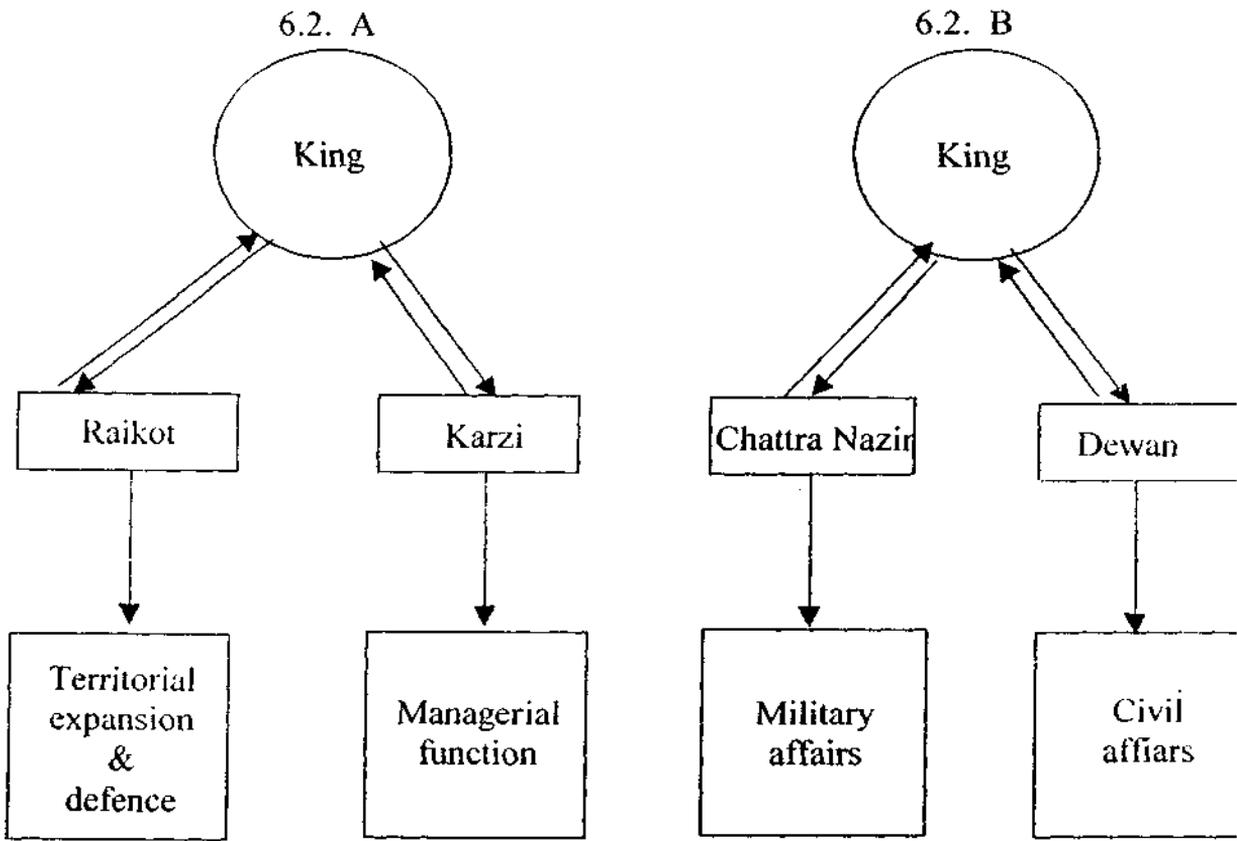
The whole process of formation of the managerial groups in the state shows that 'institutionalization of leadership' and 'concentration of power' goes together through the creation of a ruling section from the ruling tribes. The chiefship was transformed into the kingship with hereditary rights. The king, on the other hand, was dependent on the clan leaders who were appointed as *Karzi*. Similarly, defence of the state was entrusted to the leader of the same tribe in the form of the *Raikat*. So three institutions of the state had concentrated the political power, which was responsible for over all progress of the state including the maintenance of law and order, sovereignty and integration of the state. With the division of the consolidated state, new institutions were created. So since the late 17th Century King, *Chhatra Nazir* and *Dewan* had centralized the power, who provided leadership in the state formation (as explained in the **figure 6.2.**).

6.4. Administration

Warfare, centralization of power in the capital, institutionalization of leadership and development of complexity in the state-structure had created several posts in the

administration. Impact of the traditional administrative machinery of the pre-Koch polities of the region, induction from the administration of the neighbouring power and innovative administrative arrangements were the fundamental features of the administration of the Koch state.

Figure 6.2. Institutionalization of leadership and state formation.



6.4.1. Ministers and Counselors

Beside the *Raikat*, *Nazir* and *Dewan*; the king had few other supportive institutions such as the ministers and the counselors. At the initial stage of state formation ministers were recruited from the tribe. Visvasimha appointed Barihana and Baihagu³⁹, two Mech leaders, as minister. The ministers were often called *Patras*⁴⁰ and *Amatyas*⁴¹. *Patras* and ministers had to perform military service too. So Bhimbal Patra and Bahubal Patra served the Koch militia in 1562-63 A.D. against the Ahoms.⁴² Similarly, Kabindra Patra had rendered military duties to Raghudeva Narayan

and Parikshit Narayan.⁴³ On the other hand, the *Karzis* had served the state as the ministers and commander of the army.⁴⁴

The ministers were also recruited from the non-tribal castes, generally from the Brahmins and *Kayasthas* particularly in the 17th and 18th centuries. The *Khashnabish* (chief secretary to the king) often served the state as prime minister particularly during the minority of the king⁴⁵.

The *Rajguru* and the *Daivagnas* (astrologers) were the chief counselors of the state. The *Rajguru* had a great role to perform in the palace and royal family including the court politics. The Brahmins became the chief spiritual mentors for the king in the 18th century⁴⁶ although the Vaishnava saints were the *Rajgurus* for the state in the early period of the Koch rule. Next to the *Rajguru* was the *Daivagna* who was supposed to predict the future of the state. The state also maintained the *dyutas* (enjoy) and *kataki* (ambassadors)⁴⁷ who served the state as counselors for the foreign affairs.

6.4.2. Military Administration.

Ceaseless warfare for both territorial expansion and defence of the state led to the development of the Koch militia. Extraction of military services from the tribal clan leaders by Visvasimha, Nara Narayan and other Koch kings had forged direct relation of the state with the tribes. Thus Nara Narayan had to avoid confrontation with the tribal beliefs and customs.⁴⁸ Moreover, peasantry both tribal and non-tribal, had rendered military services to the state as *paik* in terms of enjoying rent-free land. It was a dependence of the state to the tribals and peasantry⁴⁹.

The *paiks* constituted the basis of Koch army who had to render military and other services required by the state. The *Darrang Raj Vamsavali* has given an exaggerated figure of 5225000 *paiks*⁵⁰ that was, however, not the total strength of the militia under Visvasimha and Nara Narayan. Lakshmi Narayan, however, had 100000 infantry.⁵¹ The figure of *paiks* was reduced in accordance with the decrement of territorial size the kingdom in subsequent years.

Cavalry, elephantry and navy were three regular units of the Koch militia which had been developed since the time of Nara Narayan. Horses were not available locally. Bhutan was the chief supplier of horses where trade of *Tangan* horses was the monopoly business of the state. It was the efficiency of the Koches in cavalry that

helped Chilarai (Koch general) to defeat the Ahoms and other Northeast Indian states as explained in the Chapter IV. Lakshmi Narayan had 1000 cavalry ⁵².

Availability of wild elephants and possibility of utilization of the elephants in the adverse and impregnable geographical locations led to the growth of elephantry in the Koch army. Lakshmi Narayan had the strength of 700 elephantry ⁵³. Elephantry was, however, maintained by the Koch kings till their last days. The navigability of the rivers of the region had its impact on the formation of navy. Koch navy was small in size and comparatively weaker than the Ahoms and the Mughals. ⁵⁴

The Koch militia had a hierarchical order. Visvasimha had introduced hierarchical military services consisting *Thakuria* (superintend of the 20 ordinary *paiks*), *Saikia* (Commander of 100 *paiks*), *Hazarika* (Commander of 1000 *paiks*), *Omra* (Commander in charge of 3000 *paiks*) *Nawab* (Equivalent to 22 *Omra* =66000 *Paiks*.) and *Raikat* (Commander-in-chief) ⁵⁵. These posts are identical with the military system of the Ahoms ⁵⁶. However, *Raikat* was an innovation of the Koches for local features of the state. Nara Narayan and Chilarai had carried out further reforms in the military administration. Infantry, navy and guerilla technique became more systematic. Nara Narayan also employed the trained Rajput, Afghans, Mughals and Bhutanese troops in the militia. ⁵⁷

Table 6.1.: Military order of Koches under Visvasimha.

Sl. no	Designation	Status	Functions(s)
1.	<i>Thakuria</i>	<i>Superintendent of 20 paiks.</i>	Military service to the state.
2.	<i>Saikia</i>	Commander of 100 <i>paiks</i> .	”
3.	<i>Hazarika</i>	Commander of 1000 <i>paiks</i> .	Military service and administrative works
4.	<i>Omra</i>	Commander in charge of 3000 <i>paiks</i> .	Zonal trop commanding.
5.	<i>Nawab.</i>	Equivalent to 22 <i>Omra</i> =66000 <i>Paiks</i> .	”
6.	<i>Raikat</i>	Commander-in-chief.	Defence of the state.

Table 6.2. Military reforms of Nara Narayan and Chilarai.

Category	Sub-categories	Commander/function(s)
Land force	Infantry, cavalry, elephantry.	<i>Senapati, Hazarika, Nawab.</i>
Navy	War boats, <i>Bacharis</i> , <i>Koshas</i> .	<i>Barua, Karzi.</i>
Spies	-----	To collect the secret news of the enemies.
Guerrilla warfare	-----	-----

With the division of the kingdom and beginning of defensive warfare, military administration had undergone further changes. In lieu of *Raikat*, *Nazir* was entrusted with military administration and protection of the kingdom. The post of *Nazir* became vital in the arena of state administration by the early 18th century and since then feudalistic cult engulfed the state at least in military service as mentioned earlier.

6.4.3. Revenue Administration

Chapter V has already highlighted the process of revenue concentration, which was manned by the state officials and revenue collectors. Visvasimha did not introduce any new system in land-revenue collection. Nara Narayan merely allowed the prevailing revenue collectors to manage the system instead of introduction of any new venture.

Units of land measurement and revenue yielding tracts had their variations in the kingdom. *Chakla*, *zilla* and *pargana* were prevailing units. Revenue collectors of the southern *parganas* became so prominent that in the last quarters of the 17th century they not only postponed to deposit land-revenue to the state treasury but also concluded agreement with the Mughals to act as their (Mughal) *Zamindars*.⁵⁸ Three *chaklas* of southern territory (viz. Boda, Patgram and Purbabhag) were conquered by the Mughals in the early 18th century and the Koch kingdom had taken the charge of the *izara* (deed of revenue collection) from the Mughals in 1711. A.D. *Zillah* was the revenue-yielding unit in the last years of the independent Koch kingdom.

6.4.5. Administration of Justice

'State formation from the stage of tribalism' did not transform the tribal traditions in its all respect. So tribal mode of justice was a general feature for the tribal people of the kingdom. Koch, Mech and Rabha tribal villages of North Bengal, Assam and Meghalaya are still carrying on the village assembly system in the field of justice⁵⁹. Local customs and traditions determined the nature of punishment. The Koch kings never intervened on the tribal autonomy. The elders of the same caste, community or multi-caste elders, on the other hand, modulated non-tribal villages. Hindu religious scriptures were the basis and source of justice⁶⁰.

The *Rajshabha* (a council headed by the king) was the highest court comprising *Raj Puruhit* (court priest), *Pandits* (learned men), *Dewan* and *Yubaraj* (prince) and king himself⁶¹. The king was free to act at his will. For example, Visvasimha inflicted

a sever punishment on a Brahmin for his unjustified claims.⁶² Similarly, King Nara Narayan issued a non-bailable arrest order to the famous Vaishnava saint Sankardeva.⁶³ But the king's will was considerably restricted by the dictation of the *shastras* (law books). In case of difficulty of determination of level and measures of the crime and punishment, *Pandit* or low officers were consulted⁶⁴. In the 16th century *Rajshabha* was movable from place to place as the kings were engaged in aggressive warfare. But *Rajshabha* became confined to the capital since the early 17th century.

The local courts including the estates of *Dewan*, *Raikat* at Baikunthapur, and *Chakladar/Zamindars* were the subordinate units of the judiciary. There was no uniformity in judiciary or the equality of law was not established. Nor did the Koch kings try to do it. Rather, power centrality and domination of the small ruling section was the focal point of the judiciary.

6.4.6. Other Officers and Offices.

In the changing political context, the intuitions and offices of the state had no fixed structure. While new offices were introduced, olds were modified and abolished in order to cope with the situation. But few offices were common throughout the Koch rule (See **Table 6.3**). So the *Bhandar-Thakur*⁶⁵ was a regular post who was in charge of the state-treasury including minting and managing the store of the palace. So *Bhandar-Thakur* can be compared with a minister of the Mughal administration called *Khan-i-Saman* (*Mir Saman*)⁶⁶. There were few more new offices, introduced in the Koch kingdom like--*Garmali* (low officers)⁶⁷, *Doloi* (officer in charge of the temple), *Sardar*, *Ahudi* (military officer), *Dhopdhara* (officer in charge of sports), *Mukaddam*,⁶⁸ *Medhi*, *Chowkidar*, (frontier gourd), *Biswas*, *Kandali*, *Kotal* etc.

For the administration of the palace the state created few post of servants such as *Supkar* (cook), *Dvari* (gatekeeper), *Bhitar Palia* (general servant), *Vaidya* (physician), *Tamuli* (betel nut supplier), etc.

Table 6.3. : Offices and officers of the Koch kings.

King	Description(s).	Remarks.
Visvasimha	<i>Karzi, Mantri, Bhandar-Thakur, Supkar, Char, Dyuta, Majumdar, Tamuli, Raikat.</i>	The offices were filled with the tribal leaders.
Nara Narayan	All the offices introduced by Visvasimha were maintained. New offices like - <i>Dewan, Nazir,</i>	Important offices were filled with

	<i>Patra, Kandali, Garmali, Kotwal, Makaddam, Biswas, Chaonia, Deori, Chomder, Ahudi, Sardar, Karmi, Kayastha, Laskar, Karzi, Barua, etc;</i> were introduced.	the non-tribal officers.
Lakshmi Narayan	<i>Karzi, Barua, Raikat, Nazir, Patra, Dewan, Senapati.</i>	-----
Parikshit Narayan.	<i>Laskar, Karzi, Barua, Patra, Nazir.</i>	-----
Bir Narayan.	<i>Raikat, Dewan, Chhatra Nazir, Karzi.</i>	<i>Nazir became the Chhatra Nazir.</i>
Prana Narayan	<i>Bhandar-Thakur, Majumdar, Chatra Nazir, Matri, Patra, Senapati, Kharadhara, Bara Deonia, Sarkayastha, Karzi.</i>	Prana Narayan revived the political status of the kingdom.
Moda Narayan	He introduced the post of <i>Mustaphi, Daptaria, Medhi</i> and <i>Chakladar.</i>	-----
Mahindra Narayan(168 2-93)	<i>Chhatra Nazir, Mushtaphi, Dakua, Bhandar-Thakur, Medhi, Daftaria, Garmali, Dewan, Bhitara Katak Dewan, Hisabia etc.</i>	-----
Upendra Narayan and other Koch kings.	<i>Chatra Nazir, Dewan, Khasnish, Suba, Jamdaria, Karzi, Baher Kotal, Darbar Khash, Khash Deonia, Oakkanbis, Patwari Doloi. etc.</i>	-----
Offices common throughout the period.	<i>Bhandar-Thakur, Majumdar, Senapti, Dewan, Nazir, Raikat, Karzi, Choudhury, Chowkidar, Katak, Mantri, etc..</i>	-----

6.5. Nature of the Administration.

Administrative arrangements of the kingdom were not the wholesale importation from outside. Even not innovated locally. While certain offices/institution like *Karzi, Raikat* and *Bhandar-Thakur* were developed from the tribal village chiefs with the growth and development of the state, *Barua, Thakuria, Saikia* and *Nawab* were imported from the Ahoms. However, the impact of the Mughal administration was more dominant than the locally developed offices. *Dewan, Nazir, Sikdar*, etc. indicate the Mughal-Afghan influence ⁶⁹on the Koch administration. But the kingdom was developed on the basis of the ancient principle of *Rajya* ⁷⁰¹ with a king having a divine connection, militia, treasury (*bhandar*), capital (*Behar* or *Nija Behar*), territory, organized bureaucracy (consisting *mantri, karzi, patra, dewan* etc.) and off course with a political relations with the neighbouring powers. The state insignias like *Hanuman*

*Danda*⁷¹ (monkey scepter) and *Raja Charta* (royal umbrella) are symbolically more identical with the Hindu concept of administration. The state emblem, *jato dharmastata jaya* (where there is righteousness, there is victory)⁷² indicates the concept of traditional kingship of India. Hindu *Shastras* (law book) were the sources of principle. As a whole domination of tribal customs, pre-Koch political traditions were synthesized in the Koch administration.

Notes and References.

1. Steward Gordon: *Marathas, Maruadars, and State Formation in Eighteenth Century India*, (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1998), p.79; J.C.Heesterman: *Power and Authority in Indian Tradition*, in R.J.Moore (ed): *Tradition and Politics in South Asia*, (New Delhi, 1979), pp.73-75; Edward S.Haynes: *British Alteration of the Political System of Alwar State, Lineage, Patrimonialism, Indirect Rule, and the Rajput Jagir System in an Indian Princely State, 1775-1920*, *Studies in History, New Series*, 5.1(1989), p.29; J.F.Richards (ed): *Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1998), p.3; Surajit Sinha (ed): *Tribal Polities and State Systems in Pre-colonial Eastern and Northeastern India*, (Calcutta, K.P.Bagchi & Co., 1987), p.xxiii.
2. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, vs. 50-52. p. 9; *Kamrupar Buranji*, p10; *Kharga Narayanar Vamsavali*, Ms. f. 7.
3. See **Chapter 3**
4. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, vs. 123-131, pp. 23-26.
5. *Ibid.*, vs. 160-172, pp. 33-35.
6. *Raja Vamsavali*, Ms. (N.B.S.L. ms. no. 4), f. 6; A Claude Campbell: *Glimpses of Bengal - vol. 1*, (Calcutta, 1907), p. 285.
7. *Deodhai Assam Buranij*, p.127; *Kamrupar Buranji*, p10; *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, vs. 55-70, pp. 10-12.
8. *Rajopakhyan*, p.8.
9. *Ibid.*, p.12.

10. K.S. Singh.: *The Chhoto Nagpur Raj : Mythology, Structure and Ramification*, in Surajit Sinha (ed.) : *Tribal Politics and State Systems in Pre-colonial Eastern and Northeastern India* ,pp. 51-69.
11. It was claimed that Nara Narayan could cut off a goat made of iron, by a wooden sword. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, vs. 342-356, pp.69-72.
12. *Rajopakhyan*, p.24; *Legendary Account of Cooch Behar*, Ms., N.B.S.L.ms. no 109, ff.29-31.
13. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, vs. 131-143, pp.25-30.
14. *The Kamakshya Temple Inscription*. See Appendix B.
15. The Brahmins were given place in the state since the days of Visvasimha. For details see *supra Chapter VII*.
16. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali* v. 149, p. 31; *Rajopakhyan*, p. 16.
17. W.W. Hunter: *Statistical Account of Bengal*, reprint ed., (New Delhi, Concept Publishing House, 1984), vol. - x., p.16.
18. Harendra Narayan Chaudhuri: *Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlement*. (Cooch Behar, The Cooch Behar State Press, 1903), p. 236; also *Rajopakhyan*., p29.
19. Khan Chowdhury Amanatulla Ahmed: *Koch Biharer Itihas vol. 1*, p. 230.
20. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, v. 164, p. 34.
21. S.K.Bhuiyan(ed): *Padsha Buranji or Annals of the Delhi Badshahate*, (Gauhati, DHAS, 1947), p.244.
22. *Ibid*.
23. Harendra Narayan Chaudhuri : *op .cit.*, p. 235.
24. *Rajopakhyan*, p. 28.
25. Harendra Narayan Chaudhuri: *op. cit.* p.236.
26. *Mercer and Chouvet Report*, p.170.
27. *Ibid*, also *Rajopakhyan*, p.34.
28. *Mercer and Chouvet Report*, p.170.
29. *Ibid*.
30. Rev.J.Long: *Selection from Unpublished Records of Governement for the Years 1748-1776*, edited by Mahadev Prassad Saha, (Calcutta, Firma K.L. Mukhopadhaya, 1973), p.715.

31. *Guru Charita*, vs. 37-39, p.743.
32. *Rajopakhyan*, p. 20.
33. Khan Chowdhury Amanatulla Ahmed: *op. cit.*, p.171.
34. *Mercer and Chouvet Report*, p.170; *Rajopakhyan*, p.37.
35. *Raja Vamsabali*, Ms.f.7. **Hingulabus** has been identified with Mahakalguri, a village of Alipurduar Subdivision where the Koch and Mech tribes have their significant concentration. Still the Meches and the Koch-Rajbanshis dominate this village.
36. Pitambar Siddhantavagis: *Markandeya Purana*, Ms, (N.B.S.L. ms. no. 08).
37. *Kamrupar Baranji*, p.18; *Baharistan-i- Ghaybi*, vol.1, p. 248.
38. *Rajopakhyan*, p.48.
39. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, vs. 165-169, pp. 34-35.
40. *Ibid.*, v. 322, p.65.
41. *The Pandunath Temple Inscription*, cited in D.Nath: *History of the Koch Kingdom* (Delhi, Mittal Publications, 1989), p. 212.
42. Khan Chowdhury Amanatulla Ahmed: *op.cit.*, p. 106.
43. *Kamrupar Buranji*, p.14.
44. *Assam Buranji (1648-81)*, pp. 14-16.
45. *Rajopakhyan*, p.45.
46. Khan Chowdhury Ammantulla Ahmed: *Op.cit.* p.186.
47. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, v.343, p.69.
48. *Ibid.* v. 337, p.66.
49. *Raja Vamsavali*, f.9.
50. *Darrang RajVamsavali*, v. 359.
51. *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. III, p.130.
52. *Ibid.*
53. H.Blochmann: Koch Bihar, Koch Hajo and Asam in the 16th and 17th centuries, *JASB*, 71.1(1872), p.52.
54. The Mughals and the Ahoms frequently defeated the Koch naval fleets. Parikshit Narayan had initial success against the Mughals but finally perished. *Baharistan-I-Ghaybi*, vol. I pp.229-243.

55. P.N.Gohain Baura: *Assam Buranji*, reprint ed., (Guwahati, 1966), p.126; *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, vs., 163-198,pp.34-40.
56. N.N.Acharyya: *The History of Medieval Assam: From the Thirteenth Century to the Seventeenth Century*, reprint ed., (New Delhi, Omsons Publications, 1984), p.118.
57. *Rajopakhyan*, p.20.
58. *Ibid*, p.36.
59. Surajit Kumar Paul: Traibal Council of the Rangdhani Rabha: An Autonomous Sociopolitical Institution, in Sebastian Karotempel and Dipali Danda (eds): *The Tribes of North East India*. (Calcutta, Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd., 1984), pp. 377-90.
60. Harendra Narayan Chudhuri :*Op.cit.*,p269.
61. *Ibid*, p.401.
62. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, vs. 274-75, p. 54.
63. *Guru Charita*, vs. 3449-3454, pp.686-87.
64. Harendra Narayan Choudhuri :*op.cit*, p.269.
65. *Ibid*, p.266; *Mercer and Chouvet Report*, p.143.
66. *Khan-i-Saman* was the minister in charge of the household department, royal buildings, roads, gardens, purchase, stores and workshops under the Mughal administration. I.H.Qureshi: *The Administration of the Mughal Empires*, reprint ed., (New Delhi, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 1990), pp.73-74; R.C.Majumdar (Gen.ed.): *History and Culture of the Indian People, Mughal Empire*, 2nd ed., (Bombay, Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, 1984), p.529.
67. *Guru Charita*, v3454,p.687..
68. *Darrang Raj Vamsavali*, v.535, p.109.
69. For details about the Mughal administration see, Ishtiaq Hussain Querishi:*The Administration of the Mughal Empire* ,(New Delhi, Atlantic Publishing and Distributors , 1990) ; Jagdish Narayan Sarkar : *Mughal Polity* , (Delhi ,Idarah- i- Adabiyat , 1984); Jadunath Sarkar :*Military History of India*, reprint ed.,(Delhi ,Orient Longman , 1960).
70. Ronald Inden: Ritual, Authority, and Cyclic Time in Hindu Kingship, in J.F.Richards(ed): *Kingship and Authority in South Asia*, pp.43-50.

71. Harendra Narayn Chaudhuri :*op.cit.*,p. 438.*Hanuman Danda (monkey scepter)* was the symbol of sovereignty since the time of Viswasimha. Each king maintained that *danda*. Although, the rebellious prince and the *Nazir* tried to plunder the *danda*, new scepters were made in each case of disturbance.
72. See *Plate 6.1*.