

KING NARANARAYAN AND HIS TIMES

**Thesis Submitted to the University of North Bengal,
West Bengal, India
for the Degree of the
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
*In the Faculty of arts***



By

**Parimal Bapari
Assistant Professor of History
Ananda Chandra College, Jalpaiguri,
West Bengal, India.**

**Under the Supervision of
Prof. (Mrs.) Mandira Bhattacharyya, Professor (retired),
Department of History
University of North Bengal,
September 2010.**

Th
954.14
B222 K

2 MAR '92

236186

Declaration by the Candidate

This Ph.D. dissertation entitled "KING NARAYAN AND HIS TIMES", submitted by me for the Degree of the Doctor of Philosophy from the Arts faculty of the University of North Bengal, is entirely based on original materials carried out under the supervision of Prof. (Mrs.) Mandira Bhattacharyya, Professor^(retired), Department of History, University of North Bengal. Neither this dissertation nor any part of it has been submitted in any academic institution for such degree or Diploma for me.

Supervisor:

Mandira Bhattacharyya

Parimal Bapari
(Parimal Bapari)

Assistant Professor of History

A. C. College, Jalpaiguri,

Jalpaiguri, West Bengal.

Date: 12/09/10

CONTENTS:

	<i>PAGES:</i>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:	= iv-vi
ABBREVIATIONS:	= vii
INTRODUCTION	= 1-14
CHAPTERS:	
I. EARLY HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND FOUNDATION OF THE KOCH DYNASTY	=15-80
II. KING NARANARAYAN'S POWER CONSOLIDATION AND STATE FORMATION	= 81-118
III. THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM, THE END OF HIS RULE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SETUP	=119- 167
IV. SOCIO-ECONOMIC-CULTURAL TRANSITION AND DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGES, LITERATURE AND ARTS	=168-241
V. RELIGIOUS UPHEAVAL	=242-313
VI. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS	=314-336
APPENDIX	=337-342
GLOSSARY	=343-346
BIBLIOGRAPHY	=347-368
PLATES	=369-380
ADDENDUM / CORRIGENDUM	= 381- 384
MAPS	= 385-387

XXXXX

Acknowledgement:

I was born and brought up in the region and heard many stories from my childhood about the great achievements of Koch king Naranarayan and other kings of the dynasty which inspired me to take up the subject as my research topic from the core of my heart. Besides, the Koch dynasty and king Naranarayan not only played the most important role in the contemporary regional political history of North-East India but also in the history of all intra human affairs of the region. However, it has trickled into the history of India without proper attention. The studies in the history of the Koch kingdom, especially the reign of king Naranarayan have so far been undertaken as a part of the history of either Assam or Bengal and not much pages have been devoted to highlight the times of king Naranarayan. This also inspired me to take up the topic for my area of research to construct the separate and complete history of king Naranarayan and his times.

I took up the present work after my post graduation as research scholar of the University of North Bengal in 1999. However, I could not continue the work as a research scholar owing to my joining as a Lecturer of the college and other various family problems. Inspite of that, I never gave up hope and after some time, I again continued the work. As a result, it took comparatively long time to finalize the work.

In the present work, I tried to explore the background of the political formation and evolution in the region, racial identity of king Naranarayan, his role in the process of political formation in Koch Behar and his relations with other contemporary rulers of Bengal and northeast India. The study highlights as to how king Naranarayan himself accelerated and patronized the socio-economic and cultural changes and developments of the region and as well as Neo-Vaisnavite movement of Sankaradeva which revolutionized the religious and socio-cultural pattern of the whole northeast India.

To prepare this dissertation, I am fortunate enough to have my guide, Professor (Mrs.) Mandira Bhattacharyya (now retired), Department of History, North Bengal University, who inspite of her retirement and various types of health and family problems, agreed to continue her guidance and provided me all kinds of co-operation and inspiration to complete this dissertation. I acknowledge my indebtedness to her.

I am especially grateful to Professor Tapas Kumar Roy Choudhary, (now retired), Department of History, North Bengal University who immensely helped me by giving his valuable suggestions for the work. Besides, I exchanged and enriched my ideas through occasional discussions with my teachers of the Department of History, North Bengal University, which helped me to prepare the work. I am also indebted to Professor J. B. Bhattacharyya, former vice Chancellor of Assam University Silchar, Professor D. Nath, Department of History, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh, Assam and Mr. Kanak Chandra Sharma, Vice President, Assam Sahitya Sabha, Gauhati, Assam, with whom I had occasional discussion about the topic to enrich my ideas.

For the source materials of my study, I visited many archives, libraries, and institutions such as Koch Behar State Library, Koch Behar; Central Library, North Bengal University; National Library, Kolkata; West Bengal State Archives, Kolkata; West Bengal Secretariat Library, Kolkata; Library of Numismatic Studies, Salt lake, Kolkata; Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti, Gauhati, Assam; Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Gauhati, Assam; Assam Sahitya Sabha, Gauhati, Assam; Kamakhya Temple trusty Board, Nilachal hill, Gauhati, Assam; Central Library Anandra Chandra College; Central Library, Gauhati University, Gauhati, Assam; Siliguri Mahakuma Library and others. I am grateful to the authorities and officials of these archives, libraries and institutions for their enthusiastic support and co-operation by providing me opportunity to collect information from their rare collections.

I also acknowledge my indebtedness to all authors, authorities and academic research websites, whose books, research works and publications (both in papers and in electronics), I utilized in preparing my dissertation.

I am also thankful to my colleagues of Ananda Chandra College - Sri Sujit Kumar Ghosh, Associate professor, Department History; Sri Chinmayankar Das, Assistant professor, Department Political science; Dr. (Mrs.) Sangita Das, Associate professor, Department English, for their encouragement, and co-operation. Mrs. Susmita Bapari (Biswas), my wife not only ever stood by me and kept aside me from many family affairs but also helped me in many ways to complete the work. I also express gratefulness to my college authority for granting me 'study leave' at the crucial last stage of my work.

Date: 17/09/10

Parimal Bapari
(Parimal Bapari)

ABBREVIATIONS:

- DHAS = Department of Historical Antiquarian Studies, Gauhati, Assam.
- DRV = Darrang Raj Van Savali, ed. N. C. Sharma. Published by Sri Ambikapada Chaudhury, Bani Prakash, Path Shala, Kamarupa, Assam, 1973.
- EPW = Economic and Political Weekly.
- IESHR = Indian Economic and Social History Review.
- IHQ = Indian Historical Quarterly, Calcutta.
- IHR = Indian Historical Review.
- JARS = Journal of the Assam Research Society, Gauhati.
- JAS = Journal of Asian Studies.
- JASB = Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.
- KAS = Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti, Gauhati.
- NBSL = North Bengal State Library, Cooch Behar.
- HCB-SCG = History of Cooch Behar, (Eng. Tr. of 'Cooch Beharer Itihas', by Khan Chaudhuri Amanatulla Ahmed), by S. C. Ghoshal, Reprint 2005.
- SKC-KJK = Suniti Kumar Chatterji's 'Kirata-Jana-Krti', the Asiatic Society, reprinted 1998, Calcutta.
- ABGB = Assam Buranji of Gunaviram Barua.
- BKB-SVSA = B. K. Barua, 'Sankaradeva Vaisnava Saint of Assam', reprint edition, Bina Library, Gauhati 2009.
- M. Neog-RNEI = M. Neog, 'Religions of the north-East India', Munshiram Manoharlal publishers Pvt. Ltd, Delhi, 1984.
- SMJC or AB = Sri Sri Svarganarayandeva Maharajar Janmacharita', or Assam Buranji.
- ABHB = Assam Buranji of Harakanta Barua.

Introduction :

The vast region to the northeast of India between the foothills of the eastern Himalaya Mountains ranges and extreme North of Bengal consisting the modern territories of Lower Assam (ten Districts), northern districts of present Bangladesh and Jalpaiguri and Koch Behar districts of west Bengal is the abode of the different ethnic groups of various cultures since the historic age. This region had seen the ebb and flow of many dynasties of many ethnic groups from the early times. The rise of some tribal chiefdom, like the Thai Ahom, the Meithei, Jayantiya, Kachari, Tripura, Khen and the Koch, from 13th century in the region and their transition to state-system by the 16th century, marked the beginning of the historical development and religious-socio-economic-political transformation¹. Among these, whose rules significantly occupied most important place in the history of northeast India is the Koch dynasty. J. N. Sarkar, in his book, '*History of Bengal*', writes, "half-a-century before Sulaiman's accession, a new power had been born in the extreme North of Bengal"². No doubt, by the words "new power", he wanted to indicate the Koch power, who established a vast empire in the beginning of the 16th century.

Hariya Mandal, a Mech / Koch tribal chief of mere 12 Mech / Koch families of the village Chikana, in the Khuntaghat region in the present Goalpara district of lower Assam had organised his tribes and established 'chiefdom'. His able son and successor Biswa Singha, in a chaotic political condition of incessant fighting with the local Bhuyans of the region transformed it into a 'semi-independent kingdom' in the beginning of the 16th century. His illustrious son and successor Naranarayan alias Malladeva came to the throne of Koch Behar in about 1540AD, who revoked the Ahom vassalage, declared suzerainty and proved himself the greatest king of the dynasty. With the help of his brother-cum-general Sukladhvaja alias 'Chilarai' and by following aggressive warfare policy expanded his kingdom and established the Koch hegemony all over northeast India. Thus, the Koch dynasty nominally founded by Biswa Singha, father of Naranarayan, in the first decade of 16th century and attained its peak in the 2nd half of the 16th century, during the reign of King Naranarayan. S. N. Bhattacharyya writes some eight decades back, "The advent of the Koches as the

dominating political factor in Kamarupa ushers in a new epoch in its history and gives it an entirely new character. It means not merely the rise of the new dynasty but also the real transition from the Medieval to the Modern age in Kamarupa. With the exception of the progenitor of the royal line, the other Koch kings are well-known historical personages, the details of whose career are known to us not only from their coins but also from contemporary as well as non-contemporary Persian and native chronicles.Further, a new nomenclature is soon evolved by the ruling dynasty for its seat of power. The kingdom of Kamarupa of ancient times and that of Kamata of the Middle Ages now gives way to a new state that of Koch Bihar, named after the Koch capital city of Bihar. The history of Kamarupa and Kamata is thus merged in that of the Koch state, which survived through various phases of contact of the Mughal ...and exists even now under the same dynasty founded four centuries ago"³.

The unification of various tribes, expansion of the kingdom, and consolidation and centralization of power were accomplished in such a situation, when the Ahom's were trying to expand their kingdom towards western frontier. In Bengal, the Mughals and the Afgans were engaged in internecine warfare to capture the throne of Bengal and trying to expand it towards northeast. In fact, King Biswa Singha organised various tribes and subdued the Bhuyans of the region at the early stage, and on that local base, his illustrious son King Naranarayan struggled with the two giant powers – the Ahom's in eastern frontier and the rulers Bengal on the western and southern frontiers to establish and consolidate a vast kingdom. In this connection, one thing should be kept in mind that most of his military exploits and expeditions were undertaken by his brother-cum-general Sukladhvaja popularly known as Chilarai. He was a great warrior and brought most of the neighbouring Kingdoms under the Koch hegemony. According to J. N. Sarkar, " the real power of the state was wield by the kings younger brother the commander in chief Sukladhvaja surnamed the Kite prince (Chila Rai) who led the Koches almost to the farthest eastern limit of Assam and achieved a series of brilliantvictories"⁴. Thus, king Naranarayan's long reign of nearly 50 years (c.1540-1587) form a landmark in the political history of whole northeast India and he and his brother Chilarai became the prime mover of the region.

However, this political hegemony could not last long and at the last decade of his rule, the kingdom suffered a division after the death of Chilarai in the beginning of 8th decade of 16th century, owing to the intra-family conflict between aged King Naranarayan and Raghudeva, the son of Chilarai⁵. But his actual achievements lies in the fields of the economic development, socio-cultural developments, legitimization of the family etc., last long, for which he is described as the 'Bikramaditya' of North-East India and his reign considered as 'the golden age' in the annals of the Koch kingdom.

The importance and prominence of the Koch dynasty, in the fields of political affairs as well as socio-economic, religious and cultural transformation process in the whole region is largely dependent on the exploration, enlightened activities of king Naranarayan which marked renaissance in the socio-economic, religious and cultural arena of the whole North-East India. S. N. Bhattacharyya writes, "Koch Bihar continued to grow in prosperity under the aegis of Biswa Singh's brilliant son and successor Mall Deva (Mal Gosain of Abul Fazl), who assumed the name of Naranarayan after his accession to the throne. The new monarch soon proved himself 'not a chip of the old block but the old block itself'. He not only imbued the political, administrative and military talents of his father but added to them a munificent patronage of Hindu religion and learning, and a refined taste for magnificent public works. He was great in peace and war and his reign ushers the golden age in the annals of the Koch kingdom"⁶. The court of king Naranarayan adorned with a large number of luminous scholars who marked their achievements in various fields under the direct patronage of the king.

Thus, he became the 'Bikramaditya' of North- East India, following the traditional 'Bikramaditya' legend of Ancient India and established 'the golden age' not only in the 'annals of the Koch kingdom' but also in the history of whole north-east India . Therefore, his achievements, his valour, his conquests, the state formation and above all, his socio-economic, religious and cultural activities in the region followed there upon suggest strongly both empirical and theoretical scrutiny. Hence, here is an intensive study undertaken about the establishment of the Koch kingdom

in the 16th century under the leaderships of Biswa Singha (nominally), and Naranarayan, (formally) and its mobilizing influences on the society, economy, religions, culture and others aspects of the region as a whole. In this connection, it should be mentioned here that consolidation of power and all round development of the Koch kingdom interestingly enough has been helped by Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva, who was a senior contemporary of king Naranarayan. His eclectic Bhakti movement added a new dimension to the process of the socio-cultural homogenization and in the development of language and literature in this region during Naranarayan's reign. For this reason, there is a need to undertake separate and complete study of the history of the dynasty and king Naranarayan.

The present study, therefore, seeks to explore the role of King Naranarayan as the appropriate agent to build the sufficient conditions for state formation in this region. In this conjectured, it should be noted that though his military exploits, through guerrilla and aggressive warfares played very important role, but, it was not enough as the condition for state formation. King Naranarayan seemed to have understood the fact that to cement the ground of his military exploits on a solid ground and to legitimize his position among the subjects, needed some socio-economic and cultural dynamics, for which he had adopted some steps simultaneously with military exploits. The steps, which he took, were:

- A). Accepted the Brahmanical socio-cultural and religious values to popularize the position of the dynasty from above and took active part for the development of society, culture, and religions of the kingdom.
- B). He took steps for the Legitimization and *Khshatriyaisation* of their line through Brahmanical mythological stories.
- C). Social homogenization of various tribal and non-tribal population for up gradation of social cohesiveness.
- D). He took steps for the modification of main religions like the Saivism and the Saktism and adaptation of Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva for eclectic development of the people.
- E). He organized proper administration on permanent basis to cement their conquests.

- F). Adapted the New vernacular as well as Sanskrita, for the linguistic development and cultivation of literature.
- G). He established the revenue structure to extract surplus from the subjects and introduced a monetary economy for the growth of trade and commerce.

In fact, military exploits and above-mentioned steps worked simultaneously helping each other. On the one hand, for the establishment of political stability and well-grounded kingdom, king Naranarayan had taken all these steps. On the other hand, the stable and peaceful political condition gave impetus to the development of the above-mentioned fields, which led to the peak period of the kingdom of king Naranarayan. Thus, political stability and supremacy of king Naranarayan created such a situation that led to the development of all aspects of human life.

Source Materials:

To carryout this work, both archeological and literary evidences have been utilized. The archeological evidences like inscriptions (both temple and independent inscriptions⁷), numerous coins of the Koch kings (*Narayani Tanka*) and the coins of other kings of Northeast India⁸, archeological remains like temples structures⁹ and evidences from archeological excavations of the region have been utilized with great care.

Among contemporary and near contemporary literary sources, genealogies locally called ‘*Vansavalis*’¹⁰ or ‘*Rajovansavalis*’ of the Koch kings, produced in Koch Behar and Assam under the royal patronage and chronicles, the historical literatures of Assam, locally called ‘*Buranjis*’¹¹ are very important sources. Most of the ‘*Vansavalis*’ or ‘*Rajovansavalis*’, the dynastic genealogical chronicles, were written at the instance of the later days Koch kings of Koch Behar, Darrang and Bijni by court poets in verse form to glorify their ancestors. As a result, ‘a certain disregard of facts and of wild exaggeration’, are there. However, inspite of that, they throw lights in the matter of the genealogical orders, some important events, socio-cultural-religious patterns and natural happenings, which are reliable and acceptable after a comparative study with the other sources and utilized to construct the history of the ‘King Naranarayan and his times’.

The '*Buranjis*', (literal meaning 'store that teaches the ignorant'), a genre of writing, a distinct form of historical writings / literatures and considered by some scholars as "national literature of Assam"¹², are the most important and reliable sources of history writing of the region. The '*Buranjis*' are 'historical writings' in the sense, that according to Gait, "The historicity of these Buranjis is proved not only by the way in which they support each other, but also by the confirmation which is afforded by the narrative of Muhamadan writers, where-ever these are available for comparison. Their Chronology is fur-supported by the dates on various records which have been collected and collated for the purpose of checking it"¹³. According to him the '*Buranjis*', are more reliable than the '*Vansavalis*' or '*Rajovansavalis*'¹⁴.

A large number of Buranjis were composed in the northeast India which contain immense source-materials for the writing of the history of northeast India including that of the Koches, from the points of literature, language, political administration, society, economy, religion and others. In the words of Lila Gogoi, "The nomenclature of the places, and families, description of coronation ceremonies, description of the swearing-in-ceremonies, political dialogues, utterances, made by different persons on different crucial moments, the diplomatic epistles and private letters, geographical description of the routes to neighbouring principalities etc., and much other minute details are carefully recorded in the chronicles.also contains information of neighbouring and foreign states, matrimonial relations, war and treaty, social customs etc."¹⁵. She also writes, "It is generally speaking, rich and reliable source information, rather unique in the history of Indian culture"¹⁶. Thus, these types of information immensely help us to construct the history of the 'King Naranarayan and his times'

The '*Charithputhis*'¹⁷ (in various names like '*Guru Charita*', '*Katha Guru Charita*', '*Guru Lila*' and others), the biographical literatures composed or compiled under the patronage of the Koch kings in the various Vaisnavite Satras, by the scholarly disciples of Sankaradeva, Madhavadeva, Damodaradeva and others, on the life, teachings and activities of their masters, is another source of information for present work. It contains scattered informations of historical values and Buranji (chronicle) type elements of the contemporary polity, society, economy, religion, culture,

literature, and language, growth of trade and commerce and development of agricultural production system. About the importance of the 'Charithputhis' or biographical literatures, M. Neog observes, "The biographical literatures is of great importance not only with regard to the lives of the saints and the activities of the Vaisnava order but also as providing much information regarding the political and economic structure of the country and the background of the Sankaradeva movement"¹⁸. Thus, the scattered informations of these *Charithputhis* are carefully utilized to construct the political, social, economic, cultural, and religious history of the period.

The Tantra literatures¹⁹ namely, 'the *Kalika Purana*' and 'the *Yogini Tantra*', which mainly contain, the procedure and the *Mantras* of the worship of the female deities and occasionally contain information about socio-religious, culture and geographical locations, which have been consulted for the present purpose. Moreover, selected parts of diplomatic letters²⁰ exchanged among the Koch kings, the Ahoms and other northeast Indian kingdoms have also been utilized.

In addition, writings²¹ of Sankaradeva, Madhavadeva and their scholarly disciples and others Brahmanical and secular scholars on Vaisnavite, Brahmanical and secular themes, produced in the Koch court, mainly during the reign of king Naranarayan, contain ample occasional and indirect information about the contemporary political, socio-religious and cultural situations of the region, which have also been utilized with great care. Besides, these local and indigenous sources, there are some Persian works²², foreign traveller's accounts²³, early colonial reports and works, containing scattered informations and references about the socio-political and economic conditions of the region, which have also been considered as supportive sources.

Besides, these primary sources, scholarly works of colonial and postcolonial modern writers, on the region have been utilized as secondary sources of information²⁴. On the one hand, the modern scholars of the North-East India, specially that of the Assam, have produced a large number of historical works, which included the history of the Koch dynasty, by utilizing primary sources, both

archeological and literary sources with their own logics and interpretations. Likewise, on the other hand, the scholars of Bengal have also produced large numbers of historical works, which included the history of the Koch Dynasty by utilizing almost same primary sources with their own logics and interpretations. Some other modern scholars produced their works on the region, comparatively with moderate and reliable logics and interpretations. In the present work, these Secondary sources have been utilized and interpreted from two angles, - a comparison of the logics and interpretation of the both groups, and verification of these logics and interpretation from primary sources. Thus, the secondary sources have been utilized with great care as a supportive source .Moreover; some data also have been collected and utilized from personal visits to some historical sites like temples, excavated sites, Satras and royal palaces and interviews with the people of various communities.

On the basis of the source materials mentioned above and the approach and methodology of present work stated therein, the work has been framed within following six broad chapters and including many sub-chapters / heads therein.

In the chapter one, there are two main parts. In the first part, the historical geography of the region, including names of the region, extent of the region and geographical features of the region from historical perspectives and the political evolution and historical outline of the region from historical period up to the end of 15th century have been drawn concisely. In the second part of the chapter I, early ancestors of the Koches, racial identity of the Koches, the contemporary political conditions in Delhi, Bengal, north-east India and core area of the Koches and foundation of Koch kingdom by Biswa Singha have been discussed . In short, the chapter designed to get an idea on geography, history, political development, ancestors of King Naranarayan and their racial identity and foundation of the kingdom by Biswa Singha.

Accession of king Naranarayan to the throne of Koch Behar, his aggressive warfare policy under the generalship of his brother Chilarai for the expansion and

political hegemony of the Koches, the defensive policy of consolidation and centralization of power, relations with other powers, which is considered as peak periods of the Koch hegemony have been discussed in the chapter two. Besides, a concise outline of the process and procedure of the formation of Koch Behar state also drawn here.

At the death of Sukladhvaja alias Chilarai, the brother-cum-general of king Naranarayan, circumstances leading to the division, end of the rule of king Naranarayan as well as his political achievements, kingship and Administrative set ups etc., have been discussed in the chapter three. This chapter highlighted the process of centralization of political power.

King Naranarayan was not only an able empire builder and efficient administration organizer, but also he was a great patron, reformer and organizer of the society, economy, culture, language, literature etc., which have been elaborately framed in the chapter four.

King Naranarayan took great initiative for the development and popularization of the both existing religions like the Saivism, Saktism etc. and the Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva, which have been discussed in the chapter five, under two sub chapters:- part 'A', contains existing religions and part 'B' contains the Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva .

In the chapter six, the last chapter, all foregoing chapter have been summarized with observations and findings.

Notes and references:

1. R. K. Barman, '*From tribalism to state*', Abhijeet publications, Delhi, 2007, p.1.
2. J. N. Sarkar, '*History of Bengal, 1200-1757*', Vol., II, Patna, 1973, reprint, p.184.
3. S. N. Bhattacharya, '*A History of Mughal North-East Frontier policy*', 1st edition, 1929, reprint, Spectrum publications, Gauhati, 1998. p. 73.
4. J. N. Sarkar, op. cit. p. 185.

5. After the division of the kingdom, the western part of named as Koch Behar and Eastern part named as Koch Hajo (now lower Assam), fixing the Sankosh river as the border between the two kingdom. From then to 1773 AD Koch Behar kingdom had been a complete sovereign state and there after it became a princely state loyal to English by an agreement between the English East India Company and Koch Behar king Dharendranarayan in 1773. In 1950, Koch Behar state became a district of West Bengal by the merger Agreement Act 1949 between independent India and Koch Behar State.

6. S. N. Bhattacharya, op. cit., p.76.

7. In this regard, the followings inscriptions are very important: The Kamakhya Temple Inscription, The Hayagriva Madhava Temple Inscription, The Pandunath Temple Rock Inscription, The Dinaipore (Bàngarh) Stone Pillar Inscription, The Ilda Copper plate (Ilda Tamarapatra), Lakshminarayan's Inscription on cannon and Raghudeva's Inscription on cannon and others. Some edited works on inscriptions like 'Kamarupa Sasanavali', of P.N. Bhattacharyya, *Epigraphia Indica*, XXII, of N.G. Majumdar, 'Prachya Sasanavali', of M. Neog, 'Kamarupa Sasanavali' of D. Sarma, 'Inscriptions of Ancient Assam', of M. M. Sarma and others.

8. A large numbers of Narayani Tanka (Mudra) of king Naranarayan were recently discovered from Chandirjhar (Alipurduar, W.B, 1986), Harisinga (Mangoldai, Assam, 1986), Halflong and Modgharia (Gauhati, Assam, 1986), Phulbari (West Garo Hills, 1992). Among these, Chandirjhar hoard of coins one of the largest finds of mediaeval coins of India discovered in recent times, contains 767 silver coins belonging to the Suri Sultans of Delhi, Bengal Sultans, Bahmani Sultans, Mughal Emperor Akbar, kings of Tripura and Koch Behar covering a period of nearly 240 years. Out of 767 coins, 222 belong to King Naranarayan. Besides, Coins of Jayantiya, Lakshminarayan's coins, Raghudeva's coins, coins of the Ahom and other throw indirect light. In this connection, some edited works on coins like Sutapa Sinha and Pratip Kumar Mitra, (ed.), 'Coins of Mediaeval India'; N.G. Rhodes, and S. K. Bose, (ed) 'The Coinage of Cooch Behar', 'The coins of Assam', vol. I, and 'The Coinage of Jaintiapur'; Botham, A.W. and Friel R, 'Catalogue of the Provincial Cabinet of coins of Assam' are very useful.

9. The Kamakhya Temple, The Hayagriva Madhava Temple, The Pandunath Temple, The Baneswar Siva Temple, Jalpeswar Siva Temple and Vaisnavite Satras etc. throw light on art, architecture, sculpture and painting of the period.
10. A large number of Vansavalis composed under the patronage of the Koch kings, which are very important for writing of the Koch kings. Following Buranjes throw light of the period of study: 'Samudranarayanaer Vansavali' of Surjya Khari Daivajna, published in the name 'Durrang Raj Vansavali', (ed.) By N C Sarmah. 'Gandharva Narayan Vansavali' of Suryadeva Siddhantavagis (It has been preserved with the Durrang Raj family). 'Kharga Narayana Vansavali', of Ratikanta Dvija, Ms., (unpublished). 'Rajopakhyan' of Jaynath Munshi, edited by Das Biswanath, (2nd, edition.). 'Raja Vansavali' (Bengali) of Durgadas Majumder, (ed); 'Raj Vamsavali' or Maharaja Vansavali of Ripunjoy Das, published in Pal, Nripendra nath (ed.), 'Bishaya Cooch Behar', Anima Prakashani, Calcutta, pp. 99-142.
11. Large number of Buranjes or Historical literary documents ~~were~~ composed in North-East India, among which following are relevant to our study: S. K. Bhuyan, (ed), 'Assam Buranji', DHAS, Gauhati, 3rd ed. 1987; 'Deodhai Assam Buranji', DHAS, Gauhati, 1932, Reprint 1962. 4th ed., 2001; Assam Buranji of Barua HaraKanta', DHAS, Gauhati 3rd. ed., 1990; 'Kachari Buranji', DHAS, Gauhati, 2nd edition, 1951; 'Kamarupar Buranji', DHAS, Gauhati 1930. 'Tripura Buranji', DHAS, Gauhati, 3rd edition, 1930. Sri Pratap Chandra Choudhury, (ed), 'Assam Buranji Sar', 3rd edition of Tamuli Phukan, Kasi Nath, 'Assam Buranji' DHAS, Gauhati 3rd. ed., 1991; Sri Sarat Kumar Datta,(ed), 'Assam Buranji', DHAS, Gauhati, 2n^d edition, 1991; Gunaviram Barua, 'Assam Buranji', Reprinted by Saikia, C. P., Publication Board of Assam, Gauhati, 1972, Hemchandra Goswami, (ed), 'Purani Assam Buranji', an ancient Chronicle of Assam, Kamarupa Anushandhan Samiti (KAS), reprint 2nd edition, lawyers Book stall, Gauhati, 1977; Assam Buranji, a history of Assam from the reign of Suklenmung (1539-52) to Siva Singha (1714-44), Kamarupa Anushilan Samiti, Gauhati; Assam Buranji, a history of Assam from Khora Raja (1552-1603) to Rudra Singh (1690-1714), DHAS, Gauhati.

12. G. A. Grierson, 'Linguistic Survey of India', (11vols), reprinted ed., Vol., I, part, I, Motilal Banarsidas, New Delhi, 1969, p.156; S. K. Bhuyan, 'Studies in the literature of Assam' 1985, p.33.
13. E.A. Gait, 'A history of Assam', Introduction, Revised, Calcutta, 1963, reprint, LBS Publications, 2004, p. xi.
14. E.A. Gait, op. cit., p. xiii.
15. Lila Gogoi, 'The Buranjis, Historical Literature of Assam', Preface, Omsons Publications, New Delhi and Gauhati, p. x., 1986.
16. Lila Gogoi, op. cit., p. xii.
17. Scholarly disciples of Sankaradeva, Madhavadeva, Damodaradeva and others, composed and compiled large number of Charithputhis on the life, teachings and activities of their masters. Among them, following few are very to our present context: Daityari Thakur, 'Sankaradeva-Madhavadevar Jivana-Charita', ed, Haribilas Gupta, Tezpur, 1900, (henceforth, 'Guru Charita of Daityari Thakur'). Ramcharan Thakur, 'Guru charita', edited by H. N. Dutta Barua, 18th edition, Dutta Barua publishing Co. Pvt. Gauhati, 2001, (Henceforth 'Guru charita' of Ramcharan Thakur). Bhushan Dvija, 'Mahapurush Sankaradeva', ed, Barkakati Durgavar, Jorhat, Assam, 1925, (Henceforth, 'Guru Charita' of Bhushan Dvija). Ramananda Dvija, 'Guru Charita', ed, M. Neog, Nalbari and Gauhati, Part I, 1957, (Henceforth, 'Guru Charita' of Ramananda Dvija). U. K. Lekharu, ed, 'Katha Guru Charit', Nalbari, Reprint, 1952, (Henceforth, 'Katha Guru Charita'). Nilkantha Dasa, 'Sri Sri Damodaradever Charita' (ed.), by S. C. Goswami, Jorhat, 1925. M. Neog, (ed), 'Bardowa- Guru-Charita', Gauhati, 1977.
18. M .Neog, 'Sankaradeva and his times: Early history of the Vaishnava faith and movement in Assam', Gauhati University, Gauhati, 1965, p.3.
19. The Yogini Tantra', Venkateswara Press, Bombay, 1925, Bengali edition S. S. Saraswati, (ed), Naba Bharat Publishers, Calcutta, B. S. 1385 (1978) and 'the Kalika Purana', Venkateswara Press, Bombay, 1925, tr. by K. P. Bidyaratna, Calcutta, 1927, Bengali edition S. S. Saraswati, (ed), Naba Bharat Publishers, Calcutta, B. S. 1385 (1977).
20. Surendranath Sen, 'Prachin Bangla Patra Samkalan', (a collection of old Bengali letters in Bengali), Calcutta University, 1942; 'Historical Letters of the

- Ahom Period*', a collection of 192 letters exchanged between the Ahom kings, other rulers of north-east India including the Koches, DHAS, Gauhati, Tr. No. 1, Vol. I; '*Historical Letters of the Ahom Period*', a collection of 42 letters exchanged between the Ahom and the kings, DHAS, Gauhati, Tr. No. 18, Vol. V, part, VI.
21. Sankaradeva, himself composed large number of literary works including *Bhaktiratnavali*, *Kirtana-Ghosh*, *Baragitas* and many others, rendered many Brahmanical scriptures including *Bhagavata* books and influenced his disciples like Madhavadeva and others to compose and render literary works. These literary works termed as 'Neo-Vaisnavite literature', most of which were done during their stay in Koch kingdom. The Brahmanical and secular scholars also composed and rendered many literary works. The references of which would be made in appropriate places.
22. All cases scholarly English translations are consulted. Some important Persian works are - Abul-Fazl's, 'The *Ain-I Akbari*', Eng. Trans., by H. Blochmann, published by Jain N. Ch., New Delhi, 2nd ed., 1965 and Abul-Fazl, 'The *Akbar-Namah*', Eng., Trans., by H. Beverage, published by Rare Books, Delhi, 1st ed., 1972; Hussain, Salim Ghulam, '*Riyazu-s-Salatin*', Eng., Trns., by Abdus Salam, reprint ed., Delhi, Idarah-i-Adabiyat, 1975; *Minhaj - uddin Siraj, Tabaqat-I-Nasiri*', Eng Trans., in by Major H. G. Raverty, vol-1, Reprint 1970; Nathan, Mirza, '*Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*', Eng., translation by M. I. Borah, (2vols.), Gauhati, 1936 and Talish, shihabuddin, '*Fathiya-i-Ibriya*', trans. in English by Blochmann, H, 'Koch Bihar, Koch Hajo and Assam in the 16th and 17th centuries according to the Akbarnamah, the Padshanamah and Fathiya-i-Ibriyah, JASB, 71.I (1872).
23. Ralph Fitch's account, in Foster, William (ed), 'Early Travels in India, 1583-1619', reprint edition, S. Chand and Co., New Delhi, 1968, pp.1-47, Also in Ryley, J .H. (ed), 'England's pioneer to India, Burma, etc.', London, 1899. Stephen Cacella's account , in Wessels, C, 'Early Jesuit Travelers in Central Asia (A.D.1603-1721)', reprint edition, Madras, Asian Educational Service, 1992, pp.119-161. Account of *Huen Tsang* (Yuan Chwang), published in T. Watters, 'On Yuan Chwan's travels in India (A.D.29-645)', edited by David,

Rhyas and Bhushel S. W., 2 vols. London, 1905, Reprint edition, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1961.

24. E.A. Gait, 'A history of Assam', first edition, 1905, Revised, Calcutta, 1963, reprint, LBS Publications, 2004; Barpujari, H. K (ed), 'The Comprehensive History of Assam', Vol. II, Publication Board, Assam, 1992; Barua, B. K., 'A cultural History of Assam' 3rd Edition, Delhi; N.N. Vasu, 'The social history of Kamarupa', (3Vol.s) Northern Book Centre, reprint, New Delhi, Reprint 1983; Nath, D, 'History of the Koch kingdom 1515-1615', Mittal publications, Delhi, 1989; Sarkar, J. N., 'History of Bengal, Muslim period: 1200-1757', Patna, Academica Asiatica, 1973; Acharyya, N. N., 'The history of medieval Assam, from the thirteenth to the Seventeenth century', Omsons Publications, Gauhati, 1984; Bandyopadhyay, Bhagavati Charan, 'Cooch Beharer Itihas', The Cooch Behar state Press, 1884 and edited by Pal, Nripendra Nath, Anima Prakashani, Calcutta,1987; Baruah, S. L.,'A comprehensive history of Assam', Munsimam and Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1985; Choudhary, H. N., 'The Cooch Behar State and Its Land Revenue of Settlement, Cooch Behar', Cooch Behar State Press, 1903; Choudhury, P. C., 'The History of civilization of the people of Assam to the 12th century A.D.', Spectrum publications, Gauhati, 1987; Khan Choudhury, Amanatulla Ahamed, 'Kochbeharer Itihas', reprint, Calcutta, 1990.

Early Historical background and foundation of the Koch Dynasty:

The vast region to the northeast of India between the foothill of the eastern Himalaya Mountain ranges and extreme North of Bengal, where the Koches established their kingdom in the beginning of the 16th century, under the leaderships of Biswa Singha nominally and king Naranarayan formally, is known in various names since the historical age. This region also witnessed the mixing of different ethnic groups of various cultures, seen the ebb and flow of many dynasties and political evolution since the early historical age. In the present chapters a concise outline of the names of the region, physical features, political development and evolution of the region as well as racial identities of the Koches drawn upto 16th century. This would be helpful for the better understanding of the reign of king Naranarayan as well as various aspects of the contemporary history of the region.

Names of the region from Historical Perspectives:

The archaeological excavations, inscriptions, coins other literary sources like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, Puranas, Tantra Literatures, chronicles (*Buranjis*, *Rajoupakhyans* and *Vansavalis* etc.) have proved the early human activities, settlements of different ethnic groups, growth of civilizations and the rise and fall of many dynasties in the region. These sources including the Persian writings and the writings of European travelers have conferred different names to the region. That are '*Pragjyotisha*', '*Kamarupa*', and '*Lauhitya*' up to 13th century and thereafter '*Kamata*' or *Kamatapur*, '*Kamru*' alias '*Chaulistan*' and '*Couch*' or '*Koch*' or '*Kochbehar*', in course of historical development. In some sources, even two or three above-mentioned names occurred simultaneously to denote a particular region or sometimes to denote two/three different sub-regions. Some modern scholars have named the region as '*Pragjyotish -Kamarupa*' and '*Kamta-Koch (Behar)*'. However, it is fact from all the evidences that all the names generally indicate the same region i.e. the Tista-Brahmaputra Valley of Northeast India in different sizes and shapes.

Therefore,

we have to proceed carefully to identify the names of the region and its changing pattern from ancient time.

Pragjyotish, Kamarupa and Lauhitya:

The earliest name of the region is *Pragjyotish* with its capital at *Pragjyotishpur*, occurred in the *Ramayana*^{1A}, the *Mahabharata*². Both the epics refer to *Naraka*, the mythological king of '*Pragjyotish*' who had his capital at '*Pragjyotishpur*'. Occasional references to '*Pragjyotish*' '*Kamarupa*' and others may be found in many *Puranas*³. In the early stage, the classical secular writings like *Raghuvamsam* of *Kalidas* (5th century AD)⁴, *Brihat-samhita* of *Barahamihir* (5th century AD)⁵, *Dasakumarcharita* of *Dandi* (6th century AD)⁶, *Harsha-charita* of *Banabhatta* (7th century AD)⁷, *Trikanda* of *Purushottama* (7th century AD.)⁸ *Kavyamimansa* of *Rajsekhar* (9th century AD)⁹ and *Abhidhanachintamoni* of *Hemendra* (12th century AD)¹⁰, etc also named the region as *Pragjyotish* or *Pragjyotishpur* with other names like '*Kamarupa*' and '*Lauhitya*'. The '*Raghuvamsam*' of *Kalidas* refers to the two countries that are *Pragjyotish* and *Kamarupa* lying to the east of the *Lauhitra*¹¹ and the *Brihat-samhita* of *Barahamihir*, refers to three countries, that are '*Pragjyotish*', '*Kamboja*' and '*Lauhitra*' in the region¹². However, the '*Harsha-charita*' of *Banabhatta* (7th century AD) and the '*Trikanda*' of *Purushottama* (7th century AD.)¹³ mentions that '*Pragjyotish*' and '*Kamarupa*' are the two different names of the same place or region '*Abhidhanachintamoni*' of *Hemendra*, a Jaina lexicographer (12th century AD) says, "the *Pragjyotish* are the *Kamarupa*"¹⁴. *Kavya Mimansa* of *Rajasekhara* (9th century AD) refers to *Pragjyotisha* as a country and *Kamarupa* as a mountain¹⁵. B. K. Barua, with reference from the *Kalika Purana*, a work 10th century AD, described "that immediately after *Naraka* of *Mithila* became king and was placed in charge of the goddess *Kamakhya*, the name of the land was changed from *Pragjyotish* to *Kamarupa*"¹⁶.

Some inscriptions also made references of *Pragjyotish* or *Pragjyotishpura*. *Balavarma*'s (9th century AD) *Nowgong* grant refers to '*Pragjyotishpura*'¹⁷. *Indrapala*'s (11th century AD) copper plate inscriptions also refer to '*Pragjyotish*' with the name of other places¹⁸. *Ratnapala* (11th century AD) in his *Bargaon* grant placed himself as "...the delight of *Kamarupa*" and "the ruler of *Pragjyotish*" (*Kamarupanandi* and *Pragjyotishadhipati*)¹⁹.

The first historical reference to Kamarupa occurred in the Allahabad Prasasti of imperial Gupta king Samudragupta of 4th century AD²⁰. The oldest of all inscriptions of Kamarupa's rulers, Bhaskaramarma's copper plate inscription (4th century AD), which issued from Karnasuvarna, also bears the name Kamarupa²¹. There are many references to 'Kamarupa' in the most of the literary sources, which have already been mentioned. Moreover, we have occasional references of 'Kamarupa' in the *Kalika Purana* (10th century AD)²², the *Siva Purana*²³, *Vayu Purana*²⁴, and the *Yogini Tantra* (16th century AD)²⁵. The secular writings of Banabhatta²⁶ (7th century AD), Chinese pilgrim *Huen Tsiang*²⁷ (7th century AD) and the Persian writer *Minhajuddin siraj*²⁸ have referred to Kamarupa' in various ways.

Therefore, from the above discussion it may be assumed that the earliest name of the region i.e. the *Tista- Brahmaputra* valley of north east India is *Pragjyotish* which continued up to 12th century AD, some times alone and some times with other names like Kamarupa²⁹, Lauhitya³⁰ and Kamboja³¹. The name 'Lauhitya' might have given to the region as it is situated on the bank of the river *Lauhitya* (*Brahmaputra*) and that of the name 'Kamboja' as this region was populated by the *Kirata* tribes (*Kombojas*)³². At early stage, Kamarupa was a small territory (*mandala*) within *Pragjyotish* (*Bhukti*)³³. According to the *Abhidhanachintamani* of Hemendra, a Jaina lexicographer (12th century AD) Kamarupa is another name of *Pragjyotisa*³⁴. For this reason, we get some references with both the names that are *Pragjyotish* and *Kamarupa*, or sometimes more than two³⁵. Ultimately, Kamarupa comes in to prominence and denotes the whole of north-east India up to the Sadiya or the *Tista- Brahmaputra* valley of north east India. So it can safely be assumed that from 5th century AD onward up to 13th century, both the names *Pragjyotish* and *Kamarupa* were in use in side by side and modern scholars of ancient times , named the region as '*Pragjyotish – Kamarupa*' to avoid controversy³⁶.

About the origin of the name '*Pragjyotish*' or '*Pragjyotishpura*', there are different views. According to the Ramayana , in the pre-historic age , King Amurtaraja , elder brother of Kusanabha, grant father of Bisvamitra and son of Kusa founded the city *Pragjyotish* here (Here king Amurtaraja a great warrior, founded the city of *Pragjyotish*)³⁷ . In the *Kalika Purana*, a work of 10th century AD., we read "Formerly Brahma staying here created the stars ; so the city is called '*Pragjyotishpura*' a city

2 MAR '312

236186



equal to the city of *Indra*" (*Indrapuri*)³⁸ and there is a tradition that in olden times astronomy (*Jyotishsastra*) was studied here or the territory famous for astronomy (*Jyotishsastra*). On this ground, Gait writes "Prag means former or eastern and jyotish a star, astrology, shining. *Pragjyotishpura* may be taken to mean the City of Eastern Astrology"³⁹. On the same ground, Khan Choudhuri Amanatulla Ahamed, writes "...পূর্বকালে দিগাজপুর অঞ্চলের 'জ্যোতিষদেশ' নাম ছিল, তাহার পূর্বদিকে অবসিহত বালিয়া এই দেশ 'প্রাগ জ্যোতিষ' নামে অভিহিত হইত"⁴⁰. K. L. Barua accepts the etymological ground but reads it in different connotation. According to him, "It is significant that to the immediate east of the town of Gauhati there is a temple on the crest of a hill known as Citrachala, and this temple is dedicated to the *Navagrahas* or the nine planets. It is probable that this temple is the origin of the name *Pragjyotishpura*"⁴¹. According to Professor B. K. Kakati⁴², '*Pragjyotish*' seems to be connected with topographical features of the land, but not with any religious cult, and it originated from an *Austro*-word '*Pagar – juh(jo)-tic* (c'=Ch), which means a extensively high hill region .

About the origin of the name '*Kamarupa*', the main source of information, the *Kalika Purana* gives different version informations. According to one version, '*Kamarupa*' is associated with *Kamadeva* (*Madan*), the god of love (sex). *Kama* was send by the gods to put an end to God *Siva*'s mourning after the death of his consort and to awaken in him again the passion of creation. He was burnt to ashes by the angry glance of god *Siva*, but later recovered his original form (*rupa*), hence the name *Kamarupa*⁴³. According other version of the *Kalika Purana* "the name *Kamarupa* originated from the Goddess *Kamakhya*, as another name of the Goddess is *Kamarupa*"⁴⁴. It is also occurs in the other Chapter, the *Asuras Madhu* and *Danabha* were killed by *Brahma*, then He and *Bisnu* worshipped Goddess *Kali* to kill *Kesidaitya* in a place called *Pandunath* near *Pragjyotishpura*. This place came to be known as *Kamakhya* from the tradition that *Kama* organ (*joni*) of the Body of *Sati* having fallen here⁴⁵. B. K. Barua with reference from the *Kalika Purana* (without details) described "that immediately after *Naraka* of *Mithila* became king and was placed in charge of the goddess *Kamakhya*, the name of the land was changed from *Pragjyotish* to *Kamarupa*"⁴⁶. Therefore, it can be assumed that *Pragjyotish* and *Kamarupa* are closely related and named as *Pragjyotish – Kamarupa*.

It is very hard to identify the exact extent and boundary of *Pragjyotish-Kamarupa* with present sources of our information. The *Puranic* and *Tantra* literatures gave us wholesome idea about the extent and boundary of the *Pragjyotish - Kamarupa*, from which we can just project an approximate extent and boundary of it. The *Kalika Purana* records that *Kamarupa* is to the east of the river *Karatoya* and the west of the river *Lalita Kanta* (*Brahmaputra?*)⁴⁷. The *Yogini Tantra* says about the boundaries of the *Kamarupa* in the following ways:

uttarasayam kanjagirih karatoya tu pascime !
tirthasrestha diksunadi purvasyam mgirikanyake II 17 .
daksine brahmaputrasya laksayah sangamavadhi !
Kamarupa iti khyatah sarvasastresu niscitah II 18 48.

'the *Kanjagirih* , probably extended *Kunchanjinga* was in the north and the *Karatoya* river was in the western boundary of *Kamarupa* The *Diksu* (modern Dikhu river near Sibsagar) was the eastern limit and the confluence of the *Laksa* and the *Brahmaputra* was the southern limit of the *Kamarupa*'. The Assam Buranji composed by Haliram Dhekiyal Fukkan and translated in Bengali by Sri Yatindra mohan Bhattachariya⁴⁹ mentioned with the reference of *Haragouri Sambad* that *Kamrupa* (ancient Assam) covering the area in the east up to *Dikkarbashini* hill and on the west up to the *Karatoya* River had four pithas. Those are *Ratnapitha* –the *Karatoya* in the west up to the *Sankosh* in the east, *Kamapitha* –from the *Sankosh* in the west up to the *Rupak* river in the east; *Swarnapitha* up to the *Vairaba* river in the east and *Sumarpitha* – up to the *Dikkarbashini* hill. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsiang, who visited the court of Bhaskaravarman in 643 AD says the country was more than a myriad li or 1667 miles in circuit and it (*Kamarupa*) was situated more than 900 li or 150 miles east of *Pundravardhana*⁵⁰. In the Tang –shu, *Kamarupa* is described as being 1600 li to the west of Upper Burma beyond the black mountain⁵¹.

On the other hand, modern scholar likes B. K. Barua, with references from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* describes the extent and boundary of *Pragjyotish* as " North of it seemingly lay tracts called *Antargiri*, *Vahigiri* and *Upagiri* (*Sabha*) which appear to be the lower slopes of the Himalayas and the Terai ; and it was close to the mountains , for *Bhagadatta* is called *Sailalaya* (*Stri*) . It bordered on the *Kiratas* and *cinas* for they formed his retinue (*Sabha*, *Udyoga*) and it is even said he dwelt at

the Eastern Ocean (*Udyoga*) ; these marshy regions can only be the alluvial tracts and islands near the mouths of the Ganges and the *Brahmaputra* as they existed anciently⁵². Gopinath Bardoloi, the son of the soil, in his autobiography, named '*Lokopriyo Gopinath Bardoloi—An architect of modern India*' , also describes with same sources of information that " from the description of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata it would appear that the country stretched as far as the sea in the south , and it was also a hilly country . It was built on a golden crested mountain, which was 64 Jojanas in extent, and stood abutted on the bottomless Varunalaya (sea). In the Mahabharata Bhagadutta, the king of Pragjyotish is called 'Sailalaya' (dwelling among the mountains) and it stated that his troops consisted of Kiratas, chinas and dwellers of seacoast. Therefore, it is quite clear that the mountains mentioned were Assam Ranges and the sea was the Bay of Bengal, which stretched up to this hill ranges. In the west, its boundary was Karatoya or Teesta, to the east as far as present Darrang district of Assam⁵³. He also describes, "Lower Bengal was not there in existence"⁵⁴.

Thus ancient *Pragjyotish -Kamarupa* included whole of the *Tista-Brahmaputra* valley i.e. present nine districts of lower Assam , Northern part of Meghalaya , Rangpur (old) district of Bangladesh and Koch Behar and Jalpaiguri (part) districts of west Bengal .

Kamta or Kamtapur Koch' or 'Kochbehar':

With the beginning of the 13th century, a series of new names came into existence to denoting the whole of the region or part of it. On the coins of Goudeswar Sikender Sah (15th century), the northeastern part of Bengal is the country of "Kamru" alias "Chaulistan" and on the Hussain Shahi coins; we find the names of two countries, i.e. "Kamru" and "Kamata"⁵⁵. The "Kamru" might be a corrupted form of Kamarupa in the Persian writings .The "Chaulistan" might be a combined form two Persian words i.e. Chaul (rice ?)+ Stan (place). It might be due to production of huge amount of rice in this region. The other name "Kamata", "was a corrupt pronunciation of Kamada, which was the sanskritised name by which the autochthonous mother goddess was known in the *Kalika Purana*, her other names being *Kama*, *Kamanga* *Kamakhya* etc"⁵⁶. So from the name of the goddess Kamada, this region is known as *Kamata* or *kamatapur* in the mid of the 15th century and the literary sources and historical records confirmed it⁵⁷. The goddess Kamada has a

derivative *Isvari* and the goddess is known as *Kamadesvari*, became in the popular tongue *Kamatesvari*, the supreme tutelary goddess of the *Kamata* or *Kamatapura* and following it, the kings took the title *Kamatesvara* and declared themselves as deputy of the goddess *Kamatesvari*, for the mother bestowed her temporal power on them⁵⁸. The *Kamatapura* was also the capital of the *Kamata* or *Kamatapur* kingdom. The extent and geographical boundary of the *Kamata* or *Kamatapur* kingdom might be demarcated as the *Karatoya* in the west, the river *Manas* in the east, the extended Himalayan foot hills in the north and *Ghoraghat* in the south with its capital at *kamatapura* situated on the bank of *Dharla* in present Koch Behar district of west Bengal⁵⁹.

Another name of the region is 'Couch', 'Koch', or 'Koch Behar', which came into limelight in the beginning of the 16th century AD. There are many of opinions about the origin of the term 'Couch' or 'Koch'. In this connection it may mentioned here that the spelling of the term is not same every where. In 1585, Ralph Fitch, an English merchant spell out it as 'Couch'⁶⁰. The *Tarikhi-i-Ferista*, the *Akbarnama*, *Tozoki-i-jahangiri* and Stephen cacella, a Portuguese traveler spell out it as 'Cocco'. By ignoring spelling of the various terms, we should precede with the single term of the *Yogini Tantra* i.e. 'Koch Behar' to identify the origin of the term. There are many of opinions about the origin of the term 'Koch' or "Koch Behar". Persian writer *Minhajuddin Siraj* in his book *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* mentioned that mainly three tribes, namely Koch, Mech and Tharu⁶¹, inhabited this region. So it may have originated from the Koch tribe. According to the *Padma Purana* and the *yogini Tantra*, it is the place, where *Mahadeva* dallied with a daughter of a Koch woman and Kshatriyas took shelter in the lap (*kol*) of a Koch woman on the bank of *Bagmati*⁶². The *yogini Tantra* also mentioned that the word 'Koch' derived from the word 'Kuvacha'. Therefore, it may be derived from the name of the Koch tribe.

According to S. K. chatterji, "the word *Koc* (or rather *Komc*) comes from a middle-Indo-Aryan source *Kawoca* written *Kamoca* which can be properly sanskritised as *kamboja*"⁶³ and he also says that " the *Kambojas* of Bengal are apparently the ancestors of the Koch people of north Bengal "⁶⁴.

According to another view, it originated from the of the 'Sankos' river. In the *Biswakosa*, 'Sankos' is considered synonymous with 'Koch'; alternatively, the word has been adapted from the 'Kos' portion of the river 'Sankos'⁶⁵. Therefore, it is the

land of Kos (Sankos) river. About the origin of the word, 'Behar', there are two views. According to the 'Rajapakhyan', the Koches wandered or played there⁶⁶. It was the abode or playing ground of the Koches and abode or playing ground means 'Biharkhetra' i.e. Behar. According to another view, it originated from Buddhist monasteries, which is known as Behar. Therefore, it is possible that the term 'Koch' may have originated either from the Koch tribe or from the river 'Sankos' and the term 'Behar', either from 'Beharkhetra' or Buddhist Behar (monastery).

The Koches rise to power at the beginning of 16th century and established the Koch dynasty, to which king Naranarayan belongs. The power and position of the Koch kingdom reached its climax during the reign of king Naranarayan. Details of his reign would be discussed in the succeeding chapters.

Geographical area of the Koch kingdom:

According to the *Yogini Tantra*, the Koch kingdom formally included ancient kingdom of *Kamarupa* extending from western part of the *Brahmaputra* valley up to the Karatoya^{66a}. According to Khan Choudhary A. Ahamed , the Geographical area of the Koch kingdom under king Naranarayan , covered the whole North-East India up to Burma border and North-Eastern part of Bengal up to Tibet border. On the south and the West, he extended hegemony up Ghoraghat and Mithila or Tirhut border respectively⁶⁷. Srijukta H. N. Chaudhury in the beginning of the 20th century following the view of Gait⁶⁸ observes that his conquest comprised "almost the whole of Northern Bengal, Bhutan and Assam as well as the modern States of Kachar, Jaintia, Manipur and Tipperah, extended up to the coast of the Bay of Bengal"⁶⁹. But it is exaggerated figure and it included the territories, where Koch expeditions were send, not the actual regions under the Koch kingdom. It is bordered by natural boundaries in the East by the *Barnadi* and the *Brahmaputra* River and in the west by the *Karatoya* River. In the North by Bhutan *Duars* i.e. present Indo- Bhutan border, as far as Rangamati (*Joygong*) of present Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal and the confluence of the *Brahmaputra* and the *Karatoya* in Rangpur districts of Bangladesh is considered as the southern border of the kingdom. In the present days political maps it included the whole Brahmaputra valley and its adjoining territories like sub-Himalayan Bengal i.e. Kochbeher, Jalpaiguri, and south Eastern part of Darjeeling districts of West Bengal and part of *Dinajpur* and *Rangpur*(present Panchagar, Thakurgaon,

Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, Khurigram and Rangpur Districts) districts of Bangladesh and Lower Assam's districts like Kokrajhar, Boingaon , Dhubri, Goalpara, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrupa, Darrang districts of Assam.

The Koch kingdom during the reign of Naranarayan extended approximately between $25^{\circ} 58'$ and $26^{\circ} 35'$ north latitude and $88^{\circ} 40'$ and $90^{\circ} 56'$ east longitude. At the division of the kingdom in 1581, the Sankosh River was fixed as the eastern boundary of the Koch kingdom and named as Koch Behar. From 1581 AD to 1773 AD, Koch Behar State had been a complete sovereign state and there after it became a princely state loyal to the English by an agreement between the English East India Company and Koch King Dharendra Narayan in 1773AD. At the time of India's partition and Independent, the size of the Koch kingdom again was reduced and in 1950, Koch Behar became a district of West Bengal by the merger Agreement Act of 1949 between India and Koch Behar.

Geographical features of the region:

The region is full of various geographical components like rivers, hill streams, mountain ranges, mountain passes (*duars*), hillocks, foothills, marshlands, fertile plain track with slopes (from east to west and north to south) and dense evergreen forest. This beautiful strip of land seems to be the very lap of nature and well secured against all outside influences. The climate is humid and tropical and annual rain falls varied from 127-655 cms. This region is considered as the easternmost continuation of the Indo-Gangetic trough⁷⁰ and is the land of the rivers *Louhitya* (*Brahmaputra*), the *Trisrota* (*Tista*) and other rivers. R. K. Barman described the region as 'Tista-Brahmaputra valley, as the river *Brahmaputra* and its tributaries and the river *Tista* (*Trishrota*), are the heart of the river system of the region which in many ways played a significant role in socio-economic, cultural and political development of the region since the beginning of the historical period⁷¹. Other rivers like the *Sankosh*, the *Karatoya*, the *Torsha*, the *Dharla*, the *Raidak*, and the *Bhairavi* and the tributaries of the *Brahmaputra* like the *Subansiri*, the *Bharali*, the *Manas*, the *Gadadhar*, the *Barnadi* etc. had made the river-net over the region, which also facilitated the communication, religions and cultural development. The *Kalika Purana* has highlighted the river system of the *Kamarupa* and important religious and trade centers on the riverbank, which are still existing⁷². All the rivers and small streams flow

either north to south or east to west, because the elevation or slope of land of the region also from east to west and north to south. On the north of the region, it is bordered by north-eastern frontier ranges or the eastern Himalaya mountain ranges, from where all the rivers except the *Brahmaputra* originated, followed towards south and south-west of the region due to a moderate slope towards south and south-west of the region. However, there were eighteen hill passes or *duars* around Bhutan, and that were the main trade routes to Bhutan from Bengal and Assam through this region⁷³.

Foothills and fertile plain tract of the region produce large amount of crops like rice, fruits, pulses of different kinds, tobacco, oil-seeds, cottons etc., for the livelihood of the people of the region since the historical period. The tropical evergreen forests or jungles were full with wild animals, reeds, bamboos, canes, timbers natural fruits and medicinal herbs etc, which had helped the development of the occupations like hunting, fishing, cattle rearing and elephant catching etc.

The region also the meeting ground of many ethnic groups from different parts of world. Many ethnic groups came here in different historical ages, inter-mingled themselves and formed a mixed ethnic identity of population of the region.

Political evolution and Historical outline of the region from the historic times to the 11th century AD:

The region had seen the ebb and flow of many dynasties from the historic times up to the 16th century AD. The mythological writings like the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Puranas* and the *Tantra* literatures, others writings and epigraphic sources have given illustrious description in it. To understand the political evolution of the region, it will be discussed under two main heads i.e. the mythological age that includes the Danava and Naraka dynasties and the early historical age that begins with the establishment of the *Varman* dynasty by *Pushya Varman* in the mid 4th century AD and continued upto 11th century.

The mythological age:

The main sources of information about the mythological age are only the Hindu religious literature, which includes the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Kalika* and

others *Puranas* and *Yogini Tantra* etc. It has no historical corroboration with other sources.

The Danava / Asura Dynasty:

According to the *Ramayana*, in the pre-historic age, King *Amurtaraja*, elder brother of *Kusanabha*, grant father of *Visvamitra* and son of *Kusa* founded the city *Pragjyotish* here and laid the foundation of the kingdom of *Pragjyotish*⁷⁴. According to a deeply entrenched local tradition, the earliest rulers of *Pragjyotisha* belonged to the *Danava / Asura* dynasty, founded by *Mairong Raja*, Sanskritised as *Mahiranga Danava*, who was definitely was a non- Aryan *Kirata* / tribal king and had spread his influence over the entire land of *Pragjyotisha*⁷⁵. This dynasty is important because the political account of *Pragjyotisha* begin with it. His successors were *Hatakasura*, *Sambarasura*, *Ratnasura* and *Ghatakasura*⁷⁶. But we possess very little information about these *Danava / Asura* kings, except the information that the last king of the *Danava / Asura* dynasty, *Ghatakasura* was defeated and killed by a prince of *Videha* named *Naraka*, who founded the legendary *Naraka* Dynasty of *Pragjyotisha*⁷⁷.

Naraka Dynasty:

The *Naraka* dynasty is a mythological dynasty of *Pragjyotisha* that has been sourced to mentions in the *Ramayana*⁷⁸, the *Mahabharata*⁷⁹, the *Kalika Purana*⁸⁰, the *Yogini Tantra*⁸¹ and local lore. It is facts from the texts, that *Naraka* was the founder the dynasty, and was a contemporary of *Banasura*, the tribal king of *Sonitpur* (right bank of the *Brahmaputra* of Upper Assam). His birth is ascribed to the union of *Vasumati* (Mother Earth) with *Vishnu* in his *Varaha* incarnation and is brought up by *Janaka*, the then king of North Behar⁸². It is said that *Naraka* came by water to *Pragjyotisha* accompanied by his father *Vishnu*, conquered the country by killing the last *Danava / Asura* king *Ghatakasura*, became the king of *Pragjyotisha*, which is described to have been extended from the *Karatoya* in the west to the *Dikhu* river in the east and established his capital at *Pragjyotishapura*⁸³. Being influenced by *Banasura*, *Naraka* tried to follow the tribal culture and became irreligious, for which his father *Vishnu* in person of *Krisna* had killed him and *Bhagadatta* was placed on the throne of *Pragjyotisha*⁸⁴. According to the *Mahabharata*, *Bhagadatta* was a "warrior king" and "the mighty king of the *mlecches*", had participated in the battle of

"Kurukshetra" on the Kaurava side, taking with him a large contingent of Chhina and Kirata troops and fought valiantly in Kurukshetra, to finally die a hero's death in the hands of Bhima, the second of the five⁸⁵. His son / brother Vajradatta succeeded Bhagadatta⁸⁶. The genealogy after Vajradatta is very much confusing and uncertain. According to a tradition, the successors of Naraka in direct line of decent were Dharmapala, Karmapala, Prithivipala and Subaru, who was the last and 19th rulers of the line⁸⁷. There are no indications when they might have ruled, but they are probably true rulers whose accounts greatly exaggerated. At the very least, the local lore and the incorporation in various texts indicate they were powerful rulers from the past. Though the traditional accounts do not give names of the all kings in chronological order yet they have fairly been placed as kings of mythological period and we have to accept the illustrious story of Naraka and Bhagadatta as historical facts⁸⁸.

Early historical period:

The Bhauma-Varman (Pushyavarman) Dynasty:

The earliest historical kingdom of Kamarupa, from which epigraphs have come down to us is the Bhauma-Varman dynasty, founded in the mid of the 4th century AD by Pushyavarman, a contemporary of the Gupta emperor Samudragupta (335-376AD). This dynasty is called Bhauma i.e. the son of Bhumi, the earth called the Avanikula⁸⁹. According to the Nidhanpur Copper Plate inscription and the Doobi copper plate of Vaskarvarman , Pushyavarman, the founder of the line had a lineal connection with Naraka⁹⁰ and he assumed the high sounding title like Maharajadhiraja which indicates his independent political power, position and status⁹¹. The Nidhanpur Copper Plate inscription also gives a genealogical list of the thirteen kings of the dynasty who ruled altogether 300 years (350-650AD) without indicating personal reign. In this situation, H. K. Barpujari⁹² generally assigned 24-year reign to each king of the 13 kings of the dynasty.

Among the which, Mahendravarman / Surendravarman, (c.470-494AD) sixth king of the dynasty, who had consolidated the kingdom and paved the way for future dominance of the dynasty. He was 'a great supporter of sacrificial performances'⁹³ and performed two 'horse-sacrifices'⁹⁴. However, most prominent king of the dynasty

and that of the *Pragjyotish-kamarupa* was Vaskarvarman, who as an ally of *Harshavardhan* of *Kanauj* ousted *Sasanka* from the throne of the *Gauda* (Bengal) and expended his kingdom up to the *Kusi* River on the west⁹⁵. He was also a lover of learning and propagator of the *Arya Dharma* in the *Pragjyotish-kamarupa*⁹⁶. *Bhaskarvarman* made himself the master of Eastern India pitched his victorious camp in the capital of his late rival *Sasanka* and thus increased power and prestige of the kingdom of *Kamarupa* to an extent never before. According to *Yuan Chwang*, the extension of the kingdom of *Bhaskarvarman*, besides *Pragjyotish-Kamarupa*, might have included also parts of south-west and northern Bengal and others adjoining territories⁹⁷. The *Yogini Tantra* also gives us same type of information, when it describes the extension of *Kamarupa* from the *Karatoya* in the west to *Sadiya* in the east⁹⁸.

The Salastambha family or Dynasty:

A tribal chief (*mlechadhinath*) named *Salastambha* founded a new *mlechch* (tribal) kingdom in *Pragjyotish-Kamarupa* around the second half of the 7th century⁹⁹. The term *mlechch* denotes the tribal origin of the family of *Salastambha* but the subsequent kings of this family claimed that they were the successors of *Bhagadatta*, the mythical hero of *Pragjyotish*¹⁰⁰. According to the *Bargaon* copper plate grant of *Ratnapala*, records the total number of kings of the dynasty altogether "twice ten" i.e. 20. and the last king, the twenty-first of the dynasty was *Tyagasingha*, who went to heaven without leaving any of his race to succeed him. His subjects selected *Brahmapala*, the father of *Ratnapala*, to be their king because of his relation to the *Bhauma* race i.e. *Naraka's* family¹⁰¹. It dose not mentioned the dates and genealogy of the kings of the dynasty. However, B. K. Barua, draw up a list of 14 kings of the dynasty, who altogether ruled about 330 years upto 990 AD¹⁰².

Salastambha was a powerful king of the dynasty as he is described as 'a king like tiger' in the copper plate grant of *Harjjara* (c. 820-835AD)¹⁰³ and on his succession owing to infamy of descent transferred the capital from *Pragjyotishpura* to *Haruppeswara*¹⁰⁴ on the bank of the *Brahmaputra*. *Harsa* (*Sri Harisa*) was another prominent king of the dynasty, who established his political control of *Kamarupa* over the extensive territories of eastern India and his daughter, was married to *Jayadeva II*.

the king of Nepal¹⁰⁵. Moreover, *Harjara* (c. 820-835AD) and *Vanamala* (c. 835-860AD) were powerful kings of the dynasty, who had their control beyond the natural frontier of *Kamarupa* i.e. west of the *Karatoya* River. *Harjara* assumed the grand epithet *Maharajadhiraja Paramesvara Paramabhattarka* in keeping with his unrivalled prowess. *Vanamala* granted lands to the Brahmins in the village *Avisura Vataka* near *Chandrapuri Vishaya* in the west of the *Trisrota (Tista)*¹⁰⁶. *Balavarman* (c.860-880AD) was the last powerful king of the dynasty and after him, in the last quarter of the 10th century, *Tyagasingha*, the last king of the dynasty, died without issue¹⁰⁷ and his subjects selected *Brahmapala*, the father of *Ratnapala* and founder of the *Brahmapala* or *Pala* dynasty of *Pragjyotish-Kamarupa*¹⁰⁸.

The Brahmapala Family or dynasty:

The kingdom of *Kamarupa* passed in to the hands of *Brahmapala*, the founder of the *Pala* family after the death of the last king of *Salastambha* dynasty towards the end of the 10th century. The *Bargaon* grant¹⁰⁹ of *Ratnapala* records that when *Tyagasingha*, the last king of *Salastambha* family departed from this world his subjects elected *Brahmapala* as their king in about 990AD¹¹⁰. In spite of disputes among the scholars, eight kings of the dynasty ruled about 130 years (990-1120AD)¹¹¹, among which *Ratnapala*, *Indrapala*, and *Dharmapala* were most prominent kings of the dynasty. *Ratnapala* (c.1010-1040AD) was the first powerful king of the dynasty ,who took the imperial title ‘*Paramesvara Paramabhattaraka Maharajadhiraja*’, founded a fortified capital called *Durjaya* (the impregnable one) on the bank of the *Brahmaputra*, which “baffled and struck terror” into the heart of many kings¹¹². The next powerful king of the family was *Indrapala*’ (c.1040-1065AD), who is described in the *Gauhati Grant*¹¹³ as “the vanquisher of all his enemies and the performer of many sacrifices” and assumed the epithet of ‘*Paramesvara Paramabhattaraka Maharajadhiraja*’ like his grant father *Ratnapala*. The last powerful king of the family was *Dharmapala* (c. 1095-1120AD.), who established the prestige of the dynasty. He shifted the capital from *Pragjyotishpura* to *Kamarupanagara* situated near *Gauhati*¹¹⁴ and revived the old policy of territorial expansion of the family particularly in the western side. The last king of the dynasty and successor of *Dharmapala*¹¹⁵ apparently was *Jayapala*, mentioned

in the *Silimpur* stone inscription of the *Brahmana Prahasa*¹¹⁶, and whom Tingyadeva, a feudatory or ally of Rama Pala, the Pala king of Gauda¹¹⁷, was defeated.

It is not possible to identify the exact extent of the kingdom at its peak ours. However, some Inscriptions through indirect light on the western boundary of the kingdom. *Indrapala* (c. 1040-1065AD), granted land to the Brahmins of *Savati* (*Sravasti*), which has been identified with at least a portion of *Pundravardhan*¹¹⁸. About this time, a *Mandalika* named *Isvaraghosh* was ruling at *Dhekkari*, and he is said to have granted lands after bathing in the *Jatola* River in the present Jalpaiguri and Koch Behar districts¹¹⁹. Again, the *Subhankara-Pataka* grant of *Dharmapala* records the donation of land to Brahmins in *Kanjiyabhitci* under the *Dijjina-visaya*¹²⁰. Therefore, it is probable that Pala family of *Kamarupa*, at its peak hours, included the northeastern Bengal also.

Political evolution and situation of the region from 12th to 15th centuries AD:

Political situation of the region became so chaotic after the decline of *Brahmapala* family or dynasty and especially from the first quarter of the 12th century that control over the region became almost impossible for a particular ruling family. We have scattered inscriptional references of many ruling families, some times one by one and some times simultaneously.

Tingyadeva supposed to have made feudatory king of the eastern country by *Ramapala* of *Gauda*. However, *Kumar Pala*, the king of *Gouda* could not maintain their control over the region for long time. For, shortly afterwards *Tingyadeva* revolted and the Pala king *Kumara Pala* (1120AD) on hearing this sent his minister *Vaidyadeva* against *Tingyadeva* to replace him and after defeating and killing him; *Vaidyadeva* occupied the throne *kamarupa* and became a vassal of the *Kumar Pala*¹²¹. However, he did not remain long as a feudatory of the *Palas* of Bengal, some time later, probably after the death *Kumar Pala* declared himself independent king of *Kamarupa* and assumed the imperial title of '*Maharajadhiraja Paramesvara Paramabhattaraka*', and thus he established a *Brahmana* dynasty in *Kamarupa*¹²². According to H. C. Roy, his brother *Budhadeva* was succeeded *Vaidyadeva*, but nothing is known about him¹²³. The Assam plates of one *Vallabhadeva*¹²⁴, dated in the Saka era 1107 (i.e., c. 1185-86AD.) refer the genealogy of a line of kings such as *Bhaskara*, *Rayarideva*

(Also known as *Triloyasingha*) and *Vallabhadeva*. However, there is controversy among the scholars about the genealogy of the kings and their kingdoms. B. K. Barua following K. L. Barua, opines that "the kings mentioned in the said epigraph could not have been rulers of *Kamarupa* for the simple reason that there is no room for them between *Vaidyadeva* and 1185AD, the date of *Vallabhadeva's* inscription"¹²⁵. P. N. Bhattacharyya holds that the line of *Vallabha* belonged to Eastern Bengal and they have nothing to do with Assam¹²⁶. He also thinks that *Vallabha* ruled over a small territory somewhere to the south-west of *Kamarupa* on the border of east Bengal¹²⁷. Even in the Assam Plates of *Vallabha* (1185 A.D.), he does not declare himself as a King of *Kamarupa*, nor does he name his capital. Therefore, there are reasons to believe that he was an independent ruler and his kingdom comprised of the *Kamarupa* and *Goalpara* districts modern Assam Valley and adjoining areas west Bengal and Bangladesh, not the whole area of the ancient *Pragjyotish -Kamarupa*. It has been considered as 'western part of the ancient Kingdom of *Pragjyotish -Kamarupa*'. Thus in the early 13th century, political center of *Kamarupa* was shifted to *Kamatapur* i.e., the lower part of the *Brahmaputra* valley and a new chapter in the political history of the region. At the same time, the Ahoms, the *Kacharis* and the *Chutias*, started to rise in the eastern part of *Kamarupa* and had closely related with the political development of Lower Assam and northeastern Bengal.

Any way, according to the inscription *Vallabhadeva* was a powerful king, "who sportively overcame hostile princes, as if they were courtezans"¹²⁸. There are many versions about his successors. According to *Bhattasali*, the invasion of Muhammaddin Bakhtiyar Khilji in 1206AD to *Tibet* was annihilated in Assam either by *Vallabhadeva* or by his successor¹²⁹. However, he says nothing about the successor of *Vallabhadeva*. On the other hand, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* informs us that during Bakhtiyar's invasion one *Prithu* or *Barthu* was the king of *Kamarupa*, who had checked him¹³⁰. Under this situation, P.C. Choudhary and K. L. Barua identified *Prithu* or *Barthu* of *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* with the son and successor of *Vallabhadeva* and 'Visvasundaradeva' of the *Gachtal* inscription was the real name of *Prithu* or *Barthu*¹³¹. He is also known as 'Jalpesvara', for, according to the *Yogini Tantra*, Siva temple of *Jalpesvara* of *Jalpaiguri* constructed by him¹³².

So, it may be concluded that *Prithu* or *Barthu*, *Visvasundaradeva* and *Jalpesvara* (c1185-1228) were the same king, who was an important king of Kamarupa and build extensive fortifications in the present Jalpaiguri district of west Bengal and Rang pore district of Bangladesh 1228AD¹³³. *Prithu* or *Barthu* alias *Jalpesvara* alias *Visvasundaradeva* defeated not only *Muhammadin Bakhtiyar Khilji* in 1206AD but also Sultan *Gias-us-din* in 1226 AD and ultimately he was being defeated and killed by *Nasir-ud-din*, son of *Iltutmish* in 1228AD¹³⁴. After *Prithu*, probably two of his successors ruled at Kamarupa before Sandhya, who might be a late successor of *Prithu* and removed the capital to Kamtapur.

According to the *Guru Charita* of Ramacharana Thakur and others, the reigning king of the lower Assam in the mid of the 13th century is supposed to have been Sandhya (C?-1260AD), who defeated *Malik Yujbek* in about 1256-57AD, and adorned the title 'Gaudeswar'¹³⁵. King Sandhya then shifted his capital from Kamarupa *Nagara* to Kamtapur¹³⁶, situated in the present Koch Behar district, due to the fear of repeated Muslim invasion from Bengal and for the gradual advancement of the Ahoms from the east. Henceforth, the kings of the region (lower Assam) began to describe themselves as *Kamateswar* (lord of Kamtapur). *Singhadhwaj* (c.1300-1305AD), the last king of the line was killed by his *Kayastha* minister *Pratapdhwaj* (c.1305-1325 AD)¹³⁷. Thus, *Pratapdhwaja* established a new line in Kamatapur but for a short time.

As a king of Kamatapur, *Pratapdhwaj* (c.1305-1325 AD) ruled only for five years, he was the king who concluded peace treaty with the Ahom king by giving his daughter *Rajani* in marriage¹³⁸. At the death of *Pratapdhwaj* in 1325AD, his nephew *Dharmanarayan* (c.1325-1330) usurped the throne of and adopted both the titles 'Gaudeswar' and 'Kamteswar'¹³⁹. *Dharmanarayan* built a new city near *Dimla* in the Rangpur district of present Bangladesh, and transferred his seat of administration there¹⁴⁰, to avoid conflicts with *Durlabhnarayan* (c.1330-1350 AD), the son and successor of *Singhadhwaj*. On the other hand, *Durlabhnarayan* (c.1330-1350 AD), came to prominence and adopted both the title 'Gaudeswar' and 'Kamteswar'¹⁴¹. This led to the hostilities between *Dharmanarayan* and *Durlabhnarayan*. However, eventually a peace treaty has concluded between them. By which it seems to have decided that, from then *Dharmanarayan* would be the ruler of southern part (present

districts of *Rangpur* and *Mymensingh* of Bangladesh) with the title '*Gaudeswar*'. In the same way *Durlabhnarayan* would be the ruler of the northern part (the present Assam districts of *Kamarupa* and *Goalpara*, and the West Bengal districts *Kochbehar* and *Jalpaiguri* with the title *Kamteswar*¹⁴². On request of *Durlabhnarayan*, *Dharmanarayan* sent seven families of Brahmins and same number of *Kayastha* families to *Kamatapur* / *Kamarupa*¹⁴³. After the death of *Durlabhnarayan*, his son *Indranarayan* (c.1350-1365 AD), became the king of *Kamatapur*¹⁴⁴, who faced twofold political pressure from two opposite direction i.e. eastern side the Ahom and from south-western side Bengal Sultans. It seems that ultimately, *Indranarayan*'s throne might have been usurped by one *Arimatta* alias *Gajanka* and in this, another new line of kings came to the throne of *Kamatapur*¹⁴⁵.

Therefore, it is clear from the above discussion that from the beginning of the 12th century, many lines of rulers became the kings of the lower Assam i.e. *Kamatapur* and our sources are somehow confusing.

Arimatta line:

Thus in the middle of the 14th century, *Arimatta* alias *Gajanika* (1365-1485), founded his line of kingdom who was descendant of *Dharmanarayan*'s line. According to K.L. Barua, *Arimatta*'s another name was *Gajanka* and he usurped the throne of *Indranarayan* who ruled at *Kamatapur*. He succeeded by *Sukaranka* (1385-1400), *Sutaranka* (1400-1415), and *Mriganka* (1415-1440) respectively¹⁴⁶. According to the *Kamarupa Buranji*, the territorial size of the kingdom of *Arimatta* extended from the *Karatoya* in the West to *Sadiya* on the east with a fort at *Baidyagarh*¹⁴⁷. It seems to be an exaggerated one, and actual extent of the kingdom of *Arimatta* included present *Jalpaiguri*, *Koch Behar* and northern part of *Rangpur* districts (now in Bangladesh), adjoining territories of Lower Assam nominally was within his kingdom but this region became the domain of the *Bhuyans*¹⁴⁸.

The Khen / Khan Dynasty:

According to K. L. Barua¹⁴⁹, the last king of the line, *Mriganka* died without any issue (1415-1440 A.D.). In this situation, with the help of *Bhuyans* a new dynasty,

known as *Khen* or *khan* came to the throne of Kamatapur under the leadership of *Niladhvaja* (c.1440-1460 AD), in the second quarter of the 15th century¹⁵⁰. The *Khen* dynasty ruled from their capital in Kamatapur (*Gosanimari*) now in Koch Behar District and they took the title *Kamteswar* or *Kanteswar*.

Identity of the dynasty:

They were probably local non-Aryan chieftains that rose to power in the mid of 15th century. K. L. Barua, named the dynasty of *Niladhvaja* as 'Khan Dynasty' considering them as *Kayastha*, for *khan* was a surname of the *Kayastha Bhuyans* in western Assam i.e. Lower Assam¹⁵¹. However, relying on local tradition, most of the scholars named the dynasty as '*Khen* dynasty'. B. Hamilton and E.A. Gait stressed on the low caste origin of the *Khenas*. B. Hamilton, who visited the ruins of Kamatapura in 1807-9, had recorded a local tradition about the foundation of the kingdom by *Khenas* in the following ways:

"According to tradition, there was a Brahman whose name is unknown; but who had a servant that tended his cattle, no one knows where. According to some, this servant was an infidel, (*Osur*) most probably from the mountain of Tripura, but concerning this, different persons are not exactly agreed, and some allege, that it was his mother who was of the impure race, and that she bore her a son while in the service of the Brahmin. Many complaints were made against this fellow; and his master one day was desired to view him asleep, while his cattle were permitted to destroy the crops of his neighbours. The Brahmin was advancing with a determination to bestow the merited punishment, when he observed the lines on the naked feet of his servant, and immediately, by his profound skill in the most noble science of '*Samudrik Jyotish*', knew that the sleeper would become a prince. On this discovery, the Brahmin paid him all due respect, rendered unnecessary for him to perform any low office, and showed him still more kindness by disclosing the certainty of his future greatness; for the servant in return, promised that when he becomes a prince, the Brahmin should be his chief minister (*Patro*). Accordingly sometimes afterwards, it is not known how, became a king"¹⁵².

Another ballad named *Gosani Mangal* composed by Radhakrishna Das Bairagi during the reign of Koch King Harendra Narayan (1783-1839) also records the humble origin of the *Khenas*. It records "the story of *Kantanath*, son of a poor couple *Bhaktiswar* and *Angana* of *Jambari* village near *Gosanimari*, who was a servant of a Brahmin of the village. Being bestowed by Goddess *Gosani*, he became the king of *Kamata*, which had been facing a period of anarchy and he assumed the title *Kamteswar* or *Kanteswar*¹⁵³. Khan Choudhury A.A. had recorded the similarities in the myths of origin of the *Khenas* and the *Kachari* King, *Nirvay Narayan*¹⁵⁴. On the other hand, with reference from the '*Kamteswar Kulakarika*', of Srutidhar Rupnarayan (16th century), he connected the origin of *Kamteswar* with *Rajbanshis*¹⁵⁵.

However, these types of legendary accounts are not sufficient to describe the origin of the *Khenas* and their kingdom. The *Rajbansi* or *Kayastha* identity of the *Khenas* was attached to them in the later period to purify their inferior social rank and with state formation they able to gain respectable position in the society. This is proved by the opinions of W.W. Hunter, H. H. Risely and others. W.W. Hunter recorded the *Khenas* as the only tribe of Kamarupa - *Kamata* from whom the Brahmin takes water¹⁵⁶. In the same way, H. H. Risely wrote in 1891 "their social rank is respectable, and the Brahmin, Kayasthas and Baidyas take water, fruit and sweet-meats from their hands¹⁵⁷. Therefore, S. N. Bhattacharyya rightly opines, "to what race the new rulers (*Khenas*) belonged is not known but they were rapidly Hinduised and assumed Hindu names and worshiped Hindu gods and goddesses"¹⁵⁸. In later days, they were segmented into different professional castes like *Mahendri*, *Teli*, *Barai*, *Saloya* and *Patiyar* and they were superior in status than the *Rajbanshis*¹⁵⁹.

The Rulers of Khen dynasty of Kamata or Kamatapur:

Niladhvaj (c.1440-60), the founder of the *khen* dynasty is described as an upstart by most of the scholars¹⁶⁰. However, succeeding happenings did not match with the view. Although he started his career in a political turmoil of the region but his virtue, dignity and leadership made him the master of *Kamata* in about 1440A.D. He assumed the *Kamteswar* and constructed the big fortified capital named *Kamatapur*, situated in present district of Koch Behar. The city was 'a gigantic work of human art and be speak great power and wealth of the prince or princes who conceived such an

idea of a capital¹⁶¹. Therefore, it seems that he was able to utilize the pre-Kamata state machineries to construct such as a gigantic city like *Kamatapur*, which would not be possible for an 'upstart'. This fortification helped him to make a well-defined defense against multi directional enemies i.e. sultan of Bengal, the *Ahom*, *Kacher*, *Bhutan* etc.

His son and successor, Chakradhvaj (c.1460-80), who initiated the policy of territorial expansion in the west bank of the river Karatoya and might have been the king who had encountered *Ismail Gazi*, the general of Sultan Ruknuddin Barbak (1459-74) of Bengal. The *Risalat-us-Shuhada*, a Persian account of 17th century, has recorded the conflict of *Ismail Gazi* with Kamata kingdom in 1474 and illustrated that he initially defeated by the Kamata king, but by a magical means he eventually was able to defeat the Kamata king¹⁶².

On Chakradhvaj's death, his son *Nilambar* (1480-98) succeeded him. He appears to have been a powerful king and his kingdom extended from the Karatoya in the west to the *Barnadi* in the east. He constructed mainly two roads; one from *Kamatapur* to *Ghoraghat* through *Rangpur*, which was strategically very important for the defense of his kingdom¹⁶³, another one from his capital *Kamatapur* to north direction was extended up to *Girimul* through *Kumari Kote* and *Muralabus*, which brought the north frontier of the kingdom directly connected with his capital. He fortified his capital and constructed a series of forts including main fort at *Ghoraghat* in the *Rangpur* region¹⁶⁴ to defend the future attacks from Bengal. Thus, in the last decade of the 15th century the Kamata kingdom became a strong political power in the region under the kingship of *Nilambar*.

Invasion by Alauddin Hussein Shah:

However, *Nilambar* could not continue his reign for long time, for Alauddin Hussain Shah (c1493-1519) defeated him in about 1498A.D. The strong political hold of *Nilambar* was a challenge for the Sultans of Bengal, for which conflicts between Alauddin Hussein Shah (c1493-1519) and *Nilambar* were, became inevitable. Nevertheless, there are two versions about the direct conflicts between them. According to the version of the *Riyazu-s-Salatin*, it was the political ambition of

Hussein Shah, for which after the conquest of Orissa he invaded Kamarupa and Kamata¹⁶⁵ to recover the lost territories of Bengal, to stop the aggression of the Kamata king and finally to fulfill his ambition of conquest¹⁶⁶. But according to tradition, Hussein Shah was instigated by Sachipatra, the Brahmin minister of Nilambar whose son was brutally murdered by the king for having an illicit love affair with queen Banamala¹⁶⁷. Under this situation, Hussein Shah invaded the Kamata kingdom with 24,000 infantry, cavalry and a war flotilla¹⁶⁸. After a long seize of the Kamatapur fort and a treacherous win, Hussein Shah finally destroyed the impregnable fort in 1498 A.D. and annexed the region up to Hajo, thereby regaining much of the land Bengal had lost earlier to Kamatapur, Nilambar escaped and fled towards the hills and thereafter nothing is not known about him. Hussein Shah subdued the local chieftains, probably *Bhuyans* of the region and established military control over the region. The independent Kamata kingdom practically disappeared.

Then Hussein shah returned to Bengal leaving his son, Danial with a strong force as viceroy of the conquered country and issued coins in his name as "Conqueror of Kamru Kamata". However, Hussein shah's invasion ultimately proved to be a failure, for within few days the *Bhuyans* of the region combined against the common enemy and attacked *Daniel's* garrison, probably defeated and killed him about 1503A.D.¹⁶⁹. The local *Bhuyans* established their individual supremacy over several small territories of the whole region. In this situation, Bisu / Biswa Singha, son of tribal chief Hariya Mandal and the father of Naranarayan, by organizing his fellow tribes, subdued all the *Bhuyans* and established the Koch kingdom on the ruins of the Kamata kingdom in the beginning of the 16th century.

His illustrious son Naranarayan succeeded Biswa Singha. He established the Koch sovereignty almost in the whole northeast and made him the prime mover not only in history of northeast but also in the history of contemporary Bengal. During his reign, socio-cultural advancements like *Aryanization* process of his fellowmen, *Sanskritization* of the languages, cultures, and religions of his fellow tribes and organization of administrations etc., reached its climax. Thus, the history of the *Koches* entered into a brilliant chapter of military glory and socio-cultural, religious,

economic, language and literary advancements, which are our main subject of present study.

Ancestors of king Naranarayan:

The source materials on the ancestors of King Naranarayan are in many ways Controversial, confusing, contradictory and fragmentary. Before going deep, we can discuss the matter under two sub-heads: A) ancestors up to Koch / Mech Hariya *Mandal* the father of Biswa Singha and B) the period of Biswa Singha and King Naranarayan, the period of their ascendancy and state formation of the dynasty.

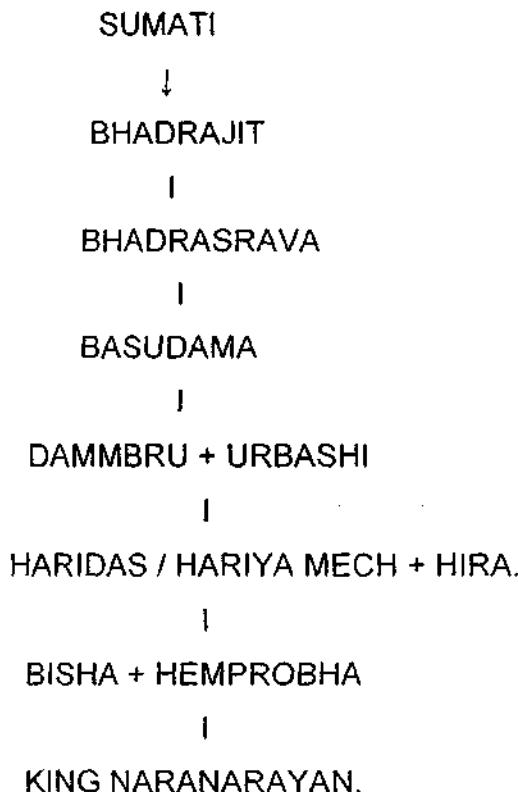
Information about the ancestors of King Naranarayan up to Hariya *Mandal* are confusing and definite information are very much limited and in many context controversial and *myth-based*. It is mention almost in all this *Buranjies* and *Vansavalies* of Assam and Kochbehar that *Hariya Mandal*, the grand father of King Naranarayan was selected *Mech / Koch* chief of 12 *Mech* families of the village Chikanagram in the *Khuntaghat Pargana* in the modern Goalpara¹⁷⁰. He was married to *Hira* and *Jira*, two daughters of the Koch Chief of *Hajo*. The names of the 12 *Mech* families are mentioned in '*Darrang Raj Vansavali*' as follows: *Panbar, Vedela, Gaubar, Phedphedo, Barihana, Kathia, Baihagu, Megha, Yuddhabar, Garakata, Jagai, and Dokhoda*¹⁷¹. However, the ancestors of *Hariya Mandal* are almost lost in obscurity. Some *Buranjies* and *Rajvansavalies* had thrown glimpses of indirect light on the ancestors of *Hariya Mandal* and the modern historians tried to make a genealogy of the dynasty. On the other hand, some scholars belief that it is impossible and improper to establish the genealogy before *Hariya Mandal's* father *Dammbru*. For the genealogy, which we can make from these fragmented information are imaginary and innovated by later writers to glorify the ancestors of the dynasty which, in every case was done by the court poets of the dynasty. It was actually glorified myth. It is fact that the ancestors of *Dammbru* were almost in primitive stage and illiterate .They were of humble origin and are just like some tribal communities of the 20th century. Surendra Nath Sen beautifully describe the ancestors of Naranarayan:

কোচবিহারের রাজবংশের উৎপত্তির কোন বিশ্লাস যোগ্য বিবরন পাওয়া যায় না -----
হিমালয়ের সানুদেশে নিবিড় অরণ্যে যে অনার্য কোচ মেচ তরুন-তরুনীরা বাস করিত,

তাহাদের ইতিহাস কেহই লিখিয়া রাখে নাই; উত্তরকালে যখন তাহাদের বীর পুত্রেরা এক বিশাল রাজ্য খণ্ডের অধিপতি হইয়াছিল তখন ব্রাহ্মণ ঐতিহাসিকরা তাহাদের যে বংশ বিবরন রচনা করিয়াছিলেন তাহাতে স্বাভাবতই অসঙ্গতার ঝটি-কল্পনার সাহায্যে সংশোধন করিবার চেষ্টা করা হইয়াছিল।¹⁷²

However, this is a supposition and scholars cannot stop here .They always trying to find out the root of the fact. They are trying to write history from Mythological and imaginary descriptions with the help of logical justifications. Therefore, the history of the ancestors of *Dammbru* is almost supposition and not rigidly established .There would be scope for further consideration.

With references from the *Darrang Raj Vansavali*, Amanattulla A. Choudhary¹⁷³ mentioned a geneology of the dynasty from *Sahasrарjun* and his son .The geneology mentioned by him is as follows:



The geneology as given by Amanattulla A. Choudhury in his book, and almost same geneology also mentioned by P.K. Bhattacharya (edited) book “*The Kingdom of*

Kamata-Kochbehar: Its Historical Perspective"¹⁷⁴. It is obviously clear from the genealogy of the above-mentioned book that it has been taken from Choudhary's book. However, the later book also taken a further step earlier from Sumati and mentioned as "A certain Kshatriya of *Haihaya* dynasty". However, it is surprising to note that Choudhary has made reference of the '*Darrang Rajvansavali*' as his source of information of the genealogy and the later book has also made a quite a beautiful genealogy of the dynasty without mentioning the source of his information. It is impossible to make such a genealogy from the information of the *Darrang Rajvansavali* and others *Buranjies*. The *Darrang Rajvansavali* described the ancestors of *Biswa Singha*: 'King *Sahasrarjuna* of the *Chandra* dynasty, a legendary figure, once went out for a hunting excursion and spent the night in the *asrama* (hermitage) of *Jamadagni*, father of *Parasurama*. The hermit had received the king with lavish entertainments with the help of a magic cow—*Kamadhenu*, *Sahasrarjuna*, struck by the extraordinary power of the cow. Forcibly took it away. At that time, *Parasuram* was not in the hermitage. No sooner, he learnt it than he killed *Sahasrarjuna* and recovered the cow. The event did not end here. Taking advantage of *Parasurama*'s absence from home, the sons of *Sahasrarjuna*, one day killed *Jamadagni* and lifted the cow again. This had so highly enraged *Parasurama* that he took a vow to clear the earth of the *Kshatriyas*, and started slaying them from one end of the earth to the other. As a result, the *Kshatriyas* became extinct. However, only twelve princes could manage their escape from the wrath of *Parasuram* by keeping themselves hidden in the *Chikana* hill. In order to conceal their identity, they married *Mech* maidens and remained in the guise of *Mech*. Of these twelve *Meches*¹⁷⁵, *Hariya Mech (Mandal)* was the chief, who had two wives—*Hira* and *Jira*, and due course *Hira* gave birth to *Bisu* (*Biswa Singha*), the father of King *Naranarayan*. However, the DRV gives a mythological story that *Bisu* was not the son of *Hariya Mech (Mandal)* but the son of God *Siva*. It states that God *Siva*, in guise of *Hariya Mech (Mandal)* had sexual intercourse with *Hira*, and in due course she gave birth to *Bisa*, and other wife of *Hariya Mech (Mandal)*, *Jira* gave birth to *Sisu*¹⁷⁶. *Bisu* after becoming king took the name *Biswa Singha* and *Sisu* after becoming *Raikot* took the name *Sisya Singha*.

The mythological story about the establishment of the dynasty of *Naranarayan*, dose not gave us any Genealogy of the dynasty but only the names of his ancestors. It is also interesting that P. K. Bhattacharya mentioned the earliest ancestors of the

line as "a certain Kshatriya of the *Haihara* dynasty", which responded to the opinion of the distinguished persons of modern *Rajvansi* community of their *Kshatriya* racial identity of the *Mech / Koch* or *Rajvansi*.

On the other hand, an M. S. chronicle collected by Buchanon Hamilton, without indicating any source, gives us a different mythological story about the origin of *Bisu*, the father of King *Naranarayan*¹⁷⁷. Two brothers, *Chandan* and *Madan*, had established a short government at *Maralabas*, a place 30 miles north from *Kamatapur*¹⁷⁸. They had ruled for eight years, and soon a rude tribe especially the *Koches* "who had a number of chiefs, at first independent, but who gradually united under the authority of one of themselves named *Hajo*"¹⁷⁹, occupied *Rangpur* and *Kamrupa*. He had two daughters, *Hira* and *Jira*, of whom *Hira* was married to *Hariya*, a member of an "impure tribe" called *Mech* and of them *Bisu* was born who succeed to the "whole power of his grand father"¹⁸⁰. From this story, geneology of the ancestors of King *Naranarayan* can be made in the following way:

CHANDAN AND MADAN

|

HAJO

|

HIRA-----JIRA (Koch) + HARIYA (Mech)

|

BISU (Biswa Singha) +HEMPROBHA (His queen from Gaud)

|

KING NARANARAYAN.

From the above two stories it seems to us that the story of DRV might be more acceptable, for most of the *Vansavali*s and the *Buranjies* admit the view and the predecessors of the community and royal family also demanded the same .

Racial Identity of the Koches / Rajvansi:

The greatest Koch King *Naranarayan*'s racial identity still remains unsettled. Although during his period, the dynasty was almost Sanskritised or Hinduised, but ethnic roots of his ancestors still remained a matter of great interest. The Scholarly Historians, Physiologists and Ethnologists are trying to highlight the matter. Very

recently, a group of distinguished person's of the Koch community is trying to establish their Aryan identity¹⁸¹ and they have given their opinions in favor of their Kshatriya identity.

The opinions of different *Scholarly Historians, Anthropologists, Physiologists, Ethnologists and Distinguished persons* of Koch community should be justified with proper references and logical justifications. We add the word 'logical justification' with proper references, because information regarding the racial identity of Koch community are limited in several ways. Lack of primary sources, except a few archaeological sources like coins, there is hardly any primary information. Scarcity of written information and available written information are in almost every case either controversial or exaggerated.

Almost all opinions and conclusions regarding the racial identity given by scholars are mainly trying to proceed to give four types of racial identity of the Koches. They are as following:

1. **Mongoloid identity of the Koches:**
2. **Dravidian identity of the Koches:**
3. **Aryan identity of the Koches:**
4. **Dravido-Mongoloid origin of the Koches:**

Mongoloid identity of the Koches:

The group of scholars who had given their opinion in favour of Mongoloid identity of the Koches emphasize on the distinct physical types and complexion. A. Grierson¹⁸² has mentioned mainly three distinct physical types – the first type, the primitive long-headed Mongoloids who are found in sub Himalayan areas of Nepal and mostly in Assam; comparatively less primitive and more advanced. Second type, short-headed Mongoloid found mostly in Burma, and spread from Burma through Arakan into Chittagong. The third group of the Mongoloid people is known as Tibeto-Mongoloid. Because of Tibeto –Mongoloids are the linguistically characterized Tibetans and they arrived in India through Himalayan region and spread from Bhutan and Sikkim to Ladak. *Tibeto-Mongoloid* are tall and have comparative lighter complexion .It seems to be the most highly developed class of Mongoloid people in India. The ancestor of Naranarayan belongs to the Tibeto -Mongoloid class. Hodgson opined that the Koches of Kochbehar are "distinctly marked type of the Mongoloid

family"¹⁸³. Waddel supported the view given by Hodgson and says that these "are distinctly Mongoloid"¹⁸⁴. Gait has given opinion that the Koches are allied with the Boros and Dhimal¹⁸⁵. Some modern scholars had given their argument in favour of the Mongoloid origins of the Koches on the ground that the names Kamboja, Kouch or Koch and Kubacha are identical and the Kombojas or Koches who came from Tibet and are Mongoloid in origin .On this ground D. C. Sircar opines that the Kombojas were the ancestors of the Koches¹⁸⁶

Suniti Kumar Chatterji .had given his opinion that "Nothing much is definitely known about the Koches of North Bengal prior to the 16th century : they may be described as Western Bodos ,an extension of the great Bodo race of Assam and East Bengal which at one time occupied the entire Assam valley from Sadiya right up to North Bengal....."¹⁸⁷. R. P. Chanda also suggests that Kombajas mean only the Koches of the period¹⁸⁸.

The Mongoloid tribes from Western China speaking forms of Sino-Tibetan speech appear to have been pushing South and West from their original homeland from Pre-historic times, but certain large-scale movements of which we have faint inklings seem to have begun in the early part of the first millennium B.C. Linguistically the Sino-Tibetan Languages of the present day have been classified into two groups or branches: (1) Tibeto- Burman and (2) Siamese-Chinese¹⁸⁹. Following traditional views about the Kirata country Gopal Chandra Praharaj in his Oriya Lexicon places in Northern India; and Jnanendra Mohan Das in his Bengali Dictionary (2nd edition, Cal-1938.) identifies with the Eastern Himalayan tracts, including Sikkim Bhutan Manipur and other adjacent tracts, which are exactly the lands of Mongoloid settlement in India¹⁹⁰.

According to Indologists, in Sanskrit the term Kirata indicates 'the wild non- Aryan tribes living in the mountains, particularly the Himalayas and in the north – Eastern areas of India, who were Mongoloid in origin'. These Kiratas were connected with the Chinas or the Chinese, the Bhutas or the Tibetans other Mongoloid people. They were distinguished from the wild or primitive tribes of Austric origin, who were being known specifically as Nisadas, Sabaras, Pulindas, Bhillas and Kallas. Sylvain Levi¹⁹¹ proposes the Mongoloid racial affinity of the Kiratas. He first took up the question and he also quoted passages from the *Mahabharata* and other texts indicating the opinion

of the ancient Hindu writers about the appearances and ways and connections of this people, all of which enable us to conclude that they were a Mongoloid people¹⁹².

From the evidences of the *Tabaqat-I- Nasir*¹⁹³, it became clear that the *Koches*, *Meches* and *Tharus* of pronounced Turkee or Mongoloid features and a distinct Sino-Tibetan speech populated North Bengal early in the 13th century. The Eastern *Bodos* (*Chuitas* and *Kacharies*) and Western *Bodos* (the *Koches* of *Hajo* and *Kamata* and the *Koches* of *Kochbehar*) disputed the possession of the Brahmaputra valley with *Ahoms*; and Western *Bodos* asserted themselves against decadent *Palas* and *Senas* and resisted the *Mahammedans* during 1250 -1500 A.D.

D. Neog¹⁹⁴ has given a Non Aryan people's tree of Assam. According to him, there are three main branches of Non-Aryans people – the Negrito, the Austric and the Mongoloid. The third branch , the Mongoloid people of Assam consist of Tibeto-Burma and Tai-Chinese .The Tibeto–Burmas were also classified into Tibeto-Himalayas , North Assam ,and Assam-Burma .The last section Assam-Burmas included *Bodos* ,*Nagas* and *Kukichinas* ;the *Rajbansi* that the *Koches* included in the *Bodo* section with *Garo* ,*Lalung* , *Rabha* ,*Chuita* , *Kachari* ,*Dimasu* and *Mikir*. Post-colonial anthropologists like B. M. Das and S. Sengupta also recognized the *Koches* as Mongoloid origin¹⁹⁵.

All the scholars ,who have given their opinion in favour of Mongoloid origin of *Koches* try to cement the opinion with references mainly from ethnological point of view .They proceed to reach conclusion with references from ancient time with the help of modern criticism of some scholars. E. A. Gait, the colonial historian specifically expressed that “there seems to no doubt that the true *Koches* were a Mongoloid race, very closely allied to the *Meches* and *Garos*”¹⁹⁶. D. C. Sircar and Suniti Kumar Chatterji have also identified the *Koches* with *Kambojas* of as of Mongoloid origin¹⁹⁷.

Dravidian Identity of the Koches:

Scholars like Rislay, Oldham, Dalton, and N. N. Vasu put their opinions and arguments in favour of Dravidian identity of the *Koches*. According to Rislay¹⁹⁸ ‘the *Koches*, unquestionably “Non-Aryan and Non-Hindu”, and were “a large Dravidian Tribes of North- Eastern and Eastern Bengal” .In this connection he also admitted it that “there are grounds for suspecting some admixture of Mongoloid blood, ---But on the whole Dravidian characteristics predominate among them”²⁹⁹. N .N. Vasu tried to

establish his view of the Dravidian identity of the *Koches* from earliest references from the *Mahabharata* and the *Tantras*. He argues that *Pani* –*Koches* were the ancestor of the *Koches* of modern period and the *Panis* were a branch of the ancient Sumarian race²⁰⁰. According to *Yogini Tantra*, the whole of North Assam was once known as *Saumara* (*Saumara* is a country bounded on the east by the river *Svarna* or *Sonkosh* and on the west by the *Karatoya*, on the south by the *Manda* or *Garo* and *Khasiya* hills and on the North by the hill known as *Vihagachala*)²⁰¹. *Assam Burunji* composed by Haliram Dhekiyal Fukkan and translated in Bengali by Sri Yatindra Mohan Bhattachariya²⁰² mentioned with the reference of *Haragouri Sanbad* that Kamrupa (ancient Assam) covering the area in the east up to *Dikkarbashini* hill and on the west up to the *Karatoya* River had four *pithas*. That is *Ratnapitha* – *Karatoya* in the west up to *Sankosh* in the east, *Kamapitha* – from the *Sankosh* in the west, up to the *Rupak* River in the east; *Swarnapitha* up to the *Vairaba* River in the east and *Sumarpitha* – up to the *Dikkarbashini* hill. This *Sumar* *pitha* is also subdivided into nine *pithas*²⁰³. According to the *Assam Buranji*, the *Saumara* *pitha* extends from the river *Bhairavi* or *Bharali* to the river *Dikrai*²⁰⁴. It is clear from Vasu's description that the whole of Northeastern Assam was given the designation of *Saumarapitha*; meaning the seat of Saumarian influence and authority. Vasu opines on the ground of this theory, that "the Sumarians were of Dravidian stock, and we also shall have no objection to accepting the *Koches*, descendant of the *Pani*, as being of Dravidian origin"²⁰⁵. If this Saumarian influence and authority considered as the direct connection with Saumarian race, then we have to admit the ancient Phoenicians as the ancestor of the *Koches*. A study of the physiological and mental constitutions of the pure Koch of Western Assam and North Bengal will however corroborate this classification ,on the contrary it will prove that they really come of the Dravidian stock²⁰⁶.

Oldham given same type of opinion and described the *Koches*, as "the most conspicuously Dravidian race of Bengal"²⁰⁷. Colonel Dalton ascribed the *Koches* "were all very dark and displayed the thick protuberant lips and maxillaries of Negro"²⁰⁸ and he considered them as belonging to the Dravidian stock. In his own words "in short, I consider, they belong to the Dravidian stock and are probably a branch of the great Bhuyan family". To support his view, he ascribed the physical traits of the *Koches*, forwards the opinion of a medical officer, a resident of Kochbehar by a letter from H. Beveridge Esq, Deputy Commissioner of Kochbehar. Here is the

description in his own words the Koches are "Face flat ,giving rather an appearance of square ness; eyes black and oblique , hair black and straight , in some curling ; nose flat and short ; cheek bones prominent ; beard and whisker rather deficient" "color of skin in most instances black ; side of head rather flattened ;forehead retreating"²⁰⁹. Dalton also argues with references from Mr. Hodgson's copious vocabularies of the dialects used by the *Bodos* and *Dhimals* and asserts that 'it is all Bengali Hindi or Assamese, and does not contain a word or a grammatical construction that would affiliate it with any of the North Eastern tribes'. Latham, in his 'Ethnology of India' has given a list of fifteen words as Koch from Hodgson's Copious vocabulary , among which three of these Assamese, two are Bengali ,and the rest ten are common in both the languages. Among these words, he points out that 'the first word on Lothams's list is remarkable. For 'man' he gives 'beta-choa' 'I (Colonel Dalton) never heard this expression in Assam or Bengal, but it is very common in *Chota Nagpur*, 'beta—choa' a boy; 'beti —choa', a girl; and it is used by the Oriya and by the Gonds"²¹⁰. The Oriyas and the Gonds are not mongoloid but Negroate or Dravidians. He tried to differentiate the Koches (*Rajvansis*) from other Lohitic tribes as "the *Rajbangsi* are all very dark; and as their cognates, the Kacharies, Mech, Garos, are yellow or light brown, and their Northern, Eastern and Western neighbours are as fair or fairer, it must be from contact with the people of the south that they got their black skins"²¹¹. He also has given a reference of Mr. G. Campbell and said, "Mr. G. Campbell would decidedly place the *Koch* amongst his Negritos and I think we must allow that color and physical characteristic clearly separate them from the *Bodo group*"²¹². C. C. Sannayal²¹³, described *Rajvansis* (*Koches*) as "the original nucleus of *Rajvansi* was certainly Dravidian". However, two points of Latham, are confusing, for the terms 'beta—choa' a boy; 'beti —choa', a girl are still commonly spoken in Jalpaiguri and Koch Behar districts, among the Rajvansis and they are fair to dark in skin colour.

Two great supporters of the Dravidian origin of the Koches, N. N. Vasu and Colonel Dalton are not able to come to a single point about the view. Vasu asserts the Pani-Koch and the Koches as same; the *Pani-Koch* comparatively primitive form and only the 'Koch' comparatively recent form .In his own words "we may assert that the *Pani-Koch*, the *Palia* and the Koch of succeeding ages are no other than the *Pani-Kuvachas* of *Puranic age*"²¹⁴. On the other hand, Dalton did not agree with the view in point, and he said, "they have been hitherto treated as the primitive type of the

Koch nation; but we have no evidence of the fact except the name.I it is a think, mistake to regard them as the primitive type of the people called Koch , They probably took the name of *Pani-Koch* ,when the real Koch were dominant to conciliate the ruling power”²¹⁵.

N. N. Vasu asserts, “according to some modern western ethnologists the Koch, the Mech, the Kachari, the Rabhas and the Dhimals are all one and the same people having sprung from one common stock. We do, however regard the Koch, the Mech, the Kachari and the Dhimal as quite different”²¹⁶. Dalton also expressed same view about the point and mentioned differences as “the Rajbanshi (Koch) are all very dark; and as their cognates, the Kacharis, the Mechs and the Garos are yellow or light brown” .He also mentioned some differences regarding marriage, inheritance, burials and sacrifices²¹⁷.

Aryan Identity of the Koches:

A group of distinguished persons of the Koch- *Rajvansi* community like Thakur Panchanan Burma²¹⁸, Hemanta Kumar Roy Burma²¹⁹, Upendra nath Barman²²⁰, and others tried to establish their Aryan origin. They tried to give their opinions in favour of Aryan origin with references from the contradictory and confusing writings of Suniti Kumar Chatterji, Dinesh Chandra Sircar, R. P. Chandra, Nihar Ranjan Ray and from inscriptions, linguistics and from the use of Sanskrit words in the language of the Koches. Hemanta Kumar Ray Burma has given references from the writing of Dr. N.R. Ray’s “*Bangalir Itihas*”²²¹, ‘During 10th century A.D., a Kamboja dynasty had been ruling over Gaud for some times’.The *Bangarh* inscription in the District of *Dinajpur* (now in Bangladesh) also mention a “*Kambajanbyj Gourapati*” and the *Irda* Copper plate also mention the “*Kambojanbyaj Gourapati*” . To identify this *Kombaja* king of Gaur, scholars like R.P. Chanda, S.K. Chatterjee, N.R. Ray, have given their opinions from different angles. S. K. Chatterjee, in his book named, “*Jati Samskriti O Sahitya*” mentioned ;

“খৃষ্টীয় নবম শতকের পূর্বে কঙ্গোজ নামক একটি জাতি উত্তরবঙ্গে রাজ্য স্থাপন করিয়াছিলেন। আমি অনুমান করিয়া ছিলাম যে এই ‘কঙ্গোজ’ শব্দটি কোচ বা কৌচ শব্দের একটি প্রাচীন রূপের সংস্কৃতিকরণ মাত্র –কোচ বা কঙ্গোজগন ভোট-চীন জাতীরই একটি শাখা

কিন্তু অন্য মত অনুসারে এই কম্বোজ গন উত্তর-পশ্চিম ভারতের পাঞ্জাব সীমান্তের কম্বোজ জাতীয়রই একটি শাখা। পশ্চিমের এই কম্বোজ গন আর্য ও আয়-ভাষী- জাতীয়ে ভোট চীন শ্রেণীর নহে”²²².

Information obtained from Inscriptions and Copper plates are generally accepted authentic. “Kambojayaj Gaurpati” of Bangarh inscription is a *Sanskrita* terms and we do not find any relations with Mongoloid terms .The word “Koch” and “Kamboja” are synonymous and so Ray Burma has came to the conclusion that the *Koches* /*Kombojas* are Aryan speaker and are Aryan²²³.

Ray Burma also given argument from the linguistic point of view .according to him the *Koch/Rajvansi* language is closely related with *Sanskrita* and it originated from *Sanskrita* language. To support his arguments, he mentioned in his book “*Koch Beharer Itihas*”²²⁴, a comparative list of *Sanskrita* words and *Koch/Rajvansi* which depict the picture of close relationship between the *Koch / Rajvansi* language and *Sanskrita* language²²⁵.

Thakur Panchanan Burma has also given his arguments in favour of Aryan origin of the *Koches*. He himself was a *Sanskrita* scholar, going through the Hindu scriptures; he concluded that *Koch/ Rajvansi*'s were *Kshatriya* of Aryan social system and they had been fallen out from *Sanskrita* social system due to the cause of an upheaval and became “*Bratya Kshatriya*”. To establish his opinion on a cemented base, he consults with the scholars of *Kashi* , *Mathura* , *Brindaban*, , *Nabadwip* and *Kamrupa* , who have given their opinion in favour of ‘*Bratya Kshatriya*’ ,which originally belong to *Sanskrita* caste system²²⁶ .

Mr. Ray Burma has also proceeded from another point of view. According to him, most of the river's names in North Bengal Lower Assam are in *Sanskrita* or *Sanskrita*-based²²⁷. Surprisingly, our religious scripture like the *Mahabharata* and some the *Purans* also refer to the *Sanskrita* name of some rivers. He quote the following names of rivers; the *Mahananda*, the *Tista* (*Trisota*), the *Dhara*, the *Gadadhar*, the *Gangadhar*, the *Sankosh* (*Swarnakosh*), and the *Brahmaputra* / *Lauthitya*. It is also interesting to mention here that the name of the river *Brahmaputra* is different in Tibet, which area is populated mostly by Mongoloid people .He questioned if the *Koch/Rajvansi*s are Mongoloid ,we do not find the ground of changing the name of the river *Sungpou* (in Tibbet) to *Brahmaputra* in North-East India . He argues that this land

had been populated by Koch/Rajbanshis of Aryan fold and so the names of rivers in Sanskrita all over region. P.K. Bhattacharya also indirectly accepted the Aryan origin theory of the ancestors of Naranarayan, when he described earliest ancestor of the king as "A certain Kshatriya of Haihaya dynasty"²²⁸.

Dravidio-Mongoloid racial identity of the Koches:

The scholars of the above mentioned three groups seems to orthodox and bias, and they tried to establish their opinions from a single point of view. They utilized the source materials in such systematic single-minded way to highlight only their own viewpoint by ignoring logical justification and whole situation. For which another group of scholars forward their opinion with moderate mental intension and they identify the ancestors of king Naranarayan as a 'Mixed Dravidic-Mongoloid racial affinity'. This view also indirectly supported by some scholars, who belonged to the groups of Dravidian and Mongoloid racial affinity of the Koches, but their opinions in indirect way and had never given sufficient emphasis about it. Risley described them to be of "Mongoloid Dravidian origin with the Dravidian element preponderant in them"²²⁹. On the other hand, D. Nath described them as "the Koches are of Mongoloid origin having close affinities with other *Bodo tribes* like the *Meches*, the *Rabhas*, the *Dhimals*, the *Hajongs* and the *Garos*. But in course of time, and in some limited areas, they intermarried with the Dravidians and gave birth to a mixed Mongolo -Dravidian race, but having preponderant Mongoloid characters"²³⁰. Here it is interesting that Risley and D. Nath are completely different in their viewpoints; Risley opines "Dravidian element preponderant" and on the other hand, D. Nath opines, "having preponderant Mongoloid characters". S. L. Baruah tried to solve these two divergent views. In his own words, "this divergence of views seems to have arisen from the confusion caused by the use of the term '*Rajvamsi*', which originally referred to an entirely distinct community of Dravidian affinities but was afterwards adopted by the Koches to the west of the Manash (Manas) river presumably after their conversion to Hinduism. Following the Koches, other tribal converts also subsequently called themselves *Rajvamsis*. So long as the Koch kings ruled, there was considerable intermingling of the two races, (the Dravidian *Rajvamsis* and Mongoloid *Koches*) in the territory under their domination. Thus, Dravidian blood poured into the Mongoloid Koches. However, there seems to be no doubt that 'true Koches' were a Mongoloid tribe, which is

evident from the fact that in Jalpaiguri, Kochbehar and Goalpara, the persons now known as *Rajvamsi* "are either pure Koches, who though dark, have a distinctly Mongoloid physiognomy, or else a mixed breed, in which the Mongoloid elements usually preponderates". Inclusion of the Hindu tribal converts in the social fold of the Koches had increased their numerical strength"²³¹.

S. L. Baruh actually mentioned in his opinion that the *Rajvansis* and the Koches were different origin— the *Rajvansis* were originally Dravidian and the Koches were pure Mongoloid. However, most of the historians considered the '*Rajvansis*' and the Koches are same – the term '*Rajvansi*' is comparatively new denomination and the term 'Koch' comparatively old denomination²³². Because, the Persian writings, foreign accounts, dynastic epigraphs even the DRV (late 18th century) do not refer to the term '*Rajvansi*' and it first occur in the census of 1872, where there are listed as '*Rajvansi*'²³³. Therefore, the whole question of *Rajvansi* and Koch arose with the census and gazetteer writings of the colonial rulers, who in their writings / reports differentiate between the Koches and the *Rajvansis*. The opinion of C. C. Sannyal, that the term '*Rajvansi*' added to the Koches (a part) after their *Hinduisisation*²³⁴, have no ground, for, the term '*Rajbanshi*' applied to the Koches toward the end of the 19th century²³⁵. S. L. Baruh's opinions, "*Rajvamsis* originally Dravidian", might be questioned from another point of view; he did not elaborately point out that on which ground he described '*Rajvansi*' as Dravidian. Moreover, he pointed out "Pure Koches" but no pure race existed in the 16th century.

The term '*Rajvansi*' literally means "descendants of royal family". In the context of Indian history we get two words with prefix 'Raj'- one is '*Rajput*'—sons of king and other is '*Rajvansi*'—descendant of royal family. The *Rajput* of western India considered as *Kshatriya* of Aryan fold, so it is probably conforming to consider '*Rajvansi*' belongs to same stock. However, it seems to us that '*Rajvansi*' of eastern India is a later denomination and it came into existence toward the end of the 19th century there is no distinction among the Koches, the *Rajvansis* and the *Paliyas* , who "are really the three names of the same thing"²³⁶.

Scholars of the four groups have tried to establish their arguments from various sources of information and even from a single source, but their explanation and angle of discussions were multi-dimensional, which led to the rise of different opinions. To

find out the racial identity of the ancestors of king Naranarayan we should proceed carefully to investigate and to analyze, the entire sources of information.

Observation:

The racial identity of the ancestor of king Naranarayan is confusing due to the emphasis on the physical structure of the people by scholars and anthropologists. If we go through the all opinions and consider the opinions of the scholars, it become crystal clear to us that it is due to the their single pointed description and pre conceived mental state . The racial identity of Indian people as classified by B.S. Guha are a) The Negrito, b) the Proto-Australoid, c) the Mongoloid, consisting the Palaeo-Mongoloid and the Tibeto-Mongoloids, d) the Alpinoid (of Indian context), and e) the Nordic (Aryan speaker)²³⁷. Among these races, only Mongoloid people came to India from Eastern side and predominantly inhabited in the Himalayan foothills and they have a close affiliation to the people of Burma, Tibbet and China. Nordic that is Aryan came from central Asia through the North-western border of India. Historian like Maxmullar had given the opinion and most of the historians supported his view that the term 'Aryan' do not denote racial group, but it denotes a language group, which included seven Indo-European languages like Persian, German Greek and sole Indian language Sanskrita²³⁸. Aryan language in India that is Sanskrita is the mother of many other Indian languages. It is generally believed that Sanskrita speakers are superior to other languages groups. Sanskrita speaking people spread their habitation all over the North India and in a way North India became sanskritised or Aryanised. The eastern side of the river Sadanira considered beyond the Aryan culture during the 5th or 6th century B. C. *The Aryanization* that is the acceptance of Sanskrita language and culture in the northeastern India is later denomination and it is cleared from scholar's opinion that *Aryanization* is the process of the acceptance Sanskrita culture and language but not the Aryan arrival in the area. The process of state formation from clan-based socio-political fragments *Hinduisisation* (*Aryanization*) continued simultaneously in pre-colonial Northeast India²³⁹. S. K. Chatterji has rightly described the situation of the Koches "With the Hinduisisation of the Koches, and the rise in power of their chiefs, Kshatriya origin was, as was natural, found out or suggested for them"²⁴⁰ . He also described them as "Indo-Mongoloid" or "mixed Austric-Dravidian-Mongoloid"²⁴¹. So the racial identity of the Koches is now not beyond the scope of re-

examination. Physiognomically Mongoloid features predominant, by colour of skin, Dravidian features dominant and culturally, Koches have close affinities with Aryan speakers; nowadays they are a mixed breed of many races.

Name of the dynasty of King Naranarayan:

It is almost established that the Kingdom of Naranarayan called 'Koch dynasty' and even the rulers of the dynasty demand themselves belong to Koch dynasty .But main sources of information regarding *Naranarayan*, the *Buranjies*, the *Vansavalies* and the *Rajopakhyan* etc. are gave us same kind of information²⁴². The *Darrang Raj Vansavali* (henceforth DRV) described Hariya Mandal, (grandfather of Naranarayan) 'as Mech chief of 12 Mech families²⁴³. The 'Assam Buranji' of HaraKanta Barua described *Hariya mandal* as 'Kachari'²⁴⁴. The 'Deodhai Assam Buranji', although mentioned the title of the chapter as "Story of the origin of the Koches", but when he mentioned 12 Mech families of *Chikanagram*, he ultimately described as *Mech* of which *Hariya Mandal* belonged²⁴⁵. The *Deodhai Assam Buranji* , on the other hand , the 'Assam Buranji' of Gunaviram Barua and the 'Kamrupa Burunji' described *Hariya Mandal* as *Koch*²⁴⁶. Modern scholars are also not single minded about the question and most of them by-pass the question describing as "Koch or Mech"²⁴⁷. Scholars like K. L. Barua, D. Nath, Khan Choudhary Amanattulla Ahmed and Durgadas Majumdar²⁴⁸ assumed them 'Koch'. On the other hand, N. N. Vasu definitely described them as 'Mech'²⁴⁹. P.K. Bhattacharya described the dynasty of Naranarayan as 'Kamta-Koch' dynasty ²⁵⁰.

This type of contradictory opinion of scholars gave us scope for re-investigation of the question elaborately. Persian writer Minhajuddin Siraj in his book 'Tabaqat-i-Nasiri' described that this area was peopled by mainly three tribes, namely *Koch*, *Mach*, and *Tharu* ²⁵¹. However, there were not much socio- cultural differences among them and social status was almost same. This proves by the information given DRV that Biswa Singha had advised his sons not to marry daughters of other caste except *Koch*, the *Mech* and the *Kachari* ²⁵². Under this situation, these could be explained from two angles:-

(A) They are actually *Koch* or *Kuvaca* of mythology, having disguised themselves through fear of *Parasurama*, living among the *Meches* and became known

as Mech. But in the 15th and 16th century, when they gained political power they disclosed the real identity as Koch.

(B) In the primitive stage, they followed the matrilineal tradition of succession of the Meches but after the formation of state and with their *Hinduization*, patriliney was established in the royal family of the *Koches*. From Biswa Singha the dynasty has been counted as 'Koch' dynasty. Biswa Singha, after consolidating his power shifted his capital to Kamtapur²⁵³. The capital of the formal the *Khen* kingdom and assumed the title of 'Kamteswar' and some scholars tried to describe the kingdom as the 'Kamta-Koch' kingdom²⁵⁴.

Contemporary political situation:

Political conditions of Delhi and Bengal proper on the eve 16th century:

Political picture of Northern India , Bengal proper and as well as in North- East India including the core area of study in the last quarter of 15th and almost whole of 16th centuries was multi dimensional . In Northern India Lodi's were the central power at Delhi, the first *Lodi Sultan Bahlul Lodi* (1451-89) marked the era of conflict between the crown and the nobility. His son and successor *Sultan Sikander Lodi* (1489- 1517), could not solve the problem. During the reign of next and last Lodi Sultan Ibrahim Lodi (1517-1526), crown –nobility conflict reached its worst situation and as a result, Daut khan (Governor of Punjab) and his partisans invited *Babur*, who defeated *Ibrahim Lodi* in the 1st battle of *Panipath* in 1526 and laid foundation the Mughal rule in India.

After the 1st battle of Panipath, Babur, in spite of initial success against *Rajputas* in the battle of *Khanua* (March 7, 1927), and in the battle of *Ghagra* (May 6, 1529) against *Mahamud Lodi* (younger brother of *Ibrahim Lodi*), could not consolidate his power due to his sudden death (26th dec, 1530). His son *Humayun* could not control the situation, and as a result he was defeated by *Sher Shah*, in the battles of *Chausa* (June 26, 1539) and *Kaunaj* (May 17, 1540) and 2nd Afghan empire had been founded and *Humayun* forced to retreat from India. *Sher Shah* (1540-45) was the most efficient ruler of his age but his successors were worthless. In this situation, *Humayun* came back to India with his worthy son Akbar, who defeated the last Afghan (*Sher Shah*'s

line) ruler *Mahamud Adil Shah* and his Hindu commander *Himu* in the 2nd battle of *Panipath* (5th Nov. 1556) and Mughal rule was re-established in India.

In Bengal, *Habsi Alauddin Hussein Shah* established independent *Hussein Shahi* dynasty by assassinating his master and last *Ilyas Shahi* ruler *Shumsuddin Muzaffar Shah* in about 1593-4 AD. Delhi Sultan *Sikander Shah* of Delhi advanced upto Bihar put *Dariya Khan* as Governor of Bihar and armies of *Hussein Shah* and *Sikander Shah* faced each other for some time. Ultimately, a treaty was signed between the two and both agreed not to attack each other's kingdom. *Hussein shah* recognized *Sikander's* authority over Bihar, *Tirhut*, and others territories of his west .By safe guarding western frontier of his kingdom , *Hussein Shah* conquered *Kamtapur* in about 1498 A.D, but he forced to retreat from *Kamtapur* due to internal problems in Bengal proper ,leaving his son *Daniyal* at *Kamtapur* , who was killed²⁵⁵ . His successor and other son *Nauru Shah* (1519-32) again attacked *Kamtapur* in about 1532 A.D. The Afghan chiefs of UP and Bihar retreated from North India after the 1st battle of *Panipath* (1526), and tried to take shelter in Eastern India, as a result Babur also advanced up to the bank of *Ghaghgar* in 1529. However, in this situation, *Nasrat Shah* offered terms, promised not to give shelter to fugitive Afghans chiefs, and handed over conquered-region to *Babur* .Thus he cleverly protected his independence by his diplomacy .After the death of *Babur*. *Nasrat Shah* tried to recover his lost regions in Bihar. This move was likely to bring the invasion of *Humayun* on Bengal. *Nasrat Shah* warded off this danger by making an alliance with *Bahadur Shah* of *Gujrat* and by this alliance, *Nasrat Shah* protected the independence of Bengal again.

On the death of *Nasrat Shah*, his son *Allauddin Firoj Shah* ascended his father's throne (1532). His uncle *Ghiyasuddin Mamud Shah*, Who ascended the throne of Bengal in 1533-1538, killed him. During his reign , the ruler of Bihar, *Sher Shah Sur* invaded Bengal and in the battle of *Surajghar* he defeated *Mamud Shah* and captured *Teliaghar* of Bengal first , then *Gaud* , the capital of Bengal . *Mamud Shah* fled from Bengal and prayed to *Humayun*, for help against *Sher Shah Sur*. To help Mamud Shah, *Humayun* sent an expedition to Bihar and Bengal against *Sher Shah Sur* but he was defeated in the battles of *Chousa* and *Kaunaj*. As a result, *Sher Shah* dethroned *Humayun* from the throne of Delhi declared himself the sole ruler of Delhi as well as whole India and 2nd Afghan rule was established. *Sher Shah* became Sultan of India,

but the epicenter of political power remained Bengal and Bihar. He sent *Khijir Khan* to Bengal as his subordinate ruler of Bengal; within few days, he married the daughter of last Independence ruler of Bengal *Mamud Shah* and declared himself as the independent ruler of Bengal. *Sher Shah* himself made an expedition to Bengal, made *Khijir Khan* captive, and placed *Kaji Fajilat* as his regent of the throne.

After the death of *Sher Shah*, his son *Islam Shah* came to the throne of Delhi and Bengal remained as a *Subah* of Delhi. At the death of *Islam Shah*, his nephew *Adil Shah* came to the throne but his Hindu Commander *Himu* became the power behind the throne.

During the reign of *Adil Shah*, Bengal *Subedar Mahamad Khan* declared himself the independent ruler of Bengal then after annexing *Jaunpur*, he advanced toward Agra when in the hand of *Himu* he was killed at the battle of *Chapra* in 1555 A.D. and established *Shahbaz Khan* as *Subeder* of Bengal. However, *Khijir Khan*, the son of *Mahamad Shah*, who declared himself the independent ruler with the name '*Giyasuddin Bahadur Shah*', overthrew *Shahbaz Khan*. In the meanwhile, *Akbar*, in the 2nd battle of *Panipath* (1556) defeated *Himu*, captured Delhi and *Adil Shah* tried to hide himself in Eastern India. But he was killed by *Giyasuddin Bahadur Shah* of Bengal in the battle of *Surujghar* and *Sur* dynasty came to an end. Then victories *Giyasuddin* advanced toward Jumper and faced Mughul commander *Khan-Jahan*. Who defeated him and as a result, he came back to Bengal, where he ruled as an independent ruler up to 1560 A.D. After his death, his brother *Giyasuddin II* ruled Bengal up to 1563 A.D. In the year 1564 A.D. *Taj Khan*, an Afghan of *Karrani* dynasty ascended throne of Bengal and established the *Karrani* dynasty.

After the death *Taj Khan* in 1565 A.D., his brother *Sulaiman Karrari* ascended the throne of Bengal and ruled up to 1572 A.D. He was intelligent and a great diplomatic ruler, who verbally accepted the *Akbar's* authority but practically he was almost an independent ruler of Bengal, who extended the boundary of Bengal by war and diplomacy. However, his successors *Bayajid* and *Daud* were worthless sons of great father. *Daud* declined his father's verbal authority of the *Mughul* and attacked the *Zamania* fort (Near *Gazipur*, UP) of the *Mughul*. As a result, *Akbar* first sent *Munim Khan* against *Daud* and then he himself joined the army and ultimately *Daud* was defeated and killed at the battle *Rajmahal* in August 12, 1576 A.D, Bengal became a part the *Mughal Empire*²⁵⁶.

However, the victory Rajmahal could not established Mughul rule on Bengal in strong basis and it took another 20 years to complete the process. A numbers of local Jaminders (Hindu, Muslim both) thought themselves independent and were ready to fight against the *Mughul* for that. In the history of Bengal, they are known as *Baro-Bhuyan*. Among them *Isha Khan* of Dhaka-Maymansing and *Keder Roy* of *Bikrampur* were Prominent. In about 1580A.D *Baro-Bhuyan* s of Bengal organized a revolt against the *Mughal* and Afghan leaders like *Katlu Khan*, *Isha Khan* and Sulaiman joined hands with them²⁵⁷. To Suppress this rebellion, Akbar sent *Hussain Quli Beg* (1576-1578), known as *Khan- I-Ajam*, as the *Subeder* of Bengal in 1580 A.D, who in spite of his best attempt could not suppress the Afghan leaders. So replacing *Khan-I-Ajam*, Akbar sent Raja Man Singh as *Subedar* of Bengal in 1594 A.D., who completed the *Mughal* authority in Bengal on a permanent basis²⁵⁸.

From above discussion, it became clear that political condition of Delhi and Bengal during the period was in a great turmoil. In Delhi *Mughal* - Afghan tussle continued up to rise of Akbar in 1556 A.D. In Bengal although , the *Mughals*–Afghans were engaged in internecine warfare to capture the throne of Bengal but multidimensional conflict continued among the Afghans themselves and with local chiefs also existed there . The rulers of *Hussain Shahi* and *Karrani* dynasty were independent. It is the law of history that when centrifugal forces became prominent and central authority became weak, that made headway and a number of independent kingdoms propped up on its ruins. The Bengal rulers when felt themselves well protected on Western frontier, a number of expeditions were sent towards northeastern India²⁵⁹.

Political conditions of north-East India at the eve 16th century:

Many dynasties had been ruling over the whole of North-East India, among them the Ahoms were in a prominent position and this dynasty of *Tai-Shans* founded in about 1228 A. D. by *Sukapha* (1228-68), who left his ancestral place *Maulung* (Upper Burma) with few a followers²⁶⁰ and at first settled in *Khamjang*. After that, he established the *Ahom* political hegemony over a large area of *Habung* on the north bank of the *Brahmaputra* and on the south as far *Dikhau-mukh* and *Simaluguri*²⁶¹. Succeeding rulers of the dynasty up to *Supimpha* (1493-97 A.D.) more or less cemented and expanded their authority at the costs of others indigenous tribes. But

with the accession of next king *Suhungmung Dihingia Raja* (1497-1539 A.D.) a glorious chapter of the Ahom history had started. A number of internal and external events characterize his reign²⁶². The king took a policy of aggressive conquest and consolidation of his power and position. He annexed the *Chutiya* kingdom by defeating king *Dhirnarayan* in 1523A.D. as a result the *Ahom* kingdom now extended from *Brahma Kund* in the east to the river *Subansirin* the west on the north bank of the *Brahmaputra*²⁶³. He pushed the Kacharis beyond the *Kalang* and extended the *Ahoms* rule over the entire *Dhansiri* valley and major part of the present district of Nowgong²⁶⁴. He also subjugated a number of *Bhuyans* on both banks of the *Brahmaputra* and appointed them to very petty offices as *tamulis* in charge of betel-nut preparations²⁶⁵. The Sultans *Nurshrat Shah* (1519-32) and *Firoz Shah* (1532-33) of Bengal, under the generalship of *Turbek*, attacked the *Ahom* kingdom during his reign in 1527, 1531 and 1532 but finally routed out by *Suhummuing*²⁶⁶. *Suhummuing's* reign also witnessed the emergence of the dynasty of King *Naranarayan* by his father Biswa Singha, who maintained friendship with the *Ahoms* until his last days.

Suhummung was killed by his son and successor *Suklenmung Gadgaya Raja* (1539-52), who consolidated his father conquests. During his reign, hostilities with the Koch king *Naranarayan* were the prime mover of political picture of north-east India. His son *Sukhampha* (1552-1603) succeeded him, during whose reign the *Ahoms* suffered fatal defeat in the hand of the Koch king *Naranarayan*. It is clear from above discussion, entire north- east during the period the *Ahoms* were in a dominant position before the Koch ascendancy.

Political condition of the core area of the kingdom at its beginning:

Political condition of Lower Assam and Northeastern part of Bengal at the ascendancy of Koch dynasty was chaotic with the beginning fourteenth century. The *Khen* dynasty was (which has been discussed earlier) ruling over the region with its capital at *Kamatapur* which was situated four miles south-east of the present town of Koch Behar, generally²⁶⁷, but real political power were exercised by high officials of dynasty and by many independent *Bhuyans* of the locality. The *Khen* rule of *Kamatapur* was overthrown by the hand of *Hussain Shah* of Bengal in about 1498A.D, and who established *Sultani* rule over *Kamatapur* under the Governorship of his son *Danial /Nasurat Shah*. The *Bhuyans* also lost their long enjoyed power, prestige and

independence and as a result, there was a political vacuum in the area. However, the *Sultani* rule was short lived, because on the one hand the *Bhuyans* could not accept the rule of *Gaud* rule for a long time and they were waiting for good time to overthrow it and to regain their lost political power and prestige. On the other hand, The *Gaud* ruler received no support from the people of *Kamtapur-Kamrupa*, as he had already alienated their sympathy by his miss- rule oppression²⁶⁸, and help from Bengal proper due to political turmoil there. In this situation, the *Bhuyans* took the leading role to overthrow the rule of *Gaud* and whole area came under the control of the independent *Bhuyans*, who were jealous of one another and began to quarrel among themselves to increase one's power by defeating others of the locality²⁶⁹. *Biswa Singha*, the father of King Naranarayan by utilizing this situation established his power in about 1515 A.D.

The Bhuyans of the area and Biswa Singha 1515-1540AD:

The *Bhuyan* system of Assam and lower Assam had originated after disintegration of ancient *Kamarupa* kingdom and they began exercising their independent powers from thirteen century up to early 16th century AD²⁷⁰. The terms 'Bhuya', or 'Bhuiya' or 'Bhuyan' means a property owner, which is synonymous with Persian equivalent *Zaminder* and Sanskrita *Bhumika*²⁷¹. They do not belong to any particular caste and religion and do not have any ethnic affinity²⁷². It is not clear from the evidences that when exactly the *Bhuyan* system originated.

Opinions differ about the origin of *Bhuyan* system in Assam²⁷³. According to one version, it originated in Assam and it is an indigenous institution of Mediaeval Assam. According to other version, *Bhuyan* system originated out side of Assam. M. Neog, without mentioning his sources of information, gave a mythological genealogy of the indigenous origin of the *Bhuyan* institution in Assam including bar (senior/big) *Baro* (twelve) *Bhuyans* and Saru (Junior/Small) *Baro* (twelve) *Bhuyans*²⁷⁴. The *Guru Charit* informed us of the institution of *Bara Bhuyans* of Assam originated from the establishment of the seven *Kayastha* families by *Kamesvara Durlabhanarayan* c-1330-1350 A.D. following his treaty with *Gaudesvara Dharmanarayan* and subsequently joined by other five *Kayastha* families from *Gauda* so that the total number of *Bhuyans* increased to twelve or *Baro*²⁷⁵. However, it is a tradition and the total number should not be twelve or *Baro* and the *DRV* mentioned the existence of large number of *Bhuyans* in the north bank of the *Brahmaputra* in the 16th century²⁷⁶.

There are also classification of the *Bhuyans* due to their power, position and prosperity and they assumed tittles like *Raja*, *Samajpati*, *Bara Bhuyan* and *Saru Bhuyan*²⁷⁷. Without going into the controversy, it can safely be assumed that the *Bhuyans* of Assam included both indigenous and migrant *Bhuyans* and some of the them were very powerful and played vital role in the contemporary political affairs²⁷⁸. Although, they collectively overthrew the rule of the successor of *Hussain shah* from Kamatapur, the *Bhuyans* were engaged in mutual conflicts among themselves.

Biswa Singha, the son and successor of *Hariya Mandal* had to fight against a large number of both, the indigenous and the emigrant *Bunyans* to establish himself. *Hariya Mandal*, the headmen of 12 *Mech/ Koch* families and the father of *Biswa Singha* had made an unsuccessful attempt to subdue the *Bhuyans* and was defeated by the *Bhuyan* of *Phulguri*, who made him a captive and forced him to purchase his liberty by agreeing to pay tribute²⁷⁹. At this time, 16 years old great boxer and expert warrior *Biswa Singha* was highly incensed to hear his father's defeat and humiliation, organized the strength of his fellow tribes, stopped the payment of tribute to the *Bhuyan* of *Phulguri*, and attacked him, but he was also defeated and forced to retreat. From this attack, he learnt a lesson that a direct war is not favourable to his power and position; he took two separate policies i.e. a) the tricks and guerrilla war tactics at the early stage and b) the policy of open challenge, at an advance stage, to achieve his objectives, which showed the political awareness of him.

Biswa Singha, at the early stage took the policy of the tricks and guerrilla war tactics at the beginning to accomplish his objectives. It was the result of his realization of the real situation, that the power of the others *Bhuyans* was superior and his power was not sufficient for a direct challenge. By following this policy, he defeated the *Bhuyan* of *Phulguri*. According to tradition, during *Biswa Singha*'s war with *Phulguri Bhuyan* at the early stage, he was defeated and forced to take shelter in the forest. After three days in the forest, without food, *Biswa Singha* took shelter in the house of a *Mechni* and eating rice there followed her advice²⁸⁰. N. N. Vasu described the incident in this way "In the month of *Chaitra*, the *Bhuyan* of *Phulguri* disbanded his troops. One day in the month of *Vaisakha*, at dead of night, *Bisu* alone entered the capital of the *Bhuyan* asking his men to wait outside. The *Bhuyan* was fast asleep. *Bisu* stole into his bedroom and cut off his head with one blow of his sword .Then he gave his signal and his men at once fell to looting the house. In this way he got vast wealth and

became master of that place"²⁸¹. With this success, Biswa Singha gained considerable amount of power over the locality and became a very powerful *Mandaleswara*.

After this incident, Biswa Singha started to follow the policy of open challenge i.e. the direct policy of aggression and aggrandizement towards others *Bhuyans* and conquered small territories like *Ugari*, *Lukibakai*, *Pantan*, *Bako*, *Bholagaon*, *Bijni*, *Beltola*, *Moirapur*, *Rani*, *Bangaon*, *Karaibari*, *Atiabari*, *Kamtabari*, *Balarampur*, *Pandu*, *Jhargao*, *Dighla*, *Khuntaghat*, *Karnapura*, *Behar*, *Rausia*, *Dhakur*, *Chhaigaon* *Baranagar*²⁸². (It is difficult to locate accurately all these small areas). All these above-mentioned names denote name of places and we do not know the names of the rulers. On the other hand, the sources supplied us some names of the *Bhuyans*, whose territories were not clearly mentioned. He subjugated *Bhuyans* like *Bara* (twelve/big) *Bhuyans* and *Saru Bhuyans* (small in size). N. N. Vasu has given a list of the names of *Bara* that is 12 *Bhuyans* and their seats as 1. *Chandivara*, the *Siromani Bhuyan* of *Bardowa*, 2. *Haripala* alias *Vishnukanta Bhuyan* of *Dighalpura / Balidia*; 3. *Sripati* alias *Jayapala Bhuyan* of *Badanagar*; 4. *Sridhar Bhuyan* of *Bheragram*; 5. *Srihari* alias *Sripati Sarasvati* of *Lengamaguri* at first and then at *Ghilaghari* of *Sarukhetri Pargana*; 6. *Sadananda Bhuyan* of *Kaunajpur* near *Kamata*; 7. *Chidananda* alias *Chirapati* of *Jhargao* at first and then at *Baligaon*; 8. *Sripati Datta*, 9. *Gadadhar Bhuyan* of *Sukekuchi*; 10. *Buda khan* of *Karnapura* and *Kakati family* of *Barpeta*; 11. *Lohabara* of *Khatabari* near *Kamatapur* and 12. *Chanuguri* of *Kanakpur*²⁸³. Some scholars also described the term 'Bara *Bhuyans*' as big *Bhuyans* (in Bengali and Assamees languages *Bara* means 12 i.e. twelve). *Ouguri Bhuyan*, *Daivajna Chuti Bhuyan*, *Kusum Bhuyan*, *Dighal Bhuyan*, *Kalia Bhuyan*, *Bhuyan* of *Jhargao*, *Kabilash Bhuyan* the *Bhuyan* of *Karnapur*, *Bejini* in order of succession and finally *Pratap Roy Bhuyan* of *Pandunath*²⁸⁴. The *Vansavali* also states that he had a hard fight with the *Bhuyan* of *Karnapur* and in course of the encounter a large amount of arms and ammunitions including horses, camels and elephants had been lost to him²⁸⁵. Then he worshipped the Goddess *Mechini* and according to her advice attacked the *Karnapur Bhuyan* on the *Bihu*, when the followers of the *Bhuyan* left for homes²⁸⁶, and *Pratap Roy Bhuyan* of *Pandunath*, who was his ally left with his kinsmen to the *Ahom*²⁸⁷. As a result, Biswa Singha easily defeated and killed the *Bhuyan* of *Karnapur* and able to gain the territories, arms and ammunitions²⁸⁸. Successors of *Sadananda Bhuyan* of *Kaunajpur* near *Kamta*, *Kalikanta* and

Safananda was also attacked by Biswa Singha and forced them to flee to Bengal, of whom *Kalikanta* could not come back and *Satananda* returned to Assam married *Kanakpriya*, the sister *Damodar Ata*²⁸⁹. One powerful *Narain Buinia (Bhuyan)* , seeing this type of incident , sent a messenger to Biswa Singha with an warning to meet him (the *Bhuyan*) in person without delay, but he himself was defeated and killed by Biswa Singha. The *Bhuyans*, who could overthrow the rule of Gauda from Kamtapur, had met with crushing defeat at the hands of this new warrior of humble origin²⁹⁰.

Thus, by organizing the tribes of the area, following the tricks, guerrilla war tactics and the policy of open challenge and by subjugating all the *Bhuyans* of the lower *Brahmaputra* valley, Biswa Singha declared himself king of the region. It is said that Biswa Singha came to power in about 1515AD, took 12 years to subjugate all the neighbouring *Bhuyans* and after which, he declared himself king in about 1527AD²⁹¹. The Brahmins and *Daivagans* performed the rituals of his coronation ceremony and the Koch, Mech, Kachari and other tribal people actively supported the kingship of Biswa Singha²⁹².

When Biswa Singha consolidated his power on the lower *Brahmaputra* valley by subjugating all the *Bhuyans* of the area, the *Ahoms* under the kingship of *Suhungmung Dihingia Raja* (1497-1539AD.) were in a dominant position in the upper *Brahmaputra* valley and were trying to expand there territory towards western border . The territorial expansion of Biswa Singha towards the east and that of the Ahom king *Suhungmung Dihingia Raja* towards the west was sure to lead to a direct confrontation of the two powers. On the other hand, sultans of Bengal sent a number of expeditions to expand their sway in the region²⁹³. However, meanwhile, the Sultans of Bengal launched their expeditions to the Ahom kingdom through the kingdom of Biswa Singha who saw direct hostilities between these two powers on more than one occasion, between the years 1527-32 AD. But Biswa Singha diplomatically remained silent thinking the infancy of his kingdom and the Sultans of Bengal also did not take him seriously and set their main target to the Ahom²⁹⁴. As a result, in 1532-33 AD, when Nurhat Shah's general *Turbak* invaded Ahom crossing his territory, he remained inactive²⁹⁵. Although the invaders gained initial successes, but ultimately they were finally completely defeated by the Ahom commander *Chankham*, who also pursued them as far as the Karatoya, the western boundary of Biswa Singha's kingdom, and obtained five eastern Parganas from the *Padshah* of Bengal²⁹⁶. On his back to Assam,

Chankham is said to have attacked Biswa Singha, who had been neutral during the war. Considering the situation, Biswa Singha made his submission by offering presents, and acknowledging Ahom's over lordship²⁹⁷. In recognition of his submission, Chankham gave Biswa Singha all the Parganas acquired from the Padshah of Gaud, which were adjacent to the western boundary of Biswa Singha's kingdom but far away from that of the Ahom. Biswa Singha agreed to pay annual tributes to the Ahom king and he along with his brother Sisya Singha came to the Ahom court, and received assurance of all kinds and protection against any foreign invasion²⁹⁸. According to the DRV, some time later, Biswa Singha, however, dishonoured his commitment and proceeded to invade the Ahom kingdom, reached as far as the *Singri* hill; but owing to the shortage of food supply and difficulties of transport, he had to retreat²⁹⁹. Contradictorily, Assam *Buranji* described this incident as the friendly visit of 1537 A D³⁰⁰. In spite of being an ambitious king, Biswa Singha did not dare shake off the Ahom vassalage, because of the frequent invasions from Bengal rulers and his defeat and humiliation at the hands of the powerful Ahom king Suhungmung. But he could not accept this from his heart and always thinking about the slur. Therefore, Biswa Singha at his deathbed asked his sons to take appropriate steps to revoke the Ahom vassalage³⁰¹.

Bhutan, the sub Himalayan *Tarai* region from the *Teesta* in the west to the river *Panchnoi* in the east ruled by the Bhutia tribe was also attacked and defeated by Biswa Singha and forced its ruler to pay tribute³⁰². But Assam *Buranji* of *Gunabhiram Barua* does not mention any war between Biswa Singha and Bhutan, only a peace treaty was concluded, according to which Bhutan acknowledge Biswa Singha's over lordship and agree to pay tribute³⁰³. Biswa Singha's contemporary Sultans of Bengal were Nurshrat Shah (1519-32 AD), Firoz Shah (1532-1533AD), Mahmud Shah (1533-38 AD), sent several expeditions crossing territory of Biswa Singha, who remained silent, and after the defeat of the Sultans of Bengal at the hands of the Ahom general Chankham, he accepted Ahom Supremacy. The Sultans of Bengal considered Biswa Singha as a vassal of the Ahom, any attack on Biswa Singha would be an attack on the Ahom, and they were not ready for any conflict with the Ahoms considering the internal troublesome situation of Bengal³⁰⁴.

Thus, Biswa Singha had the skill, intelligence and diplomatic power and capability, which enabled him to establish a semi-independent kingdom³⁰⁵. By the

policy of tricks, guerrilla war tactics and aggressive warfare transformed the small chiefdom of his father into a territorially defined kingdom and laid the foundation for his successors on well-cemented ground. He started his career as a tribal chief, by establishing his capital at Chikana, the ruins of which are still in existed about sixty north of present Dhubri town in Goalpara district of Assam, between the rivers Saralbhanga and Champavati³⁰⁶. After subjugation of the *Bhuyans* and territorial expansion of his kingdom Biswa Singha shifted the power center from the Chikana to *Hingulabas*³⁰⁷, a village in the plains of Western Duars on temporary basis³⁰⁸ and finally transferred it to *Kamtapur* (*Kantapur*)³⁰⁹, later known as Koch Behar four miles to the south-east of the present town of Koch Behar³¹⁰.

Biswa Singha inherited a small area, "bounded in the west by the Sankosh, on the north by *Dhabalagiri* (*Himalayas*), on the south by *Lohitya* (*Brahmaputra*)"³¹¹. He extended its borders to the *Karatoya* in the west , the *Baranadi* on the north bank of Brahmaputra in the east , the Bhutan frontier in the north and Bengal frontier in Rangpur (now in Bangladesh) in the south³¹². His dominion comprised the lower Himalaya region , the whole of the present districts of *Kamrupa*, Goalpara , part of Nowgong of Assam, Koch Behar and Jalpaiguri (part) districts of present west Bengal and Rangpur district (except Ghoraghat) of Bangladesh.

The DRV inform us that Biswa Singha had eighteen wives from different countries like Nepal, Gaur, Kashmir, Kamrupa, Mithila and Kashi; he had also eighteen sons, born of his eighteen wives³¹³. Among whom Naranarayan was selected as his successor and king, and Sukladhvaja (Chilarai) selected as the general of the king by a draw³¹⁴. With the accession of Naranarayan on the throne started a glorious chapter of the Koch hegemony all over the whole of North-East India, not only in the field politics but also in the fields every spare of life.

Notes and References:

1. P.K. Bhattacharyya, named his book as '*The kingdom of Kamta-Kochbehar in historical perspective*', and other have given same view.
- 1A. *The Ramayana*, *Kishkindhyakanda*, Ch. XIII.
2. *The Mahabharata*, *Udyogoparva*. Ch., 48.

3. The *Markandeya Purana* (58.13; 57.44; 66.8, see Pargiter's 'The *Markandeya Purana*', pp. 331, 357, 411 and 481). The *Bayu Purana* (77.95), the *Brahmanda Purana* (Ch.27), the *Skanda Purana* (*Kumarika khanda*, Ch. 59), the *Garuda Purana* (81.16a) ch.59). For the *Harivansa Purana*, the *Brahma Purana*, the *Matsya Purana* see Khan Choudhuri A. A, 'Kochbeharer Itihas', reprint, Calcutta, 1990, p.1.
4. *Raghuvamsam* of Kalidas, Ch. IV, vs. 81-84, refers to the two countries that are Pragjyotish and Kamarupa lying to the east of the *Lauhitra*.
5. The *Brihat-sanhita* of Barahamihir, (Grahabhakti Section, XVI-I).
6. *Dasakumarcharita* of Dandi, III. cited in I. Sarkar's " Aspects of Historical geography of Pragjyotisa-Kamarupa", Calcutta , 1992, p. 35.
7. *Harsha-charita* of Banabhatta, Cited in Phani Deka , 'The great Indian corridor' , Mittal, Delhi, 2007, pp.34-41 also in Khan Chaudhuri Amanatulla Ahamed, *Kochbeharer Itihas*' : reprint , Calcutta , 1990 , p. 1 .
8. 'Trikanda' of Purushottama, cited in Phani Deka, op. cit., pp. 34 - 41.
9. 'Abhidhanachintamoni' of Hemendra, Cited in Phani Deka, op. cit. pp. 34 -41.
10. 'Kavyamimamsa' of Rajsekhar , Ch. 17 , Ibid.
11. The 'Raghuvamsam', Ch. IV, vs.81-84, cited in Phani Deka, op. cit. pp. 34-41.
12. 'Brihat-sanhita' of Barahamihir, op. cit., Section, XVI-I.

13. Phani Deka, op. cit. pp. 34-41. : He mentioned with the references from the 'Harsha-charita' of Banabhatta (7th century AD.), the 'Trikanda' of Purushottama, (7th century AD.) p. 93 that "... the country Pragjyotish to be same with Kamarupa.
14. Abhidhanachintamoni, p. 381; cited in Phani Deka, Ibid and B. K. Barua, 'A cultural History of Assam', third Edition, Delhi, p. 13.
15. 'Kavya Mimamsa' of Rajasekhara, p. 93. cited in B. K. Barua Ibid..
16. B. K. Barua, 'A cultural History of Assam', third Edition, Delhi, p.13.
17. Balavarma's Nowgong grant (line 33), Vide M. M. Sharma: Inscriptions of Ancient Assam, Gauhati, 1978. p.159.
18. Indrapala's Gauhati and Guwakuchi grants (lines 35 and 34 respectively), Vide M. M. Sharma, Ibid, pp. 153 and 197.
19. Ratnapala's Bargaon grant (line 52) , Ibid., p. 159 .
20. J. F. Fleet; 'Corpus Inscriptiōum Indicarūm', Vol. III, P. 1f (line 21).

21. Khan Choudhuri A. A., op. cit., 1990 , p. 2 .
22. The *Kalika Purana*, Ch. LXXVIII,
23. The *Siva Purana*, Ch. XXXXVIII.
24. The *Vayu Purana*, Ch. XXXX.
25. The *Yogini Tantra*, (ed) S. S. Saraswati, Calcutta, B. S. 1385, Part II, Ch. XI, 21, ff.
26. 'Harshacharita' of Banabhatta, (Cowell), Ch., VIII. pp. 217-17.
27. Hiuen Tsiang's 'Si-u-ki' , in T. Watters ' on yuan Chwan's travels in India ' , vol. II London, 1905 , pp. 126 &186.
28. Minhaj-uddin Siraj, 'Tabaqat-I-Nasiri', trans in English by Major H. G. Raverty, vol-1, Reprint 1970 .pp. 550-595.
29. 'Raghuvansam' of Kalidas, op. cit. refers to the two countries that are Pragjyotish and Kamrupa lying to the east of the *Lauhitra*.
30. 'Brihat-samhita' of Barahamihir, op. cit., refers to the three countries that are Pragjyotish and Kamboja and Lauhitra.
31. 'Brihat-samhita' of Barahamihir, op. cit.
32. R. P. Chanda, Suniti Kumar Chatterji and others suggested that Kombajas mean only the Koches of the period. (R. P. Chanda cited in H. C .Ray, 'Dynastic History of Northern India', Cal-1931, vol-1, pp.308-9; Suniti Kumar Chatterji, 'Kirata-Jana-Kriti', the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, reprinted in April 1998, page. 112 .Henceforth SKC-KJK.); Minhaj - uddin Siraj, described that region was inhabited by Koch (Kambojas / Kiratas) and others.
33. The Kamauly grant of Baidyadeva, records the gift of two villages, situated in Kamarupa mandala, which was in the Badavisaya within the Bhukti of *Pragjyotish* (Epigraphic India, II, p. 353). Therefore, it might be assumed that the extent of *Pragjyotish* was much greater than Kamarupa, which at its early stage was a small territory (mandala). (Bhukti = Province, Visaya= District, Mandala = Subdivision).
34. *Abhidhanachintamani*, p. 381; cited in Phani Deka, Ibid and see B. K. Barua, 'A cultural History of Assam' 3rd Edition, Delhi, p.13.
35. 'Brihat-samhita' of Barahamihir, (Grahabhakti Section, XVI-I, refers to the three countries that are *Pragjyotish* and Kamboja and *Lauhitra* and 'Raghuvansam' of Kalidas refers to the two countries that are *Pragjyotish* and Kamarupa lying to the east of the *Lauhitra*. Even Ratnapala (11th century AD) in his Bargaon grant placed himself as "...the delight of Kamrupa" and "the ruler of *Pragjyotish*"

(Kamarupanandi and Pragjyotishadhipati). It might mean the son of Kamarupa (small territory) and the king of *Pragjyotisha* (larger territory).

36. I Sarkar has named his book as "Aspects of Historical geography of *Pragjyotisa-Kamarupa*", Calcutta, 1992. N. N. Vasu, 'The social history of Kamrupa'. (3Vol.s) Northern Book Centre, reprint, New Delhi, reprint 1983, B. K. Barua, op. cit., and others also given same views.
37. *The Ramayana*, Adiparva, Chap. 32.
38. *The Kalika Purana*, Part., 39, verse. 126.
39. E.A. Gait, 'A history of Assam', (Revised), Calcutta, 1963, p.15.
40. Khan Chaudhuri Amanatulla Ahamed op. cit., p. 4.
41. K. L. Barua, 'Early History of Kamarupa: From the earliest times to the end of sixteenth century', Shilong, 1933, p.13.
42. B. K. Kakati, 'The Mother Goddess Kamakhya', 1948, p.6.
43. 'The kalika Purana', Ch., 51, vs. 55-76.
44. *The kalika Purana*, Ch., 64, vv. 73.
45. *The kalika Purana*, Ch., 62, verses, 74, 77 and 103. Also see the *Yogoni Tantra*, first half, pt. XV, verses 48&49.
46. B. K. Barua, op. cit. p.13.
47. *The kalika Purana*, Ch., 38, vv. 122-23.
48. *The Yogini Tantra*, (ed) S. S. Saraswati, Calcutta , B. S. 1385, Part II , Ch. XI, 17-18
49. 'Assam Buranji', by Haliram Dhekiya Phukan, Bengali (tr.) by J. M. Bhattacharyya, Published by Mokshada Pustakalaya, Gauhati, 1369, pp. 25-33.
50. Watters, op. cit. p. 187.
51. Ibid.
52. B. K. Barua, op. cit. p. 11. However, he did not clearly mention the actual references.
53. Gopinath Bardoloi, 'Lokopriyo Gopinath Bardoloi—An architect of modern India', Gyan Publishing House, Delhi, 1992, pp. 13-14.
54. Ibid.
55. Cited in Khan Chaudhuri Amanatulla Ahamed, op. cit., p. 2.

56. Sibsankar Mukherjee, article 'The *Kamadesvara* – ritual sovereign of northeastern India', in P. K. Bhattacharyya (ed), 'The Kingdom of Kamata-Koch-Behar', The university of North Bengal, 2000, pp. 74-81.
57. See Lekharu Upendranath's compiled (in Assamese), 'the *Katha Guru Charita*', Gauhati, pp. 9-10; Radhakrishna Das Bairagi, 'Gosani Mangal', published by Brajachandra Majumder, Calcutta , 1306 B. S., also edited by Nripendranath Pal , 2nd ed. Calcutta, 1399 B.S.
58. Sibsankar Mukherjee, op. cit. pp. 74-81.
59. Ibid.
60. J. H. Ryley, (ed), *Ralph Fitch, English's Pioneer to India, Burma, etc.*, London, 1899, cited in Khan Chaudhuri Amanatulla Ahamed , op. cit. p. 2 .
61. Minhaj-uddin Siraj, 'Tabaqat-I-Nasiri', (tr.) H.G. Raverty, vol.-I, reprint, New Delhi, 1970, p. 560.
62. The *Yogini Tantra*, op. cit. vs. 40-55 & the *Fadma Purana*, (*Sristi Khanda*), Ch. XXXXXVII.
63. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, 'Kirata-Jana-Krti', the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, Reprint in April 1998, p.113.
64. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, 'Origin and development of Bengali language' , Calcutta, 1926, p.339, reprinted in April 1998, p.113.
65. Cited in Khan Chaudhuri Amanatulla Ahamed , op. cit. p. 4 .
66. Ibid.
- 66a. The *Yogini Tantra*, (ed) S. S. Saraswati, Calcutta, B. S. 1385, Part II, Ch. XI.
67. Khan Chaudhuri A. Ahamed, op. cit. p. 123.
68. Gait, op. cit. pp. 58-59.
69. H. N. Choudhary, 'The Cooch Behar State and Its Land Revenue of Settlement, Cooch Behar, 1903, p. 232.
70. 'Assam: An outline , Souvenir, 21st International Geographical Congress', Gauhati University , 1968, p. 15 cited in I. Sarkar's "Aspects of Historical geography of Pragjyotisa-Kamarupa" , Calcutta , 1992, p. 04 .
71. R. K. Barman, 'From Tribalism to State', Delhi, 2007.
72. Achaya Panchanan Tarkaratna, (ed), the *Kalika Puranam*, Calcutta, 1384BS. Ch.77-80, pp. 784-837.

73. R. K. Barman, op. cit. p. 34. He also mentioned that there are total 18 duars between Bhutan and India. Dalimkote (DurlingJung), Zumirkote, Chamurchi, Iku duar, Buxa, Bhulka, Bara, Guman, Ripu, Cherang (sildi), and Bagh are the duars between Bengal and Bhutan. Buri Gumang, Kalling, Ghur Kalla duar, Banksa, Chapaguri, Chapakhamar and Bijni are the duars between Bhutan and Assam.
74. The *Ramayana*, *Adiparva*, Chap. 32, cited in B. K. Barua, op. cit. p. 11.
75. K. L. Barua, op. cit. pp.25-29.
76. Ibid.
77. The *Kalika Purana*, Ch. 38, vs., 110-113, p-319.
78. The *Ramayana*, *Kishkindhya Kanda*, Ch., XXXXII.
79. The *Mahabharata*, *Udyogoparva*, Ch., 48, vs. 80-85 and vv. 44-45.
80. The *Kalika Purana*, Chs. 38, 39 and 40.
81. The *Yogini Tantra*, Part I, Palala XII.
82. The *Kalika Purana*, Ch. 38.
83. Ibid; also see Gait op. cit. p.13 and B. K. Barua, op. cit. p.18.
84. The *Kalika Purana*, Ch. 38, vs. 108-125.
85. The *Mahabharata*, *Udyogoparva*, Ch. 26 , vs. 15-16; B. K. Barua , op. cit. p.18 ; K. L. Barua, op. cit. p . 34. and I. Sarkar, op. cit. p. 13.
86. In the one hand , according to the Doobi grant (vs. 4-5) , Nidhanpur grant of Bhaskaravarman (Vs. 6) and Gauhati grant of Indrapala (vs.8) Vajradatta is described as the son of Bhagadatta , on the other hand, in the Tezpur grant of Banamala (vs.6), Nowgong grant of Balavarman (vs.8) and others described his as the brother of Bhagadatta . Also, see K. L. Barua: op. cit. p .23. And I. Sarkar, op. cit., p. 36fn.
87. 'Kamarupa Buranji', p. 3; Gait op. cit. p. 17; K. L. Barua : op. cit. p . 23.
88. Gait op. cit. pp. 10-21; R. K. Barman, op. cit. p. 56.
89. The Bargaon grant (line 12) and Saratbari grant of Ratnapala (line 51), Vide M. M. Sharma, op. cit. pp. 152-73 and 210-224 .
90. The Nidhanpur Copper Plate inscription vides P. N. Bhattachayya, op. cit. pp. 1-6.
91. Gait, op. cit. p. 23.
92. H. K. Barpujari, 'A comprehensive History of Assam', (ed), 1990.
93. The *Nidhanpur Copper Plate inscription*, op. cit., v.12.

94. Doobi copper Plate, vide M. M. Sharma, op. cit. p. 33. But D. C. did not accept this view. (IHQ, vol. XXI., pp.143-45.) .
95. The Nidhanpur Copper Plate inscription was issued from the *Jaya-skandhavara* 9victorious camp at Karnasuvarna, the then capital of Gauda, in present Mursidabad district of west Bengal, and Vaskarvarman donated land near the Kusi River. So it may be assumed that these regions were within his kingdom.(see B. K. Barua , op. cit. p.21.
96. *The Nidhanpur Copper Plate inscription*, (line 34-44.).
97. Watters, op. cit. p. 185.
98. *The Yogini Tantra*, (ed) S. S. Saraswati, Calcutta, B. S. 1385, Part II, Ch. XI, 17-18.
99. K. L. Barua, op. cit. p .100.
100. The Nepal inscription of Jaydeva, describes that Sri Harsha Varma deva was a descendant from *Bhagadatta* or *Bhagadatta raj Kulaja*, Cited in R. K. Barman op. cit. p. 57.
101. Cited in B. K. Barua, op. cit., p. 33.
102. B. K. Barua, op. cit. p. 35.
103. Gait, op. cit. p. 31.
104. The Nowgong copper plate grant of Balavarman, v.14: also see B. K. Barua, op. cit. p. 36.
105. R. K. Barman, op. cit. p. 57.
106. P. N. Bhattacharyya, op. cit. p. 70.
107. Ibid, pp. 89-108.
108. B. K. Barua, op. cit. p.34.
109. *The Bargaon Grant of Ratnapala*, v.,10.
110. There are different opinions about the exact date of accession of Brahmapala. H. C. Ray, *The dynastic history of Northern India*, Part I, p. 247, places him about 1000AD; K.L. Barua, op. cit. p.95 places him about 985AD ; I. sarkar , op. cit. p. 26. Placed him in about 990 AD.
111. I. sarkar, op. cit., pp. 26-29.
112. B. K. Barua, op. cit. p. 37; R. K. Barman, op. cit. p. 58.
113. Gauhati Grant, v., 19, *JASB*, LXVI, I, pp. 120f.
114. Gait, op. cit. p. 141.

115. D. Sarma, introduction, op. cit., pp. 36-37.
116. Cited in B. K. Barua, op., cit. p. 39.
117. Gait, op. cit. p. 141; Sarma. M. M. (ed), '*Inscriptions of Ancient Assam*', Gauhati University, 1978, pp.263-65.
118. P. N. Bhattacharyya, op. cit., pp-130-45, K.L. Barua, *JARS*, pp.112-15.
119. P. C. Choudhury, op. cit., p.217. According to Kalika Purana, (Ch. 77, Vs. 8-9) that the river Jatola flows through Kamarupa, and the river at present passes through the districts of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar. Therefore, it is probable that this region was within the Kamarupa kingdom during the reign of Indrapala, and Isvaraghosh most probably was a feudatory of Indrapala. (N. N. Vasu op. cit., Vol., I, pp.200f; R. C. Majumder, '*Struggle for Empire*', Vol., V, pp. 42-45.).
120. M. M. Sharma, op. cit., p.244, lines-31-32; and in the Nowgong grant of Balavarmana III (M. M. Sharma, op. cit., p.249) there is a reference of Dijjina-visaya, which is described to be in the 'Daksinakula' the southern bank of the Brahmaputra. Most probably the *Dijjina-visayas* mentioned in the both the inscriptions identical. P. C. Choudhury takes it to be identical with modern Dinajpur of north Bengal and a part of present Bangladesh.
121. The Kamuli grant of Vaidyadeva , Edited by Arthur Venis, E.I., II, pp.347-58; also see R. C. Majumdar, op. cit. p. 322 and B. K. Barua, op. cit. p.40.
122. B. K. Barua, op. cit. p.40.
123. H. C. Roy, '*Dynastic History of Northern India*', Vol., I, p.258.
124. The inscription consists of five copper plates. First edited by Hultzsch, in the '*Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*', Vol. XL, p. 42; re-edited by F. Keilhorn, *EP. Ind*, Vol. V, pp.181-88.
125. B. K. Barua, op. cit. p. 40; K.L. Barua, I.H.Q., pp. 197-98.
126. P. N. Bhattacharyya, I.H.Q., III, 1927, pp. 837.
127. P. N. Bhattacharyya, *Kamarupa Sasanavali, Bhumika*, pp. 42-43.
128. Vallabhadeva's inscription, V.10. Ibid.
129. Bhattacharyya, 'New Lights on the History of Assam', I.H.Q., IX, pp. 50-62.
130. 'Tabaqat-i-Nasiri', pp. 628-29; K.L. Barua, EHK, pp .198.
131. P. C. Choudhury, op. cit., p. 276; K.L. Barua, EHK, pp.149f.
132. Kamarupa Buranji, p.98.

133. E. G. Glazier, 'Report on District of Rung pore', Calcutta, Bengal Secretariat Press, 1873, p. 8. Ruins of his forts excavated in Jalpaiguri and Rangpur (Bangladesh) districts and locally known as 'Prithu Rajar Gharh'.
134. Wolseley Haig, 'Cambridge History of India', vol. pp. 50-54.
135. Ramacharana Thakur, 'the Guru Charita, vs. 78-82, p.150; also see K.L. Barua, EHK, (1966), p.130, and N. N. Acharyya, op. cit. p.150.
136. K.L. Barua, op. cit. p.163; N. N. Acharyya, op. cit. p.150.
137. K.L. Barua, op. cit. p.163; also see Dr.Sailen Debnath, 'Essays on Cultural History of North Bengal', & 'The Dooars in Historical Transition' (web books).
138. K.L. Barua, op. cit. p .166.
139. *The Guru Charita*, Ch.1, vs.78, p.14; the *Katha Guru Charita*, p-6; K.L. Barua, op. cit., p .162.
140. K.L. Barua, op. cit. pp .163-4: The transfer of capital is referred to in the *Guru Charita* as being due to the curse of Goddess Kamakhya (*Guru Charita*, Ch.1, vv.74-80, pp .14-5.)
141. *The Guru Charita*, Ch.1, vs.78, p.14; the *Katha Guru Charita*, p. 6; K.L. Barua, op. cit., p .162.
142. K.L. Barua, op. cit., p .164.
143. *The Guru Charita*, Ch., vv.19-85, p.11; *the katha Guru Charita*, p.7.
144. N. N. Acharyya, op. cit., p.162.
145. K.L. Barua, op. cit., p .170.
146. K. L. Barua, op. cit. P.170. Haliram Duekiya Phukan mentions that Arimatta and Gajanka were two successive king, not the other name of Arimatta. He also did not mention the name of Sutaranka. *Assam Buranji* (Four Vols.), Edited by J. M. Bhattacharyya, Gauhati, Mokshada Pustakalaya, 1369BS, p. 12;
147. *Kamarupa Buranji*, pp. 2-4.
148. K.L. Barua, op. cit. p.177.
149. K.L. Barua, op. cit. pp.170-78.
150. Ibid.
151. Ibid.
152. Francis Buchanan: General view of the history of Kama The rupa, reprinted in S. K. Bhuyan (ed) *Kamarupa Buranji*, 2nd edition, Appendix, c, Gauhati, DHAS, 1958, pp. 120-121.

153. Radhakrishna Das Bairagi, 'Gosani Mangal', Published by Brajachandra Majumdar, (Calcutta 1306 B.S.), second edition edited by Nripendra Nath Pal, (Calcutta, Anima Prakashani, 1399 B. S.).
154. Khan Chaudhuri A.A. op. cit., p. 38. He mentioned that it was possible that while the tribe was passing through *Kachar*, it met the *Kacharies* and brought the *Kachari* myth in *Kamatapur*.
155. Khan Chaudhuri A.A. op. cit., p. 39.
156. W.W. Hunter, 'Statistical Account of Bengal', Vol. X, reprint ed., Delhi, 1984, p.344.
157. H. H. Risely, 'Tribes and castes of Bengal', Vol., I, reprint ed., Calcutta, (Firma KLM), 1981, p. 489.
158. S. N. Bhattacharyya, op. cit. 65.
159. H. N. Chaudhuri, 'Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlement, Cooch Behar, (Cooch Behar State Press), 1903, p. 128.
160. Ibid, p. 221, Gait op. cit., p. 44; N. N. Acharyya, op. cit., p.172; K.L. Barua, op. cit. pp. 173-4.
161. H. N. Choudhury: op. cit. p. 81.
162. Pir Muhammad Shattari, 'Risalat-us-Shuhada', English translated by G. H. Damant: *Notes on Shah Ismail with a Sketch of the Contents of a Persian Ms. entitled Risalat-us-Shuhada*, J.A.S.B., and XLIII. III, 1874, pp .216-239.
163. Khan Chaudhuri A., A. op. cit. p. 43-44.
164. N. N. Acharyya, op. cit., p -173; E. G.Glazier: op. cit. The other forts were at Hatibanda, Olipur, Chhayaghar, Manthan Kote and Fatehpur (for details see, H. N. Choudhury: op. cit. p. 222 and Khan Choudhury A.A. op. cit. p. 44.
165. Salim, Ghulam Hussain, 'Riyazu-s-Salatin', Eng. Trans. by Abdus salam, reprint ed., Delhi, Idarah-i-Adabiyat, 1975, p. 132.
166. J. N. Sarkar, 'History of Bengal, Muslim period', 1200-1757, Patna, Janaki Prakashan, 1973, p. 146.
167. Radhakrishna Das Bairagi: op. cit., Francis Buchanan: op. cit. pp. 120-121; Gait: op. cit., p. 44; H. N. Chaudhuri: op. cit. p. 224.
168. 'Riyazu-s-Salatin', p- 132; J. N. Sarkar, op. cit. p. 46.
169. K.L. Barua, op. cit. p .176.
170. *Gandharbanarayan Vansavali*: p. 30.

হারিয়াক আনি সবে মন্ডল পাঠিলা ।

সেই দিন ধরি তৈতে অধিকারী ভৈলা ॥

Quoted in Khan Chaudhuri Amanatulla Ahamed's, 'Kochbeharer Itihas', reprint, Calcutta, 1990, p. 82.

171. N. C. Sharma (ed.), 'Darrang Raj Vansavali', Pathshala, Goahati and Calcutta, 1973, p. 9, Verse. 51. (Hence forth DRV)
172. S.N. Sen, 'Prachin Patra Sankalan', (in Bengali), Calcutta University, 1942, p. 6.
173. Khan Chaudhuri Amanatulla Ahamed, op. cit, p.80.
174. P. K. Bhattacharya (edited), 'The Kingdom of Kamata- Kochbehar in Historical Perspective', Ratna Prakashan and NBU, p.100.
175. DRV, vv. 27-50.
176. DRV, vv. 59-74; S. K. Bhuyan (Ed), Kamrupa Burunji, Gauhati, 1958, p.10
177. Kamrupa Burunji, Appendix C, p.126f.
178. Kamrupa Burunji, p.127.
179. Ibid,
180. Ibid,
181. Thakur Panchanan, Hemanta Kumar Roy Burma and others.
182. *Linguistic Survey of India* Vol 2, Introduction -1927, pp. 40f.
183. B. H. Hodgson, 'Essay on the Koch, Bodo, and Dhimal Tribes', Calcutta 1874 p-
184. L. A. Waddel, "Tribes of Brahmaputra Valley" Reprint, 1975, Delhi, p. 48.
185. E. A. Gait: 'A history of Assam' (Revised), Calcutta, 1963, p. 47; reprint, 2004.
186. D. C. Sircar; Introduction to 'Gauda Rajamala' by R. P. Chanda -1975.
187. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, *Kirata-Jana-Krti*, The Asiatic Society, Calcutta, Reprinted in April 1998, page-112 .Henceforth SKC-KJK.
188. Quoted in H. C .Ray's 'Dynastic History of Northern India, Cal-1931, vol-1, pp. 308-9).
189. SKC-KJK, p. 22.
190. Quoted in SKC-KJK, p. 21.
191. In his work on Nepal, vol. II, Paris 1905, pp. 75ff.
192. Vol., II, Cuttack, 1932, quoted in SKC-KJK. pp. 26.

193. Minhaj -uddin Siraj, *Tabaqat-I-Nasiri*, trans in English by Major H. G. Raverty, vol-1, reprint 1970. pp. 550-595.
194. D. Neog, 'New light on history of Assmiya literature', Dispur, Assam, 1962, p.31.
195. B. M. Das: *Some aspects of physical Anthropology of the Tribes of Northeast India* ,in Sebastian Karotemprel and Depali Danda (ed.): *The Tribes of North East India* , Calcutta , Firma KLM, 1984 , p. 39-57 .and also in S. Sengupta: *Physical anthropology of the Koch Population*, New Delhi , Mittal , 1993, p. 4 .
196. E.A. Gait: *A History of Assam*, 3rd ed, revised by B.K. Barua and H. V. S. Murthy, Calcutta, 1963, p. 4.
197. SKC: KJK, p. 111.
198. H. H. Risley: *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, Calcutta, pp. 491-92.
199. Ibid.
200. N. Vasu: 'The social history of Kamrupa', Delhi, Reprint 1990, vol. I, p .52.
- 201.' *Yogini Tantra*' trans. and edited by Swami Swarveswarananda Swaraswati, Nababharat Publishers, Calcutta, 1385 BS, pt., 1,Ch.13,vs.,47-67, pp. 128-130. Calcutta, Naba bharata Publishers,
202. Assam *Burunji* of Haliram Dhekiyal Fukkan, Bengali translation by Sri Yatindra Mohan Bhattacharyya, Published by Mokshada Pustakalaya, Gauhati, 1369 BS.
203. These are 1. Ajaya of Dikkara. Here is installed and worshipped Goddess Dikkaravasini. 2. Nilapitha, the presiding deity of Goddess Kamesvari representing the generative organ of Sakti. 3. The holy seat of Parijata. 4. Kausheyapura, 5. Amarakantaka, 6. Aranya, 7. Asvina, and others.
204. Haldiram Dhekiya Fakkun, .op. cit., Pp.1-4.
- 205 N.N. Vasu, op. cit. p. 55.
206. Ibid, p.55.
207. cf. Risley, op. cit., p. 491.
208. E.T. Dalton: *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, Reprint, Calcutta, 1960, p. 90 and *Tribal History of Eastern India*, Reprint, Delhi, 1973, p. 89.
209. Ibid, p. 92.
210. Ibid.
211. Ibid.
212. Ibid.

213. C. C. Sannyal: 'Rajbanshis of North Bengal', Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1965, p.12.
214. N. N. Vasu, op. cit., p.47.
215. Dalton, op., cit., p . 92.
216. N. N. Vasu, op. cit., p. 96 .
217. Dalton, op. cit. p. 93.
218. First M. A., B. L. of Rajvansi community, Social Reformer and Forerunner of Rajbansi Kshatriya Movements.
219. M. A., B. L, Follower of Thakur Panhuman Burma, and writer of many books including 'Cooch Beharer Itihas' (*in Bengali*).
220. Writer of many books including 'Thakur Panchanan Burmer Jibancharit', 'Rajbansi Kshatriya Jatir Itihas' (both in Bengali)and others .
221. N. R. Roy, 'Bangalir Itihas', (adi parba) Calcutta, 2nd edition, 1402 B. S., p. 54.
222. S. K. Chatterji: 'Jati Samskriti O Sahitya', Calcutta, p.18.
223. Hemanta Kumar Roy, Burma: op., cit. p 11.
224. Ibid, pp.15-30.

225. Some examples from Ray Burma's list

<u>Koch/ Rajbansi Language</u>	<u>Sanskrit</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
আইজ	অদ্য	আজ।
আঙ্গিনা	অঙ্গন(আঙ্গিনা)	উঠান।
কান	কন (কাণ)	কান।
রাঙ্ঘন	রঞ্জন	রাঙ্ঘা করা।
কাকই	কঙ্কাতিকা (কাকই)	চিরণী।
গোনা	গন ধাতু, গনয়তি	গননা করা।
কূয়া	কৃপ (কূয়া)	কূয়া।
ভালুক	ভলুক	ভালুক।
ভাদোর	ভদ্র (ভাদদর)	ভদ্র।
ভাতিজি	আত্ৰ+বি	ভাইয়ের মেয়ে।
মোৱ	মম (মো+ৱ)	আমাৱ।
দাহ	দহ ধাতু, দহতি	পোড়ানো।
পিয়াস	পিপাসা, পিয়াসা,পিপাসা	পিপাসা।
কুড়াল	কুঠার	কুড়াল।
দৰ্পন	দৰ্পন	আয়না।
পালায়	পৱা+অয়তে=পলায়তে	পলায়ন করা।

226. Ibid, p.14, (Edited) book '
227. Ibid, p.14.
228. P. K. Bhattacharya: '*The Kingdom of Kamata-Kochbehar in Historical Perspective*, (edited) NBU., p.107.
229. H. H. Risley: op. cit. pp. 491-92.
230. D. Nath: '*History of the Koch kingdom 1515-1615*', Mittal, Delhi, 1989, p. 4.
231. S. L. Baruah: '*A comprehensive history of Assam*', Munsimam and Manoharlal New Delhi, 1985, p. 203.
232. E. T. Dalton, '*Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*', reprint, Calcutta, 1960, p .90; H. Beverley, *Census report of Bengal* (1872), Vol. I, p. 130; W. W. Hunter, '*A Statistical account of Bengal*'; SKC-KJK, pp. 60-66; D. Nath, op. cit. p. 6 and many others.
233. D. Nath, op. cit. p.5; Rajatshubhra Mukhopadhyay, *Contradiction and change in Social Identity of the Rajvansi*, in *Journal of Indian Anthrop.society*, 1999, 34 , pp. 133-138. He mentioned that the Koches changed their identity and for that matter asked for different names in different Census: from Koch to *Rajvansi* (1872), *Rajvansi* to *Bratya Kshatriya* (1891), *Bratya Kshatriya* to *Kshatriya-Rajvansi* (1911,1921)and *Kshatriya- Rajvansi* to only *Kshatriya* (1931) .
234. C. C. Sannayal, '*Rajvansi of North Bengal*', Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1965, p. 13.
235. D. Nath, op. cit. p. 6.
236. F.O. Bell, 'The final report on the Survey and settlement operation in Dinajpur', 1934 – 40; p. 11ff.
237. B. S. Guha, '*Racial Elements in the Population*, No. 22 in 'Oxford Pamphlets on Indian Affairs', 1944, p.8. Cited in SKC-KJK, p. 6.
238. F. Maxmuller, a German philologist and Orientalist, published separately as well as 18 Volumes collected works includes '*A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*'.
239. Girin Phukun and N. L. Dutta (ed): *politics of Identity and Nation Building in North-East India*, new Delhi, 1997, p. 02.

240. SKC-KJK: op. cit. p.118.
241. SKC-KJK: op. cit., pp. 37-40 and 112-113. He used the term "Indo-Mongoloid" to discuss the Indianised Mongoloid.
242. The *Buranjies*, the *Vansavalies* and the *Rajopakhyan* had been written from 17th to 19th centuries under royal patronage.
243. DRV: op. cit. verse-52, p. 9.
244. S. K. Bhuyan: (ed) 'Assam Burunji of HaraKanta Barua' verse-70, p. 26.
245. S. K. Bhuyan (ed), 'Deidhai Assam Buranj'i, p.173.
246. *Assam Burunji* of Gunaviram Barua , p. 39 , and S. K. Bhuyan ,(ed), *Kamrupa Burunji*, Gauhati , 1972 , p. 5 .
247. Gait, M. Neog and S. L. Barua described it as Koch or Mech.
248. K. L. Barua, 'Early History of Kamarupa', p.189; D. Nath; op. cit., title of the book,Khan Chaudhuri Amanattulla Ahmed, op. cit., through out the book and Durgadas Majumdar; Koch Bihar: W. B. District Gazetteers, Calcutta, 1977, p. 30.
249. N. N. Vasu; op. cit, vol. ii, p. 35. He described the chapter II as 'Downfall of the Baro-Bhuyans and the rise of the Mech power'.
250. P. K. Bhattacharya, (edited); op. cit. Introduction.
251. Minhaj-uddin Siraj: 'Tabaqat-I-Nasiri' (tr) H.G. Raverty, voll-I, Reprint, New Delhi , 1970, p. 560 .
252. DRV: op., cit. vv. 277, p. 56.

মোৰ বাক্য শুনা সাধান নকৰিবৰ্ণি কেওৱঁ অন্য ক্যাণ
 মোৰ বংশে কল্যা নানিব অন্য জাতিৱ ।
 ভাল ভাল রূপ গুণ চাই যথাত সুন্দৰ কল্যা পাই
 আনিবাহি কল্যা কোচ মেচ কছৱীৱ ॥ ২৭৭

253. DRV, vv. 207-8), p.42,
254. P. K. Bhattacharya, op., cit, Introduction.
255. S. L. Barua, 'A Comprehensive History of Assam', Munsimam and Manoharlal New Delhi ,1985, pp. 180-81.
256. J. N. Sarkar, op., cit., p. 188; J. L. Mehta, Advanced Study in the history of India, Vol. II, (1526-1707), Sterling publishers Pvt. Ltd. Delhi, 1984, p. 249.
257. Akbarnamah, III, p. 349

- 258 . D. Nath, op. cit. p. 91.
259. S. N. Bhattacharyya, 'A History of Mughal North East Frontier Policy', Calcutta, 1929, pp. 99f; 1st reprint, Spectrum publication, Gauhati, 1998.
260. M. Neog p. 58.
261. Ibid. p.58
262. Ibid, p.59.
263. D. Nath, op. cit. p. 19.
264. Ibid., p.19.
265. M Neog p. 56, quoted from H. K. Barua Assam Burunji, arts. 64f.
266. J. N. Sarkar, op. cit. pp. 157-165; K. L. Barua, op. cit. pp.160 -172.
267. The Assam Buranji of Gunaviram Barua, p. 46.
268. N.N. Vasu op. cit. p. 33.
269. K. L. Barua, 'Early History of Kamarupa', p.189.
270. D. Nath, op. cit. p.20
271. M. Neog, p. 48.
272. S.L. Barua, op. cit. p.194.
273. N.N. Vasu, op. Cit. p. 244.
274. M .Neog op. cit. records: "Pratapura was king of Ratnapura in the Ratnapitha. His son, Mayamatta or Mayamatta, succeeded him. Divided his kingdom between his two sons - Arimatta and Nagamatta. The western portion was assigned to Arimatta, whose minister, Samudra, build a new capital at Biswanath, while Nagamatta ruled the eastern country from the old town of Ratnapura. Nagamatta died two years later, and Arimatta killed Mayamatta inadvertently during a hunting expedition. The penitent Arimatta placed Samudra in charge of the eastern kingdom and Samudra's son, Manohara, at Biswanath. Samudra died soon after this, and Manohara followed his path to the grave, leaving behind him only a daughter, Laksmi. Laksmi devoutly worshipped Durga, and by dint of a love, charm, taught by the goddess, attained the love of the sun god. She had two sons Santanu and Sumanta (Samanta or Syamanta). They received from their father a scripture called *Kalpataru*, written on copper (therefore called Dhatutamraksari), with mantras of different gods.The former had twelve sons, who were called Bar (senior) Bara Bhuyans. The twelve son of Sumanta came to be known as Saru (Junior) Bara Bhuyans", pp. 52-53.

275. H.N. Dattabaruah, (ed), the *Gurucharit* by Ramcharan Thakur , Gauhati, 529 *Sankarabda* (1978), vv. 83-95, and U. C. Lekharu, (ed),*Katha Guru Charit* , Nalbari,1952, p. 12 . Also see the K. L. Barua, *Early History of Kamarupa* p.86, for the names of the 12 Bhuyans families.
276. DRV, op. cit. vv, 89-97 and 118-122.
277. *Riyazu-s-saladin*, p.132; mentioned some powerful *Bhuyans* like Rupnarain, Malkunwar, Gasa Lakan and others calling them as Rajas and M. Neog says about the other terms , op. cit. pp.49-52.
278. The *Raut-Kuchi Grant* of Purushottam Das records that he was a very powerful Bhuyan, it also records that a thousand sword men always marched before Basudeva, Purushottam's grandfather who was also the right hand-man of the Ling. D. Nath, op. cit. p. 21
279. N. N. Vasu, op. cit. p. 38.
280. *Samudranarayan Vansavali*, p. 10-11); '*KamrupaVansava/i*', p.19-20, quoted in 'Kochbeharer Itihas', Khan Chaudhuri Amanatulla Ahamed, Eng Trans by H. Nag p.99, Print, Siliguri, 2005, p.99.
281. N. N. Vasu, op. cit. p. 39.
282. Khan Chaudhuri Amanatulla Ahamed, op. cit. p.99.
283. N.N. Vasu, op. cit. p. 8-23.
284. DRV vv..90-120.
285. Ibid, vv. 93-95.
286. Ibid, v. 118.
287. Ibid, vv. 121-122.
288. J. P. Wade, 'An account of Assam '(Ed, B. Sarma, North Lakhipur, 1927, p-186ff.
289. N.N. Vasu, op. cit. p. 20.
290. D. Nath, op. cit. p. 6.
291. S.L. Barua, op. cit. p. 204.
292. DRV, vv.125-31.

293. D. Nath, op., cit. p. 32.
294. Ibid, p. 35.
295. It is not possible to invade Ahom without crossing the kingdom of Biswa Singha, as his kingdom was in between the Ahom kingdom and Gaur, and there are no evidences of war between Biswa Singha and Turbak. So it is better to think that he was fully inactive.
296. S. K. Bhuyan (Ed), 'Deidhai Assam Buranji', p.107, and Assam Buranji (Ed), S. K. Bhuyan, DHAS, 1960, p. 20).
297. S. K. Bhuyan (ed), *Deidhai Assam Buranji*, p. 107.
298. S. K. Bhuyan (ed), *Deidhai Assam Buranji*, p-107, and Assam Buranji (ed) S. K. Bhuyan, DHAS, 1960, p. 77.
299. DRV, vv. 317 and 323.
300. Assam Buranji (ed) S. K. Bhuyan, DHAS, 1960, p.77.
301. DRV, v. 318, 'Assam Buranji' or 'Sri Sri Svarganarayandev Maharajar Janma Charitra', (ed) S.K. Bhuyan , DHAS, Gauhati, 1945; 2nd ed, DHAS, Gauhati, 1960 .
302. Ms. Rajoupakhyana (transcripts.).
303. 'Assam Burunji' of Gunabhiram Barua, p. 42 ; Ms. Rajoupakhyana (transcripts.).
304. S.N. Bhattacharya- 'A History of Mughal North- east Frontier Policy, p.74 .
305. In spite of several tries, he could not deny the Ahom Supremacy. Therefore, Biswa Singha at his deathbed asked his sons to remove the slur of having remained a vassal to the Ahoms. DRV, v. 318. Assam Buranji or 'Sri Sri Svarganarayandev Maharajar Janma Charitra', (ed) S.K.Bhuyan, DHAS, Gauhati, 1945; 2nd edn, DHAS, Gauhati, 1960.
306. 'A History of Cooch Behar, English version of 'Kochbeharer Itihas' by Khan Chaudhuri Amanatulla Ahamed (tr.) S.C. Ghoshal, pp.113f.).
307. Rajoupakhyan, (transcripts.). p. 16.
308. Hingulabas has been identified with the present Mahakal Guri village, which is situated in Alipurduar Sub-division of Jalpaiguri District.
309. DRV, v. 207, and 'Assam Burunji' of Gunaviram Barua, p.40.
310. Khan Choudury, p.114, the final transfer took place after Biswa Singha's campaign against the Ahom kingdom in 1537 A.D.

- 5 . --,, ----- Purnakanti ----- Maidan (Madan).
- 6 . --,, ----- Hemkanti ----- Ramchandra .
- 7 . --,, ----- Rati ----- Surasimgha .
- 8 . Kashmir ----- Tilottama ----- Mansimgha.
- 9 . Kashi ----- Chandra ----- Mecha .
- 10 . --,, ----- Chandranana ----- Brisaketu .
- 11 . --,, ----- Jaya ----- Ramnarayan .
- 12 . --,, ----- Bijaya ----- Ananta .
- 13 . --,, ----- Jayanti ----- Deepsimgha .
- 14 . Sonitpur----- Lalita ----- Hemadhar .
- 15 . --,, ----- Labhanyavati ----- Meghnarayan .
- 16 . --,, ----- Padmamala ----- Jagat .
- 17 . Mithila ----- Satarupa ----- Rupchand .
- 18 . --,, ----- Kanchanmalini ----- Surya .

314. DRV, vv., 251-264.

:- XXX:-

Chapter: II

King Naranarayan's power consolidation and state formation:

Biswa Singha had nominally founded the Koch kingdom in the lower Brahmaputra valley of sub Himalayan region comprising the present districts of Kamrupa, Goalpara , part of Nowgong of Assam, Koch Behar and Jalpaiguri (part) districts of present west Bengal and Rangpur district (except Ghoraghat) of Bangladesh. This nominal state had been transformed into a well organized 'formal sovereign kingdom' with the beginning of the reign of his illustrious second son and successor Naranarayan alias *Malladeva*. With his brother-cum-general Sukladhvaja alias Chilarai, he not only established a sovereign kingdom but also extended the Koch hegemony all over the whole north- east India. The importance of his reign in political affairs and socio-economic-cultural transformation process in the northeast India largely depended on the exploration and all-round construction of king Naranarayan. Instead of his father's guerrilla warfare policy and trick tactic, he started a policy aggressive warfare policy to fulfill his ambitions of being the ruler of northeast India at beginning of his reign and in later part, he followed defensive policy to stabilize the kingdom. He stuck coins in his own name, which was the main medium of exchange almost all over of northeast.

Date of Naranarayan:

The DRV, the main genealogical text of the Koches is completely silent on the dates of the different incidents of the dynasty including the birth of the Kings and their dates of their accession to the throne of the dynasty, although it recorded the genealogical order of the kings. However, other literary sources thrown indirect light on different dates of different events and depending on these sources, some modern scholars fixed different dates of different events. In this connection, it would be better and easier to start from Biswa Singh as he was the nominal founder of the dynasty and considered as the first king of the dynasty. If the dates of Biswa Singh's

becoming king and his death can be identified, than it will be easier to fix the date of Naranarayan's accession to the throne of Koch kingdom, he became king immediately after the death of his father and a short conflict his elder brother Nara Singha.

According to *Rajopakhyan*, Biswa Singha became king in the year 1510¹ AD and ruled 25 years upto 1534-35 AD². According to Khan Chaudhary A.A, the reign of Biswa Singha ended in about 1533-34 AD, which is very close to the former view³. Therefore, according to these opinions, Naranarayan ascended the in between 1533 to 1535 AD. According to some modern scholars, king Naranarayan had issued coins at his coronation in 1555 AD, as all coins of king Naranarayan, so far discovered bear only frozen date 1555AD and tried to identify the date as the date accession to the throne as well as coronation of Naranarayan⁴. However, other contemporary sources and happenings did not support both these views. According to the Ahom Buranji⁵, Biswa Singha made a treaty with the Ahom king Suhungmung Dihingia Raja (1497-1539) in 1537AD, which led to the conclusion that Biswa Singha died after 1537AD. In the same way, according to some other Buranjies⁶ King Naranarayan led his first campaign against the Ahom in 1546AD and according to the *Katha-Guru-Charita*⁷, Sankaradeva the Neo-Vaisnavite saint, settled in the territory of king Naranarayan in about 1546AD, and started his 2nd pilgrimage from there in about 1550AD. Under this situation, it seems to us that the date of accession of King Naranarayan to the throne of Koch Behar and date of his coronation, (when he issued coins) might be different dates. The Mauryan king Asoka, who ascended the throne in about 273 BC and coronation happened in about 269 BC, after four years of his ascension. It might have happened to king Naranarayan too. Thus, it might be the fact that king Naranarayan's coronation happened in 1555AD with minting of coins but he ascended the throne of the Koch kingdom long before of that date. He might have ascended the throne of the Koch kingdom even before 1546AD. Because, another Buranji named 'Sri Sri Svarganarayandeva Maharajar Janmacharita' recorded that in the 1543AD (Saka 1465), Dip Singh, Hemadhara and Ram Singh, the three brothers of Naranarayan were at Sala with three thousand men to guard the eastern frontier of the kingdom⁸. In the Buranji, the use of the term 'brothers of Naranarayan' instead of 'Sons of Biswa Singha' indirectly indicated that Naranarayan was the Koch king at that time. Biswa Singha, his father died after

1537AD as we mentioned earlier. Thus, it is cleared that Naranarayan ascended the throne after 1537AD and before 1543AD. Considering this situation, modern scholars fixed the date of the accession of Naranarayan to the throne of the Koch kingdom 1540AD and ruled the kingdom, a period of nearly 50 years upto 1587AD⁹, which is most probably acceptable.

Although Biswa Singha selected his second son Naranarayan as his successor previously by drawing a lottery, yet Naranarayan had to fight for the throne¹⁰. At the time of Biswa Simgha's death, Naranarayan and Sukladhvaja were at Benaras prosecuting their educations there under a learned Brahmin Brahmananda. In their absence, Nara Singha the elder son of Biswa Singha ascended the throne of the Koch kingdom with the support of some courtiers. However, he could not hold his position for a long time .On receiving the news of political situations in the capital, both the brothers rushed to the capital, raised an army and defeated Nara Singha, who then fled to the Morung country, the eastern part of Nepal along with his family¹¹. Due to Matrimonial relations between Biswa Singha and Nepal (Morung country)¹², Nara Singha got shelter in Morung (Nepal). However, Naranarayan and Sukladhvaja defeated Morung king and Nara Singha again fled from Nepal to Kashmir and eventually came back in Bhutan and established his control in a territory of lower Bhutan as per instruction of his father Biswa Singha¹³. After the incident, Naranarayan ascended the throne amidst pomp and grandeur in 1540 AD, and declared himself as the king Naranarayan and Sukladhvaja was appointed as general of the Koch army named him as Sangram singha¹⁴. King Naranarayan introduced a 'Chap' (seal), known as 'Singha-Chap' on this occasion with his name 'Sri Sri Naranarayan' inscribed on one side and an image of lion on the side thereon¹⁵, and stuck coins named 'Narayani Tanka'¹⁶.

He took aggressive warfare policy for the establishment of fully sovereign Koch kingdom and its expansion in the beginning of the 4th decade of the 16th century and followed this policy upto the end of 6th decade of the century and there after, he took the policy of defensive warfare policy, considering whole situation. Simultaneously, he institutionalized his leadership, centralized the administration and consolidated the

Koch power on permanent basis, and he took steps for the development of various intra-human aspects that will be discussed in the succeeding chapters.

The external policy of King Naranarayan would be discussed under two main heads; **A)** the period of aggressive warfare policy for expansion of the kingdom (1540-1568 AD) and **B)** the period of defensive warfare policy (1568-1587AD) to stabilize his position.

A) The period of aggressive warfare (1540-1568 AD):

During this period, King Naranarayan followed the aggressive warfare policy for the expansion of his kingdom towards north-east which started with the Koch-Ahom relations and ended with his war with Sulaiman Karrani of Bengal in about 1568AD. The wars and happenings of this period can be elaborately explained in the following ways;

The Koch- Ahom relations and wars 1540-1568:

The Koch-Ahom relations during the period up to the 1568 would be discussed under three main heads in the following ways:

First phase: Koch- Ahom hostilities on the Koch Sovereignty (1540- 1549):

After his accession to the throne of Koch kingdom, king Naranarayan in 1540 came into a long conflict with his contemporary Ahom ruler, Suklenmung or Godegaunraja (1539-52). Biswa Singha could not reconcile himself to his subordination and advised his sons at deathbed to remove the slur of Ahom over lordship¹⁷. It was due to his political ambition on one hand and on the other hand, his father's advice at deathbed. Naranarayan therefore, immediately after his accession to the throne took steps for a show down against the Ahoms¹⁸. In spite of that, it appears from varied accounts that the offensive was taken by the Ahom king Suklenmung or Godegaunraja, who in 1543 attacked and drove away Koch soldiers stationed at Sala, guarding the eastern border outposts of the kingdom on the south bank of the Brahmaputra¹⁹. Three brothers of king Naranarayan, Deep Simgha, Hemadhar and Ram Chandra, who along with their families and 3000 soldiers on a pilgrimage to Brahmakunda, had reached Sala by this time and on hearing the

incident, wanted to take revenge on the Ahoms. On the ground of, they captured a boat with five boatmen belonging to the Bar- Sandikai, an Ahom officer on the Sala River due to their encroachment of the boundary and carried on illegal trade²⁰. As a result, Ahom Bar- Sandikai and Deka Raja attacked the Koch garrison stationed there. But they themselves, were defeated and compelled to make a retreat and Bar- Sandikai was seriously injured by Hemadhar. Many Ahom soldiers were killed and their heads were piled up at Bhomoramukh²¹. With this initial success in 1546 and its victorious spirits, the Koch army advanced farther east and reached as far as Changinimukh on the south bank of the river Brahmaputra. No proper arrangements were made and as a result, they were defeated. Three brothers of Naranarayan were fallen in the field and wife of deep Simgha was taken a prisoner. The Ahoms captured 14 elephants and were able to spread wide panic in Koch camp, for which some Koch soldiers of the camp, fled to forests while many were killed²². After this incident, Koches alerted and became serious about their Ahom policy. Up to this period, they were engaged skirmishes with the Ahoms. But, with the loss of three brothers, Naranarayan became angry and get ready to sent an all-round expedition against the Ahoms.

In course of expedition, three battles were fought. The first battle held on the north bank of the Brahmaputra at the mouth of the Dikarai River in Darrang district. The Ahom army was under the command of Thaomung Banglung, Thaopim and others officers. The Ahom army crossed the river and attacked the Koches but failed and a number of soldiers including Thaomung Banglung and some other important officials were killed, and others were forced to retreat at a place called Karanga and then to Kaliabar²³. The second and the third battles were fought on the south bank of the Brahmaputra at Kaliabar and Sala respectively. The Ahoms army suffered a crushing defeat at Kaliabar in the hands of the Koches, who had pursued them and forced them to retreat farther to Sala. The victorious Koch army followed them and again defeated them at Sala with heavy losses.. But within a short time, the Ahoms organised their elephantry, and engaged famous generals and as a result, they inflicted a serious defeat on the Koch army, who then retreated through the Brahmaputra up to Narayanpur (in the district of Laksmipur) and constructed a fort on the north bank of the river there²⁴. The Ahoms also constructed forts at Pichala, on

the south bank of the Brahmaputra and stationed army for future hostilities with the Koches²⁵.

In the year 1547, the Koches again advanced up to Narayanpur fort, from where they attacked Pichala fort of the Ahoms on the opposite bank of the Pichala River. But they were seriously defeated by Ahom king Suklenmung's brother with huge losses in cash and kind²⁶. It is said in the Burunjis²⁷, that more than 5000 Koch soldiers were killed; their heads were piled and cremated at Mathadang, a place in the Sibsagar district²⁸. By the year 1549 AD, Koch army was completely washed out from the east²⁹.

Second phase: *Diplomatic War and Peace Proposals of Naranarayan to the Ahoms (1555-56):*

It is clear from last paragraph that, in spite of many skirmishes and wars with the Ahom, there is no evidence of peace discussion and communication between them and meanwhile, the new king Svargadeo Sukhampha alias Khora Raja (1552-1603) ascended the throne of the Ahoms . In this situation, Naranarayan before taking up aggressive policy again, decided to send a diplomatic peace mission to the Ahoms court in Saka 1477 (1555 AD.). The idea was to collect information about the Ahom attitude towards the Koches. The mission included ambassadors like Satananda Karji, Ramesvara Sarma, Kalaketu Sardar, Dhuma Sardar, Udbhanda Chaonia and Syamray Chaonia with other 22 Dhekari kings³⁰.

The Mission reached the Ahom capital 'Godegaun' and presented the gifts and a letter sent by king Naranarayan for the Ahom king Sukhampha. The letter contained the following massage:

"Let there be auspiciousness to Maharaja Sri Sri Svarganarayan of great prowess, whose virtues are sung by nymphs in all the universe , who is an ocean of learning , of fortitude and glory; whose pure body is sanctified by the waters of the heavenly river of gods; whose fame is spotless like snow, the necklace of Siva, laughter Kasa and Kailasa and which fame is spread by wind fanned by the ears of all Dik elephants... So be it written, I am well and I always wish your welfare. The seed of good feeling between us will germinate if pleasing letters be now exchanged between us, and under our efforts friendship will blossom and bear fruit. I am prepared to do my part and you should do yours. There is nothing more to write. You

know the result if you do not do so. I am sending Satananda Karji ... Hear all news from them and send them back without delay. Further, these things have been sent with the Ukil... The Month of Asar Saka 1477³¹.

The gifts includes : two ghuris (petticoats), one pillow, one bow , one pair of cheng fish , one Jakoia (fishing implement made of bamboos), five pieces of Saris , one piece of Gomcheng , (Chinese silk),five chits (a kind of cloth), Twenty pieces of black and ten pieces of white Chowries (hides) and ten pieces of Ghagaris (wearing apparel)³². Aikhek Buragohain received the Mission. Ambassadors of the mission reminded him; "friendly relationship subsisting between Assam and Behar from the time when, during the reign of the father of the present king, such relationship had been established in presence of the ruler of Gauda" They remonstrated to the Ahom king that their three princes had been killed in unfair fighting³³. Aikhek Bura Gohain replied in this way:

"Where have you seen friendship subsisting between Kshatriyas? Lips are beaten by the teeth. Should we, therefore, cause an infringement of the old bonds of friendship? Everything will be accomplished if he is intent on continuing friendly relations with the Svargadeo"³⁴. About the gifts, Buragohain said that 'they were quite ordinary and unfit for exhibiting in a royal court' and in some way 'insulting'³⁵.

The letter, the gifts and approach of the ambassadors seems to be quite polite except the sentence "You know the result if you do not do so", which convey some sort of threat. The gifts were seems to Koch culture oriented. However, Aikhek Buragohain on behalf of the king showed his dissatisfaction about the language of the letter, about the gifts and his aggressive and insulting attitudes during his conversation with the ambassadors of the Koch Mission. He also wrote an unfriendly letter, full of insinuations and humiliating comments to the Koch court through two Brahmin Kakatis (messengers) Sri Chandivar Sarma and Sri Damodar Sarma. The letter contained the following message:

"Let there be auspiciousness to king Sree Mallanarayan of generous character who shines as the sun causing the lotus of his family to unfold its petals , whose fame is white as the waves of the river of snow , who is the ocean of honour , gifts , prowess, fortitude , gravity and generosity , who is like a bee drinking the honey from the golden leaves of the feet of the destroyer of Tripura (Mahadeva).

This is written – All is well here. I am greatly delighted to learn of your welfare. You have written that the tree of good feeling will grow and blossom and bear fruit to our delight, but you know the basis of our amity. If that remains, the tree may blossom and bear fruit. I am as before.

However, the things, which you have sent through your Ukil, are not fit to be shown in a (royal) court. Such things would (naturally) appear proper to those who are accustomed to them .You yourself best understand what you meant by sending these things by messengers.....These presents are sent for you , -two pieces of Nara cloth , four elephant tusks , two ganthian (fragrant roots of a tree)10th Ahar Saka 1478³⁶

On reading the report of his ambassadors and contents of the letter of the Ahoms, King Naranarayan realized the mentality and the attitude of the Ahom court. He also realized the fact that his peace mission has failed and the Ahoms were not ready to accept the Koch sovereignty over the lower Brahmaputra valley. In this situation, king Naranarayan started thinking of alternative way and that of aggressive wars against the Ahoms and asked his brothers to prepare for war. From his previous experiences, he also realized the problems and difficulties faced during wars. For which he thought well-planned war preparation on long-term basis.

Third Phase: *the period of war preparation, reprisal and Koch Victory over the Ahoms 1561-68 AD:*

During the war preparations, King Naranarayan remembered points in his mind from previous experiences. These were the problems of transportation and obtaining of support from local tribes and petty local rulers. His father Biswa Singha was forced to retreat during his war with the Ahoms in 1537 due to the problems of food supply and transport ³⁷, and he himself faced these types of problems during the wars in 1546-47 with the Ahoms. First, to solve the problem of transport, he engaged one of his younger brothers Gohai Kamal to construct a road for the easy passage of troops, ammunitions³⁸. And accordingly , he build a 350 km long connecting road from Koch Behar to Narayanpur in the present Lakhimpur district³⁹, through the Koch-Bhutan border on the north bank of Brahmaputra in 1561 AD⁴⁰. The road is

also known as 'Gohai Kamal Aali' (road) as it was constructed under the supervision of Gohai Kamal and the parts of this road are still known by this name. He also excavated many tanks by the side of the road at equal distances to remove water scarcity. Secondly, to obtain support from local tribes and pretty rulers through out the road, followed moderate and friendly policy that would be discussed later.

After the completion of construction of the road in about 1561, Sukladhvaja as Commander-in-Chief of the Koch army, set out against the Ahom with a force of sixty thousands⁴¹ men through the new road and reached Narayanpur. King Naranarayan himself with his consort Bhanumati also joined the expedition. Meanwhile, on their way of the expedition, King Naranarayan halted at a place on the bank of the river Sankosh, organized all the Mech-Kachari people of the Mongoloid origin, and obtained their support by arranging a dance party⁴². The Bhutiyas, the Daflas and some local Bhuyans of the locality offered their submission to king Naranarayan and joined the Koch army⁴³. Naranarayan established a Durga temple at Chandikabehar in the present Mongaldoi subdivision near Bhairavkunda (during his halt at the place) for cultural assimilation of tribal and Brahmanic rites and appointed a Kachari priest for the worshiping the goddess Durga. He also introduced a cultural code for the people of the tribal origin, and Brahmanical fold, according which the Mech, the Kachari and the Koches of tribal fold to the north of the Gohai Kamal Aali will follow their tribal customs to worship and the southern territory of the road as far the Brahmaputra will follow Brahmanic customs to worship⁴⁴. From their halt at Chandikabehar, the Koches advanced to the next halt at Singri, and then reached the river Bharali. All the Vansavalis of the Darrung line stated that the Koch Commander-in-Chief Sukladhvaja crossed the Bharali River by jumping over it on his horseback and attained the nickname 'Chilarai'⁴⁵. At this time the descendants of the dethrone Chutiya line, came and prayed for protection to king Naranarayan against the Ahoms. The king considered their prayer with great sympathy and gave them land in a village named Basnbari in the Present Darrung district and they became a great ally of the king⁴⁶. According to one Buranji⁴⁷, some Brahmin Bhuyans of Narayanpur also offered their support and one of them gave an elephant to king Naranarayan and joined his forces. From Singri, the Koch army finally reached Narayanpur and used it as their base camp. It should be mentioned here that the Koch forces through out

their journey to Narayanpur proceed in two divisions .The naval division of eight thousands men, proceeded under the command of Bhaktamala and Tepu through the Brahmaputra and the infantry division of fifty two thousands men, under the command of Bhimbal and Bahubal proceeded through the '*Gohai Kamal Aafi*'⁴⁸. Both the divisions met at Narayanpur and prepared for attack.

In this way, Naranarayan obtained wholehearted support of the people of all castes and communities of the territory extending up to Narayanpur on the both sides of the road. He not only obtained their support but also they joined with the Koch army and made it multi-caste and multi-lingual force. It is cleared from above discussion that all these acts were guided by his diplomatic knowledge, which helped him to make strong back ground for direct war against the Ahoms.

From their base at Narayanpur , the Koch forces had been waiting for some time ,and in the year 1562 , the naval forces under the command Bhaktamal and Tepu sailed up the Brahmaputra and reached Sala and then to Marangi without any opposition from the Ahom side⁴⁹ . By conquering the adjoining territories, the navy further proceeded up to the mouth of the Dikhu River and constructed a fort there⁵⁰ . This time the Ahoms took offensive and their naval force, under the command of Charingia Raja advanced to fight the Koches through the Dikhu. The king himself with Aikhek Buragohain and Tipariya Raja were waiting on the bank of the Sisa and ultimately a devastating naval war was fought on the mouth of the Hariya, in which the Ahoms were defeated , and some generals were killed one was taken prisoner⁵¹ . On the land, Chilarai advanced to the mouth of Dikhu and, encamping there plundered the Morangi territory. To stop Chilarai, the Ahoms also build up a fort on the other bank of the river and have stationed at the mouth of the Sisa river⁵² . But the Ahoms realized the invincibility of Chilarai's army and the weakness of them and they devised a treacherous way to defeat the Koch general Chilarai. According to some Burunjis, the Ahom king Sukhampha sent some Sudras / soldiers disguised as Brahmins with their sacred threads raised on their ears and their sacred marks making prominent on their foreheads and seated on cows and placed them at the front line of his forces⁵³ . Seeing this and considering them as 'real Brahmins', Chilarai ordered his soldiers to withdraw from the war field, in the fear of the consequence of killing Brahmins and cows⁵⁴ .

Meanwhile, the Ahoms started evaluating the whole course of the war and their defeat at the hands of the Koches, at the battles of Sala, Marangi and on the Handia River. They identified some crucial problems like weakness of the navy, old and traditional war techniques, the joining of the Chungis with the Koches⁵⁵ and the most crucially the betrayal of some courtiers including the King's brother Tamulnokhowa who had joined the Koches⁵⁶. In this situation, the Ahoms king Sukhampha consulting with Charing Raja immediately decided for a peace treaty with the Koches and accordingly, three dignified courtiers: Langidam, Lechailung and Langikhun were sent to the Koch king Naranarayan, who being a good men cordially received and in reply, he sent an envoy named Ratikara (Ratikanta?)⁵⁷ to the Ahoms court with the following message:

“আমিও এতিয়াৱ নহওঁ, সিবোলাকো এতিয়াৱ নহয়। বিশেষতঃ স্বগীরজা ইন্দ্ৰৰ সন্তান, আমিও সদাশিবৰ সন্তান; এতেকে তোমাৱে আমাৱ দ্বন্দ-কন্দল কৰা উচিত নহে। পূৰ্বতো তোমাৱে আমাৱে অধিকাধিক শ্ৰীভিগোট চলি গৈছে; এই জানি তোমাৱ আমাৱ দুই রাজে কুশলে যেনেৱুপে রহিব, মেইৱুপে আপুনি সীমনা নিবন্ধ কৰি রাজ্য লওক, আমাকো দিওক। এই কথা শুনি যেমনে সব'জনে প্ৰশংসা কৰে, তাকে আচৰিব” |⁵⁸.

However, in the same context, D. Nath, Referring to the DAB (p-62) mentioned a different message:

“We are in friendly terms for a long time. We are descendants of gods as our fore fathers were sons of gods. We are living as brothers. In the ancient time a girl was offered to us by the king of Assam. This friendship of ours should continue to our descendants. It is not proper to be in hostility. So the king of the east should arrange to settle the affairs in such a way so that both the countries may enjoy peace and prosperity”⁵⁹

Anyway, in spite of this type of differences about the subject matter of the message , it is crystal clear that the attitude and the mentality of Naranarayan was quite cordial and friendly, and not influenced by his advantages achieved in the wars and even not by his past experiences of his 'Peace Mission' in 1555 AD⁶⁰. Ratikara (Ratikanta) came back to the Koch camp and the best wishes and presents were also exchanged .But the war renewed again on the ground that "Chilarai who

somewhat came to know how he was tricked by the Ahom king to avoid fighting , soon reorganized his forces and renewed conflict in January,1563⁶¹. The Koch navy under the command of Tepu and Bhaktmal in May 1563 started from their base camp on the bank of Hariya and reached the mouth of the Dikhu River, plundering through out their journey. In addition, on land Chilarai himself advanced with a large force up to the mouth of the Dikhu and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Ahoms in about April 1563 AD⁶². Both wings of the Koch force advanced eastward through the Brahmaputra to attack the important strategic fort of the Ahoms at Dihing and forced them to retreat further east at Abhaypur. The DRV mentions a story, that the Ahom king consulting with his courtiers, planned another trick and sent a messenger to the Koch king with a 'he-goat'(pantha) made of iron and proposed that if the Koch King was able to cut the goat in a single blow of his sword , they would surrendered to the Koch king . However, king Naranarayan successfully performed the task with the blessing of the goddess Gosani, gave the head of the goat to the messenger, and angrily ordered him to offer it to his master⁶³. In this reverse situation, the Ahoms lost their military and mental strengths to further resistance, the king Sukhampha along with some of his courtiers, fled from his capital at Garhgaon to a placed named Charaikhorong in the Naga hills⁶⁴. The victorious Koch force occupied the capital of the Ahoms and king Naranarayan advanced to it from his stay at Majuli. Some nobles, Bhuyans, Ahom subjects and even one of the king's brothers were present to welcome them⁶⁵.

At Charaikhorong in Naga Hills, the Ahom king started thinking for a term with the Koch king, and after consulting with his courtiers, he sent an important officer named Aikhek Buragohain with two gold vessels, two silver vessels and a silver jar as presents to the Koch king Naranarayan at Garhgaon⁶⁶. In spite of his dissatisfaction, king Naranarayan, agreed to a peace treaty on the conditions:

Aikhek Buragohain, " you better tell the king of the east that he must send your son ,the son of Thaomunlung , the sons of Shengdang and the son of Khamshong to me and I shall go back to my country leaving all here"⁶⁷

Or

"Please tell the king of Udaygiri (the east) that he must give me the sons of the three Gohains as well as of Sudang and Khamsen (two Ahom commanders). Only then, I shall return leaving the kingdom of the Svargadeo unmolested"⁶⁸.

According to some scholars, the Koch king also demanded the best elephant, 'Khamring', the swiftest horse 'Pakhiraj', war indemnity and valuables from the Ahom King⁶⁹ and Aikhek Buragohain came back to the Ahom king at Charaikhorong in Naga hills, informed him about the treaty conditions. King Sukhampha immediately accepted it, as he had no alternative. Accordingly , he sent four sons of his very important courtiers and his own brother Chao Sungam alias Sunder Gohain in place of Thaomunglang's son, as hostages⁷⁰ and the best elephant 'Khamring', the swiftest horse 'Pakhiraj' as tributes in July 1563 AD⁷¹. As war-indemnity, the Ahom king also gave king Naranarayan sixty elephants, sixty pieces of cloth, sixty beautiful maidens, three hundred men and a huge amount of gold, silver, and above all a red royal umbrella as the symbol of acknowledging his supremacy and ceded the whole territory on the north bank of the Brahmaputra river⁷². The triumphant Koch king organized proper administration of the territory under the supervision of his brother Kumar Kamal Narayan as Uparaj (king's representative) and appointed three officers; Ujir Bamun, Tapaswi Laskar and Malamulya Laskar with the responsibility of various departments⁷³.

Conquest of other Northeastern states:

Thus, the giant (the Ahom) of the upper Brahmaputra valley was defeated by its long-standing feudatory, the Koches under its prominent ruler Naranarayan, who established the Koch hegemony over the whole northern bank of the Brahmaputra and the giant, once their nominal master was forced to become a feudatory of the Koches. This defeat made an overwhelming reaction among all the rulers (both independent and semi-independent under the Ahoms) of the whole of the northeast India and as result some rulers voluntarily accepted the Koch supremacy by offering annual tributes⁷⁴, some started war preparation to save themselves from the aggression of the victorious Koches.

Kachhar:

Now Chilarai, supreme commander of the Koch army set out to conquer the others states of northeast. If we accept the chronology of his conquests, as given in DRV, Chilarai first advanced against the Hidimba country, the kingdom of the Kachharis with Kavi Indra Patra (Kavindra Patra), Raj Indra Patra (Rajendra Patra) Damodar Karji and, Megha Mukudum as generals and only twenty Cavalries, reached the capital of the Hidimba country (Kachhar) at Moibang⁷⁵. The Hidimba king submitted without giving any battle, the king presented a number of valuables including gold, silver and elephants⁷⁶ and agreed to pay an annual tribute of 1,000 gold mohars, 70, 000 Silver mohars and 60 elephants⁷⁷.

Manipur:

Chilarai's next target was Manipur, the country of the Meithies. Before sending the army, he sent a messenger to the king of Manipur demanding submission and tribute. The king of Manipur agreed to the demands, and immediately presented the Koch king Rs. 20,000 (silver coins), 1,000 gold coins and 40 elephants, as first installment⁷⁸ and also agreed to send by a messenger an annual tribute of 10 elephants, 300 gold coins and Rs. 20,000 in future⁷⁹.

Jayantiya:

The Napoleonic advancement of the Koch army under Chilarai continued one after another. Next, they attacked the kingdom of Jayantiya and Chilarai himself killed the king. On submission, Naranarayan placed the son of the deceased king on the throne of Jayantiya, who immediately presented 10 horses, 1,000 gold coins Rs. 10,000 (silver coins), 100 'Khengra' (special type of sword, also known as Nakodeo) and others valuables⁸⁰. The king also agreed to send by a messenger an annual tribute of 70 selected horses, Rs. 10,000 (silver coins) and 300 swords in future⁸¹. In this situation, the Jayantiya king again requested his Koch master for special permission to mint coins in his name. But the minting of coins in one's own name "being followed by independent rulers only, the Koch sovereign permitted him to mint coins with the mention of his capital" only,⁸² not with the name of the king. It is also proved by the fact that until 1731, the Jayantiya kings minted coins with the legend of "Ruler of Jayantiya", instead of giving the name of the kings⁸³.

Tripura:

According to the DRV, Chilarai after the conquest of Jayantiya advanced against Tripura with a large army of 40,000 men and in a fierce battle, the Tripuri king was defeated and killed with 18,000 soldiers. The brother of the deceased king, sued for a peace with the Koch king Naranarayan with some presents including 30 horses, 100 gold coins and 10,000 silver coins King Naranarayan placed him on the Tripuri throne on condition of paying an annual tribute of 9,000 gold coins⁸⁴. Kamrupa Burunji and Deodhai Assam Burunji also mentioned the Tripura expedition of the Koches⁸⁵. Khan Choudhary A. Ahmed⁸⁶ stated that Naranarayan had stationed a regiment of soldiers there and constructed a fort near Brahmapur, which was then named as 'Kochpur', later corrupted into as 'Khaspur'. He also builds rampart and excavated tanks⁸⁷. However, all the Chroniclès of Tripura including the *Rajamala*, the dynastic history of Tripura, do not mentioned this expedition and its succeeding events. Others Burunjis of the northeast India also do not mention the events, although they recorded the Koch expedition to the other kingdoms of the northeast India. On these grounds, Colonial historian Gait has expressed his doubt about the authenticity of the Koch expedition to Tripura and its succeeding events. He stated that the information "is not sufficient to establish it as an historical fact"⁸⁸. In this situation, we have to consider the opinions modern scholars to conclude the fact. N.R. Raychoudhury⁸⁹ mentioned that the Tripura kings Deva Manikya (1520-32), Vijay Manikya (1532-63) and Ananta Manikya (1564-1567) were the contemporaries of Biswa Singha and Naranarayan. The northeastern conquests of the Koch were carried out in between 1562-1568AD and it partially covered the reign of two Tripuri kings; Vijay Manikya (1532-63) and Ananta Manikya (1564-1567). Vijay Manikya with a long reign of 32 years was a powerful king and if the Koches defeated him, it must be recorded as a painful end of a great king in the history of Tripura. The Koch expedition of Tripura must have happened as after the 1564, the end of Vijay Manikya⁹⁰. Therefore, it may be accepted that, his son and successor Ananta Manikya, was a very weak king who ruled the country only for a short span of three years. According to D. Nath,⁹¹ he was "an unworthy son of a worthy father who suffered defeat along with loss of his life at the hand of the Koches" and he also places the event in the early part of 1567 AD⁹². So it is cleared that most of the modern scholars have accepted the authenticity of the Koch expedition and its

succeeding event. The Tripura chronicles, did not record it, most probably, due to their humiliating defeat and this type of incidents are not rear in Indian History⁹³.

Khairam:

Viryavanta, the king of Khairam, a hilly track to the north of the Jayantiya kingdom, with its capital at Nongkhree⁹⁴, is said to have voluntarily made his submission to the Koch king. He gave presents of 20 horses, 40 elephants, 1,000 gold coins and 40,000 silver coins⁹⁵, in order to avoid the fate that had been faced by other kings of north-east. Besides these, he also agreed to pay 30 elephants, 50 horses, 900 gold coins and 15,000 silver coins annually as tributes⁹⁶. On request of the Khairam king, he was given the permission to mint coins, but not in the name of Khairam king; in the name of king Malladeva (Naranarayan), for which he was also presented a mint⁹⁷.

Dimarua:

After the conquest of Tripura, according to DRV, the Koch Naranarayan and his brother-cum-general Chilarai decided to retreat, and on their way back to their naval halt at Hajo through Gauhati, attacked Pantheswara, the king of Dimarua, who claimed himself descendant from Mrigakanka⁹⁸. In the battle, the king was defeated and made a prisoner, but he purchased his freedom by agreeing to pay an annual tribute of 7,000 silver coins⁹⁹. However, according to some modern scholars the Dimaruas formally were a tributary of the Kachharis, and during the advancement of the Koches against the Kachharis, they prayed for help to king Naranarayan against the Kachharis oppression. As a result, after the conquest of the Kachharis, Naranarayan made Pantheswara (Dimarua chief) a vassal and established him as a warden of the Jayantiya border, who also agreed to pay annual tribute to the Koch King¹⁰⁰. Soon Chilarai attacked the Dimarua kingdom because its king had stopped paying their agreed annual tributes¹⁰¹. Anyway, during the course of the return of the Koches, Naranarayan had established a fort in a village named 'Baha' and excavated a canal to straighten the curved-course of the Brahmaputra near Pandunath on the right bank¹⁰².

Sirath (Sylhet):

The DRV also stated that king Naranarayan had sent an expedition against the Padshah of Sirath (Sylhat) which laid to the south-west of Jayantiya on the north of the river Kusiara. He was a powerful kingdom having a large force consisting of elephants, camels and horses¹⁰³. However, there are controversies among the modern scholars about the time and authenticity of the Sylhat expedition of the Koches and they think that the DRV could not maintain the sequence of the events. Accordingly, to D. Nath holds the view that immediately after the conquest of Tripura, the Koch force had attacked the Padshah of Sirath (Sylhat) and then Chilarai decided to retreat, and on their way back to their naval halt at Hajo, through Gauhati, attacked Pantheswara, the king of Dimarua¹⁰⁴. Accordingly, he again mentioned in his book, the Sylhat expedition first and then the Dimarua case¹⁰⁵. Khan Choudhury A. Ahmed, the distinguished scholar on the Koch Kingdom, did not even mention the incident of the Sylhat expedition in his book, although he had collected most of his information from the DRV. It seems to us that Khan Choudhary did not consider the information of the DRV as true in this case¹⁰⁶. Gait did not accept the invasion as true due to the lacks of confirmation from other sources¹⁰⁷. On the other hand, S.L Barua considered the Koch invasion of Sylhat 'as a myth'¹⁰⁸. He also questioned that why Sylhat was not conquered immediately after the conquest of Tripura and why the expedition against Sylhat was sent after the return of the army all the way from Tripura through an extremely difficult kingdom¹⁰⁹. Although, most of the scholars had showed their confusion about the invasion we would like to proceed with the information of the DRV. According to DRV , the Padshah of Sirath (Sylhat) was a powerful king who gave a hard resistance to the forces of Chilarai, who had to adopt new and more powerful war technique to defeat the Padshah and ultimately he was defeated and killed including 1,000000 soldiers¹¹⁰ . Asibai, the brother of deceased Padshah surrendered to Chilarai with presents of 100 elephants, 180 horses, 3, 00,000 silver coins and 10,000 gold coins¹¹¹. Chilarai pardoned and took him to king Naranarayan , who made him the Padshah of Sylhat , on the condition of an annual tribute 100 elephants , 200 horses, 3,00,000 silver coins and 10,000 gold coins for future¹¹². If we go through the amount of presents and commitments of annual tributes, it seemed to us that Naranarayan's war with the Padshah of Sylhat was a hard war.

After defeating and conquering Sylhet, Koch army advanced towards their naval halt at Hajo through Gauhati, Naranarayan found that the Brahmaputra had a very curved course shaped like a bangle near Pandunath and therefore he ordered his soldiers to excavate a canal to divert the river to flow straight from the east to the west. The Brahmaputra then took the course of the canal and this new current of the river thenceforth came to be known as Khargosrota, possibly because it was dug with the help of armed soldiers¹¹³.

The Koch army under the command of Chilarai conquered the whole of the north-east India within a short period of about 7 years (1562-68). However, it is also to be noted that the Koches did not directly annex the conquered kingdoms of the north-east considering practical problems such as the long distance, communication problem, geographical difficulties and sufficient machineries to do so and were satisfied with tributes and formal submission of the kings. This realistic and innovative policy could only be comparable with the policy of great Gupta king Samudragupta's southern campaign in forth century AD, who due to the such problems, did not annex the Southern states of India. These acts also indicate the political farsightedness of king Naranarayan who realized the practical situation of the area and adopted comparatively a realistic policy¹¹⁴.

King Naranarayan's relation with Kararani ruler of Gauda and the Koch defeat:

Highly ambitious with the repeated success in the northeast, the Koches turned their attention towards the west, to the kingdom of Gauda ruled by Suleiman Kararani. But it is difficult to identify the fact that who was the aggressor. Many informations and views on the matter have given by contemporary and modern writers. The Persian sources like *Akbarnamah* and *Riyaz-us-Salatin* make the sultan of Gaur Sulaiman as aggressor and it was a part of Sultan's aggressive and expansionist policy¹¹⁵. Modern Scholar like D. Nath also argued in favour of this view but from different angles. He stated that Naranarayan "had invested a large amount of money and materials in his eastern campaigns and his soldiers also were tired of protracted conflicts"¹¹⁶. He also raised question with the information from DRV that why a strong believer of astrological calculations, king Naranarayan who suspended the rebuilding of the temple of Kamakhya on the pretext of his being under the influence of evil stars, will take an aggressive policy against a more powerful enemy

under the same circumstances? It is impossible to take an aggressive policy by king Naranarayan under these situations. So he identified Sulaiman as aggressor and explained the incident in this way "Thus at a time when Naranarayan was repairing the material losses of his kingdom and had decided not to undertake any serious expedition owing to the influence of the Saturn, Sulaiman Karrani , a master of diplomacy , led his aggressive arms against the growing Koch kingdom"¹¹⁷.

On the other hand, most of the local chronicles like the *Buranjies*, *Vansavalies* depict different picture that it was the Koch king who some time after his conquest of the north-east , proceeded to fight against the Gauda (Bare Bangala), where the Koch army was defeated and Chilarai was taken as a prisoner¹¹⁸. Modern scholars like Gait and Khan Choudury A. Ahamed also accepted the view of local chronicles that king Naranarayan was the aggressor¹¹⁹. Under these circumstances, it is very hard to identify the real facts. But if we carefully examine the informations and opinions of modern scholars, it seems to us that most probably king Naranarayan took the offensive and the information of the *Akbarnamah* and *Riyaz-us-Salatin* is not clear and it seems to be very general in description. Both the *Akbarnamah* and *Riyaz-us-Salatin* never mentioned that Sulaiman 'first' took offensive. It might mean that he was disturbed or attacked by Naranarayan, and then Sulaiman "Set out for conquest"¹²⁰. It is clear from the above discussion that, the Koch army was defeated in the war and Chilarai was taken as a prisoner. The victorious Muslim army then proceeded up the Brahmaputra as far as Tezpur, devastating certain Koch territories and some Hindu temples including those at Kamakhya and Hajo, besieging the Koch capital, but had to return abruptly owing to the outbreak of a rebellion in Orissa in 1567-68 AD¹²¹. The opinion of D. Nath is also not suitable to explain the actual situation. Sulaiman Karrani was aware of the consequence of a supposed Mughal invasion, for which he was egger to create a ring of feudatories and was not in a position to take offensive against the Koches. Nath's argument: Naranarayan "had invested a large amount of money and materials in his eastern campaigns and his soldiers also were tired of protracted conflicts" is not appropriate, for the Koch army was victorious in the northeast and had became ambitious with huge amount money and materials collected as tributes. J.N. Sarkar rightly explained the fact in this way: "Encouraged by long successive victories in the north-eastern corner, the Kuch king invaded the dominions of Sulaiman Karrani"¹²². So there is no question of being

defensive from the Koch side and notably Naranarayan was offensive. Anyhow, although Naranarayan proceeded to attack Gaud, but in the war, his army was defeated and his brother Chilarai was taken prisoner, who was then kept in captive by the king of Gaur and he himself managed his escape from the battlefield¹²³. But the Muslim historians make no mention of the capture and imprisonment of Chilarai¹²⁴. Sulaiman Karran army did not remain satisfied but set out to conquer North-East India under the command of one Kalapahar¹²⁵, preceded up the Brahmaputra as far as Tezpur. However, the Muslims could not stay long in the northeast to establish their permanent authority, but hastened back to Bengal to subdue an insurrection on Orissa in about 1568AD.

The situations after the defeat were confusing and some ways controversial due to many versions of information in local Chronicles and Persian writings. According to one local legend, that during his escape, Naranarayan took shelter in a house where he revealed his identity and asked for food. But the householder did not show any respect Naranarayan as king and offered only 'Katha' of rice. Humiliated by the behaviour of the householder, the king left the house without having the rice and promised not to take rice until he became able to free his brother Chilarai. From then the king had been living on, only milk and engaged himself in various types of propitious ceremonies¹²⁶. However, the sources say nothing about the where about of the king. On the other hand, Chilarai, after passing about one year in captivity in Gaur and finding no hope of his release, sent a message to Naranarayan to release the Ahom hostages and to establish friendly relations with the Ahom king¹²⁷, for a precaution against any future Muslim attack. In the DRV, it is stated that meanwhile, Chilarai obtained the favour of Sulaiman Karrani by curing Padshah's mother (or wife) from snake-bite¹²⁸. It is stated that the Padshah even gave his daughter in marriage to Chilarai with five north-eastern Parganas –Bahirband, Bhitarband, Gayabari Sherpur and Dasakaunia (present Rangpur and north Mymensingh district of Bangladesh) as dowry¹²⁹. According to another view, Naranarayan advanced with an army to release Chilarai, who having a secret understanding with his brother, who obtained the favour and permission of the Padshah to take his (Padshah's) army under the pretence of fighting against Naranarayan, who had deprived him from his share of the kingdom. As per plan, Chilarai then joined with his brother and suddenly attracted and subjugated Gauda, in

changing situation, Padshah fled from his capital city and for this victory, Chilarai assumed the nickname Sangram Singha¹³⁰. It may be the real cause for the transfer of Sulaiman Karrani's capital from Gauda to Tanda¹³¹. But from the above two views, it seems to us that the earlier one more reliable, for most important source the DRV said nothing about the later view and the treatment of snake-bite traditional indigenous way was widely prevalent in the area .

B) The period of defensive warfare (1568-1587 AD):

The crushing and humiliating defeat of the Koch army in the hands of Sulaiman Karrani marked many remarkable changes in Naranarayan's external and internal policies. The traditional policy of 'aggressive warfare' had ended. He introduced the policy of 'defensive warfare' and the policy of peaceful co-existence, by which he tried to establish cordial relations not only with the all conquered states of the north-east India, but also with the Great Mughal emperor Akbar. The maintenance and security of the conquered territories and consolidation of kingdom had motivated the Koches to move towards 'defensive warfare' against the probable and traditional enemies i.e. the Ahoms and Bengal. The first step to this new policy was to release the Ahom hostages and to normalize the Koch-Ahom relations. According to the Assam *Burunjis* and other sources, Chilarai secretly sent a message from his imprisonment in Gaud to his brother king Naranarayan to release the Ahom hostages and prisoners taken from the Ahom kingdom at the time of their victory in 1563 AD¹³². His desire was to establish friendly terms with the Ahom king in order to get his assistance in case of another Muslim invasion. King Naranarayan agreed with the message of his brother but the king thought that it would not be good policy to do this openly, so he was engaged in a pre-planned game of dice with one of the hostages, on the condition of the liberty of the all hostages. The king intentionally lost the game according to his plan and released all the hostages to fulfill the condition of the game .He also sent with them Gaja Singha and Patal Singha Karji as ambassadors with a beautiful princess. In return, the Ahom king also sent his own ambassador Ratna Singha Kandalia to king Naranarayan¹³³. On the other hand, towards the Bengal, Naranarayan established friendship with the great Mughal Akbar to control the Afghans. The most important thing is that all the Burunjis of northeast completely silent about the payment of annual tributes and their relation with the Koches. It

seems that Naranarayan followed the policy of non-interference considering the situation and the rulers of northeastern states had stopped the payment of annual tributes. However, the policy of king Naranarayan did not realize any advantage in the eastern frontier i.e. the Ahoms and as a result, he turned his attention towards south west i.e. the Mughals that would be discussed in appropriate places.

Final Phase of the Koch-Ahom relation under king Naranarayan:

In spite of the release of the Ahom hostages and immediate exchanges of ambassadors and others, the defensive policy of king Naranarayan in eastern frontier became fruitless. In favored situation, the Ahom king Sukhampha alias Khoraraja freed him from the Koch subordination and recovered his lost territories by repulsing the Koch officers appointed by Chilarai and dismissed the Koch administration. He introduced his own administration under his own officers. As a result, hostile relation between the Koches and the Ahom again came into existence and the Koches had to lead two naval expeditions against the Ahoms under the leadership of Tepu, in October 1566 and 1571 A. D to re-establish the Koch supremacy. However, the Ahoms repulsed both of these naval expeditions and a Koch officer named Mohan was captured. The Koches also lost some men, materials and the all conquered territories from the Ahoms to the north of the Brahmaputra River. In this situation, the Koches had decided to avoid further clashes with the Ahoms and therefore remained indifferent in this reverse situation and in 1571 AD, the Ahom king ultimately succeeded in regaining his independence¹³⁴. In 1577AD, a rebellion is said to have occurred against the Koch King under the leadership of three men named Bar Dado, Gabha Naik and Bar Katu. They were defeated by the Koch king and fled with 14,000 of their followers to Ahom territory and asylum was given by the Ahom king Sukhampha¹³⁵. The Koch king this time also remained indifferent due the fear of Mughal extension towards the east and some internal problems.

The Koch –Mughal relations during the reign of king Naranarayan:

In the meanwhile, great political changes were taking place in proper Bengal. Sulaiman Karrani, although was an independent ruler of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in the mid sixties of the 16th century, but diplomatically he acknowledged the formal suzerainty of Akbar by reading ‘Khutba’ in his and sending him tribute. Sulaiman

Karrani died in 1572 AD, and was succeeded by his second son Daud, who declined formal suzerainty of Akbar and declared his independence by reading Khutba in his own name. He foolishly followed aggressive policy and destroyed the Mughal fort Zamaniya by attacking the eastern border of the Mughal territory .The Mughal Emperor Akbar sent Munim Khan to crush Daud Karrani and to conquer Bengal. King Naranarayan who had been humbled by Daud's father and who was in dread of the growing Ahom power on the eastern side seized this opportunity to establish friendly relations with the Mughal Emperor. However, informations in the Koch chronicles and the Persian writings contradict about the question who took the initiative to establish relationship between king Naranarayan and Akbar. The Koch chronicles as the DRV stated that, Emperor Akbar took the initiatives and addressed a letter to Naranarayan seeking his help and friendship to fight the Afghans of Bengal and also proposed a part of Bengal after its subjugation¹³⁶. It is also recorded in the DRV that king Naranarayan immediately accepted the proposal of friendly alliance and sent letters with a plan to take offensive from eastern side of Bengal¹³⁷. Accordingly, the forces of both the rulers (King Naranarayan and emperor Akbar) then invaded Bengal from both the sides i.e. the Koches from north-eastern side and the Mughal from western side, and defeated the Padsha, occupied Bengal and then divided it between themselves¹³⁸. On the other hand, the Persian writing like the Akbarnamah and *Ain-i-Akbari* stated that king Naranarayan had taken the initiative and begun friendly overtures by writing a letter to the Mughal emperor Akbar. The Akbarnamah states that "one of the occurrences was the arrival of presents from Bengal and Koc (Kochbehar) Rajah Mai Gosai (Naranarayan), the Zamindar of Koc, also again made his submission,including 54 noted elephants" to Akbar¹³⁹. The *Ain-i-Akbari* described the incident in this way that Naranarayan "renewed his demonstration of obedience to the Imperial throne ...sent tributes and 54 elephants"¹⁴⁰, with valuable presents from his country.

From the above evidences, it seems that the relations between king Naranarayan and Akbar no doubt was very cordial and based on equality and the king did not make friendship with Akbar as a subordinate ally. But the informations of the *Akbarnamah* and the *Ain-i-Akbari* somehow, indicate that the relation was not based on equality, but made the Koch king mere 'a Zamindar of Koc' who made his

submission to Akbar as subordinate ruler again. The word 'again' denotes 'what had already happened or renewal of an earlier event'.

After considering all the informations of the Koch chronicles and the Persian writings, most of the modern scholars had given their opinions in favour of equality of relationship. S.L Barua described that "Naranarayan did not make friendship with Akbar as a subordinate ally for there was no acceptance of formal supremacy of the Mughal emperor on the part of the Koch king"¹⁴¹. S. N. Bhattacharyya elaborately had given same in this way "There is no mention of tribute, territorial concession or any other symbol of political tutelage anywhere.....It need not be emphasized that the alliance was purely defensive in nature , contracted between two sovereign states, and peace, amity and good-will were its essence"¹⁴². D. Nath also had given same view from different angle and with explanation. He points out that "...there is no indication of treating Naranarayan as a vassal of the Mughal emperor" and he explained it as "...the relations between the two rulers were established as a result of their reciprocal longings and it was based on equal terms"¹⁴³. He also explained that "Abul Fazl's remark about the Koch king as a 'Zamindar of Koc' was motivated by the idea of raising his patron king always above others"¹⁴⁴. From the above discussion, it is established that the relations between Naranarayan and Akbar was based on equality and necessitated by the both the parties. From the Mughal side, it was because, although Bengal was formally annexed to the Mughal Empire after the battle near *Rajmaha* in about 1576 AD, yet a large part of eastern and southeastern Bengal remained outside the periphery of the Mughal rule. This large part of Bengal became the citadel of the Afghan fugitives and other prince lets of Bengal, who were waiting for opportunity to decline the Mughal rule. So in order to have an effective control over this part, an effective blockade from the east to where they repeatedly ran for shelter, was an urgent necessity for Akbar to establish friendship with the Koch king¹⁴⁵. On the Koch side, King Naranarayan felt an urgent necessity of recovering his lost prestige after his defeat at the hands of Sulaiman Karrani in 1568 AD¹⁴⁶, and his urgency to have an alliance with the Mughals in a time when the Ahoms in the east had shaken off the Koch vassalage and for their aggressive attitudes¹⁴⁷. King Naranarayan refused to give shelter to the fugitive Afghans rebellious, who were repulsed by the Mughals in 1575, to make a suitable situation for a formal alliance with Akbar. The Koch- Mughal friendship had established surely

after 1568 and before 1575 AD, and formal relations Naranarayan and Akbar had taken place definitely before 1576, by which date Daud Karrani was defeated and killed by the combined forces of Naranarayan and Akbar. Therefore, it can safely be conclude that the alliance was both offensive and defensive in nature and both of the rulers used it to save guard their states.

The Koch-Mughal alliance was a land marked in the Socio-political history of Bengal and Koch Beher, not only during the reign of king Naranarayan but also after his death in 1587 AD. However, the outcome of the alliance was more fruitful to the Mughals than to the Koches in the political field. On the Mughals side, the alliance gave an advantage to the Mughals to establish their effective sway over Bengal and to subdue the rebellious Afghans. They also obtained the help of Koch naval force against Masum Khan Kabuli, the rebellious Mughal officer at Tanta, who was defeated on the Ganges and forced to flee¹⁴⁸. On the Koch side, with the alliance the Koches became a part of all Indian politics, local Afghans chiefs of the eastern Bengal not dare to disturb the Koches and also to uplift their social status. But after the death of king Naranarayan, the alliance could not last long. With the strength of this alliance, Naranarayan's son and successor Lakshminarayan obtained Mughal help by acknowledging the formal supremacy of the Mughal emperor Akbar. He also fostered friendship with the Mughal Subeder of Bengal Raja Man Singh by giving his sister in marriage to him, to fight his cousin Raghudeva, son of Sukladhvaja, who in the meanwhile, established friendship with Isa Khan, the powerful Afghan chief of the eastern Bengal to fulfill the desire of becoming the king of the undivided Koch kingdom¹⁴⁹. Although Raghudeva was defeated in the hands of Koch-Mughal alliance and the Mughals were always in search of opportunities to realize their imperialistic ambitions in northeastern India ignored the alliance within few days and established Mughal suzerainty over both the Koch kingdoms: Koch Beher the western one and Koch-Hajo the eastern one¹⁵⁰.

The political hegemony and the extent of the kingdom of Naranarayan:

The Kingdom established by his father Biswa Singha and extended by him with the help of his illustrious Brother-cum- general Chilarai, reached its zenith in the 7th decade of the 16th century. No doubt, king Naranarayan at his peak period, established his political hegemony, directly or indirectly, over the whole North-East

India up to Burma border and Northeastern part of Bengal up to Tibet border. On the south and the West, he extended hegemony up Ghoraghat and Mithila or *Tirhut* border respectively¹⁵¹. H. N. Chaudhury in the beginning of the 20th century following the view of Gait¹⁵² observes that his conquest comprised "almost the whole of Northern Bengal, Bhutan and Assam as well as the modern States of Kachar, Jaintia, Manipur and Tripura, extended up to the coast of the Bay of Bengal"¹⁵³. But this type description is full of exaggeration and not suit to realize the actual situation of the facts. To understand the extent of Naranarayan's kingdom and his hegemony over the areas properly, we have to proceed systematically and carefully investigating all happenings throughout his reign. The territory, which was inherited and conquered by Naranarayan, can be discussed under three main heads: A) the extend of the territory, which was under his direct administrative control, B) the extend of the territory, which was his tributaries, and C) the territory, which was under his direct control after the division of the kingdom in about 1581AD. It is accepted by all modern scholars that the territory under the direct administrative control of Naranarayan however was much smaller than that of the territories on which his command worked for a certain times and the extension of the kingdom changed from time to time.

At the time of his accession to the throne Naranarayan inherited his father's kingdom comprising the Lower Himalayan region, the whole of the present districts of Kamarupa , Goalpara and a part of Nowgong of present Assam, Jalpaiguri and Koch Behar districts of present West Bengal and Rangpur district of present Bangladesh . It was extended in the east up to the Barnadi on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, up to the Karatoya in the west. On the south, it was extended up to the river *Kapili* in the present Nowgong of Assam and on the north up to Rangamati (Joygaon) in the Indo- Bhutan border¹⁵⁴. According to the DRV, he also conquered Bhutan from his brother Nara Singha¹⁵⁵. This inherited dominion was under his direct control. In the North-East India, out of many conquests, Naranarayan obtained the whole territory from the river Suvarnasiri lying to the north of the river Brahmaputra as the condition of peace treaty with the Ahoms in about 1563AD and introduced his own administrative arrangements¹⁵⁶. But Ahom king Khora Raja recovered the lost territories very soon and introduced his own administration by dismissing the Koches.

King Naranarayan also obtained the five Parganas: *Bahirbandh*, *Bhitarbandal*, *Goyabari*, *Serpur* and *Daskaunia* i.e. the Riparian portions Rangpur and north Mymensing from the Padshah of Gaud as dowry of Chilarai's marriage for which the Koch kingdom extended up to the river Karatoya¹⁵⁷. It is also proved by the information of the *Akbarnamah*, that the western boundary of Naranarayan's dominion touched the Mughal dominion at Tirhut and in the south; it was extended as far as Ghoraghat¹⁵⁸. On the north, the Koch kingdom touched lower Tibet i.e. the lower Himalayan region covering present Indo- Bhutan border, as far as Rangamati (Joygong) of present Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal¹⁵⁹.

From above discussion it can safely be concluded that the undivided Koch kingdom under its direct administrative control at its peak , extended as far as the Suvarnasiri river/ Narayanpur¹⁶⁰ on the north bank of the Brahmaputra in the east for some times and the Karatoya river in the west . But within a short period, the Koches were forced to retreat from the Suvarnasiri river/ Narayanpur to the Barnadi on the north bank of the Brahmaputra and finally Barnadi remained the eastern border of the kingdom till the division of the kingdom. In the south and south-west, it was extended up to Tirhut and Ghoraghat covering the areas like a part of present Nowgong district of Assam and the Riparian portions of Rangpur and north Mymensing of present Bangladesh. On the north, the lower Himalayan region covering Present Indo- Bhutan border, as far as Rangamati (Joygong) of present Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal.

Beyond the above mentioned areas which were directly administered by Naranarayan ,he also conquered almost all kingdoms of the north-east India but these kingdoms were not directly annexed to his Kingdom .They were allowed to enjoy their autonomy by agreeing to pay annual tributes and by accepting Koch over lordship . In the year 1563AD, the Ahoms who were almost invincible in the eastern Brahmaputra valley were defeated and became a feudatory of the Koches, by ceding the territory mentioned earlier and agreeing to pay annual tributes and thus the Koches established their hegemony on the valley¹⁶¹. According to the DRV, at the defeat of the Giant power of the valley, Kingdoms and small principalities of the northeast like Kachhar (Hidimba), Manipur, Jayantiya, Tripura, Khairam, Dimarua and Sirath (Sylhat) were either voluntarily or by force accepted Koch suzerainty and agreed to pay annual tributes¹⁶². The rulers of these areas were under the Koch

hegemony only for few years. Though the Ahoms declined the Koch supremacy and declared independence in the year 1571AD¹⁶³, and the Tripura chronicles like 'Rajamala' completely silent about the Koch conquest of Tripura and the Koch supremacy over Tripura, but some other chronicles and evidences have proved that the formal the Koch suzerainty over the major parts north-east continued for a long time . Gohain Kamal, the brother of Naranarayan formerly had been a feudatory of the Koches at Khaspur in Kachhar for a long time¹⁶⁴. The king of Dimarua (present Nowgong district of Assam) was a feudatory of the Koches till the time Parikshitnarayan, the grand son Chilarai and the kings of Jayantiya struck coin under the orders of Naranarayan with the name of the capital of the kingdom , but not with the name of the king till 1731AD¹⁶⁵. But it is not clear how, long the other defeated rulers paid their agreed tributes and committed respect to the Koches as their over lord. Actually, the conquests of Naranarayan were based on military power and the defeated rulers kept the terms of agreements due to the fear of the sword of Chilarai. Therefore, at the defeat of Chilarai in the hands of the Padshah of Gauda, they all (except Khaspur, Dimarua and Jayantiya) declined the Koch suzerainty and stopped paying tributes.

S. N. Bhattacharyya, opines that " the result of this expedition does not appear to have been nothing more than a lip-deep acknowledgement of political vassalage and a hollow promise of payment of tribute on the part of the defeated chiefs and as such seems hardly commensurate with the time, energy and resources spent thereon"¹⁶⁶. But it seems to us that the opinion of S. N. Bhattacharyya is not fully correct. Firstly, these conquests enabled king Naranarayan to establish his political influences (may not be suzerainty) over the whole North-eastern India, for which the names of king Naranarayan and his brother Chilarai spread like wild fire among the masses and contemporary rulers of the whole India as great warriors, for which they were respected and feared. Even great Mughal emperor Akbar did not hesitate to establish friendship with king Naranarayan on equal status considering his position. Secondly, the material gains, such as booties, tributes and few successive annual installments of tributes enabled him to continue aggressive warfare, to establish standing army, to introduce navy, and to carryout proper administration and construction. It also enabled him to mint huge coins from the collected gold and silver,^{that} greatly gave impetus to the developments of trade and commences.

Thus, it is fact that the political hegemony might be formal and temporary over the conquered kingdoms without permanent political suzerainty but the political influences and others materials gains enabled king Naranarayan to carryout many innovative activities, for which he would be remembered forever in the history of the whole north east India. However, at the death of Chilarai, King Naranarayan forced to divide the kingdom between him and his nephew Raghudeva, fixing the Sankosh River as boundary between the two divisions, which would be discussed in details in the next chapter.

Notes and references:

1. The *Rajopakhyan*, records that Biswa Singha became king in 1510AD, by defeating the Kotwal , at the age 9 year old accompanied by some playmates and being helped by divine power. Cited in Khan Chaudhury A.A, op cit., p.389.
2. According to the DRV (v.273), Biswa Singha ruled 25 years; M. Martin, 'The History, Antiquities and Statistics of Eastern India', Vol., I, reprint Delhi, pp. 540ff, fixed the date of the accession of Biswa Singha as 11509AD.
3. Khan Chaudhury A.A, op cit., p.389;
4. N. G. Rhodes and S. K. Bose, 'Coinage of Cooch Behar', Dhubri, (Library of Numismatic Studies), 1999 ; Sutapa Sinha, and Pradip Kumar Mitra (ed.), 'Coins of Mediaeval India', Books & Books, Kolkata, 1997; and Bhattacharyya, S. N., 'A History of Mughal North East Frontier Policy', Calcutta, 1929, reprints ed., M/s. R. N. Bhattacharyya, Calcutta, 1994 and Spectrum publication, Gauhati,1998; all of them mentioned the 1555AD as the date of accession of Naranarayan.
5. G. C. Barua, Tr. *Ahom Buranji*, Calcutta, 1930p.77, cited in D. Nath, op. cit., p. 27
6. Deodhai Assam Buranji, p.41; G. C. Barua, Tr. *Ahom Buranji*, Calcutta, 1930, p.77, cited in D. Nath, op. cit., p. 51.
7. The *Katha Guru Charita*, p. 58; M. Neog, op. cit., pp. 115-17.
8. 'Sri Sri Svarganarayandeva Maharajar Janmacharita', p. 25. (Henceforth, SMJC).
9. Different scholars mentioned following period as the reign of King Naranarayan: S. L. Barua, op. cit., pp.206 &215, reign, 1540-1587; D. Nath, op. cit., p. 47, reign 1540-1587; Khan Chaudhury A.A, op cit., p.101, reign 1533-4-1587; K. L. Barua,

- op. cit., pp. 194 &201, reign 1540-87; Assam Buranji of Gunabhiram Barua, pp-42 & 47, reign 1529-1584; Gait, op. cit, pp, 46-47, reign 1540-84. In this situation, the information of numismatics may be considered acceptable. Raghudeva and Lakshminarayan issued coins in 1588 and 1587 AD, respectively, most probably on their coronation to the throne as independent kings after the death of Naranarayan, might have occurred in 1587.
10. DRV, vv. 255 -264 and 295.
 11. Ibid, v., 296.
 12. Present Tarai region west of the river Mechi in Indo-Nepal border. *Encyclopedia Asiatica*, Vol. VI, N. Delhi, 1974, p.987.Queen Ratnavali, the mother of Nara Singha was from Nepal, DRV, vs. 231 and 240.
 13. Ibid, vs., 255 and 295-301.
 14. Ibid, v. 313.
 15. Khan Chaudhury, A. A. op. cit. p. 101.
 16. Dvija Ratikanta, 'Kharga Narayan Vansavali', Ms. (unpublished), p.20; 'Kamarupavansavali', cited in Khan Choudhary, A. A. op. cit. p. 101. How over, no such coins yet discovered. Large numbers of coins of King Naranarayan with one single date i.e. 1555 AD have been discovered from different places of the region, which would be discussed in appropriate places.
 17. DRV, v. 318; *Kamarupa Burunji*, p.11f; ABSM, p.11; S.K. Bhuyan (ed) Satsari Assam Burunji, G.U., 1969,p.71.
 18. DRV, v. 319.
 19. The *Guru Charita* of Daityari Thakur, p. 25.
 20. Ibid. pp. 25 and 29.
 21. Ibid. p.25.
 22. Ibid. p.25.
 23. Assam Burunji, p. 80.
 24. Ibid. p. 80; Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p.103. There is controversy about the actual time of construction of the fort. According to Khan Choudhary, it was constructed by Koch generals after their retreat from Sala in 1546 and used it to invade pichila fort of the Ahoms in 1547. On the other hand, according to Assam Burunji, it was constructed in 1547, during their advancement for the Pichila war.
 25. Ibid, p.81. and D. Nath , op. cit. p.51 .

26. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p.103.
27. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p.103; *Assam Burunji*, p.81; SMJC, p.25.
28. The 'Mathadang' is an Assamese word. 'Matha' = head, and 'dang' =heap, that is a heap of heads Rudra Simgha Burunji, p.52, cited in Khan Choudhary A. Ahamed , op. cit. p.103;. It is also stated that the name of the place came to be known as such from the incident. See, ABSMJC, p.25.
29. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p.103.
30. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p.104; and Historical Letters of the Ahom Period, a collection of 44 letters exchanged between the Koch and the Ahom Kings, Transcripts no. 18, Vol. V, Part VI, DRAS, Gauhati.
31. Ibid. Also see the '*Koch Beharer Itihas*' of Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, Eng Trns. by S.C. Ghosal (ed) by H. Nag, Reprint, 2005, Siliguri, W.B., p.116.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid, p.115.
34. SMJC, p.30.
35. Ibid. p. 30; D.Nath, op. cit. p-53. ; '*Koch Beharer Itihas*' of Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, Eng Trns. by S.C. Ghosal (ed) by H. Nag , Reprint ,2005, Siliguri, W.B., p.116 .
36. Ibid, p.117 ; Historical Letters of the Ahom Period , a collection of 44 letters exchanged between the Koch and the Ahom Kings , Transcripts no. 18, Vol. V, Part VI, DRAS, Gauhati
37. DRV, vv., 317 &323.
38. Ibid, v. 319.
39. DRV did not mention the length of the road and eastern end of the road. But Kamarupa Burunji (p-12) and Assam historians like S.L. Burua and K.L.Barua mentioned the length of the road as 350 km and identified the eastern end of the road at Narayanpur in the present Lakhimpur district. D. Nath also gave same information, op. cit. P.54. but Khan Choudhury identified the 32 eastern end of the road at Parasukunda, op. cit. p .106.
40. DRV did not mention any date of the construction of the road. S.L. Burua and K.L.Barua indirectly stated that it was constructed immediately after Koch-Ahom conflict in 1546-47AD. Gait also gave same view (p. 53). On the other hand, Khan

Choudhury and D. Nath identified the date after the failure of the Peace Mission of 1555 AD, and immediately before 1562 AD.

41. SMJC, p. 30.
42. DRV, vv. 326-328.
43. SMJC, p. 32; DAB, p. 59.
44. *Samudranarayanaer Vamsavali*, p.41, cited in Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p.107.
45. According to another view, he gained this nick for his swiftness of attack like *Chila* (kite of Eagle family).
46. DRV, vv. 372-373.
47. SMJC, p. 32.
48. According to the ABSM, p. 32, total strength of Chilarai is 60000 men, and 'of Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, p.106, mentioned the strength of the infantry of Chilarai's 52000. So the strength of navy will be (60000-52000) =8000 men.
49. Assam Burunji, p. 85; Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p.108.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid, and D. Nath, op. cit. p.56.
52. Khan Choudhary A. Ahamed, op. cit. p.108.
53. SMJC, p.32; *Assam Burunji* of GRB, Assam Publication Council, Gauhati, 1972, p.77; *Assam Burunji* of HKB (ed) S. K. Bhuyan, DHAS, Gauhati, 1962, p.32. Kamarupa Vansavali, p.56; SMJC identified the 'disguised Brahmins' as soldiers; AB of GRB and KV as Sudras.
54. It was due to their 'Kshatriyaisation of Brahmanical fold, who always respect the Brahmin and cows, and considered that killing of Brahmins and cows is a great sin. The Ahom king knew the fact the Koches were orthodox Hindus.
55. A section of the Horan people, who used to catch and train elephants for the Ahoms, now they started the same for the Koches. D. Nath, op. cit. p.57.
56. D. Nath, op. cit. p-57; ABSM, p.33.
57. The original version of DAB in Assamese language Edited by S.K. Bhuiyan, DRAS, Gauhati, (p.45), is as follows:

পাচে চারিং-রজাই ডাঙৱীয়াসকলেরে আলচ করি রজাদেবলৈ জনাই, ফুংখামৰ পিতেক লাসিডাম ১, লেচাইলুং ১, লাসিখুন ১, এই তিনিক কোঁচৰ রজার ঠাইলে প্রীতিৰ কাৰনে পঠাই দিলে। কোঁচ রজাও মিত্ৰ কৱিবৰ নিমিত্তে রাতিকৱা নামে ভাল মানুহ এটা পঠাই দিলে। কোঁচ রজাই এই বুলি কৈ পঠাই দিলে।

(Deodhai Assam Buranji p. 62).

58. Ibid,
 59. D. Nath, op. cit. p.57; Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p.109, also mentioned the same message.
 60. The Ahom's attitudes were fully negative and humiliating.
 61. D. Nath, op. cit. p. 57.
 62. SMJC, p.39; *A Comprehensive History of Assam*, S.L Barua p. 209 .
 63. DRV, vv., 341-356.
 64. DAB , (ed) SKB, DRAS., Gauhati, 1932,p.46 ; *Satsari Assam Buranji*, (ed) SKB, G.U,1960, p.72 ; AB, p.87 .
 65. It was due to their dissatisfied with the Ahom king, for which they were providing their supports to the Koches from the long before of the incident. SMJC, p. 33.
 66. DAB, op. cit. pp. 46-7; AB, p. 87.
 67. Original text in Assamese (p.64), from DAB, (ed) SKB, DRAS, Gauhati, 1932, p.47; Also in AB, English trans. G .C. Barua, p.87.
- “ভাৱাইথেক বৃচাগোহাঁই, তুমি উদয়গিৰি রাজাত এই কথা যাই, তিনজনা গোহাঁইৰ পৃতেকক দিব, চুড়াসনৰ পৃতেকক, খামচেলৰ পৃতেকক ; এইবোৱক যদি দি পঠাৰ প্ৰগী রাজার রাজ্য মই কৃশলে ছৈ যান”।
68. Second version of the English Trans from D. Nath, op. cit. p.58.
 69. Ibid, p. 58; *A Comprehensive History of Assam*, S.L Barua p. 209.
 70. It is stated in the Burunjis that Nangbakla Gabharu, aunt of the king (daughter of Suhungmung Dihinga Raja) and wife of Thaomunglung Bargohain refused to send her son as hostage to the Koch king saying, “I will not allow my son to be sent to the Koch country. Tell the king what he and the ministers are for when they have yielded to the enemies? Why should he reign when he is unable to save his subjects from the enemies?”She also said to her husband “Let me have your head-dress, girdle, belt and sword. Though I am a female, I shall fight with the Koch and

let him know how a female can fight with the male " AB, English trans., G .C. Barua, p.87; DAB, op. cit. pp. 47-48. so bound to sent his brother.

71. D. Nath, op. cit. p. 58; S.L Barua, op. cit. p. 209.
72. 'Koch Beharer Itihas' of Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, Eng Trns. 'A History of Coochbehar' by S.C. Ghosal, (ed) by H. Nag , Reprint ,2005, Siliguri, W.B., p. 20 ; Gait, op., cit.
73. DAB, p.49; S.L Barua, op. Cit. p. 209.
74. Manipur and Khairam, DAV, vv. 406- 408, and 432-33.
75. DRV, vv. 389-90.
76. Ibid, vv., 398-99.
77. Ibid, v., 401.
78. Ibid, v., 409.
79. Ibid, v., 413.
80. Ibid, vv., 415 -18.
81. Ibid, v. 420.
82. D. Nath, op. cit. p.62.
83. Gait, op. cit. p-54; The Jayantiya coins has a close similarity with the Koch coins. The legend Jayantiya coin runs as:

"Sree Sree Siva Charana-kamala-madhukarasya" , on reverse, and
"Sree Sree Jayantipura-Purandarasya Sake 1592", on obverse.

JASB, Vol. LXIV, PT-1, 1695; National Library , Kolkata ; J.A.S.B., Vol. , VI, No. 4 , p.159 , cited in 'Koch Beharer Itihas' of Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, Eng Trns. 'A History of Coochbehar' by S.C. Ghosal, (ed) by H. Nag , Reprint ,2005, Siliguri,W.B., p.123; A .W. Botham, 'Catalogue of the Provincial coin Cabinet's, Assam, Allahabad, 1930, p-544. Cited in D. Nath op. cit. p.79fn.

84. DRV vv., 424-428.
85. Kamrupa Burunji, p.12; DAB, p.51.
86. Khan Choudhary, op. cit. p.112.
87. DRV v. 431.
88. Gait, op. cit. p.54 .
89. N. R. Raychoudhury, 'Tripura through the Ages', Agartala, 1977, p. 33.

90. In July 1563, the Ahom sent the five sons of the chief Ahom nobles to the Koch camp at Narayanpur as hostages (AB, p. 87) and they must have taken minimum three to four years to conquer other kingdoms before their Tripura expedition.
91. D. Nath, op. cit., pp. 63-64.
92. N. R. Raychaudhury, op., cit., p. 33.
93. The example of Ramagupta of The Gupta Dynasty is the most important one
94. D. Nath, op. cit., p. 64.
95. DRV. , vv., 432-34.
96. Ibid. vv., 441-42.
- 97 Ibid, vv., 438-39.
98. Ibid, v., 445. Most probably the Kamta king Mriganka of 15th century. However, some modern scholars stated that the Dimarua has claimed themselves descendant from Naraka-Bhagadatta-Arimatta's family without mentioning their source of information. Gait op. cit. p.55; S.L Barua, op. cit. p. 211; D. Nath, op. cit. p. 66.
99. DRV, v., 461; there is also a story of 'Ghog' birds. See DRV. vv., 453-58.
100. H. Barbarua, 'Ahomar Din', Gauhati, 1961 p. 93 ; S.L Barua , op. cit. p. 211 ; Khan Chaudhury A.A., op. cit., p.12 ; D. Nath , op. cit. p. 66.
101. H. Barbarua, op. cit. p. 92.
102. DRV, vv., 447-450 & 452.
103. Ibid. vv., 465 & 466.
104. D. Nath, op. cit. p. 66.
105. Ibid., pp. 64-66.
106. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, '*Koch Beharer Itihas*'. He had mentioned all the expeditions of the Koches towards the northeast except Sylhat.
107. Gait, op. cit. p. 55.
108. K.L Barua, Lawyers Book Stall, Gauhati, 1988, p.197.
109. Ibid.
110. DRV, vv., 474-476.
111. Ibid, vv., 478.
112. Ibid, vv., 482-487.
113. Ibid, vv., 459-460. Also in Gait, op. cit. p. 61.

114. The great Gupta king Samudragupta (c 335-376AD) had followed the same type of policy towards his south Indian conquest .In south India his policy known as 'Dharma Vijay'. He defeated the kings of the south but they were re-established in their respective positions as his vassals.
115. *Riyaz-us-Salatin*, (Eng. Trns), p. 152. The book states that Sulaiman "himself set out for the conquest of the country of Kuch Behar. He had subjugated its environs and outlying parts and whilst he was besieging its capital he got of an insurrection in Orissa, and so abandoned the siege". *Akbarnamah*, (Eng trns.) , p. 1068 states that the "ruler of Koch Bihar did not pay his respect to the Hakim of Bengal, and Sulaiman Karrani proceeded to make war upon him and returned upon failure".
116. D. Nath, op. cit., pp. 67-68.
117. D. Nath, op. cit., p. 68.
118. DRV, vv. 494-496., Kamrupa Buranji, p. 12.
119. Gait, p. 55, Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, p.125.
120. *Riyaz-us-Salatin*, (Eng. Trns.), p. 152.
121. S. L Barua op. cit. p. 212, Rai K. L Barua Bahadur, op. cit. p.198., J. N. Sarkar, *History of Bengal -1200-1757AD*. p. 184
122. J. N. Sarkar, op. cit. p.184.
123. DRV, vv. 503-507.
124. Rai K. L Barua Bahadur, op. cit. p. 198.
125. The word *Kalapahar* does not denote his name but a term of the redoubtable Brahman renegade and iconoclast, which is widely known in Assam as the destroyer of Kamakhya temple and Hayagriva Madhava temple in Assam. Kalapahar also sacked the temple of Jagannath in Puri in about 1568 AD.
126. *Khargmarayan Vansavali*, p.37. *Kamarupa Vansavali*, p. 21. Cited in Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, 'Koch Beharer Itihas', op. cit. p.114.
127. SMJC, p.34.
128. DRV, vv. 519-534.
129. Gait, op. cit. p. 56.
130. SMJC, p. 36.
131. P. Gogoi, 'The Tai and the Tai Kingdoms', G.U., 1968, p. 326.
132. SMJC., op. cit. p. 36, ABHB, p. 35, also in 'Koch Beharer Itihas' , op. cit. p. 115.
133. Ibid, p.115.

134. Ibid, p. 115.
135. DAB, p. 50 , Gait , op. cit. p. 104 , and also in D. Nath , op. cit. p. 72 .
136. DRV, vv. 565-568.
137. Ibid, vv. 570-575.
138. Ibid, vv. 578-584.
139. Abul-Fazl, 'The Akbar-Namah', Eng. Trans. By H. Beverage, p. 349 .
140. Abul-Fazl, *The Ain-I Akbari*, Eng. Trans. By H. Blocmann, p. 50.
141. S. L. Barua, op. cit. p. 213.
142. S. N. Bhattacharyya, 'A history of Mughal North-East Frontier Policy, pp. 98fn, and 103.
143. D. Nath, op. cit. p. 74.
144. Ibid. p. 74.
145. Ibid. p. 73 .
146. S. N. Bhattacharyya, op. cit. p. 102.
147. D. Nath, op. cit. p. 73.
148. *The Akbar-Namah*, part-III, pp -620fn; S. N. Bhattacharyya, op. cit. p.103.
149. S. N. Bhattacharyya, op. cit. pp. 109f; D. Nath, op. cit. p. 74.
150. D. Nath, op. cit. p. 74.
151. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p-123.
152. Gait, op. cit. pp. 58-59.
153. H. N. Chaudhary; 'The Cooch Behar State and Its Land Revenue of Settlement, Cooch Behar, 1903, p. 232.
154. D. Nath, op. cit. p. 35.
155. DRV, vv., 302.
156. Gait, op. cit. p. 58; Khan Choudhary A. Ahamed, op. cit. p. 110.
157. SMJC, p. 33. , Gait, op. cit. p. 56. He stated that Chilarai obtained the favour of the Padshah of Gauda by saving the life of the Padshah's mother from snakebite. The Padshah released Chilarai and even gave his daughter in marriage with above mentioned territories as dowry .The mothers of the Padshah declared the river Karatoya as the western boundary of the Koch kingdom. , The DRV, vv. 519-536, gave us same information except the marriage and dowry. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p. 114. Stated that the mother's of the Padshah accepted Chilarai

as her son and he was not married with the daughter of the Padshah but with five noble-born-daughter of that country.

158. *Akbarnamah*, Part-III, p. 1067.
159. *Akbarnamah*, Part-III, p. 1067 ; S. N. Bhattacharyya, op. cit. p-96 fn and C. Wessels , 'Early Jesuit Travelers in Central Asia, The Hague, 1924, p-122 , Portuguese traveler , Stephen Cacella who visited western Koch kingdom (after division) had stated that the farthest limit of the Koch country to the was Renate (Rangamati / Joygong quoted in D. Nath, op. cit. p. 75 .
160. Narayanpur was the eastern most military outpost of the on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, connected with the Koch capital at Koch Behar by the road named *Gosain Kamal Ali* .
161. *Assam Buranji*, p. 88.
162. DRV, vv., 389-479.
163. Durgadas Majumder has written in the *Vansavali* that in the Saka 1493 the Ahom King succeeded in regaining his independence. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p. 115.
164. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p. 124.
165. Ibid ; on submission , the Jayantiya king was instructed not to mint coins in his own name in future, but on request of the Jayantiya king, special permission was given with the condition that the Jayantiya kings would be allowed to mint coins with the legend of "Ruler of Jayantia", instead of giving the name of kings. This tradition continued till 1731 AD.; D. Nath, op. cit. p. 62.
166. S. N. Bhattacharyya, op. cit. p. 77fn.

(-)

Chapter: III

The division of the Kingdom, the end of his rule and administrative set up:

One of the darkest and saddest days in the Koch history under King Naranarayan was the death of Sukladhvaja alias Chilarai. The loss of an able warrior and faithful brother-cum-general really was a dark day. After his death, internal dissension had started between king Naranarayan and his nephew Raghudeva, the son of Chilarai, which ultimately led to the division of the kingdom. The division of the kingdom greatly weakened the power and position of the Koches and paved the way for external intervention. But for proper understanding of the subsequent events, some questions like actual date of Chilarai's death, circumstances leading to the division and the actual date of the division have to be solved. The three questions are interrelated and worked simultaneously.

The date of Chilarai's death and its outcome:

It is stated in the almost all writings of modern scholars that in course of the second expedition against Gaud, Naranarayan's beloved brother-cum-general was severely attacked by smallpox and died on the bank of the Ganges before he could return home. However, there are divergent opinions about the date of the incident i.e. the death of Chilarai. Even, the DRV, the main source of the Koches, although gave an elaborate descriptions of the pre and post death situation and rituals but not a single word is mentioned about the date¹. Khan Chaudury A. Ahamed and M. Neog, without mentioning their sources of information, stated that Chilarai died on the bank of the Ganges in the month of *Chaitra*, Saka 1492 (1571AD.)². Gait and D. Nath had bypassed the actual date of the death³. K. L. Baruah, with reference from the *Ain-i-Akbari* mentioned that Chilarai died in 1583 AD., or immediately after that date⁴. S. L. Barua mentioned the date as "...sometime between 1572-75"⁵.

Under this situation, it is very much important to identify the second expedition against Mohammedan. The first expedition against Gaud was taken place immediately after the conquest of the northeast India in 1568, the Koches were defeated and Chilarai was taken prisoner by the Gaud army⁶. Chilarai stayed at Gaud as prisoner for about one year, and freed himself in the year 1569 AD. Akbar's Bengal expedition started in 1574 AD and Chilarai fought as an ally of Akbar against the Padshah of Gaud in 1576AD, which is accepted by almost all modern scholars and even by the DRV⁷. Under this situation, it can safely be concluded that if the second expedition is identified as the Koch expedition against Daud of Gaud as an ally of Akbar from the east, then the date of Chilarai's death could not have occurred before the year 1576 AD. The DRV also mentioned only two western expeditions of the Koches under Chilarai⁸. On the other hand, the view of K. L. Baruah also did not correspond with the real fact. For, the stone inscription of the *Hayagriva Madhava Temple* at Hajo, records that the temple was reconstructed by Raghudeva in Saka 1505 (1583AD) as an independent king⁹. It is also confirmed by the DRV that the reconstruction of the temple took six months, and before that Raghudeva is said to have visited a number of religious places within his kingdom before starting the construction¹⁰. It is established fact that Raghudeva revolted against his uncle king Naranarayan after the death of his father and hostilities continued for some times and ultimately, king Naranarayan was forced to acknowledge the sovereignty of his nephew. The death of Chilarai, the revolt of Raghudeva, hostilities between the uncle and the nephew, the visits of the religious places and duration of six months of construction of the temple¹¹ cannot fall in a single year and it must have taken at least 6-7 years. So it would be said that Chilarai had not died in the year 1583 as mentioned by K. L. Barua, it had actually happened in the year 1583-6 =1576 AD. J. N. Sarkar also identified the date of Chilarai's death in the year 1576 AD¹².

It is also historically believed that centrifugal forces raised their heads in the time of internal dissension. In 1577 AD, a rebellion is said to have occurred against the Koch king under the leadership of three men called Bar Dado, Gabha Naik and Bar Katu. The Koch king defeated them, they fled with 14,000 of their followers to Ahom territory, and the Ahom king Sukhampha¹³ gave asylum. In the year 1578, king Naranarayan established formal relation with Akbar by sending 54 elephants and

other valuable presents¹⁴. It seems that all these happened after the death of Chilarai in the year 1576 AD.

The death of Chilarai as mentioned earlier was the darkest and saddest day in the history of the Koches in many ways. He was a great warrior and all the military expeditions and victories carried out by him as the general of the Koch army. According to J. N. Sarkar, "the real power of the state was wield by the kings younger brother the commander in chief Sukladhwaja surnamed the Kite prince (Chila Rai) who led the Koches almost to the farthest eastern limit of Assam and achieved a series of brilliantvictories"¹⁵. During his lifetime, neighboring states of northeast, internal centrifugal forces and even his dissatisfied son Raghudeva did not dare to raise their heads. But after his death, all these forces were came out and raised their heads and ultimate result of which, Bar Dado, Gabha Naik and Bar Katu revolted against the king in 1577AD. Raghudeva, although did not dare to an open revolt but left the capital with some of his officers, proceeded towards the east and reached at a place called Barnagar or Ghilajaypur¹⁶ and declined his uncle's sovereignty there. The disintegration of the kingdom was the worst out come of the death of Chilarai.

Backgrounds and circumstances leading to the division of the Kingdom of Naranarayan:

The genealogies, chronicles and the Persian writings have categorically described the division of the Koch kingdom during the last decade of the reign of king Naranarayan after the death of Chilarai. Raghudeva, son of Chilarai rebelled against his uncle king and established his seat at Barnagar within the present district of Kamrupa. King Naranarayan tried to solve the problem by discussion for which he took many steps, but in vain and ultimately compelled to divide the Koch kingdom.

But it was obviously not the sudden outcome or accidental incident. The backgrounds of the incident had been prepared long before the actual happening of the division. According to the Akbaranamah, king Naranarayan was unmarried and childless till late fifty years of his life and it was due to the fact that he lived the life of an ascetic and did not marry till late in life and after fifty, on request of his brother Chilarai he married and was blessed with a son¹⁷. However, according to the

*Rajupakhyan*¹⁸ and the *Gandharbhanarayan Vansavali*, Naranarayan had married before he became king and it was through his wife Bhanumati he got the throne from Nara Singha¹⁹. The *Gandhabhanarayan Vansavali* also stated that, on the 17th *Falgun* in Saka 1488 (1567AD.) King Naranarayan and Maharani Bhanumati were blessed with a son and who was named 'Lakshminarayan'²⁰. The DRV also states that although Naranarayan married earlier, he remained childless till late in life²¹. Therefore, the information of the *Akbaranamah* that Naranarayan married in late life on his brother's request might not be correct. It is believed that he was blessed with a son long after his marriage.

So, as king Naranarayan had been childless for a long time, Raghudeva, the son of Chilarai had been considered as the next king of the dynasty. Moreover, some emotional acts of the king, in absence of his own issue, to Raghudeva established the idea that he was going to be the next king²². But with the birth of Lakshminarayan, the entire situation changed and he being the son of the ruling king, had more rights to the throne according to the law of inheritance of the dynasty at that time. The birth was the day of great joy and happiness on the one side; on the other side, the seeds of discontent were planted for future division of the kingdom. The *Kamarupa Buranji* and the *Katha Guru Charit* had mentioned that Raghudeva became very suspicious when one day Naranarayan offered the '*Nirmali*' of the Durga puja first to Lakshminarayan instead of offering it to him, as he usually had done. From the incident, Raghudeva identified a great change in the behaviour of his uncle and considered it as an indication that he would soon be deprived of his claim to the throne²³. Chilarai had deep learning, great personality, and firm love and respect for his king brother, for which in his lifetime no one dared to raise any question. But on the death of Chilarai in 1576, Raghudeva was instigated to revolt against king Naranarayan by his close kinsmen and some of the courtiers of the royal court, who feared that in case Lakshminarayan became king, they would be deprived their power, privileges and prestige which they had been enjoying since the days of Chilarai²⁴. But Raghudeva had great respect for his uncle, who also had great affection and love for him. Therefore, in spite of his dissatisfaction and continuous provocation by his kinsmen and courtiers, Raghudeva denied open revolt against his uncle. But in course of time, his kinsmen and courtiers including

Yudhisthir Kayastha, Bhandari, Kabindra Patra, Gadadhar Chaonia, Purandar Laskar, Srirama Laskar, Sardar Kabiraj, Gopal Chaulia and others succeeded in influencing the mind of Raghudeva²⁵. As a result, Raghudeva left the capital with his followers in the pretext of a hunting excursion instead of open revolt, and proceeded towards the east and reached as far as the Manas river, where he established his capital at Baranagar and declared himself king there²⁶. Although, king Naranarayan very much mourned by the act of his beloved nephew, he sent a messenger to bring him back with a view to a peaceful settlement but Raghudeva politely sent back the messenger with his respect for the king and himself declined to go back. Raghudeva established a beautiful city at Ghilajoypur on the bank of the river Gadhadhara and shifted his residence there from Baranagar²⁷. But all the sources are completely silent about the actual date of all these incidents. After considering the whole situation, it seems that it must have happened within one year of his father's death in about 1576AD that is in about 1577 / 78 AD²⁸.

The situations and subsequent happenings after the establishment of Raghudeva's residence at Ghilajoypur are somehow confusing and contradictory. According to some modern scholars, on the return of the messenger without his beloved nephew, peace-loving king Naranarayan preferred dividing the kingdom instead of going for a war against Raghudeva and accordingly the river Sankosh fixed as the boundary between the two divisions of the kingdom. The western division of the river named as Koch Behar and the eastern division of the river named as Koch Hajo. Raghudeva also agreed to pay annual tribute and acknowledged his uncle's over lordship with the rights of minting coins only in his uncle's name²⁹. However, the opinions of modern scholars do not match with the information of the DRV, the main source of information of the dynasty in the matter of facts and sequences of happenings. According to the DRV, the above-mentioned consequences did not happen immediately after the return of the messenger but after a second mission to Raghudeva. King Naranarayan had sent another army official '*Karji*' (Virupaksa?), with some forces and an order to bring back Raghudeva anyhow; by peaceful negotiation or by force. Again, Raghudeva declined to return and there was a war between the *Karji* and Raghudeva, in which the *Karji* was defeated. But he was released and sent back to his uncle with proper respect and letter praying for his belongings³⁰. As a result, king Naranarayan sent Raghu's wives

with their valuables, attendants, maidservants and properties like horses, elephants and others to Raghudeva under the protection of a Koch army³¹.

There was no formal division of the kingdom at that time, as mentioned by some modern scholars. Raghudeva actually, established his rule over the territory to the east of the river Sankosh which had been under the administrative charge of his father Chilarai earlier³². King Naranarayan had remained complete silent without going into further open conflict and considered him as local ruler of the eastern part of his kingdom. So the opinions of some modern scholars that the formal division of the kingdom immediately after the return of the messenger in about 1577 / 78 is doubtful, but it was really a peaceful step by Naranarayan, to normalize the situation after the skirmish between the Karji and Raghudeva.

The formal division of the kingdom probably occurred later, after another series of incidents, quarrel broke out which ultimately led to the formal division of the kingdom. It is believed that king Naranarayan had taken a comparatively moderate policy towards Raghudeva at early stage, due to his love and affection for Raghudeva and to avoid family conflict. But when Raghudeva stopped paying annual tribute as a ruler of the eastern part of the kingdom, king Naranarayan realized the fact that his beloved nephew had been acting like an independent ruler, for which he took a stronger position and demanded the annual tribute³³. According to another opinion, ambitious Raghudeva raided and looted an area named Baharband (in the present district of Rangpur in Bangladesh) of his uncle's territory, which compelled Naranarayan to raise arms against him³⁴. Under these situations, according to the DRV, Naranarayan declared war against Raghudeva and started advancing towards the territory of Raghudeva, who neither had sufficient power and dare to fight against his uncle, nor was prepared for such a course of action from his uncle. He became very afraid of the action and started consulting his officials to avoid a direct confrontation with his uncle³⁵. Raghudeva actually had the conviction that his beloved uncle would never take any stronger aggressive policy against him. This was due to his uncle's weakness to him and in this way; Raghudeva's actual intention was to gain some territories from his uncle by creating pressure. However, when Naranarayan took aggressive policy, he became scared of the war with his uncle and tried to find out other way to save himself. Under this situation, Raghudeva chalked out a plan in consultation with his courtiers to save himself and accordingly

he sent his one hundred and twenty queens dressed as soldiers in the first row of the army to oppose his uncle³⁶. The plan had become fruitful. At the first glance, Naranarayan was surprised at the physique and appearance of too young soldiers without moustaches but when he realized the real fact, he was filled with shame and he asked himself the question that how he can fight with his daughters-in-law and immediately left the battlefield with his force³⁷. As there was no other ways left for the king, he made a formal agreement with Raghudeva. According to which, the Koch kingdom was divided into two parts fixing the Sankosh River as the boundary between the two parts. Naranarayan and his successors would be ruling over the western part of the kingdom named as Kochbehar, on the other hand Raghudeva and his successors would be ruling over the eastern part of the kingdom under the name Koch-Hajo³⁸. It was decided that Raghudeva would be titled as '*Chhoto Raja*' and would be paying an annual token tribute including some gold, horses and Baranagar clothes to king Naranarayan and acknowledge his sovereignty³⁹. Raghudeva was also prohibited from minting coins but according to another view, he was given the right to mint coins but only in Naranarayan's name, not in his own name⁴⁰.

But, there are two questions regarding the division of the kingdom. One is about the actual date of the division and other is about the outcome and the problems regarding the division. There is no direct information about the actual date of the division and so we have to depend on indirect information to identify the actual date of the division. Some scholars without mentioning the particular date opined that the division was executed long before the death of Chilarai. During his lifetime, Chilarai had been appointed as the in charge the internal administration of eastern part of the state by Biswa singha and Naranarayan that has been described as the division of the kingdom by the scholars⁴¹. But, it was not the division but the internal administrative arrangement for administrative convenience and could not be described it as the division of the kingdom. According to one *Assam Burunji*, the formal division of the kingdom was executed in Saka 1503 (1581AD) by king Naranarayan as mentioned earlier⁴². Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, Gait and S.L. Barua mentioning their sources of informations as the Persian writings, fixed the date of division as 1581AD⁴³. However, the Persians texts did not mention the actual date of the division; it mentioned only the existence of two Koch kingdoms named as

Kochbehar and Koch-Hajo in 1581 AD, not the division of the kingdom in 1581AD⁴⁴. The information of 'the *Stone inscription of Hayagriva Madhava Temple*' at Hajo, indirectly informed us that the division took place long before the construction of the temple by Raghudeva as an independent king in Saka 1505 (1583AD), after the division of the kingdom⁴⁵. Because, it is confirmed by the DRV that the reconstruction of the temple took six months, and before that Raghudeva is said to have visited a number of religious places within his kingdom before starting construction⁴⁶. Although, D. Nath accepted 1581AD as the exact time of the division of the kingdom⁴⁷, but it is not possible to identify the exact date of the division. The division took place in between the period 1578 to 1581 and it is not possible to fix the exact date of the division with available information presently.

On the other hand, there are controversies among the scholars about the outcome and the consequences of the division of the kingdom. According to the DRV, king Naranarayan had divided the kingdom mentioning the Sankosh River as the boundary between him and his nephew Raghudeva and it was done on the equal condition of suzerainty and there was no mention of submission and any annual tribute⁴⁸. S. N. Bhattacharyya describes "in view of the peculiar circumstances under which Naranarayan was forced to concede to Raghu Deb, a part of his dominion and thereby make the best of a bad bargain, the abject concessions alleged to have been made by the later to the former the really vanquished party, appears to be quite unnatural"⁴⁹. The information and mode of description of 'the *Stone inscription of Hayagriva Madhava Temple*' at Hajo, directly mentioned that Raghudeva was an independent king who assumed the title 'Kameswara'⁵⁰. Although, J. P. Wade mentioned, Raghudeva had agreed that he would mint coins in the name of King Naranarayan⁵¹, but no such coins of Raghudeva have yet come to light⁵². Considering these points, some scholars boldly believe that the division of the kingdom was the creation of two complete independent kingdoms with cordial relations at the early stage.

However, if we carefully go through some other sources of information, happenings and consequences of the division, it seems to us that Raghudeva was not an independent king. He was subordinate to King Naranarayan and according to another source, he had to pay him all kind of tribute including some gold, horses and Baranagar clothes and had to acknowledge his uncle's Supremacy⁵³. Raghudeva

was called 'Chhoto Raja' (small king) but not called him 'king', who was also prohibited to mint coins in his own name⁵⁴. Raghudeva's eulogy of his uncle Naranarayan in his own inscriptions and the absence of any coins in his own name before 1588 AD clearly proved that Raghudeva was a tributary of king Naranarayan. But, due to the mournful mental condition and bitter relation with Raghudev at the division, peace loving king Naranarayan was unconcerned. On the other side, due to his respect and fear to his uncle Raghudev formally accepted his suzerainty but acted like an independent king. A verse of the DRV gives us supporting information regarding this fact, when it describes that the division of the kingdom executed between Raghudeva and Lakshminarayan by Naranarayan, not between the king and his nephew Raghudeva⁵⁵. It also seems that he gave up the throne of the western division in favour of his son and successor Lakshminarayan and he himself acted as an over all supervisor of both the division. It is proved by the facts that after the division of the kingdom, Naranarayan remained only a nominal ruler over the eastern part without sufficient political activities and soon after the death of Naranarayan, Raghudeva formally declared his independence and minted coins in his own name, which was the beginning of open conflict between Raghudeva and Lakshminarayan.

The last days of king Naranarayan:

The division of the kingdom greatly weakened the power and position of the kingdom and king Naranarayan was greatly shocked and mourned for it, and he did not survive long and died unhappy within few years at an old age. But there are controversies among the primary sources and the writings of modern scholars about the date of the death of Naranarayan. It is surprising that the DRV says nothing after the division of the kingdom about the king and his political activities and even about the death of the great king. The chronicles like the '*Prasiddha Narayan Vansavali*' and the '*Assam Buranji*' mentioned the date of the death of Naranarayan in Saka 1506 (1584AD)⁵⁶. K. L. Barua, without mentioning his source mentioned that Naranarayan died in about 1586AD⁵⁷. The numismatics evidences are considered more reliable source to construct history. The earliest coins of Raghudeva so far discovered bear the date Saka 1510(1588AD), and were minted provably after the death of Naranarayan in his own name⁵⁸. The earliest coins of Lakshminarayan so far

discovered bear the date Saka 1509 (1587AD), were minted at the death of Naranarayan in his own name as an independent ruler⁵⁹. Although, the coins of Naranarayan bear a 'frozen date' of Saka 1477 (1555AD) but it is generally believed that he also issued coins throughout his reign, necessitated for the development of economy within his kingdom consequent upon his military success⁶⁰. We have not found any single coin of Naranarayan throughout his reign, bearing other date except till 1555AD⁶¹. It is possible that both, Raghudev and Lakshminarayan minted their earliest coins almost simultaneously as mentioned above to observe the coronation ceremony as it was the prevalent custom in North-East India in medieval period to mint coin on the coronation date⁶². From the above points, it can safely be concluded that king Naranarayan died in the year 1587AD and Lakshminarayan and Raghudeva have issued coins on their coronation in 1587 and 1588AD respectively.

Political and Diplomatic Achievements of Naranarayan and his brother-cum-general Chilarai (Sukladhvaja):

The small Koch kingdom nominally founded by Biswa singha had been transformed into a well-based vast kingdom with the beginning of the reign of King Naranarayan alias *Malladeva* with the help of his illustrious brother Sukladhvaja alias Chilarai in about 1540AD⁶³. Naranarayan with his brother Chilarai followed the policies of expansion, institutionalization of leadership and centralization of power that had helped them to consolidate the Koch kingdom in its all aspects in the beginning of the middle of 16th century. Throughout their reign, they followed aggressive policy of expansion and, on the other hand, diplomatic policy to materialize their conquests and to introduce proper administrative arrangement in such a way that was based on the real situation. Naranarayan and Chilarai were selected as the king and the Yuvaraja of the Koch kingdom by their father Biswa singha before his death⁶⁴. After the death of his father Biswa singha in about 1540AD, Naranarayan had became king of the kingdom by defeating his other brother Nara Singha who had ascended the throne in absence of Naranarayan in the capital. After becoming king, Naranarayan took only hasty and unrealistic decision of his life, i.e. the aggressive policy against the Ahoms without considering power and position of the Ahoms. It was due his young age, lack of experience, diplomatic immaturity and influence of his father's deathbed advice. According to the DRV,

Biswa Singha at his deathbed asked his sons to take proper steps to revoke the Ahoms vassalage and therefore, Naranarayan immediately after his accession to the throne prepared for a war against the Ahoms⁶⁵. In a series of wars, the Koches were defeated and forced to retreat in 1543-47 AD; with great lose in men and money⁶⁶. But from this defeat, Naranarayan realized like a great diplomat that individual war tactics of his brother Chilarai, guerrilla and swift war tactics of his father Biswa Singha would not be suitable to fight the enemy like the Ahoms, who were the most powerful rulers of north-east at that time. In this situation, peace-loving King Naranarayan before going to war with the Ahoms, sent a diplomatic mission with peace proposal to the Ahoms king in Saka 1477(1555AD) with two main objectives: to establish friendly relation with the Ahoms on 'equal status' instead of the Ahoms supremacy, and to gather some informations about the Ahom's attitude towards the Koches⁶⁷. But the peace proposal was rejected, the Ahoms were not ready to accept the Koches as the master of the Lower Brahmaputra valley on 'equal status' and their attitude was humiliating in manner of speaking and writings⁶⁸. Now, Naranarayan started all round preparation for a fresh war with the Ahoms. He became well-aware about the difficulties of communication between the Koch kingdom and the kingdom of the Ahoms which proved a serious problem to his father in 1537 and to him in 1543-47AD. To solve this problem, Naranarayan entrusted Kamal Narayan (Gohai Kamal), one of his younger brothers to construct a road covering a distance of 350 miles from their capital in Koch Behar through the foot of Bhutan and Dalfa hills on the north bank the Brahmaputra to Narayanpur in the present Lakhimpur district for proper communication and supply. Many ponds were constructed throughout the road for water supply. The most important things of diplomatic acts of Naranarayan were to obtain the support of the local communities and the enemies of the Ahoms throughout his journey to Narayanpur. The Bhutiyas offered their submission to the Koch king and joined the Koch forces⁶⁹, the Dafla hills men, who had unfriendly relations with the Ahoms⁷⁰, the Bhuyans (including one Brahmin Bhuyan) who had been mercilessly suppressed by Dihingia Raja⁷¹ and the descendants of the Chutiya kings, who were dethroned and driven out by the Ahom king, joined the Koches⁷². In this regards he considered 'the enemies of the enemy (the Ahom) as his friends' which is very popular throughout ages all over the globe⁷³. He also used this theory in his relations with the Mughal against the Sultans of

Bengal. By which he not only took revenge of his earlier defeat in the hand of the Padshah of Gaud, safeguard his kingdom from the Ahoms in the eastern side and Afghans in the south-west in future but also raised his power, position and prestige by establishing friendship with Mughal emperor Akbar, almost on equal status⁷⁴. During his journey to the Ahom through the '*Goshain Kamal Ali*', he organized all tribes including the Kachhari, Mech, Koch, Bhutia and other tribes of the northern bank of the Brahmaputra, and hosted a great dinner (*Bhoj-Bhat*). To obtain their support, he made a provision deciding that they could follow their tribal customs of taking pork and beef on the north of the road but that in the country between the roads the north bank of the Brahmaputra, the Brahmanic rites must be observed⁷⁵. In this way, the Koch army became multi-cultural -multi-customs- tribal-peasant army and such acts of Naranarayan were definitely guided by diplomatic motives.

After the defeat of the Ahoms in 1563AD, on request of peace proposal from the Ahom side, Naranarayan acted as a great diplomat. He did not annex the whole kingdom of the Ahoms but only the territory of the north bank of the Brahmaputra, considering the real problems of establishing direct administration on the south bank the Brahmaputra⁷⁶. Therefore, he imposed some crucial conditions and annual tributes on the Ahoms, which already mentioned earlier and the Ahoms were also forced to accept the Koch supremacy. On realistic ground, he did not annex the others conquered kingdoms of the north-east and was satisfied with their acceptance of the Koch hegemony and annual tributes. This policy was the outcome of his political and diplomatic awareness of practical situation that helped him to be the formal overlord of whole of the northeast India. He realized the fact that practically it was not possible to control and directly rules over the areas due to the long distance, communication, geographical difficulties and sufficient machineries to do so. This innovative policy could only be comparable with the policy of great Gupta king Samudragupta's southern campaign in forth century AD⁷⁷. At the defeat of the Koches in the hands of the Padshah of Gauda, king Naranarayan and Chilarai realized the fact that it would be better to normalize their relation with the Ahoms to take revenge against the Padshah of Gauda, for which they released the Ahoms hostages in pretext of a dice game⁷⁸. However, this act was in vain, so he established friendship relation with the Mughals, which is already mentioned earlier. Actually, Naranarayan diplomatically tried to maintain the 'balance of power' of the

area to strengthen his own power and position. Raghudeva, the son of Chilarai revolted after the death of his father against his uncle Naranarayan demanding eastern part of the kingdom. This time also Naranarayan without going to direct war with his beloved nephew, he peacefully divided the kingdom to avoid the intra-family conflict. It might not be politically a good decision for a powerful king, but the peace-loving king did not want to fight his beloved nephew and to deprive him from the throne and this was practical thinking of the great king.

From the above discussion, it became clear that the political achievements of Naranarayan and Chilarai based on realistic and practical ground and they possessed much enlightenment and were adorned with excellent qualities⁷⁹, which would be discussed on other context. The bond of fraternity between king Naranarayan and Chilarai with different types of qualities and abilities helped them not only to conquer but also to take appropriate steps. With their brilliant military achievements and political diplomacy, they not only subjugated the neighbouring kingdoms and made themselves the master of the large part in the north east, but also established a friendly relation with the great Mughal emperor Akbar .

Administrative Arrangements of king Naranarayan:

In the Koch administration, the king had the topmost position in the administrative hierarchy and he was the integrator of the tribal and non-tribal subjects, defender of the kingdom and promoter of the civil and military administration. Both, Biswa Singha and Naranarayan took up steps to establish well-based administrative machinery. Biswa singha had taken initiative for administrative arrangements at the early stage and king Naranarayan himself reorganized it, based on his father's system on the permanent basis, which was also followed by his successors.

King Naranarayan after the conquest of the whole north-east India, took up steps to establish well based administrative arrangements over the direct control territory of his kingdom. He knew it very well that without proper administrative arrangements it would not be possible to undertake any aggressive policy of conquest at the early stage and to cement the permanent base of the kingdom for proper administration. To establish king's control over the militia, civil administration

and socio-economic affairs of the ruled, many supportive institutions were organised. He through the efforts of his brother Chilarai absorbed all the Bhuyans in the position from ministers to petty officers, according to their power and position, in the new state machinery by granting land on the both sides of the Brahmaputra^{79a}. The Koch administration was greatly influenced by the traditional administrative machinery of the pre-Koch polities of the region and the impact of the neighbouring states. However, details of his administrative arrangements greatly lacking information due to the absent of proper records. We therefore have to reconstruct of the administrative history of the Koches on the basis of certain scattered references in the Vansavaliies, the *Buranjis*, the Persian writings, contemporary literatures and a survey made by the British at the time of their annexation of Koch Behar to know about the earlier administration of the Koches. Few inscriptions and logical writings of some modern scholars also throw some indirect light about the administrative arrangements of the Koches.

Kingship and its nature:

The kingdom of Naranarayan had a tribal based monarchical administrative set up and kings of the dynasty claimed divine origin tracing their descent from Lord Siva and called themselves as 'Sivavanshi'. In the DRV, Biswa singha, father of king Naranarayan is described as the son of Lord Siva and is compared with gods like Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh, Indra, Aditya, Vayu, Varuna and Kuvera⁸⁰. Biswa Singha also assumed the title of 'Kamatesvara' and Koch State was also known as 'Kamata-Behar'⁸¹. The word 'Kamatesvari' literary meaning 'Isvari' or supreme woman, the goddess-protectress of Kamatapura. 'Kamatesvara' was the deputy of Kamatesvari; because the mother goddess bestowed her temporal power on him through 'Abhisheka' ceremony and by virtue of her deputyship, the king exercised his over lordship upon his subjects⁸². The *Kamakhya Temple Inscription* compared king Naranarayan with traditional figures like Arjuna, Dadhichi, Karna, and Kandarpa⁸³, and his successors had started to assume the title 'Narayan', the name of the supreme god of Hindu tradition⁸⁴. The coins of Koch kings though are known as *Narayani mudra* (on the name of supreme god Narayan), exhibit deep regards of the kings towards Lord Siva as most of the coins depict the king as "bee on the lotus like

feet of Siva "(Siva- Charana-kamala-madhu-karasya). By this way ascribing fictitious divine origin to kingship, and some times as the deputy of the god or goddess, the Koch kings legitimized their position and could gain command, respect and submission from the people, which helped them in consolidating their power, position and prestige. They also claimed themselves *Khsatriya* of Brahmanical fold with the influence of Brahmanas, who created the legends of divine origin through mythological stories. The nature of claims lends credence by the fact that there had been an attempt by the priestly class belonging to the Brahmins, to bestow divinity on the person of the king. Actual objective of the innovation of such fictitious origin for the Koch kings by Brahmanas, was however, to derive gains for the Brahmins themselves who could enjoy as their rewards of "lucrative posts at court and lands granted to them by their proselytes"⁸⁵. In this way, an attempt had been made to show the divine origin of the Koch kings but by the reign of Naranarayan, kingship of the Koch rulers got natural acceptance from the ruled.

Rules of Succession:

The rule of succession of the Koches to the throne was based on hereditary principle like other contemporary kingdoms of the India that was based on the Hindu tradition. It was the general rule of succession, according to Hindu tradition that the eldest son would succeed to the throne after the death or otherwise of the reigning king, but the rules of inheritance were not always maintained on primogeniture in Koch kingdom. Biswa Singha came to the throne after his father Hariya Mandal, according to the law of primogeniture but he selected his second son Naranarayan to succeed him to the throne by breaking the law of primogeniture⁸⁶. He did it, considering the competency of Naranarayan among his sons and wanted to avoid future clash among them after his death. The court nobilities sometimes played important role in this regard. They used to lay aside the claim of the legal nominee and placed their own choice on the throne for their personal interest. In this connection, it may be mentioned here that in spite of Naranarayan being selected as the heir-apparent by his father Biswa Singha, Nara Singha his elder brother usurped the throne, obviously with the support of a section of the courtiers, and ruled for a brief period taking advantage of Naranarayan's absence from the capital. It was also

the rule of succession that a king without an heir sometimes used to nominate his successor from amongst his nearest relatives. Thus, King Naranarayan nominated his brother Chilarai's son Raghudeva as his successor, as he had been childless for a long time. However, at the birth of Lakshminarayan, the whole situation became very complex. Lakshminarayan being the son of the ruling king had greater right of becoming next king as per hereditary law of succession and Raghudeva was highly alarmed at the situation. In this situation, an internal clash developing between the King's heir apparent Lakshminarayan and his nephew Raghudeva. Raghudeva with the help of some close courtiers manipulated the affairs in such a way that King Naranarayan bound to divide the kingdom in 1581AD, to avoid future clash between his son Lakshminarayan and his nephew Raghudeva. Therefore, it is clear from the incident that the rule of succession was not rigid and it was executed considering the real situation for the betterment of the kingdom. In absence of a natural heir, the elders and courtiers exercised the right to choose a king from amongst the near relatives of the king⁸⁷.

The Coronation ceremony, kingly qualities, rights and duties of kings:

The 'Abhisheka' or the coronation ceremony was regarded as one of the most important administrative events of a king's assuming power. The ceremony was performed according to Vedic rites, under the guidance of the *Raja-Purohita* (the royal priest) and worships were offered to royal Gods and Goddess. The DRV informed us that on the coronation ceremonies of Biswa Singha, Nāra Singha and King Naranarayan⁸⁸. It is mentioned in the DRV that the coronation ceremonies were performed on an auspicious specific date, which were fixed according to astrological calculations and all the inhabitants of the capital irrespective of castes and creeds, rich, or poor assembled there and participated in the festive ceremonies. At the coronation ceremony of Biswa Singha, the men and women folks were singing ceremonial songs, accompanied by drums and others musical instruments. Water from the holly rivers of whole India collected for ablution of the king before being put on the throne and the king decorated with garlands of flowers, ornaments of gold, pest of sandal wood (*Chandan*) and *Tilak*⁸⁹. The royal umbrella placed on his head, white Chamar, a kind of fan for fanning made of the hair of a yak's tail was fanned the king, and some weapons were placed beside the king⁹⁰. The Brahmins, priests,

and astrologers offered grants of lands, including grown paddy lands, slaves and servants⁹¹. The beggars, the poor and the attendants were also gifted with numerous presents⁹². One interesting fact is to be noted here that, at the coronation ceremony of Biswa Singha, though the ceremony was conducted in accordance with Vedic rites, the Koch, the Mech, the Kachari and other tribal people living in the capital participated in the ceremony. They performed worship accompanied by their traditional music and dance praying for longevity and prosperity of the new king⁹³. It was the beginning socio-cultural assimilation of tribal and non-tribal cultures and rites in the Koch court.

At the coronation ceremony of Naranarayan, same type of rituals was performed in addition with some extra institutions. At this occasion, he appointed his brother Sukladhvaja as royal prince *Yuvaraja* and named him as *Sangram Singha* and some other important officials including 'paik'⁹⁴. It is a general tradition of the region that the kings on coronation of their accession to the throne issue coins and used to pay their visit to different places of their kingdom including religious places. According to the DRV, King Naranarayan and Raghudeva visited different places of their kingdoms including religious places⁹⁵. According to some modern scholars, king Naranarayan had issued coins at his coronation in 1555 AD, as all coins of king Naranarayan, so far discovered bear only frozen date 1555AD. However, it is fact from other literary sources that he ascended the long before 1555AD, in between 1534 -1540AD⁹⁶. Raghudeva and Lakshminarayan issued coins in 1588 and 1587 AD, respectively, most probably on their coronation to the throne as independent kings after the death of Naranarayan.

The DRV mentioned certain qualities, rights and duties of king. King must be well versed in academic pursuits and the study of the *Sastras* including the *Vedas* and the *Ramayana*. He must be good looking, sound health, devotional to Gods and Goddess, proficient in the art of administration, welfare of his subjects and as well as in military and physical abilities⁹⁷. The father of king Naranarayan, Biswa Singha is said to have possessed of all good qualities found in the earth⁹⁸. Their father, for education in *Sastras* and *Sanskrita* literature, sent Naranarayan and his brother Chilarai to Benaras and both became great patrons of learning and education. Naranarayan said to have derived the name '*Malladeva*' or '*Mallanarayan*' due his mastery in wrestling / boxing and Chilarai gained the title '*Sangram Singha*' as he

was a great warrior⁹⁹. The DRV also informed us that the qualities of the kings of the dynasty of Naranarayan and have put much emphasis on a king's acquiring human traits and cultivating modest behaviour. A king should possess a sound moral character and exhibit qualities like liberality, charity, heroism, catholicity, impartial and truthfulness befitting a benevolent king. King Naranarayan had all these qualities and has been praised as "an ocean of all goodness....versed in many Sastras, possessed of an excellent character and beautiful appearance like the God Indra"¹⁰⁰.

According to Hindu tradition, the king was the head of the state administration and its all branches, but he had to rule according to the *Vidhi* of the Sastras and the traditional laws and customs of the society and had to take the suggestions and advices of the council of ministers¹⁰¹. It appears from the DRV that the kings usually followed the guidelines given in the *Kalika Purana*, a 10th century work, in matters relating to statecraft and regarding rights and duties of a king¹⁰². The first and foremost duties of the king were to protect the life and property of the people, to maintain law and order, to maintain the integration of the state, to defend the kingdom from external aggression, maintain justice and to prevent internal anarchy or misrule. He must not work only for his own interest but for whole of his subjects of all castes and creeds. It appears from the DRV that king Naranarayan paid due attention to the social organizations of different castes and classes of people and the tribal and non tribal Hindu communities were allow to follow their own manners, customs and religions¹⁰³. Ralph Fitch, the English merchant, who visited Koch Kingdom in 1586AD, informed us that the king paid attention to give medical facilities not only to his people, but also to birds and animals¹⁰⁴. As the head of the finance, the king maintained a treasury and levied different types of taxes on his people for the purpose administrative, defense expenditure, and public welfare.

Raiyat / Yuvaraj / Chatradhari Raja (the Crown Prince) and others officials:

Due to the expansion of the kingdom and centralization of power, it became impossible to the king to carryout all the functions of state without the help of others. In this connection it may be mentioned here that the classical writer *Kautilya* in the court Chandragupta Maurya mentioned in his famous book *Arthashastra*, the Saptanga (seven organs of state) theory of state, where he mentioned that 'a single

wheel can never move^{104A}. To solve this problem, king appointed many officials to look after different departments. Biswa Singha recruited officials like *Yuvaraj / Raikat* (*the Crown Prince*), *Karjis* (ministers), *Mantri*, *Bhander-Thakur*, *Supker Char*, *Dyuta*, *Majumdar*, *Tamuli*. All the officials during reign of Biswa Singha were appointed from his kinsmen and tribal leaders¹⁰⁵. King Naranarayan maintained all offices of these officials recruited by Biswa Singha and new offices and officials like *Dewan*, *Nazir*, *Patra*, *Kandali*, *Garmali*, *Kotwal*, *Makaddam*, *Biswas*, *Chaonia*, *Deori*, *Chomder*, *Ahudi*, *Sardar*, *Karmi*, *Kayastha*, *Laskar*, and *Barua* were introduced¹⁰⁶. He made a balancing admixture of the tribal and non-tribal people of these offices. Important offices were filled with non-tribal officers. Some important offices and officials are discussed under following heads:

Raikat / Yuvaraj / Chatradhari Raja (the Crown Prince):

The words '*Yuvaraj*' (*the crown prince*), *Raikot* (*the Chief of the Fortress*) and *Chatradhari Raja* (*who holds royal umbrella at time of the coronation of the king*) are found in the DRV which indicates a single person with several titles according to their functions at the early stage but during reign of Naranarayan *Yuvaraj* and *Raikot* definitely indicates different person . The appointment of *Yuvaraj / Raikat / Chatradhari Raja* was done from the royal family and was an essential post of the ruling section of the Koch kingdom and next to the king in importance. As *Yuvaraj* he look after the defense of the country, as *Raikot* (*the Chief of the Fortress*) his main duties were the protection of the frontiers, security of forts and commanding of the royal army. *Yuvaraj / Raikat* had the sole right to hold the royal umbrella at time of the coronation of the king so he is also called *Chatradhari Raja*.

Biswa Singha had appointed his brother Sisu (*Sisya Singha*) as *Raikot/ Yuvaraj*, who was next to the king in power and prestige, which not only helped him to keep his brother satisfied but also helped him to get his (*Sisu*) full cooperation in all the aspects of state administration. According to tradition, it was compulsory for the early Koch kings to get permission of the *Raikot* in their coronation and who would hold the royal umbrella at the time of coronation of the kings. In the writings of some colonial and modern writers, the *Raikot* was also described as prime minister / chief minister of the kingdom who had direct control over the king¹⁰⁷.

But the word of *Raikot* became hereditary title of the successors of *Sisu* (*Sisya Singha*) who established their seat at Baikunthapur near modern Jalpaiguri town, which territory was appanaged by Biswa Singha and ultimately lost its earlier importance of state business and became a symbolic relationship between the kingship and Raikotship during the reign of king Naranarayan. We do not find the name of the administrative post *Raikot* during the reign of king Naranarayan. But the term *Yuvaraj* became more important in the later age. King Naranarayan also followed the policy of his father Biswa Singha, who not only appointed his brother Chilarai as *Yuvaraj*¹⁰⁸, but also bestowed on him almost all the important state business. The *Katha Guru Charita* mentioned Chilarai ruled the eastern part of the kingdom as a provincial governor¹⁰⁹.

Karjis / Mantri (ministers):

With the expansion of the Koch kingdom and its proper administration another vital group posts were created in the state. It is stated in the DRV that after becoming king, Biswa Singha appointed twelve leaders of the twelve tribal clans as ministers in the services of the state with responsibility, dignity and power and were designated as *Karzi*¹¹⁰. They were also called 'Patras'¹¹¹ or 'Amatyas'¹¹². The twelve *Karzis* were Panbar, Barihana, Phedphedo, Yuddhabar / Buddhimanta, Vedela, Gaubar, Baihagu, Jagai, Kathia, Megha, Garakata and Dokhoda¹¹³. However, one Muslim chronicle gave slight different list of twelve Mech tribal leaders and they were as follows: Bhakura Karzi, Paro, Nichila, Ghurchal, Satananda, Megha, Purandra, Bhota, Bihu, Sharanam, Harish Chandra, and Ripurjoy Karzi¹¹⁴. The *Karzis* were selected on the basis of some qualities like efficiency in the wielding of arms, knowledge of state-craft, moral integrity, intelligence and trustworthy. According to the DRV, among twelve *Karzis* (ministers), Barihana and Baihagu were placed in separate category for their learning, diplomatic skill, loyalty, selflessness and skill in the art of war¹¹⁵. D. Nath named them as *Mantrins* and considered them as 'cabinet ministers' like modern democratic state administration¹¹⁶. The *Karzis* hereditary served the state as ministers and important state offices. The *Karzis*, *Patras* and *Mantrins / Mantrins* all had to perform military services also. Therefore, Bhimbal Patra and Bahubal Patra had commanded the Koch army and Bhaktamala and Tepu had commanded the Koch Navy in 1562-63 AD against the Ahoms¹¹⁷. Similarly,

Kabindra Patra, a minister had rendered military services to Raghudeva Narayan and Parikshit Narayan¹¹⁸. During the reign of Biswa Singha, the *Karzis* (ministers) were solely appointed from his tribe (Koch/ Mech) and their supports to the king had strengthened the process of centralization of power as they had their control over the clans living in the grassroots level. Therefore, beside their assigned duties, the *Karzi's* functions were instrumental in enhancing the state control over the subject.

The posts of *Karzis* (ministers) became more specific with further development of the kingdom during the reign of Naranarayan and later on. The term *Mantri* became more familiar than the term *Karzi*. *Mantris* that is the ministers were counselors of the king both in domestic and foreign affairs. For the foreign affairs, the state maintained *Dyutas* (envoys) and *Kakati* (ambassador) with the equivalent rank of minister. Appointment of the ministers from the non-tribal castes generally from the Brahmins and Kayasthas were also started at the time of king Naranarayan.

Dewan:

King Naranarayan created the post '*Dewan*', and was next to the king in dignity, power and position. He had been entrusted to the civil and financial administrations of the kingdom. First *Dewan* of the state was Chilarai, who was also the Yuvaraj and prime minister of the state. But the *Katha Guru Charit* refer to Chilarai as the '*Chota-Dewan*' or the '*Chota-Raja*' and to king Naranarayan as the *Bar-Dewan* or the *Bar-Raja*¹¹⁹. However, *Dewanship* was not confined to the ruling family only. In progress of time, king Naranarayan and his successors appointed the *Dewans* from the Kayastha caste, who proved their efficiency in that posts¹²⁰. We have a reference that Prana Narayan (1632-1665) appointed Kavi Sekhar and Kavi Narayan as *Dewan* for the civil administration of the state¹²¹.

Nazir/ Nazirdeo:

The *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, a Persian writing, informs us that there was an officer called *Nazir* or *Nazirdeo* in the Koch administration to look after the military affairs of the state¹²². The DRV says nothing about the post *Nazir* or *Nazirdeo*, for which, there are some confusion about the actual time of the innovation of the post in Koch administration. Khan Chaudhury A. A, without mentioning his source, states that this

post existed since the days of king Naranarayan who appointed a Brahmin as *Nazir*¹²³ and it was most probably, an innovation of this great king in the field administration by which he associated all sections of people in the state affairs. In the early years of the Koch rule, the *Nazirs* were appointed from the Brahmin caste and this tradition continued till the time of Lakshminarayan¹²⁴. After that, due to political situation, Lakshminarayan appointed one of his sons Mahinarayan as *Nazir* and since then the *Nazirship* had been enjoyed by the royal family hereditarily¹²⁵. Meanwhile, the *Raikot* (the of the successors of Sisu or Sisya Singha who established their seat at Baikunthapur near modern Jalpaiguri town), denied to perform his assigned duty to hold the *Chhatra*, then the *Nazir* began to perform the services of *Raikot* and *Nazir* came to be designated as *Chhatra Nazir* for holding the *Chhatra*¹²⁶

Royal Household Administration and its officials:

With the state formation on a solid basis and development of complexity in administration and centralization of power in the capital, several posts were created for the household administration. In household administration, the *Raja-Puruhitas*, the royal priests, who must be a Brahmin by caste, enjoyed the highest status and position in the Koch court and acted as *Rajgurus*, the Spiritual mentors of the kings. He must be a master in the *Sastras* and well versed in the sixty-four *Kalas*¹²⁷. A Brahmin Sarbabhuma by name was the *Raja-Puruhta / Rajguru* of Biswa Singha¹²⁸. King Naranarayan appointed Khanthabhushan, a Brahmin as *Raja-Puruhta/ Rajguru* (royal priest)¹²⁹. The *Raja-Puruhta / Rajguru* had a great role to perform in the royal palace in the spiritual aspects as well as court politics. Next to the *Raja-Puruhta/ Rajguru* in power and influence, *Daivagna* (astrologers) was another post in household administration, whose duty was to predict the future of the state. The advice of the *Raja-Puruhitas/ Rajgurus* and the prediction of the *Daivagna* highly valued and considered as guideline by the members of the royal family¹³⁰. Baidya, the royal physician was employed in the palace since the early stage of the Koch rule and who was an expert in medicinal science and knew how to prepare various drugs and medicines¹³¹. *Tamuli* was another household servant for the palace, who had to take care of the supply of betel nut and leaf¹³². The *Bhandari / Bandar-Thakur*

(storekeeper) was in charge of the state-treasury and store including the accounts of income and expenditure¹³³. The most important and trusted of all house-hold servants was the *Supkar* (chief cook), who was not only to be loyal, impassionate, impressive, expert in the quality of foods, good looking, good speaker and neat and clean but also to be expert in the preparation of varieties of delicious foods¹³⁴. The *Dvari* or the gatekeeper was another servant in household administrations. He had to keep guard of the gates of the royal household and intimated the king about the arrival of reporters and visitors¹³⁵. Moreover, some less important, officials like *Bhitar Palia* (general servant); *Thayat* (betel maker) and *Farasia* (light man) were also worked in the royal palace.

Land Revenue Administration:

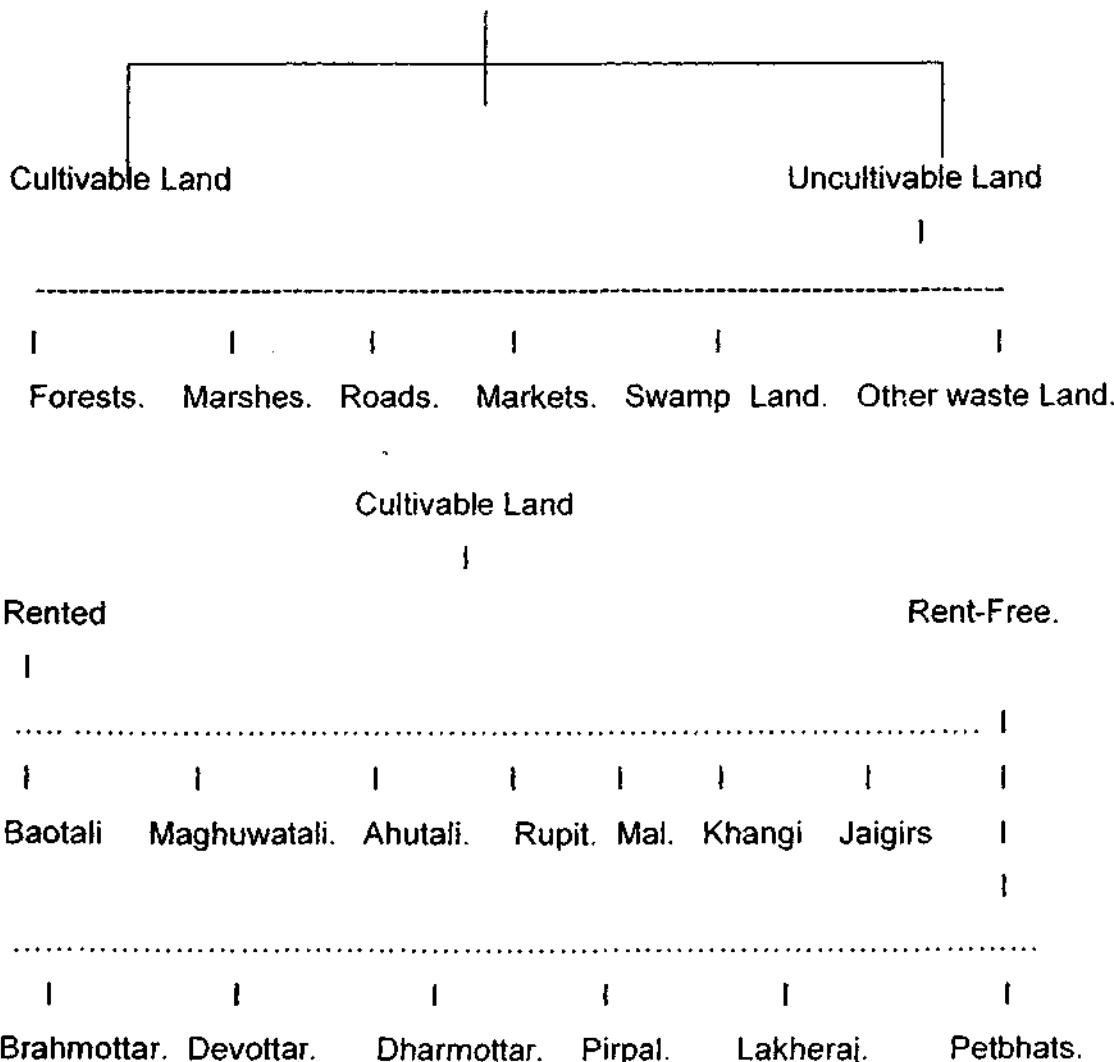
The power, position, development and stability of a kingdom depend on well-organized surplus generation of the kingdom and the Koch kingdom was not beyond it. Biswa Singha at the early stage had to depend only on the plundered booty through aggressive and guerrilla warfare for surplus extraction on temporary basis. However, it was not sufficient, so at the late stage, he introduced permanent surplus generation system that is land revenue system^{135A}. King Naranarayan also continued the policy of his father till the 1560s and there after he initiated the extraction of the revenue from the cultivable land, for which he introduced permanent land revenue administration. He attempted to survey cultivable land called 'poa-bandha'¹³⁶. However, information about the land revenue administration and land revenue collectors are lacking and we have to depend on scattered information in the chronicles of the Koches and the Persian writings. Units of land measurement and revenue yielding tracts had their variations in the kingdom and *Chakla*, *Zilla* and *Pargana* were prevailing units. Among these *Chakla* was under the control of Bhuyan and *Zilla* and *Pargana* were later denomination. In the reign of Biswa Singha, Bhuyans were entrusted to collect revenue from the cultivators, and later on, state officials such as *Dewan*, *Karzi*, *Chaudhury*, *Zaminders* and the *Sajawals* (later period) were responsible for the collection of revenue from the cultivators. The *Zaigir* lands were look after by a state official called '*Bakshi*'. The *Katha Guru Charita* informs us that the cultivators have to pay one forth of their produce as rent to the

royal treasury¹³⁷, but revenue officers collected more than the original rate¹³⁸ and very often it was exorbitant, which made the life of the cultivators' miserable¹³⁹. The collection of revenue, in the 'core area' had been in the direct control of the state and the revenue of the 'conquered territories' collected as tributes through the concern states¹⁴⁰. Revenue collected in cash and kind but cash collection was preferred and it was done in gold and silver coins in the matters of 'conquered states' and local collection was in Kowris. .

Land Revenue Structure:

There was variation in land revenue structures in the Koch kingdom during the period of our study. The entire land structure of the Koch kingdom under king Naranarayan and there after has been shown in the following table:

Land Revenue Structure.



It indicates the existence of two broad categories of land in the kingdom i.e., 'Uncultivable Lands' and 'Cultivable Lands'. The 'Uncultivable Lands' included the Jungle(forests) , Marshes , Roads , Markets , Swamps and Khas (waste lands for cattle rearing)¹⁴¹. The 'Cultivable Lands' again was of two categories 'Rent-Free' and 'Rented'¹⁴². The 'Rent-Free' lands included the '*Brahmottar*', the land donated to the Brahmins ; '*Devottar*', the land granted for maintenance of religious institutions to meet the expenditure of the religious affairs including festivals and maintenance of the temples build by the state; '*Dharmottar*' , the land granted to the Satras; '*Pirpal*', granted for maintenance of mosque, Islamic religious institutions; '*Lakheraj*', the reward for good service done to the state and '*Petbhats*', land granted for the maintenance of the relatives of the ruling family¹⁴³.

The 'Rented' land had been classified from two angels: according to the nature of produce and according to the procedure of rent collection. According to the nature of production, rented lands were classified in the following ways; '*Baotali*', low land where *Bao* paddy was sown; '*Maghuwatali*', land for the cultivation of *Rabi* crops; '*Ahutali*', where *Ahu* paddy was cultivated and '*Rupit*', lands for cultivation of *Sali* or transplanted paddy¹⁴⁴. According to the procedure of rent collection, the rented lands also classified in to three categories: '*Mal*', '*Zaigir*' and '*Khangi*'. '*Mal*' was a kind of land, where revenue directly paid by the cultivators and was the main source of state's income. It was consisted with *asal* or original rent and *abwab* or additional taxes, collected annually by the state officials called *sajawals*¹⁴⁵. The '*Zaigir*' is the lands given to the state officers as remunerations for their personal services according to the skill and efficiency of the '*Zaigirders*', who were allowed minimum one *Bish* or 13 *Bighas* of cultivable land¹⁴⁶. The revenue of the *Khangi* land had been reserved for the maintenance of the royal household expenditure.

Administration of Justice and Nature of punishment:

During the period of our study, there was no written and unified code of justice and punishment and tribal mode justice was in vague among the people of the Koch kingdom was based on the principles of Hindu religious texts or *Sastras*. The Koch kings never interfere in the autonomy of the tribal people and local customs and traditions determined the code of justice and nature of punishment of the tribal

people, which were never violated¹⁴⁷. In the lowest level, the Gramashabha or the village assemblies carried out the judgment and punishment, according to their customs and traditions and tribal villages of North Bengal, Assam are still carrying on the village assembly system in the field justice¹⁴⁸. On the other hand, the suggestions of the elders of the same caste and community or multi-caste elders and the principles of Sastras modulated the basis of justice in non-tribal villages. After the introduction of the institution of *Namghar* or prayer hall in the villages following the propagation of Neo-Vaisnavite movement, the petty cases were settled there by the village council of *Namghar* that now consisted all adult of the village instead of a selected few and its verdict became binding upon an offender¹⁴⁹.

Next to the Gramashabha or the village council of *Namghar*, was the district court of a Chaudhury or an Ujir¹⁵⁰ and then the highest court, the court of king or *Rajshabha*. The local courts including the estates of *Dewan*, *Raiyat* at *Baikunthapur* and *Chakladar / Zamindar* were the subordinate units of the judiciary^{150A}. According to D. Nath, "A person, if not satisfied with the decision of the Gramashabha, could file a petition to the district courtor make a direct appeal to the king's court which would then summon both the appellant and the respondent to appear before it on a fixed date for having hearing. On that day witnesses of the both parties were examined and then the case was dispensed with by passing a verdict based on the principles of the Sastras and on the *Rajshabha*'s own standard of right and wrong.....and its verdict only was sent to the king for his approval"¹⁵¹. Before giving his approval, the king examined every pros and cons of it and then gave his approval to satisfy both the parties.

In the highest level, the king was considered as the supreme authority of law and justice. However, the king had been assisted by a council called '*Rajshabha*', which was considered as the highest court or king's court¹⁵², consisting *Rajpurohit* (royal priest), *Pandits* (learned men), *Dewan* and king himself as the head of the Shabha. Through out the sixteen century, '*Rajshabha*' was movable from place to place, as the kings were engaged in wars but in the succeeding period, it became confined to the capital.

It is generally believed that the king was free to act at his will. For instance, Biswa Singha inflicted a severe punishment to a Brahmin for his unjustified claims¹⁵³ and king Naranarayan issued a non-bail able arrest to the Vaisnava saint

Sankaradeva without considering the authenticity of the incident¹⁵⁴. However, the king's will was considerably controlled by the principles of the *Sastras* and suggestions of *Pandits* or law officers who were consulted in case of difficulties¹⁵⁵.

The *Katha Guru Charit* mentioned various types of crimes and punishments prevalent in the Koch kingdom. Theft, robbery adultery and serious type of turpitudes were considered as crimes and punishments included mutilation and physical torture like pressing between irons. Wooden or bamboo cylinders locally called *Saranh*, *Chepa-Kunda*, *Pota-Kunda*, *Daphala-Kunda*, and *Sak-sai*¹⁵⁶. An offender was also punished by making him slaves or selling him as slaves. King Naranarayan ordered his men to sell Narayanadasa and Gokulchand, two trusted disciples of Sankaradeva, to the Bhutias as slaves¹⁵⁷. The capital punishment was also prevalent in the Koch kingdom, which always required the permission of the king and political offenders were punished by beheading or by strangulation¹⁵⁸.

Fore going discussion revealed that in the field of judicial administration, there was no uniformity and equality of law. King's will and principles of *Sastras* were main source of judgments and punishments.

Military Administration of the Koches:

It is general fact in the history of medieval period that the power, position, stability and territorial expansion of a kingdom fully depended on its military power and the Koch kingdom was not beyond this general fact of history. The Koch King Biswa Singha had followed the guerrilla warfare policy for the expansion and defense of his kingdom at the early stage and for this purpose; he organized tribal militia on temporary basis. At this stage, Biswa Singha had to depend on the booty, and there was no permanent source of regular income and so he could not organized 'standing army'. However, with expansion of his territory and concentration of power with the tribal militia he established a war department headed by a minister called '*Senapati*'¹⁵⁹. This post was most probably, nominal and having no much power and prestige. Because, this is proved by the fact that in declaring a war against any kingdom the consulted all the ministers instead of doing it with the '*Senapati*' alone and during wars the either accompanied his force under the command of a minister, or king himself commanded the force¹⁶⁰.

The tribal militia and a rudimentary state administration of Biswa Singha without regular income, inherited by Naranarayan, who was also essentially continued the policy of his father for the consolidation of the emerging Koch state at the early stage. He realized the fact that the tribal militia of his father had to be modernized and equipped with advance technologies and permanent infrastructures, to increase and consolidate his power and position against the organized forces of the Ahoms and Bengal Sultans to save his newborn state. He along with his brother-cum-general Sukladvaja, well known as Chilarai had included spices, elephantry and a navy with the existing Koch force. They formed a standing army for immediate needs, Constructed roads¹⁶¹, for the easy movement of the militia, build forts¹⁶², for the safety of their forces in bad times, and established cordial relation with all tribes of the area for their cooperation¹⁶³. They also employed the trained Rajput, Afghans, Mughals and Bhutanese in the Koch force^{163A}, and in this way they carried out many reforms, for which Koch infantry, navy and guerilla technique became more up to date and systematic. Moreover, peasantry, both tribal and non-tribal and artisans of the kingdom were also brought under the state control and forced them to render military services as *Paiks* (details will be discussed later). In these ways Naranarayan and Chilarai had established a strong military base and took up 'aggressive policy of conquest' to conquer the whole of North East India at the early stage and then followed the 'defensive policy' to save guard it.

Division of the Army:

The *paiks* (infantry), cavalry and elephantry were the three regular units of the Koch army since the time of Biswa Singha and another unit that is the navy was incorporated with it during the time of Naranarayan. Nevertheless, the DRV informs us that camels, buffaloes and donkeys were also used in wars^{163B}. Anyway, for better understanding of the Koch army, all the four units will be discussed under separate heads.

The Paiks (infantry) and its order:

The *paiks*, equivalent to infantries or land soldiers¹⁶⁴ constituted the basic unit of the Koch army and all 'able-bodied male population' of the kingdom was

considered as the paiks and was recruited from peasantry both tribal and non-tribal and artisans. They had to render obligatory military and other services to the state particularly in the times of requirement and for these duties; they were allotted 3 *puras* or 12 *bighas* of rent-free land¹⁶⁵. Royal officers were placed over the charge of a specific number of *Paiks* in pyramidal order according to strength, military ability and efficiency of the officers. Thus, according to the DRV, in lowest level twenty *Paiks* were placed under a *Thakuria*, like wise 100, 1000, 3000, 66000, (3000x22=66000) *Paiks* were placed under *Saikia*, *Hazari*, *Omra* and *Nawab* respectively¹⁶⁶. Out of the five posts, *Thakuria*, *Saikia* and *Hazari* are identical with the military administration of the Ahoms and rest two *Omra* and *Nawab* are identical with the Muslim military administration of the Bengal. However, *Raiyat*, (Commander-in-chief) was an indigenous innovation of the Koches¹⁶⁷. It indicates that the Koch military administration was an admixture of the indigenous and foreign ideas.

There are controversies about the actual numbers of the Koch land forces or *Paiks* and contemporary historical evidences have given several versions of it. According to the DRV, total number fighting force was 52, 25000 during the reigns of Biswa Singha and Naranarayan¹⁶⁸. The same source elsewhere recorded the Naranarayan had 532000 soldiers during his fight with the Ahoms in 1562 AD^{168A}. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, without mentioning his Source of information records "...the Commander-in-Chief Sukladhvaja set out (1562AD) with sixty thousand soldiers of Koch, Dom and Kavi (Keot) tribes" against the Ahoms¹⁶⁹. According to the *Raja Vansavali*, the strength of the Koch force had been 425000 at its peak time¹⁷⁰. The *Akbarnama* and the *Ain-i-Akbari* of the same writer recorded the number of infantry of the Koches 200000 and 100000 respectively¹⁷¹.

From these types of evidences, it is very hard to find out the actual numbers of the Koch force. Elaborate and logical analysis is needed to find out a reasonable number of the Koch force. The first figure of the DRV (i.e. 5225000) must be an exaggerated figure and it might be the total numbers of the population of the directly control territory or whole of the territories of Naranarayan's hegemony, and not the total number of the Koch force. Because the figures of the *Rajavansavali* and that of the DRV (later part) indirectly correlate with the figures of the *Akbarnama* and the *Ain-i-Akbari* and somehow acceptable. The figures of the *Rajavansavali* (i.e. 425000) and the DRV (Later part i.e. 532000), the *Akbarnama* (i.e. 200000) and the *Ain-i-*

Akbari (i.e.10000) were time and situation bound. We have to consider them and indirectly they support each other, if we considered the time and situation. The *Rajavansavali* and the DRV mentioned the numbers of the Koch force 425000 and 532000 respectively, at the time King Naranarayan (peak time). In the meanwhile, the kingdom had been divided between Naranarayan and his nephew Raghudeva in about 1581AD and it is quite logical assumed that the Koch force was also divided between them¹⁷². After the division of the kingdom, Naranarayan's share of the Koch force must be lesser then the number as mentioned by the *Rajavansavali* and the DRV (Later part) and it might fall in between 255000 to 319000¹⁷³. The *Akbarnama* and the *Ain-i-Akbari* mentioned the number of the Koch force of the time Lakshminarayan, who became the king of Western part of the Koch Kingdom i.e. Koch Behar at the death of his father Naranarayan in about 1587AD. Abul Fazal had started writing both the books in 1589AD and completed its manuscripts writing in 1596AD, the year of submission of Lakshminarayan to Man Singh, the then Mughal Subedar of Bengal and after that with five subsequent revisions and addition, finally came out in the year 1602 AD, a few months before the assassination of the writer¹⁷⁴. Moreover, further revisions and additions also done by Muhammad Salih in 1604AD¹⁷⁵. The *Akbarnama* mentioned the number of Lakshminarayan's force of the time of his submission to the Mughals in 1596AD. From 1587 to 1596 , the military strength of Lakshminarayan decreased to 200000 , as he was ' weak and indolent ' and 'totally unfit to guide the destiny of his kingdom'¹⁷⁶ and forced to make his submission to the Mughals to save himself from Raghudeva. After the submission to the Mughals Lakshminarayan became the vassalage of the Mughals and the number of force again decreased to 100000, as mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari* . It might be added part of the *Ain-i-Akbari*, as we mentioned earlier.

On the other hand, the information of Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed somehow acceptable on the ground that he mentioned the force under the command of Chilarai, not the whole Koch force. It might be the number 'standing force' of the Koches at its peak time, including that of the tribes of Dom and Kavi (Keot?). In this connection, it may be mentioned here that the DRV informs us that Chilarai marched against the king of Tripura with a force 40000, that might be the 'standing Force' of the Koches¹⁷⁷.

Therefore, from the above discussion it may safely be concluded that the strength of the Koch force varied time to time. At the climax of its power (peak period of Naranarayan), the Koch kingdom had a force 4.5 to 5.5 lakhs soldiers including a 'standing force' of around 40000 to 50000 men. The number of the Koch army of (western part i.e. Koch Behar), reduced to around 3 lakhs, due to the partition of the kingdom in 1581AD, and at the time of the submission of Lakshminarayan to the Mughals in 1596AD, the number again reduced to 2 lakhs due to the weakness and indolent ness of Lakshminarayan as mentioned earlier. After the submission, as vassalage, Lakshminarayan had 100000 soldiers as mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari*.

Cavalry:

The cavalry was another war unit of the Koches since the days of Biswa Singha, but information about this very scatter. The DRV occasionally informs us that Biswa Singha had cavalry and large number horses, of which 500 were killed during his war with Karnapur Bhuyan¹⁷⁸. This is the local tradition that Sukladhvaja jumped on horse back and crossed the Bharali River during time of his Ahom expedition and there by he earned the nickname 'Chilarai'. In the hilly geographical situation of the region, the cavalry played an important role with its swiftness and helped Chilarai to conquer whole of the North-East India within a short period. It is evidence from the DRV that almost all the states of northeast had their cavalry and this is proved by the fact they forced to offer certain numbers of their horses to Naranarayan as tributes. However, horses were not locally available and had to import from Bhutan, who had the monopoly business of *Tangan* horses¹⁷⁹.

However, nothing is known about the number of the Koch cavalry and who was in charge of supervision and command of this unit. The only reference in this regard is that Lakshminarayan had a cavalry of 4000 horse¹⁸⁰, and it is obvious that he had a fraction of the main Koch cavalry of the earlier. Naranarayan inherited a large number of horses from his father Biswa Singha¹⁸¹ and he himself collect considerably a large number horses as war condition, war indemnity and annual tributes from the all defeated countries which were also incorporated in the Koch cavalry¹⁸². From this point of view, we can obtain just an idea that the strength of the Koch cavalry was considerably large.

Elephant force or Elephantry:

The Elephant force or Elephantry was another important war unit like the cavalry of the Koches since the days of Biswa Singha. He had selected his son Deep Singha in charge of elephants including horses, cows and birds¹⁸³. Availability of wild elephants through out the hills and forest of the region and possibility of utilization of the elephants in war, in the unfavourable hilly and impregnable geographical locations led to the growth of elephantry in Naranarayan's force which immensely helped Naranarayan and Chilarai to conquer the whole of North-East India . The elephantry all always preceded the force and was primarily used to clear the road, demolish enemy's forts, launch night attacks and for defending their own forts and in transporting war materials¹⁸⁴. Wild elephant catching and training, a high-risk job was done by the *Chungis*, a section of Moran people of Assam and the Phandis and it was done under the strict supervision of the state authority. Mahuts were engaged to look after elephants and they had to drive elephants in wars.

However, we have only very few scatter references about the elephantry unit during the reign of Naranarayan and details information is lacking in the DRV, the main source of information¹⁸⁵. There is no direct reference about the strength of the Koch elephantry during the time Naranarayan. Naranarayan's son Lakshminarayan, the successor of the partitioned Koch kingdom (Koch Behar), had an elephantry of 700 elephants¹⁸⁶. Naranarayan had collected 264 elephants as war indemnity, and an annual tribute of 260 elephants were fixed from the defeated states of North-East India¹⁸⁷. Therefore, it is possible that Naranarayan's elephantry consisted nearly triple the strength of Lakshminarayan possessed. In spite of this, the Koch elephantry was smaller and weaker then that of the Muslims of Bengal for which it failed to withstand them¹⁸⁸.

Navy:

The Navy or naval force was very important and new war unit and it was introduced by king Naranarayan in the Koch force. It appears to have been the one indispensable weapon of defense as well as offence of the country. It is very natural that abounding in rivers and marshes, and navigability of these of the region had

influenced king Naranarayan to introduce this new unit in the Koch Military. Availability of huge amount of chambal woods (best for boat making) in the forest of the region and availability of expertise carpenters in the kingdom also facilitated the making of war boats. There were two types' war-boats called *Bacharis* or big war-boats and *Koshas* or small war-boats¹⁸⁹. The Koch force (all infantry, cavalry and elephantry) which crossed many rivers including the Brahmaputra and reached at the Ahom capital Garhgaon, must have helped by a large number of big boats to cross the rivers. However, nothing is known about the actual number of war-boats of Naranarayan. According to Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, "A large flotilla of boats under the naval commander Bhaktamala (Buktumlung) and Tepu preceded by riversail up the Brahmaputra, advanced up the Diksu River. When the naval force of the Ahoms advanced against them , a cannonade was exchanged and a sharp fight developed between the two flotilla at the mouth of the Hariya riverthe Ahoms were defeated"¹⁹⁰. Therefore, it is cleared from the above quotation that the navy of the Naranarayan was sufficient powerful, for which he could able to defeat his Ahom counterpart.

War weapons:

We have occasional references of war weapons, strategies and techniques of the Koches in contemporary chronicles and other writings. Swords, spears and bamboo bows and arrows were commonly used weapons of wars. Among these, most probably swords were very important, for, through out the DRV, there are many references of swords and even we have references that Biswa Singha fight with the Bhuyans and slain a number of the Bhuyans with his sword. Chilarai fight with sword on horse back. Chilarai had taken 100 special types Jayantiya swords called *Khangas* as compensation of the war with Jayantiya king¹⁹¹ and this was the only reference of weapons surrender. The availability of good quality bamboos in the region and easiness of making it were facilitated the use of spears and bows and arrows. Moreover, the *paiks*¹⁹² also used household appliances like axes, lathis (bamboo strict for fighting) and Kataris (iron made cutter).

The use of fire arms, at least at the early stage were very rear in the Koch kingdom. Although, the DRV informed us that Biswa Singha appointed his son

Mecha in charge of guns and its production¹⁹³ but we have no even a single reference of using it during the reign of Biswa Singha. During the reign of Naranarayan, we have only two references of using firearms i.e. guns or Muskets and that were during the naval wars with the Ahoms and the war with the Padshah of Bengal. For the first instance, in the words of D. Nath, "At night a skirmish occurred on the Dikhow where the Koches fired guns and dispersed the ahoms"¹⁹⁴, and in the words of Khan Choudhury A. Ahamed, ".....নোসেনাপতি টেপু এবং ভক্তমাল উভয়ে

ব্রহ্মপুর নদ উজাইয়া সেওলা ও মাকালং অধিকার পুরুক দিশ্বু নদীর মুখ পর্যন্ত আগসর হইলেন।

আহোমপক্ষের জালমৈন ভাঁহাদের বিরুদ্ধে আগসর হইলে ভাঁহারা শক্তপক্ষের উপরে গোলাবশন করিতে আরম্ভ কারেন"¹⁹⁵, and the Ahoms were defeated. Therefore, cannons were not in possession of the Koch military, at least in the reign of Naranarayan¹⁹⁶. However, cannons were in the possession of Lakshminarayan, Raghudeva Narayan and Parikshitnarayan¹⁹⁷.

War Strategies and techniques:

Regarding Strategies and techniques of war, both the Koches and the Ahoms were alike in certain areas. Gait on the war technique of the Ahom, which is applicable to the Koches, writes, "They would only come out of their forts at night and fall on the enemies unnoticed; invest them if they could and in the event of their repulse they would hurry back to their retreats"¹⁹⁸. Biswa Singh at early stage continuously fought against the Bhuyans of the region, following night and swift attacks, guerrilla technique of warfare and some times tricks to establish his kingdom. It was the result of his realization of the real situation, that the power of the others Bhuyans were superior and his power was not sufficient for a direct challenge. By following this policy, he defeated the *Bhuyan of Phulguri*, on which N. N. Vasu writes, "In the month of *Chaitra*, the *Bhuyan of Phulguri* disbanded his troops. One day in the month of *Vaisakha*, at dead of night, *Bisu* alone entered the capital of the *Bhuyan* asking his men to wait outside. The *Bhuyan* was fast asleep. *Bisu* stole into his bedroom and cut off his head with one blow of his sword. Then he gave his signal and his men at once fell to looting the house. In this way he got vast wealth and became master of that place"¹⁹⁹. Same was the fact with Bijeni Bhuyans, about

which N. N. Vasu writes, "Next Vaisaka, when the soldiers were, as usual, resting in their homes, Bisu availed himself of this opportunity and attacked the Bhuiya of Bijeni like a tiger falling upon a deer and killed him with his army. Thus, Bijeni was annexed to his territories"²⁰⁰. However, in the cases of Pratap Bhuyan and Narayan Bhuyan policy trick were applied²⁰¹. He continuously fought against Turbak of Gaud during 1532-33 with guerrilla technique of warfare²⁰². Thus, it is fact from the above discussion that during Biswa Singh, adopted the policies of swift night attacks, guerrilla technique of warfare, the tricks and direct war techniques that seems to him appropriate after considering real situations.

During the reign of Naranarayan, night attacks with 'mountain like ferocious looking elephant' and used of cavalry for quick advancement towards enemies, became most successful war strategy and technique. Sukidhvaja alias Chilarai, the brother-cum-general of Naranarayan, said to have gained his nickname 'Chilarai' due to his swiftness in attack on horse back like Chila (a bird of eagle group). S. N. Bhattacharyya writes," The Ahoms as well as the Koches were adapt in night attacks. The most typical form of advance towards the enemy was under the cover of small stockades, with the elephants in front, the main aim being to overwhelm them by their great numerical strength. As far as practicable, the army moved in close cooperation with the fleet"²⁰³. Among their military strategies, mention may be made of their diplomacy and well-planed war preparation that played very important role in the war preparation. To secure the withdrawal of the enemy in unfavourable situation, they would enter into a treaty with them, honour the terms for some time and no sooner they reorganized their strength than openly defy it. Thus, as war strategies King Naranarayan constructed roads (Gossain Kamal Ali) for easy passes of the army and supply line, organised various tribes, to obtain their co-operation and safeguard supply line, established friendship with the enemies of the enemy to strengthen his war position. Making of Flotilla Bridge by war boats to cross-rivers and use of war boats, in close-quarters fighting became very helpful for the Koches. Ralph Fitch noticed that the Koches used to poison waters of rivers and ponds to put the enemy into serious of straits²⁰⁴. The prevalence of military conscription was a great advantage point of the Koches to make large army to put mental pressures on the enemies. Thus, it was the tradition of the region that, 'in times of war, all the inhabitants of the kingdom , artisans, farmers, the well-to-do and common people,

free or unfree, have to go to the battle whether they wish it or not. ...this overwhelming numerical strength, the bodily vigour, courage and hardihood²⁰⁵ of the Koch paiks and multi ethnical composition of the army, were valuable military assets. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, recorded, "...the Commander-in-Chief Sukladhvaja set out (1562AD) with sixty thousand soldiers of Koch, Dom and Kavi (Keot) tribes" against the Ahoms²⁰⁶.

For the defense of the country and save gaud the army in bad times, King Naranarayan constructed many forts, embankments, ramparts and camps at strategic places in the kingdom during their northeast expedition, which played important parts in war strategy and considered as 'strongholds furnished the nerves and sinews of the kingdom'²⁰⁷. King Naranarayan had constructed the most important fort at Naranarayanpur, which had been used by him as base camp against the Ahoms as well as of other states of northeast India. Besides Naranarayanpur, he also established a line of forts at other strategic places like Tematumani, Chandika Behar and Majuli, which were of much advantage in undertaking the military operations²⁰⁸. With the authority the Persian writers, S. N Bhattacharyya, writes regarding the building of the forts of the northeast India,"They were generally made of mud, bamboo and wood and some times grass was also used. The great care was taken in their construction. Around the main stronghold, a strong wooden wall was made, whose high turrets were mounted with powerful guns. Surrounding the fort wall all through ran a deep ditch, whose skirts were invariably set with a thick bamboo palisade – a pitfall for the cavalry. Sometimes this palisade was encircled by a second ditch. The fort-making complete, it was garrisoned adequately, and a powerful contingent of war boats was deputed to safeguard it"²⁰⁹. Ralph Fitch described, the Koch capital at Koch Behar as 'well fortified and encompassed with cane and bamboo palisades sharpened at the top so that no enemy could get into it'²¹⁰.

Besides these, sending of *Dutas* (envoys/ ambassadors) and *Chars* (spies) to collect the information about the motives, war preparations of the enemies and military organizations were another form of war preparation and strategy of the Koches²¹¹. For instance, according to an Assam *Buranji*, Sankaradeva, the Neo-Vaisnavite propagator became instrumental in giving Chilarai an intelligence to bribe

the Ahom officers in order to collect secret information of Ahom military preparations²¹².

From above discussion, it cleared that military organization the Koches (Biswa Singha and Naranarayan) was well organized. With their force, the Koches followed both traditional and new innovative war strategies and techniques in their state, which helped them in expansion of the kingdom as well as in the defence of the kingdom considering situations. The military success of the Koches based on guerrilla warfare, swiftness of attack, the spirit of unity of different castes and tribes, efficient leaderships of Chilarai and construction of forts etc.

Notes and references:

1. DRV, vv. 588-590.
2. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p- 119; M. Neog, op. cit. p. 62.
3. Gait, op. cit. p. 56; D. Nath, op. cit. p. 83.
4. K. L. Baruah, op. cit. p. 200. He described the incident in this way: "Chilarai now became an able ally of the Moghals" and "In 1583 he appears to have cooperated with the Moghuls in the fight with Masum Kabuli on the bank of the Ganges. Here he contracted small-pox and died".
5. S. L. Barua, op. cit, p. 214.
6. D. Nath. Op. cit. p. 67. Koch north-east had been continued in between 1561-1567AD
7. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p- 119; M. Neog, op. cit. p. 62; Gait , op. cit. p. 56; D. Nath , op. cit. p. 83 and S. L. Barua, op. cit p. 214.
8. DRV, vv. 495, 496 and 570.
9. Gait's Eng. Trns of the inscription, op. cit. p. 64.
10. DRV, vv. 677-681.
11. DRV, vv. 590-681.
12. J. N. Sarkar, *The History of Bengal – 1200-1757*, Academica Asiatica , Patna , 1973 , p. 184 .
13. DAB, p.50, Gait, op. cit. p. 104, and also in D. Nath, op. cit. p.72.
14. Abul-Fazl, 'The Akbar-Namah', Eng. Trans. By H. Beveridge, p. 349; Abul-Fazl, 'The Ain-I Akbari', Eng. Trans. By H. Bloemmann, p. 50.

15. J. N. Sarkar, op. cit. p. 185.
16. DRV, vv. 627-637.
17. *The Akbar-Namah*, op. cit. p. 349n; Gait, op. cit. p. 57.
18. It is written in the *Rajoupakhyan* that when the newly married bride of prince Naranarayan made obeisance to the eldest prince Narasinha, he blessed her saying 'Be a queen. When the time came for Narasinha to be a king, the wife of Naranarayan reminded him of that blessing and Narasinha who loved truth, made his blessing true by making Naranarayan a king. Quoted in H. N. Chaudhury , *The Cooch Behar State and Its Land Revenue Settlement*, Cooch Behar, 1903, p. 229fn.
19. It is written in the *Gandhaubhanarayan Vamsavali* (page.66) that Bhanumati and Chandraprova, the two daughters of Pratap Roy Bhuyan were married to Naranarayan and Sukladhvaja (Chilarai) respectively immediately after his defeat in the hands of Biswa Singha. Quoted in Khan Chaudhury, A. A's, '*Koch Beharer Itihas*', p.101.
20. *The Gandharbhanarayan Vansavali*, part II, p. 39-41; Quoted in Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed's, '*Koch Beharer Itihas*', p. 115.
21. DRV, v. 618.
22. *The Akbar-Namah*, op. cit. p.716 and the *Kamarupa Vansavali*, quoted in Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed's, '*Koch Beharer Itihas*', and pp.119-20. He loved Raghudeva like a son and sometimes sat on the throne with him on his lip and he even declared him as 'Yuvaraja' (crown prince) and he was called 'Patkumar'. From all these acts, Chilarai, Some bureaucrats and Raghudeva himself had became very much hopeful to be the next king.
23. *The Kamarupa Burunji*, p.15, and *The Katha Guru Charit*, pp-614f .quoted in D. Nath, op. cit., pp.105fn.
24. DRV, vv. 622-23. It is very common in history that the kinsmen and courtiers of the court try to projects future king long before the death of the existing king. It is also true in the history of the Koches. At the death of Biswa Simgha, some courtiers had helped Naranarayan to be the king of the Koch kingdom.
25. S. K. Bhuyan, (comp.), '*Annals of Delhi Badshahate*', 1947, Gauhati, p.184. Quoted in D. Nath's op. cit. pp.105fn.

26. DRV, vv. 623-24 and 627. Most of the modern scholars described that Raghudeva established his capital at Baranagar or Ghilajoypur. However, the DRV clearly mentioned that Raghudeva established his capital at Baranagar first and after some circumstances, he established a city at Ghilajoypur.
27. DRV, vv. 637-638.
28. Most of the modern scholars had fixed the date of the partition of the kingdom in 1581 with the Archeological and the Numismatics evidences. But, if we carefully investigate the courses of happenings before the actual division of the kingdom in 1581, it became crystal cleared that it had started at least 3-4 years ago.
29. Gait, op. cit. p.57; D. Nath, op. cit. p.84 ; S. L. Baruah, *A comprehensive history of Assam* , p. 214; K. L. Baruah, *Early history of Kamarupa* p. 200.
30. DRV. vv. 639-645.
31. DRV. vv. 646-652.
32. W. W. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Bengal* p. 405; It is stated by Babu Ram Chandra Ghosh (as cited in D. Nath op. cit. p. 85) that King Naranarayan had appointed Chilarai for internal administration to the territory of the east of the river Sankosh and it can not be considered as the division of the division.
33. S. K. Bhuyan, (comp.), *Annals of Delhi Badshahate*, 1947, Gauhati, p.185, quoted in D. Nath's op. cit. pp.105fn.
34. DRV. Vv. 654-655; D. Nath, op. cit. p. 84.
35. DRV. Vv. 654-657.
36. DRV. Vv. 659-665; Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed's, '*Koch Beharer Itihas*', p.121 mentioned the numbers of Raghudeva's wives as 120 without mentioning his source of information.
37. DRV. Vv. 663-666.
38. DRV. Vv. 667-668.
39. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit., p.121, mentioned annual tribute without mentioning his source of information and other sources including the DRV said nothing about the tribute. The inscriptions of Hayagriva and Pandunath temples described Raghudeva as an independent king.

40. Kamarupa Vansavali, P.56, quoted in Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit., p. 121fn and J. P. Wade 'an Account of Assam' p.210.
41. D. Nath, op. cit., p. 85.
42. Gunaviram Barua, *Assam Burunji* Assam Publication Board, Gauhati, 1972, p. 47.
43. Khan Chaudhary A. Ahamed, op. cit., p.121; Gait. Op. cit., p. 57; S. L. Baruah, op. cit. p. 14.
44. Gait. Op. cit., p. 57.
45. Gait's trns. , op. cit. p. 64.
46. DRV, vv. 677-681.
47. D. Nath, op. cit. p. 85.
48. DRV. Vv. 667-668.
49. S. N. Bhattacharyya, *History of Mughal North-East Frontier Policy* , p- 105fn.
50. Gait's trns. op. cit. p. 64.
51. J. P. Wade, op. cit. p.210.
52. The earliest coins with Raghudev's are dated 1588AD.
53. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit., p.121, mentioned annual tribute without mentioning his source of information and other sources including the DRV said nothing about the tribute.
54. Ibid
55. DRV, vv .668: পঞ্চম দেশের রাজা শক্তীনারায়ণ ।

পুবদিশে রঘুদেবে করোক ভোজন ॥

সীমাক আগ্রহি যিটো অন্যায় করয় ।

তার দ্রুতগত হৈবে নাহিকে সংশয় ॥

56. Gunaviram Barua, '*Assam Burunji*', Assam Publication Board, Gauhati, 1972, p. 47 and Gait, op. cit. p. 58fn.
57. K. L. Baruah, op. cit. p. 201.
58. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p.283; D. Nath, op. cit., p.106fn.

59. N. G. Rhodes, 'The Coinage of Cooch Behar' , A Source Book of the Numismatic Studies in North-East India, vol. II, 1987, p.68 ; Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed , op. cit. p. 283 .
60. P. K. Bhattacharyya, "Chandir Jhar (Alipurduar) e Prapta Brihat Mudra Bhandar" (in Bengali), *Pragbas*, Puja number, 1991, p. 87. The coins of Naranarayan so far discovered including Chandir Jhar Hoard (the largest finds of coins unearthed in the Eastern India) bear a' Frozen date' Saka 1477 (1555AD) .
61. J. P. Wade ('An Account of Assam' p. 210) mentioned that Raghudeva had agreed that he would mint coins in the name of Naranarayan after the division in about 1581AD., but no such coins have yet come to light. D. Nath, op. cit., p. 92.
62. N. G. Rhodes, 'Coinage of North-East India' (Lectures delivered at the NEHU, Shilong, 1994, p. 60; J. B. Bhattacharyya, "State Formation in Pre-colonial Tribal North-East: A case study of the Dimachha State", NEHU, JSSH, Vol. 2, No. 3, Shilong, 1984, p. 7.
63. There are differences of opinions about the exact date of accession of Naranarayan and the debate continued. However, most of the scholars accepted the year 1540 AD., as the date of his coronation.
64. DRV., vv. 255-256.
65. DRV., vv. 317-318.
66. ABSM, p. 25. It records that about 5000 Koch soldiers killed and their heads were brought to Mathadang, a place in the Sibsagar district and cremated there.
67. Historical Letters of the Ahoms period, a collection of 44 letters exchanged between the Koch and the Ahoms kings. Letter no. 18, Vol. V Part VI, DHAS, Gauhati.
68. Ibid.
69. ABSM, p. 32; D. Nath. , op. cit. p.55.
70. DAV, v. 335 and ABSM, p. 32.
71. ABSM, p. 32.
72. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p.108.

73. The earliest reference of this theory in Indian context is in 'Arthashastra' of Kautilya during the reign of Maurya King Chandragupta in 4th century BC.
74. 'Akbarnamah', III, p. 349 and S. N. Bhattacharyya, op. cit. p. 98fn.
75. DRV. vv. 327-338.
76. Gait, op. cit. p. 58; Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p. 109.
77. *Alahabad Prasasti* of Harisen.
78. According to the ABSM, p. 37 and ABHB, p.35, Chilarai wrote a secret letter from his captive in Gauda requesting his brother Naranarayan to release the Ahoms hostages immediately, considering the fact that the Ahom king would take advantage of this situation and invade their territory.
79. 'Akbarnamah', III, p.1067. 79A. A. Guha, op. cit. p. 479; Vasu, Vol., I, op. cit. p. 70.
80. DRV, vv. 132-39.
81. 'A History of Cooch Behar', p. 87, 165 and 172. Three Koch kings assumed the title Kamatesvara: Biswa Singha (1515-33), Prannarayana (1632-65) and Modanarayana (1665-80).
82. P. K. Bhattacharyya, (ed) 'The kingdom of Kamata Koch Behar in Historical perspective', Sibsankar Mukherjee's article 'The Kamadesvara-Ritual sovereign of northeastern India' North Bengal University, 2000, p. 78.
83. *The Kamakhya Temple Inscription*: "Glory to the king Malladeva , who virtue of his mercy , is kind to the people , who archery is like Arjuna , and in charity like Dadhichi and Karna; versed in many Sastras ; his character is excellent ; in beauty he is as bright as Kandarpa, he is a worshipper of Kamakhya".
84. Bengal: past and present, Vol. XXIV, p.14).
85. Gait , op. cit. p. 11 .
86. DRV. vv. 251-64 .
87. This type incident happened in the 1681, when at the death of Modanarayana, the king of Koch Behar; his brother Vasudevnarayana succeeded him to the throne.
88. DRV. vv. 112-32 ; 285-86 and 312-14 .
89. Ibid, vv.125 -26.
90. Ibid . v. 130.

91. Ibid. v., 130.
92. Ibid . v. 129.
93. Ibid . v. 128.
94. Ibid . vv. 313-316.
95. Ibid. vv. 312 and 670 -71.
96. The literary sources give us different dates of the Naranarayan accession to the throne of Koch kingdom, which varied from 1534-1540. Details of which have already been discussed in the chapter II.
97. DRV, vv. 140-141.
98. DRV, v. 143.
99. *The Katha Guru Charit* (ed) K. Saikia, p. 450f.
100. *The Kamakhya Temple Inscription*:
101. D. Nath, op. cit. p. 113.
102. Ibid.
103. King Naranarayan had introduced a cultural code, for the people of the tribal origin and Brahmanical fold, according which the Mech, the Kachari and the Koches of tribal fold to the north of the Gohai Kamal Aali will follow their tribal customs to worship. And the southern territory of the road as far the Brahmaputra will follow Brahmanic customs to worship. (*Samudranarayanaer Vamsavali*, p. 41, cited in Khan Choudhary A. Ahamed, op. cit. p. 107).
104. Ralph Fitch, pp. 111-112. 104A. '*Arthashastra of Kautilya*'.
105. DRV., vv. 173-193; Rup Kumar Barman, '*From Tribalism to State*', Delhi, 2007, p.163.
106. Rup Kumar Barman, op. cit. p. 163.
107. W.W. Hunter: *Statistical Account of Bengal*, reprint, New Delhi, 1984, vol. X., p.16; S. C. Ghoshal, *A History of Koch Behar* (Eng translation of Koch Beharer *Itihas* of Khan Chaudhury A. A.) , reprint edited by H. Nag, 2005, Siliguri, p.246.
108. It is interesting to note that we do not find the post Raikot during the reign of king Naranarayan. Chilarai had been always described as 'Yuvraj' , Senapati, Dewan and Chota Dewan.
109. *The Katha Guru Charita*, pp. 234f, 237f, 252and 279.

110. DRV. v.163 .
111. DRV. vv. 283 and 322.
112. *Pandunath Temple inscription*, cited in D. Nath: *History of the Koch kingdom-1515-1615*, Delhi, 1989, p. 214.
113. DRV. v. 163.
114. The 'Padsha Buranji or Annals of the Delhi Padshahate', p. 244.
115. DRV. vv. 165-168.
116. D. Nath: op. cit. p.115.
117. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p. 106 and D. Nath : op. cit. p-115 .
118. *Kamarupa Buranji*, p.14 and S. N. Sarma, *Asamiya Sahityar Itibritta*, Gauhati, 1961, p. 152.
119. The *Katha Guru Charita*, pp. 234f, 237f, 252and 279.
120. *Rajoupakhyan*, p.20; Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p. 1133.
121. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p. 171.
122. *Baharistan-i-Ghaybi*, I., p. 246.
123. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit. p. 113.
124. H. N. Chaudhury, 'Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlement' , Cooch Behar, The Cooch Behar State Press , 1903, p. 236 ; also in *Rajoupakhyan*, p. 29.
125. Ibid. p. 235.
126. H . N . Chaudhury, op. cit. p. 236.
127. DRV. vv. 173-75.
128. Ibid and N. N. Vasu , *The social History of Kamarupa* also mentioned that Biswa simgha brought a Brahmin from Mithila , of the name of Sarvabhauma belonging to the Gotra of Vasistha for the worship of his tutelary deities . Vol. II, 1926, Delhi.
129. *Guru Charit*, (ed. by K. Saikia) records that having failed in religious debates in the hand of Sankaradeva, Kanthabhushan went to Benaras for further studies and training. p.487.
130. DRV ,vv. 493-95 informed us that Naranarayan suspended the rebuilding of the *Kamakhya temple* on the pretext of his being under the influence of evil stars.
131. Ibid. vv. 180-81.

132. Ibid. vv. 182-83.
133. Ibid. vv. 187-88.
134. Ibid. vv. 184-85.
135. Ibid. vv. 193-94. 135A. N. N. Vasu, op. cit. p. 48. He writes, "Visvasingha appointed some men as Chaudhuris and some as Patwaris and asked them to make a revenue settlement of the country".
136. Raja Vamsavali, (NBSL, Ms. no 04), F.9. Cited in Rup Kumar Barman, op. cit. p.122.
137. Katha Guru Charita, p. 237
138. H. N. Chaudhury, op. cit. p. 442.
139. H. N. Chaudhury, op. cit. p. 442-43.
140. The states conquered by King Naranarayan Chilarai paid their tributes to the Koches, which we have been mentioned in chapter two of this thesis,
141. H. N. Chaudhury, op. cit. p. 482.
142. Cited in D. Nath, op. cit. p.124.
143. H. N. Chaudhury, op. cit. pp. 441-42.
144. The *Katha Guru Charita*, p.95 .
145. H. N. Chaudhury, op. cit. p. 442.
146. Ibid. p. 547; There were other two units of land measurement like *halsa* or *halisa* equivalent to one bigha and *pura* equivalent to four bighas of land. D. Nath, op. cit. p.125.
147. DRV. Vv.325-27.
148. S. K. Paul, 'Tribal Council of the Rangdhani Rabha: An Autonomous Socio-political Institution', in Sebastian Karotempel and Dipali Danda (eds), *The tribes of North East India*, Calcutta, KLM Firma Pvt. Ltd., 1984, pp.377-90.
149. D. Nath, op. cit. p.124.
150. Ibid. p.122. He mentioned with the reference of the *Katha Guru Charita* (p-505) one Gopal Chaudhury and with the reference of the '*Prachin Kamrupiya Kayastha Samajer Itivritta*' by H. N. Dutta Baruah (p. 80), one venkat Giri was an ujir , in the regions of Phulguri and Bijni during the reign of Naranarayan 150A. Rup Kumar Barman, op. cit. p. 162.
151. D. Nath, op. cit. p.122.
152. S. K. Paul, op. cit. p. 39.

153. H . N . Chaudhury, op. cit. p. 401.
154. DRV. vv. 274-75.
155. The *Guru Charit*, vv. 3449-3454, pp. 686-87.
156. The *Katha Guru Charita*, p. 220-27.
157. N. N. Vasu, op. cit. p. 105.
158. Ms. 'Koch Rajar Burunji', p.91 cited in D. Nath, op. cit. p.123.
159. DRV. vv. 170-72. One Yuddhabhar was the *Senapati* of Biswa Singha.
160. D. Nath, op. cit. p.117. He mentioned that the *Senapati* was the small regular army stationed at the capital to serve immediate need.
161. At the instruction King Naranarayan, one of his brother Gohain Kamal constructed a road (*Gohain Kamal Ali*) extended from the Koch capital to Narayanpur fort at the Ahom- Koch frontier, for the easy movement of the militia.
162. They build many forts including Narayanpur fort at the Ahom- Koch frontier and Chilarai Kote (fort of Chilarai) at Tufangang.
163. DRV. v. 337. **163A** . 'Rajoupkhyan' , p.20. **163B** . DRV. vv. 95 and 199.
164. The Bengali word 'Paik' means an armed land soldier and some compared with the Bengali term 'Lathiya' means a skilled fighter with sticks. What may be the original meaning of word paik , in present context it is equivalent to infantry or land soldier.
165. Rajavansavali, Ms. (NBSL, Ms. No. 4) f.9. Cited in Rup Kumar Barman, op. cit. p.105.
166. DRV. vv. 196-97.
167. S. C. Ghoshal, op. cit. p. 104.
168. DRV. vv. 198 and 315. **168A** . DRV. v., 359.
169. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, *op. cit.*, Eng., translation by S. C. Ghoshal, as 'A History of Koch Behar', reprint edited by H. Nag, 2005, Siliguri, p.118.
170. *Raja Vansavali*, pp.120-21, cited in Rup Kumar Barman, op. cit. p. 86.
171. 'Akbarnamah' , Vol. III, p. 067; the *Ain-i-Akbari* Vol. II, p. 30. (Cf. Gaits Koc kings of Kamarupa, J.A.S.B., for 1893, p.284, and Blochmann's contributions.
172. Details of the incident mentioned earlier of this chapter.

173. Raghudeva left the Koch capital with large numbers of his follower officers including Yudhisthir Kayastha , the Bhandari, Kabindra Patra, Gadadhar Chaonia , Purandar Laskar, Srirama Laskar, Sardar Kabiraj, Gopal Chaulia and others (DRV, v.140). Some forts including Narayanpur also fall within his part and within few days, he dares to attack a fertile region of his uncle. If we assumed that Raghudeva had his control over the minimum 40% of the Koch force 425000 or 5,32000 as mentioned by the *Raja Vansavali* and the DRV(Later part), then the number of Raghudeva's force fall : $425000 \times 40/100 = 1,70000$ or $5,32000 \times 40/100=2,12800$. Then the number of Naranarayan's force would be $425000 - 170000 =255000$ or $532000 - 212800 = 319200$, during period 1581-1587.
174. J . L . Mehta , 'Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India' , Vol. II, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd. ,New Delhi, 2nd revised Edition , 1984 , p. 43.
175. Ibid.
176. D . Nath , op. cit. p. 90.
177. DRV. v. 424 .
178. DRV. vv. 95 and 199.
179. *Infra*, p. 231f; cited in D. Nath, op. cit. p.118.
180. 'Akbarnama'h, Vol. III, p.1067.
181. It is evidence from the DRV that the Bhuyans had cavalry force .For instance, in the war between Biswa Singha and Karnapur Bhuyan 500 horses were killed, (DRV, vs. 95). There were a large numbers of Bhuyans who were defeated by Biswa Singha and their belonging elephants, horses and camels were taken and incorporated with the Koch force.
182. According to the DRV, vv. 3779-481), Naranarayan received 320 horses as war indemnity and 370 horses were fixed as annual tributes of the defeated countries of the North-East. If he able to collect minimum 4 years tributes at the times of peak hours , then the total collection of horses would be : $330+(370 \times 4)=1800$.
183. DRV. v. 262.
184. K . L . Barua, *Mirza Nathan's Narrative*, JARS, Vol. v, No. 3 , 1937, p.65ff. cited in D . Nath, op. cit. p.90.
185. DRV. vv. 95, 195 and 201.

186. The Akbarnamah, Vol. III, p.1067.
187. The DRV, vv. 379-481, If Naranarayan able to collect minimum 4 years tributes at the times of peak hours , then the total collection of horses would be : $264 + (260 \times 4) = 1304$.
188. J. N. Sarkar (ed), History of Bengal 1200-1750 AD, Vol. II, p.182.
189. M. Neog, Purani Asamiya Samaj Aru Samskriti, Gauhati, 1971, p. 133.
190. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, Koch Beharer Itihas, Eng. translation by S. C. Ghoshal, as 'A History of Koch Behar', reprint edited by H. Nag, 2005, Siliguri, pp. 118-20.
191. DRV, v. 417.
192. The Bengali word *Lathial*, means an expert, who fight with a bamboo strict (Lathi) and *Paiks* and *Lathials* are synonymous.
193. The DRV, vv., 259. Some scholars referring to the v. 259 mentioned that Deep Singha was in charge of guns and cannon of Biswa Singha. However, the verse says nothing about cannon but says that he would be powerful of guns. The original verse is : “ মেচায়ে আনিলা যিতো সীহাৰ টুপলি ।

বুলিলা রন্দুকী হৈৱ ইটো মহাবলী ॥”

194. D. Nath, op. cit. p. 56.
195. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit., p.108.
196. It is traditionally believed that Babar first used the cannons in India in the 1st battle of Panipat.
197. D. Nath, op. cit., Bibliography , p. 215.
198. Gait, op. cit., p.253.
199. N. N. Vasu, op. cit., pp. 38-39. He writes with the authority of Brihat Rajavansavali, edited by Harendra Narayan, verses, 717-22. (Assam Govt. Col., Darrang, no.2, part 1, p. leaf 42.
200. N. N. Vasu, op. cit., pp. 39-40.
201. See Vasu for details op. cit., pp.39-45.
202. D. Nath, op. cit. p. 120.
203. S. N. Bhattacharyya, op. cit., p.39.
204. Ryley, op. cit., p.112.

205. S. N. Bhattacharyya, op. cit., p.39.
206. Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit., Eng., translation by S. C. Ghoshal, as 'A History of Koch Behar', reprint edited by H. Nag, 2005, Siliguri, p.118.
207. S. N. Bhattacharyya, op. cit., p.38.
208. D. Nath, op. cit. p. 59.
209. S. N. Bhattacharyya, op. cit., pp.38-39.
210. Ryley, op. cit., p.112.
211. King Naranarayan had sent a diplomatic peace mission to the Ahoms court in Saka 1477 (1555 AD.), the mission included ambassadors like Satananda Karji, Ramesvara Sarma, Kalaketu Sardar, Dhuma Sardar, Udbhanda Chaonia and Syamray Chaonia with other 22 Dhekari kings.(Khan Chaudhury, A. A, op. cit. p.104; and Historical Letters of the Ahom Period, a collection of 44 letters exchanged between the Koch and the Ahom kings, Transcripts no. 18, Vol. V, Part VI, DHAS, Gauhati.).
212. *Satsari Assam Buranji*, p.72; Cited in D. Nath, op. cit., p.59.

: XXX:

Socio-economic-cultural transition and development of languages, literature and arts:

The political achievements of the King Naranarayan were not long lasting. The empire was reduced its size and the power declined at the last days of his life. However, his achievements in the fields of socio-economic -cultural transition and development of languages, literature and arts were long lasting all over the northeast India. He himself was the forerunner of societal development and assimilation, a strong believer of stable economy, great patron of learning, both Sanskrit and indigenous literature. He was the prime mover of all intra- human developments and assimilations. The Kamakhya temple inscription speaks of the great king in the following words:

“Glory to the king Malladeva, who by virtue of his mercy, is kind to the people, who in archery is like Arjuna, and in charity like Dadhichi and Karna; he is like an ocean of all goodness, and he is versed in many Sastras; his character is excellent ; in beauty he is as bright as Kandarpa, he is a worshipper of kamakhya....”¹.

Socio-economic - cultural transition and development of language, literature and art of the Koch kingdom under Naranarayan can be discussed under following heads;

Society:

Population pattern:

Social format of the territory was very complex due to the admixtures of different biological and cultural communities and the society was organized on basis of clans and tribes. For the convenience of our study , we would however mention them as Hindus and non-Hindu tribal. The Koch kingdom originated from tribal² social format under the chief ship of Hariya Mandal, the grand father of king Naranarayan in the beginning of the 16th century. The general features of the tribal society as had noted by Robert Redfield ‘distinctiveness, smallness, homogeneity, and self-sufficiency as primary features of the tribal society’ and certain other features could be included to identify the tribal society such as common territory, common dialect or language, existences of common culture and distinct socio-political institutions ³. The Koches too had their non-Hindu tribal identity with unique tribal form of society, culture, religious believe and languages up to

the time of Hariya Mandal. The Sanskrita scriptures like the *Kalika purana* and the *Yogini Tantra* have identified the territory extended from the Dikrai in the east to the Karatoya in the west, the land of the Brahmaputra-Tista valley (the territorial area of the Koch kingdom) as the tribal belt, dominated by non-Aryans tribes like Kiratas, Koches, Meches and others⁴. A similar description has been also given in the *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, a 13th century Persian work of Monhaj-ud-dinSiraj. It clearly mentioned that the territory between the country of Bengal (Lakhanawati) and Tibet dominated by three distinct tribal communities viz., Koch, Mech and Tharu⁵.

So it is clear from the descriptions of Sanskrita texts and of historical writings that the territory mostly inhabited by non-Hindu people like Koch, Mech, Tharu, Kachari and others from the historical times. The tribal people lived clan life having allegiance to their tribe and the tribal chief and the social life was regulated by tribal customs that came down traditionally from times immemorial. All the tribes have close socio-cultural similarities and in early stage they did not accept the socio-cultural assimilation with the Brahmanical culture without protest and challenge. Their food habit was completely different from the Aryans. The *Padma Purana* in its single verse has highlighted the culture of the Koches that they were accustomed to eat everything⁶. It is the fact that before their rise to political power, they were fully accustomed with their non-Hindu socio-cultural practices and the society was based on matriarchal principle. But with the rise to political power, the Koches accepted the patriarchal principle with the influence of Brahmanical association or contact. The DRV informs us that although Biswa Singha himself accepted the Brahmanical socio-cultural identities and married a number Hindu Princes from different kingdoms but at his deathbed advised his sons to marry only the beautiful daughters of the Koch -Mech -Kachharis⁷.

Hindu socio-cultural practices were also prevalent in the territory since very ancient period. The Brahmins, whose number was considerably small, held esteemed position in the society, made their settlements in the region were allured by the lucrative land grants, issued by the tribal kings. The territory was a stronghold of the Brahmins and a centre of tantric culture .They were serving as priest to both the tribal ruling class and the Hindu converts and they used to enjoy high posts in the state administration of the khen kings of Kamta in the 15th century. The Koch Kings namely Biswa Singha and Naranarayan brought Brahmins from other parts of India at the early part of 16th century and established them in their kingdom with grants of land and servitors. Biswa Singha brought

from Mithila a Brahmana of the name of Sarvabhauma belonging to the Gotra of Vasistha for the worship of his tutelary deities. It is mentioned in the *Brihat Rajavansavali* of Raja Harendra Narayan, that Siddhantavagisa and Vidyavagisa first came to Kamarupa on pilgrimage and the king Naranarayan received them cordially and made to each of them a grant of nine villages and thereafter both of them settled in the country⁸. They also took the important role in the process of socio-cultural assimilation and Aryanization in the Non-Hindu tribal royal courts and played prime role in cultivation and development of Sanskrita and others Languages, literature and arts of the locality. They also took the initiative of Hunduisation process of the locality.

Besides the Brahmins, the Daivagnas (Ganakas) and Kayasthas were the other most prominent Hindu community of the area .They had migrated to the Area in the 13th and 14th centuries from Kaunaj and Gaud for their professional occupations of astrological calculations and book-keeping and accountancy (*Kayasthika*) respectively with the patronage of the local kings⁹. They gradually emerged as landed aristocrats called Bhuyans like the Brahmins, for their knowledge of advanced agricultural techniques and technologies. Thus, the Bhuyan system came into prominence from the 13th century. The Koches had to fight to establish the Koch kingdom by crushing the system. This Kayastha Bhuyans were at Kamarupa, Darrang, Barpeta and Goalpara and had a significant role in the contemporary politics of the 15th century But after the establishment of the Koch kingdom, they got special treatment from the Koch kings to run the administration.

Among the Hindu communities, a large number of lower social status and were the majorities. Most of them derived their caste-names from the professions they held and they were professional caste. Noted among them were the *Tantis*(weavers), *Katanis*(spinners of silk and cotton thread), *Hiras/Kumars* (potters), The *Kamars* (blacksmiths), the *Sonaris* (goldsmiths) , the *Kahars* (bellmetat workers or palanquin bearer), the *Dhobis* (washermen) , the *Telis* (oilmen), the *Malis* or *Malakars* (gardeners or garland maker), *Nadial* or *Kaivartas* (boatmen or fishermen) , *Goalas* (milkmen) , *Baniyas* (traders) and *Muchis* (c cobblers). Biswa Singha had appointed his sons in the charge of the various departments related to the above-mentioned professions¹⁰. The *Charit Puthis* and genealogies of the Koch also mentioned the existence of certain other occupational communities in the kingdom such as *Manjhi* (boatmen), *Baroi* (betel leaf farmer), *Kalita* (indigenous agricultural caste), *Mukhi* (image-maker), *Khaniker* (mask and image-maker), *Sutar* (carpenter), *Not* (dancer) and *Mali* (gardener¹¹.

Another section of the society consisted of the Muslims. However, it is difficult to ascertain exactly when the Muslims come to settle in western Kamarupa. Contemporary indigenous literary sources refer two terms for Muslims; the 'Turuks' and the 'Yavanas'. The both the terms certainly refer all the Muslim community in general but 'Turuks' most probably specifically refer Turks. The earliest reference of Muslims contact into the region was established during the time of Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji's expedition of Tibet in 1205 A.D. and a local Mech was converted to Islam and renamed as Ali Mech¹². After the incident, wave after wave of the Muslims invasions poured into the territory but all the invasions were like temporary raids, without permanent impression. The Muslim settlement with social base started after the conquest of Kamatapur by Hussein Shah of Bengal in about 1498 A.D. Although Hussein Shah's invasion of Kamata ultimately proved to be a failure, it appears that a colony of Muhammadans remained in the country round about Hajo, where one Giyasuddin Aulia erected a Mosque and subsequently died and buried near the mosque¹³. This place is still considered as sacred by local Muslims, who regard it as "Poa Macca" (one-fourth of Macca). The Muslims had their own socio-cultural pattern. They took initiative in the cultivation of Arabic and Persian languages and in the preaching of Islam in the area.

From the above discussion it is clear that the territory, on the eve the 16th century populated by Multi-ethnic, Multi-lingual, Multi-cultural and multi-religious groups of people of both tribal and non-tribal origin. Among them, the tribal people prefered to live in the peripheral region and had their own dialects, manners and social customs. But creamy layer of the tribal people who rose to political power as clan leaders were greatly motivated by their Hindu officials including Brahmin priests and they Hinduised /Sanskritised themselves, shifted their centre of power (i.e.capital) to the core area (i.e. plains) and discarded or modified their tribal dialects, manners and social customs¹⁴. The Non-tribal Hindu people had their own Brahmanical socio-cultural heritage and prefered to live in the plain.

Social stratification: professional and hierarchical:

The social stratification in Koch kingdom was almost same as was in the other states of North East India during the reign of Naranarayan and it was more or less organized based on clans and tribes. However, with the arrival of non-tribal Hindus including the Brahmins, the Kayasthas and others from Bengal and other parts of India, the situation

changed. The tribal, non-tribal Hindus and the admixture of the both made such a situation, where it became very hard to identify the pattern of social stratification .Under this situation, the scholars proceed from two angles: the profession based stratification and the hierarchical stratification.

The profession based social stratification was the prime characteristics of the Koch society and profession-based four categories of people appeared to have constituted the Koch Society.

The tribal chiefs, ruling class, their subordinate officers, Bhuyans, Samanta rajas and the priests, both Brahmanical and Tribal - constituted the first higher category. They are to be termed as 'Privileged aristocrats' and may be compared with the Mughal nobility. At the top, the king would try to follow the life style of the Bengal Sultans or of the Mughal Subedars of Bengal. They derived their income indirectly from land by offering various types of services to the state. They monopolized all the high posts of the administration, got some crown land, and hereditarily enjoyed it. Goutam Bhadra, with reference from the Vansavali mentioned that, “.....কোচ সামন্তদের সঙ্গে নৃপতির ‘তালাকি প্রতিজ্ঞাপত্রে’র উল্লেখ আছে। কোচ সামন্তরা নরনারায়নের কাছে বংশানুজ্ঞমিক আনুগত্যের প্রতিশ্রুতি দিয়েছিল¹⁵.

The agriculturists of various types constituted the second higher category of professional group. They were largest in number and directly derived their income from agriculture and can be termed as 'peasantry'. They freely enjoyed land right and employed mainly in cultivation. However, at the time of war they have to provide to the state the military service as the *Paiks*.

The small traders, artisans and craftsman formed the 3rd higher category. They were mainly professional people having specialisation / training in the concerned jobs. However, Prof. M. Neog classed them as middle class and he identified the middle class consisting of many functionaries such as petty shopkeepers, government servants, sepoys, peons, Dhopdharas, Garmalis, storekeepers, Mahaliya, Sadagar, Dancers, Musicians, etc¹⁶. Some people of the second category perform dual jobs: cultivation as primary job and specialisation work as secondary job.

The slaves, house servants and bondsman formed the fourth or the lowest category. The slavery widely existed in the Koch kingdom and slaves were prisoners of war, condemned criminals, and persons born of slaves or purchased. The tradition of selling slaves in the open market was also prevalent there and sometimes bartered them with

horses¹⁷. Bondsmen, who were unable to repay their debt, were forced to sell their children or even themselves as slaves¹⁸. The *Katha Guru Charit* informs that a large number of house servants or slaves worked at the houses of rich people¹⁹.

On the other hand, N. N. Vasu mentioned that the hierarchical stratification based on four-fold caste system was prevalent in the Koch kingdom during the reign of Naranarayan and Chilarai²⁰. According to him, Naranarayan and Chilarai both brought up at Benaras and greatly influenced by the ideal of high - caste Hindus and therefore a deep sympathy for Hindu manners, customs and ideals was rooted in their hearts. Because of which, they attempted to introduce those ideals and customs among their people after their accession to the power. They brought Siddhantavagisa and Vidyavagisa, two Brahmana scholars and patronized them with nine villages and ultimately they became the advisor and social dictators of the kingdom. Through the efforts of the king Naranarayan and Chilarai, under the guidance of Siddhantavagisa and his 'Kaumudis' (his 18 books in same name) four-fold Varnasrama i.e. *Brahmanas*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaisyas* and *Sudras* with modification accordingly necessity, was introduced in the Koch King kingdom²¹.

In this system, the Brahmins including tribal Brahmins were at the top. Along with the Brahmins, some indigenous caste (class?) like Kayasthas, Daivajnas and Kalitas were considered as upper caste Hindus and equivalent to the Brahmins. The Bhuyans of both tribal and non-tribal, tribal chiefs who adopted Brahmanical culture, their subordinate officers and Samanta rajas were classed as *Kshatriyas*. However, nothing mentioned about the *Vaisyas* and their professions. In Koch kingdom, we do not find the *Vaisyas* except literary references only. But the *Katha Guru Charit* mentioned some specialized trading castes *Sadagars* (big traders), *Beparis* (small traders) and others²². According to tradition, the *Vaisyas* were business communities and some times were engaged in agriculture. Therefore, it might be the fact that the trading communities were known as professional castes but not as the *Vaisyas*, for; the forth-fold Hindu caste system had no strong base in the kingdom. The earliest caste system had lost its characteristics within 8th / 9th century. New orders were organised in various areas. This mainly prompted by local needs as well as whims of the ruling class. However all the peasantry, both tribal and non-tribal of the lower strata were termed as *Sudras* and they were the lion portion of the population. But in the North-East India caste system was not rigid like other parts of India rather class system was maintained care fully.

The actual situation of social stratification is not clear from above discussion due to the confusing sources of information. However, this is the fact that the profession based stratification and the hierarchical stratification was not rigid, and it was nothing but the angle of discussion. In reality, the society had two stratas: the upper strata i.e. the privileged and rich class and lower strata i.e. non-privileged all the poor people of the country. The privileged class included the tribal chiefs, ruling class, their subordinate officers, Bhuyans, Samanta rajas and the priests, both Brahmanical and Tribal and rich business communities. According to the Hindu traditions and tribal rules, marriage within same caste and same tribe preferred, and we have few cases of that. Biswa Simgha at his deathbed, advised his sons to marry the beautiful daughters of the Koch, Mech and Kachari²³, and Madhavadeva's father looking for a groom of his own caste i.e. Kayastha caste for his marriageable daughter²⁴. However, practically the upper strata of the society did not obey it. Biswa Singha himself had established marriage relation with Kshatriya /royal ruling families of many other parts India and as well as the tribal ruling families of the North-East India as we have already mentioned in the chapter: I,²⁵. The king Naranarayan had married Bhanumati, the daughter of Protapa Ray Bhuyan and his brother Chilarai had married Chamdraprabha, the nephew of Protapa Ray Bhuyan²⁶. Chilarai also had married the daughter of the Padshah of Bengal²⁷, and Lakshminarayan had given his sister in marriage with Man Singha , the Raja of Ambar and the then Mughal Subedar of Bengal²⁸ . Polygamy was very common in the upper strata of the society. Therefore, it is cleared that, in spite of caste barrier of the Hindu caste system and tribal rules, the inter-caste/tribal marriage and inter-caste/tribal dinning was a common phenomena in the upper strata of the Koch society. Nevertheless, the inter-caste/tribal marriage and inter-caste/tribal dinning between the upper strata and the lower strata of the society was very rear in the Koch kingdom.

On the other hand, the lower strata i.e. non- privileged class included the peasants both tribal and non tribal, slaves, house servants, bondmen and 'middle class' of M. Neog like petty shopkeepers, petty government servants, sepoys, peons, Dhopdharas, Garmalis, storekeepers, Mahaliya, Dancers, Musicians, etc . They were directly involved in production or services and they were also the taxpayer in cash or kind or services. But they directly received nothing from the state. The upper strata of the society looked them down.

Therefore, the social stratification either the profession based stratification or the hierarchical stratification based on four-fold caste system, all were based on the power, position of the affluent class. Although there were the religious rules, regulations and customs to channel it, it became unable to face the power, position of the affluent class.

Standard of living and life style:

The standard of living and life style in the Koch kingdom during the reign of Naranarayan was based on the social stratification. The privileged class was an affluent class, and more or less lead a luxurious life in the matter of house building, household affairs, food habits and dress code and tried to differentiate from non-privileged or lower strata of the society. The style of living of the people of the upper strata of the society was one of the pomp and splendour, and a clear distinction had been always maintained between the life style of them and the lower strata of the society²⁹ and they marked their ranks by possessing servants, slaves, elephants, horses and even a number of wives. Among the privileged class, the kings were at the top who tried to follow the life style of the Mughals and other contemporary rulers of the region. Kings lived in the royal palaces, which were furnished with all kind of amenities and securities. Stephen Cacella, a Jesuit traveler from Portugal, notes that to have entry to the Koch King, he and his companions had to pass through three courts enclosed by roomy Verandah and separated by strong gates, leading into a beautiful garden, in the middle of which stood a villa where the king awaited those³⁰. The palace had a number of gates and rooms, which were well decorated. Other officials including all ranks i.e. senior to junior officers and Bhuyans of the privileged class too tried to ape this.

Among the lower strata i.e., non-privileged class, the peasants were majority in number, enjoyed its land rights and king's officials never interfere about the movement and personal affairs of the class. Beside agriculture, they were free to undertake other professional jobs like weaving, carpentry, pottery, shop keeping, dancing, Music etc. Their mandatory duties were to pay taxes and to provide military services to the state. The standard of living and life style of the peasantry varied according to their land holdings, which were the index of rich or poor. The *Katha Guru Charit* informs us that at lower level, some peasants had only one Bigha of land without any granary and plough, and on the other hand, at upper level some peasants had up to twenty-six Puras i.e. 104 Bighas of land with three to four granaries and a number of ploughs³¹. Therefore, it is the fact that

some peasants were rich and well off to lead quite an affluent life style, some were very poor, and to make their both ends meet with difficulty. The peasants with other professional jobs were also quite rich. Revenue collectors some times exploited all the peasants³².

The standard of living of the house servants, slaves and bondmen were fully depended on the mentality and behaviour of their owners. Some owners treated them as family members and their standard of living was quite good. On the other hand, by some owners, they were treated badly and cruelly and standard of living of that section of the slave was worst. The *Katha Guru Charit* informs us that a slave complained that he neither was allowed to sleep at night, nor had sufficient food and warm cloth in winter, but he had to work from morning to night and some times he was beaten brutally³³.

Dress and Ornaments:

There is no direct information about the dress pattern of the people of the kingdom during the reign of Naranarayan and after ward and we have to depend on the occasional references in various sources of information. The dress of the upper section and others varied region wise and class wise. The dress of the upper strata of society were made of silk and fine cotton³⁴ for, large amount of both silk and cotton fabrics were manufactured in the country³⁵. The dress of men consisted three pieces of cloth - *Dhuty* (*netabhuni*), 8 to 16 cubits long, and 2 to 2.5 cubits wide and made of silk like *pat* and *muga* and fine cotton to cover down to the knees, *pachara* (wrapper) and *dopati* or *tona* (double folded scarf)³⁶. Later on, dress items of the Mughal dresses like *Chauga* (waistcoat), *Chapkan* (long shirt) *Jama* etc. made of coarse cotton made their appearance in the royal court³⁷. On occasions kings used to wear gold embroidered dress and following them, the nobility also used to wear silver embroidered clothes³⁸. The *Chheleng* (like embroidered shawl of upper section /Chaddar of common people), a piece of *endi*, *muga* and wood or fur made cloth , for wrapping round the shoulders of men in winter were also used by both the upper section and lower section of the society³⁹.

Sihabuddin Talish, a Persian writer observed about the dress of the common people of the region:

"It is not their custom to tie turbans round the head, to wear coats, trousers or shoes or to sleep on bedsteads. They only wrap a piece of fine linen round the head, and a

waistband around middle, and place a chaddar on the shoulders. Some rich men in winter put on a half-coat like a jacket⁴⁰.

Dress of the common men folk of the population of the kingdom as revealed in the sculptures of the temples and painting of the period consisted of a single piece of cloth called *dhuty* or *churiya*, made of coarse cotton and much smaller in size than that used by the upper strata. It was wrapped round the waist and hardly reaching the knee. *Gamocha* or towel was used by the men folk of both upper and lower strata of the society as very common dress for bathing, wiping after bathe, wrapped round the head to protect sun heat or hanged it on the shoulder to wipe sweat.

The use of *Lengti*, a piece of thick coloured cloth about a feet and half in breadth and three feet in length was in vogue in the poorer and tribal men folk of the society, to hide the private parts of their body. It passed between the legs and attached at two ends to a cord passing round the waist. According to H. N. Chaudari, it had its origin in the wants of the people because they actually feel uncomfortable in a bigger or fuller raiment⁴¹. Subsequently *dhuty* largely substituted for it.

The dresses of the womenfolk of the upper strata of the society also varied region wise and class wise. The *Guru Charit* informed us that white, blue and yellow colours dresses were preferred by women⁴². The *Mekhla* and *Riha* were seem to be the original female dresses of Kamarupa, and that were the dresses of the Koch women in Rangpur⁴³ and its adjoining territories of the present North Bengal and lower Assam. The *Mekhla* tied round the waist or above the breast to reach up to the ankles and the *Riha* wrapped round the waist of the women, but being short, did not admit of passing round the shoulders⁴⁴. In winter the women of the upper strata of the society used a piece of cloth called *Jhardar* or *mongjuri* (ladies shawl), usually made of *endi* with gold and silver embroideries. The *Jhardar* is of a flowered pattern and the *mongjuri* is plain⁴⁵.

'Sari' was not the original and traditional dress of the region. It made its appearance in the region with the influence of Hinduization and acceptance of the Bengali socio-cultural pattern. The use of saris by the women of the nobility was in vogue even in the pre-Vaisnavite time and silken or costly saris were worn by the well-to-do class only⁴⁶, and therefore, it was beyond the capacity of common people to wear it. It is also fact, Women of the western Koch kingdom prefered to wear saris than that of the *Mekhla* and others of their eastern counterpart. The use of saris *ghuris* (petticoats) and *Gomcheng* (Chinse silk) and hides were widely prevalent among the Koch women of the upper strata of the

Koch people, which is proved by the fact that king Naranarayan sent saris , Gomcheng (Chinse silk), hides and *ghuris* (petticoats) as presents to the Ahom court at the early stage of the Koch-Ahom relation⁴⁷. But the Ahom King Sukhampha made a sarcastic comment about the presents , that 'these were quite unfit for exhibiting in the Ahom court , and only the Koches were accustomed to them'⁴⁸. From this comment, D. Nath concluded that in eastern part of the kingdom, sari was looked down upon⁴⁹. However, it might not be correct, for firstly, as we mentioned earlier that saris were in vogue even in the pre-Vaisnavite times. Secondly, *Mekhla* and *Riha* were the traditional dresses of the Ahom and they prefered to wear it. Thirdly, B. K. Barua clearly proved by a popular verse that saris were prevalent among women folk of the nobles⁵⁰. Fourthly, "sarcastic comment" might be on the quality of the presents for, the Ahom were also sent presents including '*Nara-Kapor*' a special kind of cotton cloth. Therefore, it might be the fact that the saris were widely prevalent in the western part among the well-to-do class and in eastern part of the kingdom were used by the nobles' women folk only.

The common Tribal and non-tribal women folk wore one piece of coarse cotton made cloth about 5 feet length called *patani* or *tona*⁵¹ and it is also known as *Bukbandha*⁵². The *patani* is tied round the body a little above the breasts like *mehkla* and broad enough to reach below the knee. It is actually used at home but while going out, they used to wear another piece of cloth with *patani* called *agran*, which is folded over the breasts.

Both men and women used various types of ornaments and it is proved by the fact that contemporary sculptures and literary sources. We have many sculptures and painting, showing various types of ornaments like rings, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, napurs, gamkharu, kinkini, galpata etc⁵³. We have literary reference of Sonari or goldsmith who makes such ornaments. Ornaments of the upper section were made of gold and silver inlaid with precious stones and those of lower section were of nickel and corals⁵⁴. It is also proved from the Vaisnavaite paintings of the period that on the occasion performing arts like dance, recitation and song, flowers and garlands were used⁵⁵. Utensils of gold and silver were used by the upper section only and on the other hand, the common people had not the means to purchase metal utensils like gold and silver. They used metal utensils of brass and copper only. They also used plates and jars made from dried gourd, earthen vessels with covers, and plates, pitchers and jars made from hollow bamboos⁵⁶.

Therefore, from the above discussion it is clear that in the matter of dresses, ornaments and utensils, there were wide difference between the upper section and the lower section of the society.

Position of Woman:

Contemporary, near contemporary literary sources and elaborate discussion of modern scholars revealed the position of women in the Kingdom during our period of study. The position of women in the society as well as in family during the early Koch rulers varied respecting their social, political and economic status. The position women of lower strata, including tribal and non-tribal women, and that of the women of upper stratas, including tribal and non-tribal women also varied. It is fact that tribal women of the both stratas enjoyed comparatively greater freedom and prestige in the society as well as in family than their counterpart non-tribal women. Again, it is also fact that due to the dominance of tribal population in the whole North-East India and influences of tribal elements in the society, all section of women enjoyed comparatively greater social status as well as freedom than their counterpart in the other parts of India during the period.

Families in the Koch kingdom were patriarchal, where the position of women was subordinate to men. However, they enjoyed great freedom in the society due to the tribal outlook and influence, which were still prevailing. Birth of male child expected and it is being observed as an event of great joy. Even Gods and goddesses were worshipped praying male child For example Kusumbara the father of Sankaradeva worshipped Lord Siva in order that he might be blessed with a male child⁵⁷ and same type of information available about the birth of Biswa Singha⁵⁸. Thus, high expectation for male child indirectly revealed the inferior position of women in the society following traditional Hindu pattern. Due to patriarchal system succession, daughter had no right to their father property, but a widow in a unilateral family, was allowed to succeed her husband's property.

Polygamy was very common among the upper strata (both tribal and non-tribal) including not only royal families and nobilities but also religious divines and Pundits. We have already mentioned with proper references, in different places that Hariya Mandal, the father of Biswa Singha, had two wives, Biswa Singha, the father of king Naranarayan had about 18 wives from different countries, and Raghudeva, the son of Chilarai had a large numbers of wives. Chathurbhuja Thakur, grandson of Sankaradeva and a Neo-Vaisnava preceptor had three wives, Kanakalata, Mukundapriya and Devahuti⁵⁹. Besides,

rich and affluent peasants also tried to imitate the upper strata and used to keep two or three wives⁶⁰. Child marriage and marriage at grown up age both were prevalent in the society irrespectively tribal and non-tribal communities of upper and lower strata. Thus, the marriage of *Hira*, mother of Biswa Singha with Hariya Mandal, took place when she was just nine years old⁶¹. King Naranarayan also seems to marry at an early age, as he got married with Bhanumati before going to Benaras for learning⁶². Sankaradeva, at the age of 32 married Suryavati, daughter of Harivaragiri Kayastha but he gave his daughter Manu or *Haripriya* in marriage to *Hari*, a Kayastha youth at the early age about 9-10 years⁶³. Through out the period, we have no any reference of widow remarriage, although S. L. Baruah opines "Widow-Remarriage was prevalent but not among the Brahmins and the Kayasthas"⁶⁴.

According to contemporary literature, dowry system more or less was current among the both upper and lower strata of tribal and not-tribal community. Kings, aristocrats and the affluent Bhuyans used to present villages, cattle along with other valuables including gold, silver clothes etc. to their daughter's marriage⁶⁵. Chilarai obtained the five Parganas: *Bahirbandh*, *Bhitarbandh*, *Goyabari*, *Serpur* and *Daskaunia* from the Padshah of Gaud as dowry⁶⁶. In the same way, among some tribes there was an interesting custom of paying the expenditure of the wedding ceremony in part or full by the groom to brides party⁶⁷ and the amount was called 'Go-dhan' and paid either in cash or kind⁶⁸. It is also fact from the literary sources that the marriageable girls were allowed freedom to choose their grooms and in cases of settle marriages their consents were also taken into consideration⁶⁹.

We have no direct information whether *Purdah* system was prevalent or not among the women. However, it seems to us from the contemporary activities of women that *Purdah* system was not prevalent among the both tribal and non-tribal women of upper and lower stratas. According to Sihabuddin Talish, the wives of the Rajah and the peasants alike never veiled their faces before anybody and they moved about in the market places with bare heads⁷⁰.

We have already mentioned earlier that Queen Bhanumati allowed accompanying King Naranarayan during the Ahom Expedition in 1562. According to the DRV and other sources, Raghudeva had sent his one hundred and twenty queens to fight his uncle king Naranarayan after the division of the Kingdom⁷¹. These two incidents clearly indicate that *Purdah* system was not prevalent among the women of royal family. In the same way,

women of lower strata mainly tribal women were allowed to participate in various types of out door activities. They allowed helping their husband in cultivation in every stage except ploughing. Besides, household activities, rearing up their children they engaged in spinning and weaving of clothes for household usages. It became a compulsory tradition of the Mech marriageable girls to be acquainted with the weaving with their traditional loom called *Sanchali* before their marriages⁷². Some poor tribal Women engaged themselves in small trade like betelnut, alkalis, fishes etc. either to increase income or for their livelihood⁷³. The DRV informs us that there were the nurses (*Dhai-Matas*) in the Koch royal palace to look after the children⁷⁴. Some women were proficient in dancing and singing and attached with temples as 'Deydasis'⁷⁵ and with other social ceremonies as Natis⁷⁶.

Therefore, it is clear from the above discussion that the *Purdah* system was not prevalent among the both, tribal and non-tribal womenfolk of the country and they enjoyed more freedom than their counterpart of the other parts of India did.

Women of the upper strata of the society of the kingdom during the period of our study had enough freedom and leisure, for which they able to engaged themselves in various types of learning, fine arts and socio-cultural activities. There was no formal education system for women, however, they got teachings in morality and religious-spiritualism from the elder members of the family through the *Kirtana*, *Namaghosh* and Scriptures based stories in their houses as well as in the village *Namaghars*. Besides, the exhibition of the Bhawnas or one act plays on religious themes also helped them to learn. It was a tradition in the nobility circle that women had to learn three R's i.e. reading of the *Ratnavali*, the *Kirtana* and *Namaghosha* form male members of the family⁷⁷.

Some talented women of the upper strata marked their great achievements in the fields of languages, literatures, fine art, religious and socio-cultural activities, which uplifted the social status of the women in society. Thus, it was at the instance of queen Bhanumati, the consort of king Naranarayan, Purusottam Viddhyavagis compiled his Sanskrita grammar '*Prayoga-ratna-mala*', which was read by all section of people including women and Sudras and became main grammar for learning⁷⁸. Wife of Sarvabhuma Bhattacharyya was a very learned woman and said to have earned a warm encomium from King Naranarayan by defeating at his court the famous Bengali scholar of the period, Raghunandan Bhattachayya, in a discourse connected with the different ways of life advocated in the Vedas and the Smritis⁷⁹. Kamalapriya alias Bhubaneswaridevi,

wife of Chilarai was highly proficient in devotional songs and in playing musical instrument like Saringa. According to the *Katha Guru Charita*, Chilarai happened one day to overhear his wife singing a devotional song of Sankaradeva on the instrument, which impressed him so much, that he immediately became a devotee of Neo-Vaisnavite faith of Sankaradeva⁸⁰. We have already mentioned that *Kanaklata alias Lakshmi Ai*, the first of the three wives of *Chaturbhuj Thakur* and grand daughter-in-law of Sankaradeva was a noted Neo-Vaisnavite preacher. She was an efficient woman of much ability and responsibility, for which got appointment in the ecclesiastical order, as the head of a Satra and initiated a large number of disciples to the faith during her stay at *Bheladunga Satra*⁸¹. Another woman, *Dayal Teli*, wife of *Krishna Teli* and a disciple of Madhavadeva, was appointed by her master (Madhavadeva) as the Medhi or religious instructor, to give instructions to the queens of Laxminarayan on religious matters⁸².

In the Koch royal court, women exercised much political influences in various aspects including in the questions of succession. On the marriage of Hariya Mandal with *Hira*, at an early age, Urvashi, the mother of *Hira* did able to obtain promises from her husband *Dambaru*, to keep her daughter with them till she attained maturity⁸³. Bhanumati, the chief consort of king Naranarayan was the most intelligent and influential woman in the royal court during our period of Study. According the *Rajoupakhyan* of Joynath Munshi⁸⁴, as per custom of the dynasty, *Nara Singha*, the first son of Biswa Singha would ascend to the throne of Koch Kingdom after his father death. Bhanumati despaired of the fact that her husband's prospect of ruling the empire was nil. Hence, on the day of *Nara Singha*'s coronation, she with presence of mind, humbly reminded him the fact that after her wedding, had blessed her saying '*Rajmahishi Bhava*' (May you be the queen). However, his blessings would never come true if he instead of Naranarayan ascended the throne of the kingdom. On hearing this, *Nara Singha* promptly relinquished the throne in favour of Naranarayan and stuck by her words. Although, other source do not confirmed it⁸⁵. What may be the fact, this incident highlights the intelligence, presence of mind and influence of Bhanumati in the royal court. She accompanied her husband to the Ahom expedition in 1562. We have mentioned earlier that at the instance of Bhanumati, Purusottam Viddhyavagis compiled his Sanskrit grammar '*Prayoga-ratna-mala*'. According to one version, it was at the suggestion of Bhanumati, Naranarayan, had released the Ahom hostages on the pretext of their winning a game of dice with them⁸⁶.

The stepmother of Parikshit Narayan, at the death of her husband Raghudeva organized a conspiracy to make her son Indra Narayan the king of Koch-Hajo overtaking the legal claim of Parikshit Narayan⁸⁷. Besides, queens and other members of the royal family, some professional women also involved in court politics. Thus, it was Nurse (Dai Ma) of Naranarayan and Chilarai called by the people, sent the message of political development after the death of Biswa Singha, by a letter through a Sannyasi named Nagabhoga to them at Benaras⁸⁸.

We have few references about the practice of Sati, which, most probably was connected with the women of upper strata. According to tradition *Sudamni*, the queen Biswa Singha had mounted the funeral pyre with her husband's body following this system⁸⁹. It is also prevailing tradition that at the news of the death of Biswa Singha, his old father Hariya Mandal died of grief and his mother *Hira* mounted the funeral pyre with her husband's body⁹⁰. Sankaradeva's mother *Satyasandha* followed this practice at the death of his father *Kusumbara*⁹¹. Moreover, there are references of sati system in the writings of Sankaradeva⁹².

Contemporary Neo-Vaisnavism literatures, highly praised the Chastity of women of the upper and lower strata of the Society. *Radhika Sati* alias *Yogamaya*, a Kaivarta woman, whose chastity was vividly praised by Sankaradeva and was regarded as an ideal woman, even among the common folks she is being remembered as an icon of womanhood till very recent times⁹³. However, adultery was also prevailing in the society. It is recorded in the '*Gosani Mangal*', that *Manamala*, a wife of last *khen* king *Nilambar*, had an illicit affair with *Manohara*, the son of *Shashipatra*, the minister of the kingdom⁹⁴. Contemporary Neo-Vaisnava and other literatures contained many colophons representing women as a source of all evils and solely responsible for all social vices⁹⁵.

From the above discussion it may be assumed that some women of the both the stratas enjoyed some sort of freedoms, privileges and influenced various aspects of society, marked their achievements in many fields. However, major sections of women were beyond these and considered them as subordinate to men. Due to the patriarchal social system, they have to submit themselves to their father at childhood and to husband after marriage. Thus, Madhavadeva, chief disciple of Sankaradeva suggested Sankaradeva's wife to address her husband as 'Gosain' meaning 'Lord'⁹⁶.

The transformation of socio-cultural pattern and Socio-cultural assimilation of the Koches:

The process of Hinduisaion or Sanskritization had first begun with the kings and their officers and then the economically and socially stronger section of the tribal society followed them. In fact, the process of Hinduisaion or conversion to Hinduism was regarded as a question of prestige and social status, they became Hindu by their own choice and so was the case with the tribal people⁹⁷. With the rise to power; the Koch royal family and its close relatives started adopting Hindu socio-cultural pattern with influence the Brahmins. Hariya Mandal, the grand father of Naranarayan, no doubt was a tribal chief of the 12 Koch /Mech and but his son Bisu, the father of the king Naranarayan, started Hinduization process with state formation and the Brahmanas tried to legitimize his Kshatryo origin⁹⁸. As a result, Bisu became Biswa Singha. He established marriage relations with Kshatriya royal family of Gaud, Nepal Kashi etc, sent his sons Naranarayan (Malladeva) and Chilarai (Sukladhvaja) to Baranas for the study of Sanskrita literature and others. Therefore, it is proved that after the conversion to Hinduism. Biswa Singha accepted the Hindu socio-cultural pattern and actively patronized Hinduism and encouraged the worship of both Siva and Durga in the form of *Baneswar* and *Kamateswari* respectively. Biswa Singha rebuilt the temple of Goddess Kamakhya at Nilachal hills⁹⁹ and the temple of Goddess Bhabani (Kamateswari) at Gossanimari in the present district of Koch Behar¹⁰⁰. According to local chronicles, Biswa Singha brought to his kingdom a number of Brahmins from Mithila and Gaur to encourage Hinduised socio-cultural rites and one Kali Chandra Bhattacharyya of Gaud who encouraged the worship of Lord Siva and one Vasudeva Acharyya who was appointed the chief priest of the Kamakhya temple¹⁰¹. He also patronized the worship of Vishnu and gave gifts to Vaishnava priests and astrologers¹⁰². In this way, Brahmanical socio-cultural system was established in area.

King Naranarayan and Chilarai had their education in Sanskrita literature at Baranas and well aware of the Brahmanical socio-cultural tradition. At the time of his accession to the throne, he performed coronation ceremony according to the Hindu socio-cultural tradition¹⁰³. However, he did not enforce his personal socio-cultural pattern on the other tribal communities of his kingdom and did not disregard tribal customs and rites. During the time of his Ahom expedition through the *Gosain Kamal Ali*, Naranarayan constructed a temple of the Goddess Durga at Bhairavkunda. He instructed the Meches and the Koches

living to the north of the Gosain Kamal Ali to follow their tribal customs to worship the goddess and in the territory south of this Ali as far as the Brahmaputra, the Brahmanic rites were to be continued¹⁰⁴. But with the acceptance of Hinduised socio-cultural pattern by royal family, an under current went into the society for Hinduisiation. By encouraging syncretism of Brahmanical and Non- Brahmanical cultures, Naranarayan brought about the transformation in socio-cultural pattern of the whole of northeast India.

Another important impetus to the socio-cultural aspect was the rise of Neo-Vaisnavism under the leadership of Sankaradeva (1449-1569). The religious aspect of Sankaradeva would be discussed elsewhere, but socio-cultural changes brought out by it, was a landmark in the whole northeast India. It marked the beginning of the emergence of an egalitarian society cutting across caste taboos and restrictions. In the wake of the Neo-vaisnavite movement, there emerged a set of new social ethics and behaviour and code of conduct among the people¹⁰⁵. The process of Hinduisiation that followed in the wake of the Neo-Vaisnavite movement was not a forceful one; rather it was based on the willing co-operation of the people who desired conversion to Hinduism. The two tier societal patterns (the tribal and the Brahmanical) had been challenged by Neo-Vaisanavism. The non-Hindu tribal people greatly influenced by Neo-Vaisanavism for its liberal outlook that inspired them to accept the faith. But the Brahmins (both Saktas and Saibas) got alarmed at the influence of Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva and they tried to provoke king Naranarayan who was a active devotee of the Goddess Sakti and against Neo-Vaisnavism. The king's brother Chilarai however, was favourably inclined towards the Vaishanavas and a well-wisher of Sankaradeva. However, all their efforts proved abortive and King himself wanted to be initiated into Vaisanabism. However, Sankaradeva did not agree to do this as he had '*made it a rule not to accept as his disciple a king*', a Bhahmana or a woman¹⁰⁶. But the king was resolved to be his follower and ultimately Sankaradeva agreed to initiate the king into *Sarana Mantra* of Neo- vaisnabism. Ultimately, both Naranarayan and Chilarai came to have great regard for vaisnavaism through the influence of Sankaradeva and established the idol of *Vishnu*¹⁰⁷. As a result, Neo-Vaisanavism became the religion of not only the common people but also the religion of royal family. However, one thing is interesting, the king as well as common people did not discard the worshiping of other god and goddess of Hindu tradition, although Sankaradeva informed them that those who did not believe in the unity of the godhead and worshipped a number of deities were not entitled to get *Sarana mantra*¹⁰⁸. Koch

kings of the Koch dynasty on the one hand demanded themselves as 'Sivavansi' (decent from Siva); on the other hand, they used the title 'Narayana' (other name of Bhagabata Vishnu). Therefore, it can be said that the transformation of socio-cultural pattern and Socio-cultural assimilation within the Koch kingdom were based on liberal outlook of the common people as well as royal family.

The establishment of large number of temples dedicated to Lord Siva (tribal and non tribal) and in the same way, establishment of large number of Satras (Vaisnava Monasteries) and Namghars (Vaisnava prayer Halls) in the Koch kingdom under royal patronage. It indicates that both the religions were equally treated.

From the above discussion, it cleared that the transformation of socio-cultural pattern and Socio-cultural assimilation of all the people of the region, following the 'Filtration theory from above' and completed was in three stages.

In the 1st stage, the tribal ruling section, including royal family and tribal state officials (*Raiyat, Karzis and Mantris etc.*) adopted socio-cultural-religious pattern of mainstream Brahmanical culture and Neo-Vaisnavism and changed their old pattern of life by the influences of the Brahmins and Neo-Vaisnava Saints and they were recognized as *Kshatriya* of the Hindu traditional caste system.

The 2nd stage, just below the 1st stage consisted all the peasantised tribal people , who were greatly influenced by the socio-cultural changes of the 1st stage and they intended to Sanskritize themselves following that . In this stage, they gave up or modified their tribal socio-cultural pattern, fully or partially and Hinduized / Vaisnavized themselves. The ruling class and their officials (of, 1st stage) also encouraged them to do so. As a result, tribal peasants modified or abandoned their tribal socio-cultural-religious patterns, food habits, dress codes and languages, and became an integrated part of Hinduized / Neo-Vaisnavized folds.

In the 3rd stage, the tribal people, who were living on the periphery, following traditional tribal economy and conserving traditional animism, faiths, beliefs and other practices, they preferred to remain isolated in their traditional settlement beyond the influences of new arrived socio-economic and cultural pattern. The state authority also did not try to interfere in their internal aspects¹⁰⁹.

Economic development and economic solidarity:

The period of king Naranarayan witnessed and accelerated the growth in agriculture, crafts, industries, trades, commerce, and the introduction of monetary economy. The people of the Koch kingdom were self-sufficient, and they themselves produced all things of their requirements by following traditional technique of their forefather¹¹⁰ and it was designed to satisfy material wants of the people, to organize production, to control distribution and to determine the rights and claims of ownership within the community. It is also the fact that the prevailing traditional tribal economic system of the kingdom was almost the same, that of in whole of the northeast. With state formation, under Biswa Simgha and Naranarayan there started the process of diffusion of the traditional tribal techniques and technologies with comparatively advanced techniques and technologies of the main land, which quickened the development of the economic structure and production. Agriculture, collection of forest products, crafts and industries and business both internal and with neighbouring countries were the main parts of the economic system.

Agriculture:

Agriculture formed the mainstay of both the tribal and non-tribal economy. The tribals of the hilly region had practiced the *Jhum* cultivation. P. C. Chaudhury had mentioned, "cultivation was carried on in the beginning by a crude method of 'jhuming' i.e. by cutting down jungles and trees, setting fire to them, making holes in the land with the help of digging sticks and then sowing seeds without the use of the hoe or plough"¹¹¹. The non-tribal people of the plains of the kingdom were acquainted with the cultivation pattern of the mainland and with the artificially irrigated agricultural practices¹¹². The topographical nature of the region and the fertility and productivity of soil were suitable for the cultivation of all types of crops. According to the writer of the '*Fathiya -i-Ibriya*', a contemporary Persian writing, "Koch Behar is well known for its excellent water, mildness of the climate, its fresh vegetation and flowers. Oranges are plentiful, as also other fruits and vegetables"¹¹³. Another Persian writing, '*Riyaz -us - Salatin*' mentioned that ".....the sweetness of its water, and mildness of salubrity of its air" and about the crops "Large oranges thrive here and other fruits also grow in abundance"¹¹⁴.

Rice was extensively cultivated, as it was the primary food of the people of the region and the topographical nature of the region, which was suitable for the cultivation of rice. According to its times of cultivation rice were of two broad categories. *Aush (ahu)* rice

used to be sown in dry season regularly particularly in the highlands, and *Aman / sali* (wet-rice) rice was cultivated in rainy season particularly in low land. The *Aman* rice cultivation was done while the monsoon had begun and the lands were full with water. It required irrigation and transplantation of seeds (*Bichan*), which must be lowland and clay in nature and could hold water and moisture for long time. Wet-rice cultivation with sophisticated technologies introduced by the non-tribals had been diffused to the tribals of the region, which stimulated the changes of tribal mode of production. The iron plough and spade (*kodal*) had replaced wooden plough and the traditional implements of jhum cultivation in advance stage of state formation. Many Pukhurs (ponds) , were excavated for many purposes including the purpose of irrigation during the region of Naranarayan¹¹⁵ and use of streams water for irrigation by making dams were also prevalent the period¹¹⁶ .

Other food grains like wheat, *china*, *kaon*, *makai* or *bhutta* (maize) and pulses like *moog* (a kind of pigeon-pea), *musur* (lentil), *kheshari* (*lathyrus sativus*), *thakuri* (*phaseolus radiatus*), *arahar* (*gajanus indicus*) and pea were grown in the region and were popular food grains¹¹⁷. Oil seeds like mustard (*sarisha/rai*) and *til* (*seamum indicum*) were also grown in the Koch kingdom, which is proved by the professional caste called *Teli* (make oil from oil seeds). Biswa Singha appointed his son Ananta Narayan, as an officer to supervise over the *Telis*¹¹⁸, Naranarayan continued the system¹¹⁹. To offer the betel leaf (pan) and betel nut (gua / supari) to the guests was a common custom of the people of the region and the DRV gave us a professional caste called *Tamuli*¹²⁰. Therefore, it is clear that the betel leaf (pan) and betel nut (gua / supari) were grown in Koch kingdom. The DRV also informed us that Biswa Singha appointed his son Rupchand in charge of ‘পঞ্চস’ (five crops)¹²¹. Cotton was another important crops and it was cultivated by a large number of people of the hilly areas of Chikinagram and khuntaghat of the kingdom. According to the DRV, Hariya Mondal the grand father of Naranarayan used to cultivate cotton in the hilly area of chikinagram¹²².

Horticulture was another occupation of livelihood. Large amount of fruits both cultivated and wild were produced in the kingdom having local geological characteristic. *Yogini Tantra* gives a vivid list of fruits, vegetables and flowers like jack-fruits, coconuts, orange, mango, olive, banana, lemon, grave, papaya, brinjal, plum, guava, sweet orange etc., by which Devi Kamakhya could be worshipped¹²³. Shihabuddin Talish (17th century)

also gives a vivid description about the fruits, vegetables and flowers of the region in the following way:

"Many kinds of odorous fruits and herbs of Bengal and Hindustan grow in Assam. We saw here certain varieties of flowers and fruits, both wild and cultivated, which are not to be met with elsewhere in the whole of India. pepper, spikenard and many species of lemon are abundant mangoes are full of worms , but plentiful, sweet and free from fibre , though yielding scanty juice . Its pineapples are large, delicious to taste, and rich in juice"¹²⁴.

The Neo- Vaisnava literature of the period occasionally made references of the different types of beautiful and fragrant flowers like *jai* (*Jasminum auriculatum*), *tagar* (*Tabernaemontana coronaria*), *malati* (*asclepias volubilis*), *champa* (*Michelia champaca*), etc., which were cultivated in the gardens of the noble and others¹²⁵. But it is a fact that the agriculture was subsistence in nature and extensive cultivation was not in vogue, atleast at the early period.

Forest products:

Beside agriculture, a section of people used to collect natural products from forest for their livelihood. Mostly forest products had been utilized for making the implements of the productions like - agricultural tools, hunting and fishing implements and weaving looms. Bamboo was an important forest product that was grown all over the country of many varieties. Hunting, fishing and musical instruments, agricultural implements and building home and homesteads were mainly made of bamboo of large varieties. Bamboo was also used in making furniture, utensils¹²⁶ and making of arms and weapons like bow and arrow¹²⁷. Ralf Fitch recorded 'all the countries is set with bamboo or canes made Sharpe at both the ends and driven into the earth, and they can let in the water and drown the ground above knee deepe, that men nor horses can passe'¹²⁸. *Motha*, one kind of grass had the use in making mats. Timber like *sai* (*shorea robusta*), *sisu*, *khair agaru*, *sonaru* , *palas*, *maina*, *ghila shimul* and other valuable trees grown in the forest of the region and had its immense use in the domestic and community life of the people. The Mech women were experts in collection and rearing of *endi* silkworm and for this purpose plants like *era* (*Riccinus communis*), *chom* (*Antheraea Assama*), *nuni* (Mulberry tree), *sowalu* (*Tetranthera macropaylla*), *kesheru* (*Heteropanax fragrans*),*champa* (*Michelia pulneyensis*), *hidal* (*Barringtonia acutangula*) etc. were cultivated to feed the worms¹²⁹.

Gala (Lac) was collected from forest and this area was famous for the production of lac of red colour and which was used to dye their calicos and others stoffs¹³⁰.

Development of Crafts and Industries:

During the reign of King Naranarayan, development of crafts and industries reached in a considerable advance stage, due to the adoption of non-tribal advanced technologies and peaceful state co-operation. The DRV and other contemporary sources mentioned some professional communities and products, which clearly proved the existence of crafts and industries in the region during the period of our study. Biswa Singha had appointed his son Meghnarayan as a supervisor of the weaving industries and to collect taxes from the weavers and washer men¹³¹, and king Naranarayan also had continued this office. With the state formation, peaceful political condition and admixture of tribal and non-tribal techniques, during the reign of Naranarayan and his successors, crafts and industries had made considerable progress. The most noted industries were weaving and dyeing. This region has a reputation from the early times for its indigenous silk like pat, muga and endi. Ralph Fitch , who visited the Koch kingdom(1586AD) during the reign of king Naranarayan, and Persian writer like Shihabuddin Tallish(17th century) made references of silk (muga) and cotton industries and its trades .

The tribal communities like the Mech, Koch and Rabhas had developed the endi-culture and the art of dying of the threads made from the endi, muga and cotton fiber. Endi culture was a traditional common and household production of the Meches and it became a compulsory tradition of the Mech brides to be acquainted with the weaving of their traditional loom called sanchali before their marriage¹³². The tribal communities of the region with their traditional technology produced the endi, mekhli and silk (Muga) cloth and they were important commodities of internal and external trades beside the household use¹³³. Katanis were the traditional silk (muga) spinners and weavers in the Koch kingdom.

Traditional non-tribal professional weavers called ‘Tantis’, who knew the art of making cloths with traditional loom called ‘Tants’ of Bengal and Assam. Two other castes like Jolah and Yogi had their expertise in weaving. Vaisnava saint Sankaradeva was appointed by king Naranarayan as the Gomasta (administrative officer) of the ‘Tantis’ of the Tantikuchi Mahal of Barpeta to look after the affairs of the Tantis¹³⁴ which had indirectly contributed to the development of the weaving industry. On request of king

Naranarayan, Saint Sankaradeva had got a 60X30 yards large special cloth woven at Tantikuchi village and called it 'Vrindananiya Kapor' depicting on it the scenes from the early life of lord Krishna¹³⁵. Narayanpur was a notable centre of weaving industry. Madhavadeva offered a beautiful cloth called 'Narayanpuriya Kapor' (a produced of Narayanpur, the easternmost outpost of the Koches) to Sankaradeva at the time of his initiation to the Vaisnava Faith by the latter¹³⁶. Sualkuchi and Kamarkuchi were other two notable centers of weaving industries. Dyeing was an important crafts related to the weaving industries. The technique of dyeing clothes with lac was prevalent among the tribes of the Koch kingdom since ancient times. The materials used were not only lac and indigo, but also roots, leaves and barks of trees of various kinds and the procedure was to dye not the cloth but the thread¹³⁷.

Pottery was another important craft, which were in prevalent in the region, during the period of our study to meet the requirement of the common utensils. Potters were of two kinds - the Hira tribe was the maker of earthenware without wheel and non-tribal professional caste called 'Kumar' was the maker of earthenware with wheel. A section of the *kalita* also adopted the art of pottery¹³⁸. The use of wheel was easier for the professional Kumar to make big utensils like *Handis* (vessel), *Saras* (lids), *Kalasis* (pitchers), *thalas* (plates), *Ghatis* (jugs) and other earthen pots¹³⁹.

Besides these, earthen image making, particularly of the Goddess Durga was prevalent in the Koch kingdom even before the rise of Biswa Simgha and some professional people called 'Khanikaras' did the work . The *Katha Guru Charit* mentions that Biswa Singha worshiped an image of the Goddess Durga, when he was a cowherd¹⁴⁰. The earthen images of the Goddess Durga so impressed the Ahom envoys that on their return to the Ahom capital and on their reporting the king immediately sent his own court artisans to Koch kingdom to be trained in the art of images making¹⁴¹. Stone engraving¹⁴² and stone / brick building /temple construction were two important crafts during the period. According to the inscription of the Kamakhya temple and others information, present Kamakhya temple structure had been built by Chilarai, during the reign of Naranarayana in the year 1565. Therefore, it is proved that the craftsmanship of stone engraving, stone inscription engraving and artistic temple construction were well developed and patronized during the period.

According to the DRV, Biswa Singha appointed his sons Brishketu and Hari Singha in charges of brass metal and bell metal respectively¹⁴³. 'Sarthebari, the most noted centre

of bell-metal and brass works, of a little later period, might have been functioning there during the reign of king Naranarayan¹⁴⁴. Due to the availability of wild elephants and other animals, ivory and leather works were prevalent in the kingdom during his reign and Barpeta was an important centre of ivory work¹⁴⁵. Making of fishing instruments like *Jakois* and *jals*, (fishing nets) were important household crafts and were mainly used by Kaivartas and Nadiyals¹⁴⁶.

Crushing of oil seeds and making of oil from *Sarishas / Rais / Ragis*, (mustard seeds) were in prevalent in the region developed as a special household craft. However, professional oilmen caste called *Telis* and *Kalus* had large concentration in the kingdom. Biswa Singha appointed his son Ananta Narayan, as an officer to supervise over the *Telis*¹⁴⁷ and Naranarayan also continued the system and they had served the state even as *Paik*¹⁴⁸. The *Telis* and *Kalus* had developed the cattle powered mill locally called *ghani* for the production of mustard oil from mustard seeds. Another small cattle powered mill called *ghani* was used by cultivators for pressing sugarcane for the preparation of *gud* or molasses¹⁴⁹.

Black smithery and gold smithery were other two important crafts and industries of the Koch kingdom. The Koch kingdom had keen interest about the ironworks and jewellery works of gold, silver and precious stones. According to the DRV, Biswa Singha appointed his sons Brishketu and Sura Singha to look after the black smithery and gold smithery of the state respectively¹⁵⁰. Gold and silver ornaments worn by rich womenfolk of the kingdom like – *Har* (necklace), *Phooti* (earring), *Bankharu* (ornaments of leg), *Noth* (nose ring) etc, were manufactured by gold smith locally called *Sonaries*¹⁵¹. Blacksmiths locally called *Kamars* were traditional caste Hindu who was the chief producer of iron implements like *dao* (knife), *kodal* (hoe), *fai* (ploughshare) and other agricultural and cooking implements. Moreover, they also had expertise in manufacturing of the lock, padlock, knives, spears, arrow share, swords and clamps for building boat etc. The Koch kings had great interest about the ironworks and that is proved by the fact that Biswa Singha appointed his son Brishaketu as the officer in charge of the iron works¹⁵².

The wooden implements making was another important crafts of the kingdom and mainly Kalitas and other tribes of the region did it. They not only made the household and agricultural implements like stools, chairs, benches, caskets and ploughs but also made the war boats, merchant boats and small boats and charits literatures repeatedly illustrated the importance of the boats for transportation in the river system of the

region¹⁵³. King Naranarayan introduced navy in his force that significantly contributed to the growth of the boat making industries. *Fathiya-i-Ibriya* has left some references about the boats of various types and its quality of the region. *Fathiya-i-Ibriya* records " they built most of their boats of chambal wood ; and such vessels, however heavily they may be loaded, on being swamped do not sink in the water"¹⁵⁴. About the techniques of boat making of the region, U.N. Gohain observes, "Canoes were manufactured out of trees, which were hollowed outIf a large boat was required, the shell was plastered over with mud and steamed over a fire , and the sides were then distented by the insertion of thwarts in this way boats 60 feet long by 6 or 7 feet in breadth were constructed, capable of lasting , if the wood be good forest timber, for 10 years or even longer"¹⁵⁵.

The bamboo works were the most important crafts of the region and both tribal and non-tribal people more or less were involved in it. However, the tribal were expert in this crafts. Different types of implements and tools for agriculture, fishing and hunting implements, household articles and weaving sets were manufactured from the bamboos of large varieties. Bamboo had immense use in making of furnitures like Chair, *Mura*, benches, *Jhapi* and *Mathal* (bamboo and leaf made head gear), trays, agricultural implements like Plough, ladder and *bida*. Weapons like bow and arrow and spear stick were also made from bamboo. Bamboo was also used in making of a special type of poisonous stick called *Bishpayiji* for using in the war¹⁵⁶. Training in bamboo, wood, cane and other crafts was given at Satras (Neo-Vaisnavite centres).

There were other household small-scale crafts like mat or *pati* making from one kind of grass called *mutha* grass, lime making by *Chunaris* or *mukhis* developed for domestic use and for trade¹⁵⁷. Making rice from paddy by using the traditional domestic husking machine locally called *Dheki* and *Chham* were prevalent during the reign. However, *Dheki* is not indegenious husking machine of Assam or Koch Behar and probably introduced from lower Bengal.

It is also fact from the contemporary sources that state accumulated its revenue from the crafts and industries and professional craftsmen had to pay taxes. The DRV has given a list of professional craftsmen from which state could collect taxes and for that purpose state appointed officials to look after it¹⁵⁸. According to the *Gurucharita* of *Daitiyari Thakur*, the professional weavers had to pay an annual tax of rupees two to the state¹⁵⁹. It is probable that other professionals also had to pay such taxes to the state but nothing is

not known about the amount of actual taxes. Some times craftsmen were allowed to render service to the state in instead of cash taxes.

It is evidence from the above discussion that on the one hand, tribal and non-tribal craft, industries and professional caste or groups were prevalent; on the other hand, technological acculturation of the above all also took place which accelerated the development of the crafts and industries of the period. As non-tribal technologies were advance, so the tribal people adopted that for their betterment. Therefore, technological acculturation was a process by which the tribal people adopted the occupations, techniques and many things, which again accelerated their economic growth into monetary economy.

Development of Trade and Commerce:

Development of agriculture, crafts, industries and marketable surplus productions during the reign of king Naranarayn also gave impetus to the development of trade and Commerce, not only within his kingdom but also in the whole of the northeast India. Moreover, encouragement in the way of establishment of roads, trade centers, commercial relation with neighbouring countries and finally introduction of coins by king Naranarayn also helped the development of trade and Commerce. Contemporary and near contemporary sources, occasionally threw glimpses on the both, internal and external trades, and its various aspects of the kingdom during the period. It is evident from the sources that the Koch kingdom had flourishing trade relations with neighbouring states like Bhutan, Tibet, Bengal, Mughal India and other northeast Indian states including Ahom, Jayantiya etc. In the same way, internal, both small and large-scale trade was an important aspect of the Koch economy. However, it is not clear from the sources that whether the state was directly involved in trade and commerce, but the state directly controled the trade and commerce through different types of administrative officers. Thus according to the DRV, Biswa Singha, father of King Naranarayan appointed his son Suryabar to look after the affairs of the traders¹⁶⁰.

Koch-Bhutan trade relations:

Bhutan was the most important trade partner of the Koches during the period and that was carried on through duars or mountain passes, which have been continued from ancient times. From the time of King Naranarayan, Bhutan was subordinate to the Koches

and it continued until the reign of the Lakshminarayan. A large number of Koch coins (*NarayaniTanka*) had been current in Bhutan and many coins have been unearthed from various places of Bhutan that proved the Koch Bhutan trade relations. According to Rhodes, during the reign of the Koch King Naranarayan, "there was a major trade route between Bengal and Tibet passing through Koch Behar and Bhutan. This was recorded by the English merchant and traveller Ralph Fitch in 1586, who noted that musk, wool, agate, silk and pepper were purchased."¹⁶¹ He also said that in the last half of the 16th century, the *Narayani Tanka* became the most used Currency in Koch Behar, Assam and Bhutan. The Koch- Bhutan commercial relation was two-dimensional; on the one hand, it was reciprocal for their internal requirement, on the other hand, both the countries acted as 'middle zone' of Asiatic trade between Bengal and Tibet-China¹⁶². The '*Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*', a Persian writing referred to a cattle market called Karampatan or Kararpatan in the region in the north of Koch kingdom in the following way:

"...everyday, at daybreak, in the cattle market of that city, about one thousand five hundred houses are sold and all the Tangan horses which reach the Lakanawati country they bring from that place"¹⁶³. It also described that the merchants from Lakanawati purchased Bhutani Ponies or Tangan horses from the market within the Koch kingdom and sell them in Lakanawati¹⁶⁴.

The merchant-traveller Ralph Fitch came to Koch Behar in about 1586, taking enormous risk only to survey the commercial prospects of Tibet through this region¹⁶⁵. Ralph Fitch records that the traders of Koch kingdom brought pepper from China through Bhutan¹⁶⁶. Most of the Chinese goods, the Bhutanese merchants brought for selling in the towns within Koch kingdom and small share of the articles brought for their home consumption¹⁶⁷. Sameway, the Koch merchants, brought their goods from the Bhutanese merchants, not only for home consumption, but also for exporting to other neighbouring countries. Therefore, both the countries acted as 'middle zone'.

The Bhutani traders including the government officials brought their goods of trade, both domestic products as well as their imported goods from Tibet and China to the trading centers of Koch Kingdom like Koch Behar, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Odalbari, Hajo and others¹⁶⁸. Nazirganj, Bhurchungmari (Tufanganj) and Geegunshur four miles from Chauna on the Assam-Bhutan border were the three important markets for the traders of both the

countries¹⁶⁹. Moreover, seasonal fairs held in different places like Hajo, Charigaon and Odalguri in eastern part and Darwani, Pangew, Barabhita, Badargaon, Haldibari Jaipesh etc., in the western part of the Koch kingdom, where the Bhutanese goods were sold in large scale¹⁷⁰.

The Bhutani traders generally used to export Chinese-silk, woolen blanket, yak-tails, Tangon horses, gold dust, rock-salt, orange, silver etc., and in exchange of them, they imported iron, lac, rice, silk cloth, cotton cloth, dried-fish, buffalo-horns, cattle, conch shells etc¹⁷¹. The king of Bhutan had monopolized the export of Tangan horse to Koch kingdom¹⁷². At the early stage, Gold dust and some times Tangan horse were used as a medium of exchange of trade between Bhutan and Koch kingdom¹⁷³. However, after the Introduction of *Narayani Tanka* by King Naranarayan, it became the medium of exchange at advance stage of his reign. It is evident from the *Guru Charita*, that the King Naranarayan ordered his men to sell Narayandas and Gokulchand, two trusted disciples of Sankaradeva, to the Bhutanese traders named Hema and Pema, at Rs. 120 as slaves, for propagating the Neo-Vaisnavism in the early stage¹⁷⁴. It is also evident from the same source that slave trade was prevalent between the two kingdoms.

Trade relations with other Neighbouring states:

Trade relations of the Koch kingdom during reign of King Naranarayan with other states like Bengal, Kacher, Sylhet, Jayantiya, Assam, and Manipur had been flourishing. Ralph Fitch refers to the extensive trade on cotton, and cotton fibres etc. in Bengal¹⁷⁵, and the Koch kingdom had been a partner of that, for, the cloths of Bengal had a great demand in the Koch kingdom¹⁷⁶ and salt¹⁷⁷ regularly imported from Bengal. Jesuit traveler Stephen Cecella, who visited Koch kingdom in 1627, recorded that goods from Patna, Rajmahal and Gaud were supplied frequently to fulfill the internal demands of the kingdom¹⁷⁸. The traders of Koch kingdom re-exported or the traders of Bengal brought Bhutanese *Tangan*¹⁷⁹ (horses), and *Bhot Kamba*¹⁸⁰ (blanket of Bhutan) from the Koch kingdom to Bengal. Moreover, the Mughals were interested in agar wood, sandalwood, silk, and textiles and carried on trade in these commodities with the Koch kingdom¹⁸¹. King Naranarayan permitted the kings of Jayantiya and Sylhet to mint coins for the development of trade with those states and that of Bengal¹⁸². King Naranarayan established many *Chowkies* (outposts) at suitable places, not only to guard the borders, but also to look after the exports and imports and to prevent illegal trade¹⁸³. The Koch

kingdom imported gold, silver, patkapor, daokatari, elephant tusk etc. from other northeastern states especially from the Ahom state¹⁸⁴. The traders of the Koch kingdom, considered the Ahom kingdom, as "something like a paradise for merchants, where all valuable trade commodities could be procured in good qualities and at a considerably low price"¹⁸⁵. Although, some of the above mentioned sources were composed after the reign of King Naranarayan, but it is probable that the trade was also in vogue during his reign.

Besides external trade, internal trade was also flourishing in the Koch kingdom during the period. In the matter of local and internal trades, *Bazars* (town centric markets), *Bandars* (mainly river ports) and *Haats* (weekly or by-weekly temporary markets) played important role. Stephen Cecella refers to many *Bazars* in the Koch kingdom, where both local products and imported goods were available¹⁸⁶. *Bandars* were generally situated on the bank of big river, which acted as meeting place of land and river routes¹⁸⁷. *Haats* were public places situated in the rural areas, people of the adjoining villages assembled on fixed days for selling and buying goods of daily uses. Besides these, *Melas* (fairs) held at different places at different times on different religious occasions were also played vital role in internal trade and commerce.

In the matter of trade, there were big and small traders. Big traders called 'Sadagars' engaged in large scale internal and external trades ,with huge capital¹⁸⁸ and dealt with the trades of gold, jewellery, silk, salt, mustard seeds, elephant tusks and other big scale commodities¹⁸⁹. *Madhavadeva* and *Bhavananda*, (later renamed Narayan Thakur by Sankaradeva), both disciples of Sankaradeva were to two big traders of the period¹⁹⁰. *Madhavadeva*¹⁹¹ carried on his trade mainly in areca nuts and betel leaves from Narayanpur and Gadgaon in the east to Banduka in the west¹⁹². *Bhavananda* alias Narayan Thakur had trade relations with the countries like the Bhutan, Assam, Garo hills and Bengal and traded in shipping, mustered seeds and others¹⁹³. Big traders used to form partnership with the big traders of the adjoining states and thus it is evident from the *Katha Guru Charita* that *Bhavananda* had partnership with seven of his companions in Bengal, Bhutan, Garo Hills and the Assam¹⁹⁴.

Smaller traders called 'Beparis' were dealt with small scale trade of areca nut, betel vine, fuel wood, salt, khar (alkali), fish, food grains, fruits, vegetables, cattle, bamboo and wooden furniture, agricultural and fishing instruments etc. on a local basis¹⁹⁵. It is interesting to note that there was no caste, sect and religious barrier of the traders and

they could be of any caste, sect, or religion. Above-mentioned *Madhavadeva*¹⁹⁶ and *Bhavananda*¹⁹⁷ were *Kayastha* and *Kalita* by castes respectively.

Details about the price of commodities, customs and trade duties of the period are not known. We have very few references on it. The *Katha Guru Charita*, informs us that two full size napkins locally called gamocha cost 8 pons (640) cowries¹⁹⁸, and a packet of betel-vine cost 4 to 8 pons of (320 to 640 cowries)¹⁹⁹. The same source refers to different types of customs and trade duties like *hat-kar* (market tax), *ghat-kar* (river port tax), *jal-kar* (taxes on fishing in the rivers) *path-kar* (road tax) *dan-kar* or sales tax. Chakiyals or Chowkiders (keepers of Chowkis, political or customs outpost), phathowals or pathkhowas (keepers of paths or outpost on roads and rivers) and other collectors of taxes collected all these taxes²⁰⁰.

Means of transports and trade routes:

Both land route and river route were the main routes of transportations of merchandizes. In overland trade, mountain passes (duars); old and new constructed routes were in used. The trade with Bhutan and Tibet carried on only through the mountain passes (duars), and Bhutanese *Tangans* were in use for transportation. There is evident from contemporary sources that the caravan of *Tangans* carrying merchandizes through the mountain passes. The old roads constructed by the *khen* rulers were in use during reign of King Naranarayan. The last *Khen* ruler *Nilambar* (1480-98) had constructed two main roads; one from *Kamatapur* to *Ghoraghat* through *Rangpur*, another one from his capital *Kamatapur* to north direction was extended up to *Girimul* through *Kumari Kote* and *Mural bus*²⁰¹. King Naranarayan had constructed the *Gosai Kamal Ali* that was the main road for overland transportations of the period. W. Robinson, refers to the roads connecting *Gauhati* and *Goalpara* (both within the Koch Kingdom) with *Kacher*, *Sylhet*, and *Jayantiya* kingdoms²⁰². D. Nath mentioned two roads to Bengal; one ran through *Goalpara*, *Bagwa*, *Rangpur*, *Dinajpur*, *Maldah* and *Murshidabad* and other roads ran from *Goalpara* to *Dacca* through *Singimari* and *Jaamalpur*²⁰³. In Overland transportation, horses and Bullock carts were main means of transportation.

The Rivers or waterways were the main and most important means of transportation of the period. In this regard, the *Brahmaputra* with its large numbers of tributaries and other big rivers played most important role like the rivers-nets. Contemporary and near contemporary sources of the period occasionally refers to the fact. Ralph Fitch came to

Koch Behar through waterways²⁰⁴. Introduction of the navy, development of boat making industry and existence of large number *Bandar* (river port), as we have mentioned earlier, during the reign of Naranarayan indicate the importance of it. Stephen Cacella refers to large boats from Gaud frequented the capital at Koch Behar and moved up and down for the whole year²⁰⁵. Actually, large number of rivers of the region forced and facilitated the waterway transportation. Small and large-scale trades were carried on by boats and in rainy session, it was the only means of communications of all kind of transportation.

Medium of Exchange and the Narayani Tankas:

At the early stage of the establishment of the Koch kingdom, the economy was not monetized and tribal economy was based on the barter system. Therefore, local trade and commerce executed through barter of cattle, paddy²⁰⁶, the slaves and handloom products²⁰⁷. At the same time, almonds²⁰⁸, and cowries²⁰⁹ were in use as medium of exchange and considered as money, and even after the introduction of the *Narayani Tanka*, the circulation of cowries continued simultaneously. Haliram Dhekia Phukan, Barbaruah, Sihabuddin Talish and Gait suggested the prevalence of coins along with cowries in the region in the middle of the 16th century²¹⁰. The *Katha Guru Charita* refers to *Mohars*, *taka*, *rupiya*, *adtaka* (Half-rupee), *maha* or *siki* (quarter rupee), and *Kara* or *admaha* (half-maha/ 1/8 of a rupee)²¹¹. We have very few references of metal coins in the pre-Koch period of the region²¹² and number of it is so small that could not be used as medium of exchange and most probably were nominal. However, introduction of *Narayani Tanka*, by Koch kings marked the beginning of the monetization of the economy of the region and accelerated the development of the trade and commerce. Although, trade and commerce were monetized with the introduction of coins by kings of many dynasty of northeast India, but the common people used barter system to exchange ordinary commodities of daily uses and cowries were used for small-scale transaction. In exchange value, generally 1280 cowries were equivalent to one silver coin²¹³.

The earliest coins of the Koch dynasty so far have been came to lime light is bearing the date Saka 1477 (1555), which was issued by King Naranarayan. Biswa Singha, the father of king Naranarayan did either not issue coins or his coins are yet to be discovered, although some literary sources and following that some modern scholars hold the view that he had issued coins²¹⁴. Under this situation, it may rightly be considered that King

Naranarayan is the first king of the dynasty, who issued coins and subsequent kings of the dynasty (both the houses of the Koch royal family) continued this process.

A large numbers of *Narayani Mudra* (tanka), including rupee, half-rupee, and quarter-rupee denominations of king Naranarayan were recently discovered from Chandirjhar (Alipurduar, W.B, 1986), Harisinga(Mangoldai, Assam,1986), Halflong and Modgharia (Gauhati, Assam,1986), Phulbari (West Garo Hills, 1992) and Barundanga (Dhubri, Assam, 1996)²¹⁵ and other places, proved the circulation of *Narayani Mudra*, over a large area of northeast India. Among these, one of the largest finds of mediaeval coins of India discovered in recent times is the Chandir jhar hoard of coins²¹⁶. The trove unearthed at Chandir jhar village in the Alipurduar district of West Bengal contains 767 silver coins belonging to the Suri Sultans of Delhi, Bengal Sultans, Bahmani Sultans, Mughal Emperor Akbar, kings of Tripura and Koch Behar covering a period of nearly 240 years. Out of 767 coins, 222 belong to King Naranarayan and beared a particular date the Saka 1477 (1555)²¹⁷.

One thing should be kept in mind that the coins of king Naranarayan so far discovered issued on a particular date i.e. Saka 1477(1555).The earliest coins of Lakshminarayan and Raghudev so far discovered issued in saka 1509 (1587) and Saka 1510(1588) respectively. So it is evident from our present sources of information that through out the reign of King Naranarayan, he issued coins only in Saka 1477(1555)²¹⁸ and the Koch coins remained the main means of transaction of trade and commerce of the region. The reign of King Naranarayan, also witnessed the introduction of coins by kings of many other states of the northeast India like the Ahom, the Kachari, Jayantiya, and Khyram (of Khasi hills), which gave great impetus in the process of monetization of trade and commerce of the regions. Among these, the Jayantiya kings of Jayantiya Hills and the kings of Khyram of Khasi hills issued coins with the permission of king Naranarayan, bearing the name of Naranarayan as their overlord²¹⁹ and even Gohain Kamal, Dhewan of Khaspur, after detaching him from the control of the core area, minted coins bearing the name of king Naranarayan²²⁰. Bhutan also gets her coins from the mint of Koch kingdom by sending silver²²¹.Therefore, it is evident that *Narayani Mudra* had been minted from several places of north-east India and became an acceptable standard medium of exchange both in inter regional and intra regional trade and commerce of the whole north-east India.

The Narayani Mudra (tanka) of King Naranarayan and his successors, of denominations of Rupee, $\frac{1}{2}$ rupee and $\frac{1}{4}$ rupee have been discovered and bear different types descriptions. The descriptions on obverse and reverse of kings Naranarayan, Lakshminarayan, Raghudeva and Jayantiya kings are given below:(See Plates; IX, X, XI and XII at the end).

Kings.	Dates.	Denominations.	Reverse.	Obverse.
King Naranarayan	Saka 1477	1 Rupee, $\frac{1}{2}$ rupee and $\frac{1}{4}$ rupee.	Sri Sri Man Nara Narayansya Saka 1477.	Sri Sri Shiva Charana Kamala Madhu Karashya.
Lakshmi Narayan	Saka 1509 & Raja Saka 98.	1 Rupee, $\frac{1}{2}$ rupee and $\frac{1}{4}$ rupee.	Sri Sri Man Lakshmi Narayansya Saka 1509/ Raja Saka 98.	Sri Sri Shiva Charana Kamala Madhu Karashya.
Raghudeva Narayan.	Saka 1510	1 Rupee and $\frac{1}{2}$ rupee	Sri Sri Raghudeva Narayan Bhupalashya Saka 1510.	Sri Sri Hara Gouri Charana Kamala Madhu Karashya.
Jayantiya Kings ²²²	Saka 1592 & Others.	1 Rupee	Sri Sri Jayantipura- Purandarasya Saka 1592	Sri Sri Siva Charana- Kamala Madhukarasya

Thus, Introduction of the Narayani Mudra, primarily by King Naranarayan not only led to the growth of trade and commerce in favour of Koch Kingdom but it also became the prime medium of exchange of the whole region. The circulation of coins (Narayani Mudra) increased in the region due to collection of huge coins as tributes from the conquered states of northeast India²²³. Moreover, gold and silver plundered from northeast India by King Nranarayan had been utilized to mint *Narayani Mudra* (tanka), most probably during the reigns of Lakshminarayan and Raghudeva. The DRV informs us that Raghudeva had

a reserve of 30000000 Narayani Mudra²²⁴, and Lakshminarayan had more reserve of Narayani Mudra than Raghudeva. According to A. Guha "The rapid increase in money supply from several sources indicated that demand for media of exchange and trade, both intra-regional and inter-regional, were increasing over the years 1500-1700."²²⁵

Development of education, languages and literature:

Development of education, language and literature during the reign of King Naranarayan is a landmark in the history of North-East India. D. Neog describes, "The reign of Naranarayan, styled as Assamese *Vikramaditya* (1540-1584), is celebrated not only for peace plenty, but also for proverbial patronage of learning and culture"²²⁶. The arrival of a large number of Brahmins and others from Mithila and Bengal since the middle of the 15th century, rise of Neo-Vaisnavite religion under the leadership of Sankaradeva and royal patronage facilitated the development of education, language and literature of the region. The establishment of kingdoms by tribal chiefs, the abandonment of the tribal culture and adoption of Indo-Aryan languages, at least by upper strata of society including royal families, for easy communication with other tribal and non-tribal people had accelerated the development of indigenous languages and led to their linguistic changes²²⁷. The period from about 1400-1550 is considered as the period of 'blossoms of renaissance' in the Assamese language and literature which included the reign of King Naranarayan and cultivation and development of literature and language including that of Sankaradeva in the region during his reign also considered as Assamese language and literature²²⁸. Therefore, language and literature during reign of Naranarayan was an integrate part of Assamese language and literature. The literary activities of the region were two-dimensional: Sanskrit language centric and non-Sanskrita language centric literary activities.

Languages:

The non-Sanskrita language, which was accepted as royal language of communication and administration by Biswa Singha and King Naranarayan got great impetus during the period²²⁹. About the name of this non-Sanskrita language of the lower Brahmaputra valley, including Northern Bengal and its roots, there are two main views among the scholars. The scholars of Bengal claim this non-Sanskrita language to be the early specimen of Bengali language²³⁰, the Assamese scholars²³¹ claim this to be the

early specimen of Assamese language. Without going into the controversies, it can be safely be assumed that the language has some common characteristics of the Bengali and Assamese languages, for which the debate might have risen²³². In the seventh century, when the Chinese traveler Huien Sung visited Kamarupa, he found the local language slightly different from that of Magadha or middle India²³³. In course development, the language came under two influences, one of South-West of Bengal and the other of Mithila and ultimately Bengali influence became predominant and considered as Bengali language. G. A. Grierson has included the language under Indo-Aryan language group²³⁴. However, due to the close connection and inclusion of many words of Tibeto-Burman language group so the influence of Tibeto-Burman language is very much there but the language is Indo-Aryan²³⁵. Again, due to the political closeness of the region with northeast India and cultural assimilation of that, the language became an integrated part of Assamese literature, for which they termed it as 'Kamarupi' or 'Kamatapuri' language but the language is akin to Bengali of the middle ages²³⁶.

The Koch kings, in the first quarter of the 16th century adopted the standard language i.e. Bengali (or *Kamrupi / Kamatapuri*) of eastern India, by discarding their Tribal languages like Mech / Baro / Koch and gradually it became the language of the state for administrative and communicative purposes. Moreover, intellectual communities like the Brahmins and *Kayasthyas* were encouraged by state to diffuse the teaching, morale and knowledge of the classical Sanskrita literature through this language. The earliest specimen of this language so far known is the letter of Naranarayan dated 1477 Saka (1555) sent to the Ahom king with the peace proposal²³⁷ and in succeeding periods the language was modified for all-round usages. Moreover, the rise of Neo- Vaisnavism under the leadership Sankaradeva gave a great impetus to the advancement of learning and literature through this language in the region during the period. Though Sankaradeva was a distinguished Sanskrita scholar, he wrote mainly in this language, with the aim of bringing Sanskrita lore within the uneducated masses. Thus, the adoption of this non-Sanskrita and non-tribal language by Koch King Naranarayan in its administrations, courts, foreign affairs and even in cultivation of literature, led the tribal people to be acquainted with this language(*Bengali / Kamarupi / Kamatapuri*) and ultimately this was accepted by the tribal people along with the upper strata of the society as colloquial language. In addition, Vaisnavite preachers also helped the development of the language.

Besides, the adoption and cultivation of the Bengali (*Kamarupi / Kamatapuri*), Koch kings were great patron of Sanskrit language, literature and learning. The Sanskrit was the main language of literary activities and had been cultivated under both Brahmins and royal patronages in the region since the 14th century. With the state formation under Biswa Singha and King Naranarayan, the Koches adopted Hinduism, which was intimately linked with the Sanskrita language and literature. Both Biswa Singha, the founder of the dynasty and his illustrious son King Naranarayan were great patron of Sanskrita language and literature and its learning. This is proved by the fact that Biswa Singha sent his sons Naranarayan (Malladeva) and Chilarai (Sukladhaja) to Benaras, and they had their education in grammar, the Puranas, Sruti, Smriti, Mimamsa and Atharvanic military practices under the guidance of their teacher Brahmananda²³⁸ and they became well versed in many aspects of Sanskrit language and literature. They themselves became a great source of inspiration to the scholars and poets of the kingdom and created such a situation that was suitable for the cultivation of Sanskrita language and literature.

According to the *Maharaja Vansavali* of Rupunjay Das, Naranarayan himself was the author of a dictionary of Sanskrita language named '*Malladevi Abhidhan*'²³⁹ although no manuscript yet have been discovered. Purusshottam Vidyavagish in the direction of King Naranarayan and his queen had compiled a Sanskrita grammar called '*Prayoga-ratna-mala*'²⁴⁰, which became the main grammar for general education including the kids of the royal family. However, it is also a fact that the cultivation Sanskrita language and literature was limited within upper strata of the society including members of royal families, the Brahmins and Kayasthyas etc. However, primary knowledge in Sanskrita language and literature was pre-requisite for the servants of the court of the Koches in the mid 16th century²⁴¹, and for this reason, the upper strata of the society monopolized lucrative posts in royal court.

From the above discussion, it has cleared that early Koch kings patronized linguistic development of both the languages i.e. the Sanskrita and the Bengali (or *Kamarupi / Kamatapuri*), which ultimately led to the development of the literatures, learning and education and other aspects which we are going to discuss in the succeeding pages.

Literatures:

Koch kings Biswa Singha and his illustrious son king Naranarayan not only hinduised themselves and Sanskritised the culture and languages of the country, but also adopted the Sanskrita and the Bengali (or *Kamarupi / Kamatapuri*) languages for the spreading of the education and literatures of the period. As king Naranarayan and his brother Chilarai, both were well versed in the Sanskrita as well as the Bengali (or *Kamarupi / Kamatapuri*) languages, took active interest to spread the teachings and values of Sanskrita literature through the contemporary vernacular of the region i.e. Bengali (or *Kamarupi / Kamatapuri*). For this reason, he along with his brother invited to their court the Brahmins and learned scholars from Banaras and other places; patronized them with lucrative posts in royal court to cultivate learning and literature. According to the DRV, Naranarayan formally instructed his court scholars to engage themselves in studies²⁴². Another important way for the cultivation of learning and literature was to hold scholarly debates where scholars from different parts of the country were invited to participate. The Guru Charitas refer many of such debates held in the court of Naranarayan²⁴³. The scholars who won such debates or who could show his scholarship were conferred high-sounding titles like Vidyavagis, Siddhantavagis, Kandali, Kavindra, Kaviratna, etc., and winners were also awarded with presents and certificates. For example, King Naranarayan conferred the title Kavindra on one of his court scholars Baninath²⁴⁴, Saraswati, Bharat Bhushan and Bharat Chandra, on Aniruddha Dvija²⁴⁵ and Ananta Kandali got his title Kandali for his mastery over tarka Sastra²⁴⁶. It is also during his reign; the Neo-Vaisnavite saint Sankaradeva and his disciples cultivated Neo-Vaisnavite literature, which heralded the Renaissance in Assamese literature.

During the reign of king Naranarayan, the literary activities included the composition of Sanskrita and Bengali (or *Kamarupi / Kamatapuri*) texts and translation of Sanskrita scriptures into the vernacular. In this regard, it should be mentioned here that the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Purans* and *Smriti Sastras* etc. as the sources of Indian mythology and Hinduism, got special attention of the king to popularize the teachings and values of these texts among the subjects. However, the translation was not word-for-word translation or verbatim translation. In the most cases, it was done on the story or theme of the Sanskrita texts using local backgrounds.

Pitambar Siddhantavagis, a great scholar in the court of Naranarayan translated *Markandeya Puran* at the instance of Yubaraj Samarsingha to diffuse the secrets of the

sacred scripture²⁴⁷ and the Dasham Skandha (Book X) of the Bhagavata Puran²⁴⁸. However, most notable work of Pitambar Siddhantavagis was on Smriti literature. In the court of Naranarayan, he compiled following 18 Smritinvandhans called Kaumudi²⁴⁹: *Danda Kaumudi*, *Preta Kaumudi*, *Vrishotsarga Kaumudi*, *Pramana Kaumudi*, *Sraddha Kaumudi*, *Durgotsava Kaumudi*, *Ekadasi Kaumudi*, *Suddhi Kaumudi*, *Pratistha Kaumudi*, *Sankalpa Kaumudi*, *Prayachitta Kaumudi*, *Tirtha Kaumudi*, *Kala Kaumudi*, *Diksha Kaumudi*, *Sambandha Kaumudi*, *Tithi Kaumudi*, *Daya Kaumudi*, and *Achara Kaumudi*. He also translated *Nala-Damayanti* episode of the Mahabharata into the vernacular at the suggestion of Samara Singha²⁵⁰. Kavi Rama Saraswti was another very popular poet and voluminous writer in the court of Naranarayan, who at the instance of the king translated major portion i.e. 30000 verses out of 33000 verses of the Mahabharata into popular vernacular²⁵¹. He in different names and titles such as Aniruddha, Kavichandra, Bharata Bhusan and Srinath Brahman with collaboration of some other scholars like his son Gopinath, Vidya Panchanan, Kamsari Kayastha, Ghabhr Khan, Damodaro Das, and others translated several Parvas of the Mahabharata like *Vana Parva*, *Visma Parva*, *Virata Parva*, *Karna Parva*, *Udyog Parva*, *Ashvamedha Parva*, *Nadi Parva* etc. into vernaculars²⁵². He also translated *Gita-Gobinda* of Jayadeva of Bengal in the name Jayadeva Kavya and wrote the *Vyadha-Charita* and *Bhima Charita* in vernacular²⁵³.

Ananta Kandali, (Real name Hari Charan) another star writer in the court of king Naranarayan and disciple of Sankaradeva, had composed *Sabitri Upakhyan*, *Mahiravan badha*, *Harihar-yuddha*, *Vrittasur- badha*, *Jiva-stuti*, *Sri Rama Kirtana* in *Kirtana* style and famous *Kumarharan kavya* and translated the *Rajasuya* section of the Mahabharata into vernacular²⁵⁴. Besides, Sankaradeva, as his favourite disciple, allowed Ananta Kandali to complete the translation of the unfinished half of the tenth *Kanda* of the Bhagavata Purana²⁵⁵.

Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya was another writer of the period. He translated the *Padma purana* under the title 'Swarga khandha Rahasya' and after becoming the disciple of Sankaradeva, he wrote the biography of his Guru and also translated fragments of *Bhagavata Purana* and *Bhavisya Purana*²⁵⁶.

Kalap Chandra Dvija in the court of king Naranarayan had translated the fourth and sixth *Skanda* of *Bhagvata Purana* and a part of the *Ramayana* under the *Ramayana Chandika*²⁵⁷.

Neo-Vaisnavite Literatures:

It is fact that the Hindu traditional scholars have generally translated the epics and the Puranas into the vernacular (Bengali or *Kamarupi / Kamatapuri*) for diffusing the secrets of the classical literature. However, Neo-Vaisnavism introduced by Sankaradeva (1449-1569) had encouraged the Vaisnava scholars to produce literatures on the Vaishnavism. It is also a fact that the Neo-Vaisnavite movement gave a tremendous impetus to the development of the vernacular literatures in various directions. Sankaradeva and his disciples not only translated the scriptures into the vernaculars but also composed various types of literary works.

In the year 1546 , Sankaradeva settled in Barpeta, a place within the kingdom of king Naranarayan, laid the foundations of the Pathbausi Satra and spent the remaining years (1543-1569) of his life here under the patronage of the enlightened Koch king Naranarayan and the major portion of his writings, lyrics, dramas and others were composed here²⁵⁸. The biographies called Guru Charitas or Charitas through valuable light on the literary activities.

M. Neog divided the literary activities of Sankaradeva into three periods corresponding to his stay in the Bara Bhuyan (up to 1516), Ahom (1516-1546) and Koch (1546-69) territories respectively²⁵⁹. The second and third periods covered the reigns of Biswa Singha and Naranarayan, and third period is considered as the most important period in the life of Sankaradeva. Sankaradeva began his writings with *Hahischandra-Upakhyan* (*Markandeya-Purana*) at his school life, which is considered as the "the first book in which the four posts of *Bhakti* were fixed"²⁶⁰. Sankaradeva wrote *Kirtana-Ghosh* (collection of 29 Kirtanas), a kind of devotional *Bhakti* songs in vernacular for propagating the *Bhakti* faith²⁶¹. The most of the stories had been taken from the tales of the *Bhagavata* puranas with few exceptions²⁶². Sankaradeva drew inspiration chiefly from the *Bhagavata*, which was his main base of literary activities. At the instance of King Naranarayan, he took up the works of translation of the all the *Bhagavata* books and himself translated the

major portion , namely Books I, II, III, VII, VIII, IX, X, and XII²⁶³. Besides Sankaradeva, under his guidance, his other disciple writers, who undertook the works of translation of other sections of the *Bhagavata* were Ananta Kandali (Books IV, VI and a section of Book X), Kesava Charana (Books VII and a section of Book IX), Gopal Charana Dvija (sections of the Book III), Kavi Kalap Chandra(sections of the Book IV), Sri Visnu Bharati (sections of the Book IV), Ratnakara Misra (sections of the Book V), Sri Chandradeva (sections of the Book IV), Aniruddha Kayastha(sections of the Book IV and V) and Hari((sections of the Book V)²⁶⁴. According to the *Katha Guru Charita*, Sankaradeva wrote Nimi-Navasiddha-Samvada, a doctrinal treaty based the *Bhagavata* book XI, at his early stay in the Koch state²⁶⁵. During his stay in Koch state, he wrote Anadi Patan on astrology, Gunamala (the garland of qualities), a summary of the *Bhagavata* at the instance of King Naranarayan and Bhakti ratnakara a doctrinal work in the ideas of Bhakti²⁶⁶. He also translated the Ramayana (Uttar-Kanda).

Most popular form of devotional literatures composed during the period in Sanskrita, vernacular and as well as in Brajabuli by Sankaradeva were the Baragitas (great songs), (panegyrics) and the Totaka hymn. The Baragitas (great songs) mostly were composed in Brajabuli language, the language of Charyas or Charyapadas. The Bhatimas constitute typical form of Vaisnava poetry; primarily songs to glorify a panegyrist (may be god Krishna or even king). According to the *Katha Guru Charita*, Sankaradeva recited a Bhatima on the first day of his visit to the court of king Naranarayan i.e. *Jaya jaya malla nripiati rasajana*, 'Glory be unto king Malla, an appreciator of sentiments, in praise of the king's valour, his love of learning and poetry, his religious mindedness and his physical beauty'²⁶⁷. The Totaka metre, glorifying gods was probably composed in Sanskrita with an eye on the scholars assembling at the Koch court²⁶⁸.

Under the inspiration of the Koch kings, Sankaradeva and his disciples had composed a large numbers of dramas popularly known as the 'Ankiyanats', (one act plays) as a medium of propagation of Neo-Vaisnavism. He composed Ankiyanats like the *Kaliya -Damana*, the *Keli-Gopal*, the *Rukmini-Harana* (in about 1560AD), *Parijata-Harana*, *Sri-Rama-Vijaya* etc²⁶⁹. Madhavadeva, one of the favourite disciples of the Sankaradeva, had composed many Ankiyanats like the *Arjuna-Bhanjana*, the *Chordhara*, the *Pimpara-Guchuwa*, the *Dadhi-Mathan*, the *Bhojana-Vihara*, the *Bhushan-Bhanjana*

etc²⁷⁰. The most of the *Ankiyanats* were in the *Brajabuli* language and performance of it always accompanied by music, dance and had a great appeal to the masses of the region. Madhavadeva also wrote '*Nama-Ghosh*', which is as popular as the *Kirtana-ghosh* of Sankaradeva.

Secular writings:

The Koch King Naranarayan not only encouraged the cultivation of religious literature, but also patronized the development of secular subjects like biography, arithmetic, astrology and medical science etc. Bakul Kayastha, a court writer of king Naranarayan, wrote the *Kitavat manjuri*, a book on arithmetic, land surveying and bookkeeping from information of the '*Lilavati*' and Sridhar was another scholar in the court of Naranarayan, who wrote a book on astronomy called '*Sadhyakhanda*' on *Jhotish*²⁷¹. *Churamani* wrote his work *Jyotis Churamani* on arithmetic, astrology and mensuration in about 1560AD²⁷². Bhusan Dvija, a court poet of Naranarayan, composed the biography of Sankaradeva named '*Guru Charita*'. In the same way, Rama Ray, father-in-law of Chilarai had composed the biography of his *Guru Damodaradevo*, called '*Gurulila*'. *Guptamani* of Madhavadeva deals with the relationship between the mind and environment²⁷³. It is believed that Sagarkhari composed his famous *Ghoranidan*, a treatise on diseases of horses, under the patronage of the Koches²⁷⁴.

Some aspects on Educations, learning etc:

During the period of our study, there was no centralized educational system in the kingdom. However, locally basic educations were imparted in the *Tolas* and *Chatrasalas*, which were a *Gurukula* type of residential schools, managed generally by the Brahmin Pandits, Acharyyas or Ojhas, and were maintained by public donations. Sankaradeva secured his early education in such a *Tola* under the Brahmin Pandit Mahendra Kandali, and Madhavadeva studied under Rajendra Adhyapaka at Banduka²⁷⁵. The *Katha Guru Charita* informs us that there had been small huts attached to the *Tolas*, where students from distance places had to live for their education²⁷⁶. Besides learning, the students had to participate in various types of works like cleaning and keeping of the school houses in order, domestic works of teachers and begging for foods as traditional custom²⁷⁷. Princes of the royal family secured their basic education under the Brahmin scholars attached to

the court. In the *Tola* system of education, the curriculum mainly consisted of Sanskrita grammer, Lexicons, the Epics, the Puranas, religious works- Dharmasastras, Niti-sastras and *Yajamani* and the medium of instruction was in Sanskrita²⁷⁸. The professional training was also prevlant among the Kayasthas to improve efficiency of bookkeepings etc.²⁷⁹. With the rise of the Neo-vaisnava Movement, the responsibility of imparting education came under its domain. The Satra institution voluntarily took upon itself the noble responsibility of enlightening the people through their own *tols*. All the important Satras used to maintain a regular band of scholars whose duty was to impart education, especially in respect of ancient lore and scriptures.

We have no references of the advance education centres within the kingdom, so ambitious students went outside of the state for their advanced learning. Naranarayan and Chilarai had their education at Benaras in grammer, the Puranas, Sruti, Smritis, Mimamsa and Atharvanic military practices under Brahmananda Sannyasi, a great Sanskrita scholar²⁸⁰. Kanthabhusan of the Maguri village near Hajo went to Benaras for advanced education in the Vedanta under a scholar named Brahmananda/ Rama-Bhatta, Asurari, son of Murari Chakraborty had his education a *Navadvipa*²⁸¹.

Contemporary literary sources are completely silent about the education in vernacular. But writings of official letters in vernacular, using the vernacular as official language of the state, translation of large number of the Sanskrita texts in the vernacular and above all writings of Neo-Vaisnavite literatures in the vernacular indirectly throw some lights on the non-formal and non institutional vernacular education. The literary activities in the vernacular was like a under current among the masses and they received informal education through the stories of the translated form of the classical writings, Neo-Vaisnavite propagations, folk-literature, folk music etc. The theatrical performances on religious themes by Neo-Vaisnava preachers served as one of the most important media for religions based informal educations among the masses. Besides, prayer-songs including music and dance and the *Namghars*, (village prayer halls) also performed important roles in verbal education.

It should be mention here that formal institutional educations were limited among the Brahmins and upper strata of society including royal princes and professional caste like Kayasthas. The common masses were beyond the formal *Tola* centric education system. The Bramins tried to control the whole education system and according social convention teaching profession was the monopoly right of the Brahmins. For example, When

Sankaradeva, a non-Brahmin student was appointed the *Ojha-Chatra* (class captain), being a brilliant and intelligent student, there was a resentment among the Brahmins students and Mahendra kandali, his teacher, had to face the brought about by one of the guardians for his violation of the convention²⁸². However, the state-sponsored stalwarts had mainly translated the classical literature in the vernacular and composed of Vaisnavite works in the vernacular gave impetus to the learning and education among the masses.

Dances and Music:

During the reigns of Biswa Sinsgha and Naranarayan, remarkable development taken place in the field of music and dance. Contemporary literary archaeological evidence refers to the music, dance and musical instruments. Dance and music of the period can be discussed under two heads: Non -Vaisvavite and Neo-Vaisnavite dance and music.

Non-Vaisnavite dance and music:

Non-Vaisnavite dance and music were the local traditional form of dance and music. The *Kalika Puran* refers to one hundred and eight mudras (dancing postures) with which the goddess could be worshiped²⁸³. The DRV refers to a large number musical instruments used at the time of the coronation ceremonies of Biswa Singha and Naranarayan, which indirectly indicates the prevalence dance and musical performances²⁸⁴. The DRV also informs us that King Naranarayan organized a dance party during his Ahom expedition in 1562 on the bank of the river Sankosh to obtain the support of the all Mech-Kachari people of the tribal origin²⁸⁵. The reign of Biswa Singha witnessed the introduction of the *Oja-Pali* dance and music. According to D. Nath, "In this type of musical performance, songs from the Ramayana and the *Manasa Kavyas*, the former composed by Durgavar and the later by both Durgavar and Mankar, were used to be sung by a group of singers under the guidance of a leader called *Oja* on the occasions of some festive gatherings like the Durga Puja, and the manasa-puja"²⁸⁶. This type of choral music were full of classical ragas or melodies like *Gunjari*, *Patamanjari*, *Devomohana*, *Mandali*, etc and the main *Talas* (rhythm) like *Ekatala*, *Kharman*, *Rachaka*, *Rupaka* etc. were basically Non-Vaisvavite in character and very popular among the masses. Therefore, Sankaradeva accepted this type of performance or its technique to

the singing of *Kirtana-Ghosas* and others of his Neo-Vaisnavite fold²⁸⁷. Ananta Kandali and Kalap Chandra Dvija, both under the patronage of king Naranarayan composed Sri *Rama Kirtana* and *Ramayana Chandika* respectively on the Ramayana in Kirtana style, which were sung in various occasions²⁸⁸. Kendukalai, the chief priest of goddess Kamakhya in the days of Naranarayan, used to sing in her shrine when the goddess herself appeared in form and danced to song²⁸⁹. Chilarai, the brother of Naranarayan was himself a musician. He utilized the musical treatise, *Sangita-damodara* of Subhankara Kavi perhaps of old Mithila, in his musical work 'Saraswati, commentary of the *Gita-Govinda*, where he quotes the *Laksanas* of the ragas like *Malava*, *Gurjari*, *Karnata*, *Bhairavi* etc²⁹⁰. The Non-Vaisnavite performing arts based on mainly classical pattern, and executed in traditional non-Vaisnavite religious performances. The tribal people performed their traditional tribal dance and music associated with agriculture at the time of the sowing of seeds, before starting harvesting and in the community feast held after the completion of the harvest. They also performed music and dance on the occasions like birth, marriage, death and worship of the deities.

Neo-Vaisnavite dance and music:

The Neo-Vaisnavite movement brought a new era in the field of music and dance in the region during our period of study. Neo-Vaisnavite dance and music based on Vaisnavite faith and its different branches. Sankaradeva, Madhavadeva and other Neo-Vaisnavite writers composed different types of the songs which were generally of a descriptive character, and recited or sung in religious gatherings in a simple, sonorous voice to impress the masses to the faith of *Bhakti*.

The Neo-Vaisnava music, in the hand of Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva reached a remarkable structure in its tone and variety. A large number of *ragas* or melodies, *Talas* (rhythm) and musical instruments were introduced in music. They employed the ragas like *Ahira*, *Asowari*, *Kalyan*, *Kedara*, *Gauri*, *Tuda*, *Dhanasri*, *Nata*, *Purvi* etc. in their musical writings²⁹¹. Musical rhythms like *Ekatali*, *Khar-man*, *Chutikala*, *Chuta*, *Yati-man*, *Domani* *Visama*, *Paritala*, *Rupaka* and *Chok* are found in their writings of dramatics performances²⁹². With traditional musical instruments like *Vipanchi*, *Kavilasa*, *Rudra* *Kavilasa*, *Rudra Vina*, *Rudra Tokari*, *Saringa*, *khanjari* etc. they introduced *Rabab*, *Dotara*, *Mridanga / Khol*, *Ramatala*, or *Karatatal* etc. in musical performances²⁹³. Different forms of music introduced by Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva included mainly *Baragits*, *Ankargits*,

Kirtan-ghosh, *Bhatima*, *Nam-ghosh* etc. All these songs especially *Baragits* and *Ankargits* were tuned to classical Ragas and *Talas* and were performed with musical instruments as we have mentioned earlier. The influences of these songs among the all classes of people were remarkable, and acted as the vehicle for the propagation of the *Bhakti* of Neo-Vaisnavite faith. Two incidents may be mentioned here to get an idea about the influence of musical performance of the *Bhakti* songs. Chilarai, happened one day to overhear his wife Kamalapriya, Ramaraya's daughter singing a *Bhakti* song on the *Sarinda*, he was so impressed by that he lost no time in resolving to secure initiation into *Bhakti* and likewise Damodaradeva was attracted to the faith by the prayers held daily in Sankaradeva's *Satra*²⁹⁴.

Sankaradeva introduced the art of dancing mainly in connection with the dramatic performances that were for the most part dance and music, prose constituting but an insignificant fraction. His large number of dances based on Vaisnavite religious themes like *Sutra-bhangi* or *Sutradharar Nach*, *Krishna-bhangi* or *Gosai-prevesar Nach*, *Gopi-prevesar Nach*, *Chali Nach*, *Nritya-bhangi Nath, rasa Nritya*, *Jhumur Nach*, *Yuddhar Nach* etc.²⁹⁵.

M. Neog termed the dance of Sankaradeva as 'Satra School of dancing' as the Satras and Nama-ghars were important centres of this dance and music²⁹⁶. On the other hand, in the opinion of D. Nath, "...Sankaradeva created a new type of music and dance which can rightly be termed as the Kamarupi or the Assamese school of Indian music and dance"²⁹⁷.

Development of Art, architecture, sculpture and painting:

Due to the strong economic solidarity, comparatively peaceful political situation and keen interest of the early Koch kings, a new era had been started in the field of art, architecture and sculpture during our period of study. Development of Neo-Vaisnavite movement, initiated a new branch of artistic work i.e. the painting. One interesting thing should be kept in mind that establishment and development in the field of art, architecture, sculpture and painting during the period is mainly based on religious and secular part of its are very rare. Besides religious establishments like temples, Nam-ghars and Satras of Vaisnavite faith, literary sources also throw glimpses in the fields Art, architecture, sculpture and painting:

The most important architectural work during the period, our study was the rebuilding of Kamakhya temple (see plates III, IV and V) by King Naranarayan and his brother Chilarai in 1565 on the Nilachal hill at Gouhati on the bank of the river Brahmaputra. The architecture and sculpture of the temple belonged to different periods due to the renovations, rebuilding and new constructions in the temple campus in the later periods for which it is difficult to comments about it. According to D. Nath, "The general structure of the temple conforms to Sri Chakra plan and has the *Nat-Mandir* or *Mandapa* (main temple), the *Gapuram* (the gate way) and the *Garbhagriha* (sanctum). The sikhara of the temple, which resembles a bee-hive, is a combination of *nagara* and *vesara* type. This was a creation of the Koch artists and can be termed as the '*Nilachala-type*' "²⁹⁸. The vertex of the temple is oval shaped like beehive-having 7 spires, 3 golden pitchers on blossoming lotus, upon that a golden trident. The temple flaunts beautiful frescos of adorned gods and goddesses of the Hindu Puranas. The plinth of the temple shows mouldings of the older temple. The main temple consists of three major chambers. The first and western chamber is large and rectangular and is not used by the general pilgrims. The middle chamber is a square, with a small idol of the goddess, probably a later adition. The walls of this chamber cointain sculptured images of King Naranarayan, chilarai and inscription recording its rebuilding by Chilarai in 1565 AD., and that of the other gods and goddesses. This chamber leads to the *Garbhagniha* (sanctum), the last chamber. The *Garbhagniha* (sanctum) of the temple is in the form of a cave, which consists of no image but a Yoni of the goddess and a natural under ground spring. This image known as the "matra yoni" and is worshipped with reverence. Some panels of the temple are also amazingly decorated with sculptural images of Ganesha, Chamundeswari in a delightful pattern of dancing postures (see plate VI). The main gateway was also build at the same time²⁹⁹. The Kamakhya is one of the most astounding architectural structures, which reflects the perfect form of the medieval architectural style.

Another important temple of the period with architectural and sculptural values is the Hayagriva Madhava temple (see plate VII) located at Hajo, a town about 30 km to west of Gouhati. According to the inscription of the temple, it was rebuild by Raghudeva, the son of Chilarai in Saka 1505(1583AD.) with the most skilled and efficient artist Sridhara, on the hillock called Mani Kuta (hillock) and a flight of stone steps composed of slab(s) leads to the main grounds of the temple³⁰⁰. The temple was built with stone slabs, is octagonal in plan, about 30-feet in diameter and crowned with a pyramidal roof, which

continues right up to an apex point. It appears "from the disarrangement of many of the mouldings and cornices, and awkward position of several bas-reliefs, that the upper portion of the temple has been reconstructed from the old materials, without much precision of arrangement"³⁰¹.

For proper understanding of the Architectural and sculptural works, the entire temple vertically may be divided into three parts: the high plinth, middle portion with Garvagriha (sanctum) and Sikkha. A row of Elephants or 'Gajaratha' appears on the plinth moulding, and on a moulding of about 2-feet above the plinth, a row of caparisoned elephants in high relief encircle the building and appears to bear the full brunt of the edifice. The elephants, all the tuskers each standing 16" in height, are facing outwards, are being finely designed and sculptured showing only their tusks, trunks and front legs. The entire structure of the temple rests over enormous brick pillars and is considered as an addition to the original structure of the temple, possibly by the Koch king Raghudeva in about 1583AD.

The middle portion, the Garvagriha (sanctum) which is a crypt, 14 square feet in size, contains the image and its pedestal and into which you descend by a flight of stone steps. The door case to this shrine, "is formed of four blocks of granite, and measures 10ft. in height and 5ft. in breadth. A lotus is engraved over the lintel of the door in the entrance. The door opens into an anteroom, also of stone, 10ft. by 10 ft., having inches of 4ft. square, stone screens, one on each side with apertures for the admission of light and air, cut in form of lotus flowers"³⁰².

The third part, the Sikkha of the Hayagriva temple has a pyramidal plane face, which continues right up to an apex point. In the horizontal aspect of the temple, it has large vestibule may be termed as 'Varandah, in vernacular, measuring 40 feet by 20 feet built of brick and resting on massive brick pillars. The upper walls of the exterior of the temple contain life-size sculptured figures representing the ten Avatars with Buddha as the ninth. The rest of the figures are of a non-descript character, but they are mostly male, and nearly all figures carry a trident ('Trishul').

Besides the Kamakhya and the Hayagriva Madhava temples, early Koch Kings built some other temples of architectural values. The temple named Bhairav Nath temple (than), established by Naranarayan and Chilarai, on the Bhairava hill in the present district of Goalpara of Assam. The temple resembles the architectural pattern of the Kamakhya

temple and although the temple is dedicated to Lord Siva (Bhairava nath), the images of His consort Bhairavi, Radha-Krishna (of Vaisnava faith) and other minor deities are found in the temple (Bhairava Nath temple). The Baneswar Siva Temple (see plate), at Baneswar, a place Situated at a distance of about 10 Km to the North of Koch Behar town is said to have constructed by king Naranarayan³⁰³. This temple too resembles the architectural pattern of the Kamakhya temple. The vertex of the temple is oval shaped like Kamakhya temple. The temple has a 'Shivalinga' 10 feet below the plinth level. Moreover, the Siva temples of *Chhoto Mahadeva* at *Nakkati Gachh* and *Baro Mahadeva* at *Baro Kodali* (both at Tufanganj, in Koch Behar district) bear some architectural values of the period³⁰⁴.

Besides, some the inscriptional and literary sources refer to some religious and secular architectural works, which however are not in existence now. Thus, an inscription in a stone slab in western Nilachal hill records that the beautiful Pandunath temple was build by Gadadhara, the loyal minister of king Raghu deva, with stones and dedicated to the feet of Payonidhi Bishnu in Saka 1507³⁰⁵. The DRV records the construction of Kamteswaridevi temple by Biswa singha, the father of king Naranarayan³⁰⁶. However, both the temples are not in existence now³⁰⁷. Inspite of the literary references of (both Local and Foreign) of royal palaces of the early kings of the dynasty, but no such palaces or its ruins discovered still now. The DRV also occasionally refers to the construction of capital cities; splendor courts, but remains of them do not exist. The early Koch kings used burnt bricks and stone slabs for the construction of temples. According to the DRV, king Naranarayan appointed 'Kumars' (potters), to make bricks for the construction of the Kamakhya temple and in this occasion, bricks were burnt in ghee³⁰⁸. Another type of architecture and sculpture developed during the period of our study under the influences of Neo-Vaisnavite movement of Sankaradeva and his disciples and that is Satra. According to D. Nath, "Under the guidance of Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva, and royal patronage, the artists of the period developed a new style which can be termed as the 'Satriya-school' of architecture and sculpture"³⁰⁹. This is new in the sense that instead of bricks and stone slabs, products like timber, bamboo, soil, thatching material etc. were used for the construction of Satras, which served as the religious place, place of learning and the dwelling place of the Monks of the faith. An ideal Neo -Vaisnavite Satra proper consists of a square enclosure wall, made of bamboo and wood, varying according to its

strength and having four main parts; i) four openings or gateways called *Karapaf*, looking like a small house. ii) The central assembly hall called *Namghar* or *Kirtanghar*, big in size for prayer and social gathering. iii) The central temple, composite of a shrine called *Manikut* or *Bhaj-ghar* in which is placed the *Simhasana* or *Thapana*, which contain the main object of worship. iv) The four rows of huts or long houses called *Hati*, where the Bhaktas lived³¹⁰. Sankaradeva is said to have established his first Satra at Bardowa, his birthplace, ultimately became a holy (*Than*) of the Vaisnavite faith and then at different centers, during the course of his long and extensive travels across the length and breadth of region. Under the patronages of King Naranarayan and Chilarai a large number of Satras were established in different places of the kingdom like the followings³¹¹:

- a) Madhupur Satra (also know as Bardowa Satra) at Madhupur, founder: Sankaradeva
- b) RamraiKuthi or Satrasal, Satra at Dhubri, founder: Ram Ray.
- c) Kakatkuta and Vela Satras, (Koch Behar, now extinct), founders: Sankaradeva and Madhavdeva.
- d) Fulbari Satra (Tufanganj, Koch Behar), founder: Madhavdeva.
- e) Bhitrua Satra (Baikunthapur).
- f) Barpeta Satra (Barpeta).
- g) Raghunath Pravu Satra (Golokganj, Dhubri.etc.

However, most of the *Satras* of the period are extinct now and present structures of the almost all *Satras* were belonging to the later period. The original *Kirtanghar* at Barpeta Satra, built under the patronage of the Koch (Hajo) king Raghudeva, and at the instructions of the Madhavadeva and his chief apostle Mathuradas Budha Ata, was a masterpiece of the wooden works³¹². Not only the *Karapatas* (main gate-ways), *Kirtanaghars*, *Bhaj-ghars* , but also the walls, gates, windows and posts were nicely engraved with many folk-art elements and images and scenes taken from religious texts and even some times wooden statues were placed in on the main gates as gate-keepers, which bear the efficiency of wooden sculpture³¹³. Therefore, the *Satras* bear not only

manuscripts, artifacts and antiques of immense historical values but also architectural and sculptural values as well.

One interesting point should be mentioned here that both the temples (stones-bricks) and the Satras (wooden) of the region bear different architectural and sculptural characteristics patterns in execution. The temple art, architecture and sculpture of the Kamakhya, Hayagriva and other temples was just an extension of all India pattern with little local variations. Although, D. Nath termed it as 'Nilachala-type' of architecture and sculpture for local variation, he find "nothing special or striking in the architecture of the early years of the Koch rule which can be termed as Kamarupa or Assam school"³¹⁴. Thus, S.K. Chatterjee termed it as "Pan-Indian Hindu tradition" of art, architecture and sculpture³¹⁵. Moreover, in the field of architecture and sculpture, Koch king followed more north behar and mid India than Bengal. The *sikhara*, of Kamakhya temple is a combined form of *nagara* and *Vesara* type of Pan-India. The plinth decoration of the Hayagriva Madhava temple is identical with decorative style of the Kailash cave temple of Ellora³¹⁶. Engraving of the images of King Naranarayan and Chilarai on the walls of the Kamakhya temple and as well as lotus flowers type apertures of the Hayagriva Madhava temple for the admission of light and airand they are identical with mid India. It was due to the strongest connection of the early Koch kings with north Bihar and mid India³¹⁷. On the other hand, the architecture and sculpture of the Vaisnavite Satras bears local characteristics, which can be termed as 'Satriya-School' and only influence it bears from outside is subject matter of the art, architecture and sculpture,which is Purana based.

Painting:

Painting, especially Neo-Vaisnavite was a new chapter and watermark of the period of our study, which received great patronage from the Koch royal court and executed by Neo-Vaisnavite Artists. The Neo-Vaisnavite Artists took great parts in their Satra centric paintings and may be named as 'the Satriya style of paintings'. It reached high watermark during the reign of king Naranarayan and it is considered as 'new chapter', in the sense that no specimen of paintings done in the area anterior to the time of the Sankaradeva is available to us³¹⁸. The Satriya style, the indigenous school of paintings is the product of Sri Sankaradeva. The Citra Bhagavat (Bhagavat, book X), dated 1461 Saka (1539 A.D.), from Bali satra of Naogaon is the earliest example of the Satriya style. The painting of this

manuscript is of great beauty and represents one of the earliest attempts to illustrate a version of the Bhagavat composed in vernacular³¹⁹. On the paintings of 'Citra-Bhagavata' M. Neog opines it "seem to be the work of some Sutra artists and a representative work too of the Assam" and "The technique and finish of this work exhibit strong Rajput-Mughal influences, although here and there local elements are naturally to be expected"³²⁰, in colours and concepts. Dr. Moti Chandra gives a beautiful analysis of the characteristics of the Bhagavata paintings in the following ways: "The physical features of the human figures, angularity in draughtmanship, monochrome background and conventional landscape are common to them. --- In short, the lyrical draughtmanship, simple composition, dramatic narration, and splendid colours give the Bhagavata illustrations a charm which distinguishes them from similar paintings from Udaypur and elsewhere"³²¹. The *Katha Guru Charita* describes Sankaradeva as a skilled painter, and how he painted the scenes of the 'Seven Vaikunthas' on the ginned cotton paper (*tula-pat*), to be used in the presentation of his play *Chihna-yatra* (does not exist today). According to the same source, he also painted with vermillion (*hengul*) and yellow arsenic (*haital*) an elephant on a small piece of paper and pasted on it a wooden bookcase with his *Gunamala*, which he had presented to his patron king Naranaryan³²². It has also been recorded in the *Katha Guru Charita* that he, for the sake of his patron king (Naranaryan) had depicted the scenes of Lord Krishna's childhood woven into a tapestry sheet of embroidered designs on silk cloth 180 feet long called *Vrindavani Vastra*. The vastra was woven by 12 master weavers in Barpeta, commissioned by Chilarai and under the supervision of Sankaradeva probably between 1565 and 1568,³²³. Another illustrated manuscript of the reign of king Naranarayan is Rama Saraswti's Mahabharata (*Udyoga Parva*) wherein the artist painted the ornaments with real gold³²⁴. Manuscripts with illustrated borders were known as *lata-kata puthi* or manuscripts with scrolls and running motifs along the borders. Many manuscripts contain pictures of the deadly sins, of the glory of Visnu, and of His incarnations according to Hindu conception.

All combinations of colours were used but the treatment is always flat. The prominent ones were yellow and green. The materials used in painting are indigo, yellow ochre (*gerumati*), vermillion (*hengul*), yellow arsenic (*haital*) and lamp-black. These materials could easily give the basic colors and even a few composite ones. Most of the

manuscripts painting were executed on *Sachi-pat*²²⁵. These are always shown against deep blue or red and sometimes with grey background.

In technique and in finish, the pictures of trees with flowers and birds have considerable charm, and animal life is vividly portrayed with observant sympathy and tenderness of feeling, that reminds us of the paintings in the manuscript *Hasti-vidyarnava*, which depicts the different types of elephants with their respective characteristics. The animals like maleness Indian lion, the bison (methon in Assamese) and birds are appeared in the painting in clear and sympathetic manner.

There are some convention and stylization that may be considered as the limitations of these paintings of the period and which can be seen in the illustrated *Bhagavata-purana*. The figures are mostly in profile, the eyes are fish-shaped and have arched eyebrows and physiology is not given due attention and physiognomy scarcely shines bright; individualization is not the aim attempted at by the painter's brush, although the MS *Lava-Kusar Yuddha* is an exception and unique, where characterization through facial expression and colour is to be noticed. Another exceptional and unique characterization is found in the Ms. *Bhagavata*, there is a rhythm in the scenes of musical performances of *Gandharvas*, *Apsaras* and *Vidhyadharas*, where attempts at symmetry are evident and movements of groups are effectively depicted.

In general, nothing is found impressive in background as well as scene setting. M. Neog writes "Landscape or any other background is scarcely or never attempted; and perspective seems to be a thing till now unknown to the painter, as the third dimension is nowhere in evidence. Successive scenes have been flatly depicted on the same plane like those in celluloid ribbons of cinematography but without anything to mark one from another. The peculiar way of representing pouring rain-water, rivers and lakes are of a conventional type. Mountains look like cross-sections of them. The trees are far from the real. The chariots (rathas) are not very happy in that they look like a low, flat stool with wheels at the bottom and a flag post at the front"³²⁶.

In spite of these limitations, "In some bigger satras the visitor eye with pleasure catches the sight of mural paintings and wood-carvings of beauty, with folk-art elements, depicting figures of gods and scenes from the Vaisnavite scriptures"³²⁷. The impulse to

create the art of painting can be explained by the evolution of the worship of religious scripture. The cult of worship of scripture in the altar of each Satra enjoyed unprecedented impetus. The practice was also followed in the domestic chapel of each household in Assam. Thus paintings under the Koch patronage at the early stage being inspired by the Mughal-Rajputas style and finally it inspired the artists of the region and became familiar as the 'Satriya style of paintings' and may be considered as a unique contribution to the domain of Indian painting . In the succeeding period, royal court centric painting also developed in the region and may be named as 'royal school of paintings'³²⁸.

Notes and references:

1. *Bengal past and present*, Vol. XXIV, p.14.
2. George Peter Murdock gives the definition of a tribe in the following way:
a ' social group, usually comprising a number of sibs, bands, villages or other sub groups, which is normally characterized by the possession of a definite territory , a distinct dialect , a homogeneous and distinctive culture and either a unified political organization or at least some sense of common solidarity as against outsiders. (Henry Prott Fairchild (ed) "Dictionary of Sociology and Related Science", Littlefield, Adams& Co., 1961, p.324)
3. Robert Redfield: 'The Little Community', (Almquist and wiksells, Bektrycheri A. B., 1955), p. 39. The International Labour organization (ILO) in its 169th Convention , article1, has also defined a tribe with the following words; 'Tribal peoplesare those whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulation' . (Cited in Meshbah Kamal, Ishani Chakraborty and Zobaida Nasrin; *Nijbhume ParbasiUttarbanger Adibasir Prantikata Discourse*, (Dhaka, Research and development Collective, 2001, p.18)
4. *Yogini Tantra*, pt.1, Ch. 11, vv. 16-18; *The Kalika Purana*, ch. vv. 95 -111.
5. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 560.
6. Cited in N.N. Vasu; *Social History of Kamrupa*, Vol. 1, p. 71.
7. DRV, verse.277, p.56.

মোৱ বাক্য শুনা সাবধান নকৰিবঁ কেএৰঁ অন্য কাণ

মোৰ বংশে কন্যা নানিব অন্য জাতিৱ ।

ভাল ভাল রূপ গুন চাই যথাত সুন্দৰ কন্যা পাই

আনিবাহঁ কন্যা কোঁচ মেচ কছুৱীৱ ॥ ২৭৭

8. N. N. Vasu; op. cit. Vol. II, p.58.
9. The *Katha Guru Charit*, p. 78.
10. DRV, vv. 259-264.
11. Cited in R. K. Barman, *From tribalism to state*, Abhijeet Publication, Delhi, 2007, p. 37.
12. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 562.
13. K. L. Barua, 'Early History of Kamarupa', p. 175.
14. Biswa Singha changed the centre of his power from Chikina to Hingulabas then again to Kamtapur (Koch Beher). *Rajopakhyan*, p.16; DRV. vv. 207-8.
15. Goutam Bhadra, 'Mughal Yuger Krishi Arthaniti o Krishak bidroha, Calcutta , 1983 , p.140.
16. M .Neog (ed): The *Guru-charit Katha*, Gauhati University, Guahati, 1987, introduction.
17. Ram charan Thakur: The *Guru Charit*, vv. 3461-3488.
18. Khan Chaudhari A. Ahamed: 'Koch Beharer Itihas', p. 57.
19. The *Katha Guru Charit*, op. cit., p. 65.
20. N. N. Vasu: *Social History of Kamrupa* Vol. II, pp. 54-59.
21. Raja Harendranarayan: 'Brihat Raja Vansavali', padas 1751-1794 .(Vide Assam Govt. Collection, Darang , No. 2, 1st part)

Original v:

“বিষ্ণু ক্ষত্ৰগন বৈশ্য শূদ্ৰ জন আনো নানা জাতি -----।

কৱিয়া বিভেদ দিলা পৰিচ্ছেদ ভাগে ভাগে অতিশয় ১৭৯১।

সমস্ত জাতিক ভিন্ন কৱিলেক উত্তম মধ্যম কৱি ।

কতো সকলক হীন কৱিলেক শান্ত্রিক্ষ অনুসারি। ১৭৯২।

Cited in N. N. Vasu, op. cit. p .59.

22. The *Katha Guru Charit* , pp .123, 250, and 307.
23. DRV, v. 277.
24. The *Katha Guru Charita* , p.76 .
25. The DRV, vv. 230-235, and 240-250.

26. The *Katha Guru Charit* , p.137 ; Brihat Raja Vansavali, op. cit. , cited in cited in N. N. Vasu, op. cit. p.71 .
27. Gait, op. cit. p.56 and D. N. op. cit. p.71.
28. The *Akbara Namah*, op. cit. p.716 .
29. A. Guha, 'The Medieval Economy of Assam ', in 'The Cambridge Economic History of India '(1200-1750), Vol. I , (ed) Tapan Roy Choudury and Irfan Habib , Cambridge university Press , 1982 , p.505 .
30. C. Wessels: *Early Jesuit Travelers in Central Asia* (A.D.1603-1721), reprint ed., Madras, Asian Educational Service, 1992, pp.124-27.
31. The *Katha Guru Charit*, p.65.
32. Ibid. p.70.
33. Ibid., p.127.
34. *Historical Letters of the Ahom Period*, a collection of 44 letters exchanged between the Ahom and the Koch kings, transcript No. 18, Vol. V, part VI, DHAS, Gauhati. Tantikuchi Mahal of Barpeta, Sualkuchi and Kamarkuchi were the main centres of weaving industries, (Haliram Mohanto, 'Sankar Charita', Sualkuchi, 1925, vv. 3506-07, p. 275).
35. Ralph Fitch, 'England's pioneer to India, Burma, etc.', (ed), J .H. Ryley, London, 1899, p. 112; also in 'Early travels in India' by sir W. Foster, Oxford University press,192, reprint edition, S. Chand and co., New Delhi, 1968, pp.1-47.
36. Hamilton, *Account of Assam*, p.61.
37. A. Guha, op. cit. p.504.
38. Koch Rajar Buranji, p.91 ff.
39. A. Guha, op. cit. p.504.
40. Quoted in D. Nath, op. cit. p.139.
41. H. N. Choudary, *Brihat Rajavansavali*, Vide Assam govt. collection, Darrang, No-2. CBSLRS, p.134.
42. K. C. Pathak edited the *Guru Charita*, pp.104-5 .
43. Hamilton, op. cit., p.61.
44. Ibid.
45. Some scholars used the word 'chheleng 'or 'chadar' denoting shawl, both ladies and gents. But the *chheleng* or *chadar* was originally gents shawl with a measurement of six cubits long and three cubits wide and on the other hand *Jhardar* or *Mongjuri*

was ladies shawl with a measurement of four to five cubits long and two to two and half cubits wide, and with luxurious gold or silver embroideries (Hamilton , Account of Assam, p. 61). .

46. M. Neog, *Purani Asamiya Samaj Aru Samskriti* Gauhati, 1971, p.133.
47. *Historical Letters of the Ahom Period*, a collection of 44 letters exchanged between the Ahom and the Koch kings, transcript No. 18, Vol. V, part VI, DHAS, Gauhati.
48. Ibid.
49. D. Nath, op. cit. p.140.
50. B. K. Barua, 'Asamer loka Samskriti', Gauhati,1961, p.150.The verse is as following:
*"Sari pindhe sari pindhe bhalo manuhar jee
Bhalo Kari sari pindhe chikan gawat di".*
Meaning; ... the daughters of the nobles only who wear saris, they wear it nicely around their beautiful bodies.
51. H. N. chaudhary, op. cit. p.135.
- 52 . Khan Chaudhuri A. A., *Cooch Beharer Itihas* (Bengali), reprint, 1990, Calcutta, p. 57.
53. D. Nath, op. cit. p.140.
54. Khan Choudhary A. A. op. cit. p.57.
55. D. Nath, op. cit. See plates no. XI, XII and XIII.
56. Khan Chaudhuri A. A. op. cit. p.57.
57. Daityari, vv. 27-34; Bhushan 16 and; *The Katha Guru Charita*, 15-f.
58. *Akbaranamah*, op. cit., pp.1066-68 records" a pious women was praying in the in the temple of Jalpeswar, which dedicated to Mahadev and prayed for a son who should be become a ruler . By Gods help she become pregnant and bore a son" and named as Biswa Singha.
59. M. Neog, op. cit., p.150; *The Katha Guru Charita.*, p.696.
60. D. Nath, op. cit., p. 142.
61. Khan Chaudhuri, A.A., op. cit., p.83.
62. Nripendra Nath Pal, 'Kochbehar-Raj Abong Raj-Anttapur' in Bhattacharyya, P. K. (ed), '*The Kingdom of Kamata- Kochbehar in Historical Perspective*', Ratna Prakashan and NBU, 2000, pp. 53-73.
63. M. Neog, op. cit., p103.
64. S. L. Baruah, op. cit., p. 422.

65. The Guru Charita of Ram Charana Thakur, v, 2920, cited in D. Nath, op. cit., p.142.
66. ABSM, p. 33. , Gait, op. cit. p. 56. He stated that Chilarai obtained the favour of the Padshah of Gauda by saving the life of the Padshah's mother from snakebite. The Padshah released Chilarai and even gave his daughter in marriage with above mentioned territories .The mothers of the Padshah declared the river Karatoya as the western boundary of the Koch kingdom. , The DRV, vv. 519-536, gave us same information except the marriage and dowry. Khan Chaudhuri A. Ahamed, op. cit. p. 114. Stated that the mother's of the Padshah accepted Chilarai as her son and he was not married with the daughter of the Padshah but with five noble-born-daughters of that country.
67. D. Nath, op. cit., p142.
68. The *Katha Guru Charita*, p.106.
69. The *Katha Guru Charita*, p. 106.
70. Sihabuddin Talish cited in S. L. Baruah, 'A comprehensive history of Assam', Munsimam and Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1985, p.421.
71. DRV, vv. 659-665; Khan Chaudhuri A. Ahamed's, 'Koch Beharer Itihas', p.121 mentioned the numbers of Raghudeva's wives as 120 without mentioning his source of information.
72. Sunil, Pal, 'Mech Jatir Endi Silpa', Amrita-12.30 (1972), p.306, cited in R. K. Barman, op. cit. p.126.
73. The *Katha Guru Charita*, pp. 103 -111 and 276.
74. DRV,v., 289. It records that when Naranarayan and Chilarai were at Benaras for their studies, the nurses informed them about the political development after the death of their father Biswa Singha.
75. P. C. Chaudhury, op. cit., p.326.
76. S. L. Baruah, op. cit., p. 422.
77. DRV,v.128. It records that at the coronation ceremony of Biswa Singha, Nats and Natis participated in dancing and singing.
78. DRV, v. 605; Vasu, op. cit., p. 74 and M. Neog op. cit., p.97.
79. B. K. Barua, op. cit., p. 59.
80. The *Katha Guru Charita*, p.138; M. Neog, op. cit., pp.277 &288.

81. M. Neog, op. cit., pp. 23 & 149-50. She was the first woman in the history of Neo-Vaisnavism of Assam, who acted as religious head and initiated disciples and appointed other persons (males) as superior (*Ibid.*).
82. *The Katha Guru Charita*, p.662.
83. Khan Chaudhuri, A.A., op. cit., p.83.
84. Munshi, Joynath, 'Rajoupakhyan' ed., Das, Biswanath, Mala Publications, Calcutta, p. 21; Pal, Nripendra Nath, *Kochbehar-Raj Abong Raj Antapur* in Bhattacharyya, P. K. (ed), 'The Kingdom of Kamata- Kochbehar in Historical Perspective', Ratna Prakashan and NBU, 2000. , Nripendra Nath Pal writes:

"কোচবিহারের সিংহসনে পিতা বিশ্বসিংহের অবতর্ণনে নরসিংহের বসার কথা । মে কারনে যুবরাজের সিংহসনে আরোহনের দিন ভাগুমভি দখলেন তাঁর শাশীৰ রাজা হবার সমতাবন্ধ নেই, তখন তিনি নরসিংহকে সবিনয়ে প্ররূপ করিয়ে দেন যে — বিয়ের পর প্রণাম করার সময় আপনি আমাকে 'রাজমহিষী ভব' বলে আশীর্বাদ করেছিলেন, কিন্তু আজ তিনি রাজা হলে সেই আশীর্বাদ রক্ষা হয় না, এই কথা প্ররূপ করিয়ে দেবার সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই নরসিংহ সত্তা পালনে সিংহসনের অধিকার ছাড়েন এবং নরনারায়ণকে রাজা করে নিজের প্রতিশ্রুতি রক্ষা করেন"।

85. DRV, Buranjis and other sources recorded that Naranarayan came to the throne by defeating his elder brother Nara Singha.
86. J. P. Wade, 'An account of Assam', p. 206, cited in D. Nath, op. cit., p. 143.
87. D. Nath, op. cit., p. 143.
88. DRV.v., 289, however, it did not mention the name of the nurse. However, Khan Chaudhuri A. A, op. cit., p. 99, recorded the names of the nurse and the massager without mentioning his source.
89. Khan Chaudhuri A. A, op. cit., p. 99.
90. *Ibid.*
91. *The Katha Guru Charita*, p.31; Daityari, 36; Ramananda, 117.
92. M. Neog, op. cit p.94. He refers to the works like *Harischandra-upakhyan*, 437; *Rukmini-harana-Kavya*, 635; *Kirtanaghosh*, 1924.
93. *The Katha Guru Charita*, p. 48-ff. It records a story about it. On their repeated failure to build an embankment on the Tembubani River, the Bhuyans of the region, concluded that the work could be done only if a women of chastity would bring water from the Brahmaputra on a sieve and offer it there. When

other women in the area refused to do so, only Radhika alias Yogamaya, a Kaivarta woman did it very confidently by amazing all others and thereby proved her chastity.

94. Radhakrishna Das Bairagi: *Gosani Mangal*, Published by Brajachandra Majumdar, (Calcutta 1306 B.S.), 2nd edition edited by Nripendra Nath Pal, (Calcutta, Anima Prakashani, 1399 B. S.), pp.112-114.
95. The *Katha Guru Charita*, p. 282.
96. Mahanta, A., 'Sankaradevar Dristit Nari O Sankaradevar Chintat Pragatisilata', Dibrugarh, 1982, p. 19.
97. Kalita, R. C. Assam Association: A Study in Regionalism, 1903-35, unpublished ICHR Research Project, 2003, pp. 13-15.
98. DRV, vv. 52-73, *Kamarupa Buranji*, p. 10, DAB. , p.127, Rajoupakhyan, pp.6-8.
99. DRV, v. 114.
100. *Koch Behar Jelar Purakriti*, p. 14.
101. Cited in D. Nath, 'History of Koch the Kingdom-1515-1515', p.38.
102. Gait, p.50; Assam Buranji of Gunaviram Barua, p.41;
103. DRV, vv. 312-313.
104. DRV, vv. 337-338 .
105. M. Neog, 'Sankaradeva and his times : Early history of the Vaishnava faith and movement in Assam', Gauhati University , Gauhati , 1965 , p. 378; S. N. Sharma , The Neo-vaishnavite movement and the Satra Institution of Assam , Gauhati University , Gauhati , 1966, p. 100 ; B. K. Baruah Asamar Loka Samkriti , Gauhati, 2nd edn, 1967, p. 159 .
106. N. N. Vasu; op. cit. Vol. II, p. 108.
107. Ibid, p. 110.
108. Ibid, p. 112.
109. For example; Naranarayan during his Assam expedition in 1562 established a temple of Goddess Durga at Chandikabehar and introduced a cultural code for the people of the tribal origin. The Mech, the Kachari and the Koches of tribal fold to the north of the *Gohai Kamal Aali* will follow their tribal customs to worship.
110. DRV, Introduction by N. C. sharma, p.15.
111. P. C. Chaudhury: 'The History of civilization of the people of Assam to the 12th century AD', Spectrum publications, Gauhati, 1987, reprint, p. 334. Although the

book is about Assam but the system of jhum cultivation among the tribal was same throughout the whole of northeast. .

112. Amalendu Guha: *Medieval and Early Colonial Assam: Society, Polity and Economy*, Calcutta, K.P. Bagchi & Co., p. 12.
113. Cited in D. Nath, op. cit. p. 147.
114. Ghulam Hussain Salim, 'Riyaz-us-Salati'n, Eng.Tr. Abdus Salam, 1975, (reprint) p. 13.
115. DRV, vv. 257, informs us that Biswa Singha appointed his son Gahain Kamal in charge of *Ali* (roads) and *pukurs* (ponds) construction, who constructed *Gahain Kamal Ali* and many ponds during the reign of Naranarayan.
116. The Kacharis knew the technique of making dams on streams for irrigation and they were under the control during the reign of Naranarayan. (A. Guha, 'Ahom Migration : its impacts on rice economy of Medieval Assam' *Artha vijnana* , Vol. 9. 1967, Issue No. 2 , p. 144.
117. H. N. Chaudhury, op. cit. pp. 165-68.
118. DRV, v. 261.
119. *Rajvansavali*, f. 9.
120. DRV, vv. 182-3.
121. DRV, v. 264.
122. DRV . v. 53 and some others Burunjis also.
123. The *Yogini Tantra*, II, patal V, vv. 277-279, 315-319.
124. H. Blochmann: *Koch Bihar, Koch hajo and Assam in the 16th and 17th centuries*, JASB, 1872 p. 66; Ghulam Hussain Salim op. cit. p. 13.
125. Cited in D. Nath, History of Koch the Kingdom-1515-1515, p. 139; Stephen Cacella, a Jesuit traveler from Portugal, also mentioned beautiful garden in front of king's palace. C. Wessels: *Early Jesuit Travelers in Central Asia* (A.D.1603-1721), reprint ed., Madras, Asian Educational Service, 1992, pp. 124-27.
126. Khan Chaudhuri A. A. op. cit. p. 57 .He mentioned varieties of bamboo made utensils.
127. J. P. Wade; 'An Account of Assam' edited by Benudhar Sharma, Lakhimpur, 1927, p.186. The use of bamboo made bow and arrow among the tribal communities are very common even in the 21st century.
128. William Foster; '*Early Travels in India*', ed. Reprint, Delhi, p.25.

129. D. Nath, op. cit. p.150.
130. V. Ball, (ed.), *Tavernier's travels in India*, Vol. II, London, 1925, pp. 281f. cited in D. Nath, op. cit. p. 150 .
131. DRV, v. 263.
132. Hari Narayan Dutta Barua: *Chitra Bhagavat*, Nalbari, Assam, '1949, p. 1.
133. Jadav Chandra Chakrabarty cited in R.K. Barman, *From tribalism to state*, Delhi, 2007, p.126.
134. Haliram Mohanto: *Sankar Charita*, Sualkuchi, 1925, vv. 3506-07, p. 275.
135. Ibid. vv. 3509-10. pp. 275-76. ; *The Katha Guru Charit* p. 267, cited in D. Nath , op. cit. p.151.
136. Daityari Thakur: *Mahapurusha Sri Sankaradeva, Aru Sri Madhavadeva charita* by, (ed), H.N. Datta Baruah, Nalbari, 509 Sankarabda (1978). v. 271; *The Katha Guru Charit* p. 267, cited in D. Nath , op. cit. p. 151.
137. D. Nath, op. cit. p.152.
138. M. Martin, *Eastern India*, reprint ed, Delhi, 1976, vol. 5., *Rangpur and Assam*, p. 553; Haliram Dekial Phukan, *Assam Buranji*, edited by J. M. Bhattacharyya, Gauhati, 1369BS. p. 88.
139. H.N. chaudhary, op. cit. p. 154; Khan Chaudhuri A. A. op. cit. p. 63.
140. *The Katha Guru Charit*, p. 60.
141. Pandit Sreejut Hemchandra Goswami (ed): *Purani Assam Buranji* , reprint , 1977, Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti , Gauhati, p. 53 ; D. Nath , op. cit. p. 153.
142. DRV,v. 680, mentions that Raghudeva appointed the Stone engravers (Silakutis) a temple to constructs
143. DRV, v. 260.
144. D. Nath, op. cit. p. 151.
145. Ibid.
- 146 . With other articles, *Jakoi* (a kind of instrument made of bamboo for catching fish) were also sent to the Ahom court by king Naranarayan at the time of Peace Proposals. 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, Gauhati.
147. DRV, vv. 259 & 260.
148. H.N. Choudhary, op. cit. p. 191.

149. Ibid, p.156.
150. DRV, v. 261.
151. H.N. Chaudhary, op. cit. p. 155.
152. DRV: v. 260.
153. R.K. Barman, op. cit., p. 128.
154. Cited in D. Nath, op. cit. p. 152.
155. U.N. Gohain, 'Assam under the Ahoms', Jorhat, 1942, p. 202, cited in D. Nath, op. cit. p. 152.
- 156 . *Rajoupakhyan*, p-112.
157. Haliram Dekial Phukan: op. cit., pp. 88-91.
158. DRV: vv. 259-264.
159. Daityari Thakur: 'Mahapurush Sri Sankaradeva and Madhavadevar Jivan Charita', edited by H. N. Dutta Barua, Nalbari, 1978, vv. 1250-1251.
160. DRV. v. 263.
161. Nicholas Rhodes, *Koch Behar coins used in Bhutan*, in P. K. Bhattacharyya edited *The Kingdom of Kamata Koch Behar in Historical Perspective*, North Bengal University, 2000, pp. 148-55.
162. Indirect information supports this view.
163. Minhaj -uddin Siraj, *Tabaqat-I-Nasiri*, trans in English by Major H. G. Raverty, vol-1, reprint 1970, p. 567f.
164. Ibid.
165. Phanindranath Chakraborty, A survey of Indo-Tibetan Trade and Commerce, in *The Historical Review*, Vol. II, No. II, 1987, pp. 89-98.
166. J. H. Ryley, *Ralph Fitch, England's Pioneer in India, Burma,etc*, Londan, 1899, p. 112.
167. Phanindranath Chakraborty: op. cit. p. 97.
168. K. K. Bose: *Accont of Bootan*, in H. K. Kuloy (ed.): *Political Missions to Bootan* , reprint ed., New Delhi, 1972, pp. 339-58; George Bogley, op. cit., p. 51.
169. Perberton, Captain Richard Boileau, *Report on the Eastern frontier of british India*, reprint , DHAS, Gauhati, 1966, p. 118f ; Ananda Chandra ghosh : *Cooch Beharer Itihas*, edited by Ananda Gopal Ghosh and Narayan Saha, Darjeeling, *Uttarbanga Itihas Prakashan Parishad*, 1990, p. 8.
170. Perberton: op. cit. pp. 142-44; D. Nath, op. cit. p. 154; R.K. Barman: op. cit. p. 135.

171. Phanindranath Chakraborty: op. cit. p. 92; D. Nath, op. cit. p. 54.
172. K. K. Bose: op. cit., p. 350.
173. Phanindranath Chakraborty: op. cit. p. 90; D. Nath, op. cit. p. 154.
174. *Guru Charita*, v. 3488; N. N. Vasu, op. cit. p. 105.
175. J. H. Ryley, op. cit. p. 111.
176. H.N. Chaudhury, op. cit. p. 192.
177. Haliram Dekial Phukan: op. cit., p. 105.
178. C. Wessels, op. cit., pp. 127-28.
179. Minhaj - udin Siraj, op. cit. p. 567f refers to the Bhutanese *Tangan* in Lakhnawati, which brought from Bhutan through the Koch kingdom.
180. Krishnadas Kabiraj: *Sri Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita*, 9th ed., Calcutta , Basumatī Sahitya Mandir, 1386B.S., p. 8 refers that *Bhot Kamīl* was very popular in Bengal.
181. D. Nath, op. cit., p. 155.
182. D. Nath, op. cit., pp. 62 &154.
183. SMJC, op. cit. pp. 25-33 ; D. Nath, op. cit., pp. 62 &154.
184. Jadav Chandra Chakraborty: *Koch Biharer Itihas* reprinted in Nripendranath Pal (ed.): *Bishaya Cooch Behar*, Calcutta, 1994, pp. 31-32.
185. M. Neog: *Sankaradeva and his times*, reprint, Delhi, 1985, p. 79.
186. C. Wessels, op. cit., p. 28.
187. H.N. Chaudhury, op. cit. p. 123. He also mentioned some *Bandars* situated on big roads.
188. The *Katha Guru Charita*, op. cit. p. 307. It informs us that big traders had capability to invest as much as Rs. 4 lakhs.
189. D. Nath, op. cit., p. 155; R.K. Barman, op. cit., p. 137.
190. M. Neog, op. cit., p. 78.
191. Ibid.
192. M. Neog, op. cit., p. 79.
193. The *Katha Guru Charita*, op. cit., p. 85; *Guru Charita*, vv. 2751-2836, pp. 546-63; Pranab Kumar Bhattacharyya: *Aitihasik Prekshapate Kamata-Koch Rajvamsa O Tar Kicchhu Samashya*, in his self-edited: *Kamata-Cooch Behar in historical Perspective*, Calcutta, 2000, p. 45.
194. The *Katha Guru Charita*, op. cit., p. 107.
195. D. Nath, op. cit., p-155; R.K. Barman, op. cit., p. 137.

196. M. Neog, op. cit., 110.
197. Pranab Kmar Bhattacharyya, op. cit., p. 45.
198. The *Katha Guru Charita*, op. cit., p.87.
199. D. Nath, op. cit., p.156.
200. The *Katha Guru Charita*, op. cit., pp.80, 85, 86, 545 and 560. Also, see M. Neog, op. cit., p. 78 and D. Nath, op. cit., p.157.
201. Khan Chaudhuri A. A. op. cit. pp. 43-44.
202. William Robinson: *A descriptive Account of Assam*, reprint, New Delhi, 1975, pp. 245ff.
203. D. Nath, op. cit., p.157.
204. Ryley, op. cit., pp. 98-100; Phanindranath Chakraborty, writes, from Agra Fitch, "came to Bengal via Allahabad, Benaras and Patna with a fleet of 180 boats , laden with merchandize. He came to Maldah and thence at Cooch Behar" op. cit., p.90.
205. Wessels, op. cit., p.128f.
206. J. P. Singh, *Monetary development of early Assam*, Jorhat (Assam), 1989, p.20.
207. N. G. Rhodes and S. K. Bose: *The coins of Assam*, vol. I, Dhubri, 2003, p. 27.
208. Ryley, op. cit., pp. 118. Fitch states that besides accepting it as money, people also used to eat it.
209. N. G. Rhodes and S. K. Bose, op. cit., pp. 57-64. Cowri or couch shell was in use as a common medium of exchange in Bengal and Assam from the early medieval period. In the Koch kingdom, during the reign of King Naranarayan , cowries were largely utilized as money for local transactions. Even after the introduction of Narayani Tanka, cowries remained as medium of exchange for local transactions.
210. J. M. Bhattacharyya , op. cit., pp.77-79; Hiteswar Barbaruah, *Ahomar Din*, APB, Gouhati, 1981, p.140;Gait op. cit., p.99; quoted in idid.,p.143.
211. The *Katha Guru Charita*, pp. 79, 128 &188. Gupta-type gold coins of the Bharman dynasty had been discovered from Paglatek, a place situated on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, and 15 km west of Goalpara. The copper coins of the Mleccha dynasty of 9th century have been discovered from Dhulapadung, near Tezpur and other places. N. G. Rhodes and S. K. Bose, op. cit., pp.12-4 Haliram Dekial Phukan , *Assam buranji* , edited by J. M. Bhattacharyya , Gauhati, 1369BS. p. 88.
212. The Silimpur inscription of Jayapala (11th century), refers to Gold coins but such coins yet to be discovered (see. Mahadev Chakraborty: *Assamer Itihas* ,Vol. I ,

Calcutta, 2007, p. 63.) Moreover, silver coins specially the coins of kacharies, Sultani coins of sikander shah(1356-89) and Hussain Shah (1493-1519) were also circulated in the area. Mahadev Chakraborty, op. cit., p.68.

213. Mahadev Chakraborty, op. cit., p.63.
214. The Raja Vansavali of Durgadas Majumder, mentioned that Biswa Singha issued coins in his 13th regnal year and he presented a latter with five hundred horses and five hundred coins to Ahom king Suhungmung in saka 1419(1497);. Assam Buranji of Gunabhiram Barua, recorded that Biswa Singha was the first king of the dynasty to issue coins and he also credited to have repaired the Kamakhya temple and having placed a gold coin in between each set of two bricks. Khan Chaudhuri A. A. op. cit. p.281; P. K. Bhattacharyya, JNSI, XXXIII, I, pp.42ff; and *Indian Studies Past & Present*, X, No. 3 (1969), p.275, f.n.3., and others.
215. N. G. Rhodes and S. K. Bose: *Coinage of Cooch behar*, Dhubri, (Library of Numismatic Studies), 1999, pp.74-85.
216. Pratip Kumar Mitra and Sutapa Sinha (ed.): *Coins of Mediaeval India*, Calcutta, Books & Books, 1997, pp. 278-79.
217. Ibid & N. G. Rhodes and S. K. Bose, op. cit., pp. 74-85.
218. This is why some scholars assumed the date 1555 as the date accession of Naranarayan. However, this view does not match with other sources.
219. The DRV, vv. 819 & 839; Kamarupa Buranji, p.12.
220. N. G. Rhodes and S. K. Bose: *Coinage of Cooch Behar*, Dhubri, (Library of Numismatic Studies), 1999, pp. 9-10.
221. Ibid. pp. 27-28.
222. JASB, Vol-LXIV, PT-1, 1695; National Library , Kolkata ; J.A.S.B., Vol , VI, No. 4 , p-159 , cited in 'Koch Beharer Itihas' of Khan Chaudhuri A. Ahamed,op. cit., pp.121-123 and A .W.Botham, 'Catalogue of the Provincial coin Cabine's, Assam, Allahabad, 1930, p. 544. cited in D. Nath op. cit. p.79fn.
223. The DRV. vv. 379-487; Gait, op. cit., 52-54; R.K. Barman, op. cit., pp.84-85.
224. Ibid. vs. 688.
225. A: Guha, 'The Medieval Economy of Assam ' , in 'The Cambridge Economic History of India ' (1200-1750) Vol. I , (ed) Tapan Roy Choudury and Irfan Habib , Cambridge university Press , 1982 , p. 488 .

226. D.Neog: *New Light on History of Asamiya Literature*, Beauty Publications, Dispur, (Assam), 1962, p.131.
227. N. N. Majumdar: *A Study of Tribe-Caste continuum and the process of Sanskritization among the Boro Speaking tribes of the Garo Hills* in K. S. Singh (ed).: *The Tribal situation in India*, New Delhi, (Motilal Banarsidas) , 1996, pp.263-70.
228. D. Neog, op. cit., p. 122.
229. We have several references of using both the languages in the royal activities. For example, the language of the letters, which exchanged between King Naranarayan and the Ahom king were written in local language and the language of the Kamakhya Temple Inscription and Haragriva Madhava Temple Inscription were inscribed in Sanskrit language.
230. S. N. Sen op. cit., described the language of the letters, which exchanged between King Naranarayan and the Ahom king as early Bengali language and Suniti Kumar chaterjee, Sukumar Sen supported this view.
231. D. Neog, op. cit., p. 122; B. K. Barua : *History of Assamese Literature* ,Sahitya Academi, Delhi, 1st ed., 1961 and Nagen Saikia: *Medieval Assamese Literature*, in K. Ayyappapanicker (ed.) *Medieval Indian Literature : an anthology* , Vol., 3, Sahitya Academi, Delhi, pp.4-19.
232. One thing is to be noted here to find out the roots of these controversies and for that, we are to go back to the period of songs and aphorisms, commonly known as Charyas or Charyapadas composed by Bhuddist Siddhacharyas (8th-12th centuries) and discovered by M. M. Hara Prasad Sastri of Bengal in 1916. Not only Bengali and Assamese scholars but also the scholars of Maithili and Oriya claim these songs to be the early specimens of their languages. These claims proved that these songs posses some common characteristics of these four languages. Sastri's observation that the language Charyas or Charyapadas can be called the Sandhya Bhasha is very meaningful. The language upholds the formative characteristics of all these eastern Indian languages and its language is equivocal in character, which matched with all the languages. Under this situation, it better to assume that the language of Charyas or Charyapadas is the early specimens of both the languages i.e. Bengali and Assamese, for the scripts of the both languages is almost same with minor differences. (See Nagen Saikia, op. cit., pp.4-19.)

233. Hiuen Tsiang (Yuan Chwang)'s, 'Si-u-ki', edited by David, Rhyas and Bhushel S. W., 2 vols. London, 1905, reprint, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1961, pp.186-192 and in T. Watters, 'On Yuan Chwan's travels in India (A.D.29-645)', , II, p.186.
234. Cited in Sukhbilas Burma: *Socio-cultural facets of the History of Kamata Koch Behar*, in Pranab Kmar Bhattacharyya (ed.): *Kamata-Cooch Behar in historical Perspective*, Calcutta, 200, p. 92.
235. Ibid.
- 236 Ibid.
237. Historical Letters of the Ahom Period, a collection of 44 letters exchanged between the Koch and the Ahom kings, Transcripts no. 18, Vol. V, Part VI, DRAS, Gauhati; Khan Chaudhuri A. Ahamed, op. cit., pp.104-5.
238. The DRV. vv., 265-268 & 291-270.
239. Ms. Maharaja Vansavali, f.9.
240. P. C. Choudhury, 'A Catalogue of the Sanskrit manuscripts of the DHAS', DHAS, Gauhati, 1961, p.58; Khan Chaudhuri A. Ahamed, op. cit., p.131.
241. Khan Chaudhuri A. Ahamed, op. cit., p.130.
242. DRV, vv., 604-610.
243. The *Katha Guru Charita*, pp.237f, 245f; Daityari Thakur, vv., 815-38.
244. D. Neog op. cit., p.135.
245. D. Nath, op. cit., p.178.
246. In his translation of the book X of the Bhagavata Puran, Ananta Kandali writes that he got this title for his mastery over debate. Bhagavata, Book X, v. 17462.
247. Pitambar Siddhantavagis: *Markandeya Puran*, Ms. (N.B.S.L.Ms.no.08 and 13), f.1a, 1b. Cited in R. K. Barman, op. cit., p.184.
248. Pitambar Siddhantavagis: the *Bhagavata Puran (Dasham Skandha (Book X))*, Ms. (N.B.S.L.Ms.no.58),
249. N. N. Vasu, op. cit., pp.58-9; N. K. Basu; *Assam in the Ahom Age*, Calcutta, 1970, p.275.
250. Ajay Kumar Chakraborty: *Literature in the Kamata-Koch Behar Raj Darbar*, Dhubri, 1964, p.85.
251. Rama Saraswati: Pusharan and Nanaparva, vv. 3936-3937; B. K. Barua , op. cit., p.54.
252. B. K. Barua, op. cit., pp. 54-5; R. K. Barman, op. cit., p.185.

253. H. C. Goswami, op. cit. pp.14, 38 and 76ff;. B. K. Barua, op. cit., p.56.
254. Ananta Kandali; the Mahabharata (Rajasuya), Ms. (NBSL.Ms.no.101);
Kavishekhar, 'Kirata Parva', Ms. (NBSL.Ms.no. 90) and B. K. Barua, op. cit., p.59.
255. B. K. Barua, op. cit.,p. 59.
256. Ibid.
257. Ajay Kumar Chakraborty, op. cit., 85.
258. B. K. Barua, op. cit., p. 59; M. Neog: *Sankaradeva and his times*, reprint, Delhi, 1985, pp. 112-114. Neog identified the year of migration 1546.
259. M. Neog, op. cit., p.160-61.

A) In Bara Bhuyan territories (up to 1516):

i) Non-Bhagavata group:-

1. *Hahischandra-Upakhyan (Markandeya-Purana)*.

2. *Bhakti-Pradipa (Garura-Purana)*

3. *Kirtana-Ghosh*: 'Uresa-Varnan' section, (*Brahma-Purana*)

ii) 4. *Rukmini-Upakhyan Kavya* (Mixed breed of *Harivansa* and *Bhagavata- Purana*)

iii) Lyrics:-

5. *Bargitas*

iv) First group of *Bhagavata* tales, taken from outside Book X:-

6. *Ajamil-Upakhyana* (Book VI)

7. *Amrita-Mathana* (Book VIII)

8. *Kirtana-Ghosh*: *Ajamil-Upakhyana* (Book VI), *Prahlada Charita* (Books III, VII), *Haramohana*, *Balichalana*, *Gajendra-Upakhyana* (BookVIII) and *Dhyanavarnana* sections.

iv) 9. *Gunamala*, ii-vi.

B) In the Ahom kingdom (1516-1546):

i) Presentation arguments in favour of the *Bhakti* cult:-

1. *Kirtana-Ghosh*: *Pasanda-Mardana* and *Namaparadha* sections (*Bhagavata*, *Padma* and *Brihana-Naradiya Puranas*, *Visnu-Dharmottara* and *Suta-Sanhita*).

2. *Patni-Prasada-Nata* (*Bhagavata-Purana*, X)

ii) About early life of Krishna from *Bhagavata-Purana*, X:

3. *Kirtana-Ghosh*: *Sisu-lila*, *Rasa-Krira*, *Kansavadha*, *Gopi-Uddhava –Sanvada*, *Kujirvanchha-Purana*, and *Akrurar vanchha Purana* Section.

The writings *Bargitas* also continued in this period.

C) *In the Koch kingdom (1546-1569):*

i) Second group of *Bhagavata* tales, taken from outside Book X:-

1. *Bali-Chalana* (Book VIII)

2. *Anadi-Patana* (Book III, *Vamana-Purana*)

ii) *Bhagavata* tales, taken from Books X (*Uttarardha*), XI, and XII:

3. *Kirtana-Ghosh*: *Jarasandha-yuddha*, *Kalayavana vadha*, *Muchukunda-Stuti*, *Syamanta -Harana*, *Narada Krishna Darshana*, *Vipra-Putra-Anayana*, *Daivakir-Putra- Anayana*, *Veda- Stuti*, *Lilamala*, *Rukminir Prema-Kalah*, *Bhrigi- Pariksha*, *Srikrishnar Vaikuntha-Prayana*, *Chaturvinsati-Avatar-Varnana* and *Tatparya* section.

260. Lakshminath Bezboroa: Sankaradeva, 3rd ed., Jorhat, p. 142

261. M. Neog, op. cit., pp.161-2. He refers as many as 29 *Kirtana Ghoshs*: 1. 'Uresa- Vaman' (*Brahma-Purana*), 2. *Ajamil-Upakhyana* (Book VI), 3. *Prahlada Charita* (Books III, VII), 4. *Haramohana*, 5. *Balichalana*, 6. *Gajendra-Upakhyana* (Book VIII), 7. *Dhyanavarnana*, 8. *Pasanda-Mardana*, 9. *Namaparadha* sections (*Bhagavata*, *Padma* and *Brihana-Naradiya Puranas*, *Visnu-Dharmottara* and *Suta- Sanhita*), 10. *Sisu-lila*, 11. *Rasa-Krira*, 12. *Kansavadha*, 13. *Gopi-Uddhava-Sanvada*, 14. *Kujirvanchha-Purana*, 15. *Akrurar vanchha Purana*, 16. *Jarasandha-yuddha*, 17. *Kalayavana vadha*, 18. *Muchukunda-Stuti*, 19. *Syamanta-Harana*, 20. *Narada Krishna Darshana*, 21. *Vipra-Putra-Anayana*, 22. *Daivakir-Putra-Anayana*, 23. *Veda- Stuti*, 24. *Lilamala*, 25. *Rukminir Prema-Kalah*, 26. *Bhrigu- Pariksha*, 27. *Srikrishnar Vaikuntha-Prayana*, 28. *Chaturvinsati-Avatar-Varnana* 29. *Tatparya* sections. (serial no. 16 to 29 from *Bhagavata* tales, taken from Books X (*Uttarardha*), XI, and XII).

262. The story of 'Uresa-Varnan' taken from the *Brahma-Purana*.

263. B. K. Barua, op. cit., p. 23; M. Neog, op. cit., pp.161-2.

264. B. K. Barua, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

265. The *Katha Guru Charita*, pp. 104f; B. K. Barua, op. cit., p. 24.

266. M. Neog, op. cit., pp.182-209.

267. The *Katha Guru Charita*, pp.185-87; M. Neog, op. cit., pp.197.

268. Ibid. pp.184.

269 . M. Neog, op. cit., pp.197-207.

270. B. K. Barua, op. cit.,p. 50; D. Nath, op. cit., pp.180-1.

271. DRV. v., 609.
272. B. K. Barua, op. cit., pp.131-32.
273. Ajay Kumar Chakraborty, op. cit., p.100.
274. D. Sarma, op. cit., p.85.
275. The *Katha Guru Charita*, pp.3278; M. neog, op. cit., 95..
276. Ibid.
277. Ibid.
278. M. Neog, op. cit., 96; D. Nath, op. cit., pp.176.
279. Daityari Thakur: *Mahapurusa Sankaradeva and Madhavadevar Jivana-charita*, (published by Haribilas Gupta), Calcutta printing press, 1900, vs.951.
280. DRV. Vv. 265-68.
281. The *Katha guru Charita*, pp.220; M. Neog, (Ed), *Sri Guru charita by Ramananda Dvija*, Nal bari, 1957, v.1364.
282. M. Neog, Ibid.
283. The *Kalika Purana*, Ch. 71.
284. DRV. vv. 125-28.
285. DRV. vv. 326-27.
286. D. Nath, op. cit., p.183.
287. M. Neog, op. cit., p.279; D. Nath, op. cit., p.183. The *Katha Guru Charita* of Daityari notes that Mathuradasa Budha ata was one of the Palis of the chorus of Tatikuchi in Madhavadeva's days; that one Laksmana was its Oja, and that Madhava, son of Laruwa Rama, was the Daina pali.
288. R. K. Barman, op. cit., p.186.
289. M. Neog, op. cit., p.280.
290. M. Neog, op. cit., p.277; D. Nath, op. cit., p.183.
291. M. Neog, op. cit., p.281.
292. M. Neog, op. cit., p.287.
293. M. Neog, op. cit., pp.288-292.
294. M. Neog, op. cit., p.277.
295. M. Neog, op. cit., pp.294-300.
296. Ibid.
297. D. Nath, op. cit., p.184.
298. D. Nath, op. cit., p.185.

299. Ibid.
300. The *Hayagriva Madhava* temple Inscription. See D. Nath, op. cit., appendix, E, p.211. However, the DRV refers to another artisan named Barkath Sumaru, DRV, v. 679.
301. E.T. Dalton; 'notes on assam temple ruins', JASB, 1855, Vol. XXIV, no. 1, p.19. Cited in D. Nath, op. cit., p.19
302. Ibid., p. 20.
303. According to the Ms. *Rajoupakhyana*, King Naranarayan rebuilt the Baneswara Siva temple which had a remote antiquity, and named the as 'Gard Sandara'. Prannarayan (1632-1665) had again rebuilt it in the present structure. *Koch Behar Jelar Pura Kriti*, p.53.
304. R. K. Barman, op. cit., p.176.
305. *Pachyasasanavai*, op. cit., p.6 ; D. Nath, op. cit., appendix, F, p.212.
306. DRV, vv. 208-9.307.
307. Although there is Kamteswaridevi temple near Koch Behar town, but the temple belongs to later period. (Personal visit).
308. DRV. v. 544. In this connection it should be mentioned here that D. Nath's supposition, that ghee baked bricks were used in every building might not be correct, for the DRV refers to a particular case i.e. the construction of the Kamakhya temple. Therefore, it is not correct to hold the view in general.
309. D. Nath, op. cit., p.188.
310. M. Neog, op. cit., p.309 ; D. Nath, op. cit., p.188.
311. R. K. Barman, op. cit., p.175.
312. D. Nath, op. cit., p.189.
313. The *Katha Guru Charita*, 353-ff; M. Neog, op. cit., p.307.
314. Ibid., pp.187-8.
315. S. K. Chatterjee, op. cit., 59.
316. JARS, vol. II, p.42.
317. The strongest connection with north Bihar and mid India is proved by the facts that Biswa Singha had many wives from that places , Naranarayan and Chilarai had their education at Benaras in grammer, the Puranas, Sruti, Smritis, Mimamsa and Atharvanic military practices under Brahmananda Sannyasi , a great Sanskrit scholar. Kanthabhusan of the Maguri village near Hajo went to Benaras for

advanced education in the Vedanta under a scholar named Brahmananda/ Rama-Bhatta.

318. M. Neog, op. cit., p.303.

319. There is great controversy regarding the date of this manuscript. Moti Chandra places the work in 17th or early 18th century A.D. because of the style of the paintings. Karl Khandalawala supports the view of Motichandra. M. Neog expressing similar views says that the original copy bears the date Samvat Saka 1461 (A.D. 1539), which seems to be too early; the work may suitably be dated to 17th century A.D. and he further says that the original manuscript was written earlier. The present date of the manuscript falls in the lifetime of Sri Sankaradeva. Therefore, if we are to accept the date, then we must assume the work as one done when the great saint was alive. Moreover, Maha-Purnan, a manuscript dated 1540, from Palam near Delhi and Mrigavati, in which the north Indian style of miniature paintings of early 16th century can be seen, are stylistically close to the manuscript of the Bhagavata paintings.

320. M. Neog, op. cit., 306.

321. Cited in M. Neog, op. cit., p.307.

322. M. Neog, op. cit., 304.

323. *The Katha Guru Charita*, 210.

324. A specimen, believed to be a part of this work, is at the Association pour l'Etude et la Documentation des Textiles d'Asie collection at Paris (inv. no. 3222). The vastra, commissioned by Chilarai, was woven by 12 master weavers in Barpeta under the supervision of Sankaradeva probably between 1565 and 1568. It was housed in the Madhupur satra but it disappeared at some point. It is believed this cloth made its way to Tibet and from there to its present place. (See Barman, Sivnath: *An Unsung Colossus: An Introduction to the Life and Works of Sankaradeva*, Guahati, Forum for Sankaradeva Studies, (1999) and Crill, Rosemary : "Vrindavani Vastra: Figured Silks from Assam", *Hali* 14(2),76–83 (1992).).

325. D. Nath, op. cit., p.190.

326. M. Neog, op. cit., pp. 306-7.

327. Ibid., p.307.

328. The paintings of Assam may be divided into two broad schools viz., Tai-Ahom school and Assam school. Again, the Assam school of painting may again be sub-divided into two styles viz., Sattriya and Royal. The royal school developed in the late period.

: xxx :

Religious upheaval:

The reign of king Naranarayan, not only witnessed the practices of heterogeneous religious sects which prevailed in the region from the earliest times, but also acceptance of the Hinduism and its diffusion and rise of Neo-Vaisnavism and its wide acceptance by royal families and that of the masses of the region. During his reign, on the one hand the non-Hindu tribal people worshiped their Gods and Goddesses and performed their religious rites according to their own ways without any interference from the state and on the other hand, Hinduism spreading its wings among the royal families under the influence of the Hindu Brahmin priests. With their state formation, Koch kings Biswa Singha and Naranarayan adopted the policy of Hinduisaion of the royal family to gain the status of Kshatriyas of Brahmanical fold and took active part in its wide diffusion among the masses of the state. However, they were liberal and broad-minded in the matter of religion, for which they patronized both Brahmaical and tribal pattern of worships and rites. The advent of Neo-vaisnavite preacher Sankaradeva into the Koch kingdom in about 1546, during the reign of King Naranarayan marked a golden chapter in not only the religious history but also socio-cultural and literary activities of the region. For the better understanding of the religions, religious cults / sects and religious establishments during the reign of king Naranarayan, we can ~~precede~~^{Proceed} under two main heads: **A)** existing form of religious practices of tribal and non-tribal people and **B)** role of Sankaradeva and his Neo-Vaisnavite religious movements. Contemporary literary and archeological sources and writings of the modern scholars provide us information about them.

A) Existing form of religious practices of tribal and non-tribal people:

The existing form of religions or religious practices included the religions like *Saivism*, *Saktism*, *Vaisnavism*, worship of Vasudeva and others, which were in vogue in the region from earliest times and would be discussed one by one.

Saivism and Saiva cults:

The worship of Lord Siva or *Saiva* cults seems to have been in vogue in the region i.e. lower Brahmaputra valley including northeastern Bengal and lower Assam (ancient Kamarupa and mediaeval Kamata-Koch Behar) from the earliest times. In the *Mahabharata* Bhagadatta of Kamarupa has been called as "a friend of Siva"¹. The *Kalika purana* narrates the story as to how Naraka induced by *Visnu* to worship Goddess *Kamakhya* and was interdicted from the worship of any other deity of the region, which was formally reserved by *Sambhu* (one name of Lord Siva) for his own domain². In the copper plate inscriptions of the royal dynasties of Pusyavarman, *Salastambha* and *Brahmapala* (4th-12th centuries AD.), Lord Siva emerges as the *istadeva* (the only god) to be worshiped by these kings, and other deities like *Bisnu* and the Devi (*Kamakhya*) are only cursorily noticed³. Chinese Pilgrim Hiuen-Tsiang (during the reign of Bhaskaravarman) found the "the deva temples were some hundreds in number, and that the various systems had some myriads of professional adherents"⁴, and some of these temples were probably dedicated to Lord Siva, and Saivism was the dominating religion of the time⁵. Moreover, the existence of some temples and some ruins of temples of pre-Koch periods in the region clearly indicate the existence of Siva worship from the earliest times⁶. Therefore, it is evident from the sources that worship of Siva or *Saivaite* cults were in vogue in the region from the earliest times and tribal people like Kiratas worshiped saivaite cults in some gross form with wine and flesh more or less accustomed with it.

Saivism was a living and flourishing religion when Sankaradeva was born. Ramananda in his *Guru Charita*, while describing the religious atmosphere of the land before the rising of Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva, writes:" people did not worship Krisna or perform the deeds sacred to Hari. They, on the other hand, would fain worship Bhairava and consider it the greatest of religions. They made offerings of blood of tortoises and goats to that deity, and drank of it as a sacred drink"⁷. Sankaradeva's father Kusumbara Bhuyan, who was a worshiper of Siva, had no issue till an advanced

age and said to had worshiped Siva to have child and as result the God pleased and a son was born to him. The child was named as Sankara on the God's name⁸. Madhavadeva, one of the disciples of Sankaradeva went to his native home at Banduka on the bank of Dharla when he was asked by his elder brother on the *Siva-Chaturdasi* day to worship Siva^{8a}.

The Koch dynasty as originated from tribal background of the region so was the worshiper or devotee of the Siva or Saivaite cults traditionally and with the state formation, the early Koch kings not only continued this process but also took steps for its development, modification and diffusion under the influences of Aryan culture.

The *Yogini Tantra*⁹, the DRV¹⁰, the *Buranjis*¹¹ vividly illustrated mythological story that *Bisu* was not the son of *Hariya Mech (Mandal)* but the son of God Siva. All the sources almost in same way state that God Siva, in guise of *Hariya Mech (Mandal)* had sexual intercourse with *Hira*, and in due course, she gave birth to *Bisa*, and other wife of *Hariya Mech (Mandal)*, *Jira* gave birth to *Sisu*¹². The Akbarnama also mention Biswa Singha as a blessed child of *Mahadeva*¹³. Bisu after becoming king took the name *Biswa Singha* of Hindu fold and he being born of Lord Siva as mentioned above, the Koch kings of the dynasty claimed themselves as 'Siva-Vansis' belonging to *Khshatriya* of Aryan fold. During his coronation ceremony and other occasions, Biswa Singha repeatedly remembered lord Siva as his father. It is said that Biswa Singha worshiped lord Siva by making numerous offerings at the *Baneswar Siva*, which is situated at Baneswar, in present Koch Behar¹⁴, and the subjects too display implicit faith in their kings as the *Siva incarnate*¹⁵.

King Naranarayan was a great devotee of Lord Siva, who accepted lord Siva as guardian deity and protector of his kingdom and his people¹⁶. The coins of Naranarayan though are known as *Narayani Mudra (Tanka)*, exhibit deep respect of him towards Lord Siva, as most of the coins depict the king as "bee on the lotus like feet of Siva" (*Siva-charana-kamala-madhu-karasya*) and the coins also known as *Siva-tanka*¹⁷.

King Naranarayan worshiped Lord Siva, both according to Hindu *Sastras* (scriptures) as well as with traditional tribal rites and customs. In the DRV¹⁸, it is stated that on the eve of his expedition against the Ahoms in 1562, king Naranarayan

worshiped lord *Siva* according to the Hindu rites and customs but Lord *Siva* appeared in a dream and rebuked him severely for giving up his own traditional tribal rites. In this situation, King Naranarayan arranged for the performance of the worship according to tribal rites and customs by his *Kachari* soldiers on the bank of the river *Sankosh* and such worship done was by offerings of ducks, pigeons wine, cooked rice, and sacrifices of buffaloes, swine, cocks, and he-goats. All the rites and customs of the worship were done under the auspices of a *Deodhai* priest (tribal priest), and there was *Kachari* dancing party with beating drums (*madala*). King Naranarayan recognized and legalized these tribal customs of worship by issuing an edict regarding the administration of religions in his kingdom. Thus, it was decided that the *Koch*, *Mech* and *Kachari* tribal people on the northern bank of the *Brahmaputra / Gosain Kamal Ali*, could only carry on their worship according to tribal customs, while those in the south of the river/ road, the Brahmin priests could perform their usual Hindu rites and customs¹⁹. Moreover, king Naranarayan, Chilarai and their successors constructed many temples including *Siva* temples all over their kingdom²⁰.

Two-dimensional *Siva* worship was prevailing in the region. Among the different Baro tribes (including the *Koch*, *Mech* and *Kachari* tribes) *Siva* was worshiped in different names like *Batho*, *Bathau-Brai* or *Bathau-siva-rai*, *Burha* and others with much dancing, feasting and sacrifices following their tribal customs²¹. In his article "Religious ideas of some of the Animistic tribes of Bengal" E. Gait notices the particular mode of *Siva* worship among the *Mech* people: The religion of the *Mech*, like that of the *Dhimal*, is still in an early stage of transition from animism to Hinduism. They describe themselves as the *Saiva Sect* of Hinduism and worship *Siva* under the name of *Batho*, and his consort kali as *Bali Khungri*. To the former the *Agnia-Mech* sacrifices buffaloes, goats, and pigeons; while his wife has to put up with the less respectable offerings of pigs, fowls and goats²². On the other hand, non-tribal Hindus and royal families of pre-*Koch* periods, worshiped *Siva* in various forms like those of *Bhairava*, *Pasupati*, *Nataraja*, *Maheswara*, *Sambhu*, *Gopeswara Kameswara*, *Adideva* and others²³ and these names continue even today. The *Yogini Tantra* contains references to the *Mahabhairava Siva* in which form he gave himself up to unrestrained use of wine, women and flesh and he could therefore, be adorned with extreme left-handed (*vamachara*) practices²⁴. The tribal concept that *Mahabhairava Siva* or *Bhairava Siva*

was the god of diseases and death as well, and had been accepted to Hinduism as *Mahakala Siva* and became very popular among the *Hinduised Koches* of north Bengal²⁵.

Lord Siva is not conceived in the abstract alone, he appears as a concrete divine figure with familiar myths and legends clustering round him. The most of the pre-Koch inscriptions and literary sources of the Koch period occasionally refer to the equipments and ornaments he adorned. He is described in the records 'as having his usual weapons *Katanga, parasu, pinaka* and *sula*, his vehicle is the bull, *Shasikala* shines on his forehead, and he has a girdle of the lord of snakes²⁶'.

Siva was also worshipped in the *linga* form and which was very popular in the region. The *Yogini Tantra*, a 16th century work, states that the number of *lingas* in *Kamarupa* exceeds a million²⁷. In the form of lingam, an upright pillar or rod of stone erected on a pedestal called *Yoni*.

It is fact from the above discussion that during the reigns of early Koch kings *Saivism* in its various forms was the dominating religion of the region. Even when the all pervading influence of Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva aiming at the establishment of a classless and casteless monotheistic religion, and powerful kings like Naranarayan and his successors took refuge to the new religion, it could not percolate deep into the heart of the people at large. In spite of great reverence of the people towards their kings and Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva, the people of the region could not shake off their time-honoured devotion to Lord Siva, who stood for the fertility of soil and agriculture²⁸. King Naranarayan, his successors and some of their subjects although took refuge to Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva, but did not give up their time-honoured devotion to Lord Siva. It is proved by the fact that a large number of temples continued to be erected till the latter period by the kings. Thus, Lord Siva resurfaced and reasserted Himself as the sole protector of the Koch Kingdom and Kings of the dynasty were obliged to build new temples of Lord Siva and popularized the legends indicating their association with Lord Siva to honour the sentiments of the subjects²⁹. All these evidences conclusively prove that the Siva worship was quite popular among the masses of the region and under the patronage of the early Koch kings, it became protector deity of the region.

Saktism and Sakti cults:

The concept of *Shakti*/ *Sakti* cults or primordial energy symbolised in a woman is an amalgam of many elements drawn from various sources, pre-Aryan, non-Aryan, Aryan and aboriginal. The processes in fertility and motherhood and the active and energising forces involved therein apparently led to the emergence of the concept of a supreme Goddess who is considered to be the repository of all energy governing the universe. Eliot defines Saktism, as the worship of "a goddess of many names and forms, who is adored with sexual rites and the sacrifice of animals or, when the law permits of men"³⁰. He also said in another place "Saktism, in the sense of a definite sect with scriptures of its own, if not confined to the north-east corner, at least has headquarters there"³¹. The worship of *Sakti* or *Sakti* cults seems to have been migrated in this region with the migration of the Austric people. *Narakasur*, a mythological king founded a kingdom in the region, worshipped *Shakti* in the form of Yoni as well as Kamakhya for the first time, established himself as the custodian of this Yoni-goddess, and made her the presiding deity of the state and subsequently *Kamakhya* was assimilated with *Devi Durga*³². Therefore, what may be the birthplace of *Saktism* or *Sakti* cult, traditionally the *Sakta* cult is considered to have its centre in Kamarupa with its chief temple at Kamakhya, on the Nilachal hill in present Gauhati town. H. K. Barpujari accepted the view by saying, "Ancient Assam was a very important seat of *Shaktism*. Traditionally Kamrupa has been recognised as the principal centre of the *Shakti* cult with its chief temple at Kamakhya"³³.

However, it is a matter of very great interest that in the pre-Koch inscriptions of the region, there is no trace of *Sakti* worship except the veiled references in the inscriptions of *Vanamala* (9th century AD.) and *Indrapala* (c. 1040-1065 AD.) to the temples of *Kameswara Maha-Gauri* and *Maha-Gauri Kameswara*³⁴. It might be because of *Saktism* represents a particular phase of religion, which was in the main personal and esoteric and had no connection with any public religious establishment or state. First, elaborate descriptions on the *Sakti* worship are found in the *Kalika Purana* (11th century) and the *Yogini Tantra* (16th century). Both composed in the region on the most extensive treatise on the *Shakti* cult and *Tantricism* and considered as the special class of magical and sacramental literature³⁵. However, Eliot makes a distinction between *Saktism* and *Tantricism* and according to him " *Saktism* means worship of a Goddess, specially those who are regarded as forms of Siva's

consorts..... *Tantricism* is a system of magical or sacramental ritual, which professes to attain the highest aims of religion by such methods as spells, diagrams, gestures and other physical exercises³⁶.

From about 13th century until 16th century, worship of *Shakti* in the name *Kamakhya* became the most dominant religion of the region and other goddesses recognized as her varied manifestations. Non-tribal Hindu communities including the Bhuyans of the region patronized the *Sakti* worship in various names like *Chandi*, *Durga*, *Bhagawati*, *Kali*, *Chhinnnamasta* and above all *Kamakhya*. We have many references of *Sakti* worships among the Bhuyans as well as among some disciples of Sankaradeva in their early life. Kusuma Bhuyan, the father of Sankaradeva worshipped a stone image of *Chandi* in his house³⁷. Mahendra Kandali sought to teach his student some mantras of *Chandi* or *Durga*³⁸. Madhav's elder brother once offered about ten he-goats as sacrifice to the Devi (*Kamakhya*) in the month of *Asvina*³⁹.

On the other hand, tribal people worshipped primordial female deities called *Burhi*, *Jakani Thakurani*, *Kuri*, *Mechini*, and *Bali-Khungri* etc and ultimately, they were accepted to Hinduism as *Durga*, *Parvati* or *kali*, the consort of lord *Siva* with the beginning of the Koch rule. It is believed that goddess *Kamakhya* was only a Sankritised form of 'khami' or 'Kham-mai-kha', the primordial female deity of the Bodo-Kacharies⁴⁰. It is also believed that some Buddhist goddesses merged with Hindu *Tantras* and later taken as manifestation of *Durga* or *Kali*. *Tara* is the same as *kali* and so also is *Kamakhya*⁴¹. Thus, all local and independent deities of tribal and Buddhist folds such as *Burhi*, *Jakani Thakurani*, *Kuri*, *Mechini*, and *Bali-Khungri*, *Tara*, *Ugratara* and *Chamunda* etc came to be regarded as manifestations of *Kamakhya* or *Durga* in different circumstances⁴².

Early Koch Kings worshipped the mother goddess both in her tribal and Sanstritised Hindu forms. According to the DRV, Biswa Singha as the adventurous cowherd youth worshipped a clay image of *Durga* with sacrifices of grasshoppers and he met and received advices from the goddess *Durga* in a tribal *Mechini* form after his defeat at the hands of Karnapur Bhuyan⁴³. The same source again mentioned that he after becoming king set up capital of the newly founded kingdom at a site of *Kamatapur* and worshipped the Goddess in the form of *Gosani*, according to the Vedic rites at the *Kamateswari* temple⁴⁴. King Naranarayan inaugurated the new self-built temple of *Kamakhya* on the Nilachal hill with numerous sacrifices, which bear the characteristics of

both tribal and Brahmanic rites⁴⁵. He also made rich endowments for the worship of the Goddess. Through out the DRV, King Naranarayan and his brother Chilarai called the Devi in various names like *Kamateswari*, *Bhavani*, *Bhagawati*, *Devi (Kamakhya)* etc. *Baro Devi* is another special form of Goddess *Durga*, worship of which was initiated by king Naranarayan in Koch royal family and this tradition even continues till today. The image of *Baro Devi* is very different from the familiar *Durga* idols. *Devi Durga's* four sons and daughters are absent here. *Jaya* and *Bijaya* are here to replace them. The cult-animals are jointly a tiger and a lion, instead of a single lion. According to the prevailing traditions, king Naranarayan saw the Devi in this form in his dream when he was on fasting for days to get blessings from the Goddess. Later, he introduced the puja/ worship of *Baro Devi* and the clay-image was made following his description. Until now, the image is identical to the previous ones to keep the tradition alive.

Actually, the early Koch kings adopted Hinduism, Hinduisued themselves and accepted Hindu socio-cultural and religious pattern, in which *Saivism* and *Saktism* both were included. According to B. K. Barua, "Kamakhya was no longer the primordial Mother goddess but became the amorous wife *Parvati* living in inseparable companionship with her husband *Siva* Thus a new motif came into play and fresh conceptions have been ascribed to the Goddess"⁴⁶. As Lord *Siva* was the male protector deity of the dynasty and goddess *Durga* in her different names became the female protector deity of the same. Therefore, king Naranarayan patronized *Saivism* and *Saktism* and constructed many *Siva* temples as we mentioned earlier as well as the temples of goddess *Kamakhya* and others and established himself as the protector of the both. It is proved by the fact that when the *Sakta* leaders complained King Naranarayan against Sankaradeva saying that he was persuading men not to worship the goddess *Kamakhya*, the king as a devoted votary of Goddess *Kamakhya* became so angry that he at once sent his men to arrest Sankaradeva⁴⁷.

Thus, early Koch kings worshipped and patronized both *Siva* and *Durga* in their different manifestations simultaneously and this tradition is continuing even today. They grant lands to the temples⁴⁸ (all, *Saiva*, *Sakta* and others), priests and other servants of the temples. King Naranarayan and his successors brought Brahmin priests from out side and granted lands to them and at the same time, the Kamarupi Brahmins were also granted lands and employed in the services of temples⁴⁹. However, kings followed the policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the temples. On the contrary, the

priests of Kamakhya and others temples had imposed certain restrictions to the state by creating fictitious myths, which restricted the royal family to visit these temples. According to the *Kamarupa Buranji*, 'Kendu Kalai, a Brahmin priest of the Kamakhya temple, used to perform the daily worship of Goddess Kamakhya. The deity being satisfied and influenced by the musical worships of the priest, used to dance in naked. King Naranarayan aspired to see it from a hidden place. However, on realizing this, the deity became very angry and cursed that if Naranarayan and his successors visit this temple again, the dynasty of the Koch kings and that of the Brahmin priest would be destroyed'⁵⁰. From then king Naranarayan, Chilarai and their successors had strictly followed these restrictions and even today, this tradition continues.

Besides, people of the kingdom during the period, were very much influenced and inspired by the royal patronage to the *Saivism* and *Saktism*. They, following royal policy, started worshiping both the cults (*Siva* and *Durga* in various forms) simultaneously and in this way, *Saivism* and *Saktism* became very popular among the masses of the region and this tradition continues till toady. Dr. Kakati explained it in the following ways; ".....the land was infected with itinerant teacher with the *Vamachara Tantric* School with their insistence on the philosophy of sex and palate. Among religious rites, the most spectacular were bloody sacrifices to gods and goddesses amidst deafening noises of drums cymbals night vigils virgin worship and lewd dances of temple women"⁵¹. It is also proved by existence of large number of house -temples and community- temples in this region, where *Siva* and *Sakti* are being worshipped. Even after the acceptance of Neo-Vaisvaism of Sankaradeva, the masses continued the worshiping of the *Devi*. According to the *Thakura-Charita* of Vidyananda, "These people not conscious of the Great Way (*Vaisnavism*); and *Sakti* (*Saktism*) then reigned supreme. They sang songs of Hari; but then, when the autumn came, they installed a *ghata* (pitcher representing the goddess) each in every one's house"⁵².

Vaisnavism:

The worship of lord *Visnu* or *Vaisnavism* was prevalent in this region from the early times and we have epigraphic and literary references about it. This traditional *Vaisnavism* was quite different from the *Vaisnavism* propagated by Sankaradeva. Therefore, to avoid confusion, in the present context, the traditional *Vaisnavism* would be termed simply as '*Vaisnavism*' and the *Vaisnavism* propagated by Sankaradeva

would be termed as 'Neo-Vaisnavism'. Earliest literary reference in details of Vaisnavism occurs in the *Kalika Purana*⁵³, which traced the lineage of early kings of Kamarupa from Lord Visnu through Naraka. Bana in his *Harsacharita* (7th century AD) described Bhaskaravarman as a descendant of the Vaisnava family (*Vaisnavavamsah*)⁵⁴. The epigraphic references to the Vaisnavism or the worship of Visnu in the region occurs in the *Baraganga* inscription of *Mahabhattivarman* (c.553-54AD) and Nidhanpur grant of Bhaskaravarman (7th century AD.) which referred to the kings as '*Parama-daivata Parama-Bhagavata*'⁵⁵. The adoption of Visnu's name as a personal name became so common in the records of the times of this region, which bears significant message. Thus the name of king Vanamala, an epithet of Visnu, indicates his devotion to that god. From the occurrences of such personal names as *Madhava*, *Govardhana*, *Gopala*, *Sudarsana*, *Narayana*, *Janarddana* and *Kesava*, etc. clearly indicates the existence of Vaisnavism in this region as all these names are of Lord Visnu⁵⁶. Moreover, of the thousand names of Lord Visnu, some like *Achyuta*, *Narayana*, *Purusottam Hari*, *Upendra*, *Vasudeva* and *Krisna* etc became very popular⁵⁷. The *Kalika Purana* (12th century AD) mentioned many manifestations of *Vasudeva* or *Visnu* with their 'pithas' of which *Hayagriva Madhava* at '*Manikuta*' and '*Vasudeva*' in the '*DikkaraVasini*' are most prominent⁵⁸.

Therefore, it is clear from the above discussion that Vaisnavism or the worship of Visnu in its several manifestations like *Madhava*, *Vasudeva* and *Hayagriva* etc. was in vogue in the region before the rise of Neo-Vaisnavism under Sankaradeva, although it was in a subordinate position due to the dominant position of the Saivite and Sakti cults.

Although the early Koch kings of our period of study, were worshiper of Saivite and Sakti cults, at least up to 1546, (the year of Sankaradeva's coming to the Koch kingdom on a permanent basis), but more or less they were greatly influenced by Vaisnavism. Biswa Singha is said to have patronized Vaisnavism with gifts to its votaries⁵⁹ and was not beyond the influence of it. He named his 1st and 2nd sons i.e. Nara Singha and Naranarayan following the 4th (14th)⁶⁰ and 5th incarnations (Avatars)of Lord Visnu⁶¹. From Naranarayan, all succeeding Koch kings assumed their dynastic title 'Narayana' on the Vaisnava style had been taken from the name *Narayana*, an incarnation of the Lord. The Koch coins had been widely circulated as *Narayani Tanka (Mudra)* due to the influence of Vaisnavism although it bears the name of Lord Siva and some times called *Siva Tanka*⁶². King Naranarayan is said to have founded the old *Hayagriva-Madhava*

temple in an entirely deserted condition and almost lost in an impenetrable jungle and repaired it and also endowed it with land, priests, musicians and dancing girls in 1550AD⁶³. Later on, Raghudeva, the son of Chilarai and King Koch of Hajo, being a worshiper of Madhava (Visnu), had reconstructed the temple on a large scale leaving only the basement of old temple and granted lands, slaves and servants for its maintenance in 1583AD. The *Yogini Tantra*, a 16th century work gives an account of the origin of the stone image of *Hayagriva-Madhava* in the light of the story of the wooden images of *Krisna*, *Balabhadra* and *Subhadra* of the great Jagannath temple of Puri⁶⁴. However, *Hayagriva-Madhava* is not a sufficiently famous god in the Hindu pantheon to merit worship and even not included into the *Dasa Avatars* of Visnu. The Neo-Vaisnava saint Madhavadeva said to have visited Hajo and went to pay his obeisance to 'Hayagriva- Madhava, by reciting several Sanskrita slokas describing the deity⁶⁵. Besides, *Hayagriva- Madhava* of Manikuta, other images of Visnu were worshipped during the period of our study; for Sankaradeva had discovered a four-armed Vasudeva (Visnu) image of black stone at Bardowa⁶⁶. It also appears that the *Bhagavata* literature seems to have entered into this region and there were scholars studying *Bhagavatagita*. It is proved by fact that Sankaradeva said to have found a copy of manuscript of the whole of the *Bhagavatagita*, floating on the Brahmaputra while he was deserting his native place Bardowa⁶⁷.

However, Vaisnavite cult or Visnu worship in many manifestations, before the peak hours of Neo-Vaisnavism was a minor or subordinate cult, during the period of our study. It was due to the wide spread popularity of the Saivite and Sakti cults among the masses. According to S. N. Sarma, "... majority of the Hindus instead of delving deep into the mysteries of *Tantricism* of Sakti and Saiva cults, resorted to them and adopted the outward philosophy of sex and palate as the real criterion of their religion"⁶⁸.

Buddhism:

Although there is no direct literary reference or direct epigraphical hints about the advent of Buddhism into the northeastern region, but archaeological evidences and different indirect literary and epigraphic sources say that Buddhism in the forms of the *Mahayana* and *Vajrayana* found its way into Assam during the 7th century AD. Since then Buddhism (*Tantric*) had been mixing with the *Tantric* form (*Saktism*) of Hinduism

and prevailing in the northeast India⁶⁹. Buddhist doctrine was widely spread, and the places of worship of *Mahakal* at the extremity of the town Koch Behar and in Bhutan hills, the *Yogi-gopa* and *Mangal Chandi* in Goalpara, and temples known as *Chandikabehar* and *Singiri* in Darrang and others are all relics of Buddhist influences. Again, Buddhist monasteries are known as Behar and there are many names of places with suffix 'Behar' like Koch Behar, the capital city of the Koches, *Chandikabehar* in the Darrang of Assam and *Haludbehar* in the *Rajsahi* district (Bangladesh), indicate the existence of Buddhist monasteries in this region⁷⁰. Rewound scholar P.C. Chaudhuri has noticed two images in *Kamakhya*, one in *Sthanaka* posture carved on a granite block and had identified as *Bodhisattva*. The other one is of the *asana* variety of a figure shown in *Bhumisparsa* mudra, was identified as *Buddha*⁷¹. These all indicated the prevalence of Buddhist cults in this region. However, as the Brahmanical religion in its different forms had already occupied the heart of the people, only a marginal influence may be traced.

The Lama Buddhists of Bhutan and Tibet considered the *Hayagriva Madhava* temple of Hajo to be the temple of *Mahamuni* (the Buddha) and they take the temple as a Buddhist Chaitya⁷². They even believed that Buddha fled from Bhutan, took his abode in this place and finally attained Nirvana there⁷³. The temple is so important to them that every year a large number of pilgrims visit the temple in the winter season. Although, the *Yogini Tantra* gives an account of the origin of the stone image of *Hayagriva Madhava* in the light of the story of the images of Krisna, Balabhadra and Subhadra of great Puri temple and most of the Hindus accepted it as has been already mentioned. However, Dr Kakati calls the account of the *Yogini Tantra* an attempt to Vaisnavising god *Hayagriva Madhava*, seems to be different origin. According to him, '*Hayagriva-Madhava* is not a sufficiently famous god in the Hindu pantheon to merit worship and a temple. But he occupies high reputation in the Buddhist *Tantras* and in Buddhist pantheon'⁷⁴ and even not included into the *Dasa Avatars* of Visnu. There are three different forms of *Hayagriva Madhava*- one with the image of *Amitabha* on the crown, one bearing *Aksobhya* and the third, *Paramasva Hayagriva*, among these first two definitely belonged to Buddhism⁷⁵ but having no indication of parentage. Dr. Kakati, with information from the *Kalika Purana* mentioned that, the Goddess *Dikkarvasini*, the presiding deity of northeastern Assam has two forms -*Tiksna-Kanta* (dreadfully

attractive) and *Lalita-Kanta* (gracefully attractive). She in all her forms are to be worshipped in general like goddess *Kamakhya*, but her delectable worships consisted of strong spirituous liquor, human sacrifice, *modaka*, flesh, curry, coconuts and sugarcane⁷⁶. *Tiksna-Kanta* are called *Ugratara* and *Ekajata*, which seems due to its Buddhist influence and which ultimately mixed up with Hindu *Tantras* as *Durga* or *Kali* or *Kamakhya*⁷⁷.

Therefore, Buddhism especially *Vajrayana* Buddhism / *Tantric* Buddhism mixed up so closely with *Tantric* practices of Hinduism and other tribal religious forms of the region in such a way that it is very hard to differentiate from them and for this reason M. Neog named the Buddhism of the region as 'crypto-Buddhism'⁷⁸.

However, in the Neo-Vaisnavite and other literatures we have some occasional and indirect references to the *Vajrayana* Buddhism / *Tantric* Buddhism. The *Katha Guru Charita* records that Sankaradeva had an encounter with two Buddhist magicians (*Baudhamatiya tatakiya*), who practiced magic at *Belaguri*⁷⁹. In his *Kirtana-ghosh*, Sankaradeva writes that the God incarnated as the Buddha, only to destroy the way of the *Vedas* and confound people with the left-hand scriptures (*vamanaya sastra*). In addition, the god will descend on the earth in his *Kalki* incarnation toward the end of the Kali age to massacre the mlecchas, destroy all the 'Buddhas' that there be, and to establish the truth⁸⁰. It is probably a reference to the excesses committed by *Tantric* or *Vajrayana* Buddhists, mixed up with *Tantric* practices of Hinduism and other tribal religious forms, as Sankaradeva himself saw them. Sankaradeva, more or less had some influences of Buddhism on him. The 'Sarana' in *Nama*, *deva* and *bhakta* of Neo-Vaisnavite doctrine might have some relation with *tri-sarana* i.e. 'Sarana in the Buddha, *dharma* and *sangha*' of Buddhism. Moreover, the use of the term '*dharani*' in *dharani mantras* of snakebites, the pattern of mathas (monasteries) in *Satras* and relic-worship might have some relation with Buddhism. The *Satras* are devoid of any images. Some disciples of Sankaradeva practiced celibacy. These might indicate some remnants of Buddhist monastic rites.

With reference from *Vyasasrama* of Rama Saraswati, M. Neog mentioned that "how Brahmins of the kali age would take to the left-handed rites and scriptures (*vamanaya vidhi sastra*) and turn '*Baudha*'. They would profess the '*Baudha*' *Sastras* and give up the usual duties of Brahmins. They would earn their livelihood by performing magical rites and feasts with funny idols made of copper, bell-metal, wood

and earth"⁸¹. However, we have no direct reference of Koch royal patronage of Buddhism during our period of study.

Tantricism:

The 'Tantricism' is a philosophy according to which *Shakti* is usually the main deity worshipped, and a quest for spiritual perfection and magical power, to achieve complete control of oneself, for the achievement of spiritual and magical power and of all the forces of nature, in order to attain union with the cosmos and with the divine⁸². Although, in its essence, the '*Tantrikism*' implied mystic worship of *Sakti* or female energy in general, but due the admixture with spiritual practices, ritual forms of worship, *Mudras* or gestures, *mandalas* and *yantras*, which are symbolic diagrams of the forces at work in the universe, of other extremist off-shot sections of the other religions, it became independent way of worship⁸³. D. Nath defines *Tantrikism* in the following ways, "The association of *Saktism* with later form of Buddhism, i.e. *Vajrayana*, a queer mixture of monistic philosophy, magic and erotics, with a small admixture of Buddhist ideas and the absorption into it of various rites and rituals gave rise to a cult which came to be known as *Tantrikism*"⁸⁴. Eliot makes a distinction between *Saktism* and *Tantricism* and according to him "Saktism means worship of a Goddess, specially those who are regarded as forms of Siva's consorts..... *Tantricism* is a system of magical or sacramental ritual, which professes to attain the highest aims of religion by such methods as spells, diagrams, gestures and other physical exercises. One of its bases is the assumption that man and the universe correspond as microcosm and macrocosm and that both are subject to the mysterious power of words and letters"⁸⁵. The central doctrine of the philosophy of *Tantra* is that the phenomenal world or *Maya* would not to be rejected outright but must be embraced. And the tacit acceptance of this ideal gave rise to the popular concept that "all beings are members of a single family, proceeding from *AUM*, the only divine substance, and that God-realization can take place by a bold affirmation of all that may ever come to be, the gods beings address as dwelling within microcosm"⁸⁶. However, *Tantricism* and *Shaktism* are so closely related that it is very hard to differentiate between the two and for this reason some scholars considered the both as the same except ritualistic⁸⁷. Both, the *Tantrics* (worshippers) and the *Sakta* worshipers worshipped the goddess some times in same form or some times in different forms, but always followed different rituals and practices of worship with

objectives. There are two classes of Saktas; 1) *Kaulika* and 2) *Samayin*. The former worship the gross material object, by offering the deity wine, flesh, fish, and such other things in dreadful way and might be considered as *Tantrics* followers, while the latter have a recourse to imagery and abstained from such practices and might be considered as real Saktas.

The *Tantricism* or *Trantric* rituals, at least in its debased form widely prevailed and practiced in the region from the 12th century, when its chief scripture, the *Kalika Purana* was written and some scholars even think that '*Tantrikism* originated in Kamarupa itself⁸⁸. Prior to the arrival of the Neo-Vaisnavite preacher Sankaradeva, the Koch kingdom was the main strongholds of the *Tantricism* or *Trantric* rituals, where it was practiced in various forms. *Vamachara*, or left-handed attainment practices, which are closely associated with *Tantrikism* and belief in magic and incarnation, gave religion a perverted form⁸⁹. The *Yogini Tantra* and the *Kalika Purana* both belong to the *Vamachara*, or left-hand school of *Tantricism* / *Saktism* enjoin blood sacrifices and various esoteric rites. The *Kalika Purana* makes provision for the offering of the votary's (*Tantric* / *Sakta* worshipers) own blood and flesh in small quantities⁹⁰ and some times the rituals consisted of even human sacrifices⁹¹. The votaries were ready to sacrifice everything in the name of the goddess. The *Katha Guru Charita* narrates how *Gobinda*, a petty Koch official, worshipped the *Devi* at the cost of all his belongings and then cut out his blood with a nail-clipper, from his body to offer it to the deity because of which he grew as white as cotton⁹². According to Gait, there was a class of votaries called '*Bhogis*' who dwelt in caves, and when they came out of the caves were allowed to do whatever they like even including sexes and finally they volunteered to be sacrificed before the goddess⁹³. He also mentioned that as late as 1615 *Karmachand*, son of *Satraila* and a commander of an invading Muslim army was sacrificed to the goddess *Kamakhya*⁹⁴. In the *Trantric* mode of worship, five special elements required, which are known as '*Pancha Tattva*' well known as five M's (*Panch makars*), because they begins with that letter, namely *Madya* (wine), *Mamsa* (meat), *Matsya* (fish), *Mudra* (parched grain) and *Maithuna* (sexual union)⁹⁵. The rituals are usually performed in the dead of night and the votaries were come to be known as *Aritiya* or *ratikhowa*⁹⁶. The *Kumari Pooja*, or virgin worship is another ritual performed by *Tantrics*, in which a *Kumari* or Virgin is considered as the deity and in selection of *Kumari* or Virgin no caste distinction was observed⁹⁷. About the *Trantric* mode of worship, Bhandarkar says, "The ambition of

every pious follower of this system, is to become identical with *Tripura Sundari* and one of his religious exercises is to habituate himself to think that he is a women and it ought to be the aim of all to become a woman⁹⁸. In the Neo-Vaisnavite and other literatures, there are some occasional and indirect references to the Tantricism. The *Katha Guru Charita* records that Sankaradeva had an encounter with two Buddhist magicians (*Baudhamatiya tatakiya*), who practiced magic at *Belaguri*, which we have mentioned earlier⁹⁹. *Kahata Samnyasi*, alleged to be a Buddhist magician, performed certain magic rites over a straw effigy of *chilarai*, whereupon this valiant fighter felt a helpless victim to slow death¹⁰⁰. Therefore, it is fact that the practice of the *Trantric* worship in various forms was prevalent in the Koch kingdom and parts of Assam as well, during our period of study and even the *Yogini Tantra*, the main book on the subject was composed in the region.

Nathism or Nath / Yogi Cult:

Nathism, a sub sect of Saivism, founded or reformed by Guru Gorakhsnath, has been prevalent in the region from ancient period¹⁰¹. The *Nathas*, the followers of *Nathism* are also known as *Yogis*, as various forms of *Yoga* practices once cultured among them and also as *Katanis* on account of their caste profession of rearing of silk cocoons and spinning of silk yarn¹⁰². Although, *Nathism* a sub-sect of Saivism yet "derived its inspirations from the *Vajrayana* or in other words, the progenitors of *Natha* school Hinduised the teaching of the Buddhist *Tantras*"¹⁰³. *Nathism* had gained its popularity by challenging the caste system and the Brahmin superiority of Hinduism and in the same way, it also wanted to reform *Trantricism* by repudiating *Mantras*, putting emphasis on *Yogic* practices and cultivation of mental powers and placing different interpretations on such fundamental *Trantric* concepts as those of *Vajra*, *Mudra* etc¹⁰⁴. M. Neog opines that, "The nine original *Nathas* are among the eighty-four *Siddhapurusas* of the Buddhist *Tantras*"¹⁰⁵.

Contemporary literary and archeological sources proved the existence of this sect under the early Koch kings. In the Assamese version of the *Ramayana* (*Ayodhyakanda*, vv.6-8), Madhava Kandali, narrates a pen-picture of the *Yogi*, with his ragged wallet, *dowadas Kathi* (platter, sometimes in the form of a trident), idols of worship, and the repeated utterance of the name of *Siva*¹⁰⁶. Madhavadeva, a disciple of

Sankaradeva, once visited the house of silk-rearing Yogi on the bank of Kachikata (in modern North Lakhimpur)¹⁰⁷. In the lower Assam, men of Yogi caste calling themselves *Nath* are numerous and throughout the northern Bengal and western Assam evidence reminiscent of *Guru Goraksnath* remains, in the temple Goraksnath in Bogra; Goraksamandapa in Rangpur; Yogi-gopa in Goalpara, and the temple of Goraksnath near Ranisankal in Dinajpur (now in Bangladesh)etc¹⁰⁸. In some local folk songs current in northern Bengal, the birthplace of Goraksnatha is reputed to be near Jalpesh and Mech-para (in the district of Goalpara)¹⁰⁹.

The worship of *Guru Gorakhsnath* of *Nath* cult is still prevalent among the followers of *Nath* sect of the region, which they perform in the months of *Bhadra* (July-august) and *Falguna* (February-March) ¹¹⁰. However, the cult losing separate identity due to its close affinity with Hinduism and now a days it is only traceable in some local folk-songs, Socio-religious rites and *Nath* and *Debnath* titles of the people of the region¹¹¹.

Other minor cults and semi-religious practices:

Besides, above-mentioned religious practices, some other minor cults and semi-religious practices have been prevalent in the society of the region before the rise of the Koches. However, most of these cults and semi-religious practices were sub sects within the Hinduism or Hiduised form of tribalism simultaneously worshipped with main deities of Hinduism.

In the *Katha-Guru-Charita*, it is stated that Ananta Kandali, the great *Bhakta* poet was originally a great worshiper of *Dharma* before his conversion to the *Vaisnava* faith¹¹². It clearly indicates that the worship of *Dharma* was prevalent in the region before the time of Sankaradeva and on the eve of the rise of the Koches. However, during the time of the early Koch kings, the *Dharma* cult seemed to have been long dead, and the deity was worshipped along with the worship of the snake goddess *Manasa* or *Marai* with certain¹¹³.

Manasa or *Marai*, the snake goddess was another minor cult of the region, which had been prevalent in the region before the rise of the Koches. Among the tribal of the

region, she was worshipped as 'Bisahari' or remover of the poisons¹¹⁴. We have literary evidences about the existence of the snake goddess. Makar appears to be the earliest Manasa poets of the region, who composed verses from the 'Padma Purana, mainly, on the theme of *Behula-Lakhinder* during the time of king *Jalpeshwar* of Kamata¹¹⁵. However, most popular poet singer of the period was Durgavar, composed '*Behula Upakhyan*'. In the colophon, "Kamata Iswar Vando Biswa Singha nripabar" he pays homage to Biswa Singha styling him as a king of Kamata and in other place, he introduced himself as a *Kayastha* by caste and a resident of Nilachal hill near Gauhati and a devotee of the goddess Kamakhya and Manasa¹¹⁶. Biswa Singha is said to have discovered Kamakhya Pitha in a deserted condition; he built a temple there to worship goddess Kamakhya along with Manasa, for, Durgavar's Manasa songs are sung here by Oja-pali during the worship of Kamakhya¹¹⁷. Bahubal a naval officer of king Naranarayan during his Ahom expedition was a devotee of Padma (Manasa)¹¹⁸. According to the DRV, Chilarai by reciting '*Sandahua mantra*' revived the mother of the *Padsha* of Bengal from snakebite¹¹⁹. There is a large mass of mantras or spells called 'sape khowa mantra' (spells of snakebite) or 'saper dharanidhara mantra' or simply 'dharani mantra' to save people from snake-bite¹²⁰. The word *dharani* is probably derived from *Dharini* texts of the Buddhists.

The worship of Manasa is accompanied with the worship of Dharma and offerings included ducks, pigeons, he-goat, rice and fruits etc¹²¹. It is very common tradition of the region that in the worship of Siva, Kali and Durga, a snake always accompanied. Therefore, it is believed that the cult of the goddess Manasa developed out of both Aryan and non-Aryan beliefs on snake worship¹²².

Another minor goddess of reverence of the region was small - pox goddess generally known as *Ai*, 'the mother'. The disease itself is reverentially called *Ai* or *Aisakal*, 'the mother' and its attack is called '*Ai olowa*' or *aisakal olowa*', the appearance of the mother or mothers¹²³. There is a large number of special type songs in praise of the goddess called '*Ai-nam*', 'the songs of the mother', which are still sung by the womenfolk of the region to get someone recovered from smallpox or measles¹²⁴. In such songs, seven types of the disease are mentioned as the seven *Ai-sisters*, and *Sitala* is one of the sisters, who control smallpox or pustule diseases¹²⁵. The worship of

'Ai In' the form Sitala widely prevalent in the region during our period of study with ritual prescribed in the *Skanda Purana*, which proves the fact that 'Vyasakalai, a follower of Sankaradeva made arrangements for the worship of the small-pox deity *Sitala* , when his only surviving son was taken ill with small-pox,¹²⁶.

The sculpture images on the walls of the Kamakhya temple shows the images of *Ganesh* and *Biswakarma*, which indirectly indicate the *Ganesh* and *Biswakarma* were worshiped in the region.

The various types of *Yoga* exercises and the exhibitions of *Yogic* feats seem to have been practiced in the region. The Vaisnava reformer Sankaradeva came across *Yoga-Sastras* in his early life and became the master of this branch of practical learning and he "exhibited *Yogic* feats much to the amazement of the people"¹²⁷. It is said that he could hold his breath continuously for three or four days and could remain under water for long time¹²⁸. According to the *Katha Guru Charita*, one Ratikanta Dalai said to have practiced *Yoga*¹²⁹. It also refers to a *Yogi*, who made his abode in the house of Naranarayan¹³⁰. The exhibitions of *Yogic* feats and *Yoga* exercises attracted people so much that some itinerant Yogis went about exhibiting people different types of *Yogic* feats and exercises¹³¹.

Due to admixture of the Hindu, Trantric Buddhist, tribal and other religious beliefs, a mysterious atmosphere had been prevailing in the region during our period of study, which included belief and practice of magic, supernatural powers and Incantations or charms. The DRV records that, Chilarai, who was imprisoned in Gauda, conjured up a snake inside a knot of cloth (*gathi*) with spells (*sadahuya mantra*), according to the advice of the goddess Durga. The snake bit the mother of the Padsha of Gauda to apparent death, from which she was recovered by Chilarai himself¹³². With the references from the *Katha Guru Charita*, we mentioned earlier that how one *Kahata Sannyasi* or mendicant, alleged to be a Buddhist magician had performed certain magic rites over a straw of effigy of Chilarai, whereupon this valiant fighter felt a helpless victim to slow death. Narayanadasa and Gokulchandra, two disciples of Sankaradeva, were sold away to Bhutiyas by the men of king Naranarayan, were let off by the latter due to the suspicion that they were 'god-men'¹³³. There were various types of magical rites, animistic and superstitious beliefs, and usages current among the common

masses of the region to prevent every evil and disease or premature death from the numerous evil spirits. M. Neog records that there is a huge *mantra* literature in the region, considered as efficacious in warding off the super-natural agencies called "bhut, daini =dakini, dat =daitya, danaha = danaba, camon which makes people mute, gulai connected with Will o' the wisp, jakh=Yaksa, jigini=yogini, kandh, kheta, mor connected with choleric diseases, prēt, pisach, and numerous others"¹³⁴. The Persian chroniclers observed, "Whoever happens to step into the land becomes enchanted and cannot find his way to out of it. The idol of the temple of Kayamkhyā, Lunachumari and Ismail Jogi are notorious for magic and sorcery"¹³⁵. The *Baharistan -i-Ghaybi* gives an interesting account of magic and sorcery of the Khuntaghat Pargana, a great centre of witchcraft of the region in the following ways: "This place is notorious for magic and sorcery. thus if a man takes by force a fowl from a Ryot, comes to the judge for redress, and if that person is refused justice, then the complainant, by means of his magic and sorcery could make the accused produce the voice of a fowl from inside his stomach and thus prove the falsity of the protestations of the accused. If a Bailiff of the judge stay at village in connection with the work of *Dihidar* or the *Pattadar* (the tenure holder of the village), and if in a state of drunkenness he would demand fish with violence in the evening or at mid-night when no fresh fish was available, and persisted in his demand by torturing the Riots, then they would bring some mango leaves (or leaves of another tree whose name reads like Lahnura) and breathe on the leaves some words of magic and sorcery. These leaves would forthwith turn into a kind of small fish. When these fish(es) were cooked by him in a state of drunkenness, they turn into blood . As soon as they were eaten by Bailiff, he died"¹³⁶.

Moreover, the semi-superstitious customs of the offering of worship to the natural things and others were also prevailing in the region. M. Neog with references from *Atair Charita* describes, that 'the offering of worship to the clouds and rivers, of making obeisance to cowsheds and barns or haylofts, of setting adrift down the course of a river a raft with standing sticks and cotton and yarn tied to the sticks, and of the tying of amulets with tiger claws to the neck of a child'¹³⁷ were prevalent in the society.

Besides these, tribal people (Hinduised or not) of the region worshipped a large number traditional tribal male and female deities, which continues among the tribal and

Hinduised tribal people of the region. The Hinduised tribal people of the present north Bengal, and adjoining territories of present Bangladesh and Assam worshipped female deities like *Bhandani*, *Pethani*, *Tista Buri*, *Jog* and male deities like *Hutumdeo*, *Rishi (Mahakal)*, *Kistho*, *Grami* or *Gram Thakur*, *Dharma Thakur*, *Mashan* etc¹³⁸. The Kachari people of the region still worship their primordial male female deities like *Burah Thakur-Burhi Thakur*, *Bullibriu* (river Bharali), *Mouthansri (Lakshmi)* etc¹³⁹. The Meches worshipped *Bathou* (tribal form of Lord Siva). Tribal priest called *Deoshi / Deodhai / Huzi* performs the ritual of the chief deities¹⁴⁰.

From the above discussion, it is clear that the religions and religious beliefs of the region on the eve of the rise of the Neo-Vaisnavism bear some characteristics. A) A large number of religions or religious beliefs both Hindu and tribal were prevailing in the region. B) The period witnessed the religious assimilation of the Hinduism and other tribal forms of worship under the guidance of the Brahmins royal family following the theory "assimilation from Above". C) Most of the religions were based on rituals and worldly pleasure, which included sacrifice, sex, mysterious practices and superstitious activities etc. D) The period distinguished itself for notorious practices of Tantricism, which combined many elements of ancient, savage, superstitious as well as ingenious but fanciful speculation.

However, it appears that both tribal and non-tribal (Brahmanical) religious beliefs existed in the region. With state formation under the early Koch kings and its political stability, existing religions could not come out of its dark sides and could not satisfy the demands of the people. As a result, a new religion came into existence under the leadership of Sankaradeva and came to be known as Neo-Vaisnavism that will be discussed in the following pages.

b). Role of Sankaradeva and Neo-Vaisnavism:

The North-East India from the fifteenth century presented a motley picture of diverse shades and grades of Socio-religious culture. The majority of the people belonged to non-Aryan tribes having distinct manners, customs and religious beliefs as we have mentioned earlier. Those who professed Hinduism loosely adhered to

Vaisnavism or *Saivism*. *Sāktism* bordering on extreme *Tāntricism* was also widely prevalent. The religious spectrum was the bulk of the indigenous tribal population who followed their indigenous tribal faiths. All these cults were more or less indulging in evil practices like animal and sometimes even human sacrifices, magical rites, spells and the like and were based on the philosophy of palate and sensual pleasures¹⁴¹. The economically backward classes and the socially downtrodden became the victims of such ghastly practices. Bringing all these diverse communities and warring factions under a systematized religious code and conduct to provide the masses with a mode of worship, which would be simple and at the same time accessible to all was what constituted the pressing need of the time. In these situations, Neo-Vaisnava preacher Sankaradeva was born in the month *Ahin* (September-October) in 1371 Saka (1449 AD) at Tembuani (Bordowā), in the present-day Nowgāon district of Assām¹⁴². A multi-faceted genius, Sankaradeva was at once a spiritual leader, a social reformer, a prolific writer, a master playwright and composer and over all the prime mover of all aspects of the period of the region. He credited with providing the bedrock of Assamese culture, and creating a religion that gave shape to a set of new values and social synthesis.

Short Biographical sketch of Sankaradeva:

Biographical sketch of Sankaradeva's life can be discussed under three subheads considering his dwelling places in the following ways:

- I). Early period: *in the Bara Bhuyan territories at Bordowa / Ali-Pukhuri (1449-1506AD):*
- II). Middle period: *in the Ahom kingdom (c.1506-1546AD.):*
- III). Final period: *in the Koch kingdom (c. 1546-1569AD.):*

I) Early period: At Bordowa / Ali-Pukhuri (1449-1506AD):

Sankaradeva was born into the Shiromani (chief) Bara Bhuyan family, near Bordowa in Nowgaon in a village called Ali-Pukhuri in c1449AD, when *Niladhvaja* (c.1440-1460 AD), and *Suhenpha* (1439-1488) were ruling over the thrones of the *Kamatapur*¹⁴³ and the Ahom respectively¹⁴⁴. His father *Kusumvara* was the chief of

Shiromani Bara Bhuyan and his mother was Satyasandhya Devi. Sankaradeva lost parents at a very tender age and was raised by his grandmother Khersuti, the wife of Suryavara¹⁴⁵. He began attending the tol or chatrasaal (school) of the renowned scholar Mahendra Kandali at the age of 12¹⁴⁶. In the school, he was a devoted student and completed his course of studies in all branches of Indian learning like the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Puranas, the Samhitas, the Tantras, grammar, lexicon and kavyas within less time than was required ordinarily¹⁴⁷. A miracle said to have happened in his school days, by which he acquired the epithet 'deva' with Sankara. Mahendra Kandali one day found Sankara sleeping in the schoolhouse alone and a serpent with its extensive hood protected him from the burning rays of the sun. On seeing Kandali, the serpent crawled down out of sight. The Pandit recognized Sankara as divine personality, and next day, he narrated this unique experience to all the pupils, and asked them to address him as 'Sankaradeva' and not simply 'Sankara'¹⁴⁸.

In course of his studies, Sankaradeva learned Yoga and became a master of that art. By this art, he became both physically and mentally very able, which is proved by many legends, some of which we have mentioned earlier.

After completing his study, he came out a finished scholar at the age 20(1469AD) and in spite of interest in studious career, he was forced by his elders to be the Siromani Bhuyan¹⁴⁹. At the age of 23, he married his first wife Suryavati, daughter of Havaragiri Kayastha and four years after the marriage he lost his wife, who died giving birth to a girl who was named as Manu or Haripriya. It is possible that the death of his wife increased his spiritual inclination as his mind began to focus, more than ever before, on the transcendental and determined to go on a pilgrimage to Puri and other places. However, he could not do that immediately due to his affection to motherless child and administrative responsibility as Siromani Bhuyan. After six or seven years later, when his daughter turned nine, he married her off to a Kayastha youth Hari with household responsibility, handed over the Shiromanship to his grand uncles and left for a pilgrimage at the age of 32(c1481)¹⁵⁰.

Seventeen persons are said to have accompanied him to the pilgrimage and visited places like Navadvipa, Puri, Mathura, Dwaraka, Vrindavan, Gaya, Rameswaram, Ayodhya, Sitakunda and almost all the other major seats of the

Vaisnavite religion in India. Interacted with Vaisnava Pandits of various schools and acquired first hand knowledge of Vaisnava theology, text, mode of worship and management of institutions¹⁵¹. He returned his native home to Ali-Pukhuri after 12 years in about 1493AD at the age of 44¹⁵². During his pilgrimage, Sankaradeva witnessed the Bhakti movement that was in full bloom in India at that time and he was greatly influenced by it, which consequently must have prompted him to inaugurate the Neo-Vaisnavite movement in the region.

After his return, Sankaradeva with widened outlook and experience of religious life wanted to take the mission of spiritual and devotional life. However, on his grandmother's insistence, he forced to marry (second marriage) Kalindi, daughter of Kalika Bhuyan but inspite of repeated insists, he refused to take back the Shiromani Bhuyanship¹⁵³. At Bordowa, he constructed his first Naamghar (prayer hall) to discuss religious matters, hold prayers and began preaching his idea of Bhakti. However, he was yet to receive the message of the *Bhagavata Purana* in its fullest significance, for which he waited to get a complete copy of the *Bhagavata Purana* from Jagadisa Misra of Tirthut which had in it commentaries from Sridhara Swami of Puri, an Advaita scholar. Jagadish Misra before handing over the *Bhagavata Purana* to Sankaradeva, he recited and explained the whole work in Sankaradeva's presence. This made him realize that this work had no peer and that its purpose was to fix Krisna as the sole God and that the celebrating of his acts in the company of holy men and the taking of sole refuge in him was the greatest religion of men¹⁵⁴. Thus, Sankaradeva went into the deep of the *Bhagavata Purana* and took the task of propounding and propagating the cult of Bhakti among the masses by translating it in vernacular and composing the Kirtana-ghosha on the *Bhagavata* subject¹⁵⁵. The 13 years at Ali-pukhuri after his first pilgrimage (upto 1506AD), was the period during which he reflected deeply on Vaisnavism and on the form that would best suit the spiritual and ethical needs of the people.

II). Middle period: in the Ahom kingdom (c.1506-1546AD.):

Sankaradeva could not however live long in his native place at Bordowa / Ali-Pukhuri, due to the political instability¹⁵⁶, which compelled him to shift his residence towards east through the northern bank of the Brahmaputra with temporary stays at

places like *Singari*, *Rauta*, *Ghiladhari* and *Bhalukaguri* and finally settled at *Gangmau* for five years¹⁵⁷. At *Gangmau*, his son Ramananda was born. Here too, due to the repeated raids of Biswa Singha, father of Naranarayan, against the Bhuyans, who were gradually getting weak, Sankaradeva left this place and moved further east to *Dhuwahat*, present day *Majuli*, now an island on the *Brahmaputra*. At this place, he stayed for about 18 years¹⁵⁸, spending most of his time in study and discussions of religious nature.

At *Dhuwahat*, Sankaradeva met his great disciple and spiritual successor *Madhavadeva* in 1522¹⁵⁹. *Madhavadeva*, a *Sakta*, got into a religious altercation with his brother-in-law *Ramadasa* who had recently converted to *Vaisnavism*. *Ramadasa* took him to Sankaradeva, who, after a long debate, could finally convince him of the power and the efficacy of *Naam Dharma* and as a result, *Madhavadeva* became his disciple. At *Dhuwahat*, he also initiated *Ratnakara Kandali* and *Vyasakalai*, both *Brahmins*, who used to read and explain the *Bhagavatagita* in the religious gatherings and many others into his religion continued composing the *Kirtana ghosha*.

The conversion is rightly regarded as the 'redoubtable exponent' of the Neo-Vaisnava sect, for it had far-reaching and enormous effect in the furtherance of Neo-Vaisnava in this region¹⁶⁰. The defeat / conversion of *Madhavadeva*, a *Sakta* by faith, meant the defeat of the *Sakti* cult a prominent religion of the land. Moreover, Sankaradeva raised the question about the authority of the priests, who were regarded as the indispensable mediators of Salvation and who had the theologian's art of translating the manifestly irrational into the seemingly rational. Because of it, the Brahmanic hostility towards the Sankaradeva and Neo-Vaisnava sect became inevitable and they took up the open challenge and started abusing Sankaradeva and his sect. This marked two-dimensional remarkable impacts on the society:

- A) The Neo-Vaisnava movement made rapid progress among the masses due to its democratic outlook and equality and within a short time, it could impress upon the imagination of the multitudes and the fame of Sankaradeva spread to distant places and,

B) The Saktas felt rudely shaken and threatened by the emergence of a new religion propagated by a Non-Brahmin and tried their best to nip the Neo-Vaisnava movement in the bud.

However, Sankaradeva tried to appease the Brahmins by gentle persuasion and debate, for which he arranged a religious debate with the leading and scholarly Brahmins of the locality in the house of Budha Khan. But, the effort went in vain and hostility on the side of *Sakta* Brahmins continued. Some Brahmins with epithets like Acharya, Kandali, Bharati and Upadhyaya¹⁶¹, submitted a complaint to the Ahom king *Suhungmung* (1497-1539) with the allegation that Sankaradeva had tampered the popular faith of the land. Influenced by the allegation of the priests, the king summoned Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva to court for trial but being satisfied by replies of them, they were freed temporarily. However, hostilities continued, but not owing to the religious ground, for the Ahom Kings bore no personal hatred towards Sankaradeva and they did not interfere with the Neo-Vaisnavism in the pursuit of their religion¹⁶². The relationship with the Ahom royalty deteriorated due to the negligence of duty by Sankaradeva and his disciples in *khedda* or elephant-catching operation¹⁶³. Meanwhile, Naranarayan ascended the throne of Koch Behar with his brother Chilarai as chief general of his army at the death of their father Biswa Singha and they were preparing to invade the Ahom kingdom. Naranarayan also took moderate policy towards the Bhuyans discarding his father's policies of oppression, which made them feel happier and contented. For instance, Prataparaya and Gabharu khan who were forced to flee in Gauda during the reign of Biswa Singha now came back to the Koch kingdom, made an alliance with king Naranarayan, and they agreed to serve the Koch army. Probably they helped Sankaradeva to come back to Koch kingdom¹⁶⁴. Moreover, Sankaradeva and his followers intended to migrate in to the territory of Naranarayan on hearing of his 'poetic qualities', scholarly activities and democratic outlook towards all caste and creeds, religions and customs¹⁶⁵.

Therefore, when Sankaradeva and his followers were preparing to migrate into Koch kingdom considering changing political situation and other circumstances, the news of the tragic incident of his son-in-law Hari's execution and the confinement of

Madhava in the Ahom prison, hastened their migration to the Koch kingdom in about 1546¹⁶⁶.

III. Final period: in the Koch kingdom (c. 1546-1569AD.):

From the territory of the Ahoms, Sankaradeva and his followers travelled hurriedly following the river route via the river *Kalakata* or *Kalakati*, *sadhana-ghat*, *khagarikata*, *Kaliyabar*, *Singari-Bardowa*, *Darrang*, *Kuwar-gao*, *Banbhag* and *Barbhag*¹⁶⁷, to Koch kingdom. In the Koch kingdom, they temporarily stationed at different places like *Kapalabari* (*Ksetri-pargana* in Kamarupa district), *Baradi* (northeast of the present Barpeta town), *Palengdi* (now a part of the Barpeta town, on the Barpeta-bil), *Ganakpara*, *Kamarkuchi* and finally settled at *Patbausi* near Barpeta. Here he spent the remaining years of his life comparatively in peace and tranquility, which gave him the opportunity to fulfill the mission of his life¹⁶⁸. At Barpeta, he laid the foundation of a Satra, erected a *Namghar* and continued the propagation of his doctrine and within few days, his name and fame reached every nook and corner of the kingdom.

Meanwhile, at *Sunpora* (*Palengdi*), Sankaradeva initiated Bhavananda, a rich trader who had extensive business interest in the Garo and Bhutan hills besides Kamarupa and renamed him as Narayan *Thakur* or Narayan Ata. He settled at Janiya near Barpeta, took to agriculture and became a devoted friend of Madhavadeva. A man of the world otherwise, he soon flourished and became a provider to Sankaradeva and his devotees and took great initiative in procuring a large number of new converts like Madhava of Jayanti village; Gobinda *Garamali*, a police officer and worshipper of the Devi; Budha Gopal; Budha Sri-Rama Ata; *Balarama*, a *Oja pali* singer and others¹⁶⁹.

At Patbausi Sankaradeva, converted two Brahmins; Damodaradeva (of *Nalacha* village near Barpeta) and Harideva (of *Maniyari* village near Barpeta) to his faith and both of them were very close disciples of him. However, after the death of Sankaradeva they founded two different sub-sects called *Damodariya* and *Harideviya* sects respectively¹⁷⁰. He also initiated some of the people here like *Chakrapani Dwija*¹⁷¹ and *Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya*¹⁷², two Brahmins; *Ketai Khan*, a *Kayastha*; *Govinda*, a Garo; *Jayarama*, a *Bhutia*; *Murari*, a Koch and *Chandsai* a Muslim. He also befriended

Ananta Kandali, a profound scholar of Sanskrit, who translated parts of the *Bhagavata Purana* and others as we have already mentioned.

At Barpeta, he spent most of his times in preaching and converting a considerable number of people, some of them already mentioned earlier. Besides, he continued composing and rendering a large number of literary works. He continued composing the *Kirtana Ghosha*, further translated the first book of the *Ramayana* (*uttarakanda*) and instructed Madhavadeva to translate the last book (*adikanda*), portions that were left undone by the 14th century poet *Madhava Kandali*. He wrote four dramas: *Rukmini harana*, *Parijata harana*, *Keligopala* and *kalidamana*. Another drama written at Patbausi, *Kansa Vadha*, is lost. At Patbausi, he had lent his Bargeets numbering around 240 to Kamala Gayana (singer). However, unfortunately, his house was gutted and most of the Bargeets were lost. Since that incident, Sankaradeva stopped composing Bargeets. Of the 240, 34 remain today¹⁷³.

In about 1550¹⁷⁴, at the ripe age of 101 years, Sankaradeva once again went out for his 2nd pilgrimage with a large party of 117 disciples that included Madhavadeva, *Ramarama*, *Thakur Ata* and others to *Puri* via *Gaya*¹⁷⁵. According to some biographers, Sankaradeva on his way to Puri via Gaya said to have visited *Kavir's* than or math, where he met *Kabir's* daughter *Kamali*¹⁷⁶. One biographer¹⁷⁷ even wrongly hold that Kabir was alive when Sankaradeva visited his place, although it is not possible as he died long before of the 2nd pilgrimage¹⁷⁸.

The *Katha Guru Charita* and other biographies of Sankaradeva record another incident, which happened during his second pilgrimage. The different *Charitas* claim that Sankaradeva met *Chaitanya* (1483-1533) of Bengal during his 2nd pilgrimage either at Nadia or at Puri¹⁷⁹. However, this meeting does not seem to be possible because *Chaitanya* had already died in 1533. But on the other hand, inspite of controversies, some modern scholars hold the view that there is ground to believe that this meeting might have happened in his 1st pilgrimage¹⁸⁰. Anyhow, Madhavadeva, on the request of Sankaradeva's wife *Kalindi* urged Sankaradeva to return from Puri and not proceed to *Vrindavana* and as a result, he returned to *Patbausi* within six months¹⁸¹.

On his return from the 2nd pilgrimage, Sankaradeva again engaged himself in preaching of the Neo-Vaisnavism, composing and translating of literary works mainly in vernacular, giving instruction to the people for their betterment and was able to establish himself as a popular religious man. The people attracted by his simple composition and translations, their sweet melody and easily understandable intelligible philosophic ideas and joined his sect in large numbers. With the increasing popularity of the new faith, the hostility of the Brahmins increased considerably and they were not ready to tolerate Sankaradeva's new faith. Therefore, they lodged a protest against Sankaradeva to king Naranarayan alleging his anti-traditional traits of Neo-Vaisnavism, which bringing utter disaster to the country by persuading the people not to perform the age-old Vedic sacrifices, as they would not bring any merit to the doer¹⁸². King Naranarayan, being a staunch Sakta and a devoted votary of the goddess and highly incensed by such exaggerated allegations of the Brahmins, he immediately sent some police men to arrest Sankaradeva. Sankaradeva managed to go into hiding through the good offices of Chilarai, but his two followers; Narayan Das (Thakur) and Gokulchand were captured, taken to Kochbehar and subjected to inhuman torture. But inspite of severest torture, they were adamant not to give up their faith and did not divulge the whereabouts of their Guru, for which they were sold to the Bhutiyas, who were impressed by their godliness and sent back to the Koch king by two constables¹⁸³. The constables too, were impressed by them and became converts to the faith of Sankaradeva and ultimately they were released by royal orders¹⁸⁴.

In the meantime, Chilarai, the general of the Koch army and brother of Naranarayana, who had married Kamalapriya, the daughter of Sankaradeva's cousin Ramaraya, and was so influenced by the faith of Sankaradeva that he converted to the faith. He took his master Sankaradeva away to his abode in *Phulbari* to safeguard him¹⁸⁵. On hearing this, king Naranarayan asked Chilarai to present Sankaradeva to his court, assuring his younger brother that no harm would be done to him, who was also decided to surrender himself to the king. Accordingly, Sankaradeva presented himself at the court and as he moved up the steps to the throne, singing his following Sanskrit *totaka* hymn (composed extempore) to God:

Madhu daanava daaran deva varam |
 vara vaarija locana cakra dharam ||
 dharani dhara dhaarana dheya param |
 paramaaarth avidyaashubha naasha karam ||
 Kara churnita chedipa bhuri bhagam |
 bhaga bhushana korchhita paada yugam ||
 yuga naayaka naagara vesha ruchim |
 ruchiraangshupidhaana sharira suchim ||¹⁸⁶

After this hymn, he sat down; he recited the following *bargeet*:

Jaya jaya malla nripathi rasavana,

Yakeri gunagana sama nahi ana.

Nijakula kumuda prakasita indu,

*Gahina gambhira dhira pekhite sindhu*¹⁸⁷.

On hearing these, Naranarayana became very pleased and offered him great seat of honour. The king then asked Brahmins to prove their allegations against Sankaradeva and as result, a great debate followed between the Brahmins and Sankaradeva, in which Sankaradeva utterly defeated the Brahmin scholars. King Naranarayan appreciated the powerful arguments and steady and serious voice of Sankaradeva and honoured him with rich presents and appointd him as 'Gamtha' or Viceroy of the Patbausi and its neighbouring places¹⁸⁸. Sankaradeva became friend of the king and lived there for about 30 months visiting the royal court daily and giving discourse on the neo-Vaisnava faith. It was at his court, where Sankaradeva established his reputation as a great religious preacher and erudite scholar and defeated the Brahmins on many occasions and as a result, many Brahmins became his disciples¹⁸⁹. Thus, his religion prospered well under the enlightened patronage of king Naranarayan and his brother Chilarai and he and his followers felt completely secure in their movements and the Neo-Vaisnava order thrived vigorously¹⁹⁰. On the request of Naranarayan and Chilarai, he supervised the creations of the 60mx30m woven *Vrindavani vastra* that depicted the playful activities of Krishna in Vrindavana, which was presented to the Koch king. He arranged a discussion with Madhavadeva and

Thakur Ata, and gave them various instructions at Patbausi and left the place for the last time and set up his home at Bheladonga in Kochbehar.

During his stay at Kochbehar, being impressed both by majestic personality of Sankaradeva and by the efficacy of the tenets of the Neo-Vaisnavism, Naranarayan expressed his willingness to become his disciple. However, Sankaradeva was reluctant to convert a king on the ground that he could not initiate the king into his religion, as he was obliged to be polytheist¹⁹¹. He also informed the king that those who did not believe in the unity of the godhead and worshipped a number of deities were not entitled to get '*Sarana mantra*'. In this connection, B. Kakati remarks; "By virtue of his position, a king would have to worship other gods and goddesses, and the fundamental principle of Sankaradeva's creed was an undeviating love for one god. There was no provision for the worship of minor gods, because that would mark the purity of his creed"¹⁹². King Naranarayan however was not satisfied with the replies of Sankaradeva and he said that he would worship no other deities than *Hari* and intended to abdicate the throne to satisfy his religious hankering. On hearing this, Sankaradeva became very pleased, and agreed to initiate the king to his '*Sarana mantra*' and returned back to his home after advising him to observe requisite fasting to-morrow.

Last days of Sankaradeva:

The next day, which was the appointed day, the king made all kind of arrangements and sent his men to bring the saint to the royal court. However, when the royal messenger came to Sankaradeva, he found him suffering from boil in some part of his body and was not in a position to go to the royal court. However, there are two opinions about the causes of his death. According to most of the biographers, that a painful boil—a *visha phohara* – had appeared in some part of his body and this led to the passing away of the Saint¹⁹³. According to 'the Guru Charit Katha', that adamancy of Naranarayan, that he be initiated into the new religion led the saint to surrender his life to the Lord by way of meditative communion¹⁹⁴. In the meanwhile, Sankaradeva realised that his last days were approaching. Therefore, he made all arrangements for the furtherance of his cult and for that purpose; he appointed his ardent disciple, Madhavadeva as his successor in the matters of religion and said to others "I give unto Madhava the whole energy of my soul. There is no distinction between myself and him.

You will get spiritual teaching from him"¹⁹⁵. Thus, on Thursday, 21st of Bhadra (September) in Saka 1490 /1569AD, after leading a most eventful life dedicated to enlightening humanity; Sankaradeva died – at the remarkable age of 120 years¹⁹⁶.

His Personality:

The biographers of Sankaradeva uniformly speak of the resplendency, transcendent glory and charming beauty and above all the great physical strength, of the saint¹⁹⁷ for which he lived up to the unusual age of nearly 120 years. Madhavadeva in a song in which he paid his obeisance to his guru describes the saint's physical charm in the following way:

"He is handsome to look. His fair body shines like the resplendent sun. His very sight, pleasing to the assembly of people, can remove and destroy sin. He is naturally handsome without the aid of ornaments and decorations. He is dignified, majestic in appearance and wise. His lotus-like eyes are wide and bright and his completion is pleasant like the rays of the moon. His gait is dignified like that of an elephant and his voice is deep like rumbling of a cloud"¹⁹⁸. Physically he was so strong that he in his childhood is said to have swam across the Brahmaputra during the rainy season and could tame a ferocious semi-wild bull by holding it by its horns. Ramananda Thakur records an incident that with books in his hands, Sankaradeva threw off two Kachari soldiers and ran away before a closely chasing band of such men¹⁹⁹. His spell bound speaking ability, attractive pronunciation during religious recitation and singing; dramatic performance of *Ankiya nat*, etc. clearly identified his great personality. Due to his attractive and radiating personality, Sakta Madhava, who was determined not to surrender before the saint at the eve of his meeting, felt overpowered at the very sight of him and immediately prostrated before the saint. Same was the case with king Naranarayan, who insisted by Sakta Brahmins, sent his men to arrest Sankaradeva and his followers, but at his first meeting with the saint, he had been so impressed by his personality of him that he provided him valuable gifts, Gomāsthāship and decided to be a disciple of him²⁰⁰.

Besides physical strength beauty and others, he had intellectual stamina and excellence, for which he combined in himself many qualities and capabilities. He was a

scholar without arrogance, a steadfast pursuer of ideals, persuasive in arguments, humanistic in outlook, a householder without worldly attachment, a good administrator (as Siromany Bhuyan and Gomastha). He was a staunch believer in monotheism, an astute organizer of social reform, a versatile artist and poet, a successful religious discourser who could enliven his talk with appropriate logics, stories, parables and humour, a man of deep feeling and foresight. For all these things, his biographers and followers appropriately consider him as an incarnation of the god^{200A}. In this connection, the opinion of Dr. B. Kakati may be noted: "Sankaradeva has given Assam a new life, letters and a state. Rulers have come and gone and their kingdoms perished in the dust, but Sankaradeva's state endures and broad in the general heart of men his power survives"^{200B}.

Sankaradeva and Neo-Vaisnavism:

Sankaradeva preached the 'Neo-Vaisnavism', a religion of supreme surrender to a single God, Vasudeva Krishna and his various incarnations like Visnu, Narayan, Rama and Hari and therefore, it is officially known as *Eka-Saraniya-Nām-Dharma*²⁰¹. His faith also known as the '*Bhagavata Dharma*' as it is based on the concept of the *Bhagavata Purana* and later on it got popularised as '*Mahapurushiya Dharma*', for both he and his chief disciple Madhavadeva obtained the status of *Mahapurushas* or Saints among their followers as Chaitanyaadeva of Bengal obtained the status of '*Mahaprabhu*' (supreme Lord) among his followers.

He upholds the concept of oneness in all through the uttering of simple *Nama-kirtana* or divine services in the form of community prayer. His faith was based on one qualified monism as propounded by Ramanuja and Ramananda in south India and in Northern India respectively, which also hold the views that God is the central reality of soul and matter and neither can exist without Him. Although, Sankaradeva mentioned nine modes, for showing devotion to God²⁰², he emphasised only two: the *savana* (listening to the name of god), the *Nam-kirtana* (chanting the name of God) modes to be sufficient for common devotees to show *Bhakti* (devotion) to God. He also mentioned another mode, i.e. the *Dasya* (servitude to God) attitude of *Bhakti*, (devotion) in which the '*bhakta*' (votary) considered himself as the servant of God. To his followers, *Bhakti* (devotion) is the main essence and appeared to be of vital importance and metaphysical questions were of little significance. The faith was accessible to the

highest and lowest, men and women alike, irrespective of birth, religions, caste or status and no rigid theocratic laws were to be followed by the votary. He strictly prohibited Idols worship of other gods and goddess, which was an open revolt against the intellectualism of Brahmanic philosophy as well as against the misguided Tantricists and others²⁰³. He holds a non-dualistic standpoint of God and ignored dual-Gods concept like Radha-Krishna of Chaitanyaadeva, Gopi-Krishna of Vallacharyya, Rukmini-Krishna of Namadeva and Sita-Rama of Ramananda of Vaisnavism of other parts of India²⁰⁴. His faith did not acknowledge neither female counterparts of the God or any Sakti, the energy represented in a female form of Lord Visnu.

If we elaborately go through the writings and activities of Sankaradeva, it becomes quite clear that he was not a speculative thinker and propagator of *Vaisnavism* supported by discursive reasoning and abstract thinking, but a realistic thinker and reformer of classical *Vaisnavism*, in a simplified form, based on devotion and faith of classical *Vaisnavism* of the *Bhagavata Purana*. He drew much of his inspiration and devotional theologism from the *Bhagavata Purana* and his two pilgrimages to the religious places of *Vaisnavism* in other parts of India, which we have mentioned earlier. According to Bhushan and the *Katha-Guru-charita*, after his first pilgrimage, Sankaradeva had built a temple on the original site of his father's residence to share his experience during the pilgrimage, to discuss religious matters and to hold prayers²⁰⁵. However, to obtain full teaching of *Vaisnavism* of the *Bhagavata Purana*, M. Neog with the authority of Daityari writes, "... he had still to wait, it appears, the arrival of a complete copy of the *Bhagavata Purana*, furnished with Sridhara Svami's commentary, from Puri through one Jagadish Misra of Tirhut. ... Much stress is laid by the biographers on this matter, which has been considered as being of great moment. It is added that Jagadish recited and explained the whole work in Sankara's presence, soon after which he died.

When Sankara had listened to Jagadish's discourses on the *Bhagavata Purana* he convinced that this work had no peer and that its purpose was to fix krsna as the sole worshipful, and that the celebrating of his acts in the company of holy men and the taking of sole refuge in him was the greatest religion of men"²⁰⁶.

Thus, Sankaradeva was greatly influenced by the *Bhagavata Purana* and derived devotional theologism from it. Daityari states that Sankaradeva now went into the *Purana* and set himself to the task of propounding and propagating the faith²⁰⁷. B. K.

Kakati rightly observes, "the *Bhagavata Purana* removed the last vestige of doubt still linger in his mind. Its appreciation marked the last stage in the process of spiritual evolution and reinforced with the voice of an ancient prophecy, the principle of devotion to One in which he had fixed his mind.as the condition of hope and final liberation, seemed to promise the only remedial social ideal, and Sankaradeva set at once to work it out"²⁰⁸.

However, inspite of the derivation of devotional theology and inspiration from the *Bhagavata Purana* and other scriptures, he did not utilize it as mere the replica of the Vaisnavite movement of the other parts of India. Considering the prevailing situation, that is ignorance, superstitions, notorious practices of Tantricism, fanciful speculation, baneful effects of the caste system, expensive ritualistic worldly religious rites and above all the heterogeneous tribes and communities of the region, he tried to utilize his gained ideas in a new form of religion through which he created conditions for their harmonious living. In this connection, S. N. Sharma, opines, Sankaradeva "could clearly and rightly perceive that the society was more in need of reformation than a system of philosophy. That is why he divert his attention solely towards the propagation of the new faith without caring whether the religion propagated by him was based on a systematic philosophy or not"²⁰⁹. Therefore, his faith is generally called the 'Neo-Vaisnavism', 'the *Bhagavata Dharma*', or 'the *Mahapurushya Dharma*', as we mentioned earlier, but not only 'Vaisnavism'.

However, it may be noted here that Sankaradeva was not a philosopher nor did he endeavour to evolve a philosophy. S. N. Sharma, opines, "He was a reformer and a poet, but not a philosopher"²¹⁰. Nevertheless, his works like the *Bhaktiratnakara*, the *Bhaktipradip* and many others, are pointers to the fact that he was steeped in the lore of Hindu philosophy and not any independent philosophy and his faith emphasised on practicalities of socio-religious aspects, not on theoretical and philosophical aspects. Even, neither Sankaradeva nor his immediate followers have tried to give much-needed philosophical basis to their faith.

Nevertheless, from the writings, translations and activities of Sankaradeva and his followers, a rough idea of their philosophical views can be had and those clearly revealed the fact that there is clear influence of the *Bhagavata Purana*, writings like the *Bhaktiratnakara*, the *Bhaktipradip* etc., in forming the theological and philosophical background of Neo-Vaisnavism of the region. All these books were very popular among

the Neo-Vaisnavas of the region and greatly respected them as religious scriptures, even as the God Almighty²¹¹.

Elements of the Neo-Vaisnavism:

The detail study of the literatures, writings, and religious activities of Sankaradeva and his followers, revealed the following fundamental elements of the Neo-Vaisnavism:

A) God: The only supreme Being, generally called Narayan, and *Krishna*, *Vasudeva*, *Visnu*, *Madhava*, *Janarddana*, *Gobinda*, etc. are some of the names that are used as synonyms of Narayana. "He (God) is the only reality and everything else that appears is illusory. There is no reality save and except Him"²¹². He pure bliss, self differentiated and the ground of all life, infinite in nature and attributes, omniscient, omnipotent, creator, destroyer , sustainer of all and the only Lord of the universe.

B) Guru (spiritual guide): It is the second fundamental element of the Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva. He is the initiator of the *Bhaktas* (devotees) to the faith, will guide them for all religious activities, and thus will act as bridge between God and *Bhaktas*. In the Neo-Vaisnavism, initiation of a *Bhakta*s through a Guru to the faith is a pre-condition to be a follower of the faith.

C) Sarana: This is another element of the Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva. The Sarana ceremony is the formal spiritual initiation of the proselyte, who totally surrendered to the God through the guru, the spiritual guide and a tax (*Guru-kar*) is paid. The mantra that is given during the Sarana ceremony to the Convert is "শরণ ম
জগন্নাথ শ্রীকৃষ্ণ পুরুষেতম", i.e. Lord Krishna, the best of all *purusha* and lord of the world, is my 'shelter'²¹³.

D) The Bhakti (Devotion) and fraternity of Bhaktas (devotees): The *Bhakti* (Devotion) or *Bhaktimarga* (Devotional way) is the one and only way to realise God and in this, Bhakta sees the Lord in everything in the world and finds him revealing himself in the form of love²¹⁴. A Bhakta must posses the qualities of sympathy, beneficence, forgiveness, softness of heart and complete mastery over his passions. Besides these, Sankaradeva prescribed *Dāsyā* (servitude to God) as an important and only way to serve God and also the only way to be a Bhakta (devotee). The relations among the Bhaktas themselves are based on universal fraternity.

E) Nām: Chanting of the God's name and glories is another element of the Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva. Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva composed a large numbers of *Kirtana-ghosha* and *Nam-ghosh* respectively to praise the God and his glories and are being chanted almost on all occasions.

Sankaradeva and propagation of the Neo-Vaisnavism:

With above-mentioned elements as his basic principles, Sankaradeva launched his Neo-Vaisnava movement in the first decade 16th century in general and in Koch Kingdom in about 1546, i.e. from the year of his settlement in Koch Kingdom during the reign of king Naranarayan. Simplistic principles of his faith and its wide democratic and humanistic outlook had a universal appeal to the heterogeneous people of the region and as result all communities including the Koch, the Mech, *Kalita*, *Kayastha*, *Chandal*, *Garo*, *Ahom*, *Bhutiya*, *Miri*, the *Brahmin* and even *Muslims* embraced Sankaradeva's faith. For example, Gobinda, a *Garo* tribe; Paramananda, a *Miri* (*Mishing*) tribe; Narahari, an *Ahom* man; Jayarama, a *Bhutiya* man; Narottam, a *Naga* tribe; Chandsai, a *Muslim* – all were the disciples of Sankaradeva²¹⁵. Among his other disciples from lower castes of Hindu Pantheon, mention may be made of the *Madhava*, *Hira* by caste of *Jayanti* Village and *Srirama* and *Bhabora Das*, who were of *Kaibarta* and *Baniya* castes respectively²¹⁶. All these heterogeneous and peripheral or so called untouchables, backward classes and tribes, who were during Sankaradeva's time either outside of Hindu fold or lower castes of Hindu fold taken into the faith of Sankaradeva²¹⁷. Besides these, many people from upper stratum of the Hinduism or converted to the Hinduism, including members of royal families, *Kayasthas*, *Brahmins*, merchants etc. accepted the new faith of Sankaradeva. Thus for example, *Chilarai*²¹⁸, the brother and general of king Naranarayan, *Kamalapriya*, the wife of *Chilarai*²¹⁹, *Bhavananda*²²⁰, a big merchants (renamed as *Narayana Thakur* by Sankaradeva), most of the *Kayasthas* (including *Bhuyans*) and the *Brahmins* including *Damodaradeva* and *Harideva* –all were disciples of Sankaradeva and references of which had already made in various places. Inspite of the challenge from the orthodox *Brahmins* and in their provocation, from royal courts of both the *Koches* and the *Ahoms* in early stages, Sankaradeva finally was able to subdue all challenges and able to reach to

the heart of the all communities of the region and made his faith a popular religion of the region²²¹.

King Naranarayan, Sankaradeva and Neo-Vaisnavism:

Sankaradeva migrated to the Koch kingdom from the Ahom kingdom in about 1546 due to Brahmanical opposition and to avoid the persecution of the Ahom royal court, he spent the rest of his life within the Koch Kingdom under King Naranarayan. Here, in the early stage, he started preaching his faith comparatively in peace and made his 2nd pilgrimage in about 1550. However, within few years, here too, he had to face the challenges from the orthodox Brahmins and their provocation, from king Naranarayan. King Naranarayan, being a staunch Sakta and a devoted votary of the goddess and highly incensed by the Brahmins, immediately sent some police men to arrest Sankaradeva. However, Chilarai, the general of the Koch army and brother of Naranarayana, who in the meanwhile, had converted to the Neo-Vaisnavism, interfered into the matter. Sankaradeva ultimately was able to win the heart of King Naranarayan. Highly impressed and pleased by the saint's deep knowledge, appearance and saintly character, the king offered him great seat of honour. He appointed him as the 'Gamatha' or Viceroy of the Patbausi and its neighbouring places²²², where the saint, lived for about 30 months, visiting the royal court daily and giving discourse on the Neo-Vaisnava faith. King Naranarayan became a friend of the saint, granted lands to establish a Satra at Bheladanga, (later known as Madhupur Satra) near the Koch capital²²³, issued a royal order permitting the free propagation of his faith among the subjects of the kingdom²²⁴ and thus established him as a great religious preacher and erudite scholar in the court. Besides these, King Naranarayan and Chilarai themselves encouraged construction of large number of Satras (monastery) and Namgharas (prayer halls) in various places within the Kingdom²²⁵. Even, during his stay at Kochbehar, being impressed both by majestic personality of Sankaradeva and by the efficacy of the tenets of the Neo-Vaisnavism, Naranarayan wanted to accept initiation from Sankaradeva, which the latter declined on the ground that he could not initiate the king into his religion, as the king was obliged to be polytheist²²⁶.

Thus, the religion of Sankaradeva prospered well under the enlightened patronage of king Naranarayan and his brother Chilarai, and his followers felt completely secure in their movements and the Neo-Vaisnava order thrived vigorously²²⁷. In such a situation, people from all castes and communities became converts to the new faith and within a short time; Neo-Vaisnavism became the religion of the people of in the Koch kingdom²²⁸. Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva did not remain only a religious movement in region; it marked a revolutionary impact on the society, culture and all spheres of life and brought about a change in the very outlook about life and the world. Dr. B. Kakati rightly observed, "A new gospel requires a new bible. And Sankara Deva gave his gospel in songs, dramas, stories and devotional exhortations. He inspired his followers and associates to popularise the literature of devotion. He led the way in acting in dramatic performances and singing in devotional congregations. He was in the full blaze of the day in all his activities, the mystic haze belonging only to the life of his spirit"^{228A}.

Direct Disciples of Sankaradeva and Neo-Vaisnavite Movements:

Sankaradeva, in his lifetime had initiated large number men to his faith from different castes and creeds and among them; some were so devoted to the faith that they greatly helped the spreading of the faith during the lifetime of Sankaradeva as associates. They took the full responsibility after the death of their Master in 1568. After the death of Sankaradeva, dissension arose among his disciples and as a result, different sub-sects arose which is discussed later. Before that, short biographical sketches of some important disciple-cum-preachers, who marked their achievements during our period of study, need to be highlighted:

Madhavadeva (1489-1596), was the most illustrious disciple of Sankaradeva and saint of the period, who was born in 1489 at a village near Narayanpur, in an orthodox Sakta Bhuyan family. It is stated that influenced by of his brother-in -law Gayapani who had already converted to the Neo-Vaisnavite faith, Madhavadeva intended to meet Sankaradeva to discuss religious matters. After a great conversation (arguments and counter arguments) between the two scholars after which, Madhavadeva realised the purity and sublimity of the faith of Sankaradeva and requested Sankaradeva to accept him as disciple and to show him the path of

supreme realization²²⁹. Soon he became a great disciple of the Master in about 1522AD²³⁰, and a strongest adherent of the faith. He started staying in the house of Ramadasa, near Sankaradeva's Satras and attended daily ceremonials of the Satras²³¹ and from then he became Master's shadow, his most accomplished and faithful follower. He first made his house at Baradi, and then moved Ganak-kuchi near Patbausi, the main Satra of Sankaradeva²³².

The conversion of Madhavadeva was a great impetus to the spreading of the Neo-Vaisnavite movement in the region for in him were the force of intellect and the strength of character imperative for a great social reformer and bulwark of religion. With his initiation, Madhavadeva too changed abode with his Master from various places, which we have already mentioned earlier. At the time of the death of Sankaradeva in 1568, he selected Madhavadeva as his successor and directed his sons and others that his spiritual power and energy would develop in Madhavadeva²³³. Madhavadeva, according to the tradition, outlived his master by 28 years till about 1596 AD. During these 28 years, he, as the head of the neo-Vaisnavism mostly stayed at Ganak-kuchi and Sunaridiya Satras close to principal Satra, Patbausi (Barpeta), and carried on the proselytising activities as well as the cultural tradition initiated by his Master and literary activities. But in the very first year of pontifical period, a section of Neo-Vaisnavas, headed by Damodaradeva, a Brahmin disciple of Sankaradeva, declined Madhavadeva's leadership and seeded the schism of the faith which is discussed later. In the meanwhile, the Koch kingdom got divided and Raghudeva, the son of Chilarai became the king of the eastern Koch Kingdom (Koch Hajo), with whom Madhavadeva came into conflict on the ground that he was preaching against the worship of the goddess Kamakhya, the guardian deity of the Koch Kings²³⁴. As a result, he was arrested and brought to Bijoynagara, the capital Raghudeva as captive but ultimately the allegation proved baseless and the Saint was released with due respect. But he was not allowed to live at Barpeta and was directed to live at Hajo, near the Haragriva Madhava Temple²³⁵. After staying few months at Hajo, he realised the uncongenial situation for him and decided to leave the place owing to the hostile attitude of the king as well as a section of the Brahmins and therefore migrated to Koch Behar, the capital of western Koch Kingdom, then ruled by Lakshminarayan, the son of Naranarayan.

King Lakshminarayan reverentially received him and some of his disciples and made arrangement of their settlement at Bheladuar, a place near the capital²³⁶. In due course of time, with the king's munificence, a Satra was established at Bheladuar and king's mother, nurses, wives, sons, daughters and others high officials embraced the Neo-Vaisnavism from Madhavadeva²³⁷. It is also recorded that king Lakshminarayan passed orders saying "Let all my subjects from this day, follow the path shown by Madhavadeva. I have come to know the purity of the faith of Madhavadeva, and therefore, let all my subjects cast off their existing faiths and beliefs so long prevalent in my kingdom"²³⁸. As a result, the Koches and Meches gave up their old rites and customs with the acquisition of the new faith²³⁹. Madhavadeva stayed at Bheladuar Satra (Madhupur satra) in Koch Behar and died here in the year 1596 AD.

Madhavadeva remained a celibate throughout his life and initiated a new order called Kewaliya (the life-celebrates)²⁴⁰. He is considered as the real founder of the Satra institution of the faith; systematised it by introducing daily prayer and disciplined monastic code and popularised it among the common masses. Besides systemisation, he was largely responsible for its spread in all direction for which he sent his faithful followers with the mission of propagation to the different regions of the north-east India. His missionary zeal and organising capacity firmly planted the root of the new faith as a faith of common masses the region. Daityari rightly said that "Sankara only revealed (the secret of) Bhakti, the religion of love; it is Madhava, who made it public"²⁴¹.

Moreover, he marked his great achievements in the fields of literature, music and rendering of religious scriptures like his master. He composed several Ankiya Nats (one act plays) and Bargitas (noble songs), all depicting the childish pranks of Krishna. At the direction of Guru, he rendered into vernacular verse the Bvakti-Ratnavali of Vishnupuri Sanyasi²⁴². Nevertheless, most crowning literary work of Madhavadeva is 'Nama-ghosh', consists of one thousand devotional verses for which it is also called Hajari-ghosh²⁴³. It is considered as magnum opus of Neo-Vaisnavite hymnic rapture and occupies a unique place in neo-Vaisnava philosophy of North-East India²⁴⁴.

Damodaradeva (1488-1598) was born in Brahmin family, at a village named Nilachal, near Sankaradeva's native place, Bardowa, in present Nowgong district where he lived in close friendship with the family of Sankaradeva. Although Dr. S. N. Sharma²⁴⁵ with reference from *Vamsigopaladevar Charita* of Ramananda Dvija, opines that Damodaradeva initiated into the mystery of the Bhakti cult by one Vasudeva Vipra of Orissa and even supported by *Buranji-Vivekaratna*²⁴⁶ of Maniram Barbhandar Barua. However, this view is not confirmed by contemporary happenings and others sources. The biographies of Sankaradeva unanimously assert that Damodaradeva was the disciple of the former. According to Gobindadasa, Damodara calls Sankaradeva his direct preceptor²⁴⁷. According to Daityari, Ramarama, a Brahmin Bhakta of Sankaradeva²⁴⁸, initiated Damodaradeva to the faith. Ramananda Dvija more elaborately records that Damodaradeva got the formal initiation (*saraḥa*) from Ramarama, while Sankaradeva administered to him the formal sermon or instruction (*upadesha* or *guru-vakya*)²⁴⁹. Even biographies of Damodaradeva had indirectly acknowledged the indebtedness of Damodaradeva to Sankaradeva. *Damodara-Charita* of Nilakantha say's "Sankara, Madhava and Damodara are identical; there is no distinction between them"²⁵⁰. Damodaradeva turned a proselytiser at behest of Sankaradeva, which is proved by the following command of Sankaradeva:"You please start initiating Brahmins, nobles and kings without any discriminate". In reply, Damodaradeva says,"You are burdening me with a noble responsibility when your own self is present"²⁵¹. Damodaradeva expected to be the successor of Sankaradeva, which can only demand a direct disciple and he duly celebrated the death anniversary of Sankaradeva as his Guru. Ramaraya, another biographer of Damodaradeva narrates that Sankaradeva, on one occasion, took Madhavadeva and Damodaradeva to a secluded place where he revealed religious secrets to Madhava in the presence of Damodaradeva, which is generally considered as internal matter of the faith²⁵².

From the above facts, it can safely be concluded that Damodaradeva might not be the direct disciple (*Mantra Sishya*) of Sankaradeva. He however, no doubt, inspired and helped Damodaradeva to undertake the arduous life of a religious preacher and reformer like an active preceptor (*Karma-guru*) for which Damodaradeva marked his important contribution to the propagation and spread of Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva during the lifetime of Sankaradeva as well as after his death.

During the time of Naranarayan's first Ahom invasion and shifting of Sankaradeva from Dhuwahat to Barpeta in about 1546, Damodaradeva with some relatives, too, followed him and settled at Patbausi, near Sankaradeva's Satra at Barpeta, where he was attracted towards the faith of Sankaradeva for its musical charm²⁵³. From here he first received the great impetus from Sankaradeva for adopting the life of a proselytiser and within a short time he could attract a band of faithful followers, mainly from the Brahmins and began to take active part in propagation and spread of Neo-Vaisnavism. With the conversion of the learned Brahmins under the guidance of Damodaradeva, the Neo-Vaisnavism movement gained a status and superiority over other faiths and came to command the admiration and reverence of kings and nobles, which ultimately lead towards the growth and popularity of the faith among the masses.

Damodaradeva was not a poet and great scholar of writings like Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva. However, as a religious organizer and propagator, he could be classed with them. After the death of Sankaradeva, dissension arose between Damodaradeva and Madhavadeva as a result of which he started a new sub-sect claiming complete independence of the sect founded by Sankaradeva and came to be known as after his own name *Damodariya* sect.

After the division of the Koch kingdom in about 1581, his Satra in Patbausi fell within the kingdom of Raghudeva, where he peacefully conduct religious activities. However, during the reign of his son and successor Parikhshitnarayan, the king for upholding a religion propounded by a Sudra saint persecuted Damodaradeva and for this reason, he had to leave his native place and had to shift to Koch Behar (the capital of the western Koch Kingdom) where he died in about 1598.

Harideva (1493-1568) was another Brahmin follower of Sankaradeva, who was born at Narayanpur, and attained a high spiritual eminence following puritanical proclivities of Sankaradeva. He is considered as one of the four *dharma-charyas* appointed by Sankaradeva and was a great follower of him²⁵⁴.

From his native place at Narayanpur, he migrated to Kamarupa, wandered places like Hajo, Malipara and Dantapur and finally settled at *Maneri* or *Maniyari* near Patbausi Satra of Sankaradeva. He used to visit the Satra daily. He died in the year 1568, the year in which Sankaradeva is also said to have died. After his death, his followers are said to have established independent '*Brahma Samhati*' sect accepting Brahmanical rituals along with the devotional practices of Neo-Vaisnavism, which had close affinity

with the fundamental teachings and practices of *Damodariya* sect. He, for the first time nominated his daughter Bhubaneswari for the headship of his Satra at *Maneri* or *Maniyari*, which is considered, as one of the extra ordinary and revolutionary event in the faith.

Narayana Dasa or Thakur Ata, another prominent disciple of Sankaradeva and a colleague of Madhavadeva was born in 1495 at a place called *Malau* or *Malowa*, on the northern bank of Brahmaputra in Kamarupa district, marked his contribution in propagation of the faith. His original name was *Bhavananda* and was a talented merchant, who joined Sankaradeva. Sankaradeva very impressed by his firmness of mind and talent, re-named him as Narayana Dasa or Thakur Ata. It is said that during a trade journey Narayan Thakur met Bhaskara Dvija, a disciple of Sankaradeva, who influenced him very much and as a result, he approached the master for initiation. Then he became very active in the faith and induced many men to come and accept the faith including Madhava of Jayanti village, Gobinda Garamali (a police officer and worshipper of Devi), Balarama (a Oja pali singer), and many others²⁵⁵. Narayan Thakur first settled at *Manthai*, a place near Patbausi Satra to enable him to attend daily ceremonials of the Satra and then he finally built his house at Janiya and tried his best to bring people from the surrounding villages to the faith. It is also said that he had extraordinary power, by which he and Gokulchandra were able to free themselves from the guards of king Naranarayan, which we have already mentioned. At the time of migration of Madhavadeva to Koch Behar, he wanted to accompany him there, but the former did not agree to take Narayana with him as the monks and lay disciples of Kamarupa would constantly be in need of a guide and support²⁵⁶. Therefore, he stayed at his home at Janiya and died at a very old age there leaving four sons- Paramananda, Jagadananda, Sivananda and Ramananda²⁵⁷.

Besides these fours, Sankaradeva had galaxy of eminent disciple, occasional references of which made at different places of the foregoing pages. He also produced in an unbroken stream a galaxy of eminent saints, poets, preachers, philosophers and leaders, who marked their significant achievements in the fields of religion, literature, religion and philosophy. They also brought into juxtaposition different races, castes tribes who were in various stages of cultures and thus infused newness and fullness to the life and thought of the people of the region. Thus, they will occupy an honoured position among the saints of India²⁵⁸.

Neo-Vaisnavism and Satra Institutions:

The most important institution, through which Sankaradeva and his followers propagated, stabilized, extended and above all institutionalised the Neo-Vaisnavism, is known as 'Satra'. The term 'Satra' in the Sanskrita texts has been used in two senses, firstly, in the sense of a sacrifice with recitation, listening and explanation of the entire the *Bhagavata Purana* and secondly, in the sense of an alms-house. In the *Satapatha Brahmana*, Purusha Narayana is said to have performed a *Pancharatna Satra* as a means of obtaining superiority over all beings and becoming all beings²⁵⁹. In the same way, in the beginning of the *Bhagavata Purana*, the term *Satra* has been used in the sense of an assembly of sages gathered together in the forest of *Nimasha* for the sacrificial purpose and *Suta-Ugrasvara* is said to have recited and explained the entire the *Bhagavata Purana* to the assembled sages²⁶⁰. On the other hand, later Sanskrita texts and inscriptions used the term in the sense of alms-house, or a hall of charity²⁶¹. However, it is most probable that Sankaradeva has utilized the part of reciting and listening of the story of *Suta-Ugrasvara* of the *Bhagavata Purana*, in his Neo-Vaisnava movement, who did the same thing to his followers, who clustered around him to listen to his religious discourses. He reminds the listeners of the part played by *Suta-Ugrasvara* in the assembly of holy sages in the forest of *Nimasha* and that easily led the people to believe that a *Satra* and a holy association where the *Bhagavata* used to be discussed were identical. Under this impression, the followers of Neo-Vaisnavite faith began to term as assembly where the *Bhagavata Purana* used to be recited and explained as a *Satra*²⁶². Etymologically *Satra* means 'an association or a sitting (V sad+tra) or an instrument which helps to liberate the noble (sat +v trai) which must have supplied additional weight to form the whole notion of *Sattra*', which changed to *Satra* in Neo-Vaisnavism of the whole northeast India²⁶³. However, the definition of *Satra* as given by Bhattacharya, a prominent religious teacher of 16th century, in his 'Sarana Mallika', may be cited in this connection :

"Yatracaranti saddharman kevala Bhagavata-priyah I
Navadha bhagavadbhakti pratyaham yatra vartate II
Tat-sattram uttamam khetram vaisnava-sura-vanditam I

*Tatrastha vaisnavah sarve Harinama parayanah*²⁶⁴. //

(That supreme place adored by gods and Vaisnavas, where ardent devotees perform place adored by gods and Vaisnavas, where ardent devotees perform duties pleasing to God and where nine fold Bhakti daily prevails, is called *Satra*: Vaisnavas residing there are naturally prone to *Harinama*)

Satra as an institution resembles a certain context, i.e., the Buddhist Matha or Monastery of early and medieval period. However, M. Neog²⁶⁵ opines that the influence of two other religious institutions more than Buddhist matha, seem to have gone deep into the origin of Neo-Vaisnavite *Satras*. These are the Jagannath temple at Puri being the chief among them and the residential institutions of various monastic faiths of India, chiefly those of the schools of Sankaracharya and Ramananda. Nevertheless, it is fact that the *Satra* institution played a vital role in the propagation and institutionalisation of Neo-Vaisnavite movement and became an integrated part of it.

Constituent parts of a Satra:

Sankaradeva himself first introduced the structure of the *Satra* institution, at least in the primary stage. According to the biographies of Sankaradeva, the reformer finding his home insufficient for the propagation of the faith, shifted a few hundred yards from his ancestral village to an open field, where his father used to cultivate mustered seeds. Here he constructed a *Satra-griha* including *Namghar*, a *Manikuta* and *Chai-hati*, which till to-day form the constituent elements of a *Satra*²⁶⁶. However, an ideal Neo - Vaisnavite *Satra* proper consists of a square enclosure wall, made of bamboo and wood, varying according to its strength and having main four parts. They are as follows²⁶⁷.

1) Karapat or Batchara: The entrances (generally four) or gateways leading to the interior of a *Satra* are usually marked by a small open house called *Karapat* or *Batchara*. It work as gatehouse, the visitors are first received here, and then they are escorted to the interior of the *Satra*.

2) Namghar or Kirtanghar: The central assembly hall of a *Satra* is called *Namghar* or *Kirtanghar* and is considered as the centre of the main activities of a *Satra*. It is a large open hall for holding prayers, religious meetings and social gatherings. The

existence of *Namghar* or *Kirtanghar* is not confined to the *Satras* alone, but it is a common feature of the all villages of the region.

3) Manikut or Bhaj-ghar: The central temple, the actual shrine in which is placed the *Sinhasana* or *Thapana*, which contain the main object of worship, generally a sacred scripture, called ‘*Manikut*’ or ‘*Bhaj-ghar*’. It is a separate house usually a bit higher but smaller in dimension and attached to the *Namghar* or *Kirtanghar* adjoining the eastern end.

4) Hati: Centering round the ‘*Manikut*’ or ‘*Bhaj-ghar*’ and *Namghar* or *Kirtanghar*, the four rows of huts or long houses existed as the living place of the clerical devotees called *Hati*. Considering its numbers i.e. four, it is popularly known as *Chari-hati*. In general, it is the living area of the *Satra*. To each devotee, one hut consisting of one or more rooms is allotted according to his status and need. The head of the *Satra* i.e. *Adhikar* or *Satriya* and his assistants heads, *Deka-Adhikar*, generally live in the eastern *Hati* with the principal devotee. However, in non-monastic *Satra*, the *Chari-hati* system is rarely found, where only other three parts are found.

Development of the Satra institution:

However, in the initial stage of the Neo-Vaisnavite movement of Sankaradeva, the term *Satra* did not acquire a technical meaning to mean a particular systematized and well-organised religious institution. It simply meant an assembly of holy men where recitation of the *Bhagavata-Purana* was regularly held. According to Ananta Kandali, a contemporary of Sankaradeva, in course of his own introduction in his translation of the *Bhagavata* (X Skanda) speaks of his father founding a *Satra* at Hajo, where he constantly recited the *Bhagavata*, most probably a religious sitting, without proper setup of full-fledged *Satra* of succeeding period²⁶⁸. Sankaradeva is said to have established his first *Satra* or *Satra-griha* at Bardowa, his birthplace, which ultimately became a holy place (*Than*) for the Vaisnavite faith. According to Bhushan Dvija, Sankaradeva used the term ‘*Satre-griha*’ in the sense of a house, where religious functions and discussions took place and which was established immediately after his return from 1st pilgrimage²⁶⁹. Thus, it is fact that that the *Satra* institution, in a well-organised form with four parts of a Vaisnavite monastery on permanent nature with different paraphernalia of elaborate religious institution developed after Sankaradeva. This is proved by the facts that Madhavadeva, who succeeded Sankaradeva as the head of the sect did not

become the head of any *Satra* left by Sankaradeva and had there been any such a system, Madhavadeva would not have resided with his brother-in-law, Ramadasa who lived at a distance of few miles from Sankaradeva's residence²⁷⁰. Thus, it is possible that insecurity and temporary nature of his stay at different places prevented Sankaradeva from organizing the infant institution on a permanent and systematic basis. However, later on *Satras* grew up at almost all places where Sankaradeva stayed during his movements from one place to another throughout his life.

Madhavadeva is regarded as the real founder of the *Satra* institutions, for he systematized and organised it on firmer footing and introduced a very rigorous and disciplined monastic codes including '*Chaidya-prasanga*' (fourteen services) and daily prayer services. He organised and reconstructed the *Barpeta Satra*, which henceforth became not only a centre of the neo-Vaisnavite activities, but also served as a model institution of that.

Damodaradeva as a head of the Brahmanical sub-sect after the death of Sankaradeva also made great contribution to the growth of the *Satra* institution and seems to be more striking. Probably it was he, who for the first time introduced the system of paying religious tithe (*dharma-kar*) by disciples to their respective *Satras*²⁷¹. It helped to improve the financial condition of the *Satras*. From the account given by Ramaraya, one of the biographers of Damodaradeva, of the *Satra* of Damodaradeva at Koch Behar, it is evident that it practically resembles a monastic *Satra* of the present day. From this, it can be inferred that he had hands in giving a definite shape to the structural pattern of the *Satra* institution²⁷². Ramacharana Thakura also indirectly admitted the role of Damodaradeva in the structural growth of the *Satra* institution. He stated that Narayan Thakur once advised Madhavadeva to establish a *Satra* on the lines of Damodaradeva's *Satra* at Patbausi, and accordingly he reorganized and reconstructed the *Satra* of Barpeta, the reference of which we have already made²⁷³.

Thus, both Madhavadeva and Damodaradeva gave a definite shape and systematized pattern to the *Satra* institution and as a result, a large number of *Satras* established in different parts of the country and their number gradually increased. S. N. Sharma elaborately made an approximate list of the *Satras* of the northeast India, mentioning names of *Satras*, founders, the times of foundation and location the *Satras*²⁷⁴. From this vast list, we rearranged the following list, which included in our period of Study:

S/L No.	Names Satras	Founders	Approx Dates	Location
1.	Bahari.	Harideva	1560-1580	Kamarupa
2.	Maneri.	Harideva	1560-1580	Kamarupa
3.	Parena	Jagannathadeva	1580-1600	Kamarupa
4.	Srijangram	Raghunath	1575-1600	Goalpara
5.	Baradi	Narayana Thakur	1580-1600	Kamarupa
6.	Ganak-Kuchi	Madhavadeva	1550-1575	Kamarupa
7.	Satrasal	Ramaraya	1550-1575	Goalpara
8	Sundariya	Ramacharana-Thakur	1575-1600	Kamarupa
9.	Barpeta	Madhavadeva	1570-1590	Kamarupa
10.	Barbari	Narayana Thakur	1580-1600	Darrang & Lakhimpur

However, it seems to us that it is an incomplete list. The *Bhitaudhap Satra*, which later on came to be known as *Vaikunthapura Satra*, *Madhupur Satra* of Sankaradeva, Kakatkuta and Vela *Satras* of Sankaradeva and Madhavdeva, Fulbari *Satra* of Madhavdeva and some others are not listed²⁷⁵. Moreover, the direct encouragement and patronage of king Naranarayan, Chilarai, and Laxminarayan gave impetus to the

establishment of a large number of Satras within the Kingdom, references of which mentioned in many places earlier²⁷⁶.

Thus, Satra institution originated as a Neo-Vaisnavite religious establishment to educate the disciples in the religious doctrine, to create an atmosphere where single-minded devotion to God based on a fellowship of devotees under the guidance of a Guru could be achieved, to initiate aspirants to Neo-Vaisnavism and to look after the administration of the establishment and others. However, within a short period, it became the epicenter of the all types of socio-cultural activities, spiritual and other leanings, religious activities and dramatic performances and brought about significant changes in all spheres life. As institutions having an unmatched symbolic value and commanding deepest of reverence from all sections of the people of Assam, the role of Satras becomes immensely significant in terms of reaching out to the people. D. Nath opines, "The Satras were the centres of learning and education and guardians of religion and morality. Regular Nama-Kirtana, recitation from religious texts, learned discussions, performance of drama on religious themes as well as of classical dance music and skill in some technical arts and crafts made the monastic life an ideal way of living"²⁷⁷.

One component of the Satra institution i.e. the *Kirtanghar* or the *Nāmghar*, needs to be emphasised in this regard which existed not only in all the Satras but also in every village of the region. It may be termed as intra-satra (situated in side of a satra campus) and extra-satra (situated in almost all villages out side of a satra campus). The *Kirtanghar* or the *Nāmghar* became an integral part of every Hindu village in lower Assam over time. The Village *Kirtanghar* or *Nāmghars* operate and are managed on democratic principles. The *Kirtanghar* or *Nāmghars* since the time of Sankaradeva have been so designed and constructed that people of all races and tribes living in this part of the country could easily enter them and take part in congregational prayers and the like. Thus, significantly, the *Kirtanghar* or *Nāmghar* is built without walls or if at all, only with half walls with two rows of pillars with a thatched or tin roof. This has a great deal of symbolic value in terms of promotion of the ideal of equality. An open wall-less *Nāmghar* underscores the point that its doors are open to everyone and that it is an

inclusive institution embracing all people without making any discrimination among them along such artificial lines as caste, creed, religion, tribe or language.

The establishment of the village *Kirtanghar* or *Nāmghar* came about with the idea of popularizing the Neo-Vaisnavite faith to the masses. As a result, every village came under the religious influence of one *Satra* or the other and its influence even penetrated gradually into the neighbouring tribal areas. It also gave the region a religious forum and rich literature; popularised art of classical music and dance and socio-cultural activities of the community feeling. Thus, D. Nath writes "The community prayer held in the *Nāmghars*, frequent recitations and interpretations of religious texts as well as performance of Bhawanas disseminated among the villagers spiritual and moral education. The *Nāmghar* therefore, was a very useful institution teaching the villagers good conduct, ethics, Morales, and even personal hygiene. Soon they became the village court trying all cases –civil and criminal"²⁷⁸.

Thus, Neo-Vaisnavite Satras of north-east India, as a whole, propagated, stabilized and systematized the faith and kept watchful eye upon the moral conduct and other socio-cultural-educational aspects. Like the Christian church of medieval Europe, Neo-Vaisnavite Satras of the region had been keeping the candle of learning and knowledge burning from the 16th century until the early part of the last century.

Schism of the faith at the death of Sankaradeva:

In the lifetime of Sankaradeva, there was no rift amongst his followers. However, immediately after his death dissension arose between his two principal followers and colleagues, Madhavadeva and Damodaradeva. About the main causes that led to the dissension, there are two versions of opinion. According to one version, before his death, Sankaradeva nominated Madhavadeva, as the head of his faith, which was not liked by his another disciple Damodaradeva²⁷⁹. Therefore, Damodaradeva, being one of the principal followers of the Brahmin caste, naturally expected to succeed Sankaradeva to the pontifical position but when his expectation was belied by the nomination of Madhavadeva, another principal Kayastha follower of Sankaradeva, he became angry and humiliated and found it difficult to accept Madhavadeva, a colleague, as his superior. As a result, Damodaradeva founded a separate sub-sect

with his Brahmins followers which came to be known after his own name as Damodariya sect at the early stage and finally came to be popularly known as the '*Brahma-Samhati*' or '*Brahma Sampradaya*'²⁸⁰.

According to another version, the dissension on succession ground seems to be very trifling and silly one. The main cause was on theological ground. According to S. N. Sharma, Damodaradeva did certain modification to accommodate *Smartta* rituals in the Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva and even accepted in his fold a few persons who were expelled from the faith by Madhavadeva, which led to the dissension²⁸¹. He did not attend the general congregation when the annual death rites of the master were to be solemnized²⁸². Under these situations, when Madhavadeva called for an explanation, Damodaradeva denied the authority of Sankaradeva and his '*Bhakti-ratnakara*', and declared the '*Bhagavata*' more authoritative than Sankaradeva and *Bhakti-ratnakara*' and even refused himself as a member of the faith of Sankaradeva²⁸³. Upon this unpleasant reply, Madhavadeva severed connection with Damodaradeva and declared a division between himself and Damodaradeva²⁸⁴. Thus, thereafter the main branch under Madhavadeva came to known as '*Mahapurusiya*' sect and the other branch under Damodaradeva came to known as '*Damodariya* sect'.

From the above two versions of opinion, it seems to us that the division was a combined result of the both. The question of succession, personal egos, jealousies and theological differences etc. led to the schism of the Neo-Vaisnavism.

There are some differences and similarities between the two sects. In doctrinal matters, there seems to be not much difference between the two sects. Both the sects extolled the single-minded devotion to Krishna or His other forms. In social intercourse, there is no distinction between the two sects. They even join in all religious ceremonies connected with the Satras and Kirtanaghars or Namghars (both intra-Satra and extra-Satra). The only point where they differ in doctrinal matters is that the *Damodariya* sect, alongside the devotional process of worshiping the *Bhakti* cult, introduced idol worship of Krishna or others, worship of other gods and goddesses and observances of Vedic and Brahmanical rites²⁸⁵. On the other hand, the '*Mahapurusiya*' are only worshiper of the *Bhakti* cult in form of a object (generally a holy book of the *Bhakti* cult) and remained stern against idol worship of Krishna or others, worship of other gods

and goddesses and observances of Vedic and Brahmanical rites²⁸⁶. In spiritual matters, again, we find some differences. H. V. Sreenivasa Murthy has written these differences in the following way: "... in Damodariya sect, a Brahmin alone can become the head of the Satra, and he alone has the authority of conferring ordination on desiring entrants.againonly Brahmanas are entitled to recite the full mystic formula of Sankaradeva while the Sudras are allowed to recite it only in a curtailed form. But such a system does not exist in *Mahapurusiya* sect"²⁸⁷.

However, we have no information about any direct confrontation and face-to-face conflict between the '*Mahapurusiya*' and the *Damodariya* sects, at least during our period of study. There were no existence of rivalry between them and conversion between the two sects was from one sect to the other is not prohibited. Both of them even worked together. For example, Madhavadeva sent Gopaldeva or Vanshigopal, to Damodaradeva for ordination (*Sarana*) and after that he himself gave spiritual light (*tattva*) to him²⁸⁸. Both of them in conjunction deputed him (Gopaldeva or Vanshigopal) to upper Assam for spreading the message of *Bhakti*²⁸⁹.

Besides, the '*Mahapurusiya*' and the '*Damodariya*' sects, according to *Harideva-Charita* of Dhaneswar and Baneswar Dvija, Harideva, another Brahmin disciple of Sankaradeva, also said to have founded an independent sect of his own called '*Harideviya* sect'²⁹⁰. In doctrinal matters, it swings more towards Damodaradeva than Sankaradeva. Although, all '*Charita- puthis*' of Sankaradeva, Madhavadeva and Damodaradeva are completely silent about the sect.

In succeeding period, schism in the Neo-Vaisnavism widened and consequently several sub-sects known as *Samhati*s or *Sampradayas* grew up²⁹¹.

In the light of the preceding discussions, it can be concluded that the Neo-Vaisnavite movement initiated by Sankaradeva and cultivated institutionalized by himself and his able successors through the Satra institution, marked a new era not only in the religious format with humanistic philosophy and democratic outlook, but also marked renaissance in the socio- cultural pattern of the region. It contributed immensely to the process of socialization and cultural homogenization, which led to the building of a vibrant civil society, based on peace, goodwill, mutual respect, social justice, self-help and equality. In this connection, the opinion of B. K. Barua is noteworthy. According to

him Sankaradeva through his faith, "tried to bring about a synthesis in his creed, by leaving undisturbed, and where possible, by incorporating, some social and cultural traits of the tribal people, such as, the community life, congregational gathering and eating of fish, flesh, art forms, music and dance, which were most suited to the genius of the Assamese people comprised of diverse racial elements"²⁹². It also gave a tremendous impetus to the development of languages, literature, in various forms, art, music and vernacular writings. In this connection, it should be mentioned here that all these activities mostly cultivated under the direct patronage of the early Koch kings. It should be specially mentioned here that Sankaradeva, Madhavadeva and Damodaradeva – all of them in the later part of their lives peacefully lived within Koch Kingdom and enjoyed the patronages of the early Koch kings. King Naranarayan issued a royal order permitting the free propagation of his faith among the subjects of the kingdom²⁹³. Early Koch kings with a few exceptions liberally helped in propagation of the faith and construction of many Satras at royal cost and gave asylum to the reformers of the faith expelled from eastern Assam. Thus, the Neo-Vaisnavism, under the royal patronages of the Koches emerged as the prime religion of the masses of the kingdom.

However, according to P. K. Bhattacharyya²⁹⁴, inspite of royal patronage and royal family taking refuge to Neo-Vaisnavism, which also aimed at the establishment of a classless and casteless society on democratic and humanistic ground, the Neo-Vaisnavism could not percolate deep into the heart of the people at large within the Kingdom. In spite of great reverence of the people towards their kings and Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva, the people of the region could not shake off their time-honoured devotion to Lord Siva and Shakti. He tried to prove this fact by the existence of large number of temples, which continued to be erected until the later period by the kings and ultimately came to the conclusion that the Neo-Vaisnavism could not become the prime religion of the people of the region.

From the above discussions, it seems to us that, King Naranarayan was very liberal in religious believe and outlook, for which he patronize all (both tribal and Brahmanical) religions of the region. As a Staunch *Sakta*, king Naranarayan, constructed *Kamakhya* temple at Nilachal hill and others and introduced a combined ritual of tribal, Brahmanical and Tantric rituals to worship the deity. As a Staunch *Saiva*, he patronized to construct *Baneswar Siva temple* at Baneswar, near Koch Behar and

many others and introduced a combined ritual of tribal and Brahmanical rituals to worship the deity in various forms like Siva, Siva Linga and Mahakal. Due to his respect to Neo-Vaisnavism and Sankaradeva, he patronized the construction of large numbers Satras including Madhupur Satra (also know as Bardowa Satra), Barpeta Satra (Barpeta) and many more. It might be due two causes. A) By virtue of his position, a king would have to worship all gods and goddesses, both tribal and Brahmanical, to harmonize relations among the multi-ethnical and multicultural subjects to legitimize his position. On the other hand, B) Due to his tribal origin, he could not completely discard his tribal traditional believe and in the same way, due to Hinduisation, he adopted Brahmanical religious culture, so he assimilated the both from his core of heart. Both the causes synthesized his liberal outlook, following which his followers also became liberal to worship many deities of different faiths.

Notes and References:

1. Savaparva, Ch. XXV, v., 1005.
2. The *Kalika purana*, 39. 103-5.
3. M. Neog, 'Religions of the north-East India', Munshiram Manoharlal publishers Pvt. Ltd, Delhi, 1984, p. 3. (Henceforth, M. Neog-RNEI.)
4. Hiuen Tsiang (Yuan Chwang)'s, 'Si-u-ki', edited by David, Rhyas and Bhushel S. W., 2 vols. London, 1905, reprint, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1961, pp.186-192 and Watters, op. cit., II, p.186.
5. B. k. Barua, op. cit., pp. 161-65.
6. The ruins of many Siva temples have been excavated all over the northeast India. Two ancient Siva temples near *Dhanukhana* hill on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, belonging to 9th century AD. The ruin of another Siva temple of 10th century was excavated in the heart of the town of Tezpur. The ruins of *Biswanath* Siva temple at Biswanath Ghat, Tezpur and that of a small hill called *Deoparvat* or *Deo-ghar-parvat* at Numalighar in the Golaghat sub-division belong to pre-Ahom period. The Jalpeswar Siva temple of Jalpaiguri existed as pre Koch Siva temple. (See B. K. Barua, op. cit. pp.161-65 and M. Neog: *Religions of the north-East India*, p. 3.)

7. The *Guru Charita* of Ramananda Dvija, v., 28, cited in M. Neog op. cit., p.81.
8. The *Katha Guru Charita*, p. 20; Daityari, 27-34. 8a. The *Guru Charita* of Ramananda 841-f.
9. The *Yogini Tantra*, Ch. Vv. 2-22.
10. The DRV, vv. 27-74.
11. The *Rajoupakhyan*, pp., 3-5; *Kamarupa Buranji*, op. cit., pp.10 -11.
12. The basic information of the all sources is almost same but there are differences in the process of description among the sources.
13. *Akbarnama*, op., cit. pp, 1066-68.
14. According to the Ms. *Rajopakhyana*, King Naranarayan rebuilt the Baneswara Siva temple which had a remote antiquity, and named the as 'Gard Sandara'. Prannarayan (1632-1665) had again rebuilt it in the present structure. 'Koch Behar Jelar Pura Kriti', p.53; The DRV, vv. 219.
15. P. K. Bhattacharyya: *Siva as guardian deity – case studies of the kingdoms of Kamata Cooch Behar and Kamarupa*, in his self edited 'The kingdom of Kamata Koch Behar in Historical perspective', University of North Bengal,2000, pp. 82-88.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. The DRV, vv. 324-28.
19. Ibid, vv. 336-37.
20. King Naranarayan and Chilarai constructed the temples like *Bhairav Nath* temple (than) on the *Bhairav* hill in the present district of Goalpara of Assam, the *Baneswar Siva* Temple near Koch Behar, *Chhoto Mahadeva* at *Nakkati Gachh*, *Baro Mahadeva* at *Baro Kodali* (both at Tufanganj, in Koch Behar district) etc., and others all over their kingdom. (See R. K. Barman, op. cit. p.176.)
21. M. Neog, op. cit., p. 81; D. Nath, op. cit. p. 166.
22. The census of India, 1901, Vol. I, Part I, appendix to Ch. VIII, p. 414.
23. *Yogini Tantra*, III, Patal IV, vs., 3-22; B. K. Barua, op. cit., pp. 161-65; D. Nath, op. cit. p.166.
24. *Yogini Tantra*, III, Patal XIX; B. K. Kakati, op. cit., pp. 20-22.
25. M. Neog, (ed), *Studies in the History of Assam*, Jorhat, 1973, p.171; D. Nath, op. cit. p.166.
26. B. K. Barua, op. cit., p. 165.

27. *Yogini Tantra*, chap. XI, v. 36.
28. P. K. Bhattacharyya, op. cit., p. 84.
29. Ibid.
30. C. Eliot: '*Hinduism and Buddhism, An Historical Sketch*', reprint, Munshiram Manoharlal, 2003, Delhi. p. XXXVI.
31. Eliot: *Hinduism in Assam*, JRAS. 1920, p.1153.
32. B. K. Barua, op. cit., p. 167.
33. H. K. Barpujari, op. cit., 117 .
34. B. K. Barua, op. cit., p. 167.
35. Ibid.
36. C. Eliot, op. cit. vol. II, p .74.
37. *The Katha Guru Charita*, p. 20.
38. Ibid. p. 27.
39. *Guru-Charita* of Ramananda, 419-f, cited in M. Neog, op. cit., p. 85.
40. D. Nath, op. cit., p.167.
41. B. K. Barua, op. cit., p. 168.
42. Ibid.
43. The DRV, vv., 78, 79 and 97-105.
44. The DRV, vv., 217-18.
45. The DRV, v., 548.
46. B. K. Barua, op. cit., p. 168.
47. N. N. Vasu, op. cit., p103.
48. In the DRV, there are references of land grants to the temples, Brahmins and others but exact amount of grants are not known of the period of Naranarayan. However, in the year 1872 land revenue share of the granted lands was 15% of total revenue. H. N. Choudhury, op. cit., p.544; R. K. Barman, op. cit., p.179 mentioned that lands granted to the Kamakhya temple, Hayagriva Madhava temple and Jalpesh temple was very high roughly 23685 *bighas*, 54300 *bighas* and 44 *jotes* respectively.
49. The DRV, vv. 541&561.
50. *The Kamarupa Buranji*, p. 38.

51. B. K. Kakati, '*The mother Goddess Kamakhya*', Gauhati, 1948, cited in Nitul Kumar Gogoi; *Continuity and Change among the Ahom*, vol. 9 (castes and tribes of India), concept publishing company, Delhi, 2006, p. 2.
52. Cited in M. Neog, op. cit., p.86.
53. *The Kalika Purana*, Chapter. 88.
54. Cited in B. K. Barua, op. cit., p.169.
55. *The Baraganga inscription* (c.553-54AD), of *Mahabutivarman* (lines 1-2); See M. M. Sharma, '*Inscriptions of Ancient Assam*', Gauhati University, 1978, p.6.
56. B. K. Barua, op. cit., pp.169-70.
57. Ibid.
58. *The Kalika Purana*, Ch. 12; also see Nitul Kumar Gogoi; *Continuity and Change among the Ahom*, vol. 9 (castes and tribes of India), concept publishing company, Delhi, 2006, p.2;
59. Gait, op. cit., p. 50.
60. *Bhagavata Purana*- 1.3.18 "In the fourteenth incarnation, the Lord appeared as *Nrisinha* (Halfmen-Halflion) and bifurcated the strong body of the atheist Hiranyakasipu with His nails, just as a carpenter pierces cane." However, Within the *Dasavatara-stotra* of Jayadeva Goswami (which lists the major incarnations of Vishnu) *Narasinha* is listed as the 4th incarnation. See Steven J. Rosen, '*Narasinha Avatar, the Half-Man/Half-Lion Incarnation*', and visit *Wikipedia*, the free encyclopedia.
61. On the other hand, Nara-Narayana is the twin-brother 5th incarnation (*Avatar*) of the preserver-god *Visnu* on earth, working for the preservation of dharma or righteousness. In a previous life, the duo was born as the sages Nara and Narayana, and who performed great penances at the holy spot of Badrinath. In the concept of Nara-Narayana, the human soul Nara is the eternal companion of the Divine Narayana. In epic poetry, they are the sons of Dharma by *Murti* or *Ahimsa* and emanations of *Visnu*, *Arjuna* being identified with Nara, and Krishna with Narayana (Vijnanananda, p.250). For details, see Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, '*Vaisnavism Saivism and Minor Religious Systems*', (1995), Asian Educational Services; Swami Vijnanananda, '*The Sri Mad Devi Bhagavatam*', Books One Through Twelve Part 1, (2004), Kessinger Publishing and visit; *Wikipedia*, the free encyclopedia.

62. P. K. Bhattacharyya, op. cit., pp.82-88.
63. E.T. Dalton, 'Notes on Assam temples ruins', JASB, 1855, p.10. But Dalton did not mentioned his source and so it might not be correct , for the place of the temple situated was not within the kingdom of Naranarayan in 1550AD.
64. The *Yogini Tantra*, II, *Patal IX*, vv. 219 and 245.
65. The *Guru Charita* of Daityari, (ed.), by Haribilas Gupta, 1900, vv.1896-98.
66. The *Guru Charita* of Ramacharana Thakura, 1515ff; the *Katha Guru Charita*, p. 34.
67. The *Guru Charita* of Daityari, op. cit., vv.184-85 ; The *Katha Guru Charita*, p. 55; The *Guru charita* of Ramacharana Thakura, 176ff.
68. S. N. Sarma, 'The Neo-Vaisnavite Movement and the Satra Institutions of Assam', Gauhati University, 1966, p.6.
69. Dr N. P. Chaudhury, Secretary, Kāmrupa Anusandhana Samiti, Gauhati. (Personal interview).
70. Khan Chaudhuri A. Ahamed, 'Kochbeharer Itihas', reprint, Calcutta, 1990, p.5.
71. P. C. Chaudhury, 'The History of Civilisation of the People of Assam to the Twelfth Century A.D', Gauhati, 1966.
72. M. Neog, 'Buddhism in Kamarupa', IHQ., XXVII, June 1951, pp.159f.
73. M. Neog - RNEI.
74. B. K. Kakati, op. cit., p.73.
75. B. Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, p. 52, cited in M. Neog RNEI.
76. B. K. Kakati, op. cit., pp.35-70.
77. B. K. Barua, op. cit., p. 168.
78. M. Neog, op. cit., p.88.
79. The *Katha Guru Charita*, 45.
80. *Kirtana-ghosh*, vv., 13 & 14.
81. M. Neog, op. cit., p.89.
82. David Gordon White, (ed.), 'Tantra in Practice', Princeton University Press, 2000, p. 9.
83. Katherine Harper, and Anne Robert L. Brown, 'The Roots of Tantra', (ed.), 2002, State University of New York Press, Introduction, p.1; M.A. winternitz, ' A History of Indian Culture', Vol. II, Calcutta, 1933, p.388.

84. D. Nath, op. cit., p. 168. He quote from M.A. winternitz, op. cit., 388, that, "a queer mixture of monistic philosophy, magic and erotics, with a small admixture of Buddhist ideas".
85. Eliot, op., cit., p.74.
86. Mulka Raj Anand: '*Kamakala*' cited in H. V. Sreenivasa Murthy, 'Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva and Ramanuja', Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1973, p. 41.
87. B. K. Barua, op. cit., pp.166-68; describes the various forms of the worship of mothers goddess as the Saktism. On the other hand, H. V. Sreenivasa Murthy, op. cit., pp. 34 - 44, describes as *Tantricism*.
88. M. Neog, op. cit., p. 82 ; D. Nath, op. cit. p.168.
89. Vamachara is a Sanskrit term meaning "left-handed attainment" and is synonymous with "Left-Hand Path" or "Left-path Sanskrit: 'Vamamarga' It is used to describe a particular mode of worship or 'spiritual practice' that are not only 'heterodox' to standard Vedic injunction, but extreme in comparison to the *status quo*. The converse term to Vamachara is '*Dakshinachara*' glossed 'Right-Hand Path', which is used to refer not only to 'orthodox' sects but to modes of spirituality that engage in spiritual practices that not only accord with Vedic injunction but are generally agreeable to the *status quo*.
90. *The Kalika Purana*, 71.155-162.
91. Eliot, op. cit., p.288; B. K. Barua, op. cit., p. 68; M. Neog, op. cit., p.84.
92. *The Katha-Guru- Charita*, pp. 117f; M. Neog, op. cit., p.84.
93. Gait, op. cit., p. 59.
94. Ibid.
95. *Yogini Tantra*, *patal VI*, v. 14.
96. D. Nath, op. cit., p.168.
97. *Yogini Tantra I*, *patal XI*, vv. 32-34.
98. H. V. Sreenivasa Murthy, op. cit., p. 37.
99. *The Katha Guru Charita*, 45.
100. *The Katha Guru Charita*, 206 and 486.
101. According to A. Ahamed Khan Chaudhuri, the sect was founded or reformed by Guru Goraknath (op. cit p.58.) The existence of Nathism in the pre-Koch period in the region proved by the fact that an inscription dated Saka 1154 (1232AD), discovered at Ambari near Gauhati refers to a settlement (hati) of the yogi gurus

- during the reign of *Pala* king *Samudra Pala* (D. Nath op. Cit., notes, p.192.). "It received encouragement in Bengal from the Buddhist kings of Pala dynasty" R. C. Majumdar, (*History of Bengal*, vol. I, Ed.), p. 350.
102. M. Neog, op. cit., p.89.
103. B. Bhattacharyya, 'Tantrika culture among the Buddhists', *the cultural heritage of India*, Vol. II, p. 218; cited in M. Neog, op. cit., p.89.
104. R. C. Majumdar, 'History of Bengal', Vol. I, (Ed.), p. 339.
105. M. Neog, op. cit. 89.
106. 'Sankaradeva and his predecessors', p.14, cited in M. Neog, op. cit. p.89.
107. Ibid.
108. Khan Chaudhuri A. Ahamed, op. cit p.58.
109. Ibid.
110. C. C. Sannyal. op. cit., pp.139 and 141.
111. M. Neog, op. cit., p.89; Khan Chaudhury A. Ahamed, op. cit pp.58
112. The *Katha Guru Charita*, 57. It also stated a mythological story about the conversion Ananta Kandali to Vainava faith. The story says, the deity was so pleased with the devotee that he manifested himself as a bull and accepted all offerings. Kandali's wife was, however, a devout Vaisnavite and adored the Vaisnava guru, Sankaradeva. Kandali could not tolerate this and one day had his wife-belabored .From that day on Dharma desisted from taking his offerings; nor did he appear before him as usual. The wife came to know of all this and said that Dharma had left for his own place, namely, where Sankaradeva, who was none else but *Hari* incarnate, lived at the place called Bardowa. Kandali went there all at once and saw Dharma sleeping near Sankaradeva in the form of a tawny-coloured bull. He however, could not remove the bull from there, and later decided to become a disciple of Sankaradeva.(see M. Neog edited *Katha Guru Charita*, 77).
113. M. Neog, op. cit., p.89.
114. D. Nath, op. cit., p.169.
115. Mankar in his benedictory verses he refers to king Jalpeswar and king of Kamata (*Kamatar raja vando raja Jalpeswar*), cited in D. Neog, 'New light on history of Asamiya Literature, Dispur, 1962, p. 126 and also in M. Neog- RNEI. p.46.
116. Ibid.
117. Ibid.

118. . Neog- RNEI., p. 47.
119. The DRV, vv. 516-528. The DRV records that Chilarai, who was imprisoned in Gauda conjured up a snake inside a knot of cloth (*gathi*) with spells (*sadahuya mantra*), according to the advice of the goddess Durga. The snake bit the mother of the *Padsha* of Gauda to apparent death, from which she was recovered by Chilarai himself.
120. M. Neog- RNEI., p. 42.
121. Ibid.
122. D. Nath, op. cit., p.169.
123. M. Neog- RNEI., 54.
124. M. Neog, 'Ai, the small pox Goddess of Assam', Man in India, Vol. XXXI, 1951, pp.72ff; M. Neog -RNEI, p. 54.
125. M. Neog -RNEI, p. 55.
126. The Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti, library has an MS. Of the Puran, which deals with the worship of *Sitala* (Hemchandra Goswami: 'Descriptive catalogue of Assamese Manuscripts', Calcutta University on behalf of the Government of Assam, 1930, p.189.
127. The Guru Charita of Daityari Thakur, vv. 55-59; the Guru Charita of Bhusan, vv. 66-68.
128. N. N. Vasu, op. cit., 84.
129. The Katha Guru Charita, p.126.
130. Ibid. p. 205.
131. The Guru Charita of Daityari Thakur, vv. 1345-1347.
132. The DRV, vv. 516-528.
133. Bhusan, 826; N. N. Vasu, op. cit.,105; M. Neog, op. cit., p. 91.
134. M. Neog, op. cit., p. 91.
135. *Alamgir Namah*, p.699, cited in H. V. Sreenivasa Murthy, op. cit., p. 39.
136. The 'Baharistan -i-Ghayb', I, 273.
137. M. Neog, op. cit., p.92.
138. C. C. Sannyal, op. cit., p.142; D. Nath, op. cit., p.170.
139. D. Nath, op. cit., p. 170.
140. R. K. Barman, op. cit., p.190.
141. H. V. Sreenivasa Murthy, op. cit., p. 44.

142. There is some controversy about the birth date of Sankaradeva. Without going into the debate, we mentioned traditionally held view i.e. 1449AD. For details, see M. Neog, op. cit., pp.98-99.
143. K.L. Barua, op. cit. pp .170 -78.
144. M. Neog, op. cit., p.59.
145. The *Guru Charita* of Daityari, 36; Ramananda, 119. However, the *Guru Charita* of Bhushan (114-20) and ascribe the dearth of his parents to the time of Sankaradeva's marriage. But it is fact that his mother *Satyasandhya Devi* burnt herself on his father's funeral pyre to be chaste wife.
146. The *Guru Charita* of Ramananda, 134.
147. M. Neog, op. cit., p.102.
148. Ibid.; H. V. Sreenivasa Murthy, op. cit., p. 48.
149. M. Neog, op. cit., p.103.
150. Some modern scholars give 1481AD as the date of the first pilgrimage.
151. H. V. Sreenivasa Murthy, op. cit., p. 52.
152. M. Neog, op. cit., p.106.
153. Ibid.
154. The *Guru Charita* of Daityari Thakur, v. 93.
155. Ibid. vv. 95-96.
156. The period from 1493-1506 is a period constant friction and conflict. The last *khen* king *Nilambar* was over thrown by Alauddin Hussain Shah (c1493-1519) of Bengal in about 1498AD. He also subdued the local chieftains, *Bhuyans* of the region and established military control over the region and then Hussein shah returned to Bengal leaving his son, *Danial* with a strong force as viceroy of the conquered country. However, Hussein shah's invasion ultimately proved to be a failure, for within few days the *Bhuyans* of the region combined against the common enemy and attacked *Danial*'s garrison, defeated and killed him about 1503A.D. However, after that local *Bhuyans* started fighting among themselves for supremacy over the whole region and finally *Biswa Singha*, the father of Naranarayan subduing all these *Bhuyans* consolidate his political power in about 1515AD. This situation is not suitable for a peace loving man like Sankaradeva.
157. M. Neog, op. cit., p.109.
158. M. Neog, op. cit., p.100. See the chart.

159. M. Neog, op. cit., p.110.
160. H. V. Sreenivasa Murthy, op. cit., p. 52.
161. The names of the priests, who made complaint against Sankaradeva are not known, M. Neog (op. cit., p.111) mentioned some epithets, which we mentioned therein. However, N. N. Vasu adds the epithet Kandali with Ratnakar, and according to him the leader of the team was Ratnakar Kandali (Vasu, op. cit., p.96)
162. N. N. Vasu, op. cit., p.103.
163. "Sankaradeva's group of Bara Bhuyans seems to have had some administrative relation with the Ahom capital" (M. Neog, op. cit., p. 112), according to which king Suklenmung ordered his people including Sankaradeva and his followers , to cooperate in *khedda* (elephant-catching) operation. They failed to perform the duty in this venture and therefore they fell into the disfavour of the king. (*Ibid*), also see H. V. Sreenivasa Murthy, op. cit., p. 54.
164. The *Guru Charita* of Bhushan, vv. 374-6 ; Ramacharana, vv. 2337-38, 2532-35.
165. The *Guru Charita* of Daitiyari Thakur, vv., 438-40.
166. About the date of migration to Koch kingdom, there are mainly two dates: 1543 and 1546. M. Neog mentioned both the dates as the date of migration in the same work in different places. (See M. Neog, op. cit., pp.112 and 161. L. Bezborora, took the date 1546. ('Sankaradeva, 3rd. Ed, Jorhat, 1936.
167. Ramacharana, vv. 2343-67.
168. M. Neog, op. cit., pp.113-4.
169. M. Neog, op. cit., p.114.
170. The *Guru Charita* of Daitiyari Thakur, vv. 1324-31.
171. A Brahmin scholar of the small village named Chila or Chili near the native village of Narayan Thakur and priest ship was his chief means of livelihood. Under the influences of Narayan Thakur, he deserted his old profession and became a disciple of Sankaradeva (Bhushan, vv., 723-34).
172. He had his education at Varanasi and was a great scholar, who interacted with Sankaradeva in scholarly disputations and being defeated by Sankaradeva, became a disciple of him (The *Katha Guru Charita*, 576.)
173. M. Neog, op. cit., pp. 172-207. Also, see the chapter IV of the thesis.

174. The *Katha Guru Charita*, pp. 141-43. Although some scholars identified 1546 as the date of his 2nd pilgrimage.
175. M. Neog, op. cit., p. 115.
176. Daityari Thakur, vv. 606 -12; Ramananda, vv. 1035-40.
177. Bardowa Charita, Ch., 25, in cited M. Neog, op. cit., p. 116.
178. Kabir was born in 1440 and he died in 1518. (See <http://www.cs.colostate.edu/~malaiya/kabir.html>, <http://literaryindia.com/Biographies/Biographic-Note/kabir.html>, <http://www.sikhionz.com/bhagatkabir.htm>, <http://www.wisdomportal.com/Peace/Kabir-Peace.html>). Therefore, it is not possible to meet Kabir in his 2nd pilgrimage in 1550. However, there are possibilities of meeting them in the first pilgrimage in 1481-93). For he stayed long 12 years in that sojourn and visited many religious centers of Northern India, where Kabir was very popular and time period also permit the assumption . However, all sources are silent about it.
179. Daityari Thakur, 571-ff; Bhusan, 578; Ramananda, 242-ff;The *Katha Guru Charita*, 152-f.
180. M. Neog, ('Sankaradeva', National book trust, New Delhi,1980, Reprint, pp.6 and 22); H. V. S. Murthy, in ' Did Chaitanya influence 'Sankaradeva', IHQ, Vol. 35, pp.171ff; and other hold the view that both the saints never met each other, as they believe that Chaitanya was born after Sankaradeva's first pilgrimage and died prior to his second one. On the other hand, S. C. Goswami, Ed. ('Sree Sree Deva Damodara Charita', p.34); Gait, (op. cit., p.59), R. M. Nath, ('Cultural Heritage of India', vol. IV, p.222.) and others hold the view that they met each other during the 1st pilgrimage of Sankaradeva but not during the 2nd pilgrimage. This group of scholars thinks that Sankaradeva was born in seventies or early eighties Fifteen century and not in 1449 AD. For instance, Gait (Ibid.) hold, that the date of birth of Sankaradeva 1449 as described by *Charit puthis* is thirty to forty years too early and actual date might be $1449+30=1479$ or $1449+40= 1489$. S. C. Goswami (Ibid.) Damodaradeva died in about 1626 at the age of 110 and so he was born in about $1626-110= 1516$. He was 39 years junior by Sankaradeva which leads us to the fact that Sankaradeva was born in $1516 -39 = 1477$. Sankaradeva started his 1st pilgrimage at the age of 32 i.e. $1477 + 32 = 1509$, and he stayed 12 years up

to 1521 (1509+12 = 1521), when Chaitanyaadeva was in Puri. If this view is accepted then there is possibility of meeting them. Moreover, it seems to me that the information of Charita puthis regarding the date of birth of Sankaradeva i.e. 1449 is doubtful on logical ground. Kusumvara father of Sankaradeva was a contemporary of Biswa Singha, who started his power consolidating after the decline of Kamata kingdom in the hand of Hussain shah of Bengal in 1498 and died in the mid thirties of the sixteen century. The encounter between Biswa Singha and Kusumvara took after 1498 and before 1533. It is also fact according the Caritas that Kusumvara died immediately after the birth of Sankaradeva in 1449 or after the marriage of Sankaradeva at the age 32 in 1481. If we accept the term 'immediately after', within five years then Kusumvara died within 1455 or 1486 and there is no possibilities of meeting them. On the other hand, if we accept the view (1477) of Gait and his group and the death of Kusumvara after the marriage of Sankaradeva in about 1509, there is strong ground meeting Kusumvara and Biswa Singh.

181. The *Katha Guru Charita*, 154a-169; M. Neog, op. cit., p. 116.
182. The *Guru Charita* of Bhusan, v., 742; Daityari Thakur, v. 714f.
183. N. N. Vasu, op. cit., p.105.
184. Daityari Thakur, v., 712-ff.
185. Daityari Thakur, v. 749-ff; the *Katha Guru Charita*, v., 108f. It records that Chilarai happed one day to overhear of his wife Kamalapriya singing Sankaradeva's lyric, '*pamara mana rama-charane chitta dehu*' on the instrument 'saringa', and so impressed by it that he lost no time in resolving to secure initiation into *Bhakti*.
186. Cited in H. V. Sreenivasa Murthy, op. cit., p. 56.
187. Ibid.
188. N. N. Vasu, op. cit., p.109.
189. For example, Kanthabhushan, who had gone to Benares to study the Bhagavata to defeating Sankaradeva in religious discourses, came to him and saluted him touching his feet. Ananta Kandali, who was so widely known for his erudition came to him and became disciple (Ibid.).
190. M. Neog, op. cit., p. 119.
191. N. N. Vasu, op. cit., p.112.
192. B. Kakati, (ed.), 'Sankaradeva', cited in Sreenivasa Murthy, op. cit., p. 56.

193. M. Neog, op. cit., p. 120.
194. Bhusan, 660-f ; Free Wikipedia, Sankaradeva.
195. N. N. Vasu, op. cit., p.113.
196. The *Katha Guru Charita*, v. 224.
197. Daityari Thakur, v. 598; KGC, 172 , and Ramananda, 111-f.
198. Madhavadeva, Guru Bhatima, pp. 1ff.
199. Ramananda, 173-f.
200. Daityari Thakur, v. 774-ff ; 200A.Ibid. vv. 262-69, 315-27, 340-47; Ramananda, 459-ff, 586-ff. 200B . Dr. B. Kakati, 'The Mother Goddess Kamakhya', APB, third edition, Gauhati, 2004, p.82.
201. B. K. Barua, 'Sankaradeva Vaisnava Saint of Assam', first edition, 1960, reprint edition, Bina Library, Gauhati, 2009, p.92. (hence forth BKB-SVSA).
202. In 'Kirtana-ghosha', vv. 340 -1, following the *Bhagavata Purana*, he mentioned following nine modes of devotion to God : 1) the *sraavana* (listening to the name of god), 2) the *Nam-kirtana* (chanting the name of God), 3) *Smarana* (recollection of the God's name), 4) *Archana* (worship of the God), 5) *Pada-sevana* (personal service to the feet of the god), 6) *Dasya* (servitude to the God), 7) *Sakhitta* (friendship with the God), 8) *Vandana* (obeisance to God) and 9) *Atmanivedana* (full-hearted submission of one's whole body). (H. N. Datta Barua, (ed.) 'Kirtana Aru Nam-Ghosha', Nalbari, 1974.).
203. Hem Barua, 'Assamese Literature', New Delhi, 1965, pp.50-55.
204. B. K. Barua, op. cit., p.88.
205. Bhushan, v., 156-ff; *Katha-Guru-Charita*, p.34.
206. M. Neog, op. cit., pp.107-108. He mentioned his authority to Daityari, vv. 82-95.
207. Daityari, v., 52.
208. Dr. B. Kakati, 'Chaitanya to vivekananda', Natesan & Co., Madras, 1928. Cited in H. V. Sreenivasa Murthy, op. cit., p. 61.
209. S. N. Sharma, op. cit., p. 34.
210. Ibid.
211. According to Ramananda Dvija, (305, 609 and 1119), Sankaradeva initiated his disciples into faith with the Bhagavata-Purana to represent the Lord, in whom the initiate's soul was to find refuge (sarana). Some times other Puthis like Sankaradeva's *Bhakti-pradipa*, Madhavadeva's *Bhaktiratnavali* were also be

substituted (M. Neog, op. cit., p.319). It is a tradition of the Neo-Vaisnavism to place a Bhagavata-Purana or other on the Ashana or *Sinhashana* of the Nam-ghar of Satra, in lieu of the image of the God. This tradition of showing of reverence to the religious scripture or holy book is common to all the great religions of the world. Christianity, Islam Sikhism, have their holy books *the Bible*, *the Koran* and *Granth sahib* respectively. In the '*Srimata-bhavata-mahatma*' section of the *Padmapurana*, *Uttar-khanda*, the Bhagavata-Purana considered as Lord.

212. *Bhakti-ratnakara* of Sankaradeva, V., 111, p.19.
213. N. N. Vasu, op. cit., p.115.
214. BKB-SVSA, op. cit. p. 96.
215. *The Katha-Guru-Charita*, pp.140 &255.
216. M. Neog, op. cit., p. 369.
217. Idid.
218. Ibid.
219. M. Neog, op. cit., 288.
220. Ibid.
221. R. K. Barman, op. cit., p.173. Besides, all the Biographies of Sankaradeva and his other disciples have vividly depicted the popularity of the faith among the people of the region.
222. N. N. Vasu, op. cit., p.109.
223. *The Katha-Guru-Charita*, p. 252; Ramcharana Thakur, vv. 3606-3609.
224. Ramcharana Thakur, vv. 3507-3508; Bhushan Dvija, p.91.
225. R. K. Barman, op. cit., p.175. he made a list of 11 Satras, out of which following 7 were constructed under the direct encouragement of king Naranarayan and Chilarai : a) Madhupur Satra (also know as Bardowa Satra) at Madhupur, founder: Sankaradeva. b) RamraiKuthi or Satrasal, Satra at Dhubri, founder: Ram Ray. c) Kakatkuta and Vela Satras, (Koch Behar, now extinct), founders: Sankaradeva and Madhavdeva. d) Fulbari Satra (Tufanganj, Koch Behar), founder: Madhavdeva. e) Bhitrua Satra (Baikunthapur). f) Barpeta Satra (Barpeta). g) Raghunath Prabhu Satra, (Golokganj, (Dhubri). (However, most of the Satras extinct now and some existed in renovated forms, which done in later days.)
226. Ramcharana Thakur, v., 3755; *The Katha-Guru-Charita*, pp.280f; N. N. Vasu, op. cit., p.112. In this connection, B. Kakati remarks; "By virtue of his position, a king

would have to worship other gods and goddesses, and the fundamental principle of Sankaradeva's creed was an undeviating love for one god. There was no provision for the worship of minor gods, because that would mark the purity of his creed" (B. Kakati, ed., 'Sankaradeva', cited in Sreenivasa Murthy, op. cit., p. 56.).

227. M. Neog, op. cit., p. 119.
228. D. Nath, op. cit., p.174. 228A . Dr. B. Kakati, '*The Mother Goddess Kamakhya*' ,APB, third edition, Gauhati, 2004, p.81.
229. M. Neog, op. cit., p. 124.
230. Ramananda, 526-f.
231. Neog, op. cit., p. 110.
232. bid. p.124.
- 233: Ramcharana Thakur, p.199.
234. S. N. Sharma however mentioned another incident as the cause of the conflict without mentioning his source, in the following way: when "Madhavadeva undertook the task of reorganizing and reconstructing the Barpeta Satra on a grand style. On the completion of the construction, the opening ceremony was performed with dramatic performances and religious dances, where devotees donning female costumes acted and danced as gopis. Madhavadeva's opponents however, found it a convenient occasion to bring him under the frown of Raghudeva the then king of the eastern Koch kingdom. They alleged that Madhavadeva, with celibate disciples, had been dancing and singing with women". (S.N.Sharma, '*The Neo-Vaishnavite movement and the Satra Institution of Assam*', Gauhati University, Gauhati, 1968. 2nd edition, lawyer Book stall, Gauhati, 1999, p.27.)
235. Daityari Thakur, p.285; Ramcharana Thakur, p.311ff.
236. M. N. Neog, op. cit., p.126, named the place as 'Bheldanga' (now Madhupurdham.) a place situated at a distance 1.5 miles from the Koch Behar town. On the other hand, B. K. Barua, '*Sankaradeva Vaisnava Saint of Assam*' (henceforth BKB-SVSA), reprint edition, 2009, Bina Library, Gauhati, p.118, and S. N. Sharma, op. cit. p. 28, named the place as 'Bheladuar' a place near Koch Behar town.
237. Daityari Thakur, vv. 1504-6.
238. Ibid.

239. M. Neog, op. cit., p.126.
240. BKB-SVSA, p.115.
241. Daityari Thakur, v. 1596.
242. BKB-SVSA, p.116 and S. N. Sharma, op. cit., p.30.
243. Ibid.
244. BKB-SVSA, p.117.
245. S. N. Sharma, op. cit., p.100.
246. *Vamsigopaladevar Charita*, vv. 151-153. Cited in S.N. Sharma, op. cit., p.100.
247. 'Santa-sampradaya-katha', f. 6b., cited in M. Neog, op. cit., p.129fn..
248. Daityari, vv. 895-899.
249. Ramananda, vv., 833-436.
250. *Damodara-Charita* of Nilakantha, p.2.
251. Ibid., pp. 71 and 87.
252. 'Gurulila', of Ramaraya, pp. 33-34 cited in S. N. Sharma, op. cit., pp.103.
253. M. Neog, op. cit., p.129.
254. *Damodara-Charita* of Nilakantha, v., 394, p.103.
255. M. Neog, op. cit., p.114.
256. *Katha Guru Charita*, 455. It should be mentioned here that he had very close affinity to Madhavadeva, whom he considered as his friend and Guru and he also belongs to Damodariya sub-sect after the death of Sankaradeva (M. Neog, op. cit., p.133.).
257. M. Neog, op. cit., pp.133-34.
258. BKB-SVSA, p.125.
259. The *Satapatha Brahmana*, (XIII, 6.I), Cited in ' A few aspects of Assamese literature and culture', by Satyendranath Sharma, Assam Sahitya Sabha, Gauhati, 1991, p.38.
260. The *Bhagavata Purana* (I.I.3), Ibid.
261. *Epigraphic Indica*, Vol. I, pp. 79-83, Ibid.
262. S. N. Sharma, op. cit., p.143.
263. Ibid.
264. Quoted by Ramdev Goswami in his introduction to *Prasanga-mala* by Bhattacharya.
265. M. Neog, op. cit., p.310.

266. The *Katha-Guru Charita*, p. 34; Ramacharan Thakur, p.161.
267. M. Neog, op. cit., p. 309 ; D. Nath, op. cit., p.188 ;S. N. Sharma, op. cit., p.143.
268. Satyendranath Sharma, op. cit., p.39.
269. Bhushan, v.157.
270. S. N. Sharma, op. cit., p.146.
271. Ibid., pp.104-05.
272. Ramaraya, 'Guru-Lila', p.157f.
273. Ramcharana Thakur, p. 310.
274. S. N. Sharma, op. cit., appendix, V, pp. 297-314.
275. R. K. Barman, op. cit., p.175.
276. Ibid.
277. D. Nath, op. cit., p.175.
278. Ibid.
279. Daityari Thakur, 1326; Nilkantha, 457-66.
280. Satyendranath Sharma, op. cit., p. 65.
281. S. N. Sharma, op. cit., p. 26.
282. Daityari Thakur, 1316-22.
283. S. N. Sharma, op. cit., p. 26. He writes with the authorities of Ramacharana (p.305f.), Daityari (p.299) and the *Katha-Guru-Charita* (p.229) in a replying style of the questions of Madhavadeva in this way : "Though I have deviated a little from Sankaradeva, I have not thereby deviated from the original preaching of the *Bhagavata*. I consider the *Bhagavata* to be more authoritative than Sankaradeva. Further, I do not owe any explanation to you (Madhavadeva) as I am not a member of your order". N. N. Vasu, op. cit., pp. 137-8, mentioned the version of Daityari.
284. Daityari, 1324-31.
285. For details, see Dr. B. Kakati, 'Chaitanya to vivekananda', Natesan & Co., Madras, 1928, p. 61;BKB-SVSA, p.119; Satyendranath Sharma, op. cit., p.65; H. V. Sreenivasa Murthy, op. cit., p. 208.
286. Ibid.
287. H. V. Sreenivasa Murthy, op. cit., p. 208.
288. M. Neog, op. cit., p.114.
289. Ibid.; BKB-SVSA, p.120.

290. Dhaneswar and Baneswar Dvija, 'Harideva-Charita', edited and published by Karuna Kanta Barua, 1332 B. S., quoted in S. N. Sharma, op. cit., p. 92.
291. Most of the schisms occurred in the last decade of 16th century and in beginning of 17th century, at the end of our period of study. However, names and features of the four main sub-sects are mentioned here: A) *The Brahma Samhati or Sampradaya* includes the sub-sects of Damodaradeva and Harideva, where Brahmanic elements pre-dominated; B) *The Kala Samhati or Sampradaya*, owes for its origin to Gopala Ata or Gopaladeva of Bhawanipur. The followers of this branch claim that Madhavadeva nominated Gopala Ata or Gopaladeva as the supreme religious head after. He had his headquarter at Kaljar, from which the name Kala originated; C) *The Purusha- Samhati or Sampradaya*, called so because, the followers of this branch claim that they are the direct successors Sankaradeva's line or *Purusha*. Purusottam Thakur, grandson of Sankaradeva. Madhavadeva simply acted as an agent during the interim period; and D) *The Nika- Samhati or Sampradaya*, called so because this branch strictly followed the rules and regulations laid down by Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva and considered their rules and regulations as 'Nika' (pure, clean). Most probably, this sub-sect originated after the formation of other three sub-sects to organise a purer and cleaner sub-sect, when other sub-sects appeared to have gone astray from the original path chalked out by the first two gurus.
292. BKB-SVSA, p.112.
293. Ramcharana Thakur, vv. 3507-3508; Bhushan Dvija, p. 91.
294. P. K. Bhattacharyya, op. cit., pp.84-85.

XXXX

Concluding Observations:

In the preceding chapters, it is revealed that the vast region to the north-east of India between the foothill of the eastern Himalaya mountain ranges and extreme North of Bengal where the Koches, an indigenous tribe and ancestors of Naranarayan, had established their kingdom in the beginning of the 16th century. This region is known by different names from mythological age as such '*Pragjyotisha*', '*Kamarupa*', '*Pragjyotisha - Kamarupa*' and '*Lauhitya*' with its power of centre at '*Pragjyotishapura*' or '*Pragjyotishanagari*' near present Gauhati town, up to 13th century. From the 13th century to the end of 15th century, the region came to be known as such names as '*Kamata*' or '*Kamatapur*', '*Kamru*' alias '*Chaulistan*' and the centre of power shifted to '*Kamatapur*' or '*Kamataganari*' near present Koch Behar town and ruins of which locally known as '*Rajpata*'. It is also fact that from the mythological period, this region witnessed the ebb and flow of many dynasties in course of its historical development.

With the establishment of the Koch kingdom by one Bisu or Biswa Singha, in the beginning of the 16th century, this region came to be known as '*Couch*', '*Koch*', or '*Kochbehar*'. He first established at Hingulabus and then shifted it to *Kamatapura*, the capital of the former kingdom under the Khen rulers and finally it came to be known as Koch Behar or Cooch Behar, means 'abode of the Koches'.

The Mongoloid or Dravido-Mongoloid and Austric tribes such as Koch, Mech, Tharu, Bado, Rabha, and Kachari were the major population of the region and mixing of different ethnic groups of various cultures continued from the mythological period. Among them, the ancestors of King Naranarayan has been described in the epigraphic records and in Indian scriptures as *Kiratas*, *Kuvachas* and *Kambojas* and many mythological stories were attached to them and in the beginning if 16th century with their rise to political power, they took the designation '*Koch*', and named the dynasty as Koch dynasty. However, they have very close affinity with other tribes of the region such as Mech, Tharu, Bado, Rabha, and Kachari and there are major differences in the socio-cultural pattern among them. The Koches are the people of basically Mongoloid origin.

However, due to their living with other racial / ethnic groups such as Dravidian, Aryan speakers and Austric of the region for a long period and admixture with them, the characteristics of theirs are also mixed the Koches. The arrival of non-tribal Brahmins and Kayasthas of the Aryan socio-cultural fold from Mithila and Bengal, under the royal patronage of the ruling families of the region from 13th century, another socio-cultural characteristic merged with the Koches. Thus, physiognomically Mongoloid features are predominant; Dravidian features are dominant with regard to the skin colour and culturally, Koches have close affinity with Aryan speakers. At present, thus, they are a mixed breed of many races. S. K. Chatterji described them as "Indo-Mongoloid" or "mixed Austric-Dravidian-Mongoloid". With their rise to political power as tribal chiefs/kings and Hinduisiation, the Brahmins, for their own interest, attached mythological stories with the Koches and described them as *Kshatriya* of Brahmanical fold which was a tradition of any ruling dynasty of the Hindu tradition.

It was Hariya Mandal, grandfather of King Naranarayan and a Koch selected as 'chief' by 12 Mech families of the village Chikanagram in the Khuntaghat Pargana in the modern Goalpara, who organised his fellow tribes and formed 'clan based chiefdom' in the peripheral area of the region with considerable amount of power by the end of the 15th century. This incident seems to be very important and new in two senses. On the one hand, the selection of Hariya Mandal, a cultivator of paddy and cotton, as 'Mandal' or chief point to the fact that he had enough economic capabilities and leadership qualities to organize his fellowmen and to protect and expand his chiefdom all around. On the other hand, the tribal people, who had only the political experience of being 'ruled' now raised their position as 'ruler' on local basis with some administrative measures and engaged themselves in inter-tribal and tribal-non-tribal conflicts to establish political power.

In the meanwhile, Hussein Shah of Bengal dethroned the last Khen king Nilambar in 1498AD and captured the region. However, he could not establish his full sway over the region due to the organised and repeated opposition of both the non-tribal Bhuyans and the tribal chiefs, which ultimately forced the successors Hussein Shah to retreat from this region. This made a political vacuum and 'stateless' situation in the region which gave golden opportunity to Bisa (Biswa Singha), the son of Hariya Mandal to lay the

foundation of the Koch kingdom. Thus, Bisa, a son of a mere tribal chief, with his successful leadership and military genius started guerrilla and aggressive war fare against the Bhuyans as well as against the Successor of Hussein Shah, in which he became victorious and brought larger territories under his sway and transformed the chiefdom of his father into a kingdom. After the considerable territorial expansion, Biswa Singha shifted the center of power from his native village Chikanagram of lower Assam to Hingulabas, a village in the plains of Western Duars temporarily and finally to Kamatapur (Koch Behar) for the consolidation of power and organization of administration. By these, he moved from the periphery to the heartland of political power and established his strong control over the plain alluvial land for the surplus generating agrarian economy.

The present study suggests that the secret of success of Biswa Singha in establishing the kingdom is multi-dimensional. Firstly, being a born leader, he organised the entire strength of all tribes of the region and followed a realistic policy to fulfill his political ambitions. Thus, at the early stage, he took the policy of the tricks and guerrilla war tactics realizing the real situation that the power of the Bhuyans was superior and his power was not sufficient for a direct challenge. He took the policy of open challenge after strengthening his position. This shows his political acumen. Secondly, by his diplomatic tactics, Biswa Singha prevented the powerful Bhuyans of the region to offer a united resistance against him and ultimately Bhuyans were forced to accept his over lordship. Thirdly, the existing political confusion, stateless situation and intra-Bhuyans conflicts offered Biswa Singha to consolidate his power. Fourthly, Biswa Singha remained neutral in the conflict between the Ahoms and the Padshah of Bengal considering the infancy of his kingdom. Lastly, under estimation and ignorance of his power by both the Ahoms and the Padshah of Bengal provided Biswa Singha enough time to consolidate his power. Thus, inspite of tribal origin, Biswa Singha was a born leader, a desperate military genius, a realistic diplomat and an efficient organizer who not only established the kingdom and organised its proper administration, but also institutionalized and legitimized his Kingdom by adopting Brahmanical socio-cultural pattern, which gave him 'Khshatriya' identity of Brahmanical fold. He assumed high-sounding name Biswa Singh of Brahmanical fold, discarding mere Bisa of Tribal fold and initiated the process of socio-political transformation of the multi-ethnic tribes and non-tribes of the region which

facilitated the future Socio-cultural homogenization and assimilation on a great scale during the reign of his son and successor king Naranarayan.

Although, Biswa Singha, during his life time could not shake off 'lip-deep acknowledgement' of the Ahom's vassalage, but was able to leave a strong well organised formal 'lip-deep semi-independent kingdom', for his successors, on which his illustrious son Naranarayan (1540-1587) undertook aggressive military conquests.

The reign of King Naranarayan (1540-1587), the main area of our study, heralded a new dawn in the history of the northeast India and is considered as the 'golden age' in the annals of Koch Behar for various remarkable successes and socio-cultural activities. He is considered as the greatest king of the medieval northeastern India. He became victorious in a series of wars in northeast India and political power of the Koches reached its peak. King Naranarayan's court was not only adorned with a large number of great scholars but many scholars, such as Sankaradeva and others also got shelter and patronage of the Koch king Naranarayan. As a result, development of society, culture, religions, languages and literature reached its climax. It is no exaggeration then that he is considered as '*Bikramaditya*' of northeast India.

He inherited from his father not only a strong kingdom, but also enmity of the Ahom state, which incessantly came in the way of his political ambition. Naranarayan lucky enough to have process a brother like Chilarai, a great general and warrior of the period, along with whom he launched an 'aggressive and systematic military warfare', which was crowned with brilliant success. By this 'aggressive and systematic military warfare policy', they not only revoked the Ahom vassalage and defeated the Ahoms but also established the Koch hegemony over the entire northern bank of the Brahmaputra and the giant, once their nominal master was forced to become a feudatory of the Koches. This defeat made an overwhelming reaction among all the rulers (both independent and semi-independent under the Ahoms) of the whole of the northeast India and as a result some rulers (Kachari, Manipur and Khairam) voluntarily accepted the Koch supremacy by offering annual tributes. Some started war preparation to save themselves from the aggression of the victorious Koches, for which a series of whirlwind campaigns were directed successively against such disobedient and potentates of Jayantiya, Tripura, Sylhet and Dimarua and they were forced to accept the Koch supremacy and agreed to

pay annual tributes. But he did not annex these conquered kingdoms of the north-east considering practical problems such as the long distance, communication problem, geographical difficulties and insufficient machineries to do so. This realistic and innovative policy could only be comparable with the policy of great Gupta king Samudragupta's southern campaign in forth century AD, who due to the such problems, did not annex the Southern states of India.

But, within few years the acceptance of the Koch supremacy and the promise to pay annual tributes, proved to be 'a lip-deep acknowledgement' of the Koch political supremacy and a hollow promise of annual tributes in future and left no permanent result. This all happened with the defeat of the Koch army as well as Chilarai which greatly encouraged the subjugated states of northeastern India to shake-off the Koch vassalage, stop agreed annual tributes and some of them even declared independence.

However, the present study revealed some important political influences and material gains, which cannot be denied. Firstly, king Naranarayan, at least for some time, established his political power and influence over the territories from his North-eastern campaigns which led to the peak period of the Koch political expansion and which is only comparable with the political expansion of the kingdom of Bhaskaravarman of Pushyvarman family of 7th century AD of the region. The names of king Naranarayan and his brother Chilarai spread like wild fire among the masses and contemporary rulers of the whole India as great warriors for which they were respected and feared. King Naranarayan even established friendship with the great Mughal emperor Akbar on equal status. Secondly, the booty and tributes, which were gathered during the expeditions and few successive annual installments, enabled him to continue aggressive warfare, to establish standing army, to introduce navy, and to carry out proper administration and construction. It also enabled him to mint huge coins from the collected gold and silver, which gave great impetus to the developments of trade and commences.

Encouraged by long successive victories in the northeastern corner, the Koch king with his brother-cum-general Chilarai invaded the kingdom of Sulaiman Karrani of Gaud. But in the war that ensued, their army was defeated and his brother Chilarai was taken

prisoner, by the Badshah of Gauda. Naranarayan himself managed his escape from the battlefield in 1568 and thus they tasted defeat for the first time.

The crushing and humiliating defeat of the Koch army as well as Chilarai greatly encouraged the subjugated states of northeastern India to shake-off the Koch vassalage, which made a great impact in king Naranarayan's external and internal policies. The traditional policy of 'aggressive warfare' was replaced by the policy of 'defensive warfare' and 'peaceful co-existence'. Thus, when after some time Chilarai managed his escape, they did not try to restore the lost glory in the northeast. Instead, they tried to consolidate the kingdom, and to organize proper administration and to establish friendship with their traditional enemies i.e. the Ahoms and Bengal. However, the Ahoms were reluctant to establish such friendship with the Koches. In such situation, Naranarayan identified the Ahoms as real enemy and in order to safe guard himself, he tried to come closer to the great Mughal emperor Akbar. The later too, was in need of such friendship to subdue the rebellious Afghans, to establish effective control over Bengal and finally to carry out his imperialistic policy towards Northeast India. In such situation, from 1573 to 1576AD, both of them came closer through various co-operative activities and in 1578 king Naranarayan dispatched a formal embassy to the court of Akbar with a praising letter and presents for Akbar, who heartily reciprocated it and a peaceful and defensive alliance was formed on equal terms between them. Thus, king Naranarayan's wise foreign policy and diplomatic acts in the 'the defensive warfare' phase was the most distinctive feature of his reign. His political far-sightedness and realistic outlook led him to establish friendship, i.e. an honourable alliance based on mutual interests and reciprocal help and on terms of perfect equality with Akbar, the greatest of the Mughal rulers. This alliance not only strengthened the defense of his kingdom against the Ahoms and the Afghans, but also gave the prestige and all India identity of the Koches as an ally of Akbar.

During his second expedition as an ally of Akbar against the Afghans of Gauda, Chilarai was attacked by small-pox and died on the bank of the Ganges, which is not only considered as the darkest day but its marked the end of wars in the history of the Koches for several years. King Naranarayan was so much shocked by the incident that he gave up interest in wars and state administration. Now he became much devoted to

religion, literary activities and works of public welfare. In this situation, the internal centrifugal forces and even his dissatisfied nephew Raghudeva raised their heads and ultimate result was that Bar Dado, Gabha Naik and Bar Katu revolted against the king in 1577AD. Raghudeva, although did not dare to an open revolt but left the capital with some of his officers, proceeded towards the east and reached at a place called Barnagar or Ghilajaypur and declined his uncle's sovereignty there. The disintegration of the kingdom was the worst outcome of the death of Chilarai. King Naranarayan first tried to tame his nephew by peaceful negotiation but this effort went in vain and was forced to partition the kingdom between him and his nephew Raghudeva in about 1581AD, fixing the Sankosh River as the boundary between the two parts. Naranarayan and his successors would be ruling over the western part of the kingdom named as Kochbehar, on the other hand Raghudev and his successors would be ruling over the eastern part of the kingdom under the name as Koch-Hajo.

The present study suggests that this partition greatly weakened the power and position of the kingdom of Naranarayan. The moral prestige and material prosperity reduced to the marginal level and it gave rise of jealousy and conflicts between the two branches of the kingdom. The other powers tried to interfere in the Koch intra-family conflict. However, as long as king Naranarayan was alive he tried his best to check these evil effects of the partition. With the death of king Naranarayan in 1587, power, position and prestige of the Koches almost disappeared. Jealousy, rivalry and conflicts between the two branches of the kingdom reached such a situation that the western kingdom (Koch Behar) compelled to seek Mughal help at the cost of its independent status. Likewise, Eastern kingdom was also compelled to establish alliance with the Afghan leader Isha Khan to protect his kingdom. Thus, the division of the kingdom and death of king Naranarayan, who raised his country to the zenith of its power, prestige and prosperity, led to the end of the most glorious era of the political history of the Koches.

Nearly 50 years of the reign of king Naranarayan witnessed the political climax and disintegration of the Koch power, as well as political vicissitudes of the whole northeast India which in courses of times lost into the womb history. But the peaceful long reign of King Naranarayan ushered the golden age for the development and transitions of military

organization, administration, economy, society, culture, religion, languages literature, art, architecture painting etc, under his own effective initiations and patronizations, for which he will be remembered. It was due to his realization of fact that to cement the strong ground of the military exploits and political hegemony could not last long without legitimization of his line, proper administrative arrangements, centralization of power, social cultural homogenization of various tribal and non-tribal populations and economic solidarity. Therefore, with his military conquests, he simultaneously organized proper administration and institutionalized it, accepted the Brahmanical socio-cultural and religious values to legitimize and popularize the position of the kingdom and took steps for social homogenization of various tribal and non-tribal populations. Besides, being a learned men and benevolent ruler, king Naranarayan took active part for the development of society, culture, and religions and the cultivation of literature and languages, both vernacular as well as Sanskrita, in the kingdom. It acted as two-dimensional roles for the all-round development of the kingdom. On the one hand, for the establishment political stability and well-grounded kingdom, institutionalization of administration and legitimization of his line, king Naranarayan had taken all these steps. On the other hand, the stable and peaceful political condition gave impetus to the development of the intra-human aspects, which led to the peak period of the kingdom of King Naranarayan. Thus, political stability and supremacy of king Naranarayan created such a situation that led to the development of all aspects of human life.

The present study revealed some distinctive features of the military organization of King Naranarayan. Tribal clan based temporary tribal militia of his father transformed into a well-organised multi-tribal multi-cultured permanent Koch army through the inclusion of the other tribes, tribal chiefs, non-tribal Bhuyans and feudal chiefs, not only from their direct control territory but also from the whole the region. Organizing the Socio-religious and cultural parties (bhoja-bhat) among the multi-tribal multi-cultured Koch army had undoubtedly influenced socio-cultural relations of all the heterogeneous tribes and non-tribal communities of the region and strengthened political and social-cultural integrity of the army as well as of the kingdom. For the long planned war preparation, king Naranarayan constructed roads and excavated many roadside ponds for proper movement of the army and proper supply line of war equipments. These were also used civilians and traders and indirectly that helped him in the integration of the kingdom.

Formation of standing army, for the defense of forts and swift attack, introduction of navy in the Koch forces to facilitate the movement of army and to fight in rivery geographical region, swift and night attack with infantry and navy simultaneously keeping elephanty and cavalry in front were some military tactics which immensely helped King Naranarayan in the wars.

It is revealed that the tribe and clan based state administration of his father distinctively was re-organised and enlarged by King Naranarayan to face changing situation of the kingdom due to the territorial expansion of the kingdom and multi-ethnic characteristics of his population by appointing officials from all tribal and non-tribal population considering only efficiencies. For instance, he being a staunch Saiva never hesitated to appoint Sankaradeva, the Neo-Vaisnava saint, as the 'Gamatha' or Viceroy of the Patbauri and its neighbouring places, considering only his knowledge. The appointment of officials from all tribal and non-tribal population, not only made the administration efficient but it also gave the administration a 'national character', which led to integration of the kingdom of numerous tribes, castes and communities. However, the members of upper strata of both the caste Hindus and Hinduised tribes monopolized administrative posts of the early Koches. Bureaucratization of the state administration by appointing influential tribal chiefs and non-tribal leaders/Bhuyans, king Naranarayan maintained the balance of power between the tribal and the non-tribal subjects of his kingdom which helped him to establish effective control over his subjects.

At the early stage of the reign of Biswa Singha, plundered booty was the main source of income, which was irregular and was not sufficient to carry out all kind of activities of the state. For this reason, to accumulate surplus from other permanent sources, he tried to establish surplus generating mechanism by organizing revenue and taxation structures to extract surplus from land, agricultural surplus, trades, obligatory manual services, arts and crafts, industries and fines. King Naranarayan re-organised, this mechanism on permanent basis, encouraged, and took active part for the development of the arts and crafts, agriculture, trades, and industries to extract more income to face the increased requirements of the funds for the state administration and welfare activities like construction of roads, rest houses, channels, ponds, hospitals, bridges and others.

Present study reveals that king Naranarayan replaced 'the tribal mode of production' by introducing the non-tribal mode of production i.e. advanced agricultural techniques for the development of agricultural pattern to stimulate the state's economic solidarity. The adoption of non-tribal mode of production by the ruling section of tribe, the fellow tribal also began to adopt the not-tribal mode of production, which eventually resulted in the peasantisation of the tribes and development of agriculture and agricultural surplus. Due to the extension of the kingdom, a vast tract of the plain and fertile land came under its control, which was already transformed, into an important surplus generating field. The land revenue structure and mechanism organised by king Naranarayan in new agricultural pattern, helped him not only to collect more revenue for state's administration, development and welfare activities, but also to establish his direct control over the subjects of his kingdom.

Beside agriculture, for the economic development of the state and as well as that of the subjects of the kingdom, Biswa Singha and king Naranarayan encouraged and took active part for development of crafts, industries, trades and commerce. Biswa Singha appointed his sons in charge of various professional artisans and trade and commerce, and king Naranarayan had continued all their offices. These offices not only supervised the development of look after the crafts, industries, trades, commerce, and legal sides, but also they acted as collectors of taxes. It was due to the adoption of non-tribal advanced technologies, admixture of tribal and non-tribal techniques, peaceful political condition and state's encouragement, the development of crafts and industries reached a considerable advanced stage, which ultimately led to the economic prosperity of the kingdom. As non-tribal technologies were advanced and more productive, so the tribal people adopted it through the process of acculturation for their betterment. However, it is also fact that tribal people did not give up their traditional crafts and industries completely. Thus, development of crafts and Industries, through the technological acculturation under royal supervision, accelerated the productions of a large amount surplus and marketable crafts and industrial goods. These not only gave a great impetus to the economic growth of the subjects and the state but also to the development of trade and commerce and to the establishment of the monetary economy.

Development of agriculture, crafts, industries and marketable surplus productions, during the reign of king Naranarayan gave a great impetus to the development of trade and commerce, not only within his kingdom but also in the whole of the northeast India. Moreover, encouragement in the way of establishment of roads, trade centers, commercial relation with neighbouring countries and finally introduction of coins by king Naranarayan also helped the development of trade and Commerce. Due to the favourable geographical location of the kingdom, trade and commerce of the states such as Assam, other northeastern states, Bengal, Bhutan, Tibet and China were carried out through the Koch kingdom and the kingdom acted as 'middle zone' of international trade and commerce. Not only that, even European merchant Ralf Fitch had come to the Koch capital in 1585AD to survey the prosperity of the trade and commerce with Tibet and China through the Koch kingdom. Although, we have no reference of the royal commercial enterprise, however, it is fact that the Koches had direct control over both the internal and external trade and commerce. Establishment of frontier Chowkies (outpost) to guard the illegal trade, collection of various types taxes like *hatkar* (market tax) and *Ghatkar* (taxes on river ports) and appointment of the officials, indirectly proved the direct control on the trade and commerce.

The most distinctive achievement of king Naranarayan is the introduction of Narayani Mudra (Tanka), which was not only circulated within the Koch kingdom but also in the whole of northeastern region including Bhutan and part of Tibet and were the prime medium of exchange in internal and external trade and commerce of many countries. Due to the geographical location as 'middle zone' and use of the Narayani Mudra (Tanka) as 'the prime medium of exchange', the trade and commerce of the region weighed in favour of Koch kingdom. It is also evident that Narayani Mudra (Tanka) had been minted from several places of northeast India like Jayantiya, and Khyram etc., for which money supply increased rapidly and as a result became an acceptable standard medium of exchange both in inter regional and intra regional trade and commerce of the whole north-east India. Thus, the political hegemony of the Koches under king Naranarayan though declined within short period but the hegemony of the Narayani Mudra (Tanka) of the Koches, over the trade and commerce of the whole region, continued for several succeeding centuries. This is the distinctive achievement of king Naranarayan in the field of economic development.

The economic development in the various fields like agriculture, crafts, industries, trades and commerce, of the Koches under king Naranarayan, not only established the strong political, military and economic bases of the kingdom but also enabled him to expense huge amount of money and materials for carrying out welfare activities, socio-cultural activities, cultivation education, learning, art and architecture.

The present study revealed that Biswa Singha and his son Naranarayan had taken active part in the socio-cultural assimilation not only in their line but also that of the whole tribal and non-tribal population of the region. Transition of Tribal Chiefdom of Hariya Mandal into a state by Biswa Singha, the father of Naranarayan, the dynasty and its close relatives started adopting Hindu socio-cultural pattern / Hinduisiation or Sanskritisation process to legitimize their power as *Khshatriya* of the Brahmanical fold under the influence of the Brahmins. Divine connection of the kingship or its link with any mythical hero of the Hindu tradition was a common trend for the legitimization of kingship and the Brahmins had the sole authority to do this. The Brahmins, who so long designated the Koches as Mlechhas, came forward to Hinduise them adding fictitious myth and legitimize their royal position as *Khshatriya* origin after the rise of the Koches to power. Thus, with various myths, the Brahmins christened Bisu as Biswa Singha, ascribed him a *Khshatriya* origin and described him as the son of Lord Siva of Hindu pantheon to legitimize his rule over the state.

After Hinduisiation, Biswa Singha accepted the Hindu Socio-cultural pattern, actively patronized Hinduism, and encouraged the worship of Gods and Goddesses of Hindu pantheon. He sent his sons Naranarayan and Chilarai to Benaras for the learning of the Hindu scriptures, established marriage relations with Hindu *Khshatriya* royal families and brought a number Brahmins from Mithila and other places to encourage Hinduised socio-cultural pattern. Thus, he initiated the Brahmanical socio-cultural system and socio-cultural assimilation in the kingdom.

Naranarayan and Chilarai, who were brought up and educated at Benaras and were greatly influenced by the ideal of high – caste Hindus and therefore they garnered a deep

sympathy for Hindu manners, customs and ideals in their hearts. Thus, they attempted to introduce those ideals and customs among their people after their accession to the power. They brought Siddhantavagisa and Vidyavagisa, the two Brahmins scholars and patronized them with nine villages and ultimately they became the advisor and social dictator of the kingdom. Through the efforts of the king Naranarayan and Chilarai, under the guidance of Siddhantavagisa and his '*Kaumudis*' (his 18 books in same name) four-fold Varnasrama i.e. *Brahmanas*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaisyas* and *Sudras* with necessary modifications was introduced in the Koch kingdom. But in reality, the society had two parts: A) the upper strata i.e. the privileged and rich class which included the tribal chiefs, ruling class, their subordinate officers, Bhuyans, Samanta rajas and the priests, both Brahmanical and Tribal and rich business communities. B) Lower strata i.e. non-privileged poor people of the country including the peasants, both tribal and non tribal, slaves, house servants, bondmen petty shopkeepers, petty government servants, sepoys, peons, Garmalis, storekeepers, Mahaliya, Dancers, Musicians, etc .They were directly involved in production or services and they were also the taxpayer in cash or kind or services. However, they directly received nothing from the state.

The Brahmin priests, non-tribal migrants, and the Koch royal patronage to them played instrumental role in the process of Hinduisiation and socio-cultural assimilation in the Non-Hindu tribal royal courts and that of the kingdom. The process of Hinduisiation and socio-cultural assimilation had started 'from above' i.e. creamy layer of the tribal people, including the kings, their tribal officers, clan leaders, and then the economically and socially stronger section of the tribal society followed them. They shifted residences to the centre of power (i.e. capital) and the core area (i.e. plains) and discarded or modified their tribal dialects, manners and social customs, following royal family. As the conversion to Hinduism and adoption of their socio-cultural pattern were considered as a matter of prestige, social status and way to obtain lucrative posts in Hinduised Koch royal court, so they accepted it by their own choice. However, a section of the tribal people preferred to live in the peripheral region in clan life keeping allegiance to their tribe following their own dialects, manners and social customs, which were regulated by tribal customs that came down traditionally from times immemorial, without any royal intervention. It is fact that King Naranarayan could not dare to impose his adopted Hindu

religion and Socio-cultural on his tribal fellows considering the interest of his kingdom. He allowed the Kacharies, Meches, Koches and other tribes of peripheral region i.e. northern side of the *Goshain Kamal Ali* of sub- Himalayan lower Assam, to follow their own religious socio-cultural traditions and rituals, according to their own wish, with their tribal priests. While the tribes of the same communities of the other areas largely adopted the Brahmanical religious socio-cultural traits. Thus, the policy of non-interference in the religious-cultural matter was another important distinctive feature of his rule.

During the reign of king Naranarayan, the Neo- Vaisnava preacher Sankaradeva (1449-1569) gave another great impetus to the socio-cultural assimilation of the kingdom, especially after the settlement of Sankaradeva in the kingdom of king Naranarayan in 1546. Inspite of being a religious movement, Neo-Vaisnavism marked the beginning of the emergence of an egalitarian society cutting across not only caste taboos, expensive rituals and social restrictions, but also new social ethics, behaviour and code of conduct among the people of the Koch kingdom on equality and fraternity. Sankaradeva aimed at to establish a classless and casteless society on democratic and humanistic ground, and to stabilize and systematize the moral conduct and other socio-cultural-educational aspects of all the people of the kingdom. King Naranarayan was highly impressed and pleased by the saint's deep knowledge, appearance and saintly character, he offered him great seat of honour, appointed him as the 'Gamatha' or Viceroy of the Patbausi and its neighbouring places. He patronized to establish a large number of *Satras* (Neo-Vaisnava Monastery) and *Namghars / Kirtanaghara*s (Vaisnava prayer Halls) in the Koch kingdom. The non-Hindu tribal people were greatly influenced by Neo-Vaisnavism for its liberal outlook and socio-cultural aspects. Thus, due to the liberal outlook and socio-cultural aspects of Neo-Vaisnavism and active patronage of king Naranarayan, it was able to percolate deep into the heart not only of the common people within the Kingdom but also into the heart of the kings which brought a revolutionary change in socio-cultural pattern.

One of the distinctive features of the transformation of socio-cultural pattern and the socio-cultural assimilation in the Koch kingdom during the reign of king Naranarayan, under the influences of Neo-Vaisnavism was synthesizing liberal and universal outlook

of Koch kings and the common people. The kings as well as common people did not discard the old socio-cultural pattern and worshiping of other god and goddess of Hindu tradition, although Sankaradeva informed them that those who did not believe in the unity of the godhead and worshipped a number of deities were not entitled to get *Sarana mantra*. Koch kings of the dynasty although traditionally demanded them as 'Sivavansi' (decent from Siva), they stated to use the title '*Narayana*' (other name of Bhagabata Vishnu). King Naranarayan, his successors and his subjects established large number of temples of Hindu pantheon as well as Neo-Vaisnavite Satras (Neo-Vaisnava Monasteries) and *Namghars/ Kirtanaghara*s (Vaisnava prayer Halls) in the Koch kingdom. Therefore, it was not theological part i.e. spiritual and religious activities of Neo-Vaisnavism, but the socio-cultural part, i.e. socio-cultural activities including humanistic philosophy and democratic outlook, which influenced the kings as well as common people (even some time without initiation to the faith), of the kingdom.

The *Namghars / Kirtanaghara*s (Vaisnava prayer Halls), mainly Village *Namghars/ Kirtanaghara*s, which were established as a Neo-Vaisnavite religious institution in almost all Hindu villages of the region within a short period, it became epicenter of the all types of socio-cultural activities, spiritual and other leanings, religious activities and dramatic performances and brought about significant changes in all spheres of life. It contributed immensely to the process of socialization and cultural homogenization, which led to the building of a vibrant civil society, based on peace, goodwill, mutual respect, social justice, self-help and equality.

It also revealed that the period witnessed the synthesis among the Brahmanical religions (with its offshoots like the *Tantricism* and *Nathism*) tribal religions, and Neo-Vaisnavite faith. The state and creamy layer of the tribal people adopted the Brahmanical religious culture to legitimize their political power and position but could not completely discard their lineage with the general layer of the tribal people of the remote periphery who maintained their primordiality. They brought some religious-cultural ideas or beliefs from their ancestors, which led to the inevitable religious-cultural synthesis under the state sponsorship of the Brahmanical religious culture and continuity of the tribal beliefs system. Thus, Rishi (Mahakal), the male deity of the Rabhas and the Koches ; *Bathou* (male god of *Bathouism*), the male deity of the Meches and some minor male deities like

Masan, Jakha, Bura Thakur, etc., were taken into the Brahmanical religious fold as local incarnations of Lord Siva. *Bhandani* and *Devi*, two female tribal deities became localized incarnations of the mainstream Brahmanical Goddess Durga. All the deities are worshipped in both the tribal and the mainstream Brahmanical forms by both, the tribal and the Brahmanical priests, bear the testimonies of religious cultural synthesis of both the tribal rituals and the Brahmanical rituals. King Naranarayan initiated this and it has been continuing till today. Besides, the worship of 'Bardevi', a special synthesized form of both the Goddess Durga of the Brahmanical faith and *Devi*, the chief tribal female deity, which might be considered as the strongest example of religious cultural synthesis of the period.

It is also revealed from the present study that king Naranarayan was very liberal in his personal religious belief and thus, he patronized all (both tribal and Brahmanical) religions of the region. As a staunch Sakta, king Naranarayan constructed Kamakhya temple at Nilachal hill and others and introduced a combined ritual of tribal, Brahmanical and Tantric rituals to worship the deity. As a Saiva, he patronized to construct Baneswar Siva temple at Baneswar, near Koch Behar and many others and introduced a combined ritual of tribal and Brahmanical rituals to worship the deity in various forms like Siva, Siva Linga and Mahakal. As a well-wisher of the Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva, he patronized the construction of large numbers of Satras including Madhupur Satra (also known as Bardowa Satra), Barpeta Satra (Barpeta) and many more. This liberal outlook helped him to synthesize religious cultural life of the multi-ethnical and multi-cultural subjects of his kingdom. Thus he was able to unify the diverse tribes and communities in a liberal synthesized religious cultural pattern which led to the socio-cultural integration of the kingdom which again supplemented political integration and strengthened the bonds of the unity of the both the subjects as well as kingdom.

Thus, modification of the tribal deities, their incorporation into the Brahmanical faith and synthesis of the both was not complete Hinduisation of the tribal religious culture but it was 'the modification of tribal religious culture and synthesis of indigenous and exogenous religious culture' under the royal patronage to keep pace with situation and times. In course of time, Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva as a religion added only some liberal and democratic religious cultural ethics and re-synthesized it without discarding

'synthesized indigenous and exogenous religious culture'. This proved from the information of the *Thakura-Charita* of *Vidyananda*, which records, 'These people not conscious of the Great Way (Neo-Vaisnavism); and Sakti (Saktism) then reigned supreme. They sang songs of *Hari*; but then, when the autumn came, they installed a *ghata* (pitcher representing the goddess) each in every one's house".

The present study suggests that king Naranarayan marked distinctive achievements for the development of both indigenous and Sanskrita languages, literature and education of the region. He patronized migrant Brahmins, Kayasthas and others, who accelerated the development of indigenous language, literature and education and as well as the cultivation of Sanskrita language, literature and scriptures, for which he is regarded as the '*Bikramaditya*' of Assam and his reign is termed as 'golden age in the annals of the Koch Behar'.

His court was adorned with large number of scholars of various branches of learning, including literature, language and education. Neo-Vaisnavite preacher Sankaradeva was the most luminous and a man of multi-genius star in the court of king Naranarayan, who composed large number of works mainly on religious subjects and rendered many Sanskrita scriptures into the indigenous vernacular to diffuse the secrets of the sacred scriptures among the masses. Besides Sankaradeva, Madhavadeva, the scholarly disciple of Sankaradeva, Pitambar Siddhantavagis, Kavi Rama Saraswti, Ananta Kandali, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, Kalap Chandra Dvija, Purusshottam Vidyavagish, Bakul Kayastha, Sridhar, Bhusan Dvija, Rama Ray, and other were notable luminaries of the court of king Naranarayan, who marked their achievements for the development of languages, literature, religions and scriptures. Naranarayan himself was the author of a dictionary of Sanskrita language named '*Malladevi Abhidhan*'.

As both king Naranarayan and his brother Chilarai, were well versed in the Sanskrita as well as the Bengali (or *Kamarupi / Kamatapuri*) languages, they took active interest to spread the teachings and values of Sanskrita literature through the contemporary vernacular of the region i.e. Bengali (or *Kamarupi / Kamatapuri*). The indigenous language, which originated in this region and popularised by king Naranarayan is known as '*Kamarupi* / *Kamatapuri*' and the language is akin to Bengali

language of the middle age. King Naranarayan distinctively, adopted this standard language i.e. Bengali (or *Kamrupi / Kamatapuri*) of eastern India; by discarding their tribal languages like Mech / Baro / Koch and keeping aside his well-verses language i.e. Sanskrita, which gradually became the language of the state for administrative and communicative purposes. The earliest specimen of this language so far known is the letter of Naranarayan dated 1477 Saka (1555) sent to the Ahom king with the peace proposal²³⁷ and in succeeding periods the language was modified for all-round usages. Moreover, he also encouraged scholars to render Sanskrita scriptures into this vernacular and to diffuse the teaching, morale and knowledge of the classical Sanskrita literature through this language. Sankaradeva, though a distinguished Sanskrita scholar, wrote mainly in this language, with the aim of bringing Sanskrita lore within the uneducated masses. Thus, the adoption of this standard language i.e. Bengali (or *Kamrupi / Kamatapuri*) by King Naranarayan in his administrations, courts, foreign affairs and even in cultivation of literature, led the tribal people to be acquainted with this language(*Bengali / Kamarupi / Kamatapuri*) and ultimately this was accepted by the tribal people along with the upper strata of the society as colloquial language.

It is also fact that he did not discourage the cultivation of Sanskrita language and literature. With the state formation under Biswa Singha and King Naranarayan, the Koches adopted Hinduism, Sanskritized themselves and became great patron of Sanskrit language, literature and learning. Besides, king Naranarayan and Chilarai had their education at Benaras in *Sanskrita* grammar, the *Puranas*, *Sruti*, *Smriti*, *Mimamsa* and Atharvanic military practices and they became well versed in many aspects of Sanskrit language and literature. Thus, they became a great source of inspiration to the scholars and poets of the kingdom and created such a situation that was suitable for the cultivation of Sanskrita language and literature.

The literary activities of his reign included the composition of Sanskrita and Bengali (*Kamarupi / Kamatapuri*) texts on languages, religions and secular subjects and translation of the Sanskrita scriptures including the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Puranas* and *Smriti Sastras* etc. into the vernacular. As all these were the sources of Indian mythology and Hinduism, so it got special attention of the king to popularize the teachings and values of these texts among the subjects. Purusshottam Vidyavagish in

the direction of King Naranarayan and his queen had compiled a Sanskrita grammar called '*Prayoga-Ratnamala*', which became the main grammar for general education including the kids of the royal family. In the court of Naranarayan, Pitambar Siddhantavagis compiled 18 *Smritinvandhans* called *Kaumudi*. Bakul Kayastha, a court writer of king Naranarayan, wrote the *Kitavat manjuri*, a book on arithmetic, land surveying and bookkeeping. Bhusan Dvija, a court poet of Naranarayan, composed the biography of Sankaradeva named '*Guru Charita*'. Ananta Kandali had composed many books including *Sri Rama Kirtana* in *Kirtana* style and translated the *Rajasuya* section of the *Mahabharata* into vernacular. Kalap Chandra Dvija had translated the fourth and sixth *Skanda* of *Bhagvata Purana* and a part of the *Ramayana* under the *Ramayana Chandika*.

The Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva gave another great impetus to the literary activities during the reign of king Naranarayan. The Hindu traditional scholars have generally translated the epics and the *Puranas* into the vernaculars (Bengali or *Kamarupi / Kamatapuri*) for diffusing the secrets of the classical literature. However, Sankaradeva had encouraged the Vaisnava scholars to produce literature on the Neo-Vaishnavism. Sankaradeva and his disciples not only translated the scriptures into the vernaculars but also composed various types of literary works. At the instance of King Naranarayan, he took up the works of translation of the all the *Bhagavata* books and himself translated the major portion , namely Books I, II, III, VII, VIII, IX, X, and XII. Besides Sankaradeva, under his guidance, his others disciples, writers, undertook the translation of other sections of the *Bhagavata*. Under the inspiration of the Koch kings, Sankaradeva and his disciples had composed a large numbers '*Ankiyanats*', *Baragitas* (great songs) and many *Kirtana-ghosh*. During his stay in Koch state, he wrote *Gunamala* (the garland of qualities), a summary of the *Bhagavata* at the instance of King Naranarayan and *Bhakti Ratnakara*, a doctrinal work in the ideas of Bhakti. He also translated the *Ramayana* (*Uttar-Kanda*).

It seems to us that there was no centralized educational system during the reign of King Naranarayan. However, there were large number of Sanskrit Gurukula type *Tolas* and *Chhatrasalas*, Neo-Vaisnavism *Satras* and royal court, where education were imparted mainly in Sanskrita Grammar, Lexicons, the Epics, the *Puranas*, religious

works- *Dharmasastras*, *Niti-Sastras* and *Yajamanis*, etc. The Brahmins and the Satradhikaris mainly managed these institutions and maintained by public donations. However, formal *Tola* centric education was limited within upper strata of the society and the common masses were beyond that. Although, there was no formal vernacular education centers but the masses received informal education through the stories of the translated form of the classical writings, Vaisnavite propagations, folk-stories, songs, folk music, dance, etc. The state-sponsored stalwarts had mainly translated the classical literature in the vernaculars and composed Vaisnavite works in the vernaculars. These gave impetus to the learning and education among the masses.

Present study suggests that in the field of performing arts like traditional tribal and non-tribal music, dances and dramas with various types of musical instruments were prevalent and received royal patronage during the period. King Naranarayan organised a musical dance party during his Ahom expedition to obtain the support of the Mech Kachari, which clearly indicates the patronage of tribal music and dances. Chilarai, the brother of the king not only encouraged performing arts like music and dramas but he also built a theatre hall for the performance of *Rama-Vijaya* drama and he himself wrote '*Saraswati*', the commentary of the '*Gita-Govinda*' of Jaydeva in vernacular. The Non-Vaisnavite performing arts based on mainly classical pattern, were executed in traditional non-Vaisnavite religious performances, agriculture, in the community feast and socio-religious occasions.

In the field of performing arts, Neo-Vaisnavism and *Satra* institution not only bought a new era but also an organised form of the performing arts in the region under the active royal patronage during our period of study. Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva, two master artists of the period composed a large number of *Baragits*, *Ankargits*, *Kirtanghosh*, and *Bhatima*, *Nam-ghosh*, which influenced all classes of masses very much and acted as the vehicle for the propagation of the Neo-Vaisnavism faith. These songs are blended form of Indian classical musical and dance traditions with local tribal and non-tribal ones, which led to the rise of two independent schools called 'Assamese school of music' and 'Satra School of dance'. The *Satra* dance was mainly connected with dramatic performances of Neo-Vaisnavite themes; however, it became prime dance pattern of whole northeast India and there may have been some connection with the

classical and traditional dances like the Manipuri dance and the Bihu dance respectively. Even, the Satra dance form with a very old ancestry has been included in the list of Indian classical dance formats along with *Kathakali*, *Bharatnatyam* etc.

The early Koch kings patronized the painting of the period, which was executed mainly by Neo-Vaisnavite artists on walls, pillars, and interior of the *Namghars* / *Kirtanghars*, gates (*Karapats*), *Manukutas*, and others parts of *Satras*, and manuscripts. Thus, the painting of the Neo-Vaisnavite Artists was mainly *Satra* centric paintings and may be named as 'the *Satriya* style of paintings', which enhanced a 'new chapter' during the reign of king Naranarayan in the sense that no specimen of paintings done in the area anterior to the time of the Sankaradeva is available to us. In the *Satra* centric paintings, religious matters were the main subject and local materials were used in it. Sankaradeva was a great painter, who painted the scenes of the 'Seven Vaikunthas' on the ginned cotton paper (*tula-pat*) and supervised the painting of scenes of Lord Krishna's childhood woven into a tapestry sheet of embroidered designs on silk cloth 180 feet long called *Vrindavani Vastra*. Besides, a large number of Manuscripts with illustrated borders were known as *latā-katā puthi* or manuscripts with scrolls and running motifs along the borders. Many manuscripts contain pictures of the deadly sins, of the glory of Visnu, and of His incarnations according to Hindu conception.

The strong economic solidarity, comparatively peaceful political situation and keen interest of the early Koch king Naranarayan and his brother Chilarai, led to the development of architecture and sculpture. The reputed architecture and sculpture of the period i.e. the Kamakhya and Hayagriva Madhava temples bear characteristics of all India pattern with little local variations or a fine admixture of local and the all Indian pattern. However, high plinth and underground Garvagriha (sanctum) with an underground natural spring are distinctive features of the architecture and sculpture of the period, for which it may be term as 'Nilachala type of architecture and sculpture'. The Kamakhya temple architecture and sculpture is the most important example of this school. Another type of architecture and sculpture developed during the period of our study and under the influences of Neo-Vaisnavite movement and royal patronage is '*Satriya School*' of architecture and sculpture. It is distinctive in the sense that instead of bricks and stone slabs, products like timber, bamboo, soil, thatching material etc. were

used for the construction of Satras which served as the religious place, place of learning and the dwelling place of the Monks of the faith. Our present study revealed that the architecture and sculpture of the period is mainly religious based and secular architectural and sculptural works are very rare. However, references in literary sources of forts and decorative royal palaces indicate the development of the secular and court centric architectural and sculptural works. As most of the works were constructed with raw materials like woods, bamboos and canes, they might have disappeared due to the wet climatic condition and heavy rainfall of the region.

The present study also revealed that the process and procedure by which Biswa Singh and King Naranarayan had formed the Koch kingdom do not conform to any stereotype theories like the Hydraulic theory of state formation of Karl Wittfogel, the Galactic State System theory or Galactic Republic theory and segmentary state system theory or others state formation theories. Rather, 'aggressive warfare and circumscription' (R.L.Carneiro), 'the conquest theory of state formation' (F.Oppenheimer) and the 'institutionalization of centralized leadership and legitimization of kingship' (Elman Service) simultaneously acted as mechanisms for the territorial expansion and formation of the Koch kingdom. Therefore, formation of the Koch kingdom though not identical with any stereotyped theory of state formation, but it is identical with many theories and concepts and may be considered as combined form of state formation, which bears characteristics of both conventional and non-conventional theories.

Thus, Biswa Singha, as a tribal chief (leader) organised his fellow tribes following guerrilla and aggressive warfare, institutionalized and legitimized his rule through the process of Hinduisiation and bureaucratization of administration on hereditary line in early stage. King Naranarayan like his father Biswa Singha, following 'aggressive warfare' and 'conquest policy' expanded territory of the basic kingdom of his father and established independent Koch kingdom as well as his sway over the whole northeast India. Simultaneously, he institutionalized and legitimized his kingship through the process of bureaucratization of administration with new innovative steps, monetization of economy for economic solidarity of the kingdom, socio-cultural and religious homogenization for socio-cultural and religious development and patronization of the development of languages, literatures, learning and others. Thus, the reign of King Naranarayan is rightly

is considered as the golden age not only in the annals of Koch Behar but also in the history of the whole region. The territorial extent of his kingdom is comparable only with Bhaskaravarman of ancient Kamarupa. His conquests and nominal political hegemony can be compared comparable only with Samudragupta of Gupta dynasty of ancient India and his achievements in the intra human development is comparable only with legendary Bikramaditya of the classical age of Indian history.

The people of northern Bengal and adjoining lower Assam fondly cherish the legacy of the Koch kingdom. Their pride is felt in the terminology of their tribal heritage as in the names of Koch, Rajvansi and Kamtapuri. The people of the lower Brahmaputra valley including some present districts of lower Assam and Koch Behar proudly remember their ancestors like Biswa Singha and Naranarayan. They named many roads and social-educational institutions / organizations on their great ancestors and erected statues in different places of the region. A statue of Chilarai stands at the entrance of the city of Gauhati and main road of the present Koch Behar town is known as 'Biswa Singha road'. Moreover, following the legacy of the Koch dynasty, the people of this region nurturing movements in various names like Kshatriya Rajbansi movement, Kamtapuri movement, Greater Koch Behar movement etc. in post independence period. Thus, past greatness, glories and lingering notion of the Koch dynasty as well as that of the Koch-Rajbansi people of the region gave rise to a sense of pride which accelerating the emergence of the different types of socio-political movements in this region.

:XXX:

APPENDIX

APPENDIX: A

Kings of the Koch dynasty (c. 1515-1773):

<i>Kings:</i>	<i>Reigns:</i>
Biswa Singha	: c 1515-1540 A.D.
Naranarayan	: 1540- 1587 A.D.
Laksminarayan, (Koch Behar /Main branch)	: 1587-1627 A.D.
Raghudevanarayan (Koch Hajo)	: 1581-1603 A.D.
Parikshit Narayan (Koch Hajo)	: 1603-1613 A.D.
Bir Narayan (Main Branch)	: 1627-1632 A.D.
Prana Narayan (Main Branch)	: 1632-1665 A.D.
Moda Narayan (Main Branch)	: 1665-1680 A.D.
Vasudeva Narayan (Main Branch)	: 1680-1682 A.D.
Manindra Narayan (Main Branch)	: 1682-1693 A.D.
Rup Narayan (Main Branch)	: c 1693-1714 A.D.
Upendra Narayan (Main Branch)	: 1714-1763 A.D.
Devendra Narayan (Main Branch)	: 1763-1765 A.D.
Dhairjendra Narayan (Main Branch)	: 1765-1770 A.D.
Rajendra Narayan (Main Branch)	: 1770- 1772 A.D.
Dharendra Narayan (Main Branch)	: 1772-1775 A.D.

(Sources: This table is prepared with informations from genealogies (*Vansavalis*), chronicles (*Buranjis*), Government records, and the official history of the kingdom and also information from Khan Chaudhury Amanatulla Ahmed, 'Cooch Beharer Itihas', Harendra Narayan Chaudhuri; 'The Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlement' and S. K. Bhuyan (ed); *Kamrupar Buranji*.)

APPENDIX: B

Contemporary Rulers of Delhi:

Sikander Lodi (Lodi dynasty):	1489-1526 A. D.
Babar (Mughal dynasty):	1526-1530 A. D.
Humayun (Mughal dynasty):	1530-1540 A. D.
Sher Shah (Sur dynasty) :	1540-1545 A. D.
Islam Shah (Sur dynasty) :	1545-1553 A. D.
Firuz Shah (Sur dynasty) :	1553- only three days.
Mahammad Adil Shah (Sur dynasty):	1553-1556 A .D.
Akbar (Mughal dynasty):	1556-1605A.D.

APPENDIX: C

Contemporary Ahoms Rulers:

Suhummung Dihingiya Raja	:	1497-1539 A.D.
Suklenmung Gadagayan Raja	:	1539-1552/3A.D.
Sukhampha Khora Raja	:	1552/3-1603 A.D.

APPENDIX: D

Contemporary Rulers of Bengal:

Alauddin Hussain Shah (Hussain Shahi dynasty):	1493-1519 A.D.
Nasrat Shah (") :	1519-1532 A.D.
Firoj Shah (2 nd) (") :	1532-1533 A.D.
Giyasuddin Mamud Shah (") :	1533-1538 A.D.
Khijir Khan (as a viceroy of Sher Shah Suri) :	1538-1541 A.D.
Qazi Fazilat (as a viceroy of Sher Shah Suri) :	1541-1545 A.D.

Mahmmud Shah Dynasty:

Shamsuddin Md. shah (Mahammad shah)	: 1545-1555 A. D.
Giyasuddin Bahadur Shah (Khijir Khan)	: 1555-1561 A. D.
Giyasuddin shah II, (Jalaluddin)	: 1561-1564 A.D.

Karrani Dynasty:

Sulaiman Khan Karrani	: 1564-1572 A.D.
Bayazid Khan Karrani	: 1572 A.D.
Daud Khan Karrani	: 1572-1576 A.D.

Mughal Subedars of Bengal:

Munim Khan (Khan-e-Khanan)	: 1565-1576A.D.
Hussain (Ismail) Quli Beg (Khan-e-Jahan)	: 1576-1578A.D.
Muzaffar khan Turbati	: 1579-1580 A.D.
Mirza Haqim	: 1580-1582 A.D.
Mirza Aziz Koka (Khan-e-Azam)	: 1582-1583 A.D.
Shahbaz Khan	: 1583-1585 A.D.
Sadiq Khan	: 1585-1586 A.D.
Wazid Khan (Syed khan)	: 1586-1594 A.D.
Raja Man Singh	: 1594-1605 A.D.

APPENDIX: E

The Kamakshya Temple Inscription:

Sanskrit Text in Bengali scripts:

ওঁ লোকানন্দহ-কারকঃ করুণয়া পার্থে ধনুর্ক্ষিদয়া
 দামেনাপি দধীচি-কর্ণো-সদৃশ্যে মর্যাদয়ান্তানিধিঃ ।
 নানা-শাস্ত্র-বিচার-চারু-চরিতঃ কল্প-রূপোজ্জ্বলঃ
 কামাক্ষ্যা-চরণাঞ্চকো বিজয়তে শ্রীমমদেবো নৃপঃ ॥
 প্রসাদমন্ত্রি-দুইভুশ্রেণারবিন্দ-
 ভক্ত্যাকরোদন্তো রব-শীল-শৈলে ।
 শ্রীশুক্রদেব ইসমুমসিতো পালন
 শাকে তুরস-পজ-বেদ-শশাঙ্ক-সংখ্যেতঃ ॥
 তষ্ঠেব প্রিয়-সোদরঃ প্রিয়মশা বীরেন্দ্র-মৌলী-স্ত্রী
 মানিক্যঃ ভজ্ঞমান-কল্প-বিটসী নীলাচলেমন্ত্রজুলম্ ।
 প্রামাদঃ মুনি-নাগ-বেদ-শশভূতশাকে শিলা-রাজিভি-
 দেবী-ভক্তিমাতঃ বড়ো রচিতবান শ্রীশুক্র-পূর্ব-ধ্রজঃ ॥

(Khan Chaudhury A. Ahmed, pp.126-7).

English translation:

" Glory to the king Malla Deb, who by virtue of his mercy, is kind to the people, who in archery is like Arjun, and in charity like Dadhicchi and Karna ; he is like an ocean of goodness, he is versed in many *shastras*; his character is excellent; in beauty he is as bright as Kandarpa, he is a worshipper of Kamakhya . His younger brother Sukladeb built this temple of bright stones on the Nila hillock, for the worship of the goddess Durga, in 1487 Sak (A.D. 1565). His beloved brother Sukladhvaja again, with universal fame, the crown of the greatest heroes, who, like the fabulous Kalpataru gave all that was devoutly asked of him, the chief of all devotees of the goddess, constructed this beautiful temple with heaps of stones on the Nila hill in 1487 Sak".

(Translation from Gait, reprint, 2004, p. 58)

APPENDIX: F

The Hayagriva-Madhava Temple Rock Inscription:

Sanskrit Text in Bengali scripts:

শ্রীশ্বেতসিংহঃ ক্ষিতিপতিবর্তত্বৎ সুতঃ খ্যাতকীর্তিঃ
 শ্রীমৎ-শ্রীমল্লদেবো নূপতিরতিমতিনির্জিভারাতিজাতিঃ ।
 গাঞ্জীয়োদায়- শৌয়-প্রথিত-পৃথু-যশো-ধৰ্ম্ম-কর্ম্মাবদাতঃ
 শ্রীমৎ শ্রীমল্লভজাখ্যো ব্যজনি তদনুজো বদ-বশেহ শেষদেশঃ ॥
 সাম্ভাদ্রাঘব-পুজোবো দিশদিশি প্রখ্যাত-কীর্তি-ব্রজো
 হস্তাপুণ্যজনস্য যো বিধি-বশাদ যঃ কামরূপেশ্঵রঃ ।
 যো যো বাখিল-লোক-শোক-দহন-জ্বালাবলী-বারিদঃ
 শ্রীমৎ শ্রীরঘূদেবো ভূপতিরভূৎ শুক্রধ্বজস্যোরসঃ ॥
 তস্যাশেষজন- প্রসাদ-জনকঃ শ্রীকৃষ্ণ-পাদার্চকো
 ভূপঃ প্রাপ্তবয়া গদাধরকৃতী প্রামাদরঃঃ ব্যধানঃ ।
 মণ্যাখ্যানগিরৌ হরাসুর-রিপো-রত্নাশুমানাস্পদঃ
 শাকে বাণবিয়তিথৌ গুণিবরাঃ কারাঃস্বয়ংশ্রীধরঃ ॥

English translation:

("There was a ruler of the earth named Bisva Singh; his illustrious son, the most wise king Malla Deb, was the conqueror of all enemies. In gravity and liberality and for heroism he had a great reputation, and he was purified by religious deeds. After him was born his brother Sukladhvaj, who subdued many countries. The son of this Sukladhvaj, was King Raghu Deb, who was like the greatest man of the Raghu race: his glories spread out in all directions; the lord of Kamarupa, in obedience to the order of destiny, is the slayer of the wicked, who was like water to the flames of the fire of sorrow of the vast populace. Of the seed of Sukladhvaj, a king was born of the name of Raghu Deb, who consoles innumerable persons and is a worshipper of the feet of Krishna; the king coming of age had a temple built on the hillock called Mani hillock in 1505 Sak (A.D.1583).The most skilled and efficient artisan Sridhar himself built it.")

(Translation Gait, reprint, 2004, p.59)

APPENDIX: G.

The Pandunath Temple Rock Inscription:

Sanskrit Text in Bengali scripts:

শ্রীমমল্লপাণুজস্য কৃতিঃ শুক্রধরজস্যাম্বজে
বীরে শ্রীরঘূদেবত্তুপতিকুলোতঃসে কলানাংনিধো ।
দৃগাদত্তবরেণ শাসতিগুণায্যাভিরামে মহীঃ
তস্যামাত্তাগদাধরস্য বহুশঃ মেহানুকূল্যাদপি ॥
শ্রীপাণ্ডুলাখস্য হরেঃ শিলাভিঃ প্রাসাদমালিষ্মিতবান্ মনোজ্ঞঃ ।
পয়নিধিবিশ্বপদৈকভানঃ শাকে স্বরব্যোমশরেন্দু সংগ্রহ ॥

English translation:

"Of Sukladhvaj, the illustrious brother of king Malladev, was born Raghudev who held the crown for a long time. He ruled the earth with glory by grace of goddess Durga. His minister Gadadhara, because of his great love to him (the king) has built the beautiful temple of Pandunath Hari with stones and dedicated to the feet of Payonidhi Vishnu in Saka 1507"

(Translation D. Nath, appendix, F, p. 212).

Glossary:

<i>Adhikary</i>	= priest of the Koches.
<i>Aman</i>	= one kind of paddy sown in the rainy season (July-August).
<i>Ankiyanat</i>	= one Act devotional play composed by Neo-Vaisnava Saints, such as Sankaradeva, Madhavadeva and others.
<i>Aush</i>	= one kind of paddy sown in the dry season, (April-May).
<i>Bachari</i>	= big war boat of the region (of the both Koches and Ahoms).
<i>Bandar</i>	= a seat of trade and commerce on the riverbank and meeting place of inland and waterways where merchant permanently reside.
<i>Bargita</i>	= a kind of devotional song composed by Neo-Vaisnava Saints-
<i>Baroi</i>	= betel leaf farmer.
<i>Bepari</i>	= small traders.
<i>Bhaki</i>	= devotion.
<i>Bhakta</i>	= Neo- Vaisnava Saint.
<i>Bhatima</i>	= a kind of devotional song, sung mainly in the Neo-Vaisnava dramas and others.
<i>Bhuyan</i>	= landlord equivalent of the Persian Jaminder.
<i>Bigha</i>	= a unit of land measurement (where one acre – three bigha).
<i>Boa</i>	= a kind of rice.
<i>Buranji</i>	= Assamese Chronicle, means “a store that teaches the ignorant.
<i>Charita puttis</i>	= a biography of Neo-Vaisnava Saints.
<i>Chhatra</i>	= royal umbrella.
<i>Chouki</i>	= an out post.

<i>Daivagna / Ganaka</i>	= an astrologer.
<i>Deodhai</i>	= an Ahom or a Kachari Priest.
<i>Devi</i>	= a female deity of Hindu Pantheon.
<i>Devottar</i>	= rent-free lands granted to for the purpose of erection and maintenance of temples.
<i>Dhobi</i>	= washer man.
<i>Dhoti</i>	= about 5 meter long and 1 meter width cloth for men.
<i>Duar</i>	= mountain Passes.
<i>Dvari</i>	= gate man.
<i>Dyuta</i>	= an envoys/Ambassador.
<i>Endi</i>	= a kind of silk produced in the region.
<i>Gamochha</i>	= a Towel type local cloth.
<i>Garamali</i>	= a Police of the Koch Kingdom.
<i>Gaudeswar</i>	= lord of Gauda/ Bengal.
<i>Gayan</i>	= singer of the Neo-Vaisnava Singing party.
<i>Ghani</i>	= cattle powered, oil crushing wooden machine, for the production oil from oil seeds.
<i>Ghat</i>	= landing place of boat on the bank of the river.
<i>Ghat kar</i>	= river port tax.
<i>Ghata</i>	= a pitcher representing the god or goddess.
<i>Ghuri</i>	= a kind of lower garment.
<i>Gomastha</i>	= a Koch administrative officers.
<i>Goshain</i>	= a Neo-Vaisnavite spiritual guide.
<i>Gram Sabha</i>	= village assembly.
<i>Guru</i>	= preceptor
<i>Handi</i>	= earthen pot.
<i>Hat</i>	= weekly or Bi-weekly market place.
<i>Hat kar</i>	= market tax.
<i>Jakoi</i>	= a kind of Bamboo made fishing instruments.
<i>Jal</i>	= fishing net.

<i>Jal kar</i>	= taxes on the Fishing in the river.
<i>Kamar</i>	= black smith.
<i>Katani</i>	= spinner.
<i>Katari</i>	= traditional silk spinner and weaver.
<i>Kavacha</i>	= amulet.
<i>Khanikar</i>	= a mask and image-maker.
<i>Khshatriya</i>	= 2 nd cast of Hindu cast system.
<i>Kirata</i>	= a tribe / tribal.
<i>Kosha</i>	= small war boat of the region.
<i>Kumar</i>	= potter.
<i>Mahal</i>	= a small administrative unit / Estate.
<i>Mahapurushaya</i>	= another name of Neo-Vaisnava religion.
<i>Majhi</i>	= boatman.
<i>Mali</i>	= Gardener/Garland maker.
<i>Mandal</i>	= chief.
<i>Mantri</i>	= minister.
<i>Mekhla</i>	= traditional Female dress of women.
<i>Mela</i>	= fair.
<i>Mohor / Mohur</i>	= gold coin.
<i>Muga</i>	= a kind of Assam silk.
<i>Nama kirtana</i>	= community chanting of the name of the God in Neo-Vaisnava.
<i>Namghar</i>	= Neo-Vaisnava prayer hall.
<i>Narayani Mudra</i>	= name of Koch coins.
<i>Not</i>	= dancer.
<i>Oja-pali</i>	= a choral performance with dance music where Puranic tales are recited.
<i>Paik</i>	= an adult male who had to render specific military services to the state in Koch infantry.
<i>Pan</i>	= battle leaf.

<i>Pat kumar</i>	= prince/ heir apartment.
<i>Path kar</i>	= a road tax.
<i>Pir pal</i>	= a revenue free land granted to a Muslim pir /a Mosque.
<i>Poa</i>	= $\frac{1}{4}$ part of any thing.
<i>Pon</i>	= a unit consisting of 80 numbers.
<i>Puja</i>	= worship.
<i>Pura</i>	= a unit of land measurement equal to four bighas.
<i>Puran</i>	= Hindu mythological text.
<i>Purohita</i>	= a priest.
<i>Raikot</i>	= protector of the front and the military general of the Koch Kingdom.
<i>Raja guru</i>	= spiritual guide of the king.
<i>Rupiya</i>	= Indian coins.
<i>Sajwal</i>	= a revenue collector.
<i>Sari</i>	= regional Female dress of woman.
<i>Satra</i>	= Neo-Vaisnava Monastery of the region.
<i>Saudagar</i>	= big merchants.
<i>Shashtra</i>	= religious and mythological scripture.
<i>Takal /Tanka</i>	= name of the currency in Bengal an Assam.
<i>Takshal</i>	= minting place.
<i>Talas</i>	= rhythms.
<i>Tangan</i>	= a kind of Bhutanese horse.
<i>Tanti</i>	= weaver.
<i>Tola</i>	= a school for Sanskrit learning kept a Brahmin Scholar.
<i>Vaidya</i>	= physician.
<i>Vansavali</i>	= genealogy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PART I Primary Sources:

(A). *Inscriptions and edited works on Inscriptions:*

1. *Inscriptions*

The Kamakhya Temple Inscription : This Inscription has recorded the rebuilding of the Kamakhya Temple by *Sukladhvaj alias Chilarai*, the brother-cum-general of king Naranarayan (Malladeva) in Saka 1487 (1565 AD) at Nilachal hill by the Temple, near Gauhati . “*Prachya Sasanawali*” edited by M. Neog, publication Board, Assam.

The Hayagriva Madhava Temple Inscription: This Inscription has recorded the rebuilding of the temple by King Raghudeva of Koch-Hajo in Saka 1505 (1583 AD) at Hajo, Edited by M. Neog, publication Board, Assam.

The Pandunath Temple Rock Inscription: This Inscription has recorded the rebuilding of Pandunath Temple by King Raghudeva of Koch-Hajo in Saka in Saka 1507 (1585), edited by M. Neog, publication Board, Assam.

The Dinajpore (Bangarh) Stone Pillar Inscription : This inscription has recorded the erection of a Siva temple by *Kunjraghatavarsa* a king called *Kambojanvaya Gaudapati* (i.e. lord of Gauda, born in Kamboja family) in Saka 888 (AD 966) . The Inscription throws light about the early history of the Koches.

The Ilda Copper plate (Ilda Tamarapatra): The Copper Plate was discovered in 1931 from a landlord named Mrityunjaya Narayan Praharaj of Ilda, District Balasor in Orissa . This Inscription has recorded the grant of land in the *Dandabhuktimandala* in *Bhardhamana Bhukti* by *Kambojavamshatilaka Paramasaugata Maharajadhiraja parameshvara paramabhattaraka Rajyapala* in the second half of 10th c AD. This Inscription indirectly helps us to reconstruct the early history the Koches (the Kambojas).

Lakshminarayan's Inscription on cannon: Koch Behar Royal family has preserved it.

Raghudeva's Inscription on cannon: It is now preserved in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.

2. Edited works on inscriptions:

Bhattacharyya, P.N. (ed): *Kamarupa Sasanavali*, Rangpur Sahitya Parisad, 1338, B.S. (1931AD).

Majumdar, N.G., *Epigraphia Indica*, XXII, 1933-34, pp 150-158.

Neog, M. (ed): *Prachya Sasanavali*, Assam Prakashan Parishad, Gauhati, 1974.

Sarma, D. (ed): *Kamarupa Sasanavali*, Govt. of Assam publication Board, Gauhati, 1981.

Sarma, M.M. (ed): *Inscriptions of Ancient Assam*, Gauhati University, 1978.

(B) Coins:

1. The Coins of Jayantiya: A large number of Jayantiya coins have been discovered which are very useful to reconstruct the history of the Koches. JASB, Vol. LXIV, plate-1, 1895. National Museum, Calcutta.

2. The coins of the Koch Kings (Narayani Tanka): A large number of Koch, Ahom and others coins have been discovered from different places of north Bengal, Assam and other parts of Northeast India and preserved by individuals and govt. institutions like the Assam state museum, Gauhati; the Indian museum, Calcutta; the Asiatic society, Calcutta and the DHAS, Gauhati. Some coins the *Chandirjhar* hoard and others Northeast Indian coins have been preserved by Sri S. K. Bose, Library of Numismatic Studies, Salt Lake, Kolkata.

3. Edited works on coins:

1. Botham, A .W. and Friel R., '*Catalogue of the Provincial Cabinet of coins of Assam*', (supplementary), *Allahabad*, 1930.
2. Goswami, Hem Chandra, '*Descriptive catalogue of Assamese Manuscripts*', University of Calcutta on behalf of the govt. of Assam, 1930.
3. H. E. Stappleton, '*Catalogue of the provincial Cabinet of Coins of Eastern Bengal and Assam*', Sillong, 1911.
4. M. Neog edited, '*Naranarayan's coins*', publication Board, Assam.
5. Rhodes, N. G and Bose, S. K. (ed), '*The coins of Assam*', vol. I, *Dhubri*, 2003.
6. Rhodes, N. G and Bose, S. K. (ed), '*The coins of Jaintiapur*', Kolkata, 2010.
7. Rhodes, N.G. and Bose, S. K. (ed), '*The Coinage of Cooch Behar*', *Dhubri*, Library of Numismatic Studies, 2003.
8. Sinha, Sutapa and Mitra, Pratip Kumar (ed.), '*Coins of Mediaeval India*', Books & Books, Kolkata, 1997.
9. V. A. Smith, '*Catalogue of the coins in the Indian Museum*', vol. I, Calcutta, 1909.

(c) Religious Book:

1. '*Ajamil Upakhyan*' by Sankaradeva.
2. '*Amulya Ratna*', a well known book on the Neo-Vaisnava sect of Assam.
3. '*Astavasa-Parva Mahabharatha*' of Rama Saraswati, ed. H. N. Dutta Baruah and Others, Nalbari, 1967.
4. '*Bakti Ratnakara*', a translation of '*Bakti Ratnakara*' of Sankaradeva in Sanskrita, by Ram Charan Thakur.
5. '*Baragita*' of Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva, ed. H. N. Dutta Baruah, revised edition, Gauhati, 2002.
6. '*Bhagavata*' (book ten) of Pitambar Siddhantavagis, Ms. NBSL, Ms. No. 58.
7. '*Bhagavata*', Books I, II, III, VII, VIII, IX, X (part I), and XII by Sankaradeva.
8. '*Bhakti Ratnavali*' of Madhavadeva, edited by H.N. Dutta Baruah, Nalbari, 1949; also edited by Surya Hajarika, Bani Mandir, Gauhati, 2009.

9. 'Gossani Mangal' of Radhakrishna Das Bairagi, edited by Nripendra nath Pal, 2nd ed., Calcutta, Anima Prakashani, 1992.
10. 'Gunamala', of Sankaradeva, edited by Padma Ram Saloi, Anuradha publishers, 1st edition, Gauhati, 2002.
11. 'Kirtana Aru Nama Ghosa' of Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva, Nalbari 1956, 12th Reprint, 1975.
12. 'Kirtana-Ghosa Aru Nama- Ghosa', of Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva, compiled and edited by N. C. Sarma, Suravi Sahitya Kuthir, Gauhati, 1st edition, 2006.
13. 'Kirtana-Ghosa' of Sankaradeva, edited by M. Neog, Gauhati, 1962.
14. 'Manasa Kavya' of Durvar and Mankar, edited by B.K. Barua and S.N. Sarma, Nalbari, 1970.
15. 'Markandeya Puran' of Pitambar Siddhantavagis, Ms. NBSL, Ms. No. 8 and 13.
16. 'Nama-Ghosa' of Madhavadeva, edited by M. Neog, Gauhati, 1962.
17. 'Nama-mallika', of Madhavadeva.
18. 'Sri Sankara Vakyamrita', ed. H. N. Dutta Baruah, Shillong 1953, 2nd edition. Nalbari. 1967.
19. 'Sri Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita' of Krishdas Kabiraj, 9th edition, Basumati Sahitya Mandir, Calcutta, 1386 BS.
20. 'The Kalika Puranam', edited by, Achaya Panchanan Tarkaratna, Naba Bharat Publishers, Calcutta, 1384 BS.
21. 'The Yogini Tantra', edited S. S. Saraswati, (Bengali) Naba Bharat Publishers, Calcutta, B. S. 1385; also Datta Barua and Co.,(in Assamese), 3rd ed., Gauhati, 2010.
22. 'Bhagavata Katha', of Vaikunthanath, edited by M. Neog. Gauhati, 1959.
23. The 'Mahabharata' (Adi parva) of Srinath Brahmin, Ms. NBSL, Ms., No. 77.
24. The 'Mahabharata' (Bana Parva), by Ram Saraswati.
25. The 'Mahabharata' (Drona parva) of Srinath Brahmin and Dvija Kaviraj, Ms. NBSL, Ms. No. 85.

26. The 'Mahabharata' (Kirata parva) of Kavi Shekhar, Ms. NBSL, Ms. No. 90.
27. The 'Mahabharata' (Rajasuya parva), by Ananta Kandali, Ms. NBSL, Ms. No. 102.
28. The 'Ramayana' of Madhava Kandali, edited by P. Chaudhury, Barpeta, 1941.
29. The 'Ramayana', (Adikanda, and Uttarkanda) by Sankaradeva.

(d) Charit Punthis:

1. 'Bardowa- Guru-Charita', edited M. Neog, Gauhati, 1977.
2. 'Guru Charita', of Ramananda Dvija, edited by M. Neog, Nalbari-Gauhati, Part I, 1957.
3. 'Guru Charita', of Ramcharan Thakur, edited by H. N. Dutta Baruah (3rd edition), Nalbari, 1978.
4. 'Guru Charta' of Damodar Das, a small biography of Sankaradeva.
5. 'Katha Guru Charit', edited by U. K. Lekharu, Nalbari, Reprint, 1952.
6. 'Mahapurush Sankaradeva', of Bhushan Dvija, edited by Barkakati Durgavar, Jorhat, Assam, 1925.
7. 'Sankaradeva-Madhavadevar Jivana-Charita', of Daityari Thakur, edited by Haribilas Gupta, Tezpur, 1900.
8. 'Santra Sampradeyar Katha' of Gobinda Das, an account of the founders of Neo-Vaisnava Satras in Assam.
9. 'Sri Sri Damodaradever Charita', of Nilkantha Dasa, edited by S. C. Goswami, Assam Sahitya Sabha, Jorhat, 1925. .
10. Chuudhury, P. C., 'A Catalogue of the Sanskrit manuscripts of the DHAS', DHAS, Gauhati, 1961.

(e) Vamsavaliies:

1. 'Gandharvanarayan Vansavali' of Surjyadeva Dvija. It has been preserved with the Durrang Raj family of Mangaldai.
2. 'Durrang Raj Vansavali' or 'Samudranarayan Vansavali' of Surja Khari Daivajna, edited by N C Sarmah, Pathsala, 1973.
3. 'Kharga Narayan Vansavali' of Dvija Ratikanta, Ms. (unpublished).
4. 'Raja Vansavali' of Durgadas Majumder, (ed), (Bengali). Koch Behar 1270 (BS).
5. 'Raj Vamsavali' or 'Maharaja Vansavali' of Ripunjay Das, Ms., No. 04; Also published in Pal, Nripendra Nath (ed.), 'Bishaya Cooch Behar', Anima Prakashani, Calcutta, 1994, pp. 99-142.
6. 'Rajopakhyan' of Munshi Jaynath Ghosh, edited by Biswanath Das (2nd, edition.), Mala Publications, Calcutta, 1989.

(f) **Chronicles:**

Barua, Gunaviram, 'Assam Buranji', reprinted by Saikia, C. P., Publication Board of Assam, Gauhati, 1972.

Bhuyan S.K. (ed.), 'Deodhai Assam Buranji', a history of the Ahom rule compiled from several old chronicles. It describes Ahom-Koch relations. DHAS, Gauhati, 1932, Reprint 1962. 4th ed., 2001, DHAS.

Bhuyan S.K. (ed.), 'Satsari Assam Buranji', Gauhati university, 1960.

Bhuyan, S. K. (ed), 'Assam Buranji', a history of Kamarupa making reference to its relations with neighbouring Kingdoms, Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies (DHAS), Gauhati, reprint, 1960. .

Bhuyan, S. K. (ed), 'Assam Buranji of Barua HaraKanta', a history from the commencement of the Ahom rule to the British occupation of Assam in 1826. DHAS, Gauhati 3rd ed., 1990.

Bhuyan, S. K. (ed), 'Kachari Buranji', DHAS, Gauhati, 2nd edition, 1951.

Bhuyan, S. K. (ed), 'Kamarupar Buranji', DHAS, Gauhati 1930.

Bhuyan, S. K. (ed), 'Tripura Buranji', DHAS, Gauhati, 3rd edition, 1930.

Choudhury Sri Pratap Chandra, (ed), 'Assam Buranji Sar', 3rd edition of Tamuli Phukan, Kasi Nath, 'Assam Buranji' DHAS, Gauhati 3rd. ed., 1991.

Datta Sri Sarat Kumar, (ed), 'Assam Buranji', DHAS, Gauhati, 2n^d edition, 1991.

Goswami, Hemchandra, (ed), 'Purani Assam Buranji', an ancient Chronicle of Assam, Kamarupa Anushandhan Samiti (KAS), reprint 2nd edition, lawyers Book stall, Gauhati, 1977.

Singha, Sri K. Ch., 'Rajamala' or 'Tripurar Itihas', Centenary edition, Akhshar publishers, Agartala, 1403 BS.

(g) Other Works:

1. 'A Legendary Account of Cooch Behar', NBSL, Ms. No.109.
2. 'An Account of Assam' of J. P. Wade, an English translation of two chronicles, one in Assamese, of which a chapter in detail on the Koch kings, edited by Benudhar Sarma, North Lakhimpur, 1927.
3. 'Beharodanta' of Sri Sri Bindeswari Devi, Cooch Behar royal Court, 1266 BS., reprinted in Pal, Nripendra Nath (ed.), 'Bishaya Cooch Behar', Anima Prakashani, Calcutta, 1994, pp. 53-98.
4. 'Bhakti-pradip' of Sankaradeva, published by Dutta Baruah and Co., Gauhati, reprint, 2007.1997.
5. 'Historical Letters of the Ahom Period', a collection of 192 letters exchanged among the Ahoms Kings and other rulers of north-east India including Koch Kings, Transcripts no. 01, Vol. 1, DHAS, Gauhati.
6. 'Historical Letters of the Ahom Period', a collection of 44 letters exchanged between the Koch and the Ahom kings, Transcripts no. 18, Vol. V, Part VI, DHAS, Gauhati.
7. 'Jayadeva Kavya' of Ram Swaraswati, a translation of 'Gita-Gobinda' of Jayadeva.
8. 'Kumar Harana' of Sridhar Kandali, a court poet of king Naranarayan, edited by Lila Gogoi, Sibsagar, 1972.

9. 'Nimi-Navasisiddha-Sanvada' of Sankaradeva, ed. H. N. Dutta Baruah, 13th edition, Gauhati, 2002.
10. 'Parijataharana-nat' of Sankaradeva, published by Dutta Baruah and Co., Gauhati, 1997.
11. 'Prachin Bangla Patra Samkalan' of Surendranath Sen, (a collection of old Bengali letters), Calcutta University, 1942.
12. 'Rukmini-harana' (kavya) of Sankaradeva, ed. H. N. Dutta Baruah, 7th edition, Gauhati, 1992.

(h) Persian Chronicles:

1. 'Ain-I Akbari', of Abul-Fazl Allami, (3 vols.), vol. 1, Translated into English by H. Blochmann edited by Phillit D.C., reprint edition Crown Publications, Delhi, 1988. Vols. II and III, translated into English by H. S. Jareet, revised and annotated by J. N. Sarkar, reprint latest edition, Crown Publications (Delhi, 1988) and classical Publishing Co (Delhi, 1996) respectively.
2. 'Akbar-Namah' of Sheikh Abul-Fazl Allami, translated into English by H. Beveridge in 3vols. reprint edition, Delhi, Rare Books, 1972.
3. 'Riyazu-s-Salatin' of Munshi Ghulam Hussain Salim, Eng. Tr., by Abdus Salam, reprint ed., Delhi, Idarah-i-Adabiyat, 1975.
4. 'Tabaqat-I-Nasiri' of Minhaj -uddin Siraj, Translated into English by Major H. G. Raverty, vol-1, reprint edition, New Delhi, Orient books, 1970.
5. 'Baharistan-i-Ghaybi' of Mirza Nathan, translated into English by M. I. Borah, (in two vols.), DHAS, Gauhati, 1936.
6. 'Fathiya-i-Ibriya' of Shihabuddin Talish, abstract translation into English by Blochmann, H, 'Koch Bihar, Koch Hajo and Assam in the 16th and 17th centuries according to the Akbarnamah, the Padshanamah and Fathiya-i-Ibriyah', JASB, 71.I (1872), pp. 49-101.
7. 'Annals of the Delhi Badshahate', English translation of the Assamese chronicle 'Padshah Buranji, by S. K. Bhuyans, DHAS, Gauhati, 1947.
8. 'Risalat-us-Shuhada' of, Pir Muhammad Shattari, English translation by G. H. Damant, 'Notes on Shah Ismail with a Sketch of the Contents of a Persian Ms. entitled Risalat-us-Shuhada', J.A.S.B., and XLIII. III, 1874, pp. 216-239.

(i) Foreigners Accounts:

1. Cacella, Stephen, who visited Koch Kingdom and Bhutan in 1626-27, he records huge information about the Kingdom, published in Wessels, C, 'Early Jesuit Travelers in Central Asia (A.D.1603-1721)', reprint edition, Madras, Asian Educational Service, 1992, pp.119-161.
2. Fitch, Ralph, an English traveler who visited the Koch Kingdom in the 1585, and recorded an account about the various aspects of the Kingdom, published in Foster, William (ed), 'Early Travels in India, 1583-1619', reprint edition, S. Chand and co., New Delhi, 1968, pp.1-47. Also in Ryley, J .H. (ed), 'England's pioneer to India, Burma, etc.', London, 1899.
3. Hiuen Tsiang' (Yuan Chwang), a Chinese traveler, who visited the region during reign of Bhaskaravarma, (1st of 7th century). His writing 'Si-u-ki', published in T. Watters, 'On Yuan Chwan's travels in India (A.D.29-645)', edited by David, Rhys and Bhushel S. W., 2 vols. London, 1905, reprint, Munshiram Manoharlal, Delhi, 1961.

PART I Secondary sources:

1. Bengali:

- 1 Adhikari, H. K., 'Rajvansi Kula Pradipa', Calcutta, 1959.
- 2 Bandhyopadhyaya, Bhagabati Charan, 'Cooch Beharer Itihas', 2nd edition, The Cooch Behar State Press, 1884. Compiled and edited by Choudhury, Kamal, Dey's Publishing Company, Kolkata, 2006.
- 3 Barman, Upendra Nath, 'Rajbanshi Kshatriya Jatir Itihas' 4th ed., Jalpaiguri, 1401 BS.
- 4 Bhattacharyya, Asutosh, *Bangla Mangal Kabyar Itihas*', 6th edition, Calcutta, 1975.

- 5 Bhattacharyya, Himadri and Sarkar, Sudhi Sankara, 'Koch Beharer Vrata Katha', Burdwan University, 1983.
- 6 Bhattacharyya, P. K., 'Otihasik Prekhshapate Kamata-Koch Rajvansa Otar Kichhu Samashya', in his self edited, 'The Kingdom of Kamata-Kochbehar in Historical Perspective', Ratna Prakashan, Calcutta collaboration with NBU.
- 7 Bhattacharyya, P. K., 'Chandir Jhar (Alipurduar) e Prapta Brihat Mudra Bhandar', Pragbhas, Puja number, 1991.
- 8 Bhattacharyya, Pradyumanya, 'Tika tippani', Papyrus, Kolkata, 1998.
- 9 Chakraborty, Mahadeva, 'Assamer Itihas', Pratham khanda, Progressive Publishers, Calcutta, 2007.
- 10 Chakraborty, Jadav Chandra, 'Koch Biharer Itihas', reprinted in Pal, Nripendranath, 'Bishaya Cooch Behar', Calcutta, Anima Pakistani, 1994.
- 11 Chanda, R. P., 'Gauda Rajamala', Naba Bharat Publishers, Calcutta, 1975.
- 12 Chatterji, S. K., 'Sanskriti silpa Itihash', Publishers, Sri, Sri Kumar Kundu Jigghasha, Calcutta, 1st ed., 1976.
- 13 Chatterji, S. K., 'Jati Samskriti O Sahitya ', Calcutta.
- 14 Das, Sukumar, 'Uttar Banger Itihas', Calcutta, 1982.
- 15 Ghosh, Ananda Chandra, 'Cooch Beharer Itihas', edited Ghosh, Ananda Gopal and Saha, Narayan, Uttarbanga Itihas Prakashan Parishad, Darjeeling, 1990.
- 16 Guha, Upendra Chandra, 'Kacharer Itibritta', Assam Prakashan Parishad, 2nd edition, Gauhati, 1971.
- 17 Kamal, Meshbah; Chakra borty, Ishani and Nasrin, Zobaida, 'Nijbhume Parbasi', Uttarbanger Adibasir Prantikata', Research and development Collective, Dhaka, 2001.
- 18 Khan Chaudhuri, Amanatulla Ahamed, 'Kochbeharer Itihas', reprint, Calcutta, 1990,
- 19 Majumdar, K. N., 'Mayman Singher Itihas', reprint edition Calcutta, Maymmansingh Prakashani, 1995.
- 20 Mukhopadhyaya, Shyamdhyan, 'Cooch Behar Jelar Purakirti', Govt. of West Bengal, Calcutta, 1381 BS.

- 21 Pal, Nripendranath (ed.), '*Bishaya Cooch Behar*', Calcutta, 1994.
- 22 Pal, Sunil, '*Mech Jatir Endi Silpa*', Amrita-12.30 (1972), p.306.
- 23 Phukan, Haliram Dhekial, '*Assam Buranji*', Jatindra Mahun Bhattacharyya, Gauhati , Mokshada Pustakalay, 1369 BS.
- 24 Ray Burma, Hemanta Kumar, '*Koch Beharer Itihas*', 2nd ed., Cooch Behar, 1988.
- 25 Roy, N. R., '*Bangalir Itihas*', adi parba, Calcutta, 2nd edition, 1402 B. S.
- 26 Sen, Sukumar, '*Bangla Sahityer Itihas*', 6th edition, 1978, reprint, Ananda Publishers Private Ltd., Kolkata,2001.
- 27 Singha, Kshetra Nath, '*Rai Saheb Panchanan Barmar Jibani*', Rangpur, 1940.
- 28 Tunga, Sudhanshushekhar, '*Bangler baire bangla gaddyer Charcha: sodar theke astadas satak*', Papyrus, Kolkata, 1985.

2. Assamese:

1. Barbaruah, Hiteswar, '*Ahomar Din*', Publication board of Assam, Gauhati, 1981.
2. Barua, B. K., '*Asamer loka Sanskriti*', Gauhati, 1st edition,1961, 2nd edition,1967.
3. Bhagat, Dvijendra Nath,' *Satrar Samikshatmak Itibritta*', Bhabani book House, Dhubri, Assam, 1995.
4. Bhattacharjee, J. B., (ed), '*Asamar Janajati*', Lawyer's Book Stall, Gauhati, 1991 reprint.
5. Bhattacharyya, J. N., (Ms), '*Koch Rajar Buranji*', DHAS, Gauhati.
6. Bhattacharyya, H. C., '*Asamiya Natya Sahityar Jilingani*', Gauhati, 1968.
7. Datta Barua, H. N., '*Prachin Kamarupiya Kayastha Samajer Itivritta*' ,Nalbari, Assam, 1941.
8. Gogoi, Lila, '*Asamiya Loka-Sahityar Ruparekha*' , Students Emporium, Gauhati,3rd edition, 1987.
9. Goswami, S. C., '*Asamar Natya-Nritya Kala*', Gauhati, 1978.

10. Mahanta, A., 'Sankaradevar Dristit Nari O Sankaradevar Chintat Pragatisilata', Dibrugarh, 1982.
11. Medini, Chaudhury, 'Sarba Bharatiya Bhakti Andolan O Sankaradever Mulyayan', Subhadra Prakashan, Gauhati, 2002.
12. Narzi, Bhabes, 'Boro Kacharir Samaj Aru Sanskriti', 2nd edition, Bina Library, Gauhati, 2001.
13. Neog, M, 'Purani Asamiya Samaj Aru Sanskriti' (Assamese), Gauhati, 1971.
14. Sarma, Jogendranath, 'Assamer Nad-Nadi' Assam Sahitya Sabha, Jorhat 1993.
15. Sarma, S. N., 'Asamiya Sahityar Itibritta', Gauhati, 1961.

3. English:

- 1 Acharya N .N., 'A Brief History of Assam', Omsons Publication Gauhati 1990.
- 2 Acharyya, N. N., 'The history of medieval Assam, from the thirteenth to the Seventeenth century', Omsons Publications, Gauhati, 1984.
- 3 Agrawal, Dr. C. M., 'Akbar and his Hindu officers', Asian Book services, Jalandhar, 1st ed. 1986.
- 4 Ayyappanicker, K. (ed.), 'Medieval Indian Literature: an anthology ', Vol., 3, Sahitya Academy, Delhi.
- 5 Ball, V. (ed.), 'Tavemier's travels in India', Vol. II, London, 1925.
- 6 Bardoloi, Gopinath, 'Lokopriyo Gopinath- An architect of modern India', Gyan Publishing House, Delhi, 1992.
- 7 Barma, Sukhbilas, 'Bhawaiya Ethno-musicological Study', Global Vision Publishing House, New Delhi, 2004.
- 8 Barman, Rup Kumar, 'From Tribalism to State', Abhijit Publications, New Delhi, 2007.

- 9 Barman, Rup Kumar, 'contested ethnicity and Regional Assumption' in *Journal of History*, vols. 23 and 24, 204-5 / 205-6, pp.99-119.
- 10 Barman, Sivanath, '*An Unsung Colossus: An Introduction to the Life and Works of Sankaradeva*', Gauhati, 1999, Forum for Sankaradeva Studies.
- 11 Barpujari, H. K (ed), '*The Comprehensive History of Assam*', Vol. II, Publication Board, Assam, 1992.
- 12 Barua, B. K., '*A cultural History of Assam*' 3rd Edition, Delhi
- 13 Barua, B. K., '*Early Geography of Assam*', Gauhati, 1952.
- 14 Barua, B. K., '*History of Assamese Literature*', Sahitya Academy, Delhi, 1st ed., 1961.
- 15 Barua, Birinchi Kumar, '*A Cultural History of Assam*', Lawyer's Book Stall, Gauhati, 2nd edition, 1969.
- 16 Barua, K. L., '*Early History of Kamarupa: From the earliest times to the end of sixteenth century*', Shilong, 1933.
- 17 Baruah, S. L., '*A comprehensive history of Assam*', Munsimam and Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1985.
- 18 Basu, Nirmal Kumar, '*Assam in the Ahom age, 1228-1826*', Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, Calcutta, 1970.
- 19 BezBarua, Laksminath, '*Sankaradeva*', Calcutta, 1926.
- 20 Bezboroa, Lakshminath, '*Sankaradeva Aru Madhavadeva*' (Assamese), Jyoti Prokashan, 4th edition, Gauhati, 2009.
- 21 Bhaba Prasad Chaliha, (ed.), '*Sankardeva: Studies in Culture*', Srimanta Sankardeva Sangha, Gauhati 1978.
- 22 Bhandarkar, R. G., '*Vaisnavism, Saivism and other Minor Religious systems*', Varanasi, 1965.
- 23 Bhattacharyya, B., '*The Indian Buddhist Iconography*', Asian Educational Service, Bangalore, 1993.
- 24 Bhattacharyya, P. K. (ed), '*The Kingdom of Kamata- Kochbehar in Historical Perspective*', Ratna Prakashan and NBU, 2000.
- 25 Bhattacharyya, P. N., '*Kamarupa Sasanavali, Bhumika*'.
- 26 Bhattacharyya, S. N., '*A History of Mughal North East Frontier Policy*', Calcutta, 1929, reprint ed., M/s. R. N. Bhattacharyya, Calcutta, 1994.

- 27 Bhattacharyya, J. B., 'State Formation in Pre-colonial Tribal North-East : A case study of the Dimachha State', NEHU, JSSH, Vol. 2, No. 3. Shilong, 1984.
- 28 Bhattasali, 'New Lights on the History of Assam', I.H.Q., IX, pp.50-62.
- 29 Bhuyan, Suryya Kumar, 'Studies in the Literature of Assam', Lawyer's Book Stall, Gauhati, 1st edition, 1962.
- 30 Bogle, George, 'Narrative of the mission of Mr. George Bogle to Tibet (1774A.D.)', edited by Clements R. M., Monjusri Publishing House, New Delhi, 1971.
- 31 Borkakoti, Dr. Sanjib Kumar, 'Unique Contributions of Srimanta Sankaradeva in Religion and Culture', Srimanta Sankaradeva Sangha, Nawgaon, 2006.
- 32 Bose, K. K, 'Account of Bhotan (18150)', in Kuloy H. K. (ed), 'Political Mission to Bhotan', reprint ed., Monjusri Publishing House, New Delhi, 1972, pp.339-358.
- 33 C. Becker, 'Early History of the Catholic Missions in Northeast India, 1598-1890'. Firma KLM, under the auspices of Vendrame Institute, Sacred Heart College, Shillong, Calcutta, 1st edition, 1989.
- 34 Carneiro, R.L, 'A Theory of the Origin of the State', Science, 169, (733-738) 1970.
- 35 Carneiro, R.L, 'The Chiefdom: Precursor of the State', in G. Jones and B. Kautz (eds), 'The Transition to Statehood', New York, Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- 36 Carneiro, R.L, 'The Role of Warfare in Political Evolution : Past Results and Future Projections', in G. Ausenela (ed), 'Effects of war on Society', San Marina, Center for Inter-Disciplinary Research, 1992.
- 37 Carneiro, R.L, 'the circumscription theory: Challenge and response', American Behavioral Scientist, 31(4):497-511, 1988.
- 38 Chakraborty, Ajay Kumar, 'Literature in Kamta Koch Bihar Raj Darbar; from fourteenth to eighteenth Century', Dhubri, 1964.

- 39 Chakraborty, Phanindranath, 'A survey of Indo-Tibetan Trade and Commerce', 'The Historical Review', Vol. II, No. II, 1987. Kuloy, H. K. (ed.), 'Political Missions to Bootan', reprint ed., New Delhi.
- 40 Chaliha, Bhaba Prasad', (ed), 'Sankaradeva: studies in culture', Srimanta Sankaradeva Sangha, Gauhati, 1978.
- 41 Chatterji, S. K., 'Origin and development of Bengali language', Calcutta, 1926, reprinted in April 1998.
- 42 Chatterji, S. K., 'The place of Assam in the History and Civilization of Assam', Gauhati, 1955.
- 43 Chatterji, S. K., *Kirata-Jana-Krti*, the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, reprinted in April 1998.
- 44 Chaudhury, H. N., 'The Cooch Behar State and Its Land Revenue of Settlement, Cooch Behar', Cooch Behar State Press, 1903.
- 45 Chaudhury, P. C., 'The History of civilization of the people of Assam to the 12th century A.D.', Spectrum publications, Gauhati, 1987.
- 46 Crooke, W., 'Races of Northern India', Cosmo Publications, Delhi 1973.
- 47 Dalton, E.T., 'Tribal History of Eastern India', reprint, Delhi, 1973.
- 48 Das, B. M., 'Some aspects of physical Anthropology of the Tribes of Northeast India', in Karotemprel, Sebastian and Danda, Depali (ed.), 'The Tribes of North East India', Calcutta, Firma KLM, 1984.
- 49 Das Gupta, Shashi Bhushan, 'Descriptive catalogue of the Bengali manuscripts' preserved in the NBSL, Cooch Behar, 1948.
- 50 Deb, Arabinda, 'Cooch Behar and Bhutan in the context of Tibetan Trade', *Kailash*, 1.1. (1973), pp. 80-88.
- 51 Debnath, Pabitra Kumar, 'Religions and Religious Establishments of Kamata-Koch kingdom', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, North Bengal university, 1993.
- 52 Debnath, Sailen, 'The Dooars in Historical Transition'.
- 53 Debnath, Sailen, 'Essays on Cultural History of North Bengal'.
- 54 Deka, Phani, 'The great Indian corridor', Mittal, Delhi, 2007.
- 55 E. T. 'Notes on Assam temples ruins', JASB. 1855.
- 56 E.T., 'Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal', reprint, Calcutta, 1960.

- 57 Fairchild, Henry Pratt (ed), 'Dictionary of Sociology and Related Science', Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1961.
- 58 Foster, Sir W, 'Early travels in India', Oxford University press, 1921.
- 59 Fried, Morton H, 'The state, the chicken, and the egg; or what came first ?', In R. Cohen and E.R. Service (eds), 'Origins of the State: The Anthropology of Political Evolution', pp.35-47. Institute for the Study of Human Issues, Philadelphia, 1978.
- 60 Gait, E.A., 'A history of Assam', Revised, Calcutta, 1963.
- 61 Ghosal, S.C. (ed), 'A History of Cooch Behar' (Eng. Trans. of 'Koch Beharer Itihas' of Khan Chaudhary A. Ahamed), reprint (ed. H. Nag), 2005, Siliguri, W.B.
- 62 Glazier, E. G., 'Report on District of Rung pore', Calcutta, Bengal Secretariat Press, 1873.
- 63 Gogoi, Lila, 'The Buranjis, Historical Literature of Assam', Omsons Publications, New Delhi, 1986.
- 64 Gogoi, Nitul Kumar, 'Continuity and Change among the Ahom', vol. 9 (castes and tribes of India), concept publishing company, Delhi, 2006.
- 65 Gogoi, P, 'The Tai and the Tai Kingdoms', Gauhati University, 1968.
- 66 Gohain, Bikash Chandra, 'Human Sacrifice and Head Hunting in North Eastern India', Gauhati, 1976.
- 67 Goswami, Surendra Kumar, 'A history of Revenue administration in Assam, 1228-1826 A.D.', Spectrum Publications, Delhi, 1986.
- 68 Grierson, G. A., 'Linguistic Survey of India' (11vols), reprinted ed., New Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, 1969, vol. III.
- 69 Guha, Amalendu, 'From Tribalism to Feudalism 600-1750', IHRI, (1974), pp. 65-76.
- 70 Guha, Amalendu, 'The Ahom political system: an Inquiry into state Formation in Medieval Assam 1228-1800', in Singha Surajit (ed), 'Tribal polities and state Systems in Pre-colonial Eastern and northeastern India', Calcutta, K.P. Bagchi & Company, 1987, pp.143-176.
- 71 Guha, Amalendu, 'Medieval and Early Colonial Assam: Society, Polity and Economy', Calcutta, K.P. Bagchi & Company, 1991.

- 72 Guha Roy, Shyamal Chandra, ' Study of some aspects of the history of Kamata-Koch Kingdom', unpublished Ph. D. thesis, North Bengal university, 1985.
- 73 Habib, Muhammad and Nizami, K. A. (ed), 'Comprehensive History of India, Vol. 5, *Delhi Sultanate (1200-1526)*', People Publishing House, New Delhi, 1970.
- 74 Hamilton, Francis, 'An account of Assam', General view of the History of Kamarupa, reprinted in Bhuyan S. K., ed., 'Kamarupar Buranji' 3rd ed., Gauhati, DHAS, 1987, pp.112-137.
- 75 Harper, Katherine and Anne Robert L. Brown, (ed.), 'The Roots of Tantra', State University of New York Press, 2002.
- 76 Hodgson, B. H., 'Essay on the Koch, Bodo, and Dhimal Tribes', Calcutta 1874.
- 77 Hunter, W. W., 'Statistical Account of Bengal', Vol. X, reprint ed., Delhi, 1984.
- 78 Hunter, W.W., 'Statistical account of Assam', (2 vols.), reprint ed., B. R., Publishing corporation, 1975.
- 79 Islam, Sirajul, (General Editor), 'Banglapedia: National Encyclopædia of Bangladesh', (10vols.), Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 2003.
- 80 Jush, P., 'History and Evaluation of Vaisnavism in Eastern India', Calcutta, 1982.
- 81 Kakati, B. K., 'The mother Goddess Kamakhya', Gauhati, 1948.
- 82 Kakati, Banikanta, 'Aspects of Early Assamese Literature', Gauhati University, Gauhati, 2nd edition, 1959.
- 83 Kakati, Satish Chandra, 'Discovery of Assam', revised edition, Calcutta, 1964.
- 84 Karotemprel, Sebastian and Danda, Depali (ed.), 'The Tribes of North East India', Calcutta, Firma KLM, 1984.
- 85 Khanna, S. K., 'Encyclopedia of north East India', Indian publisher's and Distributors, Delhi, 1999.
- 86 Kosambi, D. D., 'An Introduction to the study on Indian History', reprint edition, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1998.

- 87 Kulke, Hermann,(ed.), 'The State in India 1000-1700', Oxford University press, 1995.
- 88 Kulke, Hermann. 'Kings and Cults: State Formation and legitimization in India and Southeast Asia', reprint edition, Manohar, New Delhi, 2001.
- 89 Majumdar, D. N., 'A study of tribe-Caste Continuum and the process of Sanskritization Among the Bodo Speaking Tribes of Garo Hills ', in Singha K. S. (ed), 'The tribal Situation in India', reprint edition, Motilal Banarsidas, New Delhi, 1996, pp.263-270.
- 90 Majumdar, Durgadas, 'West Bengal District Gazetteers: Koch Behar', West Bengal Government press, Calcutta, 1977.
- 91 Majumdar, R. C., 'History of Mediaeval Bengal', Published by G. K. Mukherjee, G. Bharadwaj & Company, Calcutta, 1sted.1973.
- 92 Majumdar, R. C., 'History of Bengal', Vol. I, (Ed.), Dacca, 1943.
- 93 Martin, Montgomery, 'Eastern India', vol. V, Cosmo Publications, Delhi, 1st Indian reprint 1976.
- 94 Medhi, K. R. (ed.),' Studies in the Vaisnava literature and culture of Assam', Assam Sahitya Sabha, Jorhat, 1978.
- 95 Mehta, J. L., 'Advanced Study in the history of Medieval India', Vol. II, (1526-1707), Sterling publishers Pvt. Ltd. Delhi, 1984.
- 96 Mercer, Lawrence and Chouvet John Lewis, 'The Cooch Behar Select records', vol. II or 'Mercer and Chouvet's report on Cooch Behar in 1788', the Cooch Behar State press, Cooch Behar, 1869.
- 97 Misra, B. P, 'Early history of Bhutan', in the Himalayan Miscellany 1, (March 1987), pp. 5-14.
- 98 Mukherjee, B. N. and Bhattacharyya, P. K. (edited), 'Early Historical Perspective of north Bengal', Published by Chatterji, T. K. , Registrar, North Bengal University, Raja Rammohanpur, Darjeeling, 1987.
- 99 Mukherjee, Sibsankar, article 'The Kamadesvara – ritual sovereign of northeastern India', in P. K. Bhattacharyya (ed), 'The Kingdom of Kamata-Koch-Behar', The university of North Bengal, 2000.
- 100 Nath, D. 'History of the Koch kingdom 1515-1615', Mittal publications, Delhi, 1989.

- 101 Nath, R. M. 'The background of Assamese culture', Shilong, 1949.
- 102 Neog, M, 'The Contribution of the Sankaradeva Movement to the Culture and Civilization of India', Forum for Sankaradeva Studies, Gauhati, 1998.
- 103 Neog, D. 'New Light on History of Asamiya Literature', Xuwani Prakas (Beauty Publications), Dispur, (Assam), 1962.
- 104 Neog, M, 'Sankaradeva and his times: Early history of the Vaishnava faith and movement in Assam', Gauhati University, Gauhati, 1965.
- 105 Neog, M. (ed), 'Studies in the History of Assam', Jorhat, 1973.
- 106 Neog, M., 'Buddhism in Kamarupa', IHQ. XXVII, June 1951.
- 107 Neog, M., 'Religions of the north-East India', Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd, Delhi, 1984.
- 108 Neog, M., Comp. et ed., 'Pracya-sasanavali', Gauhati, 1974.
- 109 Neog, M, 'Sankaradeva', National Book Trust, 2000.
- 110 Pemberton, B. R., 'Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India', DRAS, Gauhati, 1966.
- 111 Pemberton, B. R., 'Report on Bhotan (1837-38)', in Kuloy, H. K. (ed), 'political Missions to Bhotan', reprint, Monjusri Publishing House, New Delhi, 1972, pp.151-274.
- 112 Perberton, Captain Richard Boileau, 'Report on the Eastern frontier of British India', Reprint, DHAS, Gauhati, 1966.
- 113 Phukun, Girin and Dutta, N. L. (ed), 'Politics of Identity and Nation Building in North-East India', New Delhi, 1997.
- 114 R. C. Majumder, 'Struggle for Empire, Vol., V, pp. 42-45.
- 115 Rajkhowa, J. P., 'Generalissimo Chilarai and his times: A Historical Biography', Vikram Publishers, Gauhati, 2nd ed., 2003.
- 116 Ray, H. C., 'Dynastic History of Northern India', Calcutta, 1931, vol.1.
- 117 Raychoudhury, N. R., 'Tripura through the Ages', Agartala, 1977.
- 118 Redfield, Robert, 'The Little Community", (Almqvist and wiksells, Bektrycheri A. B., 1955.
- 119 Risely, H. H., 'Tribes and castes of Bengal', Vol. I, reprint ed., Calcutta, (Firma KLM), 1981.

- 120 Robinson, William, 'A descriptive Account of Assam', Reprint, New Delhi, 1975
- 121 Roy Choudury, Tapan and Habib, Irfan, (ed), 'The Cambridge Economic History of India '(1200-1750), Vol. I, Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- 122 Sangma, S. Martin, 'Essays on North-East India', Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1st published, 1994.
- 123 Sannayal, C. C., 'Rajbanshis of North Bengal', Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1965.
- 124 Sarkar, J. N., 'History of Bengal, Muslim period: 1200-1757', Patna, Academica Asiatica, 1973.
- 125 Sarkar, J. N., 'The Buranjis: Ahom and Assamese', in Barpujari, H. K (ed),
- 126 Sarkar, I, 'Aspects of Historical geography of Pragjyotisa-Kamarupa", Calcutta, 1992.
- 127 Sarma, A. C., 'Tai Ahom system of Government', B. R. Publishing House, New Delhi, 1st ed., 1986.
- 128 Sarma, Satyendranath, 'A Socio-Economic and Cultural History Medieval Assam', 1200 -1800AD.' Gauhati, 1989.
- 129 Sasananda, S. 'History of Buddhism in Assam', c. 300-c. 1200 AD., New Delhi, 1986.
- 130 Sengupta, S. 'Physical anthropology of the Koch Population', Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 1993.
- 131 Service, Elman R, 'Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective', New York, 2nd ed., Random House, 1971.
- 132 Service, Elman R, 'Origin of the State and Civilization: The process of Cultural Evolution', New York, W.W. Norton and Co., 1975.
- 133 Service, Elman R, 'Classical and modern Theories of the Origins of Government', in Cohen Ronald and Service Elman, R. (eds), 'Origin of the state', Philadelphia, Institute for the Study of the Human Issues, 1978.
- 134 Sharma, Chandan Kumar, 'Genealogy contested: Oral Discourse and Bodo Identity Construction', in Muthukumaraswamy, M. D. (ed), 'Folklore as Discourse', Ind-Compress, Chennai, 2006.
- 135 Sharma, M. M., 'Inscriptions of Ancient Assam', Gauhati, 1978.

- 136 Sharma, S. N., '*The Neo-Vaishnavite Movement and the Satra Institution of Assam*', first edition, 1996, Lawyer's bookstall edition. 1999, Gauhati.
- 137 Singh, J. P., '*Monetary development of early Assam*', Jorhat (Assam), 1989.
- 138 Singh, K. S., (ed), '*The Tribal situation in India*', New Delhi, (Motilal Banarsidas), 1996.
- 139 Singh, Jai Prakash; Sengupta, Gautam, eds. (1991), '*Archeology of North-Eastern India*', New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications.
- 140 Sreenivasa Murthy, H. V., '*Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva and Ramanuja*', Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 1973.
- 141 Stewart. Charles, '*The History of Bengal*', Oriental publishers, Delhi, 1888.
- 142 Sunder, D., '*Survey and Settlement of the western Duars in the District of Jalpaiguri 1889-95*', Bengal secretariat press, Calcutta, 1895.
- 143 Tarrafdar, M. R., '*Hussain Shahi Bengal (1494-1538): A Socio-Political Study*', Asiatic Society of East Pakistan, Dacca, 1965.
- 144 Vasu, N.N., '*The social history of Kamrupa*', (3Vol.s) Delhi, Reprint 1990.
- 145 Vasu N. N., '*The social history of Kamarupa*', (3Vol.s), Northern Book Centre, reprint, New Delhi, Reprint 1983.
- 146 Waddel, L. A., '*Tribes of Brahmaputra Valley*', Reprint, 1975, Delhi.
- 147 White, David Gordon (ed.), '*Tantra in Practice*', Princeton University Press. 2000.
- 148 Winternitz, M. A., '*A History of Indian Culture*', Vol. II, Calcutta, 1933.
- 149 Wittfogel, Karl, '*Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power*', New Haven, Yale University Press, 1963.

4. Others:

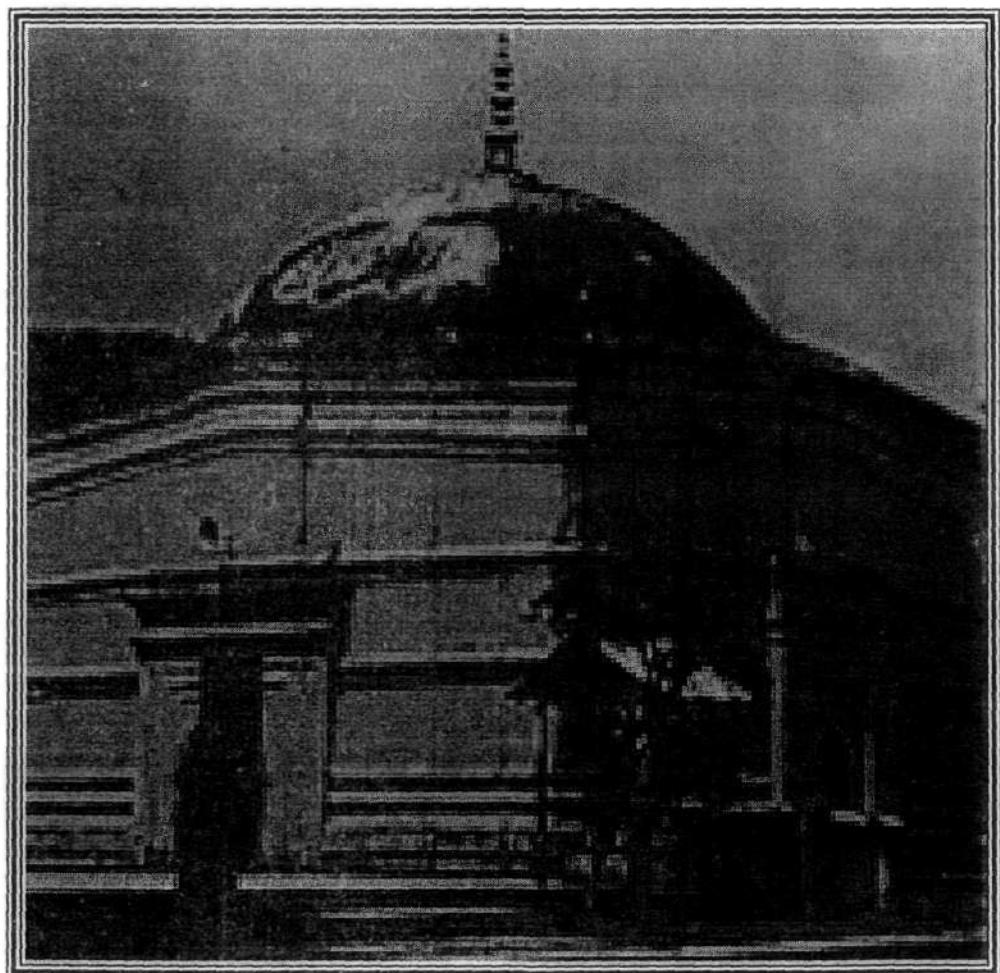
1. Adhikari, R., '*Koch Biharer Itihas O Sahitya Prasanga*', Smaranika, 1st year 1968, Koch Bihar.
2. Census of India, Assam, 1881, 1891 1921.
3. Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers (Rungpore), J. A. Vas, Allahabad, 1911.

4. Imperial Gazetteers of India, Bengal and Assam, Vol. VIII and XI, Oxford, 1908.
5. *Itihas Anushandhan*', Paschimbanga Itihas Sansad, related parts of nos. 12, 14, 15, 18, 19 and 24.
6. Pal, Sunil, 'Mech Jatir Endi Silpa', Amrita- 12. 30 (1972).
7. *Panchanan Smarak Patrika* 1996-97, .
8. Parivartan.
9. Ray, Nirmalendu, 'Koch Biharer Loka Samskriti', Smaranika, Koch Bihar.
10. Smaranika (Souvenir), '18th west Bengal state Bhowiya Sangit Protijogita and Uttarbanga mela', 2007, Bhutanirghat (Falakata)
11. The Koch Bihar gazette, November 1857.

:XXX:

PLATES:

PLATE: I



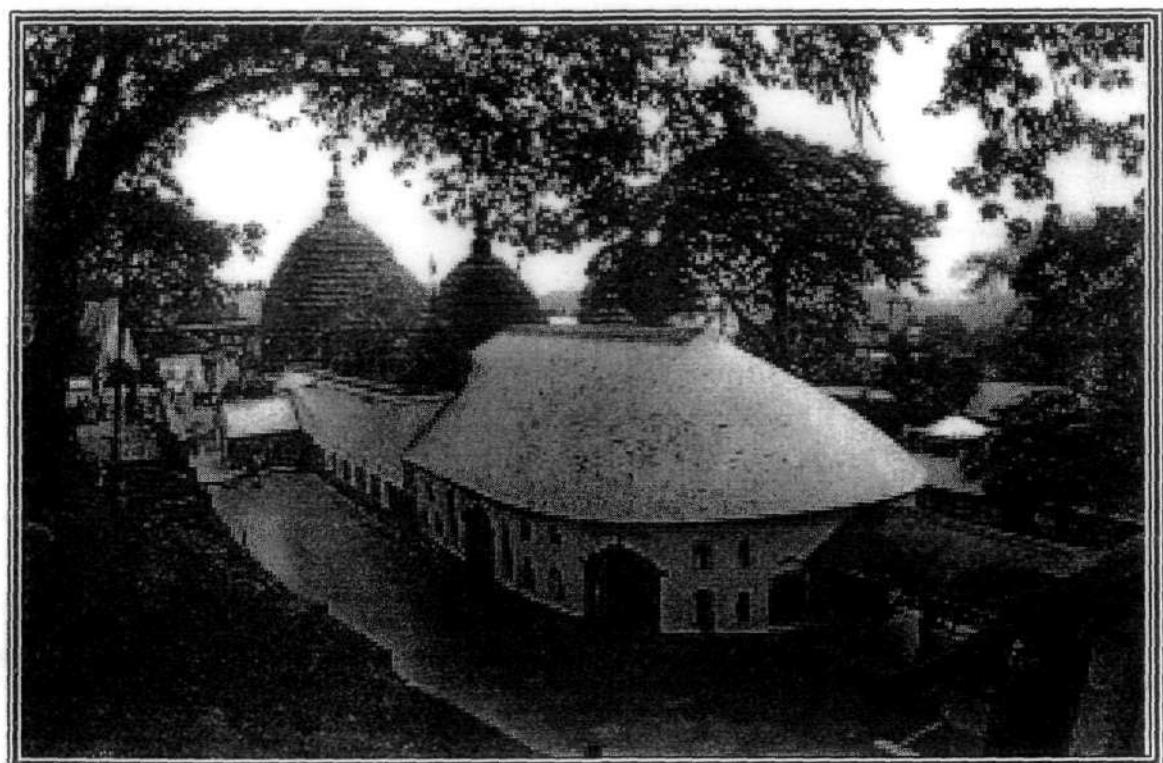
*Baneswar Siva Temple at Baneswar in present Koch Behar district,
West Bengal.*

PLATE: II



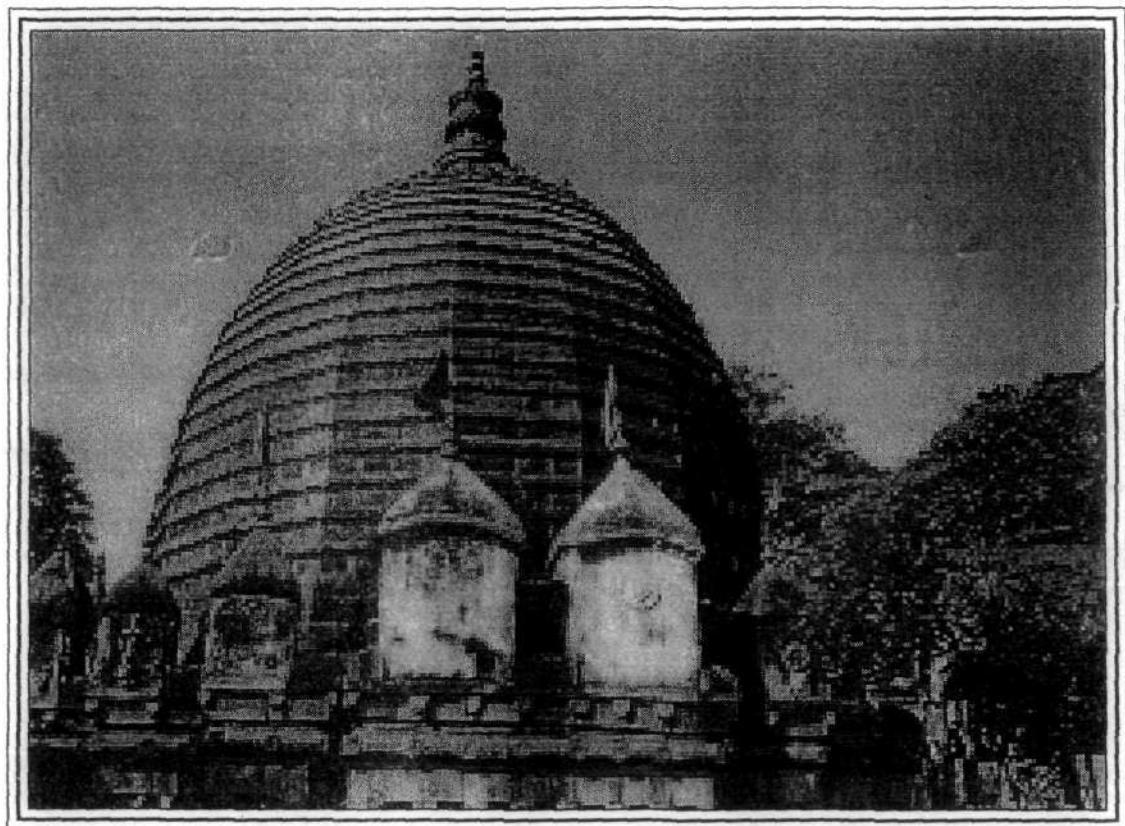
*Kamteswari temple Gosanimari, near Dinhata Town in present
Koch Behar District, West Bengal.*

PLATE: III



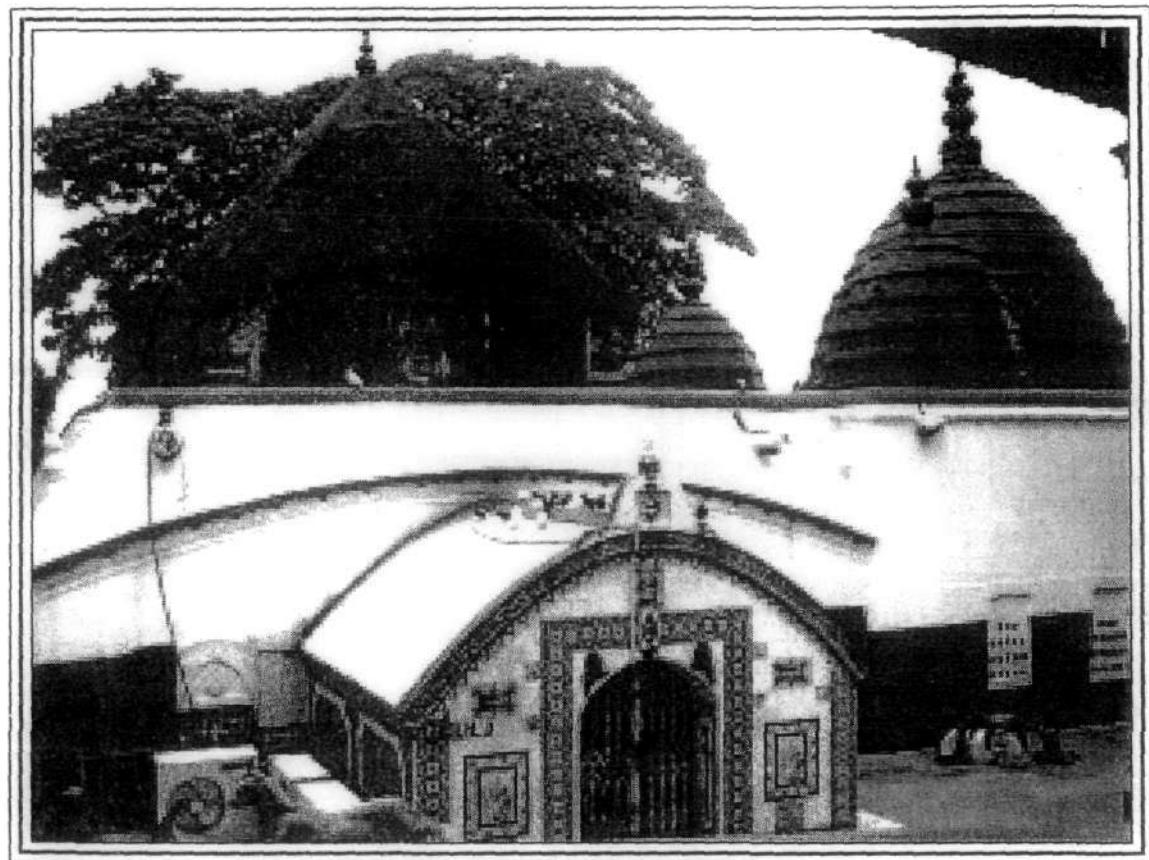
Kamakhya Temple Complex, Nilachalhills, Gauhati.

PLATE: IV



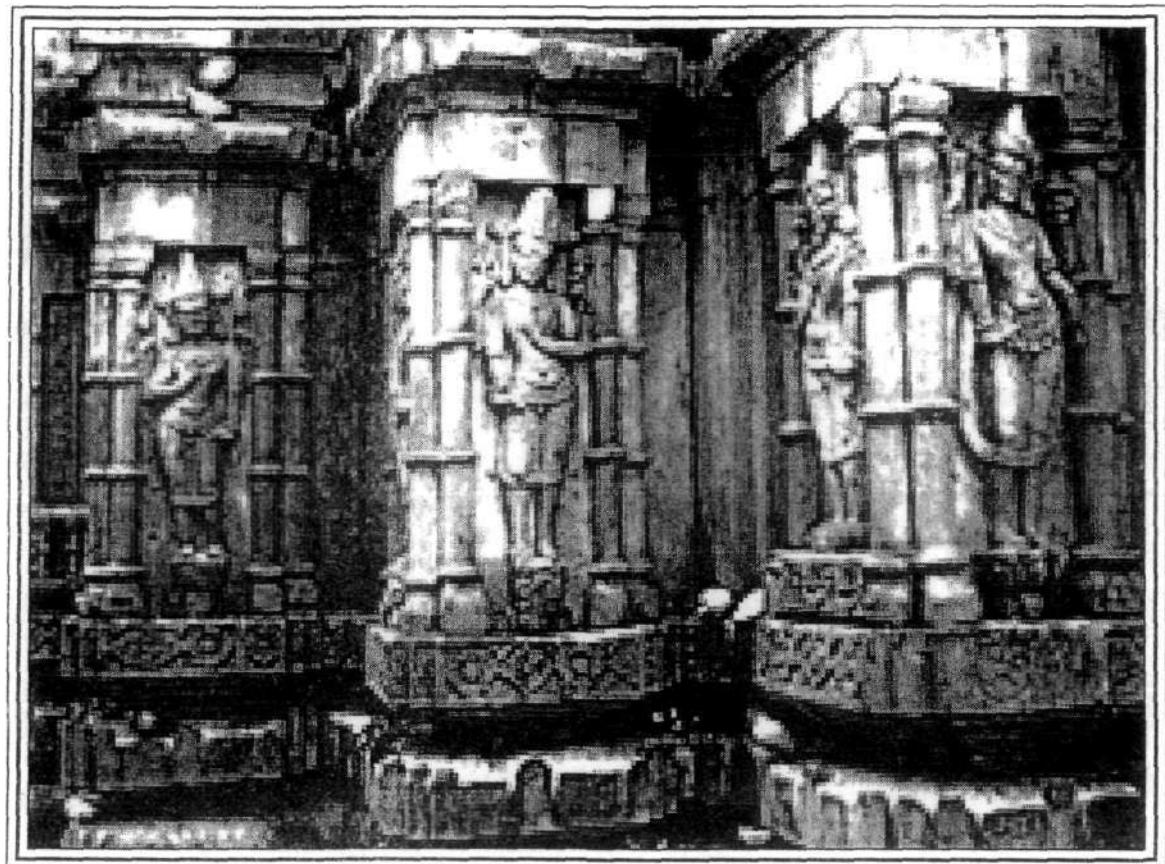
The Sikkha of the Kamakhya temple, Nilachalhills, Gauhati.

PLATE: V



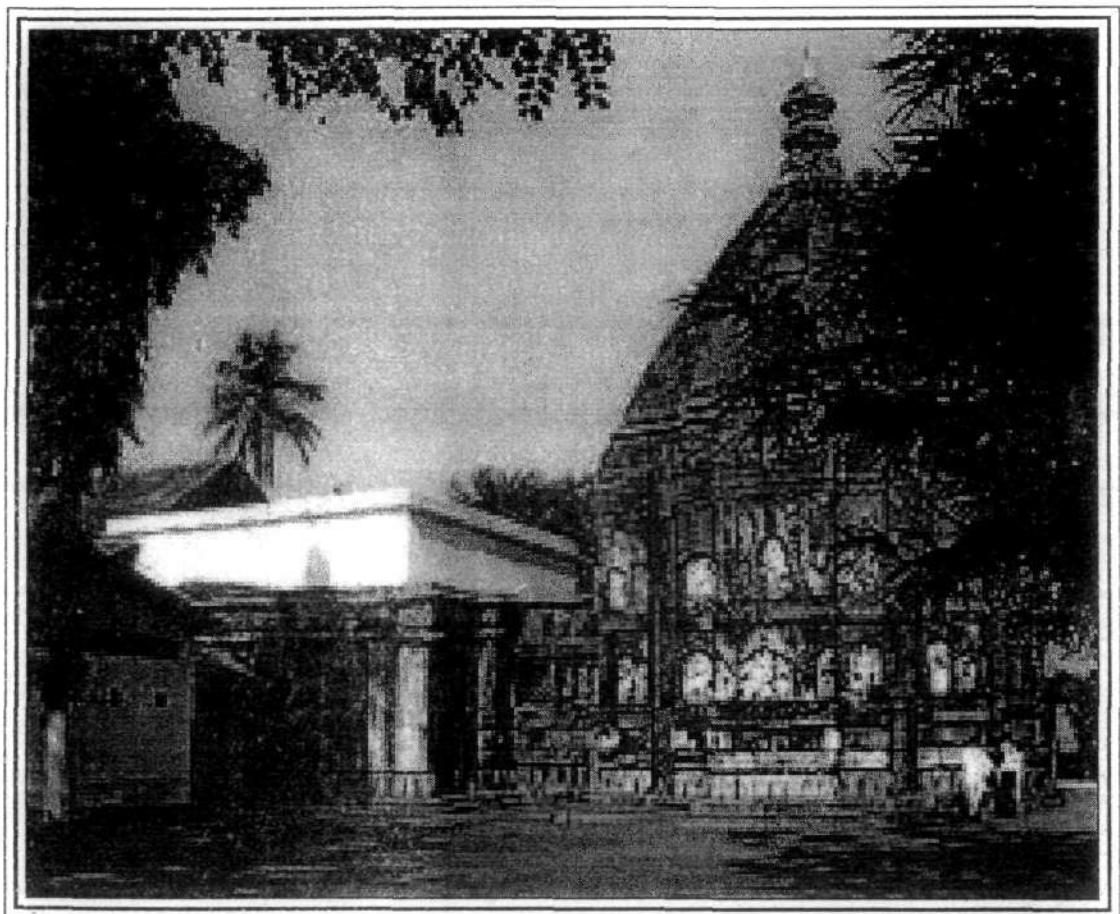
Main entrance for the Kamakhya Temple, Nilachalhills, Gauhati.

PLATE: VI



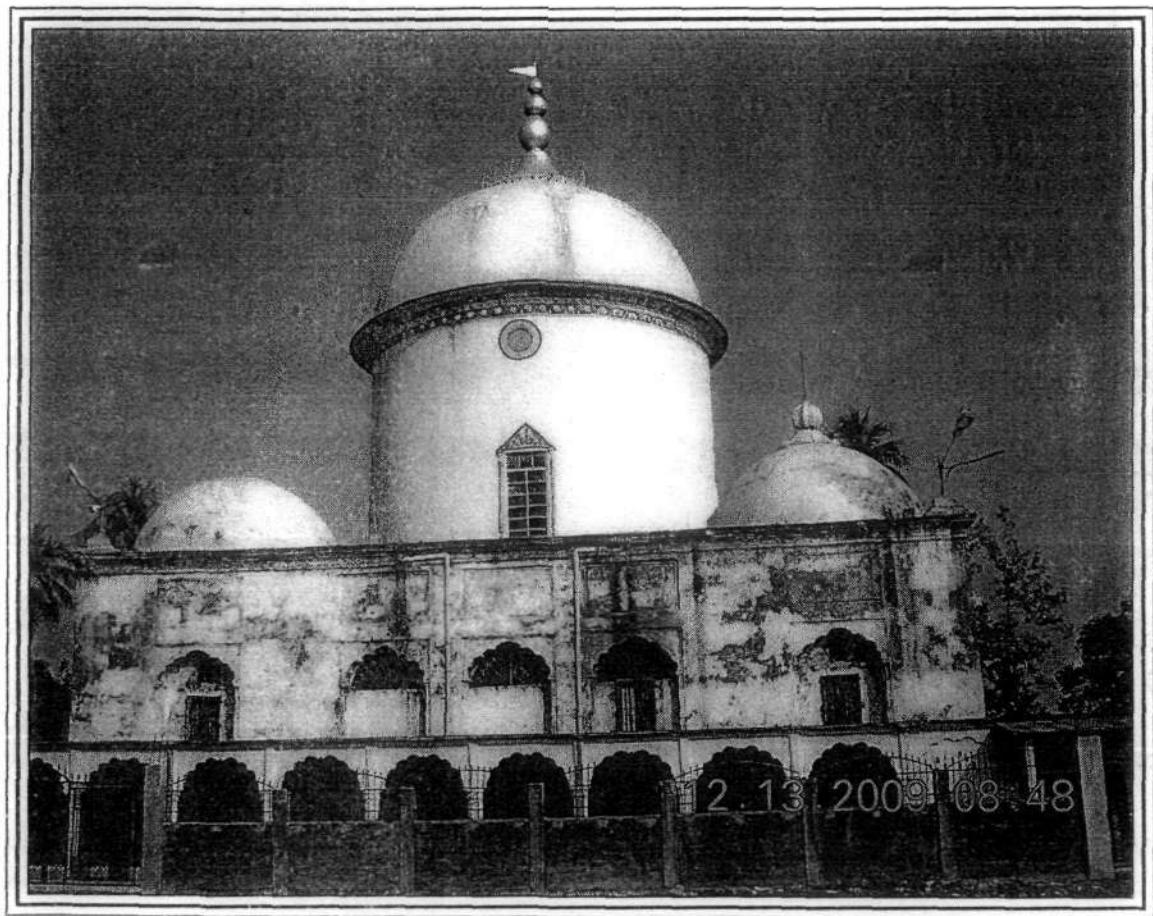
Panel Scriptures of the Kamakhya Temple, Nilachalhills, Gauhati.

PLATE: VII



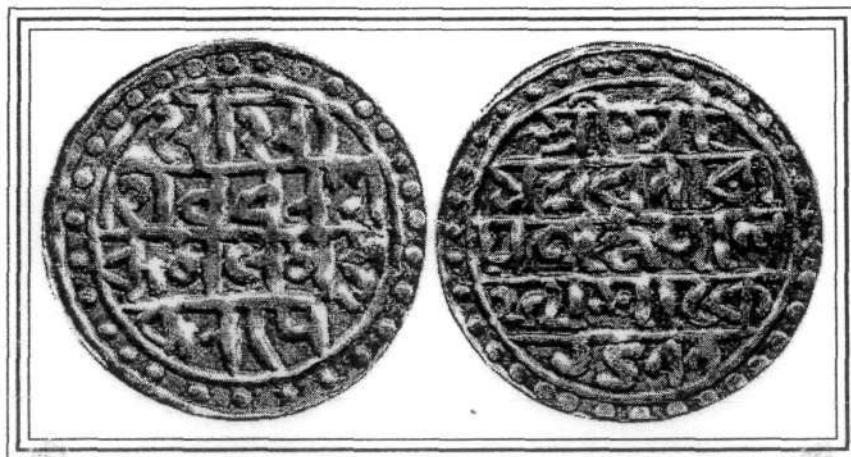
The Hayagriva Madhava temple located at Hajo, a town about 30 km to west of Gauhati.

PLATE: VIII



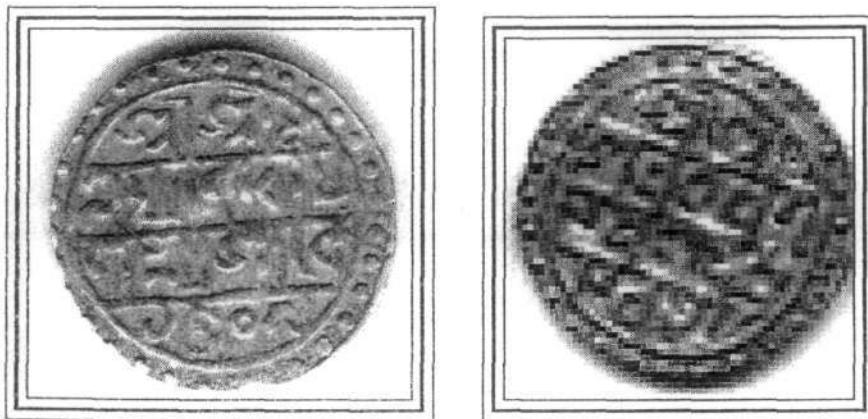
*Jalpeswar Siva Temple at Jalpeswar, a Village near present
Maynaguri town of Jalpaiguri District, west Bengal*

PLATE: IX



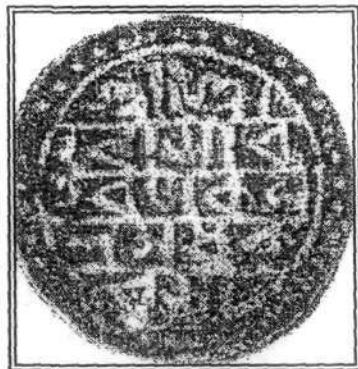
A Silver coin of King Naranarayan with legend on reverse
“*Sri Sriman Nara Narayansya Saka 1477*” and on obverse
“*Sri Sri Shiva Charana Kamala Madhu Karashya*”.

PLATE: X



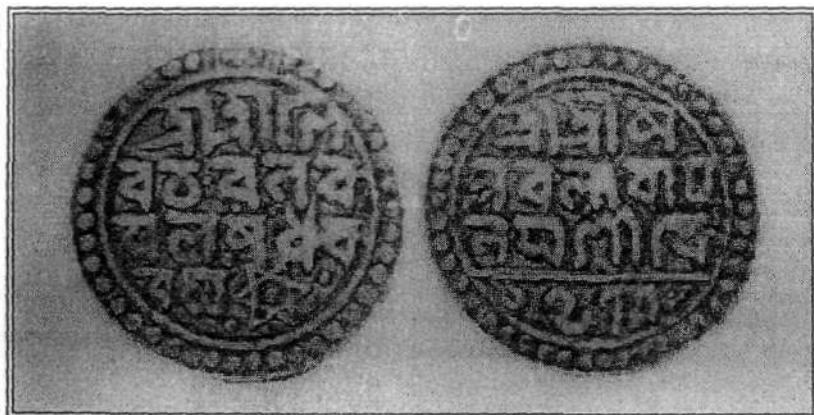
A Silver coin of Lakshminarayana with legend on Reverse
“*Sri Sriman Lakshmi Narayansya Sake 1509/Raja Saka 98*” and
“*Sri Sri Shiva Charana Kamala Madhu Karashya*” on obverse.

PLATE: XI



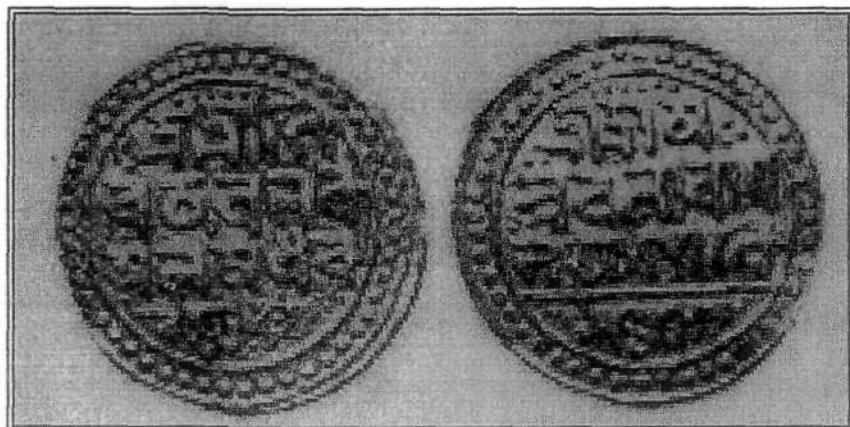
A Raghudeva's Silver Coin with legend on Reverse
"Raghudeva Narayana Bhupalashya Saka 1510" and
"Sri Sri Shiva CharanaKamala Madhu Karashya" on obverse.

PLATE: XII



According to N. G. Rhodes & S. K. Bose*, this coin is perhaps of the Khyriem in the name of King Naranarayan, with the legend "Sri Sri Shiva Charana Kamalamadhu Karasya" and a star of Davil with six angles at the end of the line on the obverse. On the reverse, "Sri Sriman Naranaraya nasya Sake 1477" and at end of the last line three dots.

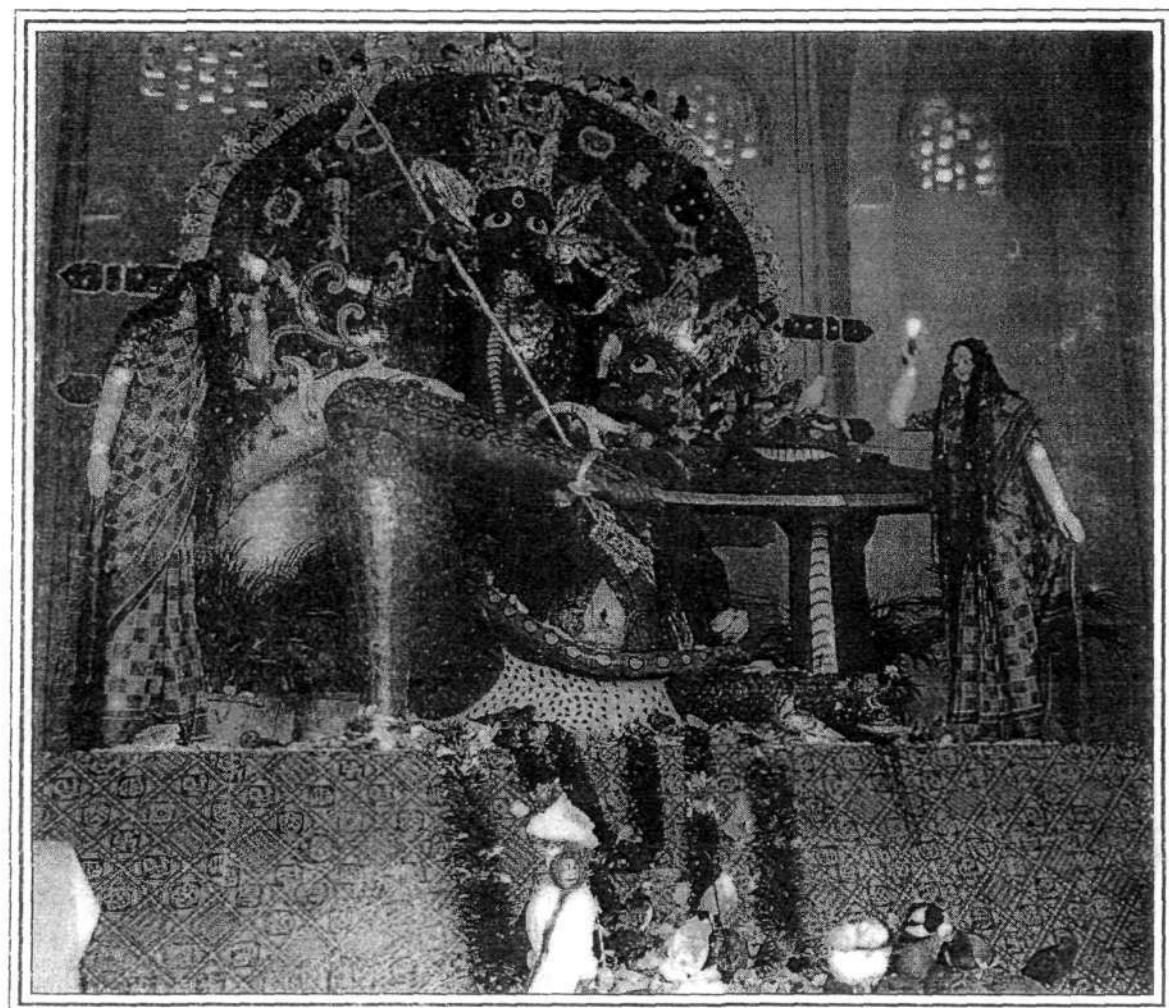
PLATE: XIII



According to N. G. Rhodes & S. K. Bose* this is a Jayantiya coin with the legend "Sri Sri Shiva Charana Kamalamadhu Karasya" and a dot and star of Davil with six angles at the end of the line on the obverse. On the reverse, "Sri Sri Jayantipura Purandarasya Saka 1555" and three dots in the field.

(*N. G. Rhodes & S. K. Bose, 'The Coinage of Jayantiapur', Kolkata, 2010, pp. 15, 59&71.)

PLATE: XIV



Baradevi Image, Koch Behar. It is believed that this image is unique, identical and bearing characteristics since the time of king Naranarayana.

Addendum/ Corrigendum

A. Addendum / Corrigendum in the part marked as 'A'

Corrigendum in the page 'Declaration by the Candidate', page-I.

In the page -i, with the heading 'Declaration by the Candidate', the title of the thesis "KING NARANARAYAN AND HIS TIMES", misprinted as "KING NARAYAN AND HIS TIMES". Please note it.

Addendum/ note on the title of the Chapter-V, page- 242.

The Chapter-V, the 'Religious Upheaval' is not titled to mean only the Growth and expansion of the Neo-Vaishnavite Movement. It is used in a wider sense. Firstly, the reign of king Naranarayan, witnessed the practices of heterogeneous religious sects and its assimilation and diffusion with other religions. With their state formation, Koch kings Biswa Singha and Naranarayan adopted the policy of Hinduisiation of the royal family by discarding/ modifying their tribal religious pattern to gain the status of Kshatriyas of Brahmanical fold. With liberal outlook, they also took active part for its assimilation and diffusion among the masses of the state. More or less, it brought revolutionary changes in the existing religious pattern during the period of our study. Secondly, the advent of Neo-Vaisnavite preacher Sankaradeva into the Koch kingdom in about 1546, during the reign of King Naranarayan marked a golden chapter in the religious history of the period. King Naranarayan and his brother Chilarai not only accepted the Neo-Vaisnavism, but also patronized it in different ways and took active part for its propagation and growth among the masses of the state. The Neo-Vaishnavite Movement under the Koch royal patronage became the prime religion of the region. Thus, assimilation and diffusion of the existing religions with Hinduism in one hand and the growth and expansion the Neo-Vaishnavite Movement on the other hand, marked revolutionary changes in the whole religious pattern of the region. Hence, the title of the chapter -V 'Religious Upheaval' is

Parimal Bapari

Subhash Chandra

set to mean the growth and development of the whole religious pattern with great emphasis on the ↲

No para change

→ Neo-Vaishnavite Movement. The Chapter may also be titled as "Religions: its diffusion, growth and expansion during the period" or "Religions: the existing forms of religious practices and the role of Sankardeva and his Neo-Vaisnavite religious movements during the period.

Addendum /Corrigendum in the introduction, pages No 5 and 6.

Please ignore two Paragraphs in the pages No 5 and 6 with first words 'Among contemporary ...and 'The 'Buranjis'...instead, add the following three paragraphs.

There are different types of contemporary and near contemporary literary sources of the period, which provide us huge fragmented and scattered information for the construction of the king Naranarayan and his times. These are mainly 'Vansavalis'¹⁰ or 'Rajovansavalis', 'Buranjis'¹¹ and the 'Charithputhis'

Locally known as 'Vansavali's or 'Rajovansavalis', are termed in English as the dynastic genealogical chronicles or annals of the royal dynasty, were written at the instance of the later days kings of Koch Behar, Darrang and Bijni by court poets in glorify their ancestors. As a result, a certain disregard of facts and of wild exaggeration in verse form to are visible. However, in spite of that, they throw lights in the matter of the genealogical orders, some important events, socio-cultural-religious patterns and natural happenings, which are reliable and acceptable after a comparative study with the other sources and utilized to construct the history of 'King Naranarayan and his times'.

The 'Buranjis', the literal meaning is 'store that teaches the ignorant', a genre of writing, a distinct form of historical writings / literatures and termed in English as historical chronicles or only chronicles. The Buranjis or chronicles are composed mainly in prose by families of the priest and nobles or royal historians at the instance of the royal families to maintain the chronological order. G. A. Grierson described the chronicles as "national literature of Assam"¹², the most important and reliable sources of history writing of the region. The 'Buranjis' are 'historical writings' in the sense, that

↳ Shakti Ray

Parimal Bapari

according to Gait, "The historicity of these Buranjis is proved not only by the way in which they support each other, but also by the confirmation which is afforded by the narrative of Muhamadan writers, where-ever these are available for comparison. Their Chronology is fur-supported by the dates on various records which have been collected and collated for the purpose of checking it"¹³ According to him the 'Buranjis', are more reliable than the 'Vansavalis' or 'Rajovansavalis'¹⁴. But without going into the nature and status of the Buranjis, it can safely be said that the Buranjis are most important source of the medieval history writing of the region and their authenticity is proved from many other sources. However, as most of the Buranjis or historical chronicles were composed directly under the patronage of royal courts there may have some wild exaggeration and myth. We should keep it in mind.

Addendum in the page -7.

Please add the following paragraph in the page 7 between the paragraph starts that with the words 'The Tantra Literatures... .

It should be mentioned here that there are some basic differences among the above mentioned three Sources i.e. 'Vansavali' or 'Rajovansavali', Buranji and Charithputhi. The Vansavalis' or 'Rajovansavalis were composed mainly in verse in latter days by the Koch royal families to glorify the past of the dynasty. The Buranjis were composed mainly in prose following the Ahom (Shan Race) tradition by priestly / noble court historians. Most of the Buranjis are contemporary writings and bear more historical sense than Vansavalis' or 'Rajovansavalis and Charithputhis. The Charitputhis are biographical texts and which were composed or compiled in both prosé and verse mainly in the Vaisnavite Satras, by the scholarly disciples of Sankaradeva, Madhavadeva, Damodaradeva and others, on the life, teachings and activities of their masters. However, all the three sources provide fragmented information during the reign of King Naranarayan which is supplementary to each other.

Shattacharya

Pareimal Barfari

B. Addendum / Corrigendum /Note in the part marked as 'B'

Note /Addendum on the first paragraph of the page- 6.

In the present context, the scholar accepted the Buranjis as a 'genre of writing, a distinct form of historical writings / literatures and to support the position as quoted from G. A. Grierson and E.A. Gait. Beside them, scholars like S.K.Bhuyan~~*~~ and Lila Gogoi~~*~~ had done comprehensive works and accepted it as an important source of the history and literature of the region and not much questions arose about the authenticity of the Buranjis as questioned about the 'Vansavalis' or 'Rajovansavalis'. However, there may have been some debates for which I have attached a few sentences in the appropriate place as addendum in the first paragraph of the page- 6.

- * He edited large number of the Buranjis with introduction, reference of which made in the note 11 of this chapter.
- * The Buranjis Historical Literature of Assam Omsons Publication, New Delhi and Guwahati, 1986

Note on the topics with headings 'the Paiks (Infantry)', 'Cavalry', 'Elephant force or Elephantry' and 'Navy' under broad heading 'Division of the Army' in the chapter II, pages 146-151.

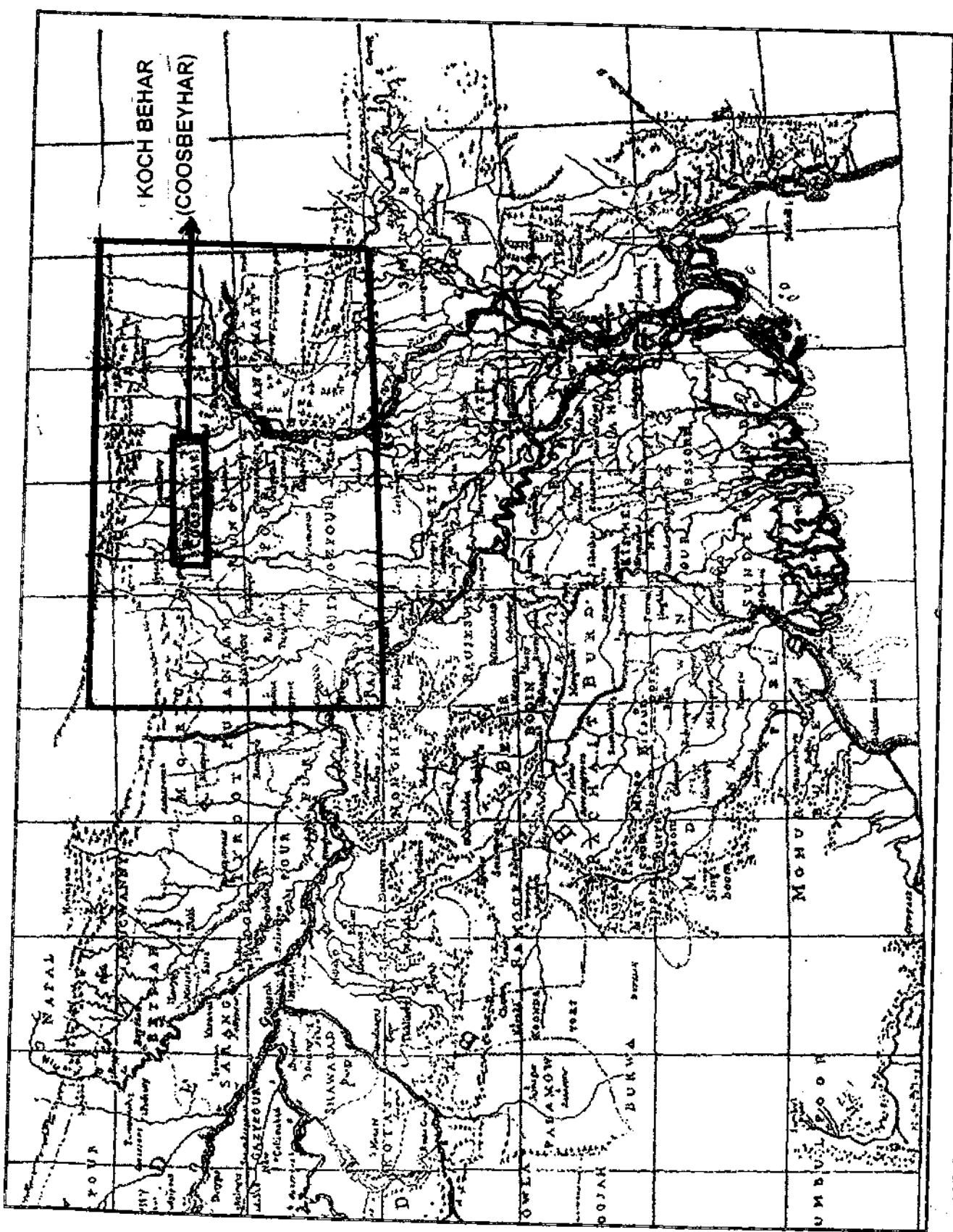
The above mentioned part of the thesis has been written from very few scattered and controversial data as source of information. In such situation, it is very common to mention and to discuss every institutions and equipments directly or indirectly related to the subject to give it a primary structure. King Naranarayan came to the throne as a successor of his father Biswa Singha with a primary structure of the state Administration, including Military Administration, as a result King Naranarayan was so successful in his military campaigns . He accepted all these established institutions as well as renovated/ introduced new mechanism in his Military Administrations. Throughout the above mentioned pages an attempt was made to describe and elaborate the established institutions and the new mechanism introduced with available data.

Subhattacharya
Mandira Bhattacharya

Parimal Barari

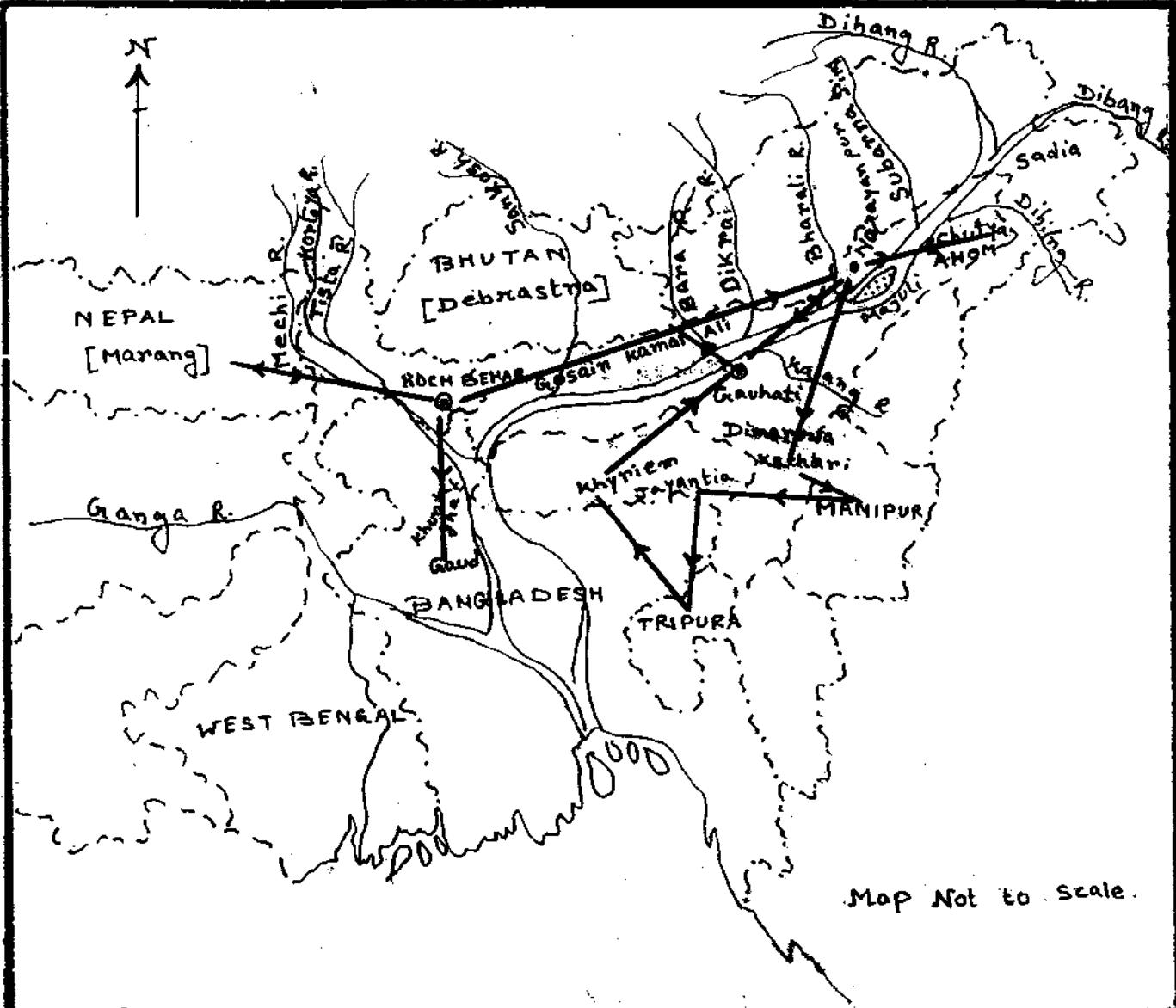
MAPS:

MAP: I.



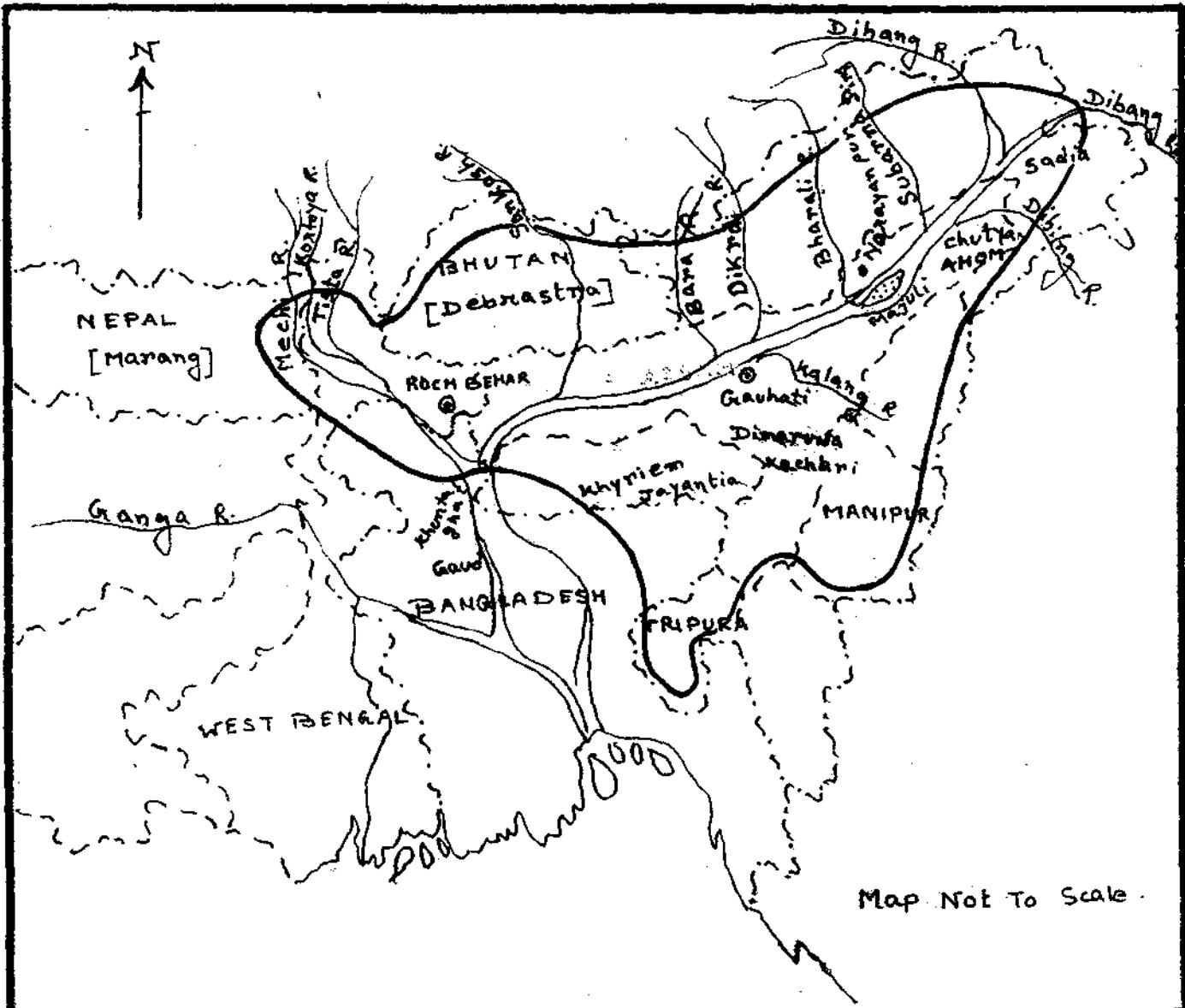
KOC BEHAR AND IT'S ADJOINING AREAS IN THE RANNEL'S MAP

MAP: II.



THE MILITARY EXPEDITIONS OF KING NARANARAYAN AND HIS BROTHER -CUM-
GENERAL CHILARAI.

MAP: III.



THE KOCH HEGEMONY (INDIRECT) OVER THE NORTH-EAST INDIA AT THE PEAK
PERIOD OF KING NARANARAYAN

