

## Chapter - IV

### Back Ground of 'AMUL and HIMUL'

#### AMUL :

"Kaira district has had a long tradition of dairying, dating back to 1892. By the early 1900's, the district was exporting an impressive quantity of milk products, particularly ghee, to the towns and cities of the neighbouring districts. Kaira is particularly noted for its ghee or clarified butter<sup>1</sup>.

The Kaira District Co-operative Milk Producer's Union Limited (AMUL) is situated at Anand in Kaira District, Gujrat. Eastern Gujrat is remarkable for both its crops and milk production and Kaira District is one

of them. This district is linked with other parts of India by major transportation routes, bordered on two sides by the Mahi river on the south-east and the Sabarmati on the north-West and situated in the area of deepest penetration by the Gulf of Cambay. This district has been visited, for many centuries, by traders, warriors and migratory people. Thus, it bears an ancient cultural and historical heritage<sup>2</sup>.

TABLE 4.1

Agro-Climatic and Other Features : Kaira District

	Unit	
1. Total geographical area (1981 Census)	Sq. Km.	7194
2. Total Population (1981 Census)	Nos.	30,07,194
a) Urban	"	6,05,325
b) Rural	"	24,01,869
3. Density of Population	Per Sq. Km.	418
4. Total No. of Households (1971 Census)	"	146
a) Urban	"	1,051
b) Rural	"	120
5. Percentage of cultivable area	%	N.A.
6. Total No. of workers (1981 Census)	Nos.	9,36,146

contd...

Table 4.1 contd...

7. Percentage of workers of Population	%	31
8. Total No. of Cultivators (1981 Census)	Nos.	6,81,007
9. Percentage of cultivators of workers	%	40.7
10. Total No. of agricultural Labourers (1981 Census)	Nos.	2,49,680
11. Percentage of agri. labourers of workers	%	26.6
12. Total No. of workers in Livestock, fishing, Forestry etc. (1971 Census)	Nos.	4,415
13. Rate of literacy (1981 Census)	%	49.2
14. Density of milch animal	100 sq.km.	N.A.
15. Annual rainfall	m.m.	60-100
16. Principal crops		Rice, Bajra, Jowar, Wheat, cotton etc.

Source : i) High lights from the 1981 Census.

Pub : Hindusthan Thompson Associates Ltd.

ii) Dept. Statistics and Full Count Census Table (KHEDA District-1971.

iii) Provisional population Totals Census-1981 series-5-R.S.Chhaya, Director of census operations, Gujrat.

iv) Census of India-1971 Administrative - C.C.Doctor, Director of census operations, Gujrat.

Kaira district, as a whole, resembles the rural India. Most of the people lives in villages and most of

them are dependent upon agriculture. 31% of the total population are workers (i.e. 9,36,046 according to 1981 census) out of which 40.70% and 26.67% of the total workers are cultivators and agricultural labourers respectively but landholdings are small in size and all are used for agriculture purpose. In Kaira, farmers mainly grew bajra, kodra, rice, jowar, wheat, cotton and tobacco.

Generally most of the farmers' family maintained one or two milch animals particularly buffaloes and utilise the by-products of the farm, seasonal grass and the available surplus labour of farmer's family. Before dairy cooperatives' era, the farmer used cotton-seeds as a main feed for their milch animals, which was not only a wasteful way of feeding but also unscientific and there was no improvised shelter for their milch animals in many cases<sup>3</sup>.

Milk production in Kaira district is an important cottage industry. Generally house-wives and children look after the milch animals. Before the co-operatives' era there was no organised marketing facilities of the milk or the milk products. At that time Milk marketing was controlled by the middlemen and contractors and for that reason, the farmers were compelled to sell their milk or milk products at a lower price.

The farmers of Kaira district, though not sufficiently educated, however could feel that it was not a fair system under which they were compelled to sell their milk or milk products to the middlemen at a low price (and the middlemen also were making huge profits by these goods).

In 1945 for a better marketing system the Government of Bombay started the Bombay Milk Scheme for the consumer of Bombay Metropolitan city, by transporting Milk from Anand to Bombay (427 kilometres). After preliminary trials the Government of Bombay made an agreement with M/s Polsons Limited for supplying milk from Anand to Bombay on a regular basis. By this agreement, the farmers of Kaira district were not satisfied mainly in respect of price. M/s Polsons Limited earned maximum profit from this supply than did the farmers. Thus the farmers of Kaira district were in the same position in which they had been in the past. They had to sell their milk to the contractors at a price which was fixed by the contractors. The grievances accumulated. The farmers went to the then National Leader Late Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on a deputation in this regards. Late Sardar Vallabhabhai Patel listened their grievances and advised them to form a co-operative society with a pasteurization plant for marketing their milk through that co-operative society. And for that reason, they would demand for setting up

such co-operative society and if their demand was not fulfilled, they should refuse to sell their milk to the milk contractors. In addition to that he pointed out that in that situation "there would be some losses to the farmers as they would not be able to sell their milk for some times. If they were prepared to put up with the loss, he was prepared to lead them"<sup>4</sup>. The farmers accepted the proposal.

Then Mr. Patel sent Mr. Morarji Desai to Kaira district for organising a Co-operative society. In 1946, Mr. Morarji Desai Organised the farmers, under the leadership of Mr. Desai farmers resolved that the milk producer's co-operative societies be organised for collecting milk from the farmer members in the village. And all the milk collected be accumulated by the 'Union' which would be formed with its own milk processing facilities, by the milk producers' co-operative societies.

Farmer's Co-operatives urged that government should undertake the responsibilities of purchasing all the pasteurised milk from the Union. If this was not done by the Government the farmers would refuse to sell their milk to the milk contractors. The Government rejected farmers' demand. A 'milk strike' was called by the farmers of Kaira district and it lasted for 15 days. Not a drop of milk reached from Anand to Bombay milk

scheme. The farmer's demand was accepted by the Government after an on the spot study and assesment of the situation by the then Milk Commissioner of Bombay and his Deputy Secretary<sup>5</sup>.

In December, 14, 1946 the 'Kaira district Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Limited' was formally registered with a view to provide proper marketing facilities to the milk producers of the Kaira district. The Union started with two Village milk producers' societies and commenced pasteurising milk for the Bombay milk scheme in June, 1948. Initially about 250 litres of milk was being handled<sup>6</sup>. At the end of 1948, the number of farmer members had increased by 432 and the quality of milk procured had also increased by 5,000 litres of milk<sup>7</sup>.

The milk Co-operative movement of Kaira district became very much popular among the farmers and the number of organisations increased. The growth rate was so fast that by 1953, it was found that the Bombay Milk Scheme was unable to purchase all the collected milk of the Kaira district Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Limited especially in winter season (as in that season buffaloes yielded an average of 250% of their summer yield). It was necessary to set up a new plant for processing the extra milk into products like butter and milk

powder. As the farmers were bound to sell their surplus milk at low rates. On the representation of the farmers the government of Bombay and the Government of India accepted the proposal to set up a new plant for processing the extra milk into milk products. The government of India helped the Union to get financial assistance from UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund), and from the Government of New-Zealand under the Colombo Plan and technical assistance from FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation).

On November, 15, 1954, the then President of India Late Dr. Rajendra Prasad laid foundation stone of a new Dairy Plant for processing milk powder and butter. After 11½ months the Dairy plant was completed and it was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister Late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on October, 31, 1955.

As a result of opening up the new Dairy Plant, the Kaira District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Limited (AMUL) was able to organise more and more village milk producers' co-operative societies and handled more milk. The AMUL Dairy was further expanded in 1958 (at a cost of Rs. 15 lakhs) to manufacture condensed milk. After two years another new plant was installed for manufacturing 2500 tones of roller-dried baby food and 600 tones of cheese. The baby food project was implemented in collaboration with the Central Food Technological Research



Institute, Mysore. In October, 1964, a Cattle Feed Plant was donated by OXFAM under the Freedom from Hunger Campaign of FAO.

In April, 1965, a new Dairy plant with the capacity of producing 40 tones of milk powder and 20 tones of butter was opened by the then Union Minister Mr. Morarji Desai to meet the requirements of the defence services for milk powder. "The Anand Dairy Complex could now handle 5,00,000 litres of a day"<sup>8</sup>. In 1974 the dairy's milk handling capacity was raised to 7,50,000 litres a day. In the same year Kaira Milk Union set up a plant for making chocolate, weaning food as well as molted milk food.

Thus AMUL worked as a technical adviser in respect of Dairy industry in India and trained several personnel for various milk schemes in this country<sup>9</sup>.

The historical summary as depicted in the Annexure 22 shows the progress of Kaira District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Limited. The union has grown from only two village societies to 870 village societies with 3,59,000 producer members. By 1984-85 procurement of milk has gone up from 250 litres to 7,00,000 litres per day with total turnover of Rs. 122 crores in 1984-85.

Besides, Amul has solved some of the problems

regarding rural poverty. It may be clear from the following conclusion made by Dr. S.M. Patel and Sri M.K. Pandey in their study. "The Milk Co-operatives have not only created certain positive impacts on the economy of the milk producers but also have made them realize such impacts to a larger extent. The milk co-operatives are not viewed by milk producers nearly as milk collection centres where they go for disposing off their surplus milk, but they are regarded as institutions which play a vital role in uplifting the rural economy in general and what of the milk producers in particular"<sup>10</sup>.

HIMUL :

It is situated in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal in the Eastern India. The area of operation of The Himalayan Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Limited (HIMUL) is Darjeeling District, Sadar Sub-Division of Jalpaiguri District and Islampur Sub-division of West Dinajpur District. This hinterland is situated in the extreme north of West Bengal. This area is linked with other parts of the country by major transportation routes. There are three international borders; on the south-east, on the north-east and on the north-west side (i.e. Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal respectively); and

two State borders on the south-west side and on the extreme north i.e. Bihar and Sikkim respectively and on the East Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal other than Sadar Sub-Division of that district and on the extreme North West Dinajpur district of West Bengal other than Islampur Sub-division of that district, in this area. This area has been passed over for many centuries by traders, migratory people etc. Thus it bears also an ancient culture and historical heritage<sup>11,12 & 13</sup>.

TABLE 4.2

Agro-Climatic and Other Features; Operational Area of HIMUL

Unit	Darjeeling District	Islampur sub-division (West Dinajpur)	Sadar Sub-Division (Jalpaiguri)	
1. Total Geographical area (1981 Census)	sq.km.	3075	1751.8	3373.7
2. Total population (1981 census)	Nos.	1024269	755002	1296022
a) Urban	"	280372	33754	218615
b) Rural	"	743897	721248	1077407
3. Density of population	Per sq.km.	325	431	384
4. Total No. of households (1971 census)	Nos.	139529	104784	196269
a) Urban	"	33861	3824	20650
b) Rural	"	105668	100960	1755619

Table 4.2 contd ...

5. Percentage of cultivable area	%	26.93	N.A.	N.A.
6. Total No. of workers (1981 census)	Nos.	366931	228662	413590
7. Percentage of workers of population	%	30.02	30.28	32
8. Total No. of cultivators (1981 census)	Nos.	94635	109822	136335
9. Percentage of cultivators of workers	%	25.79	48.02	33
10. Total No. of agricultural labourers (1981 census)	Nos.	30848	88696	66985
11. Percentage of agri. labourers of workers	%	8.4	38.78	16.19
12. Total No. of workers in live-stock, fishing, forestry etc. (1971 census)	Nos.	76172	1017	12134
13. Rate of literacy (1981 census)	%	42.52	16.24	29.28

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Table 4.2 contd...

14. Density of Milch animals	100 sq.km.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
15. Annual rainfall	mm.	211.24	261.58	N.A.
16. Principal crops		Ginger, Potato, Maize, Orange, Tea & Cincho-na etc.	Paddy, Jute, Tea & Pine-apples etc.	Paddy, Jute, Tea & Pine-apples etc.

- Source : (1) Census 1971, Series-22 West Bengal Part X-A & B; District census hand book, West Dinajpur.
- (2) Census 1971, Series-22, West Bengal, Part X-C; District census handbook, Jalpaiguri.
- (3) Census 1971, Series-22, West Bengal, Part X-A & B; District census hand book, Darjeeling district.
- (4) Census 1971, Series-22, West Bengal, Part X-C; district census handbook Darjeeling.
- (5) Gurkhaland agitation-Government of West Bengal Publication.

Geographically the hinterland of HIMUL may be divided into two parts viz. hills and plains. In hills there are mainly three sub-divisions viz. Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong of Darjeeling district. There are other three sub-divisions viz. Siliguri of Darjeeling district, Sadar Sub-division of Jalpaiguri district and Islampur of West Dinajpur district in the plains.

The three hill sub-divisions of Himalayan region of West Bengal, are largely known for their tea gardens and scenic beauty and their major tourist attraction in the country. Tea, Tourism and Timber, the three T's form the backbone of the hill economy. The topography in the hills does not favour the development of a highly productive agriculture, though the hardworking local farmers try to make the most from the difficult terrain through horticulture and animal husbandry. The area is also known for a wide range of medicinal plants, which are exported. As for animal husbandry, the hill area of the Himalayan region has the largest proportion of high-breed cattle in the state of West Bengal. This can provide an important source of livelihood to a large section of the rural population in the hills. The forests, as elsewhere in the country, are suffering from a high rate of depletion giving rise to serious ecological problems, in addition to reducing the stock of one of the Principal natural resources in this region. Besides, in this area the hill farmers grow Maiza, Potato, Ginger and the plantation crops like organge etc.

✓ About 54 per cent is covered by forests another 14 per cent is devoted to agriculture while tea and cinchona plantations account for 6.62 and 10.75 per cent of land respectively of the hills. Approximately 35.33 percent of the total population are workers out of which one third

are engaged in agriculture , about one third are engaged in activities connected with plantations, orchards, forestry and livestock, another 8 per cent are engaged as agricultural labourers, while the rest of the workers are involved with manufacturing construction, mining, trading and various service activities<sup>14</sup>.

The people of three plain subdivisions viz. Siliguri, Islampur and Sadar of Jalpaiguri, depend mainly upon the agriculture and the people have migrated, mainly from East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh), Nepal and Chhotonagpur of Bihar. In addition to that there are some permanent inhabitants like polia, Raj Banshi etc.

In these areas farmers grow mainly paddy, jute and the plantation crops like Tea, and Pine-apple etc. But major portion of the agricultural land are possessed by a few farmers. However, most of village people are marginal farmers, landless labours and bargadars. In addition to that, there is the problem of unemployment. Many of the farmers and agricultural labourers have idle time for about eight months in a year. In that period they do not get job. Besides, there are inadequate market facilities for their agricultural products, limitation of land and non availability of irrigation facilities.

Generally most of the village people of hills and plains own some milch animals, specially cows and

buffaloes. But milk output (productivity) of the cows and buffaloes is very low, mainly in plains as most of the cows in the hills are high breedable cow (Table 4.3).

"The cattle-stock now found in the hill area (specially in its higher altitudes) are generally up graded crossbreeds of the local stock with one or more of the foreign strains. Historically, the improvement of the cattle-stock in the hill area is largely due to the efforts of European Tea-Planters and christian Missionaries who imported different varieties like Ayrshire, British, Triesian Jersey and other short-horn animals from similar climatic condition in the West Bengal. This was the origin of the up-graded stock particularly around those area, where activities of the foreigners concentrated. Thus, the cattle in Darjeeling and uphill areas of Kurseong and Kalimpong sub-divisions are generally of better varieties than those in the lower parts of Kurseong and Kalimpong including the entire Garubathan Block"<sup>15</sup>. But actually output of the cows in hills is not appreciable due to scarcity of balanced cattle feed.

However, before the establishment of HIMUL the village people of Darjeeling district, especially in hilly regions, were not interested in rearing cows and



buffaloes, as they were forced to sell milk at .40 paise per litre to the local purchaser or local middlemen in milk business<sup>16</sup>.

TABLE 4.3

Percentage of Ordinary and Jersey in the Plains & Hills -  
A Comparative Study

Plain				Hill			
Ordinary		Jersey		Ordinary		Jersey	
Milch	90.0	Milch	10.0	Milch	36.3	Milch	63.7
Preg- nent	95.0	Preg- nent	4.5	Preg- nent	20.0	Preg- nent	80.0
Culf	91.7	Culf	8.3	Culf	25.0	Culf	75.0
Total	91.8	Total	8.2	Total	28.6	Total	71.4

Source : Compiled on the basis of sample survey on producers of plain and hill areas relating to HIMUL's hinterland.

Originally, West Bengal State's "Operation Flood-I" milkshed areas consisted of the districts of Darjeeling, West Dinajpur, Malda, Murshidabad, Nadia, Burdwan, Bankura, Hooghly, Howrah, 24-Parganas and Midnapur. In 1973, studies were conducted by the National Dairy Development Board in all these areas to compare the several parts of the milkshed for their potential. The project report for Darjeeling milkshed, jointly prepared

by the government of West Bengal and the National Dairy Development Board and approved by the Indian Dairy Corporation (IDC), outlined following main actions for the milkshed under Operation Flood I<sup>17</sup>.

- 1) Establishment of a 60,000 litres per day Dairy plant with 10 metric ton per day milk drying capacity of Matigara.
- 2) Installation of six chilling centres each with a capacity varying from 2000-4000 litres per day, totalling to 15,000-20,000 litres per day.
- 3) Setting up a 100 metric ton daily capacity cattle feed plant at Siliguri.
- 4) Organisation of 500 village milk producers' co-operatives, to be affiliated to the district co-operative Milk producers' Union.
- 5) A Technical Input Programme to be implemented by the Union through the village cooperatives, comprising animal health cover, artificial insemination services, balanced cattle feed, fodder seeds and dairy extension services to the milk producers, in order to enhance milk production in the milkshed. About 1,50,000 milch animals were envisaged as being brought within

the cooperative ambit.

- 6) Creation of a suitable milk procurement and marketing infrastructure.
- 7) Recruitment and training of the personnel required for the project.

HIMUL was registered in the year of 1973 (13.1.73) and it was modelled on the pattern of Indian Dairy Corporation in June, 1974. The Himalayan Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Limited, Darjeeling, West Bengal (HIMUL) is under Action Item No.7 of Operation Flood.

This project has been jointly organised by the world food programme (WFP) through the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) consisted by the Government of India, Government of New-Zealand and Government of West Bengal. Indian Dairy Corporation agreed to finance the 'HIMUL' to develop the milk cooperatives on the pattern of 'ANAND' Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Limited (AMUL), Gujrat.

This project started functioning only with its pasteurisation Unit with effect from 5th January, 1976, with a capacity to handle 60,000 litres per day with a 10 metric tones milk drying plant and adequate storage facilities to handle 1,00,000 litres per day.

Before starting the functioning of 'HIMUL' project itself there were two chilling plants, one at Ghoom and another at Kurseong having 2,000 litres per day capacity, each owned by the West Bengal Dairy & Poultry Development Corporation. In addition to that only one milk collection centre was in Mirik. Moreover, there was a small dairy plant at Mallaguri (Siliguri) of Darjeeling district run by the West Bengal Dairy & Poultry Development Corporation through the six non Anand Pattern milk cooperatives with a capacity of 5,000 litres per day. The milk collected was directly sold in Siliguri. Later, the procured milk was marketed by the 'HIMUL'.

Before the starting of HIMUL. "There were two stud Farms - one run by the Directorate of Animal Husband<sup>and</sup>dry with 6 Jersey Bulls at Kalimpong and the other at Siliguri under the project cell of the State Government with 12 Jersey bulls"<sup>18</sup>.

On completion of 'HIMUL' Dairy plant the functions of West Bengal Dairy & Poultry Development Corporation at Ghoom, Kurseong, Mirik and Mallaguri were absorbed by the 'HIMUL' in 1976. In December, 1980 a cattle feed plant of 100 metric tones daily production capacity is commissioned. The project has also been designed to manufacture 2.5 metric tones of butter and 0.6 metric tone of ghee daily. Now the 'HIMUL' has already organised seven chilling

centres located at Sukhia Pokhari, Kalimpong, Rambh, Ghoom, Kurseong, Bijanbari and Mal and 350 village milk cooperative societies with 15,145 producer members by 1984-85. Procurement of milk has gone up from 5,000 litres to 17,985 litres per day with total turnover of Rs. 2.76 crores in 1984-85.

But Himul could not achieve its target in spite of all efforts. It aimed at organising 500 village milk societies within 5 years, but it could not manage to organise more than 350 during the last ten years. Of them only 233 societies are functioning. The most surprising fact is that Himul could achieve only 45 percent of its milk procurement target.

SUMMARY :

Both Amul and Himul have a historical heritage. The density of population, percentage of literacy, agricultural products, economic status, geographical area, milk production in both the areas where Amul and Himul are located have something common in them. Nevertheless, the dissimilarities between the two are more glaring.

The establishment of Amul has back-ground of long struggle and movements. But Himul was totally a Government enterprise. Amul Co-operative has the blessings of the national leaders of pre-independence days. The strong determination and indomitable courage of the local milk producers were its main support. The people of the area have realised through experience what a co-operative actually stands for and how the people and above all, the nation may be benefited by it. This cannot be said of Himul. It was as if imposed on the people of Darjeeling district and sadar subdivision of Jalpaiguri district and of Islampur sub-division of West Dinajpur district. People were main force behind Amul, whereas in case of Himul the government was the entrepreneur - Himul is the foster-child of the Government while Amul is of the masses.

Amul has now reached the peak of success. It has become the perfect model of India's Dairy cooperative movement. Himul is lagging far behind it in every respect. It has not yet crossed its infancy.

## Notes & Reference

1. Homer Hogle, The influence of Agricultural Extension In Selected Villages of Kaira District (Gujrat, India). Michigan, USA : The University of Michigan, School of Education, 1972, p.5.
2. The Rajputs ruled the lands of Kaira from 746 to 1290 A.D. Kaira passed to the Muslim rulers of Ahmedabad at the end of the fourteenth century and, finally in 1573, it was transferred to the Muguls. From 1720, the struggle between the Marathas and Muslim rulers of this district started and in 1752, Kaira came <sup>under</sup> the Maratha rulers. Ahmedabad region was then shared by the Gackwad of Boroda and the Peshwa. In December, 31, 1802 Peshwa handed over some villages to the British under the terms of a Treaty. In 1803, for maintaining troops supplied by the British Government, the Geckwad of Boroda handed

over a portion of the region to the British. Again in 1817, another portion of Kaira districts was ceded by the Geckwad of Boroda. In January, 1818 the territory to the north of the Mahi River was divided into two districts, - Ahmedabad and Kaira. Later Kaira was subdivided into the seven talukas, (those talukas remain intact even today), Anand, Kapadvanj Borsad, Matar, Mehmedabad, Naidad and Thasra by the then British Government for their administration.

Another three talukas (Balasinor, cambay and Petlad) were added to Kaira district in between 1941 to 1951 and it was under the undivided Bombay State upto May 1, 1960. When the Bombay State was bifurcated by the Government of India into two States i.e. Maharashtra and Gujrat, Kaira became a district of the newly-formed State of Gujrat.

- Sources :
- (a) Ibid., pp.1-10.
  - (b) The imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol.XIV, Government of India.
  - (c) Gazetteer of Bombay presidency, Vol.III-B, Vol.VI-B, Bombay:Government Central Press, 1926 and 1914.
  - (d) Census of India-1961, 1971, 1981, Published by The Government of India.
  - (e) Gujrat District Census Hand Book No.12, Kaira District. Ahmedabad:State Government Publications, 1966.
  - (f) District Statistical Abstract Kaira 1960-61, Govt. of India.
  - (g) Deptt. of statistics and full count census table (Kheda district), 1971, Government of India.



3. Amul. Anand:Published by Amul 1980, p.1.
4. The Amul story - a sage of cooperative effort. Anand: Published by Amul, 1985, p.3.
5. Ibid., p.4.
6. Ibid, p.5.
7. Ibid., p.5.
8. Ibid., p.7.
9. Homer Hogle, op.cit., pp.44-45.
10. S.M.Patel and M.K.Pandey, Economic impacts of Kaira district co-operative Milk producers' Union (Amul Dairy) in Rural Areas of Kaira district (Gujrat State), Ahmedabad:Published by Institute of Cooperative Management, 1976, p.32.
11. Darjeeling District :

There was a time when some particular hill caves were believed to be the living place of Gods and Goddesses. The hills would echo the mantras and hymns sung by the Buddhist monks. The holiness of the region would attract 'Sadhus' and 'Sanyasis' from far and wide. Once upon a time Atish Dipankar a Bengali Bhikshu, launched his journey on foot towards Tibet through one of the hillway in this area carrying with him the lamp of knowledge.

It is known mostly that the Buddhist monks belonged to the 'Doharj' community. It is believed that the living place of the Doharj communities was subsequently transformed

into the name of Dorj-ling or Darjeeling. History says that to oppose the invention of the Dravidians one Meha King built a mount, or 'Garh' near pankhabari from which came the name of Siliguri.

The historical record proves that the Tarai area of Siliguri was a part of ancient Gour during the Pala Sena and Sultani period. Being far away from the capital, this area remained backward.

During the early 16th century the Kamta-Coochbehar State was formed and the whole of Tarai area of Darjeeling came into that newly formed State.

After a long time in the early 18th century Sikkim captured that region. But at the end of the 18th Century, Nepal snatched away the Tarai areas from his neighbouring State Sikkim. Still the area remained as backward as it had been in the past. All the hilly areas of the present Darjeeling district were under the possession of Sikkim.

In 1706, Bhutan captured the present Kalimpong sub-division of Darjeeling district. In 1814 an event happened in the history of Darjeeling. The English attacked Nepal taking advantage of the weakness of Nepal and inflicted a crushing defeat on it. Nepal agreed to conclude a treaty with the British. According to the terms of the treaty all the Tarai areas from Western bank of the river Mechi

became a vassal of British Raj.

After that in 1817, during Sikkim - Nepal war the British joined in favour of Sikkim and won victory. In 1833, the British received a small village named Darjeeling from Sikkim as a tribute. After having that village they crowded in Darjeeling in a large number, as they found some atmospheric similarity in Darjeeling with that of England.

Later, in 1850, the British taking the possession of some Tarai and hill areas and in 1864 (During Aung-Bhutan war) taking the possession of Kalimpong, included this greater part with the small village Darjeeling in 1866.

In this way the present Darjeeling district came into being.

- Sources :
- a) A. Mitra, Census - 1951.
  - b) W.W. Hunter, A Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. VII.
  - c) Biswanath Das, Uttarbanga Purakritty (Bengali scripts).
  - d) Abid Ali Khan, Memories of Gour and Pandua.
  - e) Nihar Ranjan Roy, Bangaleer Itihas, Adi Parba (Bengali scripts).
  - f) Dr. Atul Sur, Bangla-O-Bangaleer Bibaran (Bengali Scripts).
  - g) Gorkhaland Agitation Govt. of West Bengal.
  - h) Sadhan Sarkar, Gorkhaland Sansodhanbadider Atanka (Bengali Scripts).

## 12. Jalpaiguri Subdivision :

In the age of the Mahabharata this land was situated in

Prag-Jyotishpur. Bhagadatta was its ruler at that time. Later, it came under the domain of the state of Kamrup. It is assumed that Jalpesh, the king of pragjyotishpur built the famous Jalpesh temple and this place came to be known as Jalpaiguri since that time. Later another famous king named Prithu dominated this kingdom. Then it was under the rule of the state of Coochbehar. During the 17th century the people of Baikunthapur situated in this area, suffered a lot as the Mughals tyrannized over them. Ibrahim Khan, the Subedar of Dacca invaded Baikunthapur after the death of Bhujangadeb, the ruler of Baikunthapur. The Himalayas in the North, the Teesta in the east and the river Mahananda in the West surrounded Baikunthapur. From 1765 to 1772 the Bhutias spread their dominion over the whole of Coochbehar. In 1774 the Bhutias entered into a treaty with the English as a result of which their domain from the Teesta to the Sankoch was kept intact. In 1765 the English began to rule over Rangpur (now in Bangladesh) which they snatched away from the state of Coochbehar ruled by the Mughal emperor Shah Alam. In 1865 the English captured the vast areas from the east of the Teesta to the river Manas of Assam. Upto the year 1868 Baikunthapur and its neighbouring areas were under Rangpur. Later in 1869 the district of Jalpaiguri came into being.

Sources : a) West Bengal Gazetteers - Jalpaiguri.  
b) A. Mitra, District Census Hand Book - Jalpaiguri.  
c) W.W. Hunter, op.cit., Vol. X.

13. On November 2, 1956, Islampur thana which had been within Krishanganj subdivision of Purnea district, Bihar, was included in West Dinajpur district of West Bengal<sup>a</sup>. During the reign of Mughal Emperor Akbar, Islampur was under Surjapur Pargana in Sarkar Tajpur. Prof. Partha Sen refers to Bucanin when he makes the same claim. Mr. Sen writes; "... the large estate was Surjapur Pargana which included the Divisions of Haveli, Dulalganj, Krishanganj and Urdhrail besides a little area in Dinajpur. In the year 1945 when Humaun got back his empire, Syed Khan Dastur was deputed to Pargana Surjapur which was at the time under the Bhutias. By the assistance of Syed Khan, these mountaineers (Bhutias) were driven out. Syed Khan married his friend's daughter and succeeded to his estate. He obtained the title Raja and was made Register (Qanungo) as well as Zaminder of the newly acquired territory"<sup>b</sup>.

When Jahangir succeeded Akbar he deputed Islam Khan as Subedar of Bengal. Islam Khan was put in charge of giving a crushing defeat to the formidable 'Bhuinas' of Bengal. In the 17th century a part of Surjapur came to be known as Islampur after the name of Subedar Islam Khan<sup>c</sup>.

- Sources :
- a) J.C.Sengupta, West Bengal District Gazetteers - West Dinajpur, Govt. of India.
  - b) B.N.Mukherjee & P.K.Bhattacharyya, Early Historical Perspective of North Bengal, H.B.U., Raja Rammohunpur:p.182, Article - Land Revenue Settlement of Islampur From the Period of Akbar to the Early 19th century - Partha Sen.
  - c) M.A.Rahim, Banglar Samajik O Sanskritik Itihas Bangla Academy, Dacca.

- 14. Gorkhaland Agitation. op.cit., p.1.
- 15. M.Dasgupta, Occasional Paper of the Dept. of Economics. North Bengal University, p.181.
- 16. "It is a matter of satisfaction to know that with the advent of HIMUL the producer-farmer is not forced to sell milk at 40 p. per litre and now gets Rs. 1.25p. per litre is close proximity to his home, about 6500 producer-members have been directly benefited and a large number of non-member producers have also been benefited". Message, Amritendu Mukherjee, Minister of Animal & Husbandry and Veterinary Services Department, Government of West Bengal, published in Annual Report of Himul, 1977-78.
- 17. Operation Flood I. Impact series Digest-4; Darjeeling. Rural Milkshed:Development of milk production and cooperative milk marketing, March-1981, Published by N.D.D.B., p.3.
- 18. Ibid., p.2.