

CHAPTER V

ECONOMIC LIFE

Unlike many other kingdoms of contemporary India, the kingdom of Kāmata-Koch Bihar suffers from paucity of materials in respect of the studies of its economic condition. In spite of this difficulty outlines of economic life and activities of the people, that we gather from those of the adjoining areas and also from a few contemporary literary evidences and travellers' accounts, enables us to place it on firm foundation.

The villages in India played a significant part in the economic life of the people of India from the early days, that is to say the people lived a rural life with agriculture as their chief occupation.

Agriculture also constituted the main occupation of the people of Kāmata-Koch Bihar kingdom. For the purpose of irrigation the villages generally grew up around the rivers and rivulets. Agriculture was looked upon as noble profession by the people including those of the Brāhmaṇas.¹ A point to be noted here is that "manual labour was never looked upon with any odium or disgrace".² It may be mentioned that Hari Dāsa (Harīā) who became the 'Maṇḍal' or the King of Ciknājhāra used to plough lands and produce Kārnāsa Cotton.³ The place names like Khāmar Khātā (Farm-yard), Golābāri (Farm),

Mahishāthān (Buffalo-shed) etc. all in the Kānatā-Koch Kingdom testify to the popularity of agriculture. Dāmodaradeva, a Brāhmana disciple of Śaṅkaradeva was said to have engaged slaves in cultivation⁴ and they took immense interest in agriculture.⁵ Gosāināngala, a literary composition of the 18th century, also refers to farmers who often complained to one Brāhmana named Śasīpātra for the loss caused to their cornfields by his cows.⁶ The pasture (Go-cāraṇabhūmi) was normally located near the villages.⁷ Here in the Gosāināngala, reference has also been made to pasture where Kāntanātha, the cow-boy of Śasīpātra used to tend the cattle.⁸ Oxen were mostly used for agriculture, but cows were also sometimes employed in ploughing.⁹

The king made land grants to Bei or Ojhā encouraging them for making proper treatment of the animal diseases. Darrangājavanisāvalī refers to an incident and maintains that Viśvasiṅha employed an ojhā for the treatment of one Brāhmana whose finger was chopped by the king.¹⁰ Herbal medicines, chemicals, tantra mantra (charms and incantations) were used for treatment of men and animals.¹¹ Treatises on the treatment of diseases of elephants are mentioned in the Hastividyaśāstra (written in 1734 A.D.) and of horses in the Chorā-Nidāna.¹²

'They (the Koch people) will', observed Ralph Fitch, 'Kill nothing. They have hospitals for sheeps, goats, dogs, cats, birds and for all other living creatures. When they be old and

lame, they keep them until they die'.¹³

The soil of Koch Bihar is of alluvial formation and has a large admixture of sand¹⁴ where crops like cotton, rice¹⁵ pulses viz. musuri, khesari etc., mustard seed, opium,¹⁶ tobacco¹⁷ and jute were grown. Opium was cultivated to so large an extent that it was evidently for contraband purposes.¹⁸

'The southern portion of Cooch Behar lying along the river Durlah, is a highly improved and fertile country; but to the north of the town of Bahar, the country has a vast miserable appearance, the land being low and marshy, interspersed with thick jungles and many nullahs. The vegetation is coarse, and the ground everywhere almost choked up with rank grass, reeds, and ferns. In 1784, the total territorial area was calculated at 1,302 square miles'.¹⁹

From the account of the Fathiyva-i-ibriyya, it is observed that the climate, land, vegetables and dwelling houses of the people of Koch Bihar were far superior to those of other places of India. Oranges, mangoes and black pepper were grown in large quantities.²⁰ Pine apples²¹ was also produced abundantly in the region. However, it is stated that its production at a later period was meagre in the Jalpaiguri region.²² But banyan, jack-fruit, mango, peepful and tamarind were produced. At a later period, Bamboos, Sissu, Palms etc. grew extensively all over the country and these constituted the main supply of fuel, besides being used in the building of

their houses and fences. Trees were scarcely found.²³

It is interesting to note here that the coins of Sikandar Shāh (1358 A.D.) bears the legend Chawlistān alias Kāmrūp.²⁴ The word Chawlistān denotes the agricultural lands for paddy cultivation. A place named Chawlier Kuthi found near the Kamatāpura fort also gives support to it. It is most likely that the Koch Kings followed the system of cultivation as existed in Assam from early days. The 'Zhum' system²⁵ which was popular among the tribals of Assam, was probably introduced in Koch Bihar.

As noticed earlier, the replacement of the Bhuyān chiefs by Visvasimha in the early 16th century from the westward thrust of the Ahom state paved the way for the emergence of a tribal state formation there. It has rightly been suggested that the movement from shifting to permanent cultivation, with or without the use of plough considered to be a determinant factor for the gradual process of state formations within a tribe.²⁶ This change, yielding a surplus production ensured for maintaining even a rudimentary state apparatus. The introduction of plough and digging stick cultures gave a new impetus to wet-rice (sali) cultivation at the cost of that of dry (shu/sas) and of the transplantation technique in preference to the broadcasting of seeds. This method of cultivation was, perhaps, becoming popular among the people and continued through centuries with no innovations.

It may, however, be pointed out here that a peculiar superstition among the people was associated with agriculture as in other things. New modes of cultivation or the rearing of new crops were regarded with fear as being injurious to health.²⁷

Manifold agricultural implements were in use. No contemporary evidence is, however, available in this regard. Mostly, these have been mentioned in later works.²⁸ It is possible that these implements were in vogue from long past as we do not notice any change in the cultivation system as mentioned above. Plough (Lāngal) and other implements are mentioned frequently.²⁹ From the Guru-āgita we learn that each village of Māgurmāri was provided with a hāl (plough) along with bullocks to cultivate the fields.³⁰ In the Kāmātā-Koch territory we do not come across dhaki, the husking implement of paddy and in its place wooden hataḥ or pestle (chaḡrain)^{was} observed.³¹

Hsien Tsang who visited Kāmarūpa in the 7th century A.D., noticed that water led from the river or from reservoirs flowed round the towns.³² Minhāj-i-Sirāj has also referred to such irrigation works of opening up the waterdykes all around at the time of the spring harvest in the kingdom of Kāmarūpa³³ in the 13th century A.D. Ralph Fitch who visited the Koch kingdom in the 16th century has remarked that the people could by damming the streams inundate the country above knee deep

as required, "so that ^{men nor horses} ~~even more horses~~ (could) pass".³⁴ These dams were thrown up across the upper courses of the hill streams and the stored-up water was drawn to the rice fields through a definite system of channels. The poppy fields which need constant watering was supplied by drawing water with a small wicker basket tied to the end of a small bamboo bundle, from reservoirs dug in the field for the purpose³⁵ and leading the water to the fields through bamboo or cane pipes. Low ridges (ā) of mud and grass was raised so as to hold the right quantity of rain water and to divide the rice fields into rectangular plots of about 20 by 30 feet. Excess water was thus let out of the demarcated fields. Although we come across such practice at a later date³⁶ it is interesting to note that during the reign of king Durlabhanārāyana (c 1330-50 A.D.), Candivara, the Kayastha Chief among others settled down on the bank of a stream called Langunāri, otherwise known as Paināguri as observed by Gait³⁷ and got the blessings of the people by erecting a bund^(i.e. embankment)³⁸ It is said that people were brought to that place by the king for settlement.³⁹ The Kacharis are said to have more accustomed to watering their rice fields from the small streams of the Duar areas and consequently better rice crops were obtained.⁴⁰ When Naranārāyana, the Koch king led an invasion against Assam, Khyrun and Dinaganj, the main stream of the Brahmaputra river flowed via the Khārubhāñja (a circuitous channel shaped like a bangle) near Hājo. On his way back from Assam to Koch Bihar, Naranārāyana excavated a

canal to cause the river to flow straight (from the Rāksasi hills to the mouth of Baraliya river) to the west. Later on, this was re-excavated by the Ahom king when it was silted up.⁴¹

We get information from the Guzulīā about the condition of the people of Kāmata-Koch Kingdom. Dāmodaradeva who visited the kingdom of Koch Bihar during the period of Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa spoke regarding the people's livelihood in the Koch capital in particular and those of the other places in general. The description of the city as supplied to us forms a general outlook of the condition of the city dwellers. The king was benevolent. A large number of people belonging to different avocations used to get patronage from the king.⁴²

Gosānīnāgala also maintains that the people of the kingdom were very happy.⁴³

Ralph Fitch has also referred to the plenty of silk, cotton, musk goods etc. in Koch Bihar which testify to the economic prosperity. And the liberality shown to the animals further proves the atmosphere of peace and happiness that prevailed during the regime.⁴⁴ Caçella also mentioned of plentiful products of the country of Koch Bihar and of import from Patna, Rājmaḥal, and Gayda.⁴⁵ While describing the capital town of the Kāmata-Koch kingdom, Shihāb-ud-dīn Falīsh says, "it (the capital) is adorned with beautiful houses and gardens in Badsahi style. In different parts of the palace there are

harems, reading rooms, bathing-places, solitary places and fountains. The roads and streets of the capitals are straight and both sides of them are adorned with planted rows of Nagasvar and Kashna trees".⁴⁵

The same writer further said, "if properly administered, the country might yield a revenue of 8 lacs of rupees. The Raja coins gold mohurs and Narains rupees. The zamindars of India esteem the Koch Bihar Rajahs, and believe that they trace their descent from Rajahs who reigned there before the arrival of the arrival of the Muhammedans in India".⁴⁷

Naranārāyaṇa is known for some benevolent deeds for the well-being of the people. He made Āli, Math, Pukur (reservoirs) etc. in various places and planted trees. Inns and wells were constructed.⁴⁸ Rūpamati Devi (sister of Prānanārāyaṇa) who was married to Kṣatriya king Pratāpamalla of the Malla dynasty of Nepal caused an inscription to be inscribed on the temple of Viṣṇu (dated 1649 A.D.). It supplies us the following information :

'There is the city of Bihar, the best of all capitals, full of gold and containing big elephants and beautiful women, like Amarāvati (the heavenly city). It was greater than the Kamalā of Viṣṇu. (It was the capital) of Naranārāyaṇa who conquered all enemies and was like Indra'. 'From him (Naranārāyaṇa) was born Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa and from him (Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa)

Vīranārāyaṇa. Rūpmati was his (Vīranārāyaṇa's) daughter and Prānanārāyaṇa was his son'.⁴⁹ Prānanārāyaṇa used to perform the ceremony of Tulāpuruṣa Dāna (weighing himself against coins of gold, silver etc., and had been distributing these among the poor) on the banks of the Ganges with great ceremonies.⁵⁰

Earthquakes took ^{place} in Kāmata-Koch kingdom place since long. In 1548 a terrible earthquake took place. During Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa's period also an earthquake occurred. In 1668 A.D. and 1669 A.D. famine and earthquake are said to have occurred. In almost all the cases in the course of the earthquakes, hot water, sand, ashes etc. were thrown out from the ground. However, no detailed account as to the loss arising out of these earthquakes is available.⁵¹ Traces of earthquake (in 1737 A.D.), famine (1176 B.S. i.e. Bengali San 1769 A.D.) have also been recorded during the period of Upendranārāyaṇa and Dhaṣṭyendra-nārāyaṇa (1765-70 and 1775-83).⁵² The famine of 1769 A.D. in Bengal better known as Chiyāttarer Manvantar) had also a bearing on the history of Koch Bihar (i.e. Kāmata Koch kingdom) causing loss of life and properties. Some scholar has referred to the scarcity of goods following the famine, although the detailed report is lacking.⁵³ But the Armenian and French Merchants started collecting grains from Kurssā a place on the southern boundary of Koch Bihar. The grains grown near Kurssā was normally exported to Rangpur. It is stated that Gross, the then Supervisor of Rangpur requested the king of Koch Bihar to continue the supply of grains.⁵⁴

In spite of the reference to the affluence of the kingdom of Koch Bihar as noticed earlier the general condition of the people of Koch Bihar does not appear to be good in comparison with the inhabitants of the neighbouring Mughal country. The following observation of Turner who visited the country in 1783 is worth noticing. "The country has a most wretched appearance, and its inhabitants are a miserable and puny race. The lower ranks without scruple dispose of their children for slaves, to any purchaser and that too for a very trifling consideration; not yet, though in a traffic so unnatural, is the agency of a third person ever employed. Nothing is more common than to see a mother dress up her child, and bring it to market, with no other hope, no other view, than to enhance the price she may procure for it. Indeed the extreme poverty and wretchedness of these people will forcibly appear, when we recollect in these regions. The value of this can seldom amount to more than one penny per day, even allowing to make his meal of two pounds of boiled rice, with a due proportion of salt, oil, vegetables, fish and chilli".⁵⁵

He further pointed out to a peculiar system prevailed upon the society from remote antiquity. The custom was that if a Ryot or peasant owed a sum of money, he had to give up his wife as a pledge to the creditor in case he (the debtor) was unable to satisfy him in repayment. This possession of his wife was kept until the debt was discharged. If the wife of a debtor was not redeemed within one, two or three years and

if during this period a family came out as a consequence of her connection with the creditor, the half of which considered to be the property of the person with whom she lived, and half that of her real husband.⁵⁶ As Turner proceeded to Bhutan he saw that the northern part of Koch Bihar was practically uninhabited and in comparison with the southern area, there was more fallow land and jungle. Another factor which facilitated the disintegration of the administrative hierarchy was because of internal squabbles and strife during the last phase of Dhairyaendranārāyana's reign. Nasir Deo Kumār Khagendra-nārāyana led one group while the other group was headed by Rājaguru Sarvaṇanda Gosvāī.⁵⁷ In such state of confusion and in absence of an organised government, the revenue officers resorted to evil practice by paying the revenue in advance by purchasing the future produce of the land. And after harvesting they used to sell the produced goods at twice or thrice the revenue paid in advance.⁵⁸

In addition, the coercion reached to a great height ✓ at the hands of the Sannyasis who in disguise of robbery, carried on plundering their debtors and exacted excessive repayments of loans or took forcible possession of mortgaged property. One of them, Nārāyana Gir(Giri) Mohant, became very famous and came close with Rājaguru Sarvaṇanda Gosvāī. He was offered due respect in the royal Darbar.⁵⁹ He was to act as a witness on

on behalf of the Mahārājā before the commissioners Mercer and Chauvet at the good grace of the Rājaguru. ✓

The officers of the East India Company were also ✓ engaged in illicit money-lending business in Koch Bihar. We come across an incident when Duncanson lent Rs. 14,901/- to the Mahārājā and got unsatisfactorily a return of Rs. 21,000/- after one year.⁶⁰ Besides, the sepoys were also indulging in lending money to the peasants and exacted their dues forcibly at the rate two or three annas interest per rupee. This made the people helpless and compelled many of them to leave the country.⁶¹ The rate of interest generally ranging from 72% to 360 per cent per annum which appeared to be too high to lead the borrowers to ruination.⁶² Oppression continued by Devi Sīnha who was appointed by the British as the Collector of Revenue of North Bengal. His assistant Hararama Sen was appointed in Koch Bihar⁶³ for collection of revenues. The peasants were in extreme poverty and were unable to pay the enhanced revenue. In spite of their sad plight, these collectors, by inhuman torture, collected more revenues than what it was used to have been collected during the later period of the Muslim rule. The officers under the Mahārājā of Koch Bihar were equally responsible for the poverty of the people. Another means of oppression through a class called 'farmer' was also carried on as mentioned in the report of Commissioners Douglas (1791 A.D.) and Ahmuty (1800 A.D.).⁶⁴ ✓

As a consequence of Devi Sīnha's oppression, the ✓

peasants who had so long remained as docile, revolted against Devī Simha and also against the British. ✓

The settlement of the whole of Koch Bihar (Dhalāishā) ✓ took place in 1766 A.D. In 1769, the boundary between Koch Bihar and the territory of the company was fixed. Some Tāluks of Gītāldaha, Batrisā-jāssi parganāhs were separated from Cākā Kākina and included in Koch Bihar.⁶⁵ It may be mentioned here that a large area of Cākā Kākina was given as Brahmottara (gift) land at the time of Medanārāyana.⁶⁶ ✓

LANDS

Ownership of Land :

The tradition belonging to the north Indian Kings that all lands were of the King, was also applicable in case of the Koch kings.⁶⁷ Not only this right was acknowledged over cultivated or waste lands, but also the king exercised his possession over all woods, forests, ferries, mines etc. After the death of Dhairyendranārāyana, a question arose on the ownership of lands and its share among the king, the Nāzir and the Devān of the Koch Bihar state. Khagendranārāyana, the Nāzir Deo submitted a representation to the minor Mahārājā Harendranārāyana. The Mahārānī who had to manage the affairs during the minority of the Rājāh answered, "The Mahārājā holds the divine right and he is the sovereign of his own country. There are no partners who share it with him (the Maharaja)".⁶⁸

It has also been suggested that 'the Raja of Koch Bihar is the owner of the soil, and stands much in the same relation to the jotedars as does a zaminder in lower Bengal to his rayats'.⁶⁹ Maharāja's ownership over land was again questioned when the Chowdhuries (Collector of revenue) of Bodā, Pātgrā and Pūrvabhāg, (the possession of which was granted to Dhairyaendrāyana by a Sunnad within Sarkar Koch Bihar) sought to become zamindars by filing a suit before the Collector of Rangpur against the Nāsir and the Maharāja of Koch Bihar by setting up a claim of title. But in 1778 A.D. the queries of Purling on the issue revealed that the Chowdhuries and the Nāsir were merely officers of the three Caklās and the real owner was the king himself.⁷⁰

The King Naranārāyana introduced the poā pāik system (a rule counting four men as one Poā Pāik)⁷¹ which was in vogue in Assam.⁷² Previously, in Assam it was four men that constituted one Poā Pāik, but due to famine which caused great loss of manpower, led the inevitable change of structure formation of the 'Poā Pāik' by decreasing it to a number of three pāiks forming a Got. This pāik system in Assam became popular. One member of each Got was obliged to render service to the state in rotation. During his absence from home, the other members of the Got were required to cultivate his land in order to make both ends meet and procure the articles of daily use.⁷³ Each Pāik was allowed to have two Pugas (nearly three acres) of rice land free of rent in return to his manual

labour.⁷⁴ In Koch Bihar, however, King Naranārāyana, in order to maintain a large army and fleet had to collect regular levies from Chieftains and Jāigirdār's. Instead of paying the soldiers, a jāigir consisting of three puras (about 12 bighas) was fixed as remuneration for each soldier.⁷⁵ These Jāigir were rent-free and were held by the grantee without paying any rent.⁷⁶ But the service rendered by them during their tenure was considered as their return to the state obtained from the disposition of lands.⁷⁷ We know from Darrang Rajyasūzali that during the Ahom invasion king Naranārāyana required manual service from the Paiks of four men a 'got'.⁷⁸ Thus the adult male population owed the obligation of periodic service to the state. The utilization of the manpower pool was organised by the King with the help of a hierarchy of officers. The latter used to exploit a portion of the mobilised labour for their private gains. The ruler had been offering land grants to Brahmins, temples and religious institutions where large private feudal properties were granted to them. As such, a good number of Paiks were entrusted with the works of temporal and spiritual ^{loads,} lands, being separated from state's jurisdiction. In this process, labour-rent could be directly procured from the Paiks. This type of properties also existed in the Koch Kingdom and this practice was later on preserved by the Mughals.⁷⁹

However, details of the militia system in the Koch territory are not available. But we have already noticed that

the system of exacting compulsory militia service, though in a simpler manner was prevalent in Koch Bihar. The quasi-feudal nature of the system as existed in the Koch territory has perhaps been rightly pointed out that it had a striking resemblance to similar system in mediaeval South East Asia.⁸⁰

Land Tenures

From early times the land appeared to have been divided into two kinds : (1) revenue-paying, and (2) rent-free.⁸¹ Persons holding the first kind of land had to pay revenue to the state. The holders of rent-free land, on the other hand, were private individuals who obtained them for their purposes. They did not pay any taxes for such lands. The different types of rent-free estates classified⁸² are as follows :

- (1) Brahmottara - Land grants to Brāhmanas; (2) Devottara - Land allotted to the performance of religious rites;
- (3) Pīrnal - Lands granted to Muslims Pīrs and Saints;
- (4) Lākhāri - reward for good services to the state;
- (5) Polhātā - to maintain the expenditures for the royal families.

Various instances of land grants have been recorded. It is said that Durlabhanārāyana, the ruler of Kamatāpura settled seven families of Brāhmanas and Kāyasthas on the frontier (near Languānti) as warden of the marches, and gave them lands and slaves.⁸³ In gossānīangala we come across such lands for

the performance of religious rites.⁸⁴ It may also be mentioned that Visvasimha defeated the Kāyastha Bhuyāns during the course of his consolidation of power. And their influence being waned completely, Kavindrapātra, the minister of Naranārāyana, caused the induction of 14 Kāyastha families from Mithila, Jessore and places of Bengal. In this way king Naranārāyana encouraged the new settlements of the Kāyasthas in his kingdom.⁸⁵

On receipt of an order from king Naranārāyana, his brother Sukladhwaja, as we have seen while discussing the impact of the Bhuyān in the chapter on Society, inscribed on a copper plate, the pledge which the king gave to 14 Bhuyāns in order to settle them on the bank of the river Brahmaputra by making land grants. On the other side, the Bhuyāns also assured the king that they would settle at that place permanently. The promises of both the parties were embodied in a document.⁸⁶ Sankaradeva also got possession over Ragneta Mahal from the king Naranārāyana.⁸⁷ Land grants were made available even to the people of various classes such as, potters, Barbars, washerman, goldsmith at a period when the faith propounded by Dāmodaradeva was ^{gaining} going ground in Koch Bihār.⁸⁸ Prānārāyana, the Koch King had patronised one Brāhmana named Sīromonī Bhattacharyya by land grants and the copy of the said deed of gift has been reproduced in the A History of Koch Behar.⁸⁹ He also granted lands for the

worship of Bodesvari image established in Bhitargarh in the district of Jalpaiguri).⁹⁰ It may be mentioned in this connection that the king was credited to have established the images of Chaturbhujā in Madhupura, Madanmohana in Srirampura, Chaturbhujā in Karalkuta, Banawali in Banawali and Madangopala in Dandopura. It is said that some images were discovered when the tank at Banesvara was excavated. The present temple of Kamatesvari Gosani in Kamatapur (Gosanimari) was constructed by him in Saka 1537 (1665 A.D.) and as we know it from the inscription engraved on the temple.⁹¹

Besides, another type of land grant named Jāigir was prevalent in those days particularly among the slaves and attendants. This class of people were engaged in various activities connected with the royal palace. The right over such land was neither hereditary nor transferable. It may, however, be stated that this Jāigir right took the shape of 'Cakran' of Bengal.⁹² This system came down to Koch Bihar from the period of Naranarayana who received a few Morāngi slaves from the Morāngi Rājā in connection with a marriage.⁹³ These slaves were given the Taluks in Māthābhāng, Kodāikseti, Bhogmārā etc. They acquired lands in return to their services to the palace. The Jāigirdāri right was confiscated if they failed to perform the work entrusted to them. The total number of Jāigirdārs were 974.⁹⁴

Sometimes persons having close relation with the royal families managed to secure large quantities of rent-free

lands. For example, Sarvānanda Gosvami, the royal priest and Kāsināth Lahiri, the Khāsnavis were among others who secured large quantities of rent-free Jāgir Taluka.⁹⁵

It appears that the Revenue-paying Lands were again classified under Māl, Devottara and Khāngi. The first was considered for state revenue; the second for religious purposes; and the third was set apart for the maintenance of the Mahārāja's household. The person paying revenues immediately to the state were called jotedars who held numerous jotes, and were strikingly similar to those of the zamindars and talukdars of British India paying revenues in the same manner direct to the Government. A jote was heritable and transferable.⁹⁶ The jotes were of two kinds : Mokṛṣi and Sarasṣi. The rent of the farmer was settled in perpetuity and could not be enhanced. The lease of Sarasṣi jote, was on the other hand, only temporary, granted for a fixed number of years, after ~~the~~ which the tenure was open for re-settlement.⁹⁷ The Mokṛṣi lands, however, were of two types. In some deeds, the Rājās had entered special clause giving hereditary rights and in others no such clause was inserted. In later form, a heir could not claim the right over land in the event of death of his father.⁹⁸ For obvious reasons this system was discontinued and it led Douglas in 1790 to introduce the ijāri system of collection. And this system too could not achieve any substantial success.⁹⁹

Revenue Administration and Taxes

The land revenue administration as adopted by the Koch rulers made them enable to procure more produces out of which the heavy administrative machinery was fed. It may be mentioned that the royal revenue consisted of a ^{proportion} ~~production~~ of the produce of the land.¹⁰⁰ It has been suggested that Visvasinha perhaps retained and strengthened the Muslim type of revenue administration. He might have thought that the indigenous system of revenue collection had been defective causing, therefore, the loss of revenue.¹⁰¹ Visvasinha is said to have allotted lands called Mahals and Chamus to his officials. These two types of lands yielding revenues were similar to those of the Hazari-Malghujary class of lands in the Muslim Kingdom.¹⁰²

It may be mentioned here that in 1773, the land revenue of Koch Bihar as shown in the Husthood prepared by Purling amounted to Narsini Rs. 1, 99, 120.¹⁰³

Purling made the Husthood or account of revenue in 1773 A.D. It showed that payment of revenues could be made in two ways. One was assal or original rent, and the other was shresh, or additional cesses.¹⁰⁴ It seems that in previous times land which was settled annually was not generally measured. Assessment thereof did not follow any fixed rates.

Cowries were current as money even upto the middle of the 19th century. This is a tradition as recorded in History of Cooh Behar that King Khantesvara (Nilānvara) advised his successor to realise only a very few cowries as revenue for each plough and therefore an inscription was caused to be engraved on a stone.¹⁰⁶

It is interesting to note that Gadadhara Sinha (1681-1696) the king of Assam brought many surveyors (Āmin) from Koch Bihar and Bengal to engage them in working out the actual amount of land within the Kingdom.¹⁰⁶ Modanārāyana (1665-1680 A.D.), the Koch King is said to have ordered for a general survey of lands occupied by his subjects in 165 Rājasaka (1674 A.D.)¹⁰⁷

The assessment of land as was undertaken under the Koch rulers do not seem to have based on any uniform pattern.¹⁰⁸ However, H.N.Chowdhury has mentioned three categories of rates as prevalent in Koch Bihar State.¹⁰⁹ These are (1) Rs. 20/- for a Bigh of first class land, (2) Rs. 15/- of second class land; and (3) Rs. 10/- of third class. A Bigh was, however, equal to about 13 bighās of standard measurement. The rate per bighā of land varied thus : Rs. 1-8-3 for first class land, Rs. 1-2-6 for second class and 12 annas and 3 pies for third class land. The average of the above three rates was Rs. 1-2-4. These rates had hardly meaningful since no regular assesment of land was arranged.¹¹⁰ The measurement of land as it is noticed was done in the Khās mahals and in new settlements under the crude Khāshrah or old native system. Compass was not in use at that

period. Generally, measurement was done by a rope on a rod of a fixed lines of measurement in gaj or 2 ft. in length.¹¹¹ However, this was not applied to Māl or Devottara lands.

Crafts and Industries ✓

✓ The Crafts industry developed in the state of Koch ✓ Bihar. References have already been made to persons of various vocations who were engaged in weaving, spinning, gold washing, making earthen materials and of workers in Bamboo or wooden substances. It may be noted in this connection that in 1564 A.D. many Koch artisans were sent to ^{Ahom King} Assam along with the Ahom hostages who were released by Naranārāyana. Some of the artisans were skilled in the art of making images of Durgā and other Hindu deities.¹¹² It is said that silk industry flourished ✓ at Barnagara under the patronage of king Naranārāyana. While sending the envoys to the court of Khorā Rājā, the Ahom king, King Naranārāyana sent, inter alia, five beautiful silk sarrees manufactured in Barnagara industry.¹¹³ A ✓ good number of people ✓ might have settled around Barnagara for their livelihood. Silk varieties were classed as endi, and mekli cloth. "The endi", as Hunter observed, "is a coarse silk made of the produce of silk worms fed on the Castor-oil plant (Ricinus communis), called by the natives egi". Again, he says that "the mekli is a coarse ✓ cloth made of jute, and used for screens, bedding etc.; it takes

its name from the Sub-Divisional town of Mekhliganj, where it is largely produced.¹¹⁴ However, it is possible that the place Mekhliganj might have taken its name from a variety of jute called Mekhli which, perhaps, constituted the chief commodity of trading, there in the Gañj or Hāt (i.e. market place). It has been noticed by Campbell that mekhalā cloth made of thread of jute in different colours were in great demand among the ladies of Koch Bihar.¹¹⁵

Cotton

Cotton cloth was the chief article of common use. It has been referred to above that Cotton as cash crop was produced abundantly in Koch Bihar. From the Darrang Rāja Vaisāvalī we learn that there was a gathering of eighteen princes of royal blood arranged under the order of King Viśvasimha for the purpose of selecting the next incumbent after him on the throne of Kūmātā-Koch kingdom. For this, eighteen packets containing eighteen separate articles one each were placed before them and everybody was asked to pick up one each from the said choices. It was provided that one who would select the packet containing earth would become the next king. In this context, one of the aspirants for the throne named Meghanārāyana is said to have picked up cotton (Kārpāsa).¹¹⁶ Previously, preference was given to those brides who were adept in weaving and spinning prior to their marriages.¹¹⁷ In eastern

Indian states like Assam and Manipur this practice still seems to be in vogue.¹¹⁸ Śankaradeva under the patronage of King Naranārāyana started a cotton industry at Tantikuchi (Barpeta) and employed a large number of weavers there.¹¹⁹ They earned reputation for manufacturing the famous Vr̄ndāvanī Vastra which was presented to Naranārāyana.¹²⁰ They used to call it thus because the weavers made an attempt to depict the different incidents of the life of Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇa-līlā). The technique involved in it, as said by Śankaradeva was so peculiar that threads were required to be arranged part by part in order to have drawn the aforesaid pictures.¹²¹ Śukladhaja (alias Cīlārāi) is also said to have started a cotton industry where a weaver named Gopāla was employed.¹²²

Boat-Building

Boat-Building industry seems to have flourished ✓ in the Kāmatā-Koch kingdom in view of the constant naval transport service and meeting the domestic needs of the people. ✓ Besides, Naranārāyana also used to maintain a naval force at his command.¹²³ It may be noted here that Boat-building industries developed in Bengal in the mediæval period and necessary woods were collected from trees such as Kānthāl, Piyāl, Shāl, Gāmbhārī, Tamāl etc. ✓ The Jukti-Kalpataṛu, a sanskrit composition refers to the boat-building industries.

R.C.Majumder stated that a large number of carpenters settled round the extensive area of Dacca in the 17th century. ¹²⁴

Other Crafts

The art of pottery developed in Koch Bihar since early times under the patronage of successive Koch Kings. Lands, as we have already noted were granted to them for their subsistence. Again, it has already been noticed that a few potters were sent to the Ahom Kingdom. The Koch rulers were also patrons of art and architecture. It is said that King Prasenārāyana brought some masons from Delhi to establish the Jalpesvara temple. The remnants of a few brick-made buildings near the Khen capital at Kāmātāpura led Hamilton to comment that these building-structure followed the style of Muhammadan workmanship. ¹²⁵ Mention has earlier been made about the construction of Kāmākhya temple at Nilācala; Gosānimāri temple at Kāmātāpura, Bāhesvara temple near present Koch Bihar town, etc. which were established under the patronage of the Koch rulers. It may be mentioned that Rudra Singha (1696-1714 A.D.), the Ahom king brought Śrī Ghanasayana, an architect who lived in Koch Bihar and during the latter's stay at Assam many magnificent buildings were erected by him at Sibsagar town and Carai Deo. ¹²⁶

Trade, Commerce and Currency

Stephen Casella mentioned about Internal markets (bāsārs) which he found at Koch capital while he paid a visit there during the reign of Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa. He also said that every produce of the state was brought to the market for sale. That there was a brisk trade between Behar (Koch Bihar) with Patna, Rājmaḥal and Gouga, has been well documented in his account.¹²⁷ Dāmodaradeva informs us about the good condition of the markets (Hāts) in the Kāmata Koch kingdom and mentions of the commodities which were brought for sale such as curd, milk, oil, salt, turmeric, flowers, ghee, honey, confectioners etc.¹²⁸

Reference has been made particularly to two Hats viz. Nogulhat and DWāgnūie from which Tobacco, opium, mustard seeds were exported by boat to Murshidabad and Basca.¹²⁹ Market sector was in growing stage. Exchange operations were largely conducted on both barter and cowrie currency terms. We have seen above the use of cowrie as medium of exchange. The Kathā-Guru-Carita supplies us with an interesting story of one Bhavānanda Kalitā (b. circa 1495 A.D.), a big merchant who lost all moveable properties along with his his family in a boat-wreck while migrating to a new village. However, he made a small fortune of 640 cowries (normally equal to half-a-rupee) by assisting a betel-leaf vendor in close trade association.

Within a few years he got back his pecuniary position and took to riverine trade. He made Koch Bihar as sheet anchor of his trade which carried on with the men procured from the Gāro Hills, Bhutan, Mughal Bengal and the Ahom Kingdom. He was allowed to trade all over the Koch kingdom, being immuned from custom taxes.¹³⁰

It is noticed that cowries played an important role in business transactions. It is also known that the Koch Kings had been issuing coins at the time of their accessions to the throne, in gold, silver and sometimes in copper as well. Gold and silver coins were, however, not as much popular in the petty trade section as it could have been in the circle of big merchants. It was, perhaps, for this reason cowries and possibly copper coins continued to be the media of exchange for a considerable period. Thus, it is presumed that alongside the coins mostly used in urban or royal circles the basic structure of barter and cowrie economy ^{remained unchanged} in village level where the exchange was made on a petty level catering to the needs of small traders. Trade activities were in force in various parts of the country.

Some¹³¹ gave a list of places where trade activities were carried on. This continued upto the first quarter of the 19th century. Ralph Fitch who arrived at Koch Bihar in 1583 A.D. also mentioned of a port called Gāshazata in the Kāmata-Koch kingdom. But its exact location is still to be determined.¹³² He also wrote about Koch Kingdom's

trade relation with the distant lands of Tibet, China, Tārtāry and Muscovia.¹³³ Among the items of trade, Fitch mentioned of silk, musks, blankets, turquoise (agate) pepper, and "Safron of Persia". Fitch did not enter the Bhutan hills but his description evidently proves that there was the commercial importance of the route from Tashilhāpo through the Paro Penlop's territory to Buxā and Gāurcha north of Rangpur. The Bhutās came to the plains through different pūars (pass). These were situated at the borders of the Koch country of Laksmīnārāyana.¹³⁴

Markham considers this description as a "correct account of the intercourse which then prevailed between India and Tibet through the passes of Bhutan and through Nepal".¹³⁵

Regarding Āio (Hāio) which situated to the east of the river Sankosa, Cacella has highly appreciated it (Āio), being the important trade mart where trade routes through Manas Valley and Towāng met together.

In the 17th century the navigability of the Tersā, which flows past the town of Koch Bihar, has been emphasised by ~~the~~ H.N. Chowdhury. Both Hājo and Koch Bihar were undoubtedly the focal points of Bhutan trade with plains.¹³⁶ The river route from Goālpārā was down the Brahmaputra via Jonnāi from Jamālpara, connecting at a short distance with the Pabna river, a navigable branch of the Ganges.¹³⁷ It is quite plausible that this river-route was also utilised

by the Koch people. Because river Torsa which flowed along the capital side, ultimately fell into the Brahmaputra.

During the reign period of Naranaṛāyana, the people were said to have habituated to trade and various commodities were exchanged with other parts of Bengal via the Brahmaputra river. 138

There were a few inland roads which were important in the context of the flourishing trade in those days. The old road of Nilāvara which joins Koch Bihar with Rajshahi via Mogulhat, Rangpur, Bogra and Natore passes through several Taluks of Kismat Jālgīr paigband, Lāta Dhāpur land Manbhās. 139

In different Vaisāvalis, we find records of the construction of one road by Gohān Kamal Āli (the road of Gohān Kamal, son of Visvasimha) was one of the greatest public work of the Mahārājā Naranaṛāyana. 140 It was Pranaṛāyana who constructed the roads and bridges in various parts of his kingdom. 141

S.C.Ghosal supplies us with the information that there were three (according to another view four) routes through Morung, Bākdūr and Rāngāsāti respectively into the kingdom of Kamatā-Koch Bihar. 142

It is interesting to note that there were markets for slave trades where the slaves were brought by the parents

of poor families. ¹⁴³

By the time of transference of the Dewani (1765) Bhutan's trade in the plains was extended to Rangpur. Further, the Bhutanese had gained control of large parts of the western duars which traditionally belonged to Koch Chieftains and made a bid to conquer Koch Bihar. The Bhutanese king Desi Sidariva (Bogle's Deb Yudhur) kept Mahārāja Dhairyendraṅgarāyana of Koch Bihar in captivity at Buxā in 1770. The above factors led to the outbreak of the First Bhutanese war (1771-74) and collision between the Bhutanese and the English. ¹⁴⁴

Sidariva tried to exercise Bhutan's control of the western Duars, ensuring its hold over Koch Bihar. The Bhutan king was eager to improve the scale of Bhutan-Rangpur trade. However, his ambition could not be materialised on account of the conclusion of Anglo-Koch Bihar treaty of 1772.

It is however interesting to note in this connection that Mercer and Chauvet who were appointed as special Commissioners by the British after the conclusion of the Anglo-Koch Bihar Treaty supplies us with some valuable information about the nature of the export and import of various commodities of the kingdom as prevalent from early times. ¹⁴⁵

Notes and References

- 1 A. Guha, Medieval North East India: Polity, Society and Economy, 1200-1750, Occasional Paper No. 19, p. 14.
- 2 Gait, A History of Assam, p. 270.
- 3 N.C. Sharma (ed.) Darrang Rājavāṁśāvalī, p. 9.
- 4 S.C. Goswami (ed.), Sri Sri Deva Dāmodara Deva Carita, p. 68.

Cf. Dāsagane Kṛsi karma karante thākey |

Krisir dhānya Teyo dugun pābaya |

Verse 267.

We have noted earlier that Śaṅkaradeva's household was said to have had a number of slaves and bondsmen.

- 5 Ibid., p. 67.
- 6 N.N. Paul (ed.), Gosāṁśāvalī, pp. 13-14.
- 7 Kautilya wrote that an enclosure (for pasturage) at a distance of 100 dhanus (400 cubits) should be made around a village -
B.K. Barua, A Cultural History of Assam, p. 78.
We know from Campbell (A Comprehensive Archaeological, Biographical and Pictorial History of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, Vol. I; Chapter - Glimpses of Bengal, ^{tr. of the portion on Cooh Behar by N.N. Paul, Bengali, Calcutta, 1979, p. 6} that Golāraṅghūmi (pasture) was kept reserved by state order.
- 8 N.N. Paul (ed.), Gosāṁśāvalī, pp. 13-14
~~tr. of the portion on Cooh Behar~~
by N.N. Paul in Bengali, Calcutta, 1979, p. 6.
- 9 Hunter, A Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. X, p. 385.
- 10 Hunter N.C. Sharma (ed.), op. cit., p. 55.

- 11 N.K.Basu, Assam in the Ahom Age, p. 253.
- 12 S.C.Ghosal, A History of Coosh Behar, pp.68-69.
- 13 J.Horton Ryley, Ralph Fitch, England's pioneer to India and Burma, London, 1899,
His Narrative, Second part, p.111.
- 14 H.N.Chowdhary, The Coosh Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlement, p.158.
- 15 Damodaradeva said in reply to a query of Bankaradeva that the expected production as estimated by the former was thirty maunds of paddy, S.C.Goswami, op.cit., p.67.
- 16 The cultivation of opium is said to have been introduced in Assam in the reign of Lakshmi Sinha at about 1770 A.D. Provincial Gazetteers of Assam, Compiled by Authority, New Delhi, Reprint, 1983, p.81.

That opium was cultivated in Koch Bihar even in the 16th century is attested by the following statement :

"In the 16th century, opium is mentioned by Pyres (1516) as a production of the kingdom of coss (Kuch Behar) in Bengal and of Malwa".

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol.XX, Eleventh Edition, p.130.

- 17 Walter Hamilton, A Geographical, Statistical And Historical Description of Hindostan and the adjacent countries, Vol.I, New Delhi, 1971, (First Indian Reprint), 28.

According to Hamilton,

"It appears from a proclamation of the Emperor Jehangir, mentioned by that prince in his own memoir, that it was introduced by European into India, either in his own reign (the beginning of the 17th Century) or during that of his father Akbar".

18 Ibid., p. 215.

19 Loc. cit.

20 Blochmann, J.A.S.B., Vol. 41, Nos. 1-4, 1872, p. 65.

21 S. Turner, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

It is observed that pine apple was introduced in Koch Bihar during the reign of Aurangzeb when Mirgumla led an invasion into this kingdom. He along with the vast army had to detail a considerable time in this neighbourhood and received pine apple from Kabul and Kashmir as a part of supply.

It is thus stated that in absence of grain market in Koch Bihar, Mirgumla's troops had to face the food problem in the 1660s.

22 J. D. Hooker, The Himalayan Journal, Vol. 2, 1849, p. 12.

23 Hunter, op. cit., p. 383.

24 Catalogue of the Coins in the Indian Museum,
Vol. II, p. 152 & Part II plate II No. 38.

25 S. L. Barua, Agriculture in Assam in the Ahom Age,
J. A. R. S., Vol. XV, 1979-80, p. 62.

In this system the forests and jungles were reclaimed by fire before rains. And then seeds were sowed in those areas. In this way, crops were produced. This system, however, has been referred to in many folk literatures of Assam.

26 A. Guha, op. cit., pp. 2, 4.

- 27 H.N. Chowdhury, op. cit., p. 158; N.N. Paul (ed.), op. cit., p. 5.
- 28 C. Sanyal, op. cit., p. 55; Hunter, op. cit., p. 335;
H.N. Chowdhury, op. cit., p. 160.
- 29 A.C. Campbell, op. cit., p. 5. Tr. by N.N. Paul.
- 30 H.N. Dutta Barua, ed., Gurucarita, Nalbari, 1955, p. 19.
(Cf. Codda sata dhān pāche tāsānbāk dila |
Eko vāso āni sevāke jogāilā ||
Verse 100)
- 31 N.C. Chowdhury (ed.) Rāikat Vānsā O Tāhāder Rāiver
Sāṅkṣipta Vivaraṅ, (Bengali), Jalpaiguri, 3rd ed./1983,
p. 9.
- 32 S. Beal, Travels of Hsüen-Tsang,
New Ed. Cal. 1958, p. 404.
- 33 Minhāj-i-Sirāj, Tabaqāt-i-Nāsiri, Eng. tr. by Major Revert, Vol. II, London, 1821, Reprint, New Delhi, 1970, p. 560.
K.L. Barua, Early History of Kamarupa,
p. 151, Second Ed. Gauhati, 1966.
- 34 Horton Hyley, op. cit., p. 111; K.L. Barua, op. cit., p. 202;
N.C. Chowdhury (ed.), Rāikat Vānsā O Tāhāder Rāiver
Sāṅkṣipta Vivaraṅ, Jalpaiguri, 1983, p. 9.
- 35 William Robinson, A Descriptive Account of Assam,
pp. 220-221, 1861, Delhi, Reprinted, 1975, pp. 220-221
- 36 B. Hamilton, J.A.S.B., p. 65, 1838, p. 65
- 37 Gait, op. cit., p. 41.
- 38 H.N. Dutta Barua (ed.), op. cit., p. 19; U. Lekharu (ed.),
Kathā Guru Carita, 1964, pp. 14ff.

39 H.N. Dutta Barua, (ed.), op.cit., p. 19.

(Cf. Lenguāmāriā nāme bil ek āche |

Bicāri phurante sabē dekhilanta pāche ||

Bāta kāti tāhār tīrat vāsā dilā |

Tār matsya sūve bhojan karilā || (verse, 96)

40 Robinson, op.cit., p. 221.

41 Ghosal, op.cit., p. 142.

42 K.C. Pathak (ed.), op.cit., p. 111.

43 N.N. Paul (ed.), Gosārimāngala, pp. 3 & 74.

(Cf. "Ei rājye jato lok sukhi sarvajan"

"Anandita sarvalok hailek sukhi

Rāurājya samarājya nahi keho sukhi".)

44 Horton Ryley, op.cit., p. 111.

45 C. Wessels, op.cit., p. 128.

46 quoted in S.C. Ghosal's op.cit., p. 206.

47 Blochmann, op.cit., p. 66.

48 N.C. Sharma (ed.), op.cit., p. 114.

49 S.C. Ghosal, op.cit., p. 201.

50 Ibid., p. 204.

51 Ghosal, op.cit., pp. 167, 190 & 207.

52 Ibid., p. 248.

53 Loc. cit.

54 Loc. cit.

55 S. Turner, An account of an Embassy to the Court
of Teshoo Lama in Tibet, p-11,

New Delhi, 1971(Reprinted), P 11

Walter Hamilton also refers to the custom prevalent among the lower classes to dispose of their children for slaves without scruple and he gives hint to the extreme poverty of the people in this region.

W. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 215.

56 Turner, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

57 Ghosal, op. cit., p. 279.

58 Mercer and Chauvet's Report on Cooch Behar (i. e. The Cooch Behar Select Records, Vol. II, 1788, Cooch Behar Press, 1968, p. 74.

59 Ghosal, op. cit., p. 280.

60 Loc. cit.

However, in his letter dated 21st August, 1788 A.D. Capt. Duncanson denied the receipt of this amount.

61 Biswanath Das (ed.), Rājopākhyāna, p. 81, 1st edition, 1965, P 81

62 The Cooch Behar Select Records, Vol. I, p. 29.

63 A.N. Chandra, op. cit., p. 123.

"His (Devisinha's) oppressions and also the actions of Hastings were censured in unequivocal terms by Edmund Burke and he stated : "I charge him (Hastings) with having committed to the management of Devi Singh three great

Provinces; and thereby, with having wasted the country, ruined the landed interest, cruelly harassed the peasants, burnt their houses, seized their crops, tortured and degraded their persons and destroyed the honour of the whole female race of the country" - quoted in the above book, p. 163; Patterson, who in his judgement reported about the oppression of Devi ^{Simha} Singh in Rangpur and Dinajpur, had to meet with evil fate ^{at the hands of} by the Governor General Warren Hastings -

Nd. Abu Talib, Majnu Saha (Bengali), pp. 53-54, Dacca, 1980.

64 Ghosal, op.cit., p. 281.

65 Banwari Chandra Chaudhury, Sambhu Vasisa Carita, p. 12.

66 Cf. The land grants of the Mahārājā Modanārāyana

See Ghosal, op.cit., p. 213 fn.

67 Gait, op.cit., p. 270.

68 Mercer and Chauvet, op.cit., p. 19.

69 Hunter, op.cit., p. 388.

70 Mercer and Chauvet's Report, Vol. II, pp. 90, 97, 102.

71 N.H. Paul (ed.), op.cit., p. 4.

72 S.K. Bhuyan (ed.), Assam Burāñi by Harkanta Barua

Sadaramin, Gauhati, 1962, p. 120.

73 Gait, op.cit., p. 249.

74 Ibid., p. 250.

75 Ghosal, op.cit., p. 157.

76 N.H. Paul (ed.), op.cit., p. 4.

77 H.N. Chowdhury, op. cit., p. 242.

78 N.C. Sharma, op. cit., p. 64.

(Cf. Pāṇḍu Rājā Mohalā karilā |

Rāvana Lakṣa pañcīśa hājorok pailā ||

Cari poā dare got ekek pākar |

Naba sakhiāḥ suniok ātapar || Verse. 315)

79 A. Guha, op. cit., p. 10.

80 Virginia Thompson, Thailand : the New Siam (New York, 1941), pp. 292 ff.

81 H.N. Chowdhury, op. cit., p. 441;

Again, H.N. Chowdhury, The Chakrajat Estates, Cooch Behar, 1902, p. 90.

82 H.N. Chowdhury, The Cooch Behar Estate and its Land Revenue Settlement, p. 541.

83 H.N. Dutta Barua (ed.), Guru Garita, pp. 18-19;
Gait, op. cit., p. 41.

84 N.N. Paul (ed.), Gosānīmāṅgalā, p. 74.

85 N.N. Vasu, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 167-68.

86 Durgādāś, op. cit., quoted in N.N. Vasu's op. cit., p. 69.

87 H.N. Dutta Barua (ed.), op. cit., p. 781

S.C. Gosvami (ed.), op. cit., p. 66.

88 K.C. Pathak (ed.), Gurūlīlā, p. 113, Barpetā, 1932.

89 Ghosal, op. cit., p. 205.

90 Loc. cit.

91 Ibid., p. 206.

92 H.N. Chowdhury, op. cit., p. 546.

93 Loc.cit.

94 Loc.cit. Mostly they used to show negligence to agriculture and enjoy more lands than actually entitled. They introduced farmers who acted as intermediaries. In 1870, an attempt was made to survey the actual amount of lands within the kingdom. Strange enough, the jāigirdārs abandoned their identities and wanted to pose them as rāyats with lands as usually allotted to the latter.

Consequently, the number as shown above came down to 359.

95 S. Mukherjee, Koch Biharar Bhūmi rāisava - Unabinnā Satābdī, published in Koch Bihar Sahitya Sabha Patrika, (a Bengali journal) (ed.), Gopesh Chandra Dutta, Cooch Behar, 1380 B.S. p. 34.

The records of the East India Company refers to as many as 22 Taluks held by Gosvami such as Dhumar Khātā, Boalāri, Magica, Pācherā, Sinjiani, Petlākuthi, Sitalkhuchi, Barbhita. Later on, his descendants had the privilege to enjoy right over only two Taluks.

96 H.N. Chowdhury, op.cit., p. 509.

97 H.N. Chowdhury, Chakrajat Estates, p. 172.

98 Hunter, op.cit., p. 391.

99 H.N. Chowdhury, The Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlement, pp. 443-44.

100 S.C. Ghosal, op.cit., p. 118.

101 Mohini Mohan Saikia, Assam-Muslim Relation and its Cultural Significance, Golaghat, Assam, 1978, p. 162.

- 102 Ibid., p. 193.
- 103 H.N.Chowdhury, op.cit., p. 272.
- 104 For detailed statement of the Hustbood as prepared by Purling in 1773 A.D.
See Ghosal, op.cit., pp. 261-62.
- 105 However, no such inscription of Nilgvara has so far been found. Ghosal, op.cit., p. 70.
- 106 Ibid., p. 225.
- 107 Ibid., p. 213.
- 108 The Cooh Behar Select Records, Vol. I, Para 7, p. 47.
- 109 H.N.Chowdhury, op.cit., p. 549.
- 110 Loc.cit.
- 111 Ibid., p. 457.

It may be mentioned here that according to the British lineal measure 3 ft. is equal to one yard (i.e. two cubits or one gai)

"The area used to be computed in bishes, dones and kalis according to the following table :

5 (5 x 1) sq. gojes	= 1 Gandā or 1 Dhur
100 (10 x 10) sq. gojes	= 20 Gandās = 1 kālī or 16 Dhurs.
16 Kālīs	= 1 Done or 12 Khottās and 16 Dhurs
20 Dones	= 1 Bish or 12 Bighās and 16 Khottās
16 Bish	= 1 Gram or 204 Bighās and 16 Khottās

Chakrajat Estates, p. 153.

Loc.cit., Also H.N.Chowdhury, Chakrajat Estates, p. 153.

- 112 Gait, op.cit., p.103; N.C.Sharma (ed.), op.cit., p.18 - Artisans were found to be mainly engaged in construction of the Maths and temples in various parts of the country.
- 113 S.K.Bhuyan, Weaving in Assam, published in The Modern Review, 1948, p.465.
- 114 Hunter, op.cit., p.397.
- 115 A.C.Campbell, op.cit., /tr.by N.N.Paul in Bengali, Calcutta, 1979, p.6.
- Earlier F.Hamilton^{has} mentioned that meghalā was the original female dress of Kāmarūpa and Koch of Rangpur and this region, An Account of Assam, 1840, ed. by S.K.Bhuyan, Gauhati, 1940, p.61.
- 116 N.C.Sharma (ed.), op.cit., p.52.
- 117 H.N.Chowdhury, op.cit., p.154.
- 118 Gait, op.cit., pp.271-72.
- 119 M.Neog (ed.), Bardoloi Gurucakts, p.180, Gauhati, (Reprinted), 1980.
- 120 S.C.Goswami (ed.), op.cit., p.66.
- {Cf. Vṛndāvanī vasanare kām karāllā |
Siovastra nirmi pāchāṅhrpatik dilā | ॥ १ ॥
- 121 (Cf. Vṛndāvana kṛṣṇalīlā Vastre ṛka aita |
Sankare bulila bahu ayojan lage |
Vastrat tulite suto lage bhāge bhāge || V.360 ||.
- H.N.Dutta Barua, op.cit., p.780.

- 122 M. Neog (ed.), op.cit., p. 158.
- 123 Ghosal, op.cit., p. 157. Ghosal further mentions that the flotilla of boats maintained by Naranārāyaṇa was under the naval commander Bhaktsmalā (Buktumlung) and Teṇu. op.cit., p. 134.
- 124 R.C. Majumdar (ed.), Traveller's Travels in India, 1711-18
R.C. Majumdar (ed.),
 p. 103 quoted in Bengal Desher Itihāsa (Bengali),
 Vol. II, 1385, pp. 120-21.
- 125 Martin, op.cit., p. 433, Vol. III.
- 126 Ghosal, op.cit., p. 224.
- 127 C. Wessels, op.cit., p. 128.
- 128 K.C. Pathak (ed.), op.cit., p. 104.
- 129 Mercer and Chauvet, op.cit., p. 12.
- 130 U.C. Lekharu (ed.), Kathā Gurūśrīti, Nalbari, 1952.

A. Guha, op.cit., p. 18.

- 131 Amanatullah, Prācīn Sāhityā, Published in fortnightly Bengali journal. "Koch Bihar Darpan", 1938, p. 4.

The author gives the list of following places :

'Balarāmpura, Gītāldaha, Bāmanhāt, Kurā, Dinhātā, Sāhebgunj, Vetāguri, Gosālganj, Nekīgunj, Tufānganj, Śhikhuri, Rānidāngā, Beksīgunj, Kāsiyābāri, Śhībpur, Khāttimāri, Okhāndighi, Bālā, Bālārhat, Kseti, Mārāghat, Uchalpukhri and Cyāngrābāndhā'.

- 132 Horton Ryley, op.cit., p. 111.

Blochmann, however, says, "Cacchegata is the place where the merchants from China meet. Cacchegate is

Chishakote, north of the town of Koch Bihar and south of Baksa Fort, Longitude $89^{\circ}35'$, in the Bengal Duars. It is now British".

H. Blochmann, Contributions to the Geography and History of Bengal, Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1968, p. 34.

133 Hakluyt, The Second Volume of Principal Navigators' Voyages, p. 257, London, Anno 1599.

134 Ghosal, op. cit., p. 186.

"Among the eighteen Duars (entrances) to the Kingdom of Bhutan, five in the West were situated on the border of the kingdom of Kānata. The other Duars were to its east viz., on the northern border of the kingdom under Parikshit".

135 Markham, elements R. Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet and the journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa, 1876, Reprinted by Manjusri Publishing House, New Delhi, 1971, Intro. p. Liv.

136 Wessels, op. cit., p. 128.

137 N. K. Vasu, op. cit., p. 192.

138 B. K. Barua, op. cit., p. 108.

139 S. C. Ghosal, op. cit., p. 167;

Darrang Rāja Vaisāvali also records that trade and commerce flourished in the kingdom.

Cf. Bānījagu Gope Bānījā Kara :

139 H. N. Chowdhury, The Chakriat Estates, p. 42.

- 140 Ghosal, op.cit., p. 157.
- 141 Ibid., p. 206.
- 142 Ibid., p. 325.
- 143 Turner, op.cit., p. 11.
- 144 A. Deb, Ganesh Behar and Bhutan in the context of Tibetan Trade, published in Kailash, a journal of Himalayan Studies, 1973, pp. 81-82.

- 145 Mercer and Chauvet, op.cit., p. 13.

<u>Export</u>	<u>Mounds</u>	<u>Import</u>	<u>Mounds</u>
Tobacco	100,000	Salt	10,000
Mustard Seeds	10,000	Jaggery	3,000
Opium	Small quantity	Iron	Small quantity.

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