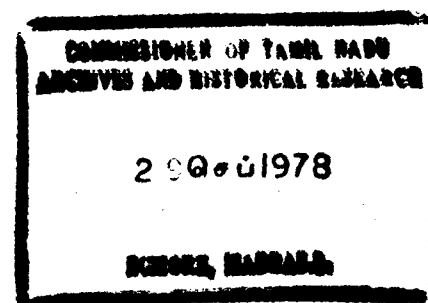


Q
W 2-1516
NTT
P 12305 .

[TWA File no. 15941/GS/78] A S



GAZETTEER OF INDIA
WEST BENGAL

KOCH BIHĀR

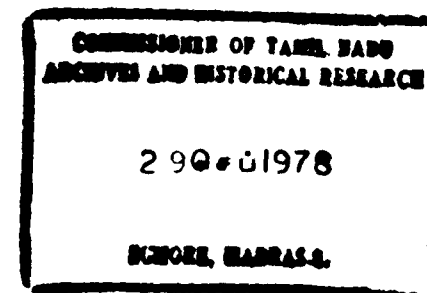
WEST BENGAL DISTRICT GAZETTEERS



KOCH BIHAR

By

DURGADAS MAJUMDAR, I.A.S. (retd.),
former State Editor



February 1977

© GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL

G
V 27516
N77



PRICE : Rs. 20/- IN INDIA & \$ 5.80 ABROAD

Published by Shri B. R. Chakraborty, I.A.S., State Editor, West Bengal District Gazetteers and Secretary to the Government of West Bengal, Information and Public Relations Department, at 23 Rajendra Nath Mukherjee Road, Calcutta-700001 and printed by the Superintendent, West Bengal Government Press, 38 Gopalnagar Road, Alipore, Calcutta-700027

Preface

The Koch Bihar Gazetteer is the seventh volume in the series of West Bengal District Gazetteers, being written since 1959, according to a scheme jointly sponsored by the Governments of India and West Bengal. This, unlike the previous six volumes, is the first gazetteer of the district, which had been a princely State (Cooch Behar) before it was amalgamated with India in 1951. The plan followed in the present volume, as its predecessors in the series, had been drawn up by the Union Government, keeping in view the socio-economic policies of our Welfare State as well as the actual achievements of the people since Independence.

The draft of this volume had been prepared by Shri D. Majumdar, I.A.S., State Editor (June 1970 to November 1972),—the preliminary drafts of a few chapters being the handiwork of Shri (now Dr.) Sankarananda Mukerji, W.B.C.S., Assistant Editor. Shri Majumdar got his draft vetted by the Central Gazetteers Unit of India Government, which was subsequently scrutinised by the State Advisory Committee, in consonance with the usual procedure. But it had to hibernate long in cold storage due chiefly to a procedural bottleneck, which could not be removed through the efforts of this office. I utilised this enforced delay to revise the finalised draft by incorporating in it up-to-date information and by taking the liberty of polishing the language at places. I have also formulated a **crash programme** and taken adequate concrete steps for the publication of all the remaining nine gazetteers during the remainder of the current Five-Year Plan period,—besides editing the two Gazetteers of Murshidabad and Puruliya.

This is the first time that a District Gazetteer of ours has been printed in the West Bengal Government Press, which has acted very promptly despite the preoccupation of its officers and staff with Budget papers. I cannot praise too highly the cheerful co-operation of Shri S. S. Varma, I.A.S., former Industries Commissioner and Secretary, Commerce and Industries Department, as also of Shri P. G. Mukherjee, I.P.S., Controller of Printing and Stationery, under the administrative control of that Department. It is my bounden duty to express my personal heartfelt gratitude to Shri Varma and Shri Mukherjee as well as to all the officers and staff under the latter for honouring the generous commitment made by their erstwhile Commissioner at my earnest request.

I am deeply indebted to Shri B. Sarkar, I.C.S. (retd.), Chairman of the Advisory Committee as well as Dr. S. B. Chaudhuri, M.A., Ph.D. and Dr. P. C. Gupta, M.A., Ph.D., the other members, for having examined the draft minutely and made numerous valuable suggestions,—apart from the kind consideration constantly shown me ever since I joined this office and became the member-convener of the

committee meetings. I am also grateful, beyond measure, to (my junior friend) Shri D. K. Guha, I.A.S., Education Commissioner and Secretary, Education Department, Government of West Bengal, for co-operating with me, in his urbane and appreciative manner, but for which the present volume could not have been brought out with such expedition. I offer ample thanks to Shri D. Majumdar, who edited this Gazetteer, along with Dr. S. Mukerji, his worthy Assistant Editor (at present an admirable colleague of myself), for having produced a pioneer work, which I am now sponsoring as godfather (in a secular sense).

It is a pleasant duty as well as a proud privilege to convey most cordial thanks to Dr. P. N. Chopra, M.A., Ph.D., Editor (Gazetteers), Government of India, for his own openhearted courtesy and scholarly guidance, which drew me to him personally as well. The officers and staff of the Central Gazetteers Unit—over which he presides, in the Department of Culture—scrutinised the draft of the Koch Bihar Gazetteer with great care and made a large number of important suggestions, which have improved its quality and calibre. It would be churlish on my part not to thank all of them without the least reserve. I should also mention here that a portion of the expenditure incurred on the compilation and printing of the District Gazetteers is borne by the Government of India in the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare.

Many departments of the Central and the State Governments as well as various branches of our district administration rendered yeoman service by furnishing data utilised in the volume. In a sense, it is they who lay the foundation on which the edifice of a district gazetteer is built. Their silent contribution merits eloquent praise, which I tender gladly.

Shri Tarapada Maity, Research Assistant, has prepared the Bibliography and the Index with much pains and zeal, for which I thank him sincerely. The Head Assistant, together with all his colleagues (including, in particular, the other Research Assistants, the Publication Assistant, the Proof Reader, the Stenographers, the Typists and the Comparers), has worked very hard in making this Gazetteer see the light of day with utmost promptitude; I am grateful to them—one and all. In general, I applaud the spirit of teamwork that pervades this office at present.

In spite of the concerted efforts of all who have played some role or other in the production of the volume, it may contain many errors of omission and commission,—the final responsibility for which is mine and this I would not shirk.

Calcutta,
13th March 1976

BIRENDRA KUMAR BHATTACHARYA,
State Editor.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: GENERAL

	Pages
Introduction (1): Origin of the name of the district (1-2): Location and Boundaries (2): Enclaves (2-5): Origin of the enclaves (5-6): Administrative divisions (6-7): Topography (7): River System (7-14): Bils and marshes (14-15): Geology (15): Flora (15-18): Fauna (18-19): Climate (19-20): Table 1—Normals and Extremes of Rainfall (21): Table 2—Normals of Temperature and Relative Humidity (22): Table 3—Mean Wind Speed in Km/Hr. (23): Table 4—Special Weather Phenomena (23): Appendix—Types of Fish available in the rivers and tanks in the district of Koch Bihar (24-26).	1—26

CHAPTER II: HISTORY

Prehistory and Proto-History (27): Ancient Period (27-28): Medieval Period—The Khen Kings (29): Muslim invasion (30-31): Shera Shamiyas (30): Rise of the Koch Kings—Visvasimha (30-31): Narayanarayan or Mahanarayan (31): Lakshminarayan (32): Birnarayan (32): Pranayanarayan (32-33): Modnarayan (33): Vasudevnarayan (33-34): Mahindranarayan (34): Rupanarayan (34): Upendranarayan (35): Devendranarayan (35-36): Dhairvendranarayan (36): Rajendranarayan (37): Modern Period—Treaty with the East India Company (37-38): Harendranarayan (38-39): Sivendranarayan (39): Narondranarayan (39): Nripendranarayan (39-40): Appendix A—Cooch Behar Merger Agreement (40-43): Appendix B—Articles of Treaty Between the Honourable East India Company and Dhairvendranarayan, Raja of Cooch Behar (43-44).	27—44
--	-------

CHAPTER III: PEOPLE

Population (45-46): Literacy (46): Immigration and Emigration (46): Language (47): Bilingualists (46): Local Bengali Dialect (48-49): Communities (50): Castes and Tribes (50-51): Religion (52): Religious beliefs (52-54): Manners and customs (55-56): Position of women in the house (56-57): Inheritance (57): Dwelling and furniture (57): Dress (57-58): Ornaments (58): Food and Drink (58-59): Amusements (59): Appendix I—Growth of Population in Koch Bihar District: 1961-71 (60-61).	45—61
---	-------

CHAPTER IV: AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION

Land utilization (62-64): Drainage of water logged area (64): Irrigation (64-66): Agriculture soil (66-67): Principal crops—paddy (67-70): Jute (70-71): Tobacco (71-73): Mustard (73-74): Pulses (74): Wheat, barley, millet (74): Roots and bulbs (74): Sugarcane (74): Saw and rock (75): Turmeric, ginger, chillies, coriander, anise, arum (75): poppy and indigo (76): Tea (76): Agricultural implements (75-76): Seeds and manures (76): Fertilizers (76-77): Control of diseases and pests (77): Animal husbandry and fisheries (77-78): Veterinary hospitals (79): Fisheries (80): Forestry (80): State assistance to agriculture (80-82): Floods, famines, droughts and other natural calamities (82): Statement I—Blockwise Acreage of Autumn Rice: 1974-75 (83): Statement II—Blockwise Acreage of Winter Rice: 1974-75 (83): Statement III—Blockwise Acreage of Summer Rice: 1974-75 (84): Statement IV—Blockwise Acreage of Wheat: 1974-75 (84).	62—84
--	-------

CHAPTER V: INDUSTRIES

Old time industries (85): Jute fabrics (85): Pottery (85): Smithy (85): Small scale industries (85-86): Very small scale and village industries (86): Tea garden (86): Registered small scale industrial units (86-87): Loans disbursed to industries (87): Bamboo crafts and Eriiculture industry (87-88): Handloom industry (88): Tobacco industry (88-89): Electricity (89).	85—89
---	-------

CHAPTER VI : BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE

Pages

Early banking practices in the district (90): Present-day financial institutions (90-91): Commercial Banks (91-92): Chit fund (92): Cooperative Banks (92-93): Co-operative Societies (93-94): Life Insurance Corporation of India (94-95): Post Office Savings Bank (95): Trade and Commerce—Imports and Exports (96-97): Markets and Marketing of agricultural produce (97-99): Fruit and Vegetable Preservation and Processing (99): Warehousing Regulation (99): Appendix A—List of Hats and Markets in Koch Bihar District (99-104): Appendix B—List of Fairs and Festivals in Koch Bihar District (105-113).

90—113

CHAPTER VII—COMMUNICATIONS

Old time routes and conveyances (114-15): Roads in 1900 (115-16): Road Development after 1950 (116-18): Village roads (118): Vehicles and conveyances (118-19): North Bengal State Transport Corporation (119): Railways (119-20): Waterways, Ferries and Bridges (120-21): Air transport (121): Travel and tourist facilities (121): Posts and telegraphs facilities (122): Appendix—Post Offices in Koch Bihar District (122-24).

114—124

CHAPTER VIII : ECONOMIC TRENDS AND MISCELLANEOUS OCCUPATIONS

Distribution of working population (125-28): Wages (129): Cost of Living (129-30): 125—133
Different kinds of loans and their recoveries (130-31): Community Development Blocks (131): District Planning Committee (132): Miscellaneous Occupations (132-33).

CHAPTER IX : GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Early administration (134): Administration in the British period (134-38): Administration in September 1949 (138-39): The present set up (139-41): Community Development Blocks (141).

134—141

CHAPTER X : REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

Land Revenue in early times (142): Settlement prior to 1773 (142-44): The first Survey of Koch Bihar (144-45): The first settlement operation (145-46): Re-settlement operations (146-50): Present Settlement (150-52): Land and Land Revenue Administration (152-53): Agricultural Labour (153): Other revenues (153-54).

142—154

CHAPTER XI : LAW, ORDER AND JUSTICE

The Evolution of Criminal Administration (155): Number of offences (155-58): Police (158): Jails (158-59): Criminal Courts of Magistrates (159): Civil and Sessions Courts (159-60): Bar (161): State assistance to litigants (161).

155—161

CHAPTER XII : OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Agriculture (162): Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services (162): Cooperation (162): Commerce and Industries (162-63): Education (163): Excise (163): Finance (163): Fishery (163): Food and Supplies (164): Information and Public Relations (164): Irrigation and Waterways (164): Panchayat (164): Public works (164): Refugee Rehabilitation (164): Registration (164-65): Central Government Departments (165).

162—165

CHAPTER XIII : LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

Local Self-Government in the nineteenth century (166): Town Committee (166-67): Municipality (167-68): Panchayati institutions (168-69): Anchalik Prishad (170): Zilla Parishad (170): Koch Bihar Municipality (170-71).

166—171

CHAPTER XIV : EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Early literary activities (172-73): Centres of learning (173-74): Beginning of modern and western education (174-75): Establishment of the first college (176): Literacy and level of education (176-78): Primary education (178-79): Junior High schools (179): Senior Basic schools (179): High schools (179): Higher secondary schools (180): Engineering institutions (180): Training colleges (180): Music schools (180): Tols and Madrasas (181): Social education (181): General colleges (181).

172—181

CHAPTER XV: MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

Pages

Public health and medical facilities in early times (182-84): Medical facilities in the present day (184-85): Vital statistics (186-87): Diseases common to the district (187-89): Organisation of the Medical Department (189-90): Present hospitals and dispensaries (190-93): Public Health—Welfare work (193-95).

182—195

CHAPTER XVI : OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES

Labour Welfare activities (196): Welfare of the Backward classes (196-97): Old age pension (197): Blind school (197): Missionary activities (198).

196—198

CHAPTER XVII : PUBLIC LIFE AND VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATION

Representation of the district in the State and Union Legislatures (199-204): Periodicals (204): Social Welfare Organizations (204-06).

199—206

CHAPTER XVIII : PLACES OF INTEREST

Bakshirhat (207): Balarampur (207): Banerwar (207-08): Changrabandha (208): Damodarpur (208): Dewan Hat (209): Dhalibari (209): Dinhat (209): Fulbari (209): Gossanimari (209-11): Haldibari (211): Haripur (211): Jamaladaha (211): Koch Bihar (211-12): Madhupur (212-13): Matabhanga (213): Mekhliganj (213): Nishiganj (213): Pundibari (213): Siddheswari (213-14): Sitai (214): Sitalkuchi (214): Tufanganj (214).

Bibliography	..	..	..	..	..	215—223
Index	..	..	..	..	..	224—230
Art Plates	..	..	..	..	..	1—15

CHAPTER I

GENERAL

Koch Bihar district in the north-eastern frontier of India is included in the Jalpaiguri Division of West Bengal. Until the 28th day of August 1949 Koch Bihar was an Indian State ruled by the Maharaja of Koch Bihar who had been a feudatory prince under the British Government. By a document dated 28 August 1949 Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan of Koch Bihar ceded his territory to the Dominion Government of India. The transfer of the administration to the Government of India took place on the 12th day of September 1949, from which date Koch Bihar was ruled as a Chief Commissioner's Province by a Chief Commissioner appointed by the Government of India. By an order under section 290A of the Government of India Act of 1935, Koch Bihar was transferred and merged with the Province of West Bengal on 1 January 1950. Since then Koch Bihar is being administered as a district of West Bengal.

The name Koch Bihar is of comparatively recent origin. Formerly, a tract of land now forming the district of Koch Bihar was part of a much bigger kingdom of Kamrup. The earliest mention of Kamrup in epigraphic records is in the Allahabad Inscription of Samudra Gupta.¹ In later times, the kingdom of Kāmarupa was split into two parts,—the western part known by the name of Kamata containing Koch Bihar. In Blaeu's map of 1650 Koch Bihar has been mentioned as Comotay. In *Baharisthan-i-Ghaibi* the country was designated as Kamta.² The name Koch Bihar appears to have been first used in relation to this country in *Shah Jahan Nama* about the middle of the 17th century. Major Rennell's maps prepared in the 18th century designated Koch Bihar as simply Behar. In the treaty between the East India Company and the ruler of Koch Bihar in 1773 the kingdom was referred to as Koch Behar and the capital was referred to as Behar Fort. Dr. Buchanan Hamilton in his narrative written in the beginning of the last century mentioned only Behar. There have been conjectures whether the second term in the name of the district, viz., Behar, has any connexion with some early Buddhist monastery located in the region. Considering the fact that the name Koch Bihar is of recent origin, connexion with any Buddhist monastery seems unlikely. Yet, it must be considered a probability, because, in the old ruins of the capital of the Khen kings at Kamtapur within the district of Koch Bihar there is a raised mound which goes by the name of Raj-pat. There is a suspicion that this might have been the site of an early

ORIGIN OF THE
NAME OF THE
DISTRICT

¹Fleet, "Gupta Inscriptions No. 1.

²The *Āin-i-Akbari* refers to a Koch country, in which there were two kingdoms 'Kāmatā' and 'Kāmarupa'. (*District Census Handbook, Cooch-Bihar*, 1961, p. 3.)

Buddhist monastery and the raised mound the remnant of a Buddhist *stupa*. Only an excavation of the place might provide a conclusive answer on this point. In the absence of any concrete evidence of the existence of a Buddhist monastery, the main word Bihar must be etymologically derived as a place or abode of sport. Koch Bihar thus is an abode of the Koch tribe. There is a legend that Lord Mahadev had at one time engaged in dalliance with Koch maidens and as the word *rihara* also means dalliance, this etymology may not be farfetched. But the balance of probability lies in favour of the etymology that Koch Bihar means the land of the Koch. Even shortly after the merger of Koch Bihar with West Bengal the local people referred to the capital of the Maharaja or the city of Koch Bihar as simply Bihar, and Hunter in his *Statistical Account* has recorded that the Raja of Koch Bihar, repudiates the theory of Koch origin and calls his capital Nijbehari. In the above circumstances, it is difficult to say whether the district took its name from the capital city, or the capital city took its name from the name of the country. The name of the kingdom was finally determined to be Koch Bihar by an order of the Maharaja and published in the *Cooch Behar Gazette*.

LOCATION AND BOUNDARIES

The district of Koch Bihar lies between 26°32'46" north latitude and 25°57'56" north latitude. The longitude of the easternmost point is 89°52'00" east and the longitude of the westernmost point is 88°15'02" east.

With the exception of a few miles at the extreme southern tip of Tufanganj subdivision where the river Raidak forms the boundary and for about 5 miles (8 km.) to the north of Mekhliganj thana where the river Jaldhaka forms the boundary, there is no natural boundary of the district. The northern boundary and most part of the western boundary are formed by the district of Jalpaiguri. From west to east the following thanas of the district of Jalpaiguri abut on the border of Koch Bihar, viz., Jalpaiguri, Maynaguri, Dhupguri, Falakata, Alipur Duars and Kumargram. The southern boundary of the district is very much indented and the following thanas of the district of Rangpur in Bangladesh form the southern boundary, viz., from west to east, Boda, Debiganj, Domar, Dimala, Patgram, Hatibandha, Kaliganj, Lalmonir Hat, Phulbari Nageswari and Bhurungamari. The eastern boundary is formed by the district of Goalpara of Assam. The total area of the district according to the Survey of India is 3,386 sq. kms. (as on 1. July 1971). The population of the district, according to the Census of 1971, is 14,14,183.

Enclaves

Besides the congregated area included in the boundaries of the district mentioned above, there are enclaves or *chhits* which are outlying and detached tracts of land situated inside the district of Rangpur in Bangladesh. There were similar detached tracts lying within the district of Jalpaiguri. The detached tracts which lay within the district of Jalpaiguri have now been merged in the general area of that district.

Seventeen *chhits* of Haldibari police station were transferred to the Jalpaiguri police station in the district of Jalpaiguri under the Government of West Bengal, Home (Police) Department, Notification No. 2427PL., dated 27 June 1952. A further adjustment between the district boundaries of Koch Bihar and Jalpaiguri had taken place in the year 1955. Under the Government of West Bengal, Home (Police) Department, Notification No. 2115PL., dated 20 May 1955, 34 *chhits* of Koch Bihar were transferred to Jalpaiguri. Two *chhits* belonging to Mekhliganj police station were transferred to Maynaguri police station of Jalpaiguri, 30 *chhits* belonging to Matabhanga were transferred to Dhupguri police station and 2 *chhits* of Tufanganj police station were transferred to Alipur Duars police station of Jalpaiguri district. The notifications are given below:

NOTIFICATION No. 2427PL., DATED 27 JUNE 1952

"In exercise of the power conferred by clause(s) of Sub-section (1) of Section 4 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (Act V of 1898), and in partial modification of all previous notifications relating to the area included in, and the boundaries of police-stations Haldibari in the district of Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri in the district of Jalpaiguri, the Governor is pleased to declare that the areas comprised in the *chhits* shown in the Schedule hereto which have hitherto been included in Haldibari police-station in the district of Cooch Behar, are transferred to, and shall be included in, the Jalpaiguri police-station in the district of Jalpaiguri.

THE SCHEDULE

Sl. No.	Name of the <i>Chhit</i>	<i>Chhit</i> No.
1	Shingimari	71
2	Shingimari (Part I)	72
3	Shingimari (Part II)	74
4	Shakoti	62
5	Do	63
6	Do	64
7	Do	65
8	Do	66
9	Do	67
10	Do	68
11	Do	69
12	Do	70
13	Binnaguri	61
14	Do	81
15	Daikhata	39
16	Do	40
17	Do	43"

NOTIFICATION No. 2115PL., DATED 20 MAY 1955

"In exercise of the power conferred by clause(s) of Sub-section (1) of Section 4 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (Act V of 1898), and in partial modification of all previous notifications, relating to the areas included in, and the boundaries of police-stations Mekliganj, Matabhanga and Tufanganj in the district of Cooch Behar, and Maynaguri, Dhupguri and Alipur Duars in the district of Jalpaiguri, the Governor is pleased to declare that the areas comprised in the *chhits* described in Columns 1 and 2 of the Schedule hereto annexed, which have hitherto been included in the police-stations of the district of Cooch Behar, specified in the corresponding entries in Column 4 of the said Schedule, are transferred to and shall be included in the police-stations of the Jalpaiguri district, shown against each in Column 5 of that Schedule:

THE SCHEDULE

Sl. No.	Name of the <i>Chhit</i>	<i>Chhit</i> No.	Name of the police-station in Cooch Behar district from which transferred	Name of the police-station in Jalpaiguri district to which transferred
1	Panisala, Thak No. 152	152	Mekliganj	Maynaguri
		M		
2	Do	152	Do	Do
		N		
3	Magurmari	82	Matabhanga	Dhupguri
4	Do	83	Do	Do
5	Do	84	Do	Do
6	Do	85	Do	Do
7	Do	86	Do	Do
8	Do	87	Do	Do
9	Do	88	Do	Do
10	Gossairhat	89	Do	Do
11	Do	90	Do	Do
12	Do	91	Do	Do
13	Do	92	Do	Do
14	Do	93	Do	Do
15	Do	94	Do	Do

Sl. No.	Name of the <i>Chhit</i>	<i>Chhit</i> No.	Name of the police station in Cooch Behar district from which transferred	Name of the police station in Jalpaiguri district to which transferred
16	Gossairhat	95	Matabhanga	Dhupguri
17	Do	96	Do	Do
18	Do	97	Do	Do
19	Do	98	Do	Do
20	Do	99	Do	Do
21	Do	100	Do	Do
22	Do	101	Do	Do
23	Do	102	Do	Do
24	Godang	103	Do	Do
25	Do	104	Do	Do
26	Do	105	Do	Do
27	Do	106	Do	Do
28	Do	107	Do	Do
29	Do	108	Do	Do
30	Do	109	Do	Do
31	Do	110	Do	Do
32	Do	111	Do	Do
33	Chikliguri (Part I)	138	Tufanganj	Alipur Duars
34	Chikliguri (Part II)	139	Do	Do "

At the time of merger of the Indian State of Koch Bihar with West Bengal there were 130 enclaves measuring more or less 20,957.07 acres. There were correspondingly 95 enclaves of Bangladesh situated within the district of Koch Bihar. Another intriguing fact is that there were enclaves within enclaves. It so happens that while the parent enclave belongs to Koch Bihar district the enclaves inset within these enclaves belong to Bangladesh. A Land-border Agreement was signed between India and Bangladesh on 16 May 1974, which provides, among other things, for the

Origin of these enclaves

exchange of the enclaves of the two countries at a future date. The Agreement is to be ratified by the two Governments before it can come into operation.

The origin of these enclaves is not very clear. It is generally believed that during the Mughal invasions of 1687 and 1699 some of the powerful Koch Bihar chieftains retained possession of their lands in the *chaklas* of Roda, Patgram and Purbabha and the invading Mughal forces could not dislodge them. In 1712 when Khan Jehan Khan, the Nazim of Bengal, recovered possession of these *chaklas* a treaty was signed between the Maharaja of Koch Bihar and the Nazim whereby these three *chaklas* were leased out to the Maharaja of Koch Bihar in the *benami* of the Chhatra-Nazir Santanu Narayan. The powerful chieftains who had not been dislodged from their lands during the Mughal invasion continued to owe allegiance to the Maharaja of Koch Bihar and these lands did not therefore form part of the *zamindari* which continued to remain part of the kingdom of Koch Bihar though detached from it. Similarly, during these raids some demobilized Muhammedan soldiers occupied some portions of the land and continued to owe allegiance to the Mughal Emperor through the Nazim; and it seems that the Maharaja of Koch Bihar could not or did not enforce his authority on these disbanded soldiers. These areas became part of the Subah of Bengal and later part of the British district of Rangpur.

Except for the merger of some enclaves of Koch Bihar district into Jalpaiguri district there has been no change in the boundaries or in any of the component parts of the district since the time of the merger of the erstwhile Koch Bihar State into West Bengal.

Administrative
divisions

At the time of the signing of the Koch Bihar Merger Agreement on 28 August 1949 and the subsequent transfer of power to the Government of India on the 12 September 1949, the State of Koch Bihar had 8 police-stations, viz., Kotwali, Dinhata, Sitai, Tufanganj, Matabhanga, Sitalkuchi, Mekhliganj and Haldibari. There were 5 subdivisions, viz., Cooch Behar Sadar with P.S. Kotwali, Dinhata subdivision with P.Ss. Dinhata and Sitai, Tufanganj subdivision with P.S. Tufanganj, Matabhanga subdivision with P.Ss. Matabhanga and Sitalkuchi, Mekhliganj subdivision with P.Ss. Mekhliganj and Haldibari. With the merger of the Chief Commissioner's Province of Koch Bihar with West Bengal several notifications were issued by the Government of West Bengal regularizing the administrative jurisdictions.¹

There are 6 revenue *parganas* in the district, viz., (1) Mekhliganj, (2) Tufanganj, (3) Matabhanga, (4) Lalbazar, (5) Dinhata and (6) Koch Bihar. These *parganas* find

¹Notification No. 3599-G.A., dated 1 January 1950, declared Koch Bihar to be a district of West Bengal; Notification No. 3549-G.A., dated 1 January 1950, recreated the 5 subdivisions mentioned above; Notification No. 9 Pl., dated 1 January 1950, recreated the 8 *thanas* mentioned already and Notification No. 7618-J., dated 1 January 1950, recreated the jurisdictions of the several subdivisions and the *thanas* comprised in them as on the date of merger.

mention in the old revenue records of Koch Bihar State but are no longer of much importance except for identification of a particular *jama* or lands with old records. Mekhliganj *pargana* comprises Mekhliganj and Haldibari *thanas*, Tufanganj *pargana* comprises a part of the Tufanganj *thana*, Matabhanga *pargana* comprises a part of Matabhanga *thana* while the remaining parts of the Matabhanga, Sitalkuchi and Sitai *thanas* appertain to the *pargana* of Lalbazar. Dinhata *pargana* comprises Dinhata *thana*, Koch Bihar *pargana* comprises the Kotwali *thana* and a part of the Tufanganj *thana*.

Koch Bihar is essentially a flat country with a slight south-eastern slope along which the main rivers of the district flow. There are slight ups and downs and while some areas may be so low as to be inundated by the rivers during the monsoon, others are slightly higher and remain always above water even when the rivers are in spate. Most of the high lands appertain to *pargana* Lalbazar and most of the low lands lie in *pargana* Dinhata. There are no mountain peaks nor any hills within the district. The greater part of the district is cultivated and is composed of green fields studded with timber trees and an inferior variety of orange trees. There is no forest worth the name, but tracts of land consisting mostly of heavy grass and reed are seen at places mostly in the oscillation areas of the rivers.

TOPOGRAPHY

The rivers in Koch Bihar flow in a slanting course from north-west to south-east. All of them take rise in the Himalayas and enter the district from the western Duars of the district of Jalpaiguri except one which enters from the Gumma Duars. Flowing through the district they pass on to the Rangpur district of Bangladesh to discharge their waters into the Brahmaputra. The banks of the river are abrupt and the beds sandy. There is generally a beach on one side though at places both banks are abrupt. The bed is sandy and the sands shift at the time of the monsoon when the rivers are in spate. The larger rivers bring down gravel in large quantities. When the rivers are in spate, trees which fall down owing to erosion of the soil on which they were rooted are carried along in the torrential current and pose a severe danger to the ferries over such rivers. The rivers in the dry season are tame and, with the exception of the Tista, mostly shallow. But due to the vicinity of the Himalayas, in which they rise, even an ordinary rainfall on the hills causes a sudden rise of these rivers which overflow the banks and the gushing waters destroy crops and even homesteads. Though generally the rivers keep to their beds small oscillations and throwing out of a channel are almost annual features of these rivers. Just as the water of these rivers rise suddenly, so also the fall is quick. The flooding water hardly remains on the fields for more than a day or two in ordinary inundations. The soil, through which the rivers flow, being alluvium of very recent origin and largely mixed with sand, is easily cut by the rushing water and deposited on the side on which the velocity is less. Thus

River System

alluvion and diluvion are almost annual happenings with these rivers and large sand banks are numerous near these rivers. By the end of October the waters come down considerably and by March the rivers become slow currents.

Six river systems cut through the district flowing in a south-easterly direction. From the west to the east these are: (1) the Tista system, (2) the Jaldhaka system, (3) the Torsa system, (4) the Kaljani system, (5) the Raidak system and (6) the Gadadhar system.

The Tista system

The Tista is by far the largest river of the district. Though it forms a large system elsewhere, within this district it throws out no tributary nor does it receive any tributary. The Tista takes its rise in lake Chalamu and has another source below Kanchenjunga in Sikkim. Flowing through Sikkim, Darjiling and Jalpaiguri districts it enters Koch Bihar district near *taluk* Baxiganj. It flows for about 15 miles in this district and separates Haldibari from Mekhliganj thana. It passes out of the district by *taluk* Kuchlibari to flow into the Rangpur district of Bangladesh. The bed is about a mile broad and sandy. The bank is high on one side and shelving on the other. The water is cool and limpid.

Shaniajan or Khutamara

A small stream, the Shaniajan, uniting with the Khutamara enters the district at *taluk* Bhotbari and flows for about 20 miles within the district wholly to the east of the Tista and passes out of the district by the south-east of *taluk* Kuchlibari to flow into the Tista near the border of Kakina and Patgram within Bangladesh.

The Jaldhaka system

The Jaldhaka with its right bank tributaries (north to south), the Satanga, the Dharla and the Khutamara or Gidari and the left bank tributaries (north to south), the Kumlai, the Gilandi, the Duduya, the Mujnai and the Dolong form the Jaldhaka system within the district. It rises in the Bhutan hills and flows through Bhutan in the early part of its course under the name Di Chu. Flowing by the east of the Kalimpong subdivision of the district of Darjiling and through the western Duars of the district of Jalpaiguri and augmented by the Murti and the Diana, the river enters Koch Bihar through the *taluk* Dhulia Baldiahati. For the first five miles of its course after touching Koch Bihar the river mostly lies in Jalpaiguri district. Just south of Moranga it enters the district in a south-easterly direction and receives its first tributary, the Kumlai, on the left bank. Seven miles below it receives the Gilandi on its left bank in *taluk* Giladanga. After receiving the Gilandi the river flows eastwards for some distance and then turns north-east and makes a loop by the north of *taluk* Indrerkhuti. At this point it is joined by the Duduya the current of the Duduya giving it a turn south-eastwards it flows in that direction to Chokhekata. Slightly above Chokhekata and below Ruidanga the Mujnai joins it from the north. The Mujnai carries a part of the waters of the Torsa via Buri Torsa from Bala Duars and is augmented by another river, the Birpati, also rising in the Bala Duars. From below Chokhekata the

river takes its name Mansai or Mujnai from the name of the tributary and flows almost south up to Khaterbari near the subdivisional town of Matabhanga. At this point the river formerly turned eastwards for about half a mile and then again turned southwards. At present the river has cut through the loop and the main stream flows by Matabhanga town. The east and southward stream is not completely abandoned and flows during the rains. Two miles below Matabhanga town it receives the Satanga on the right bank. Continuing to flow south-eastwards it receives the Dharla on the right bank at Sibpur. From Sibpur the river flows almost due south and three miles further down it flows through the bed of a non-existent river, the Singimari, and from this point the name of the river changes into Singimari. The river turns eastwards by the south of *taluk* Chat Salbari. Flowing for about four miles eastwards it turns south again near *taluk* Latabari and enters into the fortified area of old Kamtapar by causing a breach into the northern rampart of Raja Kamteswar's fort. Flowing southwards it turns to the east again by the south of the Gossanimari temple and flows in that direction up to the southern border of the district in Sitai P.S. Here it turns eastwards again and flowing in that direction for a mile it receives the Torsa on the left of northern bank. The Torsa is here locally known as the Dharla or Dhalla. But this is distinct from the other Dharla which joins the Jaldhaka-Mansai-Singimari at Sibpur. After receiving the Torsa on the left bank the river turns south again and flowing almost along the boundary of Dinhata P.S. of Koch Bihar and Kaligani P.S. of the Rangpur district of Bangladesh, the river turns eastwards again and flowing almost along the southern border of Dinhata P.S. passes out of the district slightly to the east of the railway line.

The Satanga is a small stream which takes its rise in the western Duars to the east of Maynaguri and enters Koch Bihar from the north by the north-west of *taluk* Kamat Changrabandha and a small rivulet, the Chebas, joins it at this point on the left bank. Flowing along the west of the *taluk* of Kamat Changrabandha it turns east by the north of *taluk* Panisala and flows east-south-eastwards dividing *pargana* Mekhliganj from *pargana* Matabhanga. On either side of the river lie rich and fertile lands growing paddy, jute and tobacco. At *taluk* Dhuliya Khalisa in *pargana* Mekhliganj it receives on the left bank a small rivulet the Jalashuya which is an offshoot of the Jaldhaka. Flowing in the same direction the river flows past Jamaladaha on its right bank to Chongerkata-Khagribari. The course now becomes south-eastern and near Khaterbari its course becomes almost parallel to the Mansai with a small strip of land intervening. It then makes a long curve and flows by the west and south of the town of Matabhanga almost encircling the town and falls into the Mansai above Bherbheri-Manabari. As the town of Matabhanga was often endangered by the floods of the Satanga, an attempt was made in the forties of this century to divert the Satanga into the Mansai above

The tributaries
The Satanga

Khaterbari, but the experiment failed. The bed of the Satanga is sandy and the river is usually tame. But at times it can be turbulent.

The Dharla

The Dharla, at one time, was a very important river of this district. It drained through the southern portion of the country and served as a natural moat to the fort of Raja Kamteswar at Kamtapur guarding its approach from the east. Its lower course had now been largely usurped by the Mansai-Singimari flow of the Jaldhaka while in its upper course its headwaters have been largely robbed by the Tista. The Dharla at present takes its rise from the Tista slightly below Barnes Ghat. Passing by Jalpes it enters Koch Bihar in *taluk* Panishala and winding for five miles through Mekhliganj P.S. and leaving the Changrabandha *bunder* on its right bank it passes out of the district into Patgram P.S. of the district of Rangpur in Bangladesh. Flowing over 13 miles in Patgram P.S. it enters Koch Bihar district again by the south-west of *taluk* Satgaon and doubling that *taluk* it passes out again into Patgram P.S. After another re-entry in *taluk* Mahismari and another exit into Patgram P.S. it finally enters the district from the west in *taluk* Tetuler-Chhara and flows by the south of Ratherdanga Hat. Flowing eastwards in serpentine bends it receives on its right bank a small stream named Neda or Chenakata which is an offshoot of the Satanga taking off by the south of *taluk* Chhat Jamaladaha. The Dharla then proceeds eastwards and falls into the Singimari in Sibpur.

The Khutamara

Another small stream known as the Khutamara in its upper course and the Girdari in its lower course is an eastward offshoot of a small river known as the Maldah which enters Koch Bihar district from Patgram P.S. of the district of Rangpur of Bangladesh through the *taluk* Mahismari. Flowing three miles southwards it turns east by the north of *taluk* Baraghararia and then turns westwards and leaves the district to flow into Patgram P.S. again by the south-west of Gadopota. From a point in *taluk* Gadopota the offshoot Khutamara flows south-east. After flowing through the big *taluk* of Sitalkuchi the stream flows through *taluks* Atiabari Nepra, Dewankote Javduar, Javduar and Lalbazar into Sovena Baramasia. From here the stream takes the name of Gidari and under that name flows south and south-east and falls into the Singimari to the north-east of Barthar Hat.

Left bank tributaries

The Kumlai

The Kumlai, a branch of the Diana, used to meet the Jaldhaka on its left bank in the district of Jalpaiguri. Due to the shifting southwards of the current of the Jaldhaka the Kumlai flowed through the abandoned channel of the Jaldhaka and now joins the Jaldhaka to the north of *taluk* Kacha Khawa.

The Gilandi

The Gilandi is also a branch of the Diana. It enters the district in *taluk* Tengnamari and after flowing for about two miles in a south-easterly direction it turns south through *taluk* Fulbari and meets the Jaldhaka at Giladanga.

The Duduya before it enters the district at Dekalikuba Hat is formed by the combination of the waters drained from the Bhutan hills by the Kalua, the Barabank, the Dim Dima and the Tasati and also carries the united waters of the Gaikata, the Nanai, the Angrabasha and some other small streams. It flows south-eastwards, forming the boundary between the *parganas* of Mekhliganj and Matabhanga and falls into the Jaldhaka at Indrerkhuti. The Duduya.

The Mujnai takes its rise near Hantapara from the southern slope of the Bhutan water-shed and flows south through the western Duars receiving a current from the Torsa via Bura Torsa on its left and the Birpati on its right before it enters this district by the west north-west in between *taluks* Saulmari and Singjani. Formerly, this river known as the Mansai was the main river in this area until the Jaldhaka usurped its channel and reduced this river to the position of a left bank tributary. The oldest river flowing through this channel was the Mansai. The Mansai is shown in Rennell's map as a pretty big river rising high up in Bhutan. The stream is still known as the Mansai in Koch Bihar. Most of the rural people do not know of the name Jaldhaka and old folk songs refer to this river as Mansai only. The Mujnai

In its present position the Mujnai is a left bank tributary of the Jaldhaka and joins the latter a little north of Chokhekata.

The last tributary of the Jaldhaka on its left bank is the Dolong. It rises in the western Duars. It enters the district at a point about two miles and a half to the east of the entry of the Mujnai and flows south in between the *taluks* Saulmari and Ramthenga on the west and Lotapota on the east. It then turns south-east and flowing by the north-east of Dowaguri and east of Ruidanga, it turns south and cutting through the *taluks* Angarkata, Parodubi and Bhanurkhuti passes under the culvert on the old Matabhanga-Koch Bihar road, falls into the Jaldhaka (here called the Mansai) in *taluk* Dolangerkhuti. The Dolong

The Torsa or *toya-rosha* meaning "angry water" has been the "Sorrow of Koch Bihar" for over two centuries and still shows no signs of having been appeased. The river is so capricious that any description of its course may become only a matter of history by the time the ink is dry. It has so frequently changed its course during the last two hundred years that the entire northern portion of Matabhanga thana is a country laid waste by its caprice. Prosperous villages and marts that grew up on its banks have been devastated and abandoned and the whole country is full of innumerable abandoned channels of the river covered with sand banks. Rich fields of tobacco and paddy were made barren by thick deposits of sand. The Torsa

The river rises outside India and flows through Bhutan where it receives the name Amo Chu. The river enters Koch Bihar from the north between *taluks* Latabari in *pargana* Matabhanga and Bakshibos-Putimari in *pargana* Koch Bihar and flows nearly south with a few tortuous bends up to the north of Barabhita. Here the stream bifurcates and one branch goes eastwards under the name Torsa and the other stream goes southwards under the name Dharla. The eastern branch of Torsa proper now carries the main current. It passes by the south of the town of Koch Bihar and turning south-east it receives the Ghargharia on its right bank after passing Mahisbathan and falls into the Kaljani in *taluk* Balarampur west of Tufanganj town. The southern branch under the name Dharla flows on in various turns and bends and passing about two miles west of Dinhat town falls into the Singimari in *taluk* Balarampur. The southern branch is now a feeble current. Rennell in his map of 1779 gives the river approximately its present course. From 1952, however, the river had started moving east. Though the channel shown in the Survey map of 1927 has not been entirely given up, two abandoned channels to the east of this channel have started growing in strength. The "angry water" was infuriated when attempts were made to bridge it to make a road from Koch Bihar to Matabhanga. The road was breached in several places and a wooden bridge constructed over one of its abandoned channels was distorted and partly washed away. This road project had to be abandoned.

The Ghargharia

The only tributary of the Torsa is the Ghargharia which comes from the north-west. The Ghargharia is formed by the union of two small streams outside the district in the western Duars. It enters the district in *taluk* Sibpur by the north-east. After a flow of two miles by the east of the *taluk* it receives a small rivulet of the name Harinmara which rises in the western Duars. After receiving the Harinmara the Ghargharia flows south-west through Gopalpur Kankanguri, Mahisbathan and Dhalaguri and to the west of Baraibari where it receives another stream called the Betra. From Baraibari the Ghargharia flows east and then turns south through Ambari and Kaljani and receives the stream Bheri from the west. From the point of its junction with the Bheri the Ghargharia flows nearly south and after receiving another small stream the Lautara falls into the Torsa in *taluk* Panisala. Almost all the feeders of the Ghargharia are moribund now and the Ghargharia itself has very little water except during the rains. But as it has a narrow steep channel, it may become turbulent at the height of the monsoon.

The Kaljani

The Kaljani is formed in the western Duars by the combination of the Alaikuri and Dima and the combined waters take the name Kaljani after their junction at Alipur, the headquarters of the Alipur Duars subdivision of Jalpaiguri district. It enters Koch Bihar by the north of *taluk* Kholta. Almost at the point of its entry into the

district it receives on the right bank a small stream, the Gidari, which takes its rise in the western Duars. The Kaljani now flows east and on the left bank is Alipur. The river then turns south-east and flows in a tortuous course for about ten miles marking the boundary of the district with Jalpaiguri. It then receives the Gadadhar on its left. The Gadadhar is a small stream taking rise in the Buxa Duar and flows more or less southwards till its confluence with the Kaljani. The Kaljani now flows almost due south though in a serpentine course. A short way down, the Kaljani receives from the north another small stream, the Katajani which rises in the Duars. After the confluence of the Katajani in Bhelapeta the Kaljani passes by the west of Ghoramara Bunder in *taluk* Chilakhana and joins the Torsa in Panisala.

The Kaljani is a quick-flowing river with a formed bed and shelving banks. It has a good depth and is about 300 yards wide.

The Raidak enters the district from the Duars in between the *taluks* Dorko and Chentimari about ten miles east of the point where the Gadadhar joins the Kaljani. There are two rivers of the same name Raidak and the other Raidak flows east of this Raidak. Both flow for some distance almost parallel. The western stream takes its rise very high up in the Bhutan hills where it is called the Chin Chu. It flows southwards forming the border between the Buxa and Bhalka Duars. South-east of *taluk* Naratoli, about three miles from the border of Koch Bihar, the stream bifurcates and the western branch enters Koch Bihar at Dorko while the eastern stream enters by the west of *taluk* Khagribari and is known as Rangbarsuti. Both the streams unite in *taluk* Salbari. The eastern Raidak also comes down from the Bhutan hills and enters the district in between the *taluks* Khagribari and Rampur and after a course of about ten miles falls into the great Gadadhar or Gangadhar to the south of *taluk* Jaldhoa. The Raidak after its union with the Rangbarsuti in Salbari flows south-east through *taluks* Dhaladabari and Nakarkhana. The main current of the Raidak is now flowing through the Dipa which was originally a branch of the Raidak in *taluk* Bara Salmari about half a mile west of the confluence of the Rangbarsuti. The Dipa flowed for five miles south-east and joined the united currents of Dheri-Lohagir, another branch of the Raidak issuing forth from Dorko. Up to Dhalpal this river is called the Dheri being a current of the old Dheri which originally fed the Gadadhar. From Andaran Phulbari the river is called the Lohagir. In 1890 the Raidak opened through the Lohagir by the west of Banshiara II. Since then the current of the Raidak passed through this channel which was considerably augmented and thereafter it followed the course of the Dipa. The Dipa-Raidak now issues out of the original course of the Raidak in the north-east of *taluk* Dorko, and flowing by Andaran Phulbari, Chamta, Dipar-par and Rajarkhuti *taluks* on the right bank takes up the course of the old Raidak from the original mouth

of the Dipa. The subdivisional town of Tufanganj is on the right bank of this river. Ordinarily this river now goes by the name of the Raidak.

The Gadadhar

The Gadadhar is called the Sankosh or Suvarna-Kosha in its upper course and the Gangadhar in its lower course. This river was the dividing line between the western kingdom of Kamtapur and the eastern kingdom of Kāmarupa in the fifteenth century. The course has changed much since then and at present it flows for about ten miles within the district of Koch Bihar. It rises in Bhutan and flows through the Duars separating the western Duars from the eastern for the first five miles of its course through the Duars. For two miles it flows through the Gumma Duars and then enters Koch Bihar from the east in *taluk* Garbhanga. Here it receives a small stream, the Takulla, from the north. Flowing south-east and then south along the north-west of *taluk* Falimari it receives the Jorai, south of Garbhanga and the Raidak (eastern), south of Jaldhoa. The river then passes out of the district by the south of Chhat Bara Laokuti.

Bils and marshes

The district abounds in a large number of rivers and most of them have changed courses very frequently. There are thus a large number of abandoned channels of the rivers. While some of these establish a connexion with the river during the monsoon, others are completely insular accumulations of water. Due to the very heavy rainfall in the district, these remain full of rain water and local drainage. These *bils*, and marshes are used for growing fish and small tortoise and also help the cultivators by providing water for the steeping of jute. Some of the marsh products are *dhemp* or the seed of water-lily, *sola* (pith), shells used for making lime and *boro* paddy. The rainfall in the district being quite heavy and well distributed the cultivator hardly needs artificial irrigation for his crop. Occasionally during the tobacco season in winter the accumulated waters are lifted by *dons* for irrigating tobacco-fields. The principal *bils* are:

In Sadar subdivision—Hanskhawa, Bherbheri, Champaguri, Mara Lautara, Baisguri and Diyaler Chhara;

in Tufanganj subdivision—Sukanim, Garu-Marar Chhara, Dhadiyal, Durlaber-Chhara, and Bauser Chhara;

in Dinhat subdivision—Pakhihaga, Shashtia, Sakdal, Sheber-Chhara, Karala, Lauchapra and Sital Bil;

in Matabhanga subdivision—Panigram, Pakhihaga, Moranga, Baulbari, Bhogmara and Kawardara;

in Mekhliganj subdivision—Sarohati, Jagatber and some smaller *bils*.

¹Locally known as *chhara*, *dara*, *doba* or *kura*.

There are no springs in the district. The level of the sub-soil water is quite high. Ordinarily shallow wells are dug to a depth of about 15 to 20 feet. Water generally remains at level of 8 to 12 feet, but during heavy monsoon when the rivers are in spate the water level rises considerably and it is possible then to draw water from these wells without the use of a rope.

The soil of Koch Bihar is alluvial of very recent formation. It is mostly sandy and loose. There is hardly any good stiff clay found in the district. The surface soil is loamy in most part to a depth of about 3 feet and in some places even less than that and below is all bare sand. For the most part the soil of the district is of ash colour. Black loam is found only in the eastern part of the district bordering on the Goalpara district of Assam to the east of the Kaljani. Some black loam is also found in the region between the Jaldhaka and the Tista in the old valley of the Dharla. The district is not noted for seismic disturbances. However in 1897 an earthquake upheaved the beds of many *bils* and water-courses, and caused heavy silting.

GEOLOGY

The flora of the district may be enumerated under fourteen heads: (1) palms, (2) bamboos, (3) plantains, (4) fruit trees, (5) spices, medicinal plants and herbs, (6) creepers, (7) aquatic plants and woods, (8) ferns and orchids, (9) aroid plants, (10) fungi, (11) timber trees, forests trees and minor plants, (12) flowers, (13) minor grasses and jungles and (14) grains and vegetables.

FLORA

(1) Palms: The commonest tree of the palm variety is the *gua* or betel-nut palm. This is largely cultivated in this district with great success. There is hardly a well-to-do house-holder in the rural areas who has not got a betel-nut garden attached to his homestead. Two varieties are grown. One is called *deshwali* or indigenous and the other *bangla*. The *deshwali* variety flowers between the middle of August and the middle of September, and ripens between the early part of February and the beginning of April. The *bangla* variety flowers in June and July, and ripens between the middle of October and the middle of December. There is another variety of areca locally known as the *ram-gua*. The stem is rather slender and it grows in clusters. Not much use is made of the fruit. There is still another variety, the *cha-gua*. Its fibres are used to tie fishing engines made of bamboo. Date-palm (*Phoenix*) and ordinary palm (*tal*) and coconut palm are rare in the district and the few that exist do not bear any fruit. Recently, some attempts were made to grow coconut palm with partial success.

(2) Bamboos (*Bambusa stricta* and *Arundinacea*): Five different kinds of bamboos are found in the district, viz., (a) *Bara bansh* which has a thick stem in which the joints lie close. This is used for making posts and rafters for huts; (b) *Makla bansh* is a species indigenous to this district, particularly the northern area near the Himalayas. It is straight and slender and light in weight. It can be split easily and is not affected by moth; (c) *Jaota bansh* resembles

the *Makla* but is less straight and has less uniform fibres. It is chiefly used as fuel and occasionally for cheap hut building; (d) *Beru bansh* or prickly bamboo. This grows with thickly set branches containing sharp pricks and (e) *Nal-bansh* or reed bamboo is very slender and light. It looks like a giant reed and is very straight. The *nal* mentioned in early copper plate inscriptions to measure land was probably made of this variety of bamboo.

(3) Plantain: The plantain grows in abundance in this district and is even seen wild. There are twelve varieties found in the district, viz., (a) the common *biche kala*, locally called the *athia*, is sweet; (b) the *jhamu kala*, locally called the *shilathia*, is sweet but has plenty of seeds or stones; (c) the *kanch-kala* is used unripe for curries and when ripe is called *bherua*; (d) the *manua kala* is the same as *daye-kala* of lower Bengal; (e) the *chini-manua* is a native of this part and stands midway between *manua* and *champa* in flavour and taste; (f) the *champa-kala* is by far the most prolific; (g) the *malbhog* is the same as *martaman* of lower Bengal. The fruit attains a good size; (h) the *chini-malbhog* is intermediate between *malbhog* and *champa* in taste and flavour; (i) *bhartaman* is a speciality of this district. It has a green skin even when ripe, has a soft pulp and tastes well; (j) the *jahai-malbhog* is the same as *kanaibanshi* of lower Bengal. The fruit is of extraordinary size and the skin is green even when ripe; (k) the *jahai-kala* is a dwarf plant and grows small fruits in clusters and (l) the *ram-kala* plant has a thick tapering trunk. The fruits are about the same as *champa*.

(4) Fruit trees: Almost all the common fruit trees of Bengal grow here, but by far the most abundant is the jack-fruit or *kanthal* (*artocarpus integrifolia*). There are some mango trees (*maunifera indica*) but they are useless. The fruit is sour and of small size and before it is ripe it is infested with worms. *Dalim* or pomegranate (*punica granatum*) grows, but is very sour. Pine-apple or *anaras* grows profusely and is locally called *kanthal-supri*. *Paraya* (*carica papaya*) grows to good size and is tasteful. It is locally known as *tormul*. The *lata-kul* or plum shrub is a speciality here. It is a dwarf bushy tree growing small fruits which have almost the taste of *topa-kul* of lower Bengal.

(5) Spices, medicinal plants, herbs and weeds: Cinnamon, *teinata*, clove and pepper are grown. *Nim kutraj*, *nishinda*, *apang*, *bach*, *bhang*, *svet-makal*, *gulanchar* and *nata* are also found. The *shii* plants, both prickly and plain, are found. *Shata-mul* and *ananta-mul* are found in the jungle parts. The *kuchli* is found in plenty.

(6) Creepers: The chief of the cultivated creepers are the pumpkin and the gourd. Both grow well here and the pumpkin under proper manuring grows to enormous size. Cucumber is also grown, but strangely enough no *pulbul* (*patal*) nor *uchchhe*. Two varieties of *pan* are grown, the

gachh-pan and the *barui pan*. The wild creepers are innumerable. There is one wild creeper known as *dakini* which entwines big trees in the forest. The creeper contains a store of water. Cut with a sharp weapon it provides drops of water which can be drunk without harm.

(7) Aquatic plants and weeds: Lotus plants of two varieties—the *kumud* (red) and the *padma* (white) are commonly found. Other aquatic plants are the *kesur*, *pana*, *sheola*, *sola* (pith), *kalmi*, *susuni* and *dal* grass.

(8) Ferns and orchids: A few varieties of orchids grow wild on the trunks of trees. A parasitic growth going by the name of *gadda-pakhi* looks like a bird on its wings. It has a small rotund body with a few leaf-like growth on either side which gives it the appearance of a bird; hence the name. The commonest fern is the *dhenki sag*.

(9) Aroid plants: Arum of different kinds is grown and even grows wild. The *mankachu*, *panikachu* or *solakachu*, *ghatkachu* and *najikachu* are the chief varieties. There are several varieties growing wild with spots on their very big leaves. These are not eaten. The *garokachu* growing wild and cultivated as well has more than one root stock. It is a little fibrous but otherwise of good taste. *Ol* is also grown but the local preference is in favour of *kachu*.

(10) Fungi: Mushrooms of different kinds grow, of which two varieties are common. One has tapering head and the other with a flat head looks like toad-stool. A kind of mildew also grows on trees.

(11) Timber trees, forest trees and other minor plants: The banyan or *bat* (*ficus bengalensis*) and the *aswattha* or *peepul* (*ficus religiosa*) attain huge proportions in the loose soil of the country with abundant rainfall. *Pakur* tree similar to the *aswattha* but having smaller leaves are quite common and so also are two varieties of figs, the ordinary *dumur* and *mainadumur*. Of the timbers, *sal*, *siru* and *teak* are the chief. *Champ* also grows. Some fruit trees namely jack-fruit, *gab*, *iam* and mango also provide good timber. *Babla*, *khayer*, *dhawli*, *kat-gua* and *salti* provide hard wood. The last four are indigenous to this district and its neighbourhood. *Kadam* and *simul* also provide timber of an inferior kind. The rain-tree called *talli* grows extensively in this district and a species allied to the *krishnachura* bears nice red and yellow flowers. The *sonali* is another tree which produces beautiful golden yellow flowers. Among the minor trees mention may be made of *jiani*, *bhaibali*, *pitha-kumar*, *chhatyan*, *scora*, *chhitki* and *hiial*. Mulberry grows wild and on it *eri* worms were at one time reared. *Haritaki*, *bahera* and *amlaki* trees are found in the forests and also *tun*, *namri*, *pithali* and *siris*.

(12) Flowers: Koch Bihar may aptly be called the land of flowers, which grow profusely all over the land. Roses of different varieties attain large size and give fine fragrance. The *canna* grows very well as well as *magnolia*. *Nag-kesar*

or *nageswar* trees are very common and the Koch Bihar State planted these trees along the road in many places. The *ketaki* grows but does not flower.

(13) Minor grasses: The reed known as *khagra* grows profusely, specially near abandoned beds of rivers. More than one village in the district is named after the reed as Khagribari. A kind of aromatic grass smelling almost like lavender grows wild. Thatching grass grows in plenty. *Pundi* grass which is a favourite food for elephants is found in abundance, specially near marshy places, and gives the name Pundibari to several villages. *Hogla* also grows.

(14) Grains and vegetables: The district produces the following cereals—paddy of two varieties, the *bitri* or early and *haimanti* or winter paddy; two varieties of millets, the *china* and the *koan*: an inferior variety of wheat (with less of gluten); barley and maize. The following pulses are grown—*mug*, *masur*, *matar* (pea), *arhar*, *khesari*, *kulti* and *thakri*. Of the oil seeds, mustard, *til* and *tisi* are the ones generally cultivated. The fibre plants grown are jute and *mesta*, *shan* and *kukura* (rhea). Tobacco of two varieties is grown and fetches good cash money to the cultivator.

Among the garden vegetables potato, brinjal, radish, arum, onion and garlic are commonly grown. There is a special variety of potato which does not need much irrigation and has small tubers. It is sweeter than ordinary varieties and is very sticky. This variety is very much liked by the local people. Watermelons and musk melons are grown on the sand banks of rivers after they recede in autumn and winter.

FAUNA

Koch Bihar district at present has no large forest. The only real forest area in the district is the Patlakhawa forest east of the point where the river Torsa enters this district. Formerly, there had been larger forest areas which were gradually cleared for increasing cultivation. Owing to this clearance of forests and spread of human habitation, big animals have become more or less scarce in this district. The low bushy jungles in the areas where cultivation is not possible due to sand deposits by changes in the course of rivers still harbour some of the wild animals. Of the carnivorous animals only a small variety of tiger called *go-bagha* and the leopard called *hakra* are occasionally found in these areas. They seldom attack human beings. The leopard is a wily animal and enters villages near its lair in the night and carries away goats and small calves and fowls. A common prey is the village dog. Wild pigs are still quite numerous and they cause havoc to the crops. They usually reside in the ant-hills which abound in the barren bushy areas. Bears have become very rare and occasionally a barking deer or hog deer is seen in the riverine jungles. The *khatas* (tiger cat) and the civet cat are common. The mongoose is a very common animal which causes havoc to the plantain when ripe. The other animals found in this district are porcupines, otters, paddy field rats of very large size, mice and moles. There are no wild life sanctuaries and no record of enforcement of game laws.

Of the reptiles, snakes of different kinds are found. Pythons are common in the forests and jungles. The brown and the black cobra are also not rare. But strangely enough there are very few deaths from snake bite. Of the crocodiles, the *ghariyal* with long jaws is seen in the larger rivers. There is no man-eater variety. *Gosup* or lizard, *anjana*, *kaklash* or chameleon are very common. Frogs of various kinds are seen.

The names of different types of fish available in the district are given in the Appendix after the tables.

The climate of this district is characterized by a highly humid atmosphere and abundant rains, with the temperatures being seldom excessive. The cold season is from mid-November to the end of February. This is followed by the hot season from March to May. The period from June to about the beginning of October is the south-west monsoon season. October to mid-November constitutes the post-monsoon season.

Records of rainfall are available for 5 stations for periods ranging from 60 to 82 years. The details of the rainfall at these stations and for the district as a whole are given in table 1. The average annual rainfall in the district is 3,201.3 mm. (126.03"). The rainfall generally increases from the south-west to the north-east. About 70 per cent of the annual rainfall is received during the south-west monsoon season, June being the rainiest month. The variation in the rainfall from year to year is not large. During the fifty-year period from 1901 to 1950 the highest rainfall which was 149 per cent of the normal occurred in 1921 while 1908 was the year with the lowest rainfall which amounted to 71 per cent of the normal. There were six years when the rainfall was less than 80 per cent of the normal, no two of them being consecutive. At most of the stations, however, rainfall less than 80 per cent of the normal in two consecutive years has occurred once during this fifty-year period. From table 2 it will be seen that the rainfall was between 2,800 mm. and 3,800 mm. (110.24" and 149.61") in 31 years out of fifty in the district.

On an average there are about 102 rainy days (i.e., days with rainfall of 2.5 mm. or more) in a year. This number varies from 96 at Dinhata to 107 at Koch Bihar and Tufanganj.

The heaviest rainfall in 24 hours recorded at any station in the district was 403.3 mm. (15.88") on July 20, 1879 at Matabhanga.

The only meteorological observatory in the district is at Koch Bihar and the records of this station may be taken as representative of the meteorological conditions in the district as a whole. The cold season commences by about the middle of November when both night and day temperatures begin to decrease steadily. January is the coldest month of the

CLIMATE

Rainfall

Temperature

year with the mean daily minimum temperature at 10.4°C (50.7°F) and the mean daily maximum at 24.1°C (75.4°F). During cold spells in association with the passage of western disturbances during January and February, night temperatures may drop down to about 4°C (39.2°F). Temperatures begin to rise by about the beginning of March, and by April which is the hottest month the mean daily maximum temperature is 32.5°C (90.5°F), and the mean daily minimum is 20.2°C (68.4°F). Although the temperature by itself is not excessive, the dampness of the air makes the weather rather unpleasant. Even in the south-west monsoon period the day temperatures are not appreciably below those in summer, while the night temperatures are higher than those during summer. So even in this season, the weather is a little trying in between spells of rain. In the post-monsoon season temperatures decrease progressively.

The highest maximum temperature recorded at Koch Bihar was 39.9°C (103.8°F) in May, 1960, and the lowest minimum temperature was 3.9°C (39.0°F) on January 1, 1955.

Humidity

The atmosphere is highly humid throughout the year. During the months February to May the relative humidities are less, being only between 50 and 70 per cent.

During the period October to April the sky is generally clear or lightly clouded. In May, cloudiness increases. In the south-west monsoon season, the sky is heavily clouded or overcast.

Winds

Winds are generally light except for short spells during thunderstorms in the period March to May when they are stronger. In the post-monsoon and winter seasons the direction of wind is variable. In the summer season winds are mostly north-easterly or easterly but in the afternoons westerly winds blow on some days. In the monsoon months the winds blow from directions between north-east and south.

Special weather phenomena

Some of the cyclonic storms and depressions from the Bay of Bengal in the monsoon and post-monsoon seasons which move northwards into Bengal affect the weather, causing widespread heavy rain and high winds. Thunderstorms occur during the period March to October, being more common before the onset of the south-west monsoon and towards the end of the monsoon season. The thunderstorms in the period March to May are similar to the nor'westers and are sometimes violent. Fog occurs in the winter months on a few days.

Tables 2, 3 and 4 give the temperature and humidity, mean wind speed and frequency of special weather phenomena respectively.

GENERAL

TABLE 1
NORMALS AND EXTREMES OF RAINFALL

Station	Number of years of data	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Annual	Highest annual rainfall as % of normal year**	Lowest annual rainfall as % of normal year**	Heaviest rainfall in 24 hours* (mm.)	Date
Sadar	a 50	7.6	19.8	33.9	156.2	426.7	833.9	747.8	530.1	591.8	191.3	10.2	3.3	3,607.6	181 (1921)	63 (1930)	[306.6	1935 June 23
Dinabata	a 50	9.4	17.3	28.2	126.0	358.9	659.9	539.2	434.1	446.3	166.4	9.1	1.8	2,797.1	136 (1921)	69 (1940)	364.3	1896 Sep. 18
Matabhanga	a 50	7.9	18.3	33.3	113.0	344.9	741.7	633.8	533.7	492.2	146.6	11.2	2.5	3,129.4	141 (1921)	60 (1908)	403.3	1879 July 20
Methilganj	a 50	6.1	21.1	33.5	101.6	294.6	663.2	650.0	566.2	470.7	153.7	12.5	2.3	2,981.0	162 (1931)	59 (1908)	342.9	1950 June 12
Tufanganj	a 50	8.4	21.3	37.6	160.8	428.0	808.5	726.7	530.9	573.8	181.1	11.4	3.1	3,491.6	157 (1912)	75 (1901)	322.6	1897 Sep. 27
Koch Bihar	a b	7.9	19.8	34.3	131.5	370.6	741.4	669.5	529.0	514.9	168.8	10.9	2.7	3,201.3	149 (1921)	71 (1908)	..	..
		0.7	1.6	2.3	6.9	14.5	18.9	18.4	16.9	15.3	5.7	0.6	0.2	102.0				

(a) Normal rainfall in mm.

(b) Average of rainy days (days with rain of 2.5 mm. or more).

*Based on all available data up to 1956.

**Years given in brackets.

TABLE 2
NORMALS OF TEMPERATURE AND RELATIVE HUMIDITY (KOCH BIHAR)

Month	Mean daily maximum temperature		Mean daily minimum temperature		Highest maximum ever recorded		Lowest minimum ever recorded		Relative humidity	
	°C		°C		°C		°C		Per cent	
	Date		Date		Date		Date		0803	1730*
January	24.1	10.4	27.8	1954 Jan. 3	3.9	1955 Jan. 1	75	69		
February	26.5	12.4	31.1	1954 Feb. 21	5.9	1958 Feb. 16	70	57		
March	30.7	16.6	37.3	1958 Mar. 29	10.0	1958 Mar. 6	64	48		
April	32.5	20.2	39.4	1954 Apr. 29	13.9	1955 Apr. 18	65	56		
May	31.6	22.8	39.1	1957 May 28	16.7	1955 May 1	79	72		
June	31.1	24.4	35.6	1953 June 20	19.4	1955 June 1	86	80		
July	31.5	25.5	37.2	1956 July 14	22.8	1952 July 26	86	80		
August	31.6	25.6	36.3	1957 Aug. 21	22.2	1956 Aug. 19	86	82		
September	32.1	25.0	35.6	1953 Sep. 5	20.6	1950 Sep. 28	82	81		
October	30.9	21.7	36.1	1952 Oct. 24	15.1	1957 Oct. 27	78	78		
November	28.2	15.8	32.8	1950 Nov. 1	11.1	1953 Nov. 22	71	75		
December	25.3	11.6	29.4	1953 Dec. 3	6.7	1954 Dec. 30	73	72		
Annual	29.7	19.3					76	71		

*Hours I. S. T.

TABLE 3
MEAN WIND SPEED IN Km./Hr. (KOCH BIHAR)

Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Annual
2.7	3.7	4.5	7.1	6.6	5.5	5.0	4.3	4.0	3.4	2.3	2.3	4.3

TABLE 4
SPECIAL WEATHER PHENOMENA (KOCH BIHAR)

Mean No. of days with	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Annual
Thunder	0.4	0.0	1.1	1.7	4.4	1.8	1.1	1.3	3.3	0.9	0.0	0.0	16.0
Dust storm	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5
Squall	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9
Fog	1.7	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0

APPENDIX

TYPES OF FISH AVAILABLE IN THE RIVERS AND TANKS IN THE DISTRICT OF KOCH BIHAR

24

KOCH BIHAR

Group	Scientific name of fish	Local name of fish	Habitat
Carp (Major)	<i>Catla</i>	(Ham)	Rivers, Bils and Ponds
Do	<i>Labeo rohita</i>	(,,)	Do
Do	<i>Labeo calbasu</i>	(,,)	Do
Do	<i>Cirrhina mrigala</i>	(,,)	Do
Do	<i>Cirrhina reba</i>	(,,)	Do
Do	<i>Labeo bata</i>	(,,)	Do
Do	<i>Labeo gonius</i>	(,,)	Do
Do	<i>Labeo nandina</i>	(,,)	Rivers
Do	<i>Barbus spp.</i>	(,,)	Do
Carp (Minor)	<i>Chela bacila</i>	(,,)	Rivers, Bils and Ponds
Do	<i>Rasbora daniconius</i>	(,,)	Rivers and Ponds
Do	<i>Amblypharyngodon mola</i>	(,,)	Ponds and Bils
Do	<i>Aspidoparia morar</i>	(,,)	Rivers
Do	<i>Barbus Sarana</i>	(,,)	Rivers, Bils and Ponds

GENERAL

25

Do	<i>Barbus ticto</i>	(,,)	• Pati	Do
Do	<i>Barbus Stigma</i>	(Cuv & Val)	Do	Do
Do	<i>Barilius spp.</i>		• Bol	
Cat fishes	<i>Heteropneustes fossilis</i>	(Bloch)	Singi	Bils and Ponds
Do	<i>Clarias</i>	<i>Batrachus</i> (Linn)	Magur	Do
Do	<i>Callichrous</i>	<i>spp.</i>	Pabda	Bils
Do	<i>Wallago attu</i>	(Bloch Schn)	Boal	Rivers, Bils and Ponds
Do	<i>Eutropichthys</i>	<i>Vacha</i> (Ham)	Bacha	Rivers
Do	<i>Channa</i>	<i>garua</i> (,,)	Ghaira	Do
Do	<i>Pangasius</i>	<i>pangasius</i> (,,)	Pangas	Do
Do	<i>Silonia</i>	<i>Silondia</i> (,,)	Silong	Do
Do	<i>Mystus</i>	<i>spp.</i>	Tangra	Rivers, Bils and Ponds
Do	<i>Mystus</i>	<i>seenghala</i> (Sykes)	Aier	Rivers and Bils
Do	<i>Rita</i>	<i>rita</i> (Ham)	Ritha	Do
Do	<i>Bagarius</i>	<i>bagarius</i> (,,)	Bagair	Rivers
Do	<i>Ailia</i>	<i>colia</i> (,,)	Banspata	Rivers and Bils
Perch like fish	<i>Nandus</i>	<i>nandus</i> (,,)	Bhada	Bils and Ponds
Do	<i>Batis</i>	<i>batis</i> (,,)	Do	Do
Do	<i>Ambassis</i>	<i>spp.</i>	Chanda	Do
Do	<i>Anabas</i>	<i>tetradon</i> (Bloch)	Koi	Do

Group	Scientific name of fish	Local name of fish	Habitat
Pearl like fish	<i>Glossogobius</i>	giris (Ham)	Rivers, Bils and Ponds
Do	<i>Trichogaster</i>	spp.	Bils and Ponds
Snake headed fishes (Murrels)	<i>Opisthophthalmus</i>	Maribus (Ham)	Do
Do	O.	Sriatus (Bloch)	Do
Do	O.	punctatus (,,)	Do
Do	O.	gachua (,,)	Do
Garfish	<i>Belone</i>	Gencila (,,)	Rivers, Bils and Ponds
Loaches	<i>Lepido-dephalichys</i>	Spp.	Rivers and Bils
Feather Back	<i>Natopterus</i>	natopterus (Pallas)	Rivers, Bils and Ponds
Do	N.	chitola (Ham)	Do
Herrings and Anchovies	<i>Hilsa</i>	ilisha (,,)	Rivers
Do	<i>Goniistius</i>	spp.	Rivers, Bils and Ponds
Do	<i>Engraulis</i>	telara (,,)	Rivers
Mud Eels	<i>Amphiprionus</i>	cuchia (,,)	Bils, Rivers and Tanks
Spiny Eels	<i>Mastacembelus</i>	spp.	Do
Do	<i>Rhynchobalatta</i>	spp.	Do
Fresh water Mullet	<i>Mugil (Liza)</i>	Corula (,,)	Bils and Ponds

CHAPTER II

HISTORY

No prehistoric artefacts have been found in Koch Bihar. Situated to the east of the Karatoya which was the traditional boundary between North Bengal and Assam or Kāmarūpa, the early history of Koch Bihar has to be sought in the early history of Assam. The name Assam is of recent origin. In early times the territory was known as Prāgyotisha which is mentioned in the *Rāmāyana*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Vishnu Purāṇa* and the *Harivamśa*. There is no mention of Kāmarūpa in any of these works. According to *Yoginītantra*, Prāgyotishvara was triangular in shape, 100 *yojanas* in length and 80 in breadth. Yuan Chwang estimates the circumference at 10,000 *li* or 1,867 miles. Kāmarūpa extended from Kalesvara to the Svetagiri and from Tripura to Nilapurvata which is the name of Kamakhya hill mentioned in the *Kālikāpurāṇa*. Yuan Chwang placed it to the east of Karatoya while the *Yoginītantra* includes in the country the Brahmaputra Valley together with Rangpur and Koch Bihar.¹

PREHISTORY AND
PHOTO-HISTORY

According to the *Kālikāpurāṇa*, Lord Vishnu in his Boar incarnation begot a child on Mother Earth. This child was Naraka who was brought up by Siradhvaja Janaka while Mother Earth in disguise acted as his nurse. After the child came of age, Mother Earth revealed to him the story of his birth and Lord Vishnu came and took the child to Prāgyotisha, where by grace of Lord Vishnu Naraka defeated the Kiratas and was ordained king of Prāgyotisha by Lord Vishnu. Later Naraka fell into evil ways and was killed by Lord Vishnu in his Krishna incarnation and his son Bhagadatta was made king. Bhagadatta fought in the Kurukshetra war on the side of the Kauravas and was killed. All later historical kings of Kāmarūpa or Prāgyotisha have claimed descent from Bhagadatta. It appears that the western part of the original territory of Prāgyotisha came to be known as Kāmarūpa in later times and this is hinted at in Canto IV (verses 81 and 83) of the *Raghuvamśam* by Kālidāsa. There are several legendary kings of Kāmarūpa like Mahiranz Dānav, Hatak Asur, Sambar Asur, Ratna Asur, etc. The kingdom of Kāmarūpa finds mention for the first time in epigraphic records in the Allahabad Pillar inscription of Samudra Gupta² who reduced the kingdom into a vassalage. For how long Kāmarūpa remained under the suzerainty of the Guptas is not known.

The last king of Gupta lineage who appears to have held some kind of sway over Kāmarūpa was Mahāsena Gupta³ as the Apsad inscription⁴ states that he fought a battle with

¹D. C. Sircar, *Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India*, Calcutta, 1980, pp. 88-87.

²J. F. Fleet, *Gupta Inscriptions*, No. 1, p. 6.

³J. F. Fleet, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

Susthitavarman on the bank of the Lauhitya or the Brahmaputra. The last vestige of the Gupta empire seems to have been wiped out by the rise of Yaśodharman whose Māndāsor inscription,¹ states that he conquered or subjugated the country as far as the Lauhitya. We have no knowledge how long the empire of Yaśodharman lasted and how its end came. The Gauda king Śaśāṅka appears to have attempted the subjugation of Kāmarūpa,² but probably he did not succeed. The Nidhanpur³ copper plate inscription of Bhāskaravarman shows that the kingdom of Gauda was for a time subjugated by Bhāskaravarman, the king of Kāmarūpa in the middle of the seventh century. Shortly after the death of Bhāskaravarman there was a Mlechchha line of kings in Kāmarūpa beginning with Śālasthambha. The dynasty founded by Śālasthambha ruled Kāmarūpa till about the end of the tenth century. Thereafter this dynasty became extinct with the death of Tyāgasimha. The people thereafter elected Brahmapāla of the dynasty of Bhagadatta. The Śālasthambha line of kings had their capital at Haruppesvara whose identity has not been established. The dynasty founded by Brahmapāla shifted their capital to Durjaya. But the Puspabhadra copper plate of the reign of Dharmapāla of the dynasty of Brahmapāla mentions Kāmarūpanagara as the seat of the king.⁴ This Kāmarūpanagara was most probably the same as Kāmtā or Kāmtāpur whose ruins lie in the district of Koch Bihar at Gossanimari. Dharmapāla is the last of the Pāla line of kings of Kāmarūpa (dynasty of Brahmapāla) whose epigraphic record has been discovered. The local tradition of Koch Bihar is that the last king of the line was Pāla-raia (apparently either he was Dharmapāla himself or one of his dynasty, whose name has been lost in the tradition) whose fort was at Baeduar. Local tradition says that Dharmapāla was succeeded by Mānik Chandra, who abdicated in favour of his son Gopī Chandra. The latter became an ascetic and was succeeded by Bhavachandra. This tradition finds no support in history. The history of the Chandras has only recently come to light with the discovery of a number of copper plate inscriptions. It appears from these epigraphic records that the Chandras had no connexion with the Pāla line of kings of Kāmarūpa and the Koch Bihar tradition of succession of Gopī Chandra after Dharmapāla may be dismissed as a myth. The identity of Kāmarūpanagara with Kāmtāpur may be accepted tentatively on the evidence of the Maldah Madrasa Inscription⁵ and the Kantaduar Inscriptions⁶ of Allauddin Hussain Shah.

¹Ibid., pp. 142-48.

²The Dobbi Copper plate of Bhāskaravarman, *vide Epigraphia Indica*, xix, 287.

³P. Bhattacharya, *Kamarupa Sasanaśālā*, p. 1ff.

⁴Ibid., p. 177, Verse No. 20.

⁵Samsuddin Ahmed, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, Vol. IV, No. 110.

⁶Ibid., No. 132.

It is not known how the rule of the dynasty of Brahmapāla came to an end. It is probable that the last of the Pāla kings, having died without an heir there was anarchy for a time, during which the country was overrun by the Koch, Mech, Garo and Bhot tribes. The condition was favourable for the rise of upstarts and so a person of humble birth somehow acquired power and proclaimed himself king and assumed the name of Niladhvaja. Niladhvaja made Kāmtāpur his capital. It is generally believed that the fortifications of Kāmtāpur were the creation of Niladhvaja. But if we accept the identity of Kāmarūpanagara and Kāmtāpur the possibility of the fortifications being the work of the Pāla line of kings cannot be ruled out. Niladhvaja might have added to the fortifications and erected the temple of Kāmateśwari, the presiding deity of Kāmatā. Niladhvaja assumed the title of Kāmateśwara or Kāmateśwar, the lord of Kāmatā.

Niladhvaja was succeeded by his son Chakradhvaja. According to tradition he discovered the skeleton of the arm of Bhagadatta which was carried by a kite from the Kurukshetra battle-field and lay buried under a *simul* tree. Chakradhvaja enshrined the amulet tied to the arm in the temple of Kāmateśwari. Chakradhvaja was succeeded by Nilāmbara who was the last of this line of kings. His dominions included the greater part of Goalpara district, the whole of Koch Bihar and Rangpur districts and portions of Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur districts with the southern frontier at Ghorāghāt where he built a fort. Nilāmbara constructed a highway from Kāmtāpur to Ghorāghāt now forming part of the road between Koch Bihar, Rangpur and Bogra. According to tradition current in Koch Bihar, Nilāmbara had five queens of whom one was involved in an intrigue with a son of his minister. The king had the young man killed and made his father eat his flesh. The minister Sashi Patra thereupon went to the court of Allauddin Hussain Shah and urged him to invade the territory of Nilāmbara. A Muslim army invaded Kāmtāpur and it is said that after a siege of 12 years they took the fort by a stratagem. It is difficult to believe the tradition because in the coins of Allauddin Hussain Shah issued in 800 A.H. (A.D. 1402-94) during the first year of his reign he is styled as conqueror of Kāmrū and Kāmtā.¹ According to tradition Kāmtāpur was conquered in A.D. 1498. The Muslim army was led by Ismail Ghazi. The city was destroyed and the whole kingdom as far as Haio was permanently annexed. The general administration was put under Hussain's son named Dulal Ghazi. Nilāmbar was taken prisoner but he escaped on the plea of bathing in the *Kajali Kura* tank. The cage in which he was being taken was abandoned in a place which is still called Pinjarir Jhar.

¹Catalogue of coins in the Indian Museum, Vol. II, p. 173, Coin No. 175. Catalogue of Indian Coins, British Museum, p. 148, Coin No. 123.

The Muslim army, however, could not keep the Kāmtā kingdom for long. The son of Hussain Shah who was left in charge of the operations made a rash attack on Assam. The Ahom king of eastern Assam retreated without fight but when the rains came and the country was flooded, he issued forth from his retreat and made a fierce attack on the Muslim army, which was routed and the son of Hussain Shah was either killed or had to make a dishonourable retreat.

Bāra Bhuinyās

After the expulsion of the Muslim army the Kāmtā kingdom was engulfed in anarchy and split up into petty principalities under small chiefs who are collectively known as Bāra Bhuinyās in the local tradition.

Rise of the
Koch kings

During the disturbed condition of the country subsequent to the expulsion of the Muslims, the Koch chiefs were gradually becoming powerful. One of them was Hajo. He had two daughters, Hira and Jira who were married to one Hariya Mandal, a resident of Chikangram of the Kuntaghat *narāna* of Goalpara district. Jira gave birth to two sons, Chandan and Madan. Hira gave birth to two sons, the elder of them was called Sisu and the younger Bisu. Accounts differ as to who became the first king of the Koch line in Koch Bihar. One account states that Chandan was proclaimed king after the defeat and death of Hariya Mandal and after his death Bisu became king under the name of Visvasimha. According to this account the era Raja Saka was counted from the date of accession of Chandan, i.e., from 1432 *śakābda* or A.D. 1510. According to Khan Chowdhury Amanatulla Ahmed, the author of *The History of Koch Bihar* (in Bengali) there is no authentic record to show that Chandan was the first king of the line. According to him, the first king was Visvasimha but his date of accession is given as Raja Saka 24, which leaves 24 years as unexplained. According to the latter view Visvasimha ascended the throne in A.D. 1496 as an independent monarch. Allaiddin Hussain Shah is known from his coins to have ascended the throne in A.D. 1493. Even if we assume that Kāmtāpur was conquered in the very first year of his reign, three years is too small a period for the expulsion of the Muslim army and the rise of Visvasimha to power as the independent monarch of Koch Bihar. Harendra Narayan Ray Chowdhury gives the date of accession of Visvasimha as A.D. 1510 which appears more probable. E. A. Gait in his *History of Assam* assigns A.D. 1515--1540 as the duration of Visvasimha's reign.

Visvasimha

Visvasimha on assuming power got himself anointed as king according to Hindu rites and assumed the title of Kāmateśwar. At his coronation Sisu who assumed the name Sishyasimha held the umbrella over his head. Sishyasimha was given the title of Raikat and is said to be the ancestor of the Raikat family of Baikunthanur. Visvasimha is said to have subjugated Bhutan and made the Devaraja pay him tribute. He also attacked the Ahom territory but fell short of provisions and retreated. According to tradition,

Visvasimha attacked Nasarat Shah of Gaur but with what result, is not clear. Muslim historians are silent about this attack. Visvasimha moved his capital from Chikangram to Koch Bihar where he built a fine city.

Visvasimha died in about 1533 and was succeeded by his second son Naranarayan, who was also known as Mallanarayan, after a civil war with Nar Singh who fled to Morung and then to Bhutan. Mallanarayan set upon a policy of conquest and in this he was greatly assisted by the valour of his brother Sukladvaja who was nick-named Chila Rāi as his attack on the enemy was swift as the kite. He attacked the Ahom king and forced him to submission and payment of tribute. He conquered Tripura, Kachar, Dimru and other places. It is claimed that his sway extended over Chittagong to the sea. Naranarayan and Sukladvaja erected the present temple of Kamakhya which bears inscriptions testifying to the fact. The name of Naranarayan is associated with the building of the fort of Narayanpur and other public works, patronage of learning, Vaishnava reformation, etc. He had a mint and his coins are still in existence.

Naranarayan
Mallanarayan

Till old age Naranarayan had no son and he sat on the throne with Raghudev, son of Sukladvaja, on his lap. Raghudev gradually believed that he would be king after Naranarayan. But the birth of a son to Naranarayan in late years shattered the hopes of Raghudev. After the death of Sukladvaja Raghudev rebelled and looted Boda. War started, but in the end Naranarayan made peace with his nephew by giving him the territory to the east of the Sankosh river in 1581. During the reign of Naranarayan there was a terrible earthquake in Koch Bihar, as mentioned by Ralph Fitch who visited the place at the time. He says about Koch Bihar in general:

"I went from Bengala into the country of Couche, which lieth 25 days journey northwards from Tanda. The King is a Gentile, his name is Suckel Counse; his country is great, and lieth not far from Couchin China (sic!) for they say they haue pepper from thence. The port is called Cacchegate. All the countrie is set with Bambos or canes made sharpe at both endes & driuen into the earth, and they can let in the water and drowne the ground above knee deepe, so that men or horses can passe. They poison all the waters if any wars be. Here they haue much silke and muske, and cloth made of cotton. The people haue eares which be marueilous great of a span long, which they draw out in length by deuises when they be young. Here they be all Gentiles, and they will kill nothing. They haue hospitals for sheepe, goates, dogs, cats, birds and for all other living creatures."

Lakshmi-
narayan

Naranarayan died in 1584 and was succeeded by his son Lakshminārāyaṇ. Soon after the accession of Lakshminārāyaṇ, Raghudev proclaimed himself as independent king of Kāmarūpa and minted coins in his own name. This led to a war between Lakshminārāyaṇ and Raghudev. There may be a reasonable assumption that Kāmarūpa or a part of it was under the partial occupation of the Kings of Koch Bihar. Raghudev sought the alliance of Isa Khan, and Lakshminārāyaṇ first sought the friendship of the Ahom king in his war against Raghudev and failing to secure that he sought alliance of Man Singh, the Mughal Subahdar of Bengal. This led to a partial submission of the kingdom of Koch Bihar to the Mughals. Parikshitnārāyaṇ, the son of Raghudev, had rebelled against his father and was sheltered by Lakshminārāyaṇ. He utilized Lakshminārāyaṇ to assassinate Raghudev. Later, however, Parikshitnārāyaṇ himself rebelled against Lakshminārāyaṇ and looted Baharbund. Lakshminārāyaṇ sought the help of the Mughal Subahdar Islam Khan and with his help attacked and defeated Parikshitnārāyaṇ who died in 1616. He had planned to get hold of Parikshitnārāyaṇ's territory. But in the meantime Islam Khan died and the new Subahdar Kashem Khan called him to Dacca and practically made him a captive. He was then sent to Agra. He met Jahangir on February 25, 1618 and was honoured by him. He then appears to have accepted the suzerainty of the Mughal Emperor and was released. He died in 1627.

Birnārāyaṇ

Lakshminārāyaṇ was succeeded by his son Birnārāyaṇ. In his later years Lakshminārāyaṇ had appointed one of his sons Mahinārāyaṇ to be Nazir-deo. This appointment in later years brought much distress to the people of Koch Bihar as will be narrated later. He transferred his capital to Atharokotha. He was very much given to pleasures and his reign is hardly of any significance. He died in 1632 and was succeeded by his son Prānnārāyaṇ who reigned from 1633 to 1666.

Prānnārāyaṇ

In 1657 when old Emperor Shah Jehan lay ill and the empire was on the point of breaking up in fratricidal war, Prānnārāyaṇ seized the opportunity of the weakness of the central Mughal power and grabbed the Mughal possessions in Kāmarūpa and even occupied Dacca. Mir Lutfulla, the Subahdar of Kāmarūpā, was defeated by Prānnārāyaṇ and took shelter in Gauhati. After Aurangzeb was seated on the throne of Delhi, Mir Jumla, the Governor of Bengal was directed to attack Koch Bihar and recover the lost Mughal possessions. Mir Jumla marched upon Koch Bihar at the head of a large army and Prānnārāyaṇ fled and sought refuge in Bhutan hills. Mir Jumla occupied Koch Bihar and with the help of Vishnunārāyaṇ, the eldest son of Prānnārāyaṇ who had embraced Islam, sent a general to seize the king. But the attempt proved unsuccessful. Mir Jumla occupied the capital of Koch Bihar on December 19, 1661 and the city's name was changed to Alamgirnagar. He settled the revenue of the State at ten lakhs Narayani

rupees and left Isfandiar Beg in charge of Koch Bihar and proceeded to conquer Assam. The Mughal Officials were tyrannical and due to their tyranny the people rose in revolt and Prānnārāyaṇ took the opportunity to return to his kingdom at the head of an army and drove the Mughals away. Mir Jumla was coming back to reconquer Koch Bihar but fell ill and died. In 1664 Shaista Khan was marching upon Koch Bihar when Prānnārāyaṇ offered submission to the Mughal Emperor and offered an indemnity of five and a half lakh of rupees which reached Delhi on December 6, 1665. The Mughal court took this as a tribute.

Prānnārāyaṇ was a poet of some reputation and a good musician. He wrote a treatise on the science of music. He was versed in Sanskrit grammar and literature, and there was a royal Pandit Sabhā known as Pancharatna Sabhā. Kaviratna wrote a history of the royal dynasty in Sanskrit entitled *Rājakhandaṃ*. Under the inspiration of the king, Śrināth Brāhman translated the *Mahābhārata* in verse and wrote a Sanskrit Kāvya entitled *Draupadī-Swayamvara*. The manuscripts of the *Adi Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata* and that of *Draupadī-Swayamvara* are preserved in the State library at Koch Bihar.

Prānnārāyaṇ constructed or repaired the temple of Būneśwar. The present temple of Gossanimari was erected by him. He brought masons from Delhi and began the construction of the present temple of Jalpes but could not finish it.

Towards the end of his reign the boundaries of the kingdom of Prānnārāyaṇ extended to Tajhat and Baharband *parganas* in the south, Bhaskarpur near Khutaghat (in the district of Goalpara) on the east and Bhatgaon in Morang on the west.

Modnārāyaṇ succeeded his father Prānnārāyaṇ in 1666. From his reign started the influence of Bhutan on Koch Bihar. Immediately after the death of Prānnārāyaṇ, there was an attempt on the part of the sons of Mahinārāyaṇ, the Nazir, to seize the throne. Mahinārāyaṇ dissuaded them and put Modnārāyaṇ on the throne but retained all the powers in his hands. Modnārāyaṇ then intrigued and won over the army to his side and slew some of the creatures of Mahinārāyaṇ and banished some officers who had sided with him. A sentence of death was passed on Mahinārāyaṇ. This led to an open conflagration. The sons of Mahinārāyaṇ secured the help of Bhutan and fought with the king. Mahinārāyaṇ was killed in this war. This war was ended by Modnārāyaṇ agreeing to make Yainārāyaṇ, son of Mahinārāyaṇ, the Nazir. In the midst of these troubles Modnārāyaṇ died in 1680 without a male heir.

When Modnārāyaṇ died Jayanārāyaṇ made a bid to seize the throne for himself with the assistance of the Bhutias. The capital was looted, some people were killed and others were made prisoners. At this juncture the Raikats of Baikunthapur advanced with an army. The Bhutias retreated and the

Vasudev-
narayan

Raikats Jagadeva and Bhujadeva placed Vāsudevnārāyaṇ, the third son of Prānnārāyaṇ, on the throne. As soon as the Raikats retired, Jayanārāyaṇ re-asserted himself with the assistance of the Bhutias and Vāsudevnārāyaṇ was killed in a skirmish. He then declared himself king. Eight days later the Raikats again advanced with force and a fierce battle followed, in which Jayanārāyaṇ was defeated and he fled to the hills. The Raikats then placed Mahindranārāyaṇ, grandson of Vishnunārāyaṇ and great-grandson of Prānnārāyaṇ, on the throne.

Mahindra-
narayan

Mahindranārāyaṇ was only five years old when he was made king. Of the three sons of Nazir Mahinārāyaṇ, Darpanārāyaṇ had died earlier, and the remaining two sons constantly harassed the peace of the country. Two years later both the Raikats died and Mahindranārāyaṇ became helpless. Officers of the State in distant provinces gave up their allegiance. The Mughals invaded the territory from Ghoraghat and district after district fell to the Mughals. In this crisis, the ministers of the king made peace with Jayanārāyaṇ and he was re-appointed Nazir. Jayanārāyaṇ made a half-hearted attempt to stem the advance of the Mughals but failed. The Mughals, commanded by Prince Iradat Khan, occupied the three central *chaklas* of Fatepur, Kazirhat and Kakina. The officers in charge of Tepa, Manthona Jhori, and some other *parganas* became traitors, accepted Mughal suzerainty and received *zamindari sanads* from the Mughals in their own names. Panga and even Baikunthapur accepted Mughal suzerainty and became Zamindars under the Mughals paying a nominal tribute. Jayanārāyaṇ died in 1691 and his son Sāntanārāyaṇ was reluctantly made Nazir by the king. Mahindranārāyaṇ died after a nominal reign of 11 years in 1693.

Rupnarayan

Immediately after the death of Mahindranārāyaṇ Sāntanārāyaṇ aspired to become the king. But as he had accepted service under the king as Nazir, he was considered ineligible to sit on the throne and his brother's son Rūpnārāyaṇ was raised to the throne while another brother Satyanārāyaṇ became the Dewan of the realm. With the death of Mahindranārāyaṇ ended the main line of kings and Rūpnārāyaṇ started a dynasty which descended from Mahindranārāyaṇ, the first Nazir.

The Mughals renewed their attack on Koch Bihar territory and attacked Boda, Patgram and Purvabhag. In 1711 a treaty was concluded whereby Mughal suzerainty over these *chaklas* was accepted and these *chaklas* were taken in *ijara* in the *benami* of Nazir Sāntanārāyaṇ. Rūpnārāyaṇ was the last king of Koch Bihar who held sway over western Kāmarūpa. From his time the territory of Koch Bihar was confined practically to the present boundaries of the district. Rūpnārāyaṇ transferred his capital from Atharokoṭha to Guriahati constituting more or less the present town of Koch Bihar.

After a reign of 21 years Rūpnārāyaṇ died in 1714. Upendranārāyaṇ succeeded his father Rupnarayan in 1714, supported both by the Nazir and the Dewan. During his reign, the Bhutias whose territory was confined to the foot of the hills began to make inroads into the plains and Upendranārāyaṇ could not resist them. Dinanārāyaṇ, the son of Dewan Satyanārāyaṇ was adopted by Upendranārāyaṇ who was childless till then. Dinanārāyaṇ wanted a written document naming him as heir to the throne. This the king would not agree to do as he still hoped for a son. The frustrated Dinanārāyaṇ then intrigued with the Mughal Fouzdar of Rangpur and Satyanārāyaṇ deserted the king. The Mughals invaded the territory and in a battle near Jhar Simheswar to the south of Mekhliganj Upendranārāyaṇ was defeated. The kingdom of Koch Bihar fell to the Fouzdar who made Dinanārāyaṇ ruler of Koch Bihar in 1736. Upendranārāyaṇ and his Khasnavis, Gauriprasad Bakshi, however, collected a fresh army and secured the help of Bhutan. The Nazir Sāntanārāyaṇ who was living in Rangamati after the defeat was informed of the treaty with Bhutan and he was asked to collect an army. Upendranārāyaṇ then proceeded to give battle to the Mughal Fouzdar. The Fouzdar was attacked by the king and Gauriprasad from the west, by a Bhutan army from the north and by the Nazir's army from the east. After a bloody battle the Fouzdar was defeated and fled towards Rangpur. Dinanārāyaṇ died in exile.

Upendra-
narayan

Upendranārāyaṇ built a palace at Dhaliabari. In old age a son Devendranārāyaṇ was born to Upendranārāyaṇ of the younger queen. Upendranārāyaṇ died in 1763.

In 1763 the boy Devendranārāyaṇ was installed as king, seated on the lap of Chhatra Nazir Lalitnārāyaṇ. Upendranārāyaṇ had brought a Raḍhiya Brāhman Sātānanda Goswami to be the Rājguru (king's preceptor). After his death his son Rāmānanda Goswami became the Rājguru. Rāmānanda had started intrigues against the king and the Maharani had passed orders for his expulsion. Rāmānanda then conspired with the Nazir deo and secured one Rati Sarmā to assassinate the boy king. Rati Sarmā went up to the palace where the boy king was playing and asked for a glass of water. One of the attendants of the king went to fetch water and Rati Sarmā beheaded the boy king with a sword which he had kept concealed in his clothes. Rati Sarmā then ran with the severed head to a temple and placing it before the goddess sat feigning meditation. He was found there and cut into pieces by the king's men.

Devendra-
narayan

The Chhatra Nazir was then Rudranārāyaṇ. He wanted to make his son Khagendranārāyaṇ king and a civil war became imminent. The situation was saved by the pluck of Gaurināth Karji, a young officer who spoke to the Chhatra Nazir that he was the chief of the descendants of the Visvasimha and no one could stop what he intended to do. But if after what had happened he made his own son king, people would say that he had complicity in the killing of

Devendranārāyaṇ as Itati Saruā came from Balarampur (the residence of the Nazir) to do the dastardly act. The Chhatra Nazir then withdrew his proposal and it was decided to make the third son of Dewan Kharganārāyaṇ (who was the brother of Upendranārāyaṇ) the king. This third son of Kharganārāyaṇ was Dhairyendranārāyaṇ.

Dhairyendra-
narayan

In 1765 Dhairyendranārāyaṇ was installed with popular approval. But the sovereign power of the king of Koch Bihar had been shattered. The Nazir became too powerful and began to collect revenues of Zilla Matabhanga and Zilla Gitaldaha directly on the plea of meeting the military expenditure. The influence of the Bhutias had increased so much that an officer of Bhutan was permanently stationed at Koch Bihar with an army and his consent had to be taken in important matters of administration. When the news of the assassination of Devendranārāyaṇ reached Bhutan, the Devaraja of Bhutan had Ramananda Goswami seized and carried to Punakha hung like a beast from a bamboo. He was executed there. Pensu Toma was sent to Koch Bihar as the representative of Devaraja with a company of soldiers. He began to interfere in the affairs of the State. In 1769 Devaraja attacked Vijaypur near the Morang territory to the north of Purnea. According to a previous treaty he invited the king of Koch Bihar to participate in the enterprise. Dewan Ramnārāyaṇ as commander-in-chief of the Koch Bihar army participated in the action and it is said that a large amount of booty fell into his hands. He delivered only a small fraction to the king. Ramnārāyaṇ had also been interfering in the purely household matters of the king and gave a sister of the king in marriage without his consent. Dhairyendranārāyaṇ gradually became apprehensive of his growing powers and dismissed him from office and issued orders to confiscate his *jaigir*. Orders were also passed to imprison him. But Ramnārāyaṇ anticipated the move and escaped to Bhutan and with Bhutia help reoccupied his position. Thereupon Dhairyendranārāyaṇ decided to kill him and decoyed him to his room unattended, feigning illness. He then attacked Ramnārāyaṇ unawares and killed him. This happened in 1769. The murder of Ramnārāyaṇ who was friendly with the Devaraja, was considered an affront to the authority of Bhutan and a plot was hatched to depose Dhairyendranārāyaṇ. There used to be an annual feast at Chekakhata where officers of Bhutan and Koch Bihar exchanged presents. That year Dhairyendranārāyaṇ and all his advisers were asked to join in the feast. Dhairyendranārāyaṇ was suspicious and so was his minister Gaurinandan Mustafi. The latter went to ascertain the real intention of the Bhutias and was bluffed. Pensu Toma himself came to Koch Bihar and swore in the name of Mahakal that no harm was intended. The doubts thus removed, Dhairyendranārāyaṇ attended the feast. There he was made captive and carried first to Buxa and then to Punakha, the capital of Bhutan and kept in confinement.

Rājendranārāyaṇ was raised to the throne by the Bhutias and after a nominal reign of two years he died in 1772. Pensu Toma tried to put Bijendranārāyaṇ, son of Ramnārāyaṇ, on the throne. But the Chhatra Nazir Khagendranārāyaṇ*, acted quickly. He installed Dharendranārāyaṇ, son of Dhairyendranārāyaṇ on the throne. His army drove Pensu Toma out of Koch Bihar. The Devaraja then sent an army 20,000 strong and the Nazir Khagendranārāyaṇ was defeated and the Bhutias occupied Koch Bihar. The officers of the State removed the king, the dowager queen and the Maharani to Panga and themselves escaped to Rangpur. Nazir Khagendranārāyaṇ then approached the East India Company for assistance.

Rajendra-
narayan

The East India Company was watching with concern the growing power of the Bhutias close to their borders. The appeal for help by the Nazir Khagendranārāyaṇ was readily admitted and even while the discussions for the treaty were going on, Charles Purling, the Collector of Rangpur, detained a company of soldiers of the Company under Lieutenant Dickson to Koch Bihar. This force occupied Gitaldaha, Dinnata, Baladanga and Mowamari and reached Koch Bihar where there was severe fighting before the fort fell to the English on December 21, 1772. On January 12, 1773, Nazir Khagendranārāyaṇ and Raja Dharendranārāyaṇ met Purling, the Collector of Rangpur. After the fort of Koch Bihar was occupied by the English army, Darpadeva, the Raikat who had taken the side of the Bhutias, was cut off from them. Captain Jones with a detachment of soldiers marched from Mowamari through Lalbazar to Patgram and on January 28, 1773, there was a fierce battle between the forces of Darpadeva and Captain Jones, in which the Company's soldiers inflicted severe losses on the army of Darpadeva which fled in disorder. After this the fort of Rahimganj was occupied by Captain Jones. Darpadeva now took up a position in the jungles with about 1,500 soldiers known as Sanyasis. As the force under Captain Jones was not sufficient, a battalion from Dinajpur was directed to engage the Sanyasis on the borders of Purnea and Tirhoot and another force under Captain Stuart was sent to check the oppression of the Sanyasis. In the meantime Captain Jones passed through Sanyasikata, Devgaon and reached Dalingkote. With a view to protecting the north of Koch Bihar, Purling sent Lieutenant Dickson to occupy Chekakhata on February 12, 1773, where a body of Sanyasis were reported to be causing depredations. The Sanyasis retired before the advancing army of the East India Company and Lieutenant Dickson occupied Buxa. After this the Company's forces were contemplating an advance on Lakshmi Duars but were ambushed at night and had to retreat to Chekakhata. In the meantime (April 5, 1773) the treaty between the young Maharaja Dharendranārāyaṇ and the East India Company was finalized. The text is given in Appendix B. Purling then sent a letter to Bhutan, pointing out the consequences

TREATY WITH
THE EAST INDIA
COMPANY

*Son of Chhatra Nazir Rudranarayan.

of an escalation of the war and requested the return of Dhairyendranārāyaṇ, failing which an attack would be made on Tasisudan. The Dharmarāja of Bhutan (the de jure king) now asserted himself and sent a reply to Purling expressing his desire for peace. Soon after this the fortunes of the Devaraja changed. The Dharmaraja published a proclamation dismissing him and a new Devaraja was appointed. Thereafter a peace was concluded between Bhutan and the East India Company on April 25, 1774.

In consequence of the treaty with Bhutan, Dhairyendranārāyaṇ was released from captivity. He was received by Khagendranārāyaṇ, the Nazir at Chekakhata. But the king was bitter with the Nazir on hearing the terms of the treaty with the East India Company in the name of his young son, whereby his sovereignty had suffered. He was a changed man and oppressed by melancholy. He did not take the reins of Government in his hands and let Dharendranārāyaṇ continue as king. Dharendranārāyaṇ died in 1775 and thereafter Dhairyendranārāyaṇ formally assumed royalty for the second time but hardly concerned himself with the affairs of the State. He died in 1780 leaving his only heir, Harendranārāyaṇ, his son, born in 1780.

Harendra-
narayan

Harendranārāyaṇ was 3 years 9 months old at the time of his installation. Maharani Kāmteśwarī produced a will of Dhairyendranārāyaṇ appointing her the guardian of the minor king and administratrix of the realm during the minority of the king. There were two parties in the State. One consisted of the Rajguru Sarvānanda Goswami, who had Maharani Kāmteśwarī completely under his control, and the Khasnavis Kāsikānta Lahiry, and the other consisted of the Nazir deo Khagendranārāyaṇ. For thirteen years the peace of the country was disturbed by the mutual jealousies of the contending parties. The successive Collectors of Rangpur who were Political Agents for Koch Bihar also complicated matters by injudicious interference. At the coronation the Nazir Khagendranārāyaṇ seized the Royal seal and misused it to proclaim his son as Yuvarāj. Later at the instance of the Collector of Rangpur the seal went to the Maharani and Sarvananda Goswami misused the seal to get large rent-free estates. Skirmishes between the men of Sarvananda Goswami and the Nazir were frequent occurrences. The dispute between the two parties culminated in the kidnapping of the young king and the Maharani by Marichimati Aye, the aunt of the Nazir. For this purpose she employed the Sanyasis on payment of bribe. When the news of the kidnapping of the king reached the East India Company a force was sent to rescue the king and a Commission was appointed to inquire into the affair and other disputes. The Commissioners were Lawrence Mercer and John Lewis Chauvet. Amongst other findings the Commission observed that the interference in the affairs of Koch Bihar by the Collectors of Rangpur had not been guided by any policy and had therefore done more harm than good. As a result of this recommendation Henry Douglas was appointed Commissioner for Koch Bihar. Harendranārāyaṇ assumed the reins of

administration in 1801 and reigned till 1839 when he died at Vārānasi. In 1800 the East India Company stopped the coining of *Nārāyaṇi ruppee*, once and for all.

Harendranārāyaṇ was succeeded by Sivendranārāyaṇ, his eldest son, who was installed king. The new king devoted his attention to the internal administration of the State and established a Dharma Sabha for discussion of the affairs of the State. Some improvement in the administration of justice was made in his reign. The temple of Śiva at Dhaliabari which was begun in the reign of Harendranārāyaṇ was finished and Siddhināth Śva was installed. The only important event in his reign was a boundary dispute with Bhutan, which was amicably settled by the arbitration of Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjiling. As Sivendranārāyaṇ had no son, he adopted, with the consent of the Governor General, Karindranārāyaṇ, a grandson of Nazir Khagendranārāyaṇ. The boy died in 1845 and the king adopted Chandranārāyaṇ who was named Narendranārāyaṇ and succeeded him after his death at Vārānasi in August 1847.

Sivendra-
narayan

Narendranārāyaṇ was about 6 years old at the time of the death of his adoptive father, Sivendranārāyaṇ. He was installed on August 23, 1847. Sivendranārāyaṇ had expressed a wish that the East India Company's Government should take care of his son's education. The Dewan and the Maharani were averse to an English education of Narendranārāyaṇ. But the Government took strong steps and intimated the Maharani that the boy king would receive his education either at Dacca or at Krishnanagar as the Maharani might choose. The boy king was sent to Krishnanagar and admitted to the Collegiate School in the 4th class. From Krishnanagar the king was sent to Wards Institution at Calcutta and remained under the guardianship of Raja Rajendra Lal Mitter, the eminent scholar till 1859, when he attained majority. In 1859 a topographical survey of Koch Bihar was made by J. G. Pemberton. His map is the first regular map of the country now extant. In 1861 Narendranārāyaṇ established the first English School in the State and named it after Colonel Jenkins, the Agent of the Governor General. In 1862 the Government recognized the title of Maharaja Bahadur and granted Narendranārāyaṇ a *Sanad* conferring the title. In 1862 Lt. Sadler surveyed the communication system between Koch Bihar and Jalpaiguri. Narendranārāyaṇ died on August 6, 1863.

Narendra-
narayan

Nripendranārāyaṇ was a little over one year old at the time he succeeded to the throne of his father. During his minority the charge of the administration was placed in the hands of a Commissioner appointed by the Governor. From this reign the administration of Koch Bihar enters the modern phase. The first Commissioner was Colonel J. C. Haughton. The Commissioner of Koch Bihar was vested by the Government with full authority of the ruler of the State. On

Nripendra-
narayan

¹The Administrative reforms introduced by the Commissioner will be found in chapters X and XI.

November 4, 1864 a Deputy Commissioner, H. Beverage, was also appointed. The Maharaja attained majority and was formally installed on November 8, 1883. The charge of the administration was formally made over to him by the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal.

The modernization of the administration started by the Commissioners was continued by the Maharaja after assumption of power and the administrative machinery of the State was created on the model of a British district. On March 6, 1878 Maharaja Nripendranārāyan was married to Srimati Suniti Devi, daughter of Babu Keshab Chandra Sen, the celebrated Brahmo reformer and founder of the Nava Bidhan Samaj. In 1887 the construction of the new palace was completed. In 1893 the Koch Bihar State Railway was opened for traffic. Maharaja Nripendranārāyan died in 1911 and was succeeded by his eldest son Rājārājendranārāyan. Rājārājendranārāyan died in 1913 and was succeeded by his brother Jitendranārāyan. Jitendranārāyan married Srimati Indira Devi, daughter of the Gaekwad of Baroda. He died in 1921 and was succeeded by his minor son Jagaddipendranārāyan during whose minority the dowager queen acted as regent. Jagaddipendranārāyan was the last Maharaja of Koch Bihar. On September 12, 1949, he signed the Instrument of Accession. He transferred the State to India on August 28, 1949. The Agreement through which this was done is given in Appendix A.

APPENDIX A

COOCH BEHAR MERGER AGREEMENT

AGREEMENT MADE THIS Twenty-eighth day of August 1949 between the Governor-General of India and His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar.

WHEREAS in the best interests of the State of Cooch Behar as well as of the Dominion of India it is desirable to provide for the administration of the said State by or under the authority of the Dominion Government;

IT IS HEREBY AGREED as follows:—

Article 1

His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar hereby cedes to the Dominion Government full and exclusive authority, jurisdiction and powers for and in relation to the governance of the State and agrees to transfer the administration of the State to the Dominion Government on the 12th day of September 1949 (hereinafter referred to as "the said day").

As from the said day the Dominion Government will be competent to exercise the said powers, authority and jurisdiction in such manner and through such agency as it may think fit.

Article 2

His Highness the Maharaja shall continue to enjoy the same personal rights, privileges, dignities and titles which he would have enjoyed had this agreement not been made.

Article 3

His Highness the Maharaja shall with effect from the said day be entitled to receive for his life-time from the revenues of the State annually for his privy purse the sum of Rupees eight lakhs fifty thousand free of all taxes. After him the privy purse will be fixed at Rupees seven lakhs only. This amount is intended to cover all the expenses of the Ruler and his family, including expenses on account of his personal staff, maintenance of his residences, marriages and other ceremonies, etc., and will neither be increased nor reduced for any reason whatsoever.

The Government of India undertakes that the said sum of Rupees eight lakhs fifty thousand shall be paid to His Highness the Maharaja in four equal instalments in advance at the beginning of each quarter from the State Treasury or at such Treasury as may be specified by the Government of India.

Article 4

His Highness the Maharaja shall be entitled to the full ownership, use and enjoyment of all private properties (as distinct from State properties) belonging to him on the date of this agreement.

His Highness the Maharaja will furnish to the Dominion Government before the 15th September 1949, an inventory of all the immovable property, securities and cash balances held by him as such private property.

If any dispute arises as to whether any item of property is the private property of His Highness the Maharaja or State property, it shall be referred to a judicial officer qualified to be appointed as a High Court Judge, and the decision of that officer shall be final and binding on both parties.

Article 5

All the members of His Highness' family shall be entitled to all the personal privileges, dignities and titles enjoyed by them whether within or outside the territories of the State, immediately before the 15th day of August 1947.

Article 6

The Dominion Government guarantees the succession, according to law and custom, to the gaddi of the State and to His Highness the Maharaja's personal rights, privileges, dignities and titles.

Article 7

No enquiry shall be made by or under the authority of the Government of India, and no proceedings shall lie in any Court in Cooch Behar, against His Highness the Maharaja, whether in a personal capacity or otherwise, in respect of anything done or omitted to be done by him or under his authority during the period of his administration of that State.

Article 8

(1) The Government of India hereby guarantees either the continuance in service of the permanent members of the Public Services of Cooch Behar on conditions which will be not less advantageous than those on which they were serving before the date on which the administration of Cooch Behar is made over to the Government of India or the payment of reasonable compensation.

(2) The Government of India further guarantees the continuance of pensions and leave salaries sanctioned by His Highness the Maharaja to servants of the State who have retired or proceeded on leave preparatory to retirement, before the date on which the administration of Cooch Behar is made over to the Government of India.

Article 9

Except with the previous sanction of the Government of India no proceedings, civil and criminal, shall be instituted against any person in respect of any act done or purporting to be done in the execution of his duties as a servant of the State before the day on which the administration is made over to the Government of India.

In confirmation whereof Mr. Vapal Panguuni Menon, Adviser to the Government of India in the Ministry of States has appended his signature on behalf and with the authority of the Governor-General of India and Lieutenant Colonel His Highness the Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan Bhuj Bahadur, Maharaja of Cooch Behar, has appended his signature on behalf of himself, his heirs and successors.

JAGADDIPENDRANARAYAN

Maharaja of Cooch Behar

V. P. MENON

Adviser to the Govt. of India
Ministry of States

APPENDIX B

ARTICLES OF TREATY BETWEEN THE HONOURABLE
EAST INDIA COMPANY AND DHARENDRANARAYAN
RAJA OF COOCH BEHAR

Dharendranarayan, Raja of Cooch Behar, having represented to the Honourable the President and Council of Calcutta the present distressed State of the country, owing to its being harassed by the independent Rajas, who are in league to depose him, the Honourable the President and Council, from a love of justice and desire of assisting the distressed, have agreed to send a force, consisting of four companies of *sipahies*, and a field-piece, for the protection of the said Raja and his country against his enemies; and the following conditions are mutually agreed on:

1st.—That the said Raja will immediately pay into the hands of the Collector of Rangpur Rs. 50,000 to defray the expenses of the force sent to assist him.

2nd.—That if more than Rs. 50,000 are expended, the Raja will make it good to the Honourable the English East India Company, but in case any part of it remains unexpended that it be delivered back.

3rd.—That the Raja will acknowledge subjection to the will of the English East India Company upon his country being cleared of his enemies, and will allow the Cooch Behar country to be annexed to the Province of Bengal.

4th.—That the Raja further agrees to make over to the English East India Company one-half of the annual revenues of Cooch Behar for ever.

5th.—That the other moiety shall remain in the Raja and his heirs for ever, provided he is firm in his allegiance to the Honourable United East India Company.

6th.—That in order to ascertain the value of the Cooch Behar country, the Raja will deliver a "hustabud" (revenue statement) of his district into the hands of such person as the Honourable the President and Council of Calcutta shall think proper to depute for that purpose, upon which valuation the annual *Malguzari* (assessment) which the Raja is to pay, shall be established.

7th.—That the amount of Malguzari settled by such person as the Honourable East India Company shall depute, shall be perpetual.

8th.—That the Honourable East India Company shall always assist the Raja with a force when he has occasion for it, for the defence of the country, the Raja bearing the expense.

9th.—That this treaty shall remain in force for the space of two years, or till such time as advices may be received from the Court of Directors empowering the President and Council to ratify the same for ever.

This treaty signed, and sealed, and concluded, by the Honourable the President and Council at Fort William, the fifth day of April 1773, on the one part, and by Dharendra-narayan Raja of Cooch Behar, at Behar Fort, the 6th Magh 1179, Bengal Style, on the other part.

CHAPTER III

PEOPLE

There had been no attempt before 1871-72 to enumerate the people living in the tract of land now forming Koch Bihar district. The first enumeration of 1871-72 was not a simultaneous count but was spread over three or four months beginning in November 1871 and ending in February 1872. This census disclosed a total population of 5,32,565 persons. The next census was in 1881 when the total population was found to be 6,02,624, of whom 3,11,678 were males and 2,90,946 were females. The increase in the total population was 70,059, or 13.15 per cent. The third census was in 1891 when the total population was ascertained to be 5,78,868. This showed a decrease of 23,756 or 3.9 per cent from the population of 1881. Of the total population of 5,78,868 in 1891, 3,02,457 were males and 2,76,411 were females. The decrease of population between 1881 and 1891 was mainly due to two epidemics of cholera and partly, to migration to the tea gardens of western Duars. The population further fell by 1901 and the census taken that year shows the total population as 5,56,116, or a fall of 4.1 per cent. The additional factors responsible for the decline between 1881-1901 were unhealthy climate and its scarcity of food in 1897. There was a slight increase of the population by 1911 as the census taken that year showed a population of 5,91,012. The increase was 25,896 or 4.58 per cent. The two successive censuses of 1921 and 1931 showed the population to remain almost static. The population found in the 1921 census was 5,90,599 and the 1931 census found the population as 5,89,053. The decrease in absolute number was 413 and in percentage 0.07 between 1911 and 1921 and between 1921 and 1931 these figures were 1,546 and 0.26 per cent respectively. The slight fall in 1921 was due to the influenza epidemic. In 1931 there was a further decline owing to the cholera and small pox epidemics of 1928 and 1929. The population started increasing from 1941 and increase has continued till now. In 1941 the total population was 6,38,703; the decade increase was 49,650 or 8.43 per cent. In 1951 the population was 6,68,949; the decade increase was 30,246 or 4.74 per cent. In 1961 the population was 10,19,806; the decade increase was 3,50,857 or 52.45 per cent. In 1971 census the total population has been found to be 14,12,148, the decade increase being 3,92,342 or 38.47 per cent.

The number of females for every one thousand males from 1881 to 1971 was as follows: In 1881, 932; in 1891, 900; in 1901, 881; in 1911, 873; in 1921, 877; in 1931, 886; in 1941, 879; in 1951, 855; in 1961, 890; in 1971, 919. It will be seen that the number of females for every one thousand males has steadily decreased from 1891 to 1911, there was a slight increase between 1911 and 1931

followed by another fall between 1931 and 1951. In the two decades from 1951 to 1971 there has been an increase but the figure is still below the figure of 1881.

The table in Appendix I gives the growth of the population from 1901 to 1961.

Literacy

The 1971 census found that 21.99 per cent of the population was literate. The average for West Bengal was 33.05 per cent. Of the five North Bengal districts, viz., Darjiling, Jalpaiguri, West Dinajpur, Koch Bihar and Malda the percentage of literacy of Koch Bihar population was the third. Darjiling district with a literacy percentage of 32.90 and Jalpaiguri with 24.22 were more literate than Koch Bihar. There has been a slight increase in literacy in Koch Bihar in the decade 1961-1971. In 1961 census the total percentage of literates was 21, the males constituting 31.44 per cent and females 9.27 per cent. In 1971, the total percentage rose to 21.99; amongst the males the literacy remained almost static at 31.43 per cent but amongst the females it rose to 11.71 per cent.

Immigration and Emigration

The total population according to 1961 census was 10,19,806 and of this number 7,21,927 persons were born in the district. Thus about 298 thousand persons were born outside the district and of this number a little over 252 thousands were born in Pakistan. These came mostly from the adjacent districts of Rangpur and that portion of Jalpaiguri district which was partitioned off from India by the Radcliffe Award. This territory now forms part of Bangladesh. Of this 298 thousands, 171 thousands were males and 127 thousands were females. In this migrant population, females work out at about 700 per thousand. This lower ratio has significantly lowered the average male-female ratio of the whole district. The migrants from other States of India were: 18,269 from Bihar; 6,396 from Assam; 1,860 from Rajasthan; 1,596 from Uttar Pradesh; 397 from Orissa; 312 from Madhya Pradesh; 244 from the Punjab and 176 from Andhra Pradesh.

During the ten-year period from 1951 to 1961 the immigrants into the district numbered 11,603 while the emigrants numbered 33,969. There has been a net loss of population to the extent of 22,366. The maximum movement of population has been from and to Jalpaiguri district. While 7,265 immigrated from Jalpaiguri, 15,362 emigrated to that district. There has been also quite large emigrations to the industrial districts of 24-Parganas, Calcutta, Howrah, Hugli and Bardhaman; the numbers being 4,852, 4,352, 1,236, 1,284, and 1,792. This is what is to be expected of a district which has hardly any industrial potential at present and which has had a 220 per cent rise in population in the thirty-year period from 1941 to 1971. Agriculture has been extended to the utmost and yet there is no employment for all.

Bengali is the principal language of the district spoken by more than 96 per cent of the population. The next major language of the district is Hindi returned by 3.13 per cent of the people in 1961. The Hindi speakers are mostly people of upper India coming to this district for trade and commerce. They are mainly concentrated in the towns and in the trade centres. Koch Bihar town has a little more than 6,000 speakers of Hindi, while about 4,000 are found in each of the subdivisional headquarters Matabhanga, Tufanganj and Dinahata. During the period between 1911 and 1931 the number of Hindi speakers fell gradually, but since 1931 the number is on the increase and a sharp rise by 139 per cent was recorded between 1951 and 1961. This was mainly due to the integration of the erstwhile Koch Bihar State into India which has attracted more businessmen from Upper India.

Though the total number of persons speaking Rabha is only 1,595 (in 1961 census), yet it occupies the third position in the district. The return of the Rabha mother-tongue by so many people in Koch Bihar in the 1961 census is rather strange as previously it was thought that the language was dying out. There was considerable uncertainty about the real nature of the Rabhas even in 1891 when F.A. Gait wrote the census report of Assam. Gait remarks that in lower Assam it was asserted that the Rabhas were an offshoot of the Garos while in Kamarupa and Darrang it was considered, that they were Kacharis on the road to Hinduism. It was certain that they were members of the great Bodo family, but it was not equally clear whether the Rabhas were more closely allied to any one tribe of the family than to another. Gait further noted that in the Garo hills there were five sections of the Rabhas. After 1951 there was a migration of some tribal people from Mymensingh district (now in Bangladesh) to Koch Bihar. It is not unlikely that these Rabhas came into Koch Bihar during that migration. Next to Rabha comes the Kurukh tongue of the Oraons. They are mostly concentrated in Koch Bihar and Dinahata subdivisions. The total number of Santali speakers was only about 400 and found only in Koch Bihar and Dinahata subdivisions. The following table gives the numbers and percentages of speakers of Bengali and Hindi and their variations from 1911 to 1961.

Mother-tongue		1961	1951	1941	1921	1911
Bengali	(a)	980,413	650,811	572,773	567,819	566,898
	(b)	+50.64	+13.62	+0.87	+0.16	
	(c)	96.14	97.29	97.24	96.14	95.92
Hindi	(a)	32,165	13,441	10,441	19,519	21,258
	(b)	+139.31	+28.73	-46.51	-8.18	
	(c)	3.15	2.01	1.77	3.30	3.60

Note: (a) absolute figures;

(b) percentage variation;

(c) percentage to total population.

Bilingualism

The Bengali speaking section of the district has shown apathy to learn a second language. Only 2 per cent have returned as knowing another language. Amongst the females the percentage is only 0.5. The males of tribal people, the Rabhas, the Oraons and the Santals mostly know another language. Amongst the Urdu speakers about 5.24 per cent know another language. The total percentage of bilingual people shown in 1961 census was 2.77.

The local Bengali dialect

In the 7th Century when the Chinese pilgrim Yuan Chwang visited Kāmarupa he found the local speech slightly different from that of Magadha or Middle India. This slight difference is still maintained and the dialect of the Bengali spoken still has some points of dissimilarity with the standard dialect of Bengali. This is no place to enter into a detailed inquiry into the subject but the following broad points may be noted.

When Yuan Chwang visited Kāmarupa the language of Eastern Magadha was not very much different from the language of Bengal or Kāmarupa. Since that time the Bengali language has grown out of the several *apabhramsa* dialects arising out of Eastern Magadhi. Thus the Bengali dialects spoken in different parts of Bengal as well as Kāmarupa, which included Koch Bihar, did not grow out of a single primitive Bengali dialect but grew out of the several *apabhramsus* of Magadhi. During the course of the evolution of its dialect Koch Bihar came under two influences, one of south-west Bengal and the other of Mithila. It is significant that the influence of Assam or eastern Bengal on its dialect is negligible.

The following are its principal traits:

- (i) The pronunciation of the labio-velars are slightly more backward, influenced by an open pronunciation of the associated simple vowel.
- (ii) Only three nasal sounds are pronounced, (a) the sound of *n* (ন), (b) the sound of *ṇ* (ণ) only if followed by a sonant, otherwise it is changed to the dental *n* and (c) a nasalised accented vowel.
- (iii) Intervocalic aspirates are uniformly de-aspirated.
- (iv) The only sibilant pronounced is *ś* (স).
- (v) The palatals have not acquired the character of fricatives as in Eastern Bengal or Assam.
- (vi) *ph* (ফ) and *bh* (ভ) have not acquired any spirant value as in 'fan' and 'van'.
- (vii) An initial *r* (র) is hardly pronounced, but an initial vowel occurring in the middle of a sentence very often gets a *r* (র) prefixed. Thus *Rām bādu ukil* becomes *āmi bādu rukil*.

(viii) There is difficulty in pronouncing *ḍ* (ড়) but it is not confused with *r* (র) as in some parts of East Bengal and Assam. *L* (ল) is pronounced correctly.

(ix) The only vowel correctly pronounced is long *ā* (আ). The short *a* (অ) is given an open pronunciation. This trait introduces a vowel harmony, thus *kathā* (কথা) becomes *kātā* (কাতা). Except *ā* (আ) all other simple long vowels occurring etymologically are pronounced short. The diphthongs *e* (এ) and *o* (ও) are more or less pronounced correctly, the former often getting the oblique sound; *ai* (আই) and *au* (আউ) are pronounced long and open so that they acquire the values *āi* and *āu*.

These peculiarities may now be illustrated: (i) The pronunciation of the labio-velars cannot be shown in writing. (ii) The words *Cheng* (চক্) and *Bengdubi* (বক্‌ডুবি) are correctly pronounced, but *tāmāku* is shortened to *tānku* (তান্‌ক্). The first person verbs, e.g. *karo* (করো) *pāro* (পারো) show this nasalization. (iii) *Kathā* (কথা) becomes *kātā* (কাতা), *māḥete* (মাহেতে) becomes *māṭat* (মাটত), *ek-khānā* (একখানা) becomes *eknā* (একনা), *uhāke* (উহাকে) becomes *uāk-uyāk*. But initial aspirates are not changed, thus *ghar* (ঘর), *ghi* (ঘি), *khāy* (খায়), *Chhāwā* (ছাওয়া), *jhar* (জহর), *bhāi* (ভাই) and *phelāil* (ফেলাইল). (iv) This needs no illustration. It is the common characteristic of standard Bengali. In Assamese all sibilants were changed into *h* (হ) which is very characteristic of that speech. This shows that Koch Bihar dialect was not influenced by Assam. (v) In Assam and some East Bengal dialects *ch* (চ), *chh* (ছ), *j* (জ) and *jh* (ঝ) have acquired the sounds of *ts*, *s*, *dz* and *z*. In Koch Bihar no such trait is found. (vi) and (vii) have been illustrated. (viii) Where *ḍ* has the sound of (ড়) it is well pronounced, but where it has the sound of (ḍ) it is pronounced midway between (র) and (ড়). Thus *dāng* (stick) and *bhāṇḍi* (bear) are correctly pronounced but *guḍi* (গুড়ী) is pronounced something like *gurrhi*. (ix) has been illustrated.

Morphology: The sentence '*sampattir je hissā mui pāim tāk mok den*' (সম্পত্তির জে হিসসা মূই পাইম তাক মোক দেন) (property's share I will get that me give) illustrates the *k* (ক) affix of accusative (*tāk* তাক্) and dative (*mok* মোক্). The sense of the ablative is not very clear in the language. An example may be '*bārir kachhot āsiyā sunil bājnā habār dharchhe*' (বাড়ীর কাছোৎ আসিয়া সুনিল বাজনা হবার ধরছে) (from near the house on coming heard instruments being played). *Gāchhot guā phelāil*; *Mui nadit māchh dhāro* (গাছোৎ গুমা ফেলাইল; মূই নদিৎ মাছ ধরে) (I from river fish catch). These last two examples may be explained on locative case too. Standard Bengali in these cases will use *barir kachh theke* (বাড়ীর কাছ থেকে), *gachh haite guā* (supāri) *phelila* (গাছ হইতে গুমা ফেলিল) and *āmi nadi haite machh dhari* (আমি নদী হইতে মাছ ধরি). Since no auxiliary word like *theke* (থেকে) or *haite* (হইতে) is used in the Koch Bihar dialect the *t* (ত্) ending must be taken as ablative ending.

Communities

The two principal communities in the district are the Hindus and the Muslims. According to the census of 1971, 78.4 per cent of the population were Hindus and 21.1 per cent were Muslims. In 1961, 76.05 per cent of the population were Hindus and 23.77 per cent were Muslims. In 1891 the percentage of Hindus was 69.53 and that of the Muslims was 30.10. In 1951 the percentage of Hindus was 70.90 and that of the Muslims was 29. Thus in the sixty-year period from 1891 to 1951 the ratio of Hindus to Muslims was almost static. In the two decades 1951-1971 the growth rate of the Hindus has far outstripped the growth rate of the Muslims in the district. This is clearly the result of migration following the partition. Persons professing other religions are Buddhists—49 persons, Sikhs—21 persons, Christians—1,076 persons and Jains—1,524 persons.

Castes and tribes

The Rajbanshis who are Scheduled Castes are by far the largest class in the district. In a total population of 10,19,806 (1961 census) the Rajbanshis numbered 4,18,893 or about 41 per cent of the total population. The total number of Hindus being 7,75,514, the Rajbanshis who are all Hindus are 54 per cent of the Hindu population. The next largest group of Scheduled Castes are the Namasudras numbering 23,429. The other principal Scheduled Castes are the Bagdi or Duley 7,015 persons, the Chamar (or Charmakar, Mochi, Muchi, Rabidas, Ruidas, Rishi) 6,109 persons, Jalia Kaibartta 6,619 persons, Jhalo Malo or Malo 3,434 persons. The total number of Scheduled Tribes in Koch Bihar district is 8,809 or about 0.8 per cent of the total population.

The Rajbanshis being by far the largest group in the district their manners and customs call for special mention. The Rajbanshis are a Hinduized tribe. But to what tribe they belonged and what their origin was is far from clear. The usual lines of investigation are, firstly, the language, secondly, anthropometric measurements, facial and bodily features, colour of the skin, etc. and thirdly, the manners and customs. But investigations along none of these lines lead to any conclusive result. Firstly, the language was pure Bengali and in morphology no difference is found. Indeed it appears that the Rajbanshis took to speaking the Bengali language even in the Old Bengali period (circa twelfth/thirteenth century). Secondly, anthropometric and anthropological investigations have led different authorities to arrive at different conclusions. These may be briefly noted. Buchanan-Hamilton, who visited eastern India in the beginning of the nineteenth century, was of the opinion that the Rajbanshis were Koch and were aborigines of Kamarupa. He thought that the *Pani-Koch*, a small tribe of food gatherers who lived in the forests of Parbat Jowar, were of the same stock as the Koches or Rajbanshis. Hamilton, however, thought that the Koches were different from the Garos, Meches and Rabhas. W. W. Hunter in the *Statistical Account of Koch Bihar* stated that the Koches were connected with the neighbouring tribes of Meches and Kacharis and were of trans-Himalayan extraction. Dalton, on the other hand, drew a marked distinction between the Koches and

their aboriginal neighbours, based mainly on colour. The Meches being yellow were consequently referred by him to the Mongolians of Indo-Chinese stock of which the Garos were the prototype. The Koches were black, or very dark, and are to be connected with the Dravidians. Beverley in his *Census Report* of 1872 stated thus: "The Koch people appear to be entirely out of their element amongst the Lohitic tribes. From all that I have been able to glean regarding them, it seems likely that they originally belonged to the dark people whom they resemble and who were driven out of the Gangetic Provinces when the Kingdoms of Mithila and Magadha were established by the lunar and solar races, rather than to the northern Turanian or Indo-Chinese family, to which they are so unlike. In short I consider that they belong to the Dravidian stock." Risley in his *Tribes and Castes of Bengal* considers the Koch, the Kochmandi, the Rajbanshi, the Deshi and Paliya to be all allied and belong to a Dravidian tribe of north-eastern and eastern Bengal among whom there are reasons to suspect some admixture of Mongolian blood. After citing the opinion of Dalton, Risley remarks: "A comparison of these opinions with my own observations and with the average cephalic, nasal and nasomalar indices ascertained by a large number of actual measurements, seems to me to warrant the conclusion that the Koch, Rajbanshi, Paliya, Desi and other varieties by whatever names they are called are descended from a Dravidian stock, which may probably have occupied the valley of the Ganges at the time of the Aryan advance into Bengal. Driven forward by the incursion into the swamps and forests of northern and north-eastern Bengal the tribes were here and there brought into contact with the Mongoloid races of the lower Himalayas, and of the Assam border, and their type may have been affected to a varying degree by the intermixture with these people. But on the whole Dravidian characteristics predominate among them over the Mongolian."

Gait in his *Census Report* of Assam, however, opined that the Rajbanshis or the Koches were of Mongolian origin and this opinion he based on anthropometric measurements. According to Gait, the Mongoloid tribes advanced into Northern Bengal in three waves the first being the Chandal, the second Koch and the third Ahom.

The only conclusion that can be drawn from these divergent views is that the Koches or Rajbanshis are a mixed people arising out of a Dravidian stock with marked admixture of Mongoloid blood. The divergence of opinion between Risley and Gait is probably the result of sampling. Further east in Assam the Mongolian traits predominate while in North Bengal and Koch Bihar it is the Dravidian traits which are more marked. Regarding manners and customs, no serious and detailed investigation appears to have been undertaken. The important part played by betelnuts and betel leaves in the marriage rites of the Rajbanshis shows a marked similarity to the rites followed in marriages of even the higher castes in southern Bengal.

Religion

It is difficult to say when the Rajbanshis took to Brahmanic rites and religion. When Yuan Chwang visited Assam during the 7th Century he found Bhāskaravarman to be the reigning King. The religion followed by the people was the Brahmanic religion. The territory of Bhāskaravarman included present Koch Bihar and extended up to Murshidabad district of West Bengal. Yuan Chwang found no trace of Buddhism in the territory of Bhāskaravarman. The Khen kings of Koch Bihar adopted Brahmanical religion about the thirteenth century. At the present time the Rajbanshis claim themselves to be Kshatriyas in the caste hierarchy of the Hindu fold. A late work, the *Yoginitantra* states that some Kshatriya tribes fled eastwards out of fear of Parasurama and as their Kshatriya traits were curtailed (*sankoch*)¹ out of that fear they were called the Koch. There are more than one such pseudo-etymological myths invented in later works and these do not deserve any mention here.

Religious beliefs

The Rajbanshis are Hindus. The chief god is Mahākāl who has been identified with Mahādeva. In this it appears there has been a synthesis of beliefs. The older god Mahākāl was probably the Mahākāl mountain, and this god is uniformly worshipped, feared and adored by almost all the hill people north of Koch Bihar and by the submontane people including the Bhutias. This god may be compared with the *morana buru* or the great mountain as the principal god of the Santals. Later, when the Koches were Hinduized, they worshipped Mahādeva and a synthesis of the two gods was made. Gods of the Hindu pantheon are also worshipped but the approach sometimes differs from the regular form of Hindu approach.

Hari or Vishnu is worshipped in the months of *Baisakh* to *Bhadra* chiefly for the purpose of getting rains for the crop. Offerings of plantain, *atap* rice, *dahi* and *chira* are made.

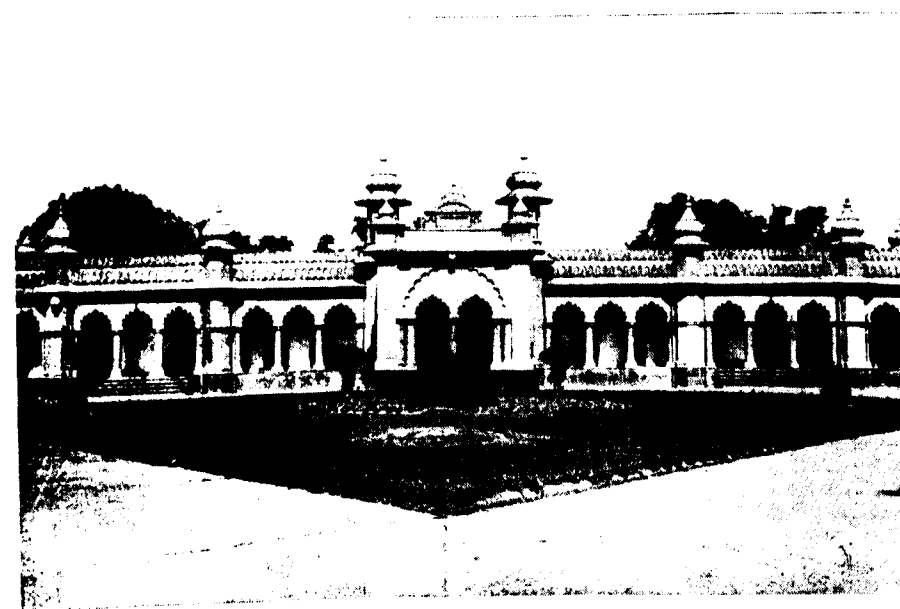
Manasa better known as Bisha-hari, is worshipped more as a goddess to bring wealth and prosperity than as a snake-goddess for immunity against snake-bite. She is worshipped in the months of Baisakh and Bhadra with offerings of plantains, milk, curd, *atap* rice and sugarcane. Sometimes, a black goat is also sacrificed. Balaram is worshipped as the presiding god of agriculture. The usual offerings are milk, curd, *atap* rice and plantains.

Chandi is worshipped as a goddess to protect people against cholera with the offering of a buffalo calf. Kali is worshipped as the goddess who can ward off all ills and is considered to be a malevolent goddess who has to be kept appeased just like Chandi. Offering of goats and/or buffalo calves are made.

Madan-kam is another popular god. The rites of the worship of this god is reminiscent of a spring festival and fertility rites. From the fourteenth day of the bright



Maharaja's Palace, Koch Bihar



Maharaja's club, Koch Bihar

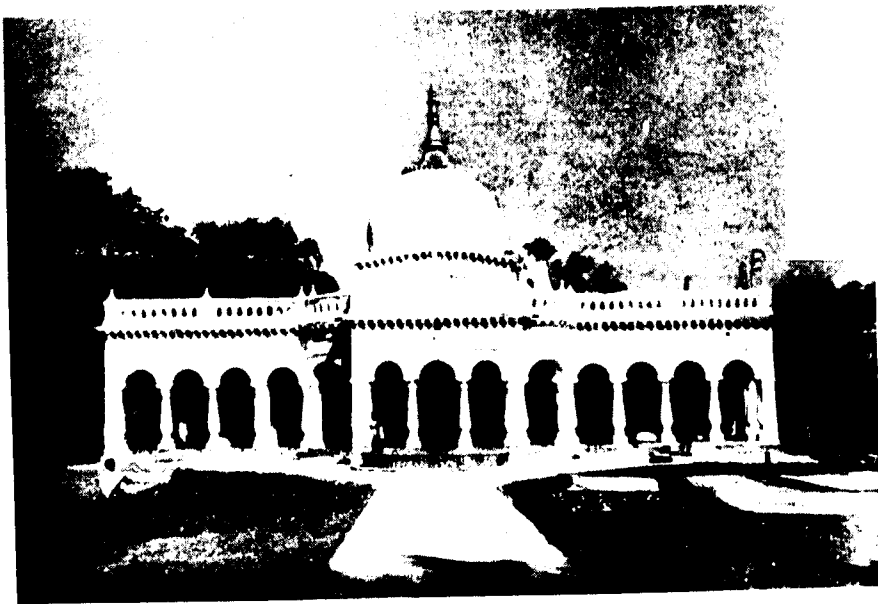
fortnight of the months of Chaitra this god is worshipped for three days. Large straight bamboos decorated with alternate rings of white and red cloth and surmounted by a *chamar* (yak's tail) are erected in the courtyard and *pujas* are offered to these. Great rejoicings prevail. Singing of lewd songs was part of the rite. These are now generally going out of use but the merry-making remains. On the fourth day, the bamboos are taken off, their decorations are removed and they are thrown into rivers.

Wild animals such as tigers, crocodiles and some minor village deities going by the names of *Bura Thakur*, *Bura Thakurani*, *Dangdhar* and *Suvachani* are also worshipped.

There are two main sects amongst the hindus, viz., the Vaishnavas and the Saktas. The former do not eat meat and do not make any animal sacrifices. Among the Vaishnavas there are two sects, the Sankarpanthi and the Damodar panthi named after two Vaishnava preachers Sankara and Damodara. According to tradition Sankara was a contemporary of Shri Chaitanya and probably came under his influence when the latter visited his original home in Sylhet. But the life history of Sri Chaitanya shows that at this time he had not taken to Vaishnavism. He became a Vaishnava after the death of his first wife and after that he did not go to his original home in Sylhet. Be that as it may, Sankara emulated the preaching of Shri Chaitanya and started *namagan*, or singing of the holy name of Hari, in the territory of the Ahom king of Assam. After the conquest of the Ahom kingdom by Narayan, the king of Koch Bihar, Sankara came to Koch Bihar and Sukladhwaja, the brother of the king was greatly influenced by his preachings. Sankara appears to have preached the Bhakti cult. Damodara is said to have been a disciple of Sankara. But he preached the *Sastry* ritualistic worship of Vishnu. The disciples of Sankara are called Bhaktas and those of Damodara are called Madhis. The latter are mostly Brahmans.

Besides these there is an undefined class of Vaishnavas known as the *Bairagis*. There is a priesthood order amongst this class who are called *adhikaris*. The *adhikaris* appear to have been the representatives of the Kolitas of Assam and have most of their disciples in that class. They perform *pujas* with the offering of *naivedyas* consisting of *atap* rice, plantain and milk.

Among the Saktas the Assam Brahmans almost monopolized the priesthood class of the district before the recent migration of the East Bengal people into this district after 1951. The worship of Siva is very popular among the Saktas. There are quite a number of Siva temples in the district and people offer *pujas* in these temples throughout the year. There is a large congregation of people at the time of the Siva-ratri and a pilgrimage to Banaswar temple is considered specially holy.



Madanmohan temple, Koch Bihar

There exists a priesthood who have their clientele mostly among the Saktas. These are called *bharrariyas*. They are more sooth-sayers than priests and are generally consulted for warding off disease or other calamities in order to obtain prophecies from the gods. When consulted they repair to a *put* or raised mound and there shake their head, as if in a trance, to the accompaniment of a drum. Soon a revelation or directive is obtained from the god thought to have been angered. The angry god is then propitiated by a *puja* with some profit for the *bharrariya*.

There was a practice of invoking the assistance of a tribal god *hudumdeo* at times of severe drought and other similar calamities. The women of the village assembled at night at a place in the outskirts of the village, planted a young sapling of plantain tree or a new shoot of bamboo and danced round it after taking off their clothings. The practice is now almost obsolete or at any rate not admitted.

The Muslims offer adoration to the Pirs in the *dargas* and take out the Muharram *tazias*. There are only a few Farajis or Wahabis who abstain from this rite. The general term by which the Muslim are known is *Nasya*. It is thought that the word came from the Sanskrit word *nasta* or fallen from the Hindu fold. How far this view is correct cannot be ascertained.

At about the beginning of the 13th century A.D. preaching of Islam had begun in western Kamarupa, though it is difficult to ascertain exactly when the preachers of Islam first came to Kamarupa. Thence onward many saints came and the religious literature of the Mohammedans has preserved the names of their different sects. The Dham of Torsa Pir at the outskirts of Koch Bihar town is a well-known *darga*. It is said that many people were attracted to Islam through the influence of this Torsa Pir who flourished probably in the beginning of the 13th century. In the ancient capital of Koch Bihar named Dhalnabari, four miles to the south-east of the town of Koch Bihar, there lies the tomb of Saha Fakir. Saha Garib Kamal was buried outside the fort of Kamtapura, south-west of the Bagh-duar. This Pir probably lived in the 17th century. At the beginning of the sixteenth century Giasuddin Aulia came to preach Islam in this part of the country. According to tradition Saha Soltan Mahisour a prince of Balkh, abandoned his claims to kingship and came to preach religion to western Kamarupa, where he lived, and was buried at Mahastanagarh. According to *Tarikh-i-Bangala*, Saha Soltan resided in Mahastanagarh in *Hiiri* 439 (A.D. 1047). Satyapir is a name among the Muslim preachers in northern Bengal. Various songs and manuscripts refer to Satyapir originally as a Hindu, but converted to Islam later on and devoted his life to preaching. He was unquestionably a religious power in northern Bengal and even today the influence of his name remains.

The Rajbanshis do not build any separate lying-in room at the time the child is born. Any suitable room in the house is good enough for it and though it is considered unclean during the period of lying-in, a simple purification by washing removes the stigma. After the birth of the child the navel-cord is cut by some elderly woman by a sharp split-bamboo which is called *nil*. The woman who cuts the cord is considered by the child as a second mother and called *nari-kata-mao*. The unclean period is thirty days after birth. Of these the first eight days are considered more unclean. On the ninth day the mother's nails are pared by a barber and a similar formal ceremony is done for the child. On the thirtieth day the barber is called again and the nails of the mother are pared and the head of the child is shaven. The father of the child has to be present at this ceremony. Thereafter water sanctified by *mantras* by the priest is sprinkled on the child, the mother and on articles used by them and the unclean period ends.

Manners and customs

Birth rites

One hundred and eighty days after birth the *annaprasana* or the *bhat-chhoyani* ceremony is performed generally in the manner of Hindus. The child is also given a name. The name of the child is selected sometime after the gods and goddesses and often after the name of the month in which he was born, e.g., Baisaku, Asaru, etc.; after the name of the day, e.g., Somaru, Bishadu, Sania; after the lunar cycle, e.g., Panchami, Ekadasi; after the character of the night, e.g., Jonaku, Andharu; after the time of the day, e.g., Poyatu, Sanjua; after the season, e.g., Sitbar, Ban-bhasa; after animals, e.g., Chika (kole), Saleya (mouse), Cheng (a fish); etc.

Annaprasana or First Rice Ceremony

In the sixth, or twelfth or eighteenth month after birth the child is shaved outside the house within a circle along which there are small figures of houses made of pith (*sola*). Miniature flags are also stuck on the ground on which a small *charka* is placed. The shaved-off hair is sent as an offering to *Buri Thakurani*. A *naivedya* is offered to the gods. The lobe of the ear of the child is pierced by a needle or a porcupine quill.

Chura-Karan or Tosure

At some time when the child is still young the *adhikari* whispers the name of Hari in the ear of the child. In the case of the Vaishnavas this is considered formal initiation to the cult.

Diksha

In marriage amongst the Rajbanshis a bride-price has usually to be paid. The match is arranged by the relatives with the assistance of a *bhatait* or match-maker. The usual Hindu prohibited degrees, viz., seven generation shift on the father's side and five generation shift on the mothers' side is observed. When the terms of the marriage are settled, the friends of the bridegroom send a present of betel leaves and betel-nuts to the house of the bride on an auspicious day. After the party with these presents reach the house of the bride, the neighbours, relatives and friends on either side

Marriage

assemble, the betel-nuts are cut and distributed to those present. This is called *ghata-path-dekhani*. If nothing inauspicious takes place within three days of this ceremony, the marriage is finally settled and a date is fixed in consultation with the gaurdians of the bridegroom. On the day of the marriage, betel-nuts are again cut and distributed in the presence of the guests, friends and relations on either side. The bride is then taken round the bridegroom and the father of the bride sprinkles water on both. If the father of the bride be dead or otherwise absent, another person, usually an uncle, performs this function and henceforth he is called the *puni-chhita-bap* by the bridegroom. The *sastric* portion of the marriage is performed with the aid of Brahman priests.

Puberty rites

Young girls before they attain puberty usually tie a cloth round the waist and the upper part of the body remains bare. As soon as the girl attains puberty the young women of the neighbourhood assemble and after a simple ceremony of blessing tie another piece of cloth to cover the breasts. This cloth is called *ugran* and the ceremony is called *do-kapra*.

Polygamy and Polyandry

Usually the Rajbanshis take one wife at a time. Polygamy though not banned by society is very rare. Polyandry has no sanction of society or law and does not exist.

Widow re-marriage

The law legalizing widow re-marriage did not extend to Koch Bihar State. Widow re-marriage was, therefore, not legal before Koch Bihar was merged in West Bengal. Though now such marriage is legal it is extremely rare. There were two social practices among Rajbanshis of a widow living with another as man and wife. In one case, after the usual amour the man holding a stick went to the house of the widow and struck the door with the stick. The woman thereafter let him in. They then lived as man and wife. The man was called *dangua*. In most such cases the widowed woman wanted a protector for herself and her property. In the other case, the widowed woman herself went to the house of her lover. This form was called *ghar-dhokani*. Society did not sanction these practices, but tolerated them. The offsprings of such unions were, however, illegitimate and had no right of succession to property.

Position of women in the house

Women have full liberty both within and without the house. The Rajbanshi women do not observe the *purdah*, the Muslim women do but they only use a portion of the *sari* to cover the head and the forehead. No *burkha* is used. While the Rajbanshi males are rather indolent and lazy, the women are very active. Though not positively respected, the women are not ill treated and for her usefulness the Rajbanshi husband dares not ill-treat his wife. Sex morality is neither too low nor too high. The elopement of a young wife with her lover was not very uncommon in pre-merger Koch Bihar and the State regime enacted a law giving the *Foujdari Ahilkar* (District Magistrate) powers to cause arrest of a run-away wife. If marriage was admitted, the *Foujdari*



A Nagesia woman weaving a palm-leaf mat at Bararangrash



A Nagesia family of Bararangrash



A Rabha male



Students of the Oraon, Nagesia, Rajbansi communities before the Primary school at Bandiardanga in village Bararangrah

Ahilkar had power to restore the run-away wife to her husband. If marriage was denied, they were bound over by a bond and referred to the civil court.

The Rajbanshis are guided by the Hindu law of inheritance of the *Daya-bhaga* school which is followed in Bengal. The Muslims of Koch Bihar are also generally guided by the Hindu law of inheritance unless any Muslim dissents and proves in court that his family was guided by the Muslim law from before. Inheritance

The people usually live in thatched huts. The floor is raised and in houses of the poor made of mud. Well-to-do people raise the floor on bamboo or *sal* posts and the floor is made of planks. The walls are made of *chatai* (matting made by splitting bamboo). The thatching is of *chhan grass* which grow in abundance in the district. Paddy straw is not used. A householder of moderate means usually makes four huts arranged in a quadrangle. Two of these are used as bedrooms, one as cooking room and the fourth to keep the cattle. There is a *machang* (raised bamboo platform) in the bedrooms to keep the grain as well as other valuables. Wealthier persons have *grain-golas* outside. A *thakur ghar* is also provided by more affluent people. There is usually a high fencing round the house for privacy and protection against wild animals. This is made of split bamboos sharpened at the upper end. Dwelling and furniture

The common folk have very little furniture. They either sleep on the floor or make small *machangs* of bamboo in the bedroom. The poor man's bedding consists of a grass mat, pillow and a *kantha* or coarse blanket. The utensils are also few in number. The usual pattern nowadays are one or two aluminium *thalis*, one brass or aluminium *lota* and a cast iron *karai*. Water is stored in earthen pitchers or in dried and hollowed gourd shell. The *urum* and *gain* (pestle and mortar) of wood is possessed by most moderately well-to-do villagers. Some bamboo baskets, a *khalai* to catch fish, and a *kula* (winnow) to remove the chaff from the grain almost completes the possessions of an ordinary rural householder.

As the soil of Koch Bihar does not make good bricks, even the rich people cannot make houses of brick. So houses of timber with corrugated iron roof is generally constructed by the rich men.

The ordinary folk are very scantily dressed at home. The males wear a *lengti*, i.e., a piece of cloth about a foot or a foot and a half in breadth and three feet in length passed between the legs and held in position by a string round the waist. The Rajbanshi women ordinarily wear a piece of cloth called *patani* about five feet in length and about three and a half feet in breadth which is tied above the breast and reaches up to the knees. At home they very often tie a smaller cloth at the waist and the upper part of the body is left bare. When going out of the house the Dress

elderly women wear the *patani* tied above the breast, but younger women use two pieces of cloth. The *patani* is then tied at the waist and another piece of cloth, the *agran*, covers the upper part of the body. Hindu women usually do not cover the head. The Muslim women also wear a *sari* in the Bengali fashion. Of late blouses, the brassiere and petticoats are coming into use and are being used by the affluent families.

Winter is severe and most of the village people do not stay out of doors after dusk. They keep themselves warm by charcoal fire (the remnant of the fire to cook the food), cover their body with a blanket, *kantha*, *eri-chaddar*, or jute cloth according to their means. Shoes have now come into use and mostly the vulcanized rubber shoes are popular owing to excessive rain. But the footwear largely used is the wooden *kharam* and this is used even by the well-to-do as a home wear during the rains.

Women part their hair and keep the knot tied at the back of the head. Plaiting of hair is considered indecorous. Vermilion is used at the parting of the hair by the married women but there is not that amount of compulsion in its use as in lower Bengal.

Ornaments

The use of ornaments depends upon the means of the family. The poor married woman is content with wearing a conch shell bangle (*Sankha*) in the left wrist. Those who can afford wear silver or gold bangles or *churis*. A peculiar kind of silver bracelet called the *Mutha* is in common use. Silver *hensli* in the neck, *bank-kharu* around the ankle joint, and *nak-ful* in the nose are quite popular. The ear-lobe is pierced when the girl is quite young and a silver ring is inserted.

Food and drink

The principal meals consist of *bhat*, that is, boiled rice, with boiled leafy vegetables (*sak*). When available, fish is also eaten. The use of condiments are practically unknown and the vegetables are savoured only with chillis. Even salt is not in universal use. Pigeons, wild duck and rabbits are hunted and eaten. Use of pork has now almost stopped. A very favourite food is made by pounding small dried fish with the green stems of the arum plant. These are made into balls and dried in the sun and stored in earthen vessels covered with wood-ash. The balls when needed are crushed and cooked with the green leave of the jute plant. No salt is added but it is flavoured by *chheka*. *Chheka* is hot boiling water passed through the ashes of plantain leaves. The liquid is red colour and has a strong astringent taste.

Wheat, barley and millets are roasted and then broken up using the *urum* and *gain*. This is called *goora* and is eaten much in the same way as *chhatu*.

Though milk is taken, the more favourite milk product is curd or *dahi*. No curdling agent is usually added and the milk is allowed to turn sour and curdle by itself. A cheese-like curd is also made by pouring milk in vessels made of hollow bamboo which is then covered with leaves and buried in earth and kept for about three to six months. This is considered a great delicacy.

Betel leaf and betel-nuts are in universal use. The betel-nut is usually used green. Dried nuts are not in use. The nuts are divided into four pieces and each piece is placed between two betel leaves with some lime. No catechu or *khair* is used. The *gachh-pan* or betel leaves growing on creepers climbing up a tree is preferred to *baraj-pan*.

Betel leaf and betel-nuts

Tobacco is both chewn and smoked in a *chhilum*. Nowadays *biris* are coming into use and also cigarettes.

Tobacco

The Rajbanshis generally abjure alcoholic drinks.

Alcoholic drinks

The typical Rajbanshi music is in a very elementary state and the instruments are the *ektara*, *dotara*, *khol* and cymbals, but nowadays Bengali music is spreading into the villages. A common recreation is to sing *kirtan* to the accompaniment of *khol* and cymbals. Holiday-making is universally observed during religious festivals. The festivities at the Madan-kam worship has been referred to before.

Amusements

There is nothing special about civil marriage, divorce, etc. There is no traffic in women or prostitution worth mentioning.

APPENDIX I

GROWTH OF POPULATION IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT: 1901-71

District/Subdivision/ Police Station	Population 1971	Variation 1961-71	Population 1961	Variation 1951-61	Population 1951	Variation 1941-51	Population 1941	Variation 1931-41
Koch Bihar District	14,14,183	3,94,377	1,019,896	+ 3,50,857	6,69,049	+ 30,396	6,38,703	+ 49,859
Sadar Subdivision	3,72,487	1,00,003	2,72,484	+1,00,619	1,71,865	+ 21,891	1,49,974	+ 17,352
Koch Bihar	3,72,487	1,00,003	2,72,484	+1,00,619	1,71,865	+ 21,891	1,49,974	+ 17,352
Tufanganj Subdivision	2,41,633	67,996	1,73,637	+ 75,924	97,713	+ 3,011	94,702	+ 9,555
Tufanganj	2,41,633	67,996	1,73,637	+ 75,924	97,713	+ 3,011	94,702	+ 9,555
Dinbata Subdivision	3,40,556	92,597	2,47,959	+ 86,905	1,61,054	+ 1,020	1,60,034	+ 11,204
Dinbata	2,88,801	77,506	2,11,295	+ 74,295	1,37,000	+ 5,126	1,31,874	+ 9,504
Sitai	51,755	15,091	36,664	+ 12,610	24,054	- 4,106	28,160	+ 1,700
Matabhanga Subdivision	3,21,925	1,00,760	2,18,165	+ 69,474	1,48,691	+ 1,698	1,46,993	+ 7,393
Matabhanga	2,26,797	76,352	1,50,445	+ 47,509	1,02,936	+ 2,780	1,00,156	+ 4,627
Sitalkuohi	95,128	35,071	67,720	+ 21,985	45,265	- 268	45,523	+ 2,766
Mekhliganj Subdivision	1,37,582	30,021	1,07,561	+ 17,935	89,626	+ 2,626	87,000	+ 4,146
Mekhliganj	81,067	21,010	60,057	+ 14,802	45,255	- 268	45,523	- 1,883
Haldibari	56,515	9,011	47,504	+ 3,133	44,371	+ 2,894	41,477	+ 6,029

KOCH BIHAR

GROWTH OF POPULATION IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT: 1901-71—contd.

District/Subdivision/ Police Station	Population 1931	Variation 1921-31	Population* 1921	Variation 1911-21	Population 1911	Variation 1901-11	Population 1901
Koch Bihar District	5,99,653	- 1,546	5,99,599	- 413	5,91,612	+ 25,986	5,85,116
Sadar Subdivision	1,32,622	+ 288	1,32,334	+ 1,732	1,30,602	+ 8,993	1,21,609
Koch Bihar	1,32,622	+ 288	1,32,334	+ 1,732	1,30,602	+ 8,993	1,21,609
Tufanganj Subdivision	85,147	+ 2,184	82,963	+ 2,816	80,147	+ 6,709	73,438
Tufanganj	85,147	+ 2,184	82,963	+ 2,816	80,147	+ 6,709	73,438
Dinbata Subdivision	1,48,830	+ 647	1,48,183	- 346	1,48,529	+ 4,629	1,43,900
Dinbata	1,22,370	+ 532	1,21,838	- 285	1,22,123	+ 3,605	1,18,517
Sitai	26,460	+ 115	26,345	- 61	26,406	+ 828	25,583
Matabhanga Subdivision	1,39,500	- 1,767	1,41,367	- 1,237	1,42,604	+ 2,431	1,40,183
Matabhanga	96,329	- 515	96,044	- 1,791	97,835	+ 1,661	96,174
Sitalkuohi	44,071	- 1,252	45,323	+ 554	44,769	+ 760	44,009
Mekhliganj Subdivision	82,854	- 2,898	85,752	- 3,378	89,130	+ 3,144	85,986
Mekhliganj	47,406	- 1,570	48,976	- 2,569	51,545	+ 1,342	50,303
Haldibari	35,448	- 1,328	36,776	- 809	37,585	+ 1,802	35,783

PEOPLE

61

CHAPTER IV

AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION

The *Rakam Charcha* Settlement¹ which followed the survey of 1868-70 was a monumental work in the matter of land administration. That operation found out that the total area of land cultivated was 14,32,205 bighas (4,77,401 acres) out of a total area of 21,23,696 bighas (7,07,998 acres) settled. The total area of *laik patit* or culturable fallow was 4,87,523 bighas (1,62,507 acres) and the area which was unculturable was 42,926 bighas (14,308 acres). There was in addition 1,14,542 bighas of waste land (38,181 acres) which was not settled and remained *khas* of the Maharaja. The total area of uncultivated land thus came to 6,44,991 bighas (2,14,996 acres) or 333 sq. miles representing about 25 per cent of the area of the State.

The statistics of 1901-02² show the following pattern of land utilization:

	Acres
1. Total area	8,36,480
2. Forests	9,845
3. Not available for cultivation	1,27,299
4. Culturable waste other than current fallow	1,80,776
5. Current fallow	1,02,110
6. Net area cropped	4,08,441

Excluding current fallows the total area of waste land was thus 9,845 + 1,27,299 + 1,80,770 acres. This shows that the area of waste land had slightly increased from the time of the *Rakam Charcha* Settlement. The statistics of 1949-50 show the following figures:

	(In 1,000 acres)
1. Total area	820.6
2. Forests	15.4
3. Not available for cultivation	75.1
4. Culturable waste other than current fallow	130.2
5. Current fallow	160.5
6. Net area cropped	439.4

Excluding current fallows the waste land amounted to 220.7 thousand acres.

¹*Rakam Charcha*—Settlement recorded the classification of land in Koch Bihar in 16 classes according to the quality of soil and the crop grown. Details in Chapter XI.

²*Cooch Behar Statistics: 1901-02.*

The total waste land increased by nearly 3 thousand acres between the Revenue Survey (1870-83) and 1901-02, and between the latter year and 1949-50 it increased further by about another 2.7 thousand acres. The net cropped area decreased from 477.7 thousand acres at the Revenue Survey to 408.4 thousand acres in 1901-02. It increased to 439.4 thousand acres in 1949-50, which was still less than the figure of the Revenue Survey. These figures may now be compared with the population of the country at the relevant times.

Year	Population	Area not available for cultivation	In 1,000 acres			
			Other uncultivated land excluding Current fallow	Current fallows	Net area sown	Double cropped area
1881	6,02,624	157.4	162.5		477.4	
1901-02	5,65,116	127.2	180.7	102.1	408.4	16.5
1949-50	6,38,703	90.5	130.2	160.5	439.4	21.3
1950-51	6,68,949	102.1	124.9	92.9	500.7	72.0
1951-52		102.5	104.9	66.7	549.3	88.0
1952-53		108.6	118.0	64.1	532.7	82.0
1953-54		111.1	105.8	38.2	569.3	87.5
1954-55		110.6	105.3	66.7	540.8	89.0
1960-61	10,19,800	112.9	67.0	42.8	600.7	84.5
1961-62		112.9	66.2	23.7	620.6	112.3
1962-63		113.0	64.9	14.3	631.2	110.0
1963-64		107.0	58.2	5.0	653.2	171.1
1964-65		107.0	58.9	9.0	648.5	170.2

[Total area of the district according to Surveyor-General of India: 1,334.1 sq. miles]

The figures of the foregoing table will show that the area under cultivation has increased with increase of the population. Between 1881 and 1901 the population fell and there was a diminution of the net area cultivated and increase in the area of fallow land. The population started increasing at an accelerated rate from after 1951 and the net cropped area increased from 439.4 thousand acres in 1949-50 to 648.5 thousand acres in 1964-65. The current fallow was 160.5 thousand acres in 1949-50 and in 1964-65 it was reduced to only 9 thousand acres. Other uncultivated land was 180.7 thousand acres in 1901-02; in 1949-50 it was 130.2 thousand acres and in 1964-65 it was reduced to 58.9

thousand acres only. The area unavailable for cultivation was 157.4 thousand acres in 1881, 127.2 acres in 1901-02 after the *Rakam Charcha* Settlement and in 1949-50 it touched the lowest figure of 90.5 thousand acres. According to the Survey of O'Donnel, Becket and others¹ the total areas unavailable for cultivation were:

	(In 1,000 acres)
1. Rivers, streams, lagoons and marshes	61.07
2. Forests	9.8
3. Homesteads	8.3
4. Roads	6.2
5. Bamboos	16.7
Total	102.07

Since that time the forest area has been increased by 5.6 thousand acres and there has been further construction of roads and one railway line. The total area unavailable for cultivation shown in 1964-65, i.e., 107.0 thousand acres appears to be the limiting figure and this cannot further be reduced. Current fallow has been reduced from 160.5 thousand acres in 1949-50 to only 9 thousand acres in 1964-65. Other uncultivated area, which was 162.5 thousand acres in 1881 and 130.2 thousand acres in 1949-50, has been reduced to 58.9 thousand acres in 1964-65. As there are quite a number of small *jalas* of areas less than 10 bighas which were included in the *jotes*, this latter area must include these small *jalas*. Thus Koch Bihar district appears to have almost reached the limit of reclamation of waste land. Further increase of food production must be done by increase of double cropping and by more intensive cultivation.

The rivers of Koch Bihar district have not yet formed a firm regimen through which they are flowing. Thus almost all of them show oscillations and very often change their courses. The land is flat. The water-logged areas are mostly too deep to be successfully drained and drainage levels are not easy to obtain. Thus only very small drainage schemes have hitherto been possible. These are (1) Putia Baramasia Drainage Scheme in P.S. Sitalkuchi affecting an area of 900 acres, (2) Chhoto Simulguri Channel Scheme in P.S. Matabhanga affecting an area of 450 acres, (3) Kochabari Bil Kalighat Drainage Scheme in P.S. Dinhat affecting an area of 900 acres, and (4) Kharija Baniadaha Drainage Scheme in P.S. Dinhat affecting an area of 300 acres.

The rainfall chart in Chapter I will show that the rainfall is more than adequate for nine months in the year. Even the driest months, November to February, have on an average 10.9, 2.7, 7.9 and 19.8 millimetres of rain. There is also heavy precipitation of dew during these months. The only

¹Survey and Settlement for 1883-87.

crop which is occasionally irrigated is tobacco. This is done by lift from shallow wells dug in the fields. The small portable power-driven pumps have become very useful in this respect. The total area irrigated in Koch Bihar is 34.4 thousand acres of which tobacco covers 27.0 thousand acres. Of the entire irrigated area 19 thousand acres are irrigated from wells and the rest from *bils* and river channels. The ordinary method of lift irrigation is by means of the *don* and in recent years more wealthy farmers have begun using the power pumps.

The sources of irrigation are given in tabular form as follows (in acres):

Year	Private canals	Wells	Other sources	Total
1958-59	10,000	18,500	3,100	31,600

(Vide Statistical Abstract, West Bengal, 1960.)

The irrigated area under various crops is likewise given as follows (in acres):

	Rice	Wheat	Other cereals and pulses	Other food crops	Non-food crops
1955-56	500	200	1,000	2,000	28,000
1958-59	2,100	300	600	1,000	28,000

(Vide Statistical Abstract, West Bengal, 1960.)

Wells are made either by sinking baked earthen rings about 2' in diameter on top of one another or protected by a square framework of *sal* timber. There are a few protective *bunds* to prevent soil erosion. One such *bund* is at Sovaganj and the rivers against which the *bund* was erected are parts of Daina and Hanskhowa.

While the average annual rainfall in the district is heavy, the occurrence of dry spells during the crop seasons is not less frequent than the floods. For assured crop production, therefore, arrangement for additional irrigation devices both during *rabi* and *kharif* cultivations is necessary. The following statement presents the area irrigated in this district. The figures for 1971-72 are based on the irrigation survey while the figures for 1974-75 have been estimated on the basis of recent additions to irrigation potentials.

ESTIMATED IRRIGATION AREA IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT

	(Area in Acres)	
Classification	1971-72	1974-75
Pre-kharif crops	290	2,000
Kharif crops	2,849	5,000
Rabi crops	13,855	30,000
Vegetables	501	3,000
Total	17,495	40,000

Drainage of water-logged area

Irrigation

Based on the above estimate, about 5 per cent of the gross cropped area is at present getting irrigation water. The net area irrigated is also estimated to be 8 per cent of the net cultivated area. In recent years more and more shallow tube-wells, deep tube-wells and river-lift pumps are being utilized for the extension of irrigated area. The command area of these irrigation units is very limited and changes in the water transmission system as also in the technique of application of water to crops may help improve the situation. The tobacco growers of the district are employing new methods to irrigate the fields. The traditional *kutchha* wells have given place to shallow tube-wells that are sunk during the tobacco season and removed later.

The number of deep tube-wells in the district in 1975 was 15, and the number of river-lift irrigation units was also 15. Between 1966 and 1975 the number of hand-pumps distributed was 1,095 and the number of shallow tube-wells sunk was 1,833.¹ Loan was advanced to the cultivators by the State Bank, Central Bank and the Land Development Bank for purchasing pumps and tube-wells.

Agriculture soil

The soil of Koch Bihar is alluvial of rather recent formation and has a large admixture of sand and what in common parlance is known as sandy loam. The proportion of sand, silt and clay, however, varies from place to place. The soil is of light texture and can retain moisture and easily give it up. It neither becomes water-logged easily nor does it form hard cakes when dry. The surface soil which is loam soil is hardly more than two feet deep and at places even less and below the surface soil is fine sand. The soil is thus unsuitable for deep furrowing and improved heavy ploughs and tractors can hardly be used on this soil with advantage.

Five main river systems flow through Koch Bihar and the soil is a formation of the river system. Though the general character of the soil is sandy loam throughout the district there are large variations in the content of clay and silt and these variations may be related to the river system which originally formed the land. Thus the western part of Mekhliganj subdivision to the west of the Tista may be considered to be a formation of the Karatoya and the Tista and this area contains more clay than sand. The eastern portion of Mekhliganj subdivision is a creation of the Tista and contains more of sand. Similar is the nature of the soil in *pargana* Lalbazar which was a creation of the western Dharla which appertains to the Tista system. The Jaldhaka, the Mansai, the Mujnai and the Torsa have created *pargana* Matabhanga and the western part of *pargana* Koch Bihar. Though the Torsa at one time had the same entry as is now occupied by the Jaldhaka in later years the entry shifted to the present position and the old Torsa was beheaded. The bed occupied by the Mansai, the Mujnai and lastly by the

¹Source: District Agricultural Officer, Koch Bihar.

Jaldhaka has given *pargana* Matabhanga a character of soil slightly different from *pargana* Koch Bihar. Thus the soil of *pargana* Matabhanga has more of clay and the soil of *pargana* Koch Bihar has slightly more of sand. The eastern part of *pargana* Koch Bihar which may be taken to be a formation by the Sankosh has less of sand and more of clay. The portion of Tufanganj subdivision to the east of the Dipa-Raidak which is a formation of several rivers, viz., the Dipa, the western Raidak, the eastern Raidak, and the Gangadhar, is the richest soil in the district. *Pargana* Dinhata appears to have been formed in part by the western Dharla of the Tista system, the Mansai and the Torsa. There is thus a wide variety of soil in this *pargana*. The portion to the west of the old course of the western Dharla has more sand, that to the east of this course has more loam as it was more under the influence of the Mansai. The soil further to the north is still richer and is probably a formation of the Kaljani.

The principal crops of the district are:

Principal crops

1. Paddy of two kinds, the *aus* and the *aman*. Boro paddy is hardly cultivated.
2. Jute of two varieties, the *capsularis* and the *oliotaris*.
3. Tobacco.
4. Rape and mustard seeds.
5. Pulses—*mug*, *masur*, *khesari*, *thakri*, *kulti*, *arahar*.
6. Wheat and barley.
7. Millets, china and *kaon*.
8. Indian corn (*makai*).
9. Roots and bulbs—mainly arum and potato, but also onion, garlic, ginger and turmeric.
10. Other fibre plants, hemp or *San*, and *Reah* or *Kunkura*.
11. Sugar-cane.
12. *Mutha* or matting grass.

The *aus* paddy is locally called *bitri*. There are two kinds grown. The earlier one is sown in January and harvested in the early part of June. The later one, which is more extensively grown, is sown in February to March and harvested in July and August. Both are sown broadcast. As January is the driest month in the district, the early sowings are done on low lands of the *duiam* or even of the *awal* class. The later *bitri* is sown on lands of the *saiam* and *chaharam* class. This arrangement gives the best double cropping. The early *bitri* which can be harvested in later part of May and in early part of June leaves the better class lands, i.e., *awal* and *duiam* free for the cultivation of the *aman*, locally called *haimanti*, which is transplanted in June to August. After harvest of the late *bitri* the land can be utilised for jute.

The *bitri* paddy needs land which is sufficiently porous so as not to be water-logged, for, accumulation of water at the root spoils the crop. Ploughing of the land for *bitri* paddy commences in the month of November if the land had been fallow in the previous year. Otherwise it is ploughed a month later. If the land had been fallow for some time, it may need ten ploughings. Ordinarily, if the land had a previous crop like mustard, five to six ploughings are enough. The land is first ploughed lengthwise and then breadthwise at right angles to the previous furrows. Usually, two ploughs are worked together, one following the other. Sometimes, specially if time is short, ploughing is done on the *gantha* system when neighbours join with their plough and some ten to twelve ploughs may be simultaneously employed. After the first two ploughings the weeds and refuse are removed by the rake and the land is left for about seven days during which period the land is harrowed on alternate days. The land is then ploughed twice again and harrowed twice. If the land had some crop which required a good preparation of land like mustard this suffices. Otherwise two more ploughings are necessary. In between the ploughings the clods are broken with a mallet made of wood or heavy bamboo. The seed which is kept in bamboo baskets in a dry condition is then sown broadcast and the average requirement is about 40 kilograms per acre of land. After the sowing, the land is ploughed twice and harrowed once to cover up the seeds for germination. Depending on the moisture in the land, the seeds germinate between six to ten days. When the young plants give four leaves (a process taking about 3 to 4 weeks after germination), the land is harrowed by means of the rake to thin out the plants. The thinning out operations give the plants an impetus to grow and in that process some weeds and jungles growing meanwhile are weeded out. The operation used to be done by the hand hoe. At present, wheel hoes are coming into use. The paddy is ripe for harvesting in about 20 days after the coming in of ears. Before harvesting the stalks are pressed down by a bamboo. A length of stalk about 2 feet is cut. Ten or twelve handfuls are made into a sheaf.

The grain is separated from the stalks by the treading of cattle. For this purpose the sheaf bundles are laid on the *kholan* or courtyard in a circle with the corns inside. The arrangement of the bundles is radial and a full-sized treading ground contains about 32 bundles for four pairs of cattle to tread. The animals are tied in pairs and made to tread the sheaves going round and round. The bundles are now and then turned up to facilitate effective treading. When the treading is over, the straw is shaken and removed. Beneath the straw the grains lie in a layer mixed with dirt and chaff. These are collected and winnowed in a *kula* after drying. The yield of *bitri* paddy varies from 5 to 10 maunds per bigha.

There are two modes of cultivation of the *haimanti* paddy, the broadcast or *bowa* and the transplanted or *rowa*; and there are two modes of transplantation or rather two periods of transplantation. The *bowa* is cultivated in very low lands bordering on *bils* and channels of rivers which are inundated early. The plant grows rapidly with the head always out of water as it rises. The land does not require great preparation. The total quantity of such paddy sown is small. The *rowa* variety requires a well-prepared ground and the preparation is done in the same way as for *bitri*. At present, quite a large area of *rowa* paddy land is used to raise a crop of *bitri* also. The stubs of *bitri* left are burnt and then the land ploughed and harrowed with the *bida* or rake to remove the stubs and other unwanted under-growths. There are two crops of the *rowa*. The first is transplanted in lands lower than the ordinary which come under water in the latter part of May or by the earlier part of June. The second crop is raised on lands which are comparatively high and come under water in the middle of July to the end of August. Both these varieties come in ears at about the same time and are harvested together.

The seedling for the earlier *rowa* is called *taluya* and that for the later *rowa* is called *neocha*. The *taluya* is raised from the middle of February to the end of March and the *neocha* is raised from the middle of May to the end of June. Ordinary *bitri* or jute land is used for raising the *taluya* seedlings. The land may or may not be manured depending on the quality of the soil. The manure, if used, is generally farmyard manure. The land is prepared in the same way as for the ordinary cultivation of *bitri* paddy. Ordinarily, the quantity of seed required for transplanting an acre of land with *taluya* is about a quintal. The *neocha* seedling is raised in land which is ploughed to the consistency of mud. For this purpose, the land is ploughed twice, the grass and weeds are allowed to rot, and the land is ploughed twice over again with two harrowings. When the surface of the land is muddy, the dry seed is scattered evenly and left to germinate in the muddy soil. Alternatively, the seeds are previously soaked in water for two days to the point of germination. These are then scattered and seeds at once take root in the moist land. In the latter process there is less risk of the seeds being washed away by rain. The *taluya* seedlings take about two months to be ready for transplantation, while the *neocha* take about three to four weeks.

The land for the transplantation of *haimanti* paddy has to be prepared in the same manner as for the raising of the *neocha* seedlings. The *taluya* seedlings which remain in the seed-bed for about two months often become very tall and grow in clusters. For transplantation the seedlings are pulled out and the clusters broken. If the seedlings are too tall, they are clipped short and transplanted in the muddy soil 12 to 18 inches apart. The *neocha* seedlings which are transplanted about 45 to 60 days after the *taluya*

and thus get less time for growth are transplanted closer, about 6 to 10 inches apart. Sometimes, double transplantation is performed. The *taluya* which has been transplanted and had grown into clusters is treated as a source of fresh supply of seedlings. For this purpose plants which have grown out of *taluya* seedlings are uprooted, leaving a few in the cluster and these uprooted plants are transplanted in the manner of *neocha* transplantation. The seedlings of this double transplantation at first wither and become pale but soon recover and throw out fresh leaves. The quantity of yield by this double transplantation is quite good. This method of double transplantation is called *Khasia bichan* transplantation.

Irrespective of the method of transplantation the crops come in ears about the same time in the month of *Kartik* or middle of October and become fit for the sickle in December and early January. As the straw of *haimanti* paddy is in great demand as a principal fodder, the crop is cut more near the root than *bitri*. The treading and winnowing is done in the same manner as *bitri* paddy. The average yield of *haimanti* paddy is about 18 to 24 maunds per acre. At present, high-yielding seeds and Japanese methods are being tried to increase the yield.

Jute

The soil required for jute is the same as for *bitri* paddy. *Saiam* and *chaharam* lands are sown with jute. The land requires manuring and about 450 maunds of farmyard manure is used per acre. Nearness of supply of water is important for steeping and retting. The land is prepared in March with about 10 to 12 ploughings with the application of the manure at intervals. About a month is taken in the preparation of the land. When the surface of the land has dried a bit after the last ploughing, the seed is scattered first length-wise and then breadth-wise and the land is harrowed. The seeds have to be specially collected from the last year's crop. A small patch of land is left with the plants standing after the harvest. After the seeds have ripened, the seed pods are collected and sun-dried and stored in gourd-shells called *bosh*. Usually, about 3 kilograms of seed are required to sow one acre of land. The seeds germinate in about 3 days and when the seedlings are about 10 to 12 days old, a *bida* is applied. Four or five days after the application of the *bida*, the land is weeded once. Unless there be too much of undergrowth, a second weeding is hardly necessary. The plants become mature by the end of August. Harvesting continues throughout the month of September and may extend to October. The *Koshta* variety of jute grows to a height of about 10 feet while the *Mesta* variety grows to a height of about 15 feet. They are cut with the sickle near the root and after cutting the end is chopped off. About ten plants of the *Koshta* and eight plants of the *Mesta* are tied to form a bundle. The bundles are placed in water in a single file of about twenty bundles and some jute branches are scattered on them. This is called *jag*. For the first three days the upper

surface of the *jag* is above the water, on the fourth day the surface of the *jag* is brought to the level of the water by weighting with plantain trunks and clods of earth. The *jag* takes about 15 days to become fit for washing. In the washing process the washer takes his stand in the water and lifting a bundle with both hands strikes the water with it with force. The rotten barks and dirt become loose and fall off and the stalk breaks near the grip. The washer then agitates the bundle in the water and the broken stalk falls off. The fibres are jerked in the water to make them loose and are then wound round the hand and twisted to drain the water. Each handful is then made into a knot. The fibres are then dried in the sun by hanging from a horizontally placed bamboo. The dry fibres are twisted into bundles (called *Moras*), each about 4 to 5 kilograms in weight. The average outturn of jute fibre is about 15 to 18 maunds per acre. The area under jute is about 14 per cent of the acreage of the State and accounts for 12 per cent of the entire yield of the State. It is grown all over the region and particularly in Haldibari.

Tobacco is by far the most important cash crop of the district, for, after the partition, Koch Bihar district alone supplies about 72 per cent of the total tobacco output of West Bengal. At present the area varies from 20,000 to 25,000 acres. The most significant feature of tobacco cultivation is that it is grown mainly in the Dinhat-I, Sitai, Sitalkuchi and Matabhanga-I blocks, i.e., the areas adjoining the Mansai river. Over 3 lakh acres is sown more than once. This is about 55 per cent of the net cropped area of the district. As the area under irrigation is much less, most of this double or triple cropping is done counting on the available soil moisture.

Tobacco

Tobacco can be grown on the poorest land which is very sandy. The quality of land required for tobacco is high porosity with lightness of texture. Heavy manuring is required for the crop which literally grows on the manure, the soil only forming the base to hold the manure. Tobacco is generally grown on *chaharam* land.

The ploughing of the land starts in the middle of August. Cow-dung is put on the land all the year round. The land requires from 12 to 16 ploughings till the soil is very loose. In between the ploughings the land is repeatedly harrowed and when finally prepared a handful of soil taken from the field should not have any solid earth even of the size of a pea. Literally, the soil particles are broken down to size smaller than mustard seeds. The surface is made flat with the *Mai*. Lines are then drawn on the field first length-wise and then breadth-wise three feet apart. The intersections give the points at which the seedlings are to be transplanted. Buffalo-dung and urine of buffaloes are considered to be the best manure for tobacco and in between the ploughings the land is manured with as much buffalo-dung and urine as available. Thereafter this is supplemented by cow-dung.

Preparation of the land

Seed-bed

The seed-beds are specially prepared by raising them about 6 inches above the surroundings and the land used for the seed-bed is made absolutely level. About 800 to 900 maunds of old cow-dung is applied per acre of seed-bed. The manure is thoroughly mixed with the soil, first by the spade and then by the plough if the land is big enough to be ploughed. The soil particles are broken down very fine and the land levelled. The seeds are sown in the middle of August at the rate of 14 kilograms per acre. The seeds are uniformly scattered and then pressed by hand so as to be covered by the loose soil. The seed-bed is then covered with *San grass* and a surface drain cut round the seed-bed. Removable covers are kept ready to cover the seed-bed in case of heavy rains. The seeds sprout in about seven days' time and when the seedlings are about an inch in length and have grown small leaves like the ears of the mouse (*indur-kania pata*), the base of stem of the seedling is held and it is given a pull so as to draw it out of the soil a little. The soil must be very loose or else the light stalk will break. During this operation the soil at the base of the neighbouring seedlings is kept pressed by the hand so as not to uproot them. At this time if there is any spot where the seedlings have grown too dense, they are thinned out. This operation has the effect similar to transplantation and strengthens the seedlings. In about two weeks' time the seedlings give off leaves of the size of a rupee coin (*take-pata*) and if the rains have subsided by this time the seedlings are regularly watered in the morning. The seedlings are usually ready for transplantation in about a month's time.

Transplantation

In the meantime the land is ready for transplantation. The land looks like a chequer-board with the longitudinal and transverse lines drawn on it. The intersection points of these lines are the points of transplantation and each plant is at a distance of three feet from its neighbour. Transplantation begins in the early part of October. The seedlings are taken off from the seed-bed in the afternoon and carried in bamboo baskets to the field to be transplanted. A hole is made at the transplantation point with a pointed bamboo stick and the seedling is inserted in the hole to the extent of about two inches. The loose earth is then pressed with the palm of the hand against the root. No watering is usually done and the copious dew that is shed in the night at this time of the year supplies the moisture required. The seedlings take root in about three days' time. A few of them die and are replaced. About five to seven days after the transplantation, furrows are made in between the lines of the transplantation by drawing a wooden light plough without a share by the hand. The furrows are not made all at once, but at intervals and during this period the land is heavily manured by applying about 2 kilograms of farmyard manure per plant. The furrowing continues along with application of manure to mix the manure and to loosen the soil. A month after transplantation the dry and withered leaves which are called *Kanpata* are removed. About one month after the removal of the *Kanpata*, the head of the plant is broken and the shoots

coming out of the main stalk and the leaves near the ground are broken. These leaves are called the *bispata*. By this operation 8 or 10 leaves are left on each plant to take the entire nourishment supplied. Some watering may be necessary at this stage depending on the amount of precipitation of dew and the quantity of moisture retained by the soil. Over-watering is bad for the crop. The leaves become mature and fit for gathering about two months later.

A kind of insect attacks the roots of the plants when the plant is young. The local remedy for this is to light some stalks of jute sticks planted here and there on the land. The fire attracts birds which eat away the insects. The *bhulki* flower is a pest for tobacco. It is a parasite which grows on the main root of the near mature plant. It shoots up generally as a single stalk and gives a purple flower. It can be checked by proper weeding. The crop infested with *bhulki* is not totally lost. The leaves become prematurely ripe and lose weight and flavour. *Jain-dhara* is a disease which sometimes attack the tobacco plants when nearing maturity. The disease manifests itself by the wrinkling and withering of the leaves. At the first sign of this disease the affected leaves have to be removed and if that does not effect a cure the whole plant has to be uprooted and removed. The disease spreads unless checked at the early stage.

Pests and diseases

The gathering of the leaves commences in the early part of March. The leaves are cut close to the stem in the morning and then spread out for a partial drying in the sun. By about 4 o'clock these spread out leaves are collected and made into bundles called *jhoka* with about four or five leaves in each. The leaves are then left in the field for some time to get the evening dew and then taken home and hung up in rows in a closed room shut out from exposure or wind. The heat of the sun and the dry west-wind of the season complete the drying.

Gathering

In the beginning of *Jyaisktha* or middle of May when the moist east-wind begins to blow the leaves are softened to some extent and these are then taken down and tied in bundles weighing about 2 to 3 seers. These bundles are then stacked in circular piles with the stems of the leaves remaining on the outside. These piles are called *gadis*. A *gadi* ordinarily contains 50 to 60 maunds of tobacco.

Storing

Tobacco is largely grown in Lal Bazar, Dinhata, Sitai and Haldibari. In 1876 its export to Burma alone was valued at Rs. 10 lakhs.

Mustard is sown on high *bitri* land classed *saiam* and *Mustard Chaharam*. The land is prepared in the month of *Aswin* or middle of September. Ordinarily, six ploughings with harrowings in the intervals are enough. Manure in the form of cow-dung and ground oilcake is applied after the second ploughing. The seed is sown broadcast at the rate of about 5½ kilograms to an acre. After sowing the land is lightly ploughed and harrowed with the *Mai* to cover the seeds. The

seeds germinate in about 3 to 5 days and the plants start flowering when about a month old. The pods come out in about ten days thereafter and the seeds take about two months to be mature. The crop is gathered from the middle of February to March. The plants are uprooted by hand and the seeds separated by treading by cattle. The produce per acre varies from 3 maunds to 9½ maunds. Of the two varieties of mustard seed, *rye* and *jati*, only the latter is extensively grown in the district. The *til* cultivation is limited as it is not used for cooking here.

Pulses

The pulses are grown as both *kharif* and *rabi* crops. But except *Mash-kalai* the cultivation of which has grown in recent years as a *rabi* crop covering an area of approximately 17,000 acres, the other pulses are comparatively minor crops in the district. *Mug* is grown in about 2,100 acres with an yield of approximately 5½ maunds to the acre. Good quality *sona-mug* is grown in Tufanganj subdivision. Other pulses grown are (i) *khesari* on 8,700 acres with an yield of about 5½ maunds to the acre, (ii) *masur* on about 4,000 acres with an yield of 2½ maunds to the acre of which some good quality is grown in Matabhanga subdivision, (iii) *arahar* on about 200 acres with an yield of 5½ maunds to the acre and (iv) gram on about 200 acres with an yield of about 6 maunds to the acre.

Wheat, barley, millets.

Wheat was an inferior and uncertain crop for the Koch Bihar farmers as grain formation with local varieties was very poor. At present there is considerable demand for short-duration high-yielding varieties, particularly "Sonolika". Wheat acreage, which was 5,950 in 1970-71, increased to 19,142 acres in 1974-75. It is expected that at this rate of progress the wheat acreage will increase to a great extent within a short period. The Blockwise average of wheat is given in Statement IV at the end of the chapter.

Barley is grown on about 700 acres and the average yield is about 4 maunds to the acre. This is also an inferior variety. Of the millets, *china* and *kaon* are grown as a *rabi* crop on about 200 acres with an yield of about 6 maunds to the acre. Indian corn or *makai* is grown near the towns where people from up-country reside. The estimated area is about 200 acres and the yield is about 6 maunds to the acre.

Roots and bulbs

Potato of an inferior variety with more stickiness in pulp after boiling and of a smaller size is grown in about 4,000 acres. It is mostly used for home consumption by the growers and very little of it comes to the market. Similar is the case with onion and garlic.

Sugarcane

Though it is possible to grow sugarcane profitably, the crop is yet a very minor crop taking about 1,000 acres in all. The people are so busy with the two cash crops, jute and tobacco, that they do not find incentive for sugarcane for which there is no ready nearby market. The small quantity produced goes to the making of jaggery.

The fibre plants *san* and *reah*, are grown in small quantities all over the district and the fibres are mainly used for making fishing nets.

Turmeric is grown on about 50 acres, ginger on 100 acres, chillis on 1,800 acres, coriander seeds on 10 acres, and anise on 10 acres. Arum is cultivated as a garden vegetable near the homesteads and is mostly used for home consumption and a small quantity comes to the market.

Turmeric,
ginger,
chillis,
coriander,
anise, Arum

Poppy used to be cultivated and opium was extracted from it. This was stopped in 1867 under orders of the British Indian Government. Indigo used to be cultivated in bygone days, but no record of it is available. There are the dilapidated ruins of a factory in Gossanimari and probably there was one in the outskirts of Koch Bihar town; whence the area takes its name Nilkuthi.

Poppy and
indigo

There is only one tea-garden in Koch Bihar district in taluk Saulmari of Matabhanga subdivision adjacent to the district of Jalpaiguri. The garden is situated on 410 acres of land. The factory is not a completely equipped one and only the plucking and the initial processing are done here and the rest is done by the parent company, that is, Kadambini Tea Co. Ltd., P.O. Falakata, in the district of Jalpaiguri. The production is only 0.1 per cent of the total of West Bengal. The production of black and green tea in 1960 amounted to 55,434 and 1,25,522 kgs. respectively.

Tea

The agricultural implements used in the district are mostly the old time implements. These are:

Agricultura
implements

- (i) The plough.—This is of a light structure made of a light wood to which an iron ploughshare is attached. The share is smaller in size than that used in lower Bengal. The handle is of bamboo. Sometimes a wooden plough without the share is also used as in the case of tobacco cultivation in certain operations. The plough cattle are of small size and they cannot draw a heavy plough nor is a heavy plough required for the light soil of the district. Indeed, except in very small areas, a heavy plough with a long ploughshare is injurious as it turns up the sand below the top crust of the soil. For this reason the improved ploughs and the tractors are unsuitable.
- (ii) The *bida*.—This is made of wood with teeth made of iron and is drawn by a pair of bullocks. It is used for thinning out plants.
- (iii) The harrow or *mai*.—This is made of bamboo and is drawn by two pairs of bullocks while two men stand on it to give it weight. It is used for breaking the clods of earth and to gather the weeds and jungles thrown up by the plough. It is also used to thin out plants.

- (iv) The *passon*.—This is made of a small piece of iron about a foot long and sharpened at the end and provided with an wooden handle. It is used for weeding. Mechanical weeders are now being used to a limited extent in the case of line sowing of jute.
- (v) The *sickle*.—This is a crescent shaped instrument made of iron which is sharpened in the concave edge and provided with a wooden handle. It is used for reaping. No mechanical reapers have yet come into use.
- (vi) The *hachni*.—This is a small rake made of a wooden beam to which pins of sharpened wood or bamboo are attached. It is provided with a handle and is worked by hand.
- (vii) The *shape*.—This is used to make the *ails* and for preliminary mixing of manures prior to ploughing.
- (viii) The *kursi*.—This is a mallet of wood or heavy bamboo to break the clods of earth.

In 1956, there were 4 tractors, 1,27,641 ploughs, 2,90,219 harrows, spades, etc; 14,368 carts, 20 crushers, 37 pumps and 3,396 other irrigation implements.

The cultivators are very conservative and it is very difficult to make them agree to adopt any novel method in agriculture. Especially in the case of tobacco they have a deep rooted idea that their empirical knowledge is better than what the Agriculture Department expert might tell them. Thus except for double cropping of some of the tobacco fields it has not been possible to introduce any innovation in tobacco cultivation. The activities of the Agriculture Department are more successful in the cases of paddy and jute cultivation. Manures like urea, superphosphates and special mixed fertilizer for paddy are becoming popular. The Koch Bihar State had established an Agricultural farm near Koch Bihar town in 1937. This farm has been extended to an area of 104 acres and varietal, manurial and cultural experiments are being conducted here. Improved wheat seeds raised in the farm have been distributed, but the impact is yet not very much discernible. The old wheat has not been completely replaced. The reason lies in the taste of the people and in the manner in which wheat is used by them. They do not make *chappatis* but fry the wheat and crush it to form what they call *gura*. Six *thana seed farms* have been established in Tufanganj, Sitai, Sitalkuchi, Matabhanga, Mekhliganj and Haldibari. Improved paddy seed raised and issued by these farms have been popular.

The fertilizer is one of the major inputs for increasing crop yields. The local farmers today are taking interest in the use of balanced fertilizer. They are interested specially

in the high-yielding varieties. The high price of fertilizers usually stands in the way of a rapid increase in fertilizer off-take. In many cases the selling points are quite at a distance from the farmers' plots and this also affects consumption of fertilizers. The following statement shows the consumption of fertilizers in the district for a three-year period from 1972-73.

CONSUMPTION OF FERTILIZERS IN KOCH BIHAR
DISTRICT : 1972-75

Year	Quantity (in M. T.)
1972-73	511
1973-74	461
1974-75	538

In recent years much stress has been given on the preparation and use of compost. To encourage preparation and use of compost a scheme for competition in compost-making is in operation. The tobacco-growers are traditionally good users of cattle manures and compost.

The activities of the Agriculture Department have been very much appreciated in the control of diseases and pests. Improved seeds of paddy, both *aus* and *aman*, treated with A.G.N. has practically controlled the disease known as *chita* (*Helmethosporium*). The Rice bug pest (*Leptocoris varicornis*) has been successfully controlled by dusting with 10 per cent B.C.H. In jute the hairy caterpillar is the only pest known in this district. It can be successfully combated with Endrex. But the high cost of Endrex is preventing its large scale use. In the case of tobacco the cut worm (*Agrotis sp*) has been successfully controlled by a spray of water dispersible D.D.T. Except for these changes and the occasional use of some simple mechanical device, such as, the seed-drill for line sowing of jute and paddy and the wheel hoe and mechanical weeder, the cultivator is still following his age old practice and custom.

Koch Bihar has hardly any surplus land for growing fodder crops. Even in the past as records show there was hardly any attempt to grow fodder crop. The cattle are of very inferior breed. They are small animals and the milch cows give no more than a litre or a litre and a half of milk in a whole day. An attempt was made towards the end of the last century to improve the breed by importing improved breed of oxen and cows and the Koch Bihar State started a cattle breeding farm. But the scheme fell through on account of apathy of the people. The cattle and the buffaloes are mainly kept as plough animals and as manure producing machines for tobacco cultivation.

Seeds and
manures

Fertilizers

Control of
diseases and pests

Animal husbandry
and fisheries

The cattle census of 1966 shows the following position of live-stock in the district:

	Total
1. Cattle—	
(a) Cows	1,38,596
(b) Bulls and bullocks	2,36,837
(c) Young stock	1,33,785
	5,09,218
2. Buffaloes—	
(a) Cows	24,003
(b) Bulls and bullocks	33,505
(c) Young stock	25,760
	83,268
3. Sheep	10,452
4. Goats	1,27,733
5. Horses and ponies	861
6. Pigs	2,718
8. Poultry—	
(a) Fowls	1,83,894
(b) Ducks	1,32,730
	3,16,624

The above figures will show that the number of cows is very much less than the number of bulls or bullocks both in the cases of cattle and buffaloes. As the cows are very poor in milk, it is not possible to have any dairy with this breed of cows and there was never any attempt to start any dairy. The high rainfall of the district and damp conditions are not conducive for sheep rearing and the meagre number of the sheep show that they are mainly kept for meat. There is scope for poultry farming, but none has been attempted as yet.

From 1966-67 the Government have started artificial insemination centres with a view to improving the breed of cattle. The numbers of artificial inseminations done are: 1966-67, 1,004; 1967-68, 1,466; 1968-69, 2,164; 1969-70, 1,443. A programme of castration of inferior kind of bulls has been taken in hand since 1963-64. The castrations performed since that time are: 1963-64, 286; 1964-65, 344; 1965-66, 361; 1966-67, 363; 1967-68, 409; 1968-69, 2,584.

There is one A class hospital at Koch Bihar and there are three B class hospitals at Matabhanga, Dinahata and Tufanganj. In addition there are 17 Block level dispensaries. Mass vaccination for eradication of rinderpest has been started since 1963-64. The following are the targets achieved:

Veterinary hospitals

Year	No.
1963-64	95,399
1964-65	86,970
1965-66	1,53,401
1966-67	1,27,361
1967-68	1,23,984
1968-69	3,37,645
1969-70	2,08,300

Vaccination against Ranikhet disease of poultry was started from the same year with the following targets achieved:

Year	No.
1963-64	71,357
1964-65	47,837
1965-66	58,472
1966-67	94,336
1967-68	70,434
1968-69	1,18,821
1969-70	1,15,363

The results of these preventive measures are seen in decreased incidence of Rinderpest and Ranikhet disease amongst cattle and poultry as shown here.

Rinderpest: 1967-68, 72; 1968-69, 17; 1969-70, 1.

Ranikhet: 1966-67, 17; 1967-68, 6; 1968-69, 3; 1969-70, 2.

In recent years the Artificial Insemination Programme is being followed up for the purpose of upgrading cattle. Semen is now collected from Jersey bulls of the Central Semen Collection Station, Koch Bihar, attached to the State Veterinary Hospital. It is processed and distributed to the A. I. Centres. There is also a District Veterinary Laboratory where disease investigation or pathological examination is made of samples received from the field units. Besides, there is one Ambulatory Clinic Van which is provided with a mobile dispensary. The Van is under the control of a Veterinary Surgeon, who attends all fixed centres in the rural pockets to treat sick live-stock brought by the owners to the centres.

Fisheries

There are 15 fish markets in the district where fish is sold daily. The location and the number of such markets are given below:

Location	Number
Koch Bihar Town	4
Tufanganj	2
Dinhata	2
Sitai	1
Sitalkuchi	1
Matabhanga	2
Mekhliganj	2
Haldibari	1

Besides, there are two wholesale fish markets, one at Koch Bihar and the other at Dinhata. All varieties of carps and other fishes are available in these markets. Besides, some hill-stream species like *Burbus tor*, a few species under family cyprinidae (locally known as *chepti pathar chola*, etc.) are also found in the district. The following statement shows the extent of loans given to deserving fishermen during 1971-74 for the development of tank fisheries.

Year	Amount disbursed (in Rs.)	Number of families benefited
1971-72	5,000	5
1972-73	22,000	29
1973-74	30,000	37

During the Fifth Plan period a sum of Rs. 4.50 lakhs, for which budget provision has been made, is expected to be utilized in connection with the implementation of various schemes for development of fisheries as well as the improvement of the economic condition of the fishermen families.

Forestry

There is no forest worth the name in Koch Bihar. The main products are firewood with only a small amount of timber.

The outturn of the forest produce for the years 1965 to 1968 is shown below:

	(in thousand cubic feet)		
	1965-66	1966-67	1967-68
1. Timber	1,610	44,991	14,402
2. Fuel	27,000	1,45,497	44,878

State assistance agriculture

Until recently the agricultural operations in the district was entirely financed by private money-lenders. The commercial banks and the Government have now entered the field. But the bulk of the finance is still made

available by the village money-lenders all of whom are unauthorised money-lenders and charge interest at exorbitant rates. Their method of finance is also peculiar. Instead of paying the loan in cash at a time the village money-lenders supply food and other necessities to the agriculturists against the security of the future crop. When the crop is harvested, the repayment of the loan is made by delivery of the produce at a previously arranged rate.

The Koch Bihar district Central Cooperative Bank Ltd. had made some advances to the agriculturists and the total amount of agricultural loans allowed by the bank up to 31 March 1972 is Rs. 31,99,000. But the recovery has been bad and as a result the bank is now in a moribund condition. The commercial banks have also made advances for the purpose of agriculture and the loan granted by the banks up to 31 March 1972 are as follows:

	Rs.
(1) State Bank of India	4,67,000
(2) Other commercial banks	21,000
(3) Cooch Behar District Central Cooperative Bank Ltd.	31,99,000
(4) Cooch Behar Cooperative Land Mortgage Bank Ltd.	10,55,000

The State Government also give different types of agricultural loans to the agriculturists. The amounts disbursed during the last three years are given below:

Subdivision	Kind of loan	Amount disbursed		
		1969-70	1970-71	1971-72
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Koch Bihar	Agriculturist	70,030	22,500	76,000
	Cattle purchase	53,000	17,500	15,000
	Land improvement	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Fertilizer	28,306	11,900	13,780
	Milch cows	15,700	Nil	Nil
Dinhata	Agriculturist	80,000	30,000	61,000
	Cattle purchase	1,01,000	60,000	8,000
	Land improvement	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Fertilizer	1,82,941	1,94,879	1,26,000
	Milch cows	Nil	Nil	Nil
Tufanganj	Agriculturist	53,200	33,200	76,000
	Cattle purchase	1,27,950	50,000	5,000
	Land improvement	4,000	Nil	Nil
	Fertilizer	27,000	18,750	17,000
	Milch cows	Nil	Nil	Nil

Subdivision	Kind of loan	Amount disbursed		
		1969-70	1970-71	1971-72
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Matabhanga	Agriculturist	81,700	97,600	51,000
	Cattle purchase	50,375	18,000	15,000
	Land improvement	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Fertilizer	82,500	82,000	80,000
	Milch cows	3,000	Nil	Nil
Mekhliganj	Agriculturist	51,200	1,08,000	46,000
	Cattle purchase	55,000	18,000	10,000
	Land improvement	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Fertilizer	80,000	77,000	50,000
	Milch cows	36,900	Nil	Nil

Floods, famines, droughts and other natural calamities

There is no connected record of the natural calamities of Koch Bihar up to 1850. From all available evidence it may be surmised that the great famine of 1770 did not much affect the district and the State of Koch Bihar.

Although blights and pests are rare, floods are frequent. The State suffered from heavy floods in 1787, 1822 and 1842, on each of which occasion crops were badly damaged, cattle and human lives were lost. There was a minor flood in 1870. A very heavy flood occurred in July 1878, the like of which was not repeated until the 20th century. In 1886 there was a heavy flood again followed by another flood in July 1892. The 1892 flood was localized in Matabhanga and Sadar subdivisions. There were flood in July 1895, severe earthquake in 1929, another in 1934, distress in 1943, earthquake and flood in 1950 and distress in 1951. Moderate floods occur almost annually in the rainy season.

The district easily feels the full brunt of a flood, specially as there are no embankments. The land is still in the process of formation and the lack of embankments help the country to receive rich deposits of loam and silt.

The district is seldom visited by draught, but there was one severe drought in 1854.

There was a violent hailstorm and hurricane in 1887.

Koch Bihar has been visited by several bad earthquakes. Buchanan Hamilton records having suffered from an earthquake in 1808-09. There were earthquakes again in 1885 and 1897. The earthquake of 1897 was very severe, having occurred on 12 June at 5 p.m., lasting for three minutes. Few lives were lost, but a great deal of property was damaged. Buildings, roads, bridges, drains and wells were all damaged, springs of hot water with sand issued from many of the fissures, the beds of marshes and *bils* were upheaved and many fisheries became dry. The last great earthquake was in 1934, which also inflicted a great deal of damage.¹

¹Adapted from A. Mitra, *District Handbook, Cooch Behar*, 1953, p. 1v.

Statement I

BLOCKWISE ACREAGE OF AUTUMN RICE : 1974-75

Blocks	Local varieties			High Yielding varieties		
	Area (acre)	Yield-rate (Qtl./acre)	Production (M. T.)	Area (acre)	Yield-rate (Qtl./acre)	Production (M. T.)
Tufanganj	35,516	4.4	8,523	200	8.0	160
Koch Bihar-I	13,110	3.2	3,146	750	7.2	540
Koch Bihar-II	20,666	4.0	4,959	302	9.6	290
Dinhata-I	26,500	4.4	9,540	8,500	8.0	6,800
Dinhata-II	23,500	6.0	5,640			
Sitai	77,000	6.0	1,630			
Sitalkuchi	24,000	4.0	3,340			
Matabhanga-I	14,816	5.2	2,963	3,665	4.0	1,466
Matabhanga-II	12,500	3.2	2,000	800	12.0	960
Mekhliganj	11,500	4.8	4,140	500	8.0	400
Haldibari	4,050	2.8	972	200	8.0	160
	2,63,158	4.1	47,403	14,917	7.0	10,776

Statement II

BLOCKWISE ACREAGE OF WINTER RICE : 1974-75

Blocks	Local varieties			High Yielding varieties		
	Area (acre)	Yield-rate (Qtl./acre)	Production (M. T.)	Area (acre)	Yield-rate (Qtl./acre)	Production (M. T.)
Tufanganj	53,000	4.4	23,320	15,000	6.4	9,600
Koch Bihar-I	28,769	3.2	9,206	7,000	6.4	4,490
Koch Bihar-II	30,750	4.0	12,300	9,268	10.4	9,638
Dinhata-I	31,500	4.4	13,860	16,000	9.6	15,360
Dinhata-II	35,000	6.0	21,000	9,000	12.0	10,800
Sitai	4,000	6.0	2,400	500	6.0	300
Sitalkuchi	34,000	4.0	13,600	6,000	4.8	2,880
Matabhanga-I	38,935	5.2	20,246	9,000	14.4	12,960
Matabhanga-II	35,387	3.2	11,324	4,520	6.4	2,893
Mekhliganj	38,800	4.8	18,624	3,200	8.0	2,560
Haldibari	19,300	2.8	5,394	2,000	7.2	1,440
	3,49,441	4.1	1,51,274	81,488	8.9	72,911

Statement III

BLOCKWISE ACREAGE OF SUMMER RICE : 1974-75

Blocks	Local varieties			High Yielding varieties		
	Area (acre)	Yield-rate (Qtl./acre)	Production (M. T.)	Area (acre)	Yield-rate (Qtl./acre)	Production (M. T.)
Tufanganj	600	9.6	576	150	11.2	168
Koch Bihar-I	134	4.8	64	64	7.2	46
Koch Bihar-II				53	9.6	54
Dinhata-I	200	5.2	104	100	8.0	80
Dinhata-II	200	4.8	96	100	8.0	80
Sitai	40	4.8	19			
Sitalkuchi	100	8.0	80	10	8.0	8
Matabhanga-I	66	4.8	32	75	8.0	60
Matabhanga-II				70	4.0	28
Mekhliganj	15	6.4	80	25	6.0	15
Haldibari				5	9.2	4
	1,355	6.5	1,051	652	8.4	533

Statement IV

BLOCKWISE ACREAGE OF WHEAT : 1974-75

Blocks	High Yielding varieties			Local varieties		
	Area (acre)	Yield-rate (Qtl./acre)	Production (M.T.)	Area (acre)	Yield-rate (Qtl./acre)	Production (M.T.)
Tufanganj	3,500	9.6	3,360	200	3.6	72
Koch Bihar-I	1,887	8.0	1,509	1,331	6.0	799
Koch Bihar-II	3,000	12.0	3,600	500	6.0	300
Dinhata-I	2,500	8.4	2,100	500	4.0	200
Dinhata-II	2,000	10.0	2,000	100	3.6	36
Sitai	200	5.2	104	150	4.0	60
Sitalkuchi	355	10.8	383	250	6.4	160
Matabhanga-I	2,250	8.0	1,800	1,000	6.4	640
Matabhanga-II	1,500	8.4	1,400	1,000	4.8	480
Mekhliganj	1,400	9.6	1,344	300	4.0	120
Haldibari	550	7.2	396			
	19,142	9.4	17,996	5,331	5.2	2,886

CHAPTER V

INDUSTRIES

Koch Bihar is essentially an agricultural country. No ores, minerals or coal has yet been found. Till 1950 it had a self-sufficient economy. The felt needs of the people were few and they adjusted their mode of life within the small compass of things available within the district. The soil is soft and light and can be ploughed by a wooden plough without the plough-share of iron; and ploughs without such share are even now in use. A few earthenware pots and plantain leaves sufficed for all the needs of cooking and eating.

One of the oldest industry of the district was rearing, spinning and weaving of Eri. The Eri worms were reared on castor plants. The cocoons cannot be reeled but has to be spun. The spinning was done in indigenous *takkis*. The yarn is coarse and uneven in texture. It was then woven in an improvised pit loom made with bamboos. The cloth woven was about 18 to 24 inches in breadth and 7 to 9 feet in length. These fabrics though coarse to touch are extremely durable. This industry practically died out due to competition of imported cotton fabric, but efforts are being made now to resuscitate it.

A fine fabric was made by spinning jute and weaving it in looms. Certain vegetable dyes were used to dye the fabric. Mekhliganj takes its name from these jute fabrics which were called *mekhli*. This industry has completely died out. The spinning of fine jute yarn was a difficult art and could not stand the competition of imported fabrics. A small quantity of gunny cloth is still made by hand. It is mostly used for home consumption.

The district does not contain good soil for making pottery and for the most part these used to be imported from East Bengal districts. With the partition import from that source stopped and prices of earthenware vessels have risen. Cheap aluminium vessels and cooking utensils have now taken their place. A coarse and rude type of clay toys and figures are made from the clay available in Teldhar tract in the old valley of the Karatoya.

There are a few iron-smiths in the villages turning out cheap types of agricultural implements. The wrought iron is imported from outside and the workmanship is not good. Most of the household and agricultural implements are now imported from outside the district.

There is no large scale industry in the district. Two plywood factories were set up in the district of which one is defunct. Only one is running but not satisfactorily. The labourers are mostly casual and about 200 are employed

OLD TIME INDUSTRIES

Jute fabrics

Mekhli and gunny

Pottery

Smithy

Small scale industries

during peak periods. There are four paddy husking units of small dimensions employing 6 labourers each. The Koch Bihar State Press has been taken over by the West Bengal Government and is being run as a State Press.

Very small and village industries

After the influx of displaced persons some village industries have been started by them sometimes with Government assistance and sometimes without such assistance. These include hand-loom weaving, shoe making, conch-shell industry, paddy-husking machines, bidi making, brass and bell metal industry, oil pressing, wheat-crushing, etc.

Tea garden

There is a tea garden in the district adjacent to Falakata. One hundred labourers work here. The authorized capital is Rs. 5,00,000.

The district is still deficient in industries for lack of an adequate infrastructure. It is wanting in raw materials, mineral resources, organized markets and marketing facilities. There is no big industry licensed under the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951, and there are only a few small factories registered with the Chief Inspector of Factories, West Bengal. The small industries are still mainly concerned with bidi-making, handloom weaving, bamboo crafts, printing press, cane products, wheat grinding, rice husking mills, bakery, etc.

The total number of small scale industrial units registered with the Directorate of Cottage and Small Scale Industries in the district are 560 as on 10 July 1972, while the unregistered units are estimated to be 13,000. The following table shows the different categories of registered units functioning in the district:

REGISTERED SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIAL UNITS IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT : 1972

Type	Number of units
Food products	84
Textiles	225
Beverage industries	8
Chemical and chemical products	22
Footwear and other wearing apparels	12
Woodwork other than furniture	53
Furniture	19
Metal products	18
Building materials	7
Tobacco products	24
Clay modelling	17
Printing and publishing	10
Miscellaneous	61
Total	560

The registered companies get (1) loans under the Bengal State Aid to Industries Act, (2) payment of subsidy in the rate of electric power consumed by them through motors up to 50 h.p., (3) payment of interest subsidy at the rate of 2 per cent as grant-in-aid on loans up to Rs. 50,000 for working capital, (4) recommendations to the commercial banks for advances, (5) allotment of scarce and controlled raw materials and recommendations for import licence, (6) assistance in marketing the products, (7) training to the staff of the units, and (8) hire-purchase facilities for machineries.

The following table shows the amount of loans advanced to the registered small scale industrial units in the district as well as in the Development Blocks in recent years.

LOANS DISBURSED TO THE REGISTERED SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIAL UNITS IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT : 1967-72

	Disbursing Authorities			Total
	Deputy Commissioner	District Industrial Officer	Block Development Officer	
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1967-68	46,950	7,000	11,000	64,950
1968-69	63,000	10,000	10,500	83,500
1969-70	60,000	11,000	Nil	71,000
1970-71	89,100	10,000	10,000	1,09,100
1971-72	56,000	22,000	20,000	98,000

The total amount of loans thus disbursed comes to about Rs. 4.27 lakhs in five years. The commercial banks also advanced loans to the extent of Rs. 3.03 lakhs as on 31 March 1972 to the small scale industrial units.

The people of the district are born artists in bamboo craft, bamboo replacing wood in every article of daily use. Bone to the extent of about 100 tonnes is also available in the district every year, but there is no bone-processing unit. Hides numbering about 90,000 pieces and skins numbering about 2,50,000 pieces are available, but for want of local markets all these are generally consigned to Calcutta through commissioned agents for disposal. Sericulture is an important home industry of the district. A Government office for rural demonstration and propaganda work has been established in the district town in 1963-64 to encourage the workers. The Sericulture office there gives facilities of supplying disease-free eri-eggs to

the rearers with a view to encouraging them to produce more cocoons in a scientific manner. The following table shows the production figures of eri in recent years in the district.

PRODUCTION IN ERICULTURE INDUSTRY IN KOCH BIHAR
DISTRICT : 1966-72

	Total production of eri-cocoons	Total expenditure
	Kgs.	Rs.
1966-67	674	6,705
1967-68	590	9,762
1968-69	112	10,555
1969-70	Nil	7,906
1970-71	30	10,213
1971-72	Not available	10,373

Handloom is also an important industry. The number of handlooms and workers was 3,955 and 6,192 respectively in 1972. The weavers face difficulties in their work because of high prices of yarn, dyes and chemicals in comparison with South Bengal. The yarn dealers charge Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 more for a bundle of 10 lbs. of yarn than the rate prevailing in Calcutta. The sales depots of the West Bengal Small Industries Corporation are, therefore, making arrangements for the supply of yarn and other raw materials at competitive rates to the weavers. The following table shows the number of handlooms in different subdivisions of the district.

NUMBER OF HANDLOOM UNITS IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT :

	Number of units	Number of Looms
Koch Bihar Sadar	765	1,540
Dinhata	95	400
Tufanganj	110	280
Matabhanga	115	180

Tobacco is the most important cash crop of the district. The Wrapper and Hookah Tobacco Research Station, Dinhata, have tried the production of the cigar wrapper tobacco since 1952 and it is found that tobacco of very good quality can be produced in the district. Such wrapper tobacco is now produced in about 15 acres with an output of about 270 mds. a year. Cigar filler tobacco of good quality

is also produced in about 12.5 acres of land with a total yield of about 200 mds. a year. The State Government also opened a Training-cum-Production Centre in Dinhata in 1966 for imparting training in the making of Cigar and country cheroots. The centre has, however, been closed down in 1968.

The main source of power in the district is electricity, supplied by the West Bengal State Electricity Board. The supply made by Koch Bihar Power House and Changrabandha Power House, as supplement to Jaldhaka Hydel Project, is consumed mainly for domestic purposes. The capacity for generation of the Koch Bihar Power House is 2.8 MW of which 600 KW is taken away by Jalpaiguri for Alipurduar Electric Supply and of the Changrabandha Power House production of 575 KW, 240 KW is taken away by Jalpaiguri for Maynaguri Electric Supply. The total consumption of the district in October 1971 was 4,01,681 KW hours. The following table gives the average monthly consumption of the district.

AVERAGE MONTHLY CONSUMPTION OF POWER IN KOCH BIHAR
DISTRICT : 1971

	(Units)
Domestic	85,523
Commercial	1,51,823
Industrial	1,32,432
Street light	11,406
Water works	20,497
Total	4,01,681

Koch Bihar, Dinhata, Vetaguri, Dewanhat, Tufanganj, Matabhanga, Mekhliganj, Changrabandha, Haldibari and 13 villages of the district have been provided with electricity which normally comes from the Jaldhaka Hydel Project. Electrified villages include Guriahati, Khagrabari, Khari-mala-Khagrabari, Dewan-hat, Kamal, Phulbari, Baranchina, Bhangri, Jhuripara, Khanjabaladanga, etc. There are also some diesel power houses which are put into operation when there is a failure of power.

There is acute shortage of power and the demand for unsatisfied power is as follows: Large Industrial Consumers 0.7 MW, Medium Industrial Consumers 1.2 MW, Small Industrial Consumers 0.3 MW, Municipalities (for street lighting, etc.) 0.3 MW, Public Institutions (Schools, Colleges, Government offices, Hospitals, etc.) 0.5 MW, Domestic Consumers 1.5 MW, all totalling 4.5 MW.

A scheme is under consideration to take power from Assam.

There are no labour and employers' organizations worth mentioning as modern industries have not yet grown.

CHAPTER VI

BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE

Some sort of indigenous method of banking flourished in the district when it was an Indian State. Peasants and men of small means used to deposit their savings with merchants who in exchange met some of the daily needs of the investors. A full-fledged non-scheduled bank named Kamala Bank was opened in Koch Bihar on 1 July 1929. It had paid-up capital and reserves between Rs. 50,000 and Rs. 1,00,000 at that time. The balance sheet of the Bank during the late fifties shows the following (in thousands of rupees):

Date of balance sheet	Paid up capital	Reserves	Deposits				Total
			Fixed	Savings	Current	Others	
31-12-1958	38	41	51	31	76	4	1,02
31-12-1959	39	41	51	29	92	5	1,77
	Other liabili- ties	Balance of profit or loss	Total liabili- ties or assets	Cash		Money at call and short notice	Loans and ad- vances
				In hand	At banks		
31-12-1958	18	4(3)	2,63	19	12	5	1,57
31-12-1959	20	3(3)	2,80	22	22	5	1,60
	Investments		Premises and im- movable property	Other assets	No. of offices including Head office	Dividend declared (per cent)	
	Govt. securi- ties	Others					
31-12-1958	46		15	9	1	4.501	
31-12-1959	47		15	9	1	4.501	

The State Bank of India took over the business including the assets and liabilities of the Bank from 14 January 1967 by an order issued by the Government of India under the State Bank of India Act of 1955.

Facilities of finance through institutions are still poor, and up to 1966 banking facilities were available only in the district town. The present-day financial institutions consist of commercial banks, cooperative banks, Chit fund company, Post Offices, Life Insurance Corporation of India and a large number of money-lenders, both registered and

unregistered. So long the commercial banks were confined to the urban areas, while the tottering cooperative credit societies operated in the rural areas. As the district has considerable cash crop like jute and tobacco, credit facilities in the rural areas are offered by big merchants, shopkeepers and farmers acting as money-lenders to whom repayment is made through the crop. The following table shows the names of different commercial banks operating in the district.

COMMERCIAL BANKS IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT: 1972

Name of the area	Location	Name of the Bank
Koch Bihar Municipality	Koch Bihar	State Bank of India, State Bank of India (Pay Office), United Bank of India Central Bank of India, United Industrial Bank Ltd.
Dinhata I Block	Dinhata	State Bank of India
Tufanganj Block	Tufanganj	Central Bank of India
Matabhanga I Block	Matabhanga	Central Bank of India
Mekhliganj Block	Mekhliganj	Central Bank of India
Mekhliganj Block	Changrabandha	State Bank of India
Haldibari Block	Haldibari	Central Bank of India

The commercial banks, including the State Bank of India, cater to the requirement of 1,18,000 people per office as against an all-India average of 45,000 people per office. The commercial and cooperative banks together serve a population of 94,000 per office. The commercial banks including the State Bank of India through all their branches had a total deposit of Rs. 288.95 lakhs on 31 December 1971. This amount consisted of Current, Savings and Term Deposits of Rs. 60.64, Rs. 134.99 and Rs. 93.32 lakhs respectively. The average per capita deposits of the commercial banks therefore worked out to Rs. 20.47 lakhs. The following table shows the growth of deposits in the commercial banks of the district in recent years:

GROWTH OF COMMERCIAL BANK DEPOSITS IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT: 1969-71

Date	No. of offices	Total deposits (in lakhs of Rs.)	Percentage of annual growth rate
31-12-1969	4	190.45	
31-12-1970	9	211.80	+11.21
31-12-1971	10	288.95	+36.43

As against the deposits the credit structure of the commercial banks including the State Bank of India stood at Rs. 56.38 lakhs on 31 December 1971. The commercial banks also gave financial assistance to the extent of Rs. 14.33 lakhs and Rs. 34.03 lakhs as on 31 December 1969 and 31 December 1970. The commercial banks also made advances to agriculture and small scale industries to the extent of Rs. 4.88 lakhs and Rs. 3.03 lakhs respectively on 31 March 1972.

A Chit fund company named Nirmal Chit Fund Co. Ltd. also operates in the district town.

There are two cooperative banks in the district, namely, Cooch Behar District Central Cooperative Bank Ltd. and Cooch Behar Cooperative Land Mortgage Bank Ltd., both having Head Offices in Koch Bihar. The former has two branches, one at Matabhanga within the district and the other at Alipurduar in the Jalpaiguri district. It provides short-term loans to the members of cooperative societies for agricultural activities during the seasons and for marketing of crops. It also renders usual banking service to both members and non-members. The Cooch Behar Cooperative Land Mortgage Bank Ltd. provides medium-term loans to the members of cooperative societies for reclamation of lands, construction of ringwells or cattle-shed, etc., and also long-term loans for 7 to 15 years to the extent of Rs. 700 to Rs. 25,000 to individual members through the Primary Land Mortgage Banks for reclamation of lands, redemption of old debts, purchase of agricultural implements like pump-sets, power tillers, tractors, etc. and for sinking shallow tube-wells.

The deposits of the Cooperative Bank in recent years were as follows:

DEPOSITS IN COOPERATIVE BANK IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT :
1969-71

Date	Current (in lakhs of Rs.)	Savings (in lakhs of Rs.)	Term (in lakhs of Rs.)	Percentage of annual growth rate
31-12-1969	2.86	9.22	0.58	
31-12-1970	3.09	10.33	0.69	+11.45
31-12-1971	3.43	9.55	1.40	+1.91

The per capita deposits therefore, comes to Rs. 1.02.

The West Bengal State Cooperative Bank issue loans to the Central Cooperative Bank for financing short-term loans for agricultural activities during the seasons. The sum is ordinarily received from the Reserve Bank of India at 2 per cent below the Bank rate on the guarantee of the

State Government. The Central Cooperative Bank in their turn disburse loans to the individual members through the affiliated primary societies. The West Bengal State Cooperative Bank usually charge the Central Cooperative Bank an interest at the rate of one per cent above its rate of borrowing from the Reserve Bank of India. The Central Cooperative Bank in their turn charge a maximum of 2½ per cent above the rate of borrowing from the State Bank of India. This Bank normally disburse loans for the cultivation of jute, tobacco and paddy. The following table shows the amount of advances made by the cooperative and commercial banks in recent years which were outstanding on the dates mentioned:

COOPERATIVE BANK ADVANCES TOWARDS AGRICULTURE
OUTSTANDING IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT : 1969-71

Date	By Coopera- tive Bank	By Land Mortgage Bank
	Rs.	Rs.
31-12-1969	24,33,000	7,92,000
31-12-1970	31,92,000	8,28,000
31-12-1971	34,72,000	10,14,000

There are two types of cooperative credit societies in the district, namely agricultural credit cooperative society and non-agricultural credit cooperative society. The former raises funds through shares purchased by individual members and government and also through borrowings made from the Central Cooperative Bank, and invests the same by granting loans to the members for agricultural activities and for marketing produces. The latter raises funds from members through shares, deposits, borrowings, etc. and supplies credit to its members for normal use.

There are 50 industrial cooperative societies in the district whose working capital is formed of the shares and deposits of the members as also the borrowings made from government and other agencies.

The cooperative movement in the district started only in 1951 after the merger of the former State with the Indian Union.

In 1951, there were only 1 Agricultural Credit, 1 non-Agricultural Credit, 2 Farming, 1 Fishermen's, 6 Weavers'

and 2 Multipurpose societies in the district. The following table would show how the number of societies as also the types have increased in recent years.

COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT:
1970-71

Type of societies	No. of societies	Dor- mant or defunct	No. of member- ship (Actual)	(In thousand rupees)			
				Paid up share capital	Reserves and other funds	Depo- site	Loans and ad- vances (Short term)
Central bank	1		442	709	102	1,390	1,030
Land mortgage bank*	1		1,098	75	5		
Agricultural credit	417	170	48,000	1,044	71	428	1,014
Employees' credit	4	1	275	0	1		18
Grain banks	10	2	1,293	14	107	0	02
Marketing societies	14	4	5,845	489	18	01	
Processing societies	1		109	352	2	23	
Farming societies	7		121	3	48		
Fishery societies	55		2,324	69	35		
Wholesale consumers'	1		2,051	189			
Primary consumers'	10	14	2,965	32	27		
Weavers' societies	10	9	1,262	80	140	51	
Powerloom	3	1	68	17	5	15	
Other industries	11	10	241	10	8	32	
Transport societies	4	3	361	49	26		
Non-agricultural Non-credit	18		703	40	12		
Cooperative union	1		67				
Liquidation societies	32						
Housing societies	3		50				

*made a long-term advance of 200 thousands of rupees.

The district has made good progress during the year 1971 so far as the deposits with the various financial agencies are concerned. The deposits went up from Rs. 40.52 lakhs in 1970 to Rs. 99.02 lakhs in 1971 which come mainly from the urban sector. Life Insurance Corporation of India is, however, taking away a good

amount of the deposits. The progress of activities of Life Insurance Corporation of India can be understood from the following table:

ACTIVITIES OF LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA IN
KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT: 1967-72

Year	Number of policies	Sum assured (in lakhs of Rs.)	Premium collected (in lakhs of Rs.)
1967-68	3,223	160.49	33.42
1968-69	3,319	159.07	33.76
1969-70	3,217	147.65	34.10
1970-71	3,479	183.44	34.91
1971-72	3,597	226.23	Not avail- able

The following table shows the savings in the Post Offices of the district in recent years.

SAVINGS IN THE POST OFFICES OF KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT:
1969-71

	1969	1970	1971
Number of Savings Bank Ac- counts	43,137	47,389	45,415
Deposits in Savings Banks (in lakhs of Rs.)	291.44	318.21	332.46
Rate of growth of deposits		9.18%	4.48%
Value of National Savings Certi- ficates sold (in lakhs of Rs.)	18.13	8.76	15.31

The per capita deposit in the Post Office Savings Bank account comes to Rs. 23.55 and the per capita contribution to the National Savings Certificates comes to Rs. 1.08

The district is an agricultural one, yet it is deficient in food grains. Whatever is grown, is consumed within the district. The main export consists of cash crops like jute and tobacco, while the main items of import are rice, pulses, vegetables, spices, oils, wheat, sugar, iron and steel materials, cement, coal, etc., worth Rs. 10 crores a year. The following table shows the volume of import of some important items made by the district from other districts of the State or from other States.

Trade and
Commerce

IMPORTS OF FOODGRAINS IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT : 1971

Commodity	Quantity (in tonnes)	Value (in Rs.)
Dry chillis	450	18,00,000
Gur	600	10,80,000
Jute	4,000	48,00,000
Oil	4,000	2,00,00,000
Onion	16,000	11,30,000
Paddy	1,000	8,00,000
Potato	1,000	10,00,000
Pulses	4,000	72,00,000
Rice	1,000	12,00,000
Salt	4,500	9,00,000
Sugar	650	17,87,500
Wheat	3,000	24,00,000

The volume of exports of jute and tobacco is as follows:

	Tonnes	Rs.
Jute	94,000	11,28,00,000
Tobacco	5,920	2,38,80,000

The following table would further show the volume of export of cash crop by railway wagons in the district in recent years.

NUMBER AND VALUE OF WAGONS LOADED IN SELECTED RAILWAY STATIONS OF KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT : 1969-72

Name of station	Principal commodities	1969-70		1970-71		1971-72	
		No. of wagons	Approx. value	No. of wagons	Approx. value	No. of wagons	Approx. value
			Rs.		Rs.		Rs.
Cooch Behar	Jute	400	37,32,350	566	50,76,500	594	57,59,375
New Cooch Behar	Jute	1,208	4,15,36,000	683	2,18,56,000	1,222	4,05,23,000
	Tobacco	122	1,23,42,000	77	41,69,400	52	57,20,000
	Hides	21	6,03,000	10	3,01,500	16	4,06,300
	Timber	37	1,11,000	29	87,000	31	93,000
	Miscellaneous	224	60,60,000	81	40,60,500	255	67,00,000
Dewanhat	Jute	110	16,50,000	223	33,45,000	87	13,05,000
Dinhata	Jute	1,678	2,51,70,000	879	1,18,35,000	1,085	1,62,75,000
Vetaguri	Jute	193	23,16,000	138	16,56,000	95	1,14,000
Bamanhat	Jute	523	7,84,500	319	4,65,900	246	3,63,000
Ghoksha-danga	Jute	25	3,75,000	16	84,520	12	72,320
Jorai*	Jute	19	18,227	21	15,269	108	94,358
	Timber	131	77,597	379	2,35,956	273	2,12,749

*Including Broadgauge and Metregauge wagons. The rest are on Broadgauge wagons.

The imports are mainly financed by banks and similar institutions, the centres of import trade being Koch Bihar town, Dinhata, Haldibari, Matabhanga, Mekhliganj and Tufanganj. The bulk of the export trade, on the other hand, is financed by money-lenders, though the cooperative marketing societies are now making some progress in this respect. A list of important market places has been given in Appendix A.

Orderly marketing of agricultural produce is of paramount importance in a growing economy where production is steadily increasing and prices are subject to fluctuations. The efficiency of the marketing system depends on channelizing the growers' surplus to consumers at reasonable prices, having due regard to the margin and costs involved in the process without burdening the consumer and ensuring remunerative prices to the growers to induce them to produce more. To attain both the objectives, the Marketing Branch of the State Agriculture Directorate has formulated a few schemes for implementation in Koch Bihar district along with other districts.

Regulation of markets: There are nearly 136 primary and secondary markets in Koch Bihar district. Out of these there are 10 important wholesale markets through which nearly 80 per cent of the growers' marketed surplus of principal crops like rice, jute, tobacco, mustard seeds, pulses are marketed. Out of the ten wholesale markets, only five markets, e.g., Dinhata, Haldibari, Matabhanga, Gossanimari-

hat and Tufanganj have initially been selected for bringing under the purview of the Market Regulation Act. Regulated Markets are considered to be the most important institutions in the field of orderly marketing. They not only provide certain legal protections to the producers in the process of marketing their produce, but also provide a variety of amenities and facilities needed for the smooth flow of the growers' surplus and for strengthening the economic position and bargaining powers of the producer-sellers.

Market Reforms: This programme includes granting of long term loans to the private market owners and also to the markets owned by statutory bodies, e.g., municipalities, etc., to develop and remodel their markets on standard lines so as to give better marketing facilities to the grower-sellers. The Koch Bihar Municipality has been granted a sum of Rs. 50,000 as loan for improvement of the Bhowaniganj market. Another loan of Rs. 10,000 has been granted to the Dinhata Town Committee for improvement of Gudrihazar. A proposal for granting of a second loan of Rs. 20,000 to the same committee for meeting additional costs of improvement of Gudrihazar is under consideration of the Government.

Grading and Standardisation: With a view to developing quality consciousness at the producers' level for ensuring better price for quality products, it has been considered necessary to introduce grading. A grading centre is functioning at Dinhata (Chowrahat) to induce the growers, traders and others to propagate the techniques of grading of tobacco, jute, etc. Another peripatetic jute grading unit with headquarters at Jalpaiguri covers the jute growing belt of the Jalpaiguri-Koch Bihar districts with the object of developing quality consciousness at the producers' level.

Market Intelligence: Market intelligence data from seven Market Intelligence Centres, viz., Koch Bihar, Dinhata, Tufanganj, Matabhanga, Mekhliganj, Pundibari, Bakshirhat in respect of paddy, rice, jute, tobacco, mustard seeds are supplied to the Economic and Statistical Adviser to the Government of India and also to the State Government on weekly and daily basis which are utilized for compilation of National Statistics and State Price Bulletins and also for local broadcast over the All India Radio.

Further periodical reviews of the marketing situation of different crops are prepared for circulation among the leading growers, Anchal Panchayats, Block Development Officers so as to enable the growers to plan their production and marketing activities.

Market Extension Service: This scheme envisages selection of villages in phases by the Subdivisional Agricultural Marketing Officers and District Agricultural Marketing Officers. Growers of these villages are consulted about their marketing difficulties and helped out as far as possible.

Movement Programme: Every year a detailed rail movement programme is drawn up by the local marketing officers for jute in consultation with the dealers and growers concerned and also the N.F. Rly. authorities and a strict implementation of the programme is ensured. Such planned movement ensures prevention of transport bottlenecks and resultant losses to the growers and intermediaries.

Market Research: This includes commodity marketing surveys, studies in respect of price variations, marketing margins, marketing costs, price-spreads, marketable surpluses, distribution and utilization of agricultural produce and also other problem-oriented studies. They are conducted by the local marketing officers in close collaboration with and under the guidance of the Market Research Section at the headquarters.

Fruit and Vegetable Preservation and Processing: The district grows a number of seasonal fruits and vegetables, viz., guavas, cabbages, cauliflowers, tomatoes, etc., in good quantities. The Marketing Department has arranged for processing and preservation of these with the help of a peripatetic Fruit Preservation-cum-Training Unit with headquarters at Jalpaiguri to avoid any possible seasonal glut and fall in prices of these crops. The unit offers training facilities in fruit and vegetable preservation to the housewives.

Warehousing Regulation: The warehouses of the West Bengal State Warehousing Corporation and of the Central Warehousing Corporation in the district are licensed under the Act so that they can issue warehouse certificates to the grower-depositors against which the latter get bank advances. Duties of the local officers are, however, confined to periodical inspection of the warehouses and also to induce the growers to take advantage of the storage facilities and the easy bank credit. Warehousing facilities are available at Dinhata, Tufanganj and Koch Bihar.

A list of fairs and festivals appears in Appendix B.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF HATS AND MARKETS IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT

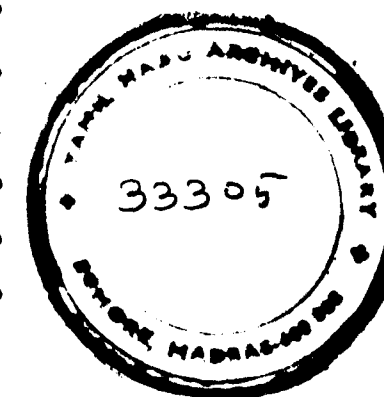
Name of Market	Police Station	Type
'A' Class Markets :		
Koch Bihar	Koch Bihar	Wholesale and retail
Pundibari Hat	Do	Do
Chowra Hat	Dinhata	Do
Tufanganj (Ranirhat)	Tufanganj	Do
Bakshir Hat	Do	Do
Haldibari Assembling Centre	Haldibari	Do
Matabhanga Hat	Matabhanga	Do

LIST OF HATS AND MARKETS IN COCH BIHAR—*contd.*

Name of Market	Police Station	Type
'B' Class Markets :		
Dodyer Hat	Koch Bihar	Wholesale and retail
Ambari Hat	Do	Do
Okrabari Hat	Dinhata	Do
Sahebganj Hat	Do	Do
Gossanimari Hat	Do	Do
Bhetaguri Hat	Do	Wholesale
Haldibari Hat	Haldibari	Wholesale and retail
Sitai Hat	Sitai	Wholesale
Mekhliganj	Mekhliganj	Retail
Sitalkuchi Hat	Sitalkuchi	Wholesale
Mekhliganj Hat	Mekhliganj	Do
Gosair Hat	Sitalkuchi	Do
Matabhanga Market	Matabhanga	Retail
Changrabandha Hat	Mekhliganj	Wholesale and retail
Jamaldaha Hat	Do	Do
Ranir Hat	Do	Do
Dhapra Hat	Do	Do
'C' Class Markets :		
Dawaguri Hat	Koch Bihar	Do
Nilkuthi Hat	Do	Do
Nayarhat (Ghugumari)	Do	Retail
Rajar Hat	Do	Wholesale and retail
Chhotamahadev Hat	Tufanganj	Retail
Abutara Hat	Dinhata	Do
Baneswar Hat	Koch Bihar	Wholesale and retail
Mahishkuchir Hat	Tufanganj	Do

LIST OF HATS AND MARKETS IN COCH BIHAR—*contd.*

Name of Market	Police Station	Type
Shyamganjer Hat	Tufanganj	Retail
Barokodali Baromahadev Hat	Do	Wholesale and retail
Harir Hat	Do	Retail
Nagur Hat	Do	Wholesale and retail
Dhalpal Hat	Do	Retail-cum-wholesale
Buribamunir Hat	Do	Retail
Saheber Hat	Do	Do
Aludhowa Hat	Do	Retail-cum-wholesale
Deocharai Hat	Do	Retail
Sarker Hat	Sitalkuchi	Wholesale and retail
Baibhuti Hat	Tufanganj	Retail
Kalinagar Hat	Koch Bihar	Do
Kholtar Hat	Do	Do
Pakrar Hat	Do	Do
Mahishbathan Hat	Do	Wholesale-cum-retail
Suktabari Hat	Do	Do
Dewan Hat	Do	Do
Gobrasara Hat	Dinhata	Retail
Tapur Hat	Koch Bihar	Do
Kalika Bazar	Do	Do
Khapaidanga Naya Hat	Do	Do
Domparrer Hat	Do	Do
Akulpasari Hat	Do	Do
Kochabari Hat	Do	Do
Rakhalmari Hat	Do	Do
Chilkir Hat	Do	Do



V 27516
N 77

LIST OF HATS AND MARKETS IN COCH BIHAR—*contd.*

Name of Market	Police Station	Type
Thaneswar Hat	Koch Bihar	Retail
Ghugumari Nagar Hat	Do	Do
Patlakhawa Hat	Do	Do
Putimari Fuleswari Hat	Do	Do
Natun Basir Hat	Do	Do
Katamari Hat	Do	Do
Kashiabari Hat	Do	Do
Dhangdhingguri Hat	Do	Do
Khattamari Nayer Hat	Do	Do
Dobiganjer Hat	Do	Do
Dhulia Hat	Mekhliganj	Do
Kishir Hat	Do	Do
Boolmari Hat	Do	Do
Kashiabari Hat	Do	Do
Nimajkhana Hat	Do	Do
Dewanganj Hat	Do	Do
Bholar Hat (Bhola village)	Do	Do
Nishiganj Hat	Matabhanga	Wholesale and retail
Ratherdanga Hat	Do	Do
Buriganj Hat	Do	Do
Akrar Hat	Do	Do
Faltur Hat	Do	Do
Khattimari Premerdanga Hat	Do	Do
Ghoksadanga Hat	Do	Do
Gumani Hat	Do	Do
Hazrar Hat	Do	Retail

LIST OF HATS AND MARKETS IN COCH BIHAR—*contd.*

Name of Market	Police Station	Type
Suknadighir Hat	Matabhanga	Retail
Khaltimari Hat	Do	Do
Giladanga Hat	Do	Do
Gourbairagi Hat	Do	Do
Sareyadanga Hat	Do	Do
Nazer Hat (Panigram)	Do	Do
Dhirebad Hat	Do	Do
Siber Hat	Do	Do
Marunga Hat	Do	Do
Tariganjer Hat	Sitalkuchi	Do
Dakater Hat	Do	Do
Samgerbari Hat	Do	Do
Baramaricha Hat	Do	Do
Barakaimari Hat	Do	Do
Shibpur Hat	Do	Do
Puglar Hat	Do	Do
Lalbazar Hat	Do	Do
Nayer Hat	Dinhata	Wholesale and retail
Burir Hat	Do	Retail
Nazir Hat	Do	Retail and wholesale
Kochabari Hat	Do	Do
Chowdhury Hat	Do	Do
Falta Hat	Do	Do
Natkabari Hat	Do	Do
Gitaldaha Hat	Do	Do
Gudri Market	Do	Do

LIST OF HATS AND MARKETS IN KOCH BIHAR— *concl'd.*

Name of Market	Police Station	Type
Taraganj Hat	Dinhata	Wholesale and Retail
Notafala Hat	Do	Retail
Matal Hat	Do	Do
Badur Hat	Do	Do
Baradanga Hat	Do	Wholesale and retail
Bairagir Hat	Sitai	Retail
Giridhari Hat	Do	Do
Nazer Hat	Do	Do
Barthar Hat	Do	Do
Kitu Hat	Do	Do
Nagar Hat (Adabari)	Do	Wholesale and retail
Haribaler Hat	Do	Retail
Paglar Hat	Do	Do
Garad Hat	Tufanganj	Do
Chatbhalka Hat (Natan Hat)	Do	Do
Bhalka Hat	Do	Do
Krishnapur Hat	Do	Wholesale and retail
Old Tufanganj Hat	Do	Do
Balarampur Hat	Do	Do
Chilakhana Hat	Do	Do
Maruganj Hat	Do	Do
Natabari Hat	Do	Do
Chandir Hat	Do	Retail
Nugabhag Hat (Nalian Hat)	Do	Do

N. B.—The classification of hats into A, B and C is based on the average volume of transactions and the average attendance.

APPENDIX B
LIST OF FAIRS AND FESTIVALS IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT

Police Station	Mauza No.	Place	Time (Bengali month)	Occasion	Duration	Approximate attendance
Koch Bihar	813	Uttar Sibpur	Aswin	Durgapuja	4 days	500
	823	Maghpala	Do	Do		
		Do	Kartik	Kalipuja		
		Do	Agrahayan	Rasyatra		
		Do	Phalgun	Dolyatra		
		Do	Do	Sivaratri and Manasapuja		
	825	Phalimar	Aswin	Durgapuja	7 days	1,500
	825	Do	Chaitra	Basantipuja		
	849	Haldi Mohan	Phalgun	Dolyatra	1 day	
	888	Charaker Kuthi	Do	Pancham Dol	1 day	2,000—2,500
	909	Dhafiabari	Do	Sivaratri	2 days	4,000—5,000
	912	Godam Maharaniganj		Muharram	1 day	
	951	Chatra Chekardara	Aswin	Durgapuja	4 days	1,000
	956	Dhampur Balasi	Do	Do	4 days	500

APPENDIX B—contd.

KOCH BIHAR

Police Station	Mauza No.	Place	Time (Bengali month)	Occasion	Duration	Approximate attendance
	980	Gopalpur	Phalgun	Sivaratri	5 days	2,000
	980	Do	Do	Pancham Dolyatra	1 day	2,000
	983	Dudumari	Aswin	Durgapuja	4 days	400
	987	Marichbari	Chaitra	Rasyatra	4 days	800
	1008	Baikunthapur	Phalgun	Dolsori (Baikunthadev)	2 days	..
	1008	Siddheswari	Do	Maghi Purnima and Ganga-puja		30,000
	1014	Baneswar	Do	Sivaratri	3 days	30,000
	1022	Bokair Math	Aswin	Durgapuja		2,500
	1024	Khokta	Agrahayan	Jagaddhatripuja	3-4 days	2,000—6,000
	1047	Kachuban	Chaitra	Baruni Snan	2 days	3,000
	1047	Do		Ashtami Snan		
	1048	Madhupur	Kartik	Rasyatra	3 days	
	1048	Do	Magh	Saraswatipuja		
	1051	Charidan Chaura	Aswin	Durgapuja	5 days	500
	1061	Holangerkuti	Do	Do	4 days	400

BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE

1064	Angarkata	Phalgun	Dolyatra	5 days	500
1076	Khagribari	Aswin	Durgapuja		
1076	Khagrabari	Chaitra	Baruni Snan	3 days	10,000
	Cooch Behar Town	Aswin	Durgapuja	4-5 days	10,000
	Do	Kartik	Rasyatra	12 days	50,000
934	Ambari	Chaitra	Ashtami Snan	2 days	4,000—5,000
Tufanganj 943	Chaukashi Balarampur	Aswin	Baich Mela (during Durgapuja)	1 day	2,000
1102	Dwiparpar	Chaitra	Asokashtamir Mela	1 day	300—500
1105	Balabhut	Aswin	Durgapuja Mela	5 days	400—500
1117	Panishala	Chaitra	Asokashtamir Mela	3 days	
1142	Bhurkush	Phalgun	Dol or Dolsori Mela	1 day	500
1145	Salbari	Kartik	Rasyatra	1 day	400
1162	Bhandijalas	Do	Do	15 days	400
1168	Balakuti	Agrahayan	Jagaddhatripuja	7 days	500—700
1171	Bakshir Hat	Aswin	Durgapuja	5 days	
1186	Rampur	Phalgun	Dolyatra	3 days	25,000
1186	Tufanganj Town	Do	Do	15 days	2,500

APPENDIX B—contd.

KOCH BIHAR

Police Station	Mauza No.	Place	Time (Bengali month)	Occasion	Duration	Approximate attendance
Dinbata		Harir Hat		Ashtanagpuja		700—800
		Garad Hat	Phalgun	Dolyatra	2 days	500
	542	Khalisa Gosanimari	Kartik	Kalipuja		200—300
	542	Do	Chaitra	Kamadepapuja or Bans Utsaver Mela	3 days	200—300
	542	Do	Aswin	Durgapuja	5 days	500
	546	Alokjhari	Baisakh	Masanpujar Mela	1 day	
	546	Do	Aswin	Durgapuja		
	546	Do	Chaitra	Basantipuja	4 days	2,000
	553	Singimai Madankura	Do	Madanpuja	3-4 days	2,000—3,000
	558	Singimari	Do	Basantipuja	3 days	200
	564	Baradanga	Aswin	Durgapuja	4-5 days	1,000
	589	Brahmanir Chauki	Kartik	Kalipuja	7 days	2,500
	648	Bhoram	Do	Do	2-3 days	1,000
	664	Nagarer Bari	Aswin	Durgapuja	3 days	2,000—3,000
	686	Dwitiya Khanda Khetarer Kuthi	Do	Do	3-4 days	4,000—5,000

BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE

709	Borodanga	Agrahayan	Jagaddhatripuja	3-4 days	150
710	Baladanga	Aswin	Durgapuja	3-4 days	500—600
710	Do		Muharram	4 days	300
727	Bala Kura (North)	Agrahayan	Jagaddhatripuja	1 day	200—300
731	Ruyer Kuthi	Aswin	Durgapuja		800—900
731	Do	Kartik	Rasyatra		1,000
731	Do	Agrahayan	Jagaddhatripuja		600—700
731	Ruyer Kuthi	Phalgun	Sivaratri	3 days	1,000
731	Do	Chaitra	Ashtami Snan	1 day	800—900
746	Belbari Bazar	Aswin	Durgapuja	1 day	500—700
749	Shalmara	Phalgun	Dolyatra		2,000—3,000
750	Baragarajihora	Aswin	Durgapuja	3 days	300—400
761	Khattimari	Aswin	Do		400
778	Simulbari	Magh-Phalgun	Sanmyasi Thakurer Mela	1 month	
791	Kumarganj	Aswin	Durgapuja	1 day	500—700
	Chaora Hat	Paush	Sankrantir Mela	2 months	10,000—12,000
	Dinhata	Chaitra	Baruni Snan or Sakhir Mela		15,000—20,000
	Mahamaya Path	Aswin	Durgapuja	5 days	500

APPENDIX B—contd.

Police Station	Mauza No.	Place	Time (Bengali month)	Occasion	Duration	Approximate attendance
		Mahamaya Path	Aswin	Durgapuja	5 days	500
		Ranir Hat	Do	Do	5 days	500
		Gobra Chhara	Do	Do	3 days	300
		Bhatagudi Bamdar	Do	Do	4 days	300
749		Shalmara	Do	Do	4 days	400
772		Tiyadaha	Do	Do	4 days	300
718		Harir Hat (Gitaldaha)	Do	Do	4 days	300
714		Dinhata	Do	Muharram	2 days	100
714		Do	Phalgun	Sivaratri	7 days	500
714		Do	Do	Dolyatra	1 day	300
714		Do	Chaitra	Basantipuja	4 days	500
563		Petla	Aswin	Muharram	1 day	500
		Okra Bari	Do	Do		300
608		Bara Atiyabari	Do	Do		300
		Kursha Hat	Do	Do		300
		Nakta Bari	Do	Do	1 day	300

712	Karishal Nutimari	Aswin-Kartik	Budipuja	7 days	300
	Kuchni (Magrahat)	Agrahayan	Jagaddhatripuja	2 days	300
783	Garbhadanga	Do	Do	2 days	300
568	Rangapani	Chaitra	Basantipuja	4 days	200
741	Baje Jama Sheoraguri	Do	Do	4 days	200
711	Putimari	Phalgun	Dolyatra	1 day	1,000
587	Gothamari	Do	Do	1 day	500
562	Panaguri	Do	Do	1 day	
542	Khalisa Gossanimari	Do	Do	1 day	500
542	Do	Chaitra	Baruni Snan	1 day	600
542	Bhangani	Do	Do	1 day	2,000
543	Jambari	Do	Do	1 day	400
497	Konachatra	Do	Annapurnapuja	3 days	500
498	Kesari Bari	Kartik	Kalipuja	2 days	200
501	Khamar Sitai	Aswin	Durgapuja	3 days	
510	Belapukuri	Do	Do	4 days	5,000
511	Panikhaosa	Do	Do	4 days	200
513	Gebua	Do	Do	4 days	200

Sitai

KOCH BIHAR

Police Station	Mauza No.	Place	Time (Bengali month)	Occasion	Duration	Approximate attendance
	514	Brahmottarchatra	Chaitra	Madanchaturdasi or Bans Utsav	4 days	1,000
	516	Deokhatan	Do	Baruni Snan	3 days	
	517	Seel Duar	Aswin	Durgapuja	1 day	6,000
	529	Chamata (Gunjarir Chattara)	Do	Do	4 days	4,000
Matabhanga	228	Pachhara Gopalpur	Chaitra	Charakpuja	2 days	500
	309	Chengorkhata Khagir-bari	Phalgun	Sivaratri	10 days	4,000—5,000
	314	Andaran Pakhihaga	Magh	Maghi Purnima	3 days	1,000
	327	Bhogramguri	Chaitra	Baruni Snan		
	392	Singijani	Aswin	Durgapuja	6-6 days	400—500
	430	Bochagari	Chaitra	Asokashtami Snan and Mahamayapuja	8 days	2,500
	432	Sibpur	Kartik	Kalipuja	1 day	
		Matabhanga Town	Chaitra	Sivaratri	7 days	10,000
	287	Bherbheri Manabari	Baisakh	Goloknather Mela	7 days	10,000
	297	Gendaguri	Chaitra	Baruni Snan	7 days	5,000
		Jaldhakka	Do	Dharmiya Utsav	7 days	5,000

BANKING, TRADE AND COMMERCE

	345	Khoksardanga	Phalgun	Sivaratri	7 days	5,000
		Bhogmara	Paush	Paush Mela	7 days	5,000
		Nishiganj	Kartik	Kartik Purnima	7 days	7,000
Sitalkuchi	413	Mahishmari	Chaitra	Baruni Snan	10 days	4,000—5,000
	433	Kurshamari	Do	Do	1 day	
	428	Rangamati	Do	Baruni Snan and Gangapuja	1 day	
	437	Abur Pathar	Aswin	Durgapuja	3 days	
	438	Dakaliganj	Kartik	Rasyatra	3 days	1,000
	447	Rajarbari	Aswin	Durgapuja	3 days	600
Mekhliganj	70	Mekhliganj	Aswin	Do	3 days	6,000
	70	Do	Phalgun	Sivaratri	3 days	
	104	Phulka Dabri Kasiabari	Chaitra	Baruni Snan	1 day	2,000
	143	Kamat Changrabandha	Aswin	Bhandarnipuja	4 days	1,500
	154	Changrabandha	Agrahayan	Changrabandhar Mela	1 month	4,000—5,000
	157-158	Jamaldaha	Chaitra	Baruni Snan	1 month	
	174	Dhulia Khalisa	Phalgun	Dolyatra	7 days	6,000
	75	Nijtaraf	Aswin	Bhandarnipuja	3 days	1,000
	119	Andaran Kuchlibari	Do	Durgapuja	4 days	2,000
Haldibari	1	Haldibari	Phalgun	Pirer Utsav	3 days	10,000
		Andaran Khasbas Bakshiganj	Magh-Phalgun	Death anniversary of a Muslim	2 days	10,000

CHAPTER VII

COMMUNICATIONS

The State Government of Koch Bihar provided the country with a tolerably good system of roads. All places of importance in the neighbouring British districts were connected to Koch Bihar and all important villages and village marts were connected with roads to the subdivisional headquarters and to Koch Bihar. Moreover, the country had a net-work of rivers which provided a system of communication in certain seasons.

The principal means of communication was only along the rivers in the early days. Buchanan Hamilton left a fine account of the means of communication available in the district in his time. His account refers to the second quarter of the last century. During rainy season when the rivers swelled they could easily admit large boats to almost every part of the district and small boats could easily make their way to the interior villages. The imports and exports were mainly carried out in the rainy season. Dry season was mostly utilized in distribution of various articles from the marts to different market places. Most of the rivers were subjected to only a limited navigation in the dry season. For conveyance of goods from one place to another, load cattle were used for which no good or accessible roads were strictly necessary. Almost all parts of the district were accessible by bullock carts over a net-work of fair weather tracks only between November and July. At the advent of rainy season all such roads almost became impassable for wheeled traffic. Riverine Communication or conveyance of goods at the back of the cattle was the only course open for exports and imports during the rainy season.

Rennell's Map
Old roads

The map of Major Rennell of 1779 shows ten arterial roads in Koch Bihar State as follows:

- (1) A road starting from Koch Bihar northwards crossed the Kaljani (Surradingah—of Rennell) at Alipurduars and then proceeded to Chichakata.
- (2) A road starting from Sahebganj in the district of Rangpur (now in Bangladesh) passed through Gitaldaha and Dinbata up to Koch Bihar.
- (3) A road taking off from Mowamari on the Koch Bihar-Gitaldaha road (No. 2 above) proceeded eastwards through Balarampur and crossing the Sankosh at Khoribari went towards Dhubri.
- (4) A road taking off at Mowamari from the Koch Bihar-Gitaldaha road passed through Sowriguri, Sahebganj and Lolchapra and went to Parodanga in pargana Bhitribund in Rangpur district of Bangladesh. A feeder road from Balarampur joined this road at Sowriguri.



Koch Bihar Head Post Office



North Bengal State Transport Corporation Headquarters, Koch Bihar



The tower in Koch Bihar market place



A tobacco field at Dinbata

- (5) A road starting from Koch Bihar went south-south-west through Bogribari, Patharganj and Kaliganj to Lalbazar and thence to Rangpur.
- (6) A road from Barthar in Sitai P.S. passing through Lalbazar and Nepra and then through Sitalkuchi to Kochabari whence it passed into Patgram P.S. of district Rangpur and connected Sahebganj in Mekhliganj P.S.
- (7) A road starting from Koch Bihar westwards through Maynaguri, Bhot-hat, Jelemo and Kursamari to Balarhat. This road passed through Patgram P.S. and then connected Jalpes.
- (8) A road starting from Chichakata in Western Duars passed south-west through Raychang and Netanundy and connected Balarhat.
- (9) A road taking off from No. 8 above at Raychang went southwards through Kolta, Bagmara, Jelemo, Taankumary to Nepra.
- (10) A road starting from Kanthalbari in Western Duars passed west-south through Berubari, Changrabandha, Sahebganj and connected Dewanganj.

Changes in the course of rivers caused change in the alignment of many of these roads. The alignment of road from Gitaldaha to Alipurduars (Nos. 1 and 2) still follows more or less the same alignment as shown by Rennell. The Koch Bihar-Mowamari-Balarampur-Kharibari road (No. 3) has somewhat changed its alignment. The road now goes eastwards through Fulbari to Bakshirhat. These changes were firstly due to change in the course of Raidak and secondly due to the opening of Tufanganj Subdivision. The Koch Bihar-Lalbazar road via Bogribari, Patharganj and Kaliganj has been abandoned due to changes in the courses of the Singimari, the Buri Dharla and the Dharla. Portions exist as village pathways. The Barthar-Lalbazar-Nepra-Sitalkuchi-Kochabari road is still in existence. The Koch Bihar-Maynaguri-Bhot-hat-Jelemo-Kursamari-Balarhat road changed its alignment due to change in the course of the Mansai and became the Koch Bihar-Khattimari-Matabhanga-Balarhat road. The Chichakata-Raychang-Netanundy-Balarhat road and the Raychang-Kolta-Bagmara-Jelemo-Balarhat road are both abandoned. The Kanthalbari-Berubari-Changrabandha-Sahebganj-Dewanganj road still exists.

In 1900 the following main roads were in existence and maintained by the Koch Bihar State: Roads in 1900

- (1) A road from Gitaldaha through Dewanhat, Koch Bihar, Baneswar to Alipurduars. This is the same as Nos. 1 and 2 of Rennell's map.
- (2) A road from Koch Bihar to Tufanganj and passing on to Kharibari.
- (3) A road from Koch Bihar eastwards through Ghoramara and Fulbari to Laukuthi and then turning north and passing through Mahishkuchi to Garadhat (Guard-hat).

- (4) A road going north from Ghoramara to Natabari. A road from Baneswar eastwards connected at Natabari.
- (5) A road from Koch Bihar through Rajarhat westwards to Pundihari whence a branch went northwards to Patlakhawa¹ forest, while the main road went westwards through Chokhekata and Giladanga to Moranga.
- (6) A road from Koch Bihar westwards through Rajarhat, Khattimari, Matabhanga to Balarhat.
- (7) A road from Koch Bihar southwards through Rasidanga to Gossanimari and thence to Sitai. A branch went westwards to Lalbazar and then to Sitalkuchi. This is nearly the same road as No. 6 of Rennell's map with a changed alignment.
- (8) A road from Koch Bihar through Nishiganj hat and Sibpur to join the Matabhanga-Sitalkuchi road.
- (9) A road from Giladanga going south through Matabhanga to Sitalkuchi.
- (10) A road from Matabhanga to Nishiganj to join No. 8 above.
- (11) A road from Matabhanga to Falakata through Chokhekata.

Road Development after 1950

The network of Koch Bihar Roads described above were joined with the network of roads in the district of Rangpur (in Bangladesh) and through them with Calcutta. The road Scheme of 1900 described above had also this objective in view apart from opening up the interior of the country. The partition of Bengal upset the fundamental scheme of the road network of Koch Bihar.

The rivers in Koch Bihar mainly flow from north to south. Any road running east to west would, therefore, needs crossing of these rivers and the large number of channels and deserted beds of these rivers. The original Koch Bihar Scheme was, therefore, to construct roads mainly in the north-south direction and establish connexions with the road systems of Rangpur on the one hand and of the Western Duars on the other, to utilize the river crossing facilities existing in these districts and establish the east-west communications by a circuitous route. With the partition this scheme was completely upset.

The major task facing the Government of West Bengal after the merger of Koch Bihar was to provide communication between Koch Bihar the district headquarters and all the subdivisional head quarters. Of the four outlying subdivisions, only Tufanganj lying on the road to Dhubri was connected with Koch Bihar by a metalled road. The communication with Dinhata was easily established; the distance was short and the only river to be crossed, the Torsa (a weak stream here after bifurcation at Barabhatta), was

¹The portion of this road from Koch Bihar through Pundibari to Patlakhawa forest is now National Highway No. 31.

already bridged by the rail-cum-road bridge. The Gitaldaha-Koch Bihar-Rajarhat-Khattimari-Matabhanga road. The road was improved and connected with N.H. 31 at Koch Bihar. A section of N.H. 31 passes through the district touching Koch Bihar town. The Jalpaiguri-Siliguri State Highway is extended up to Haldibari and Dewanganj hat. The two real problems after the merger were to connect Matabhanga, the largest of the subdivisions having the richest tobacco fields, and also to connect Mekhliganj. The Koch Bihar State had started work on the improvement of the Koch Bihar-Rajarhat-Khattimari-Matabhanga road. The embankment had been made and small stone boulders already spread to consolidate the embankment.

When the Koch Bihar State Government had already committed themselves to the improvement of the road *via* Khattimari, the West Bengal Government continued the project and there was a proposal to bridge the Torsa at Khattimari. But the turbulent Torsa made this project impossible and the scheme had to be abandoned in 1958. The original idea of connecting Mekhliganj was to improve a portion of the Matabhanga-Giladanga road and take it to Jamaladaha and Changrabandha. With this purpose in view the construction of the road from Matabhanga to Jamaladaha had started in 1955 and was completed in 1960. When the road project *via* Khattimari to Matabhanga had to be abandoned the metalling of the alternative road *via* Nishiganj was taken in hand in 1959-60. From 1962-63 the construction of the road from Matabhanga to Falakata was started. All these roads have been completed and Mekhliganj is now connected in two alternative ways. Firstly, along the Matabhanga-Jamaladaha-Changrabandha road which entails a crossing of the Mansai, at Matabhanga and the other by the Matabhanga-Falakata road along the left bank of the Mansai to Falakata. The road joining Koch Bihar town with Matabhanga and then proceeding to Patgram in Bangladesh is known as the Emigration Road West. The road connecting Koch Bihar town with Dhubri in Assam, passing by the north of Balarampur and crossing the Sankosh below Kherubari, is known as Emigration Road East. The Buxa road connects Koch Bihar town with Buxa *via* Alipurduar. The Laukuthi road connects Koch Bihar town with Fulbari, Buxiganj and Mahishkuchi.

The linking of the headquarters of the police stations with the headquarters of the subdivision to which they belong and thence to the district headquarters was next taken up. There was an old road from Ghoramara to Gossanimari and Sitai *via* Balarampur. The portion of this road from Dinhata *via* Gossanimari to Sitai was first improved. The old road from Sitalkuchi *via* Lalbazar to Gossanimari was also improved and the roads connected. The portion of the old road from Giladanga to Sitalkuchi *via* Matabhanga was improved in the portion from Matabhanga to Sitalkuchi. Thus Sitai P.S. was connected to Dinhata and through Dinhata to Koch Bihar and Sitalkuchi was connected to Matabhanga on the one hand and through Gossanimari and Dinhata to Koch Bihar on the

other. From the opposite side of Mekhliganj across the Tista a road was constructed to Haldibari police station. From the same point opposite Mekhliganj the portion of the old Dewanganj road was improved. This completed the basic requirements of the district. The following roads are under construction:

- (1) Rajarhat-Gossanimari road;
- (2) Fulbari-Chilkiguri road to Alipurduar;
- (3) Bakshirhat-Garadhat road to Jorai; and
- (4) a diversion road from the Matabhanga-Jamaldaha road to Giladanga.

Village roads

There was neither any District Board nor any Local Board in Koch Bihar. From the date of merger the Government of West Bengal in the Public Works Department took over the maintenance of all the roads. Apart from the important district roads described above, there are a number of village *kutcha* roads which are maintained by the Public Works Department.

Vehicles and conveyances

In 1950, the district had hardly any road outside the town of Koch Bihar along which motor propelled vehicles of any kind could move. The State had procured a few jeeps for Government use, and difficult areas were negotiated on elephants and each Subdivisional Officer was provided with an elephant for official tours. The means of conveyance for the ordinary man was the old bullock carts or boats. There were a few two-wheeled carts drawn by small ponies. The well-to-do people in the villages also kept horses to ride. The Koch Bihar State had procured a few buses which were mainly plied outside the State, that is, for trips to Bagdogra and Siliguri and also up to Purnea in Bihar. With the partial improvement of the roads passenger bus service was started between Koch Bihar and Matabhanga which terminated on the left bank of the Mansai opposite Matabhanga. Two other passenger bus services ran between Fulbari (Tufanganj) and Koch Bihar and Dinhata and Koch Bihar. The Koch Bihar State Transport Organisation was taken up by the Government of West Bengal and converted into the North Bengal State Transport Corporation. The constitution of North Bengal State Transport Corporation is given in next para. All the passenger bus services are run by this organization and no private operators have been given any licence. At present buses are plying on all the improved roads. The total number of routes are 28 with a total mileage of about 700 miles plied by a fleet of 120 buses. The total number of goods vehicles registered in the district is 366. Goods vehicles registered in the districts of Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling and West Dinajpur have also been given permits to ply in the district. The vehicles registered in Bihar and Assam also ply. As there is no registration of bullock carts and cycles, their number cannot be given. Bullock carts are still the primary means of transport of agricultural produce from the villages to the markets. There are no tramway

or ropeway. In 1961, the private cars numbered 85, jeeps 84, motor cycles 191, public vehicles 163, goods vehicles 316 and others 49.

The North Bengal State Transport Corporation with its headquarters at Koch Bihar serves the five North Bengal districts, namely, Koch Bihar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Malda and West Dinajpur. The earliest history of the Corporation can be traced from April 1945 when the former Koch Bihar Raj started a motor transport service with a fleet of 3 buses and 3 trucks under its Second World War Reconstruction Scheme. After the merger of the Koch Bihar State with West Bengal from January 1, 1950, the Government of West Bengal took over control of this undertaking and extended its operation. The North Bengal State Transport Corporation was subsequently established with the participation of the Railway Board with effect from April 15, 1960. It has a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a General Manager, a Chief Engineer, a Deputy General Manager and a Chief Accounts Officer. It has 502 persons on its administrative, 2,734 on traffic and 1,201 on mechanical and/or maintenance staff. It incurred a total establishment cost of Rs. 1,55,60,096 in 1973-74.

North Bengal
State Transport
Corporation

Before 1876 there was no Railway within Koch Bihar State. In 1876 the North Bengal Railway opened a station at Haldibari. This line later became the main line of the Eastern Bengal Railway connecting Calcutta with Siliguri and Darjeeling. But as Haldibari lay at the extreme western end of the State, and the Tista intervened, connection of Haldibari with the other places in the State was not easy. Almost as a corollary to the road policy of Koch Bihar, the State constructed a Railway line from Mogalhat to Koch Bihar in 1894. The line was originally opened on 2 ft. 6 inches gauge. Between February and April 1910, the line was converted into a metre gauge (3 ft. 3½ in.). This linked up Koch Bihar with the Railway system of the district of Rangpur. At first the Railway stopped near Koch Bihar town to the south of the Torsa. Later the line was extended up to Alipurduars and to Jaintia in the Bhutan foothills. The partition, however, upset the Railway system of Koch Bihar more seriously than it upset the road system. In the case of the Railway, the old Railway system connecting Assam with Calcutta lay through the district of Mymensingh and there was no Railway system to the north of Koch Bihar district through which the Koch Bihar Railway could find an opening. The communication through Haldibari Railway Station was also snapped as the entire southern portion of the route from Haldibari up to about Ranaghat lay in territory then forming East Pakistan. Thus until the Assam Link Railway was constructed, Koch Bihar Railway remained moribund. From Gitaldaha a branch Railway went through Bamanhat to Dhubri. This branch was also cut at Bamanhat. At present the Railway is working from Gitaldaha to Alipurduars, establishing a link with the Assam link portion of North-East Frontier Railway, while the Bamanhat-Gitaldaha section is working as a branch line. The recent opening of

Railways

the broad gauge line from New Jalpaiguri to Jorai through the northern part of the district has at last provided a satisfactory railway communication in the district. The new railway line enters the district from Falakata in Jalpaiguri district through Gumanir Hat and passes through Ghoksa-danga to within 2½ miles of Koch Bihar town. Then taking a northward bend it passes close by Baneswar and leaves the district near Alipurduar. This broad gauge system linking with the old metre gauge system has provided a satisfactory railway communication for passengers as well as goods. This new railway line as well as the old Koch Bihar State Railway are now managed by the North-east Frontier Railway.

Waterways,
Ferries,
Bridges

The rivers of the district and their nature have been described in chapter I. They are either rushing torrents in the rains or limpid shallow streams in the dry season. They, therefore, hardly provide any good inland navigation. Before the partition some trade used to be carried on with the southern districts in Eastern Bengal by these rivers. But after the partition this has altogether stopped. The Tista defies navigation. The Mansai is partly navigable by small boats from Giladanga to Matabhanga in favourable season and under favourable conditions. The Torsa is not navigable at all. The Dipa Raidak is partly navigable in favourable season. There are no canals in the district for navigation. The Koch Bihar State provided an well organised system of ferries and almost every river crossing along the roads described were provided with ferries which were under the control of the Revenue authorities.

The important Ferries in the district are:

- (1) The Tista ferry at Mekhliganj,
 - (2) the Mansai ferry at Matabhanga,
 - (3) the Torsa ferry at Khatimari,
 - (4) the Giladanga ferry over the Jaldhaka,
 - (5) the Gossanimari ferry over the Singimari,
 - (6) the Dinbata ferry over the Dharla branch of the Torsa, and
 - (7) the Sadar Ghat ferry at Koch Bihar over the Torsa.
- Some ferries were abolished due to bridging of the channels. There are quite a number of small ferries of lesser importance.

Bridges

The following are the important bridges in the district:

	Number
1. Hamilton truss bridge on N. H. 31	1
2. Ditto	1
3. Ditto	1
4. Truss bridge over the Kaljani	1
5. Steel bridge over the Ghargharia	1
6. Wooden bridge on Jorai Road	1
7. Ditto	1
8. Ditto	1

9. Other minor bridges—

(a) Wooden bridge	70
(b) Concrete bridge	1
(c) Steel bridge	1
(d) Iron bridge	1

There are no steam launches nor any public transport by water.

After the partition of India and till the Assam link portion of the Railway was constructed, the only means of egress from Koch Bihar was the air transport. A few private operators started air services for passenger and cargo combined. At present the Indian Airlines Corporation are running regular daily service to Koch Bihar. There were small strips in Koch Bihar, Tufanganj, Dinbata, Matabhanga and Mekhliganj for small planes before 1950. After 1950 the Koch Bihar airstrip has been enlarged.

Koch Bihar does not have much to attract tourists. The only place of real interest is the old capital and fort of Kamtapur at Gossanimari and the Gossanimari Temple. There are no *dharmaśalas* in the district. The following are the State-owned Circuit House and Inspection Bungalows:

Travel and
tourist facilities

Description	Location	Controlling Authority
1. Circuit House	Koch Bihar	Deputy Commissioner
2. Inspection Bungalow	Koch Bihar	Do
3. Dak Bungalow	Matabhanga	Subdivisional Officer
4. Inspection Bungalow	12th mile of Matabhanga-Moranga Road	Executive Engineer, P. W. D.
5. Dak Bungalow	Mekhliganj	Subdivisional Officer
6. Inspection Bungalow	Haldibari	Executive Engineer
7. Inspection Bungalow	Dinbata	Do
8. Dak Bungalow	Dinbata	Subdivisional Officer
9. Inspection Bungalow	Gossanimari	Executive Engineer
10. Inspection Bungalow	Natabari	Do
11. Dak Bungalow	Tufanganj	Subdivisional Officer
12. Rest House	Tufanganj	Executive Engineer
13. Inspection Bungalow	Gitaldaha	Do
14. Inspection Bungalow	Mahishkuchi	Do

At Koch Bihar there are two Indian style hotels. There are no travel agents or guides.

Posts and tele-
graphs facilities

The Postal Administration of Koch Bihar district is under Jalpaiguri Postal Division. Besides the Head Office at Koch Bihar there are 20 Sub-Post Offices and 159 Branch Post Offices.

The following Post Offices have telegraph arrangements:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Koch Bihar Head P.O. | 8. Dinhata |
| 2. Changrabandha | 9. Matabhanga |
| 3. Mekhliganj | 10. Nishiganj |
| 4. Bakshirhat | 11. Sitalkuchi |
| 5. Tufanganj | 12. Dinhata Bazar |
| 6. Banewar | 13. Sitaihat |
| 7. Dewanhat | 14. Haldibari |

The following Telephone Exchanges are functioning in the district:

Name of Exchange	Capacity
Koch Bihar (Auto)	400 lines
Dinhata (Central Battery)	200 lines
Matabhanga (Auto)	50 lines
Tufanganj (Auto)	50 lines
Mekhliganj (Auto)	50 lines
Haldibari (Auto)	25 lines

There are 20 Sub-Post Offices and 159 Branch Post Offices in the district under the Head Post Office (vide Appendix).

APPENDIX

POST OFFICES IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT

Sub-Post Offices

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Changrabandha | 11. Dinhata Bazar |
| 2. Haldibari | 12. Gossanimari |
| 3. Mekhliganj | 13. Kalika Bazar |
| 4. Bakshirhat | 14. Matabhanga |
| 5. Bangchatra Road | 15. Nilkuthi |
| 6. Dewanhat | 16. Nishiganj |
| 7. Koch Bihar Bazar | 17. Jamaladaha |
| 8. Koch Bihar New Town | 18. Sitalkuchi |
| 9. Balaierhat | 19. Tufanganj |
| 10. Dinhata | 20. Pundibari |

Branch Post Offices

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Padmati | 44. Nazirhat |
| 2. Fulbari | 45. Panisala |
| 3. Kheti | 46. Ruerkuthi |
| 4. Fatehmamud | 47. Putimari Fuleswari |
| 5. Saulmari | 48. Salmara |
| 6. Uchalpukuri | 49. Pushnadanga |
| 7. Kharkhari | 50. Moamari |
| 8. Fulkadabri | 51. Balakandi |
| 9. Bhotepatty | 52. Baranachina |
| 10. Bhotebari | 53. Barasakdal |
| 11. Helapakri | 54. Choudhurihat |
| 12. Jorepakri | 55. Gitaldaha |
| 13. Kamat Changrabandha | 56. Gobrasara |
| 14. Bara Haldibari | 57. Kalmati |
| 15. Buxiganj | 58. Karala |
| 16. Dewanganj | 59. Kishmat Deshgram |
| 17. Hemkumari | 60. Koalidha |
| 18. Kuchhibari | 61. Khochabari |
| 19. Niztaraf | 62. Sahebganj |
| 20. Bhogmara | 63. Kuchni |
| 21. Chakchaka | 64. Matulhat |
| 22. Chilkirhat | 65. Nandina |
| 23. Dumukha Nayahat | 66. Subachanir Path |
| 24. Budherkuthi Dewanbash | 67. Singimari Madnakura |
| 25. Ghogerkuthi | 68. Sukarurkuthi |
| 26. Guriahati | 69. Bhutkura |
| 27. Kharja Kakribari | 70. Hokadah No. 1 |
| 28. Khuttimari | 71. Baranatabari |
| 29. Krishnapur | 72. Champta |
| 30. Dawaguri | 73. Jatigara |
| 31. Dhangdhingguri | 74. Pakhihaga |
| 32. Patehara | 75. Panikhawa |
| 33. Rajarhat | 76. Sitaihat |
| 34. Shildanga | 77. Ashokebari |
| 35. Talliguri | 78. Agarkata Parodubi |
| 36. Sajherpar Ghoramara | 79. Bairagirhat |
| 37. Rashidanga | 80. Baragopalpur |
| 38. Sukhdhanerkuthi | 81. Bhangamore |
| 39. Pasterjhar | 82. Bhawarthana |
| 40. Bhulki | 83. Bhogramguri |
| 41. Dhum Purbalashi | 84. Bara Godalkhara |
| 42. Kamat Seoraguri | 85. Chhota Salbari |
| 43. Haribhanga | 86. Giladanga |

Branch Post Offices

87. Jatamari	123. Falimari
88. Jorepatki	124. Chhit Bara Lowkuthi
89. Kanfata	125. Ambari
90. Kesharibari	126. Boklaimath
91. Khalisamari	127. Charaljani
92. Madhyam Madhusudan	128. Chhat Bara Chowki
93. Mahishmuri	129. Khapaidanga
94. Mahishcharu	130. Kaljani
95. Pachagarh	131. Siddheswari
96. Panigram	132. Andaran Fulbari
97. Shibpur	133. Balaghat
98. Shikarpur	134. Balapukuri
99. Sutapara	135. Devagram
100. Andaran Pakhihaga	136. Dhalpal
101. Baramaricha	137. Dwiperpar
102. Nagarlal Bazar	138. Harirhat
103. Vetaguri	139. Salbari Tufanganj
104. Chilakhana	140. Balabhut
105. Ghughumari	141. Bara Salbari
106. Khagrabari	142. Kholta
107. Maghpala	143. Silaghari
108. Marandirkuthi	144. Gopalpur
109. Petla	145. Natabari
110. Kowardara	146. Marichbari
111. Joresimuli	147. Pachkalguri
112. Patlakhawa	148. Jorai
113. Elajanerkuthi	149. Ghoksadanga
114. Airanichithaliya	150. Nigamnagar
115. Bara Atiabari	151. Gossairhat
116. Bamanhat	152. Barakodali
117. Deochari	153. Madhupur
118. Unishbisha	154. Golenachati
119. Maruganj	155. Dharanipur
120. Kishmat Adabari	156. Bagdokra
121. Bakla	157. Jiranpur
122. Bhainskuchi	158. Tapurhat
159. Jamadarerbash	

CHAPTER VIII

ECONOMIC TRENDS AND MISCELLANEOUS
OCCUPATIONS

The Census of 1971 have returned only 284 persons per 1,000 as workers, of whom 82.6 per cent were agriculturists, but the methods of cultivation are still orthodox. Although tobacco and jute are produced in appreciable quantity, there is no curing factory for tobacco and the little curing that is done is intended for local use. Naturally, the economic condition of the people is backward and their standard of living is low. Although weaving of cotton handloom cloths and gunny fabrics have made some progress and there has been farming of some high-yielding varieties of crop under Government incentive, the economic trends cannot be said to be shifting from agriculture to industry.

The number of workers, however, compares favourably with that of the entire State, which is 283 per 1,000. Labour participation on the part of the females is lower than the average for the State. While in the State there are 53 per 1,000 females as workers, in the district there are only 27 per 1,000 females as workers. The recent distribution of the working population in the district can be gauged from the following table.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE WORKING POPULATION IN KOCH BIHAR
DISTRICT: 1971

	Male	Per- centage to total workers	Female	Per- centage to total workers	Total	Per- centage to total workers
Cultivators	2,65,029	69.23	6,028	32.86	2,71,057	67.57
Agricultural labourers	58,177	15.20	2,081	11.34	60,258	15.02
Other workers	59,591	15.57	10,238	55.80	69,829	17.41

The above table shows that most of the workers in the district are engaged in agricultural avocations. While in the State as a whole only 54 per cent of the total working population are preoccupied with agriculture, in the district such people constitute 82.6 per cent. Labour participation is the highest in Sitalkuchi thana, followed by Mekhliganj and Sitai thanas. A decade ago the picture of economic trends or labour participation and the like was almost similar. In the 13 factories in the district 529 workers were

employed daily on the average in 1970; and in the same year 21 registered motor transport undertakings also employed a few persons in different categories of work. The following table shows the average daily employment in selected industries of the district.

AVERAGE DAILY EMPLOYMENT IN SELECTED INDUSTRIES OF KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT : 1966-70

Kind of industry	Employment				
	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
Bidi					59
Printing press	59	55	53	53	53
Motor vehicles repair	125	117	106	123	172
Plywood	118	112	103	92	80
Plantation	39	51	49	69	35
Rice mills and oil mills	170	109	130	131	211
Wood industry	28	27	25	23	18
Other manufacturing industries	19	23	35	38	41
Total	558	494	510	529	669

Manufacturing industries which were not registered with the Chief Inspector of Industries, West Bengal and are practically small scale industries had the following level of employment in the district in recent years.

EMPLOYMENT IN SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT : 1965-74

	Actual		Target
	1965-66	1968-69	1973-74
Number of units	12,910	13,558	15,249
Number of workers employed	64,900	68,100	76,700
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Value of gross production	2,58,20,000	2,71,12,000	3,05,01,000
Value of investment	5,80,95,000	6,09,99,000	6,86,24,000

ECONOMIC TRENDS AND MISCELLANEOUS OCCUPATIONS 127

A good number of tribal people are engaged in the eri industry for ages. The following table shows the employment position in ericulture industry in the villages of the district.

	Number of persons employed in village rearing work
1966-67	174
1967-68	105
1968-69	20
1969-70	190
1970-71	190
1971-72	190

Handloom industry also employs 6,192 persons in the district distributed among the cooperative and the private sectors respectively to the extent of 1,172 and 5,020. The number of handloom workers in different areas are as follows: Posterjhar 1,000, Baisguri 200, Chakchaka 250, Gairguri 160, Guriahati 800, Bharat Colony and Ramkrishnapalli 1,200, Maghpala 100, all in Koch Bihar subdivision; Dinhata 400, Nigamnagar 150, all in Dinhata subdivision; Tufanganj 300, Baxirhat 125, all in Tufanganj subdivision; Nishiganj 125, Matabhanga 60, Ghoksadanga 100, all in Matabhanga subdivision.

According to Census 1971, the total workers numbered 3,90,502 in the district (3,79,064 males and 11,438 females). The workers included (i) cultivators, (ii) agricultural labourers, (iii) those engaged in livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting, plantations, orchards and allied activities, (iv) mining and quarrying, (v) manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs (household industry), (vi) manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs (other than household industries), (vii) construction, (viii) trade and commerce, (ix) transport, storage and communication, (x) other services and (xi) non-workers. The following table shows the number of workers in different categories and non-workers spread over the subdivisions of the district during the Census of 1971.

WORKERS IN DIFFERENT CATEGORIES AND NON-WORKERS
(Census 1971 : District Koch Bihar)

District/ Subdivision	KOCH BIHAR										
	i	ii	iii	iv	va	vb	vi	vii	viii	ix	x
Koch Bihar	2,65,358	60,897	2,985	23	8,140	6,766	1,016	15,519	5,228	24,570	10,28,651
Mekhliganj	31,609	4,588	133	1	461	445	68	1,372	163	1,911	95,831
Matabhanga	71,099	13,370	875	8	532	768	80	2,285	254	3,586	2,29,038
Sadar	57,405	14,584	665	10	2,711	3,134	686	6,104	3,449	10,748	2,72,991
Tufanganj	43,249	11,486	699	4	2,892	714	100	2,378	522	3,064	1,76,525
Dinhata	61,996	16,869	613	Nil	1,544	1,705	82	3,380	840	5,261	2,48,263

ECONOMIC TRENDS AND MISCELLANEOUS OCCUPATIONS 129

The following table shows the wages of the field workers in the only tea estate of the district.

**BASIC WAGE AND VARIABLE DEARNESS ALLOWANCES IN THE
TEA PLANTATION OF KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT : 1968-70**

		Basic wage	Variable dearness allowances	Total
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Men	1-4-1968	2.07	0.12	2.19
	1-4-1969	2.07	0.12	2.19
	2-9-1969	2.21	0.18	2.39
	1-4-1970	2.30	0.18	2.48
Women	1-4-1968	1.90	0.12	2.02
	1-4-1969	1.90	0.12	2.02
	2-9-1969	2.04	0.18	2.22
	1-4-1970	2.13	0.18	2.31
Children	1-4-1968	1.13	0.06	1.19
	1-4-1969	1.13	0.06	1.19
	2-9-1969	1.20	0.09	1.29
	1-4-1970	1.24	0.09	1.33

The above wages were recommended by the Wage Board.

The Cost of Living Index in general shows how it has gone up in recent years specially in the lower income group. Based on 1950, the Index was below the base up to 1956 in all the income groups, while it was almost at par with the base in 1961 in two income groups, the other two still recording lower than the base. The Index, however, recorded accelerated figures since 1967 onwards.

COST OF LIVING INDEX IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT : 1955-69
(Base : November 1950 = 100)

Monthly expenditure level	All items combined					
	1955	1956	1961	1967	1968	1969
(Rs.)						
1—100	76.3	85.2	94.5	186.8	193.4	171.6
101—200	81.3	88.2	98.2	177.4	184.1	169.1
201—350	82.3	88.6	98.4	172.7	180.2	168.1
351—700	86.4	91.1	100.8	161.8	161.8	159.0
701 and above	89.7	93.5	101.5	151.4	158.6	154.1

Food records sharply rising trends as will appear from the following table.

COST OF LIVING INDEX FOR FOOD IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT
1965-69

(Base : November 1950 = 100)

Monthly expenditure level (Rs.)	Years				
	1955	1961	1967	1968	1969
1-100	78.4	86.1	199.9	206.6	172.3
201-350	79.4	89.0	192.5	200.0	175.2

The district being an agricultural one, the high cost of living must be telling upon the economic life of the people specially upon the agricultural labourers whose daily wages were Rs. 3.54 per male, Rs. 3.27 per female and Rs. 2.02 per child in 1969-70 in the State agricultural farms. The adult males and females, however, received an additional Re. 0.75 for special agricultural operations like ploughing, harvesting, retting of jute, etc. Payments at the private level in comparison to the aforesaid rate in the public sector must have been much lower and the plight of the workers at that level can easily be surmised. In the circumstances, the people become easy prey to the usurers. Repayments of loans made from Government agencies also do not show any relieving picture. The following table shows the figures regarding different kinds of small loans and their recoveries made in 1971-72. The low percentage of recovery may point to economic bankruptcy on the part of the loanees who mainly consist of poor agriculturists.

ADVANCES OF SMALL LOANS AND RECOVERY IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT : 1971-72

Subdivision	Kind of loan	Amount disbursed	Amount recovered	Percentage of recovery
		Rs.	Rs.	
Koch Bihar Sadar	Agriculture	76,000	10,332	0.40
	Cattle purchase	15,000	9,284	0.82
	Fertilizer	13,780	6,690	0.53
Dinhata	Agriculture	61,000	925	0.20
	Cattle purchase	8,000	2,423	1.28
	Fertilizer	1,26,000	3,846	0.97
Matabhanga	Agriculture	51,000	7,171	1.86
	Cattle purchase	51,000	4,130	2.89
	Fertilizer	80,000	1,764	0.55
Mekhliganj	Agriculture	46,000	1,441	0.23
	Cattle purchase	10,000	958	0.26
	Fertilizer	50,000	262	0.09

ECONOMIC TRENDS AND MISCELLANEOUS OCCUPATIONS 181

Households incur debts, for various reasons, like construction and repair of residences, meeting of social obligations like marriages or death-rites, performance of religious ceremonies and treating patients in the family. The following table shows the average indebtedness in the rural areas of the district in 1966 B.S.

	Percentage of families reporting	Average indebtedness per reporting family Rs.
Loan outstanding at the beginning of the year	46.43	256.87
Loan taken during the year	41.72	198.03
Loan repaid during the year	37.17	109.02
Loan outstanding at the end of the year	62.14	258.76

The Census of 1961 returned 20,401 persons out of 2,92,293 as non-workers in the 15-59 age-group amongst males.

There is only one Employment Exchange in Koch Bihar located at Hridaya Nibash, Ashram Road, P.O. and District Koch Bihar which was set up in March, 1961. There is one Employment Information and Assistance Bureau at Dinhata under the District Employment Exchange. The live-registers of the employment exchanges recorded a total number of 6,638, 10,021 and 11,967 registrants as on 31 December of 1968, 1969 and 1970 respectively. Persons numbering 910, 597 and 368 found employment through the employment exchanges in 1968, 1969 and 1970 respectively. The State Government, the Union Government and the private sector offered 71.15, 21.01 and 7.84 per cent of the employment on an average during the said three years.

There are eleven Community Development Blocks, each under the charge of a Block Development Officer, covering the eight thanas of the district as listed below.

DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT : 1972

Subdivision	Block	Block Office at
Koch Bihar Sadar	Koch Bihar I	Ghughumari
	Koch Bihar II	Pundibari
Dinhata	Dinhata I	Dinhata
	Dinhata II	Sahebganj
	Sitai	Sitai
Matabhanga	Matabhanga I	Matabhanga
	Matabhanga II	Matabhanga
	Sitalkuchi	Sitalkuchi
Mekhliganj	Mekhliganj	Changrabandha
	Haldibari	Haldibari
Tufanganj	Tufanganj	Tufanganj

A District Planning Committee has now been set up which will review every month the progress of development work in the district. A draft plan prepared by this Committee, which will form the approach paper to the Fifth Five-Year Plan, suggests a total expenditure of Rs. 124 crores in the district. The suggested plan is roughly as follows:

Minimum Needs Programme	Rs. (in lakhs)
Education	124.35
Health	647.96
Rural Water Supply	59.60
Roads	6,000.00
Power	803.00
Home Site	1.50
Employment Programme	
Minor Irrigation	56.80
Soil Conservation	19.41
Dairy and Animal Husbandry	283.80
Forestry	4.00
Fisheries	43.60
Warehousing and Marketing	95.65
Small Industries including Agro-Industries	42.55
Normal Programme	
Cooperation	221.23
Agriculture	3,797.00
Roads	150.00
Dairy and Animal Husbandry	2.15

MISCELLANEOUS OCCUPATIONS

There are both Central and State Government establishments in the district providing employment to a good number of people. According to the Census of 1961 there were 1.98 public servants in the administrative departments of the Central and State Governments in the district per 1,000 population as against 4.97 persons per 1,000 in the State. The police personnel numbered 0.65 per 1,000 of the district population as against 1.45 per 1,000 in the State. The following table shows the distribution of State Government employees by emoluments group in the district as on

ECONOMIC TRENDS AND MISCELLANEOUS OCCUPATIONS 133

31 March 1967 who had a total number of 6,823 (including 528 females), the percentage of females to total being 7.9 and the percentage of district total to the State total being 2.7.

DISTRIBUTION OF STATE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES IN THE KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT: 1966

Emoluments groups	Number of employees
Rs.	
1—75	640
76—100	2,109
101—150	1,895
151—200	1,059
201—250	410
251—300	222
301—400	241
401—500	51
501—700	47
701—1,000	21
1,001+	6

The persons employed in the only municipality and the town committees numbered 415 on 31 March 1968. Those engaged in administrative and supervisory duties numbered 2, in technical departments 18, in clerical work 47 and as peons, durwans, sweepers, etc. 348.

As to the learned professions, teachers for 10,000 persons below 20 numbered 60 in the district as against 81 in the State for the same number. In the urban areas, however, such teachers numbered 303 per 10,000 persons in the district as against 161 in the State for the said areas in 1961.

There was a total number of 8 physicians, surgeons, and dentists for every 10,000 people in the district as against 9 in the State for the same number. In the urban areas their number was 38 as against the State figure for the same area which was 20. Nurses and other paramedical staff numbered 4 in the district for the same number of people as against the State figures of 10.

The Census of 1961 enumerated 1.32 persons per 1,000 households in the group consisting of governesses, tutors and private secretaries in the district as against the State figure of 3.32 for the same kind of people. The domestic servants and cooks numbered 17.84 per 1,000 households there during the said Census as against the State figure of 41.91.

A recent survey (1972) reports the number of self-employed persons in the district, existing as well as potential for the next 4-5 years, as follows: petty contractors (construction) 100, fishermen 500, barbers and beauty shops 150, drapers and outfitters 250, cobblers 100, launderers 100, rickshaw pullers 1,500, restaurants and catering houses 100, doctors 100, passenger bus operators 15, truck operators 75, and taxi operators 75. The small number of all such categories of workers only shows the isolated nature of the district having only old-time occupations.

CHAPTER IX

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

The Government of Lord Cornwallis appointed Lawrence Mercer and John Lewis Chauvet, Commissioners to report on various subjects including the mode in which the British influence should be exercised for better administration of the State in future. The earliest knowledge about the internal administration of Koch Bihar State comes from the report of Mercer and Chauvet dated December 10, 1788.

At that time there was only one court in Koch Bihar for the trial of all kinds of cases. The court exercised powers in the name of the Maharaja. Written petitions were received by the court presided over by Sivaprasad Mustafi which held public sittings at the palace. The petitions were placed before the Maharaja and with his approval summonses were issued to the parties who after appearance were bound over by bonds. The cases and causes were determined in accordance with the Common Hindu Law enjoined in the *Smritis*, the law on the relevant matters being propounded by the Pandit of the Court. The final order of the Court was placed before the Maharaja. There were no fixed dates for the sittings of the Court and except for revenue matters the records were not preserved.

Active attempts at interference in the internal administration of Koch Bihar by the British Government of Bengal began thereafter. Henry Douglas was appointed Resident Commissioner at Koch Bihar sometime in 1789. What instructions he had from the Government are not known. He applied himself mainly to regularize the Revenue administration. Douglas was succeeded by Charles Andrew Bruce in 1791 and the latter by W. Towers Smith in 1795 who made over charge to Richard Ahmuty in 1797. Francis Jenkins writing in 1849 states that he did not find on record anything to show what degree of control was to be exercised over Koch Bihar except as regards the right of minting money by the Maharaja. Maharaja Harendra Narayan came of age in 1801 and the office of the Resident Commissioner of Koch Bihar was terminated.

In the meantime administrative reforms had been carried out in the *Devani* districts of Bengal by Lord Cornwallis and the Cornwallis Code had been promulgated. In January 1803 the post of the Commissioner of Koch Bihar was revived and Francis Pierard was appointed Commissioner of Koch Bihar for the purpose of carrying into effect, in concert with the Maharaja, certain necessary arrangements for the collection of the public revenue and the administration of justice and for the adoption of a proper and efficient system of police.

During the period of nine years from 1805 to 1813 the Collector of Rangpur carried on the duties in connexion with Koch Bihar from Rangpur. The Collectors seem to have lent their ears to many a complaint against Maharaja Harendra Narayan and sent reports to the Council at Calcutta. In such state of affairs the Government of Lord Minto recorded its Resolution in the Revenue Department dated August 7, 1813, and determined upon exercising a thorough and efficient interference into the internal affairs of Koch Bihar with a view to eradicating the evils of the administration. With this object in view the Government revived the office of the Commissioner of Koch Bihar and appointed Norman MacLeod to the post.

MacLeod failed in his task and was recalled shortly after and thus ended the attempts of the East India Company to interfere in the affairs of Koch Bihar in their own way.

The contact with the British Commissioners was not entirely devoid of result. While there was only one irregular court in 1788 and no arrangement for policing the State, in 1849 when Francis Jenkins, Agent of the Governor General inspected Koch Bihar he found the following regular courts presided over by officers specially appointed :

A. CRIMINAL COURTS :

1. Two Criminal Courts of first instance, the court of the *Foujdari Ahilkar* and the court of the *Natb Ahilkar*.
2. Court of Criminal Appeals and Court of Sessions presided over by a brother of the Maharaja.

B. CIVIL COURTS :

1. Court of the Civil Judge (*Ahilkar*).
2. Court of *Sadar Amin*.
3. Court of Civil Appeals.

C. REVENUE COURTS :

1. Court of the *Dewan* for *Khalsa* lands.
2. A separate court for the *Khangi* lands.

D. The RAJSABHA was nominally presided by the Maharaja assisted by the *Dewan*. This was the final court in all criminal matters.

In 1849 there were seven police thanas and outposts under the *Foujdari Ahilkar*. These were located at (i) Sadar or Kotwali, (ii) Dinahata, (iii) Mekhliganj, (iv) Giladanga, (v) Bhavaniganj, (vi) Shamganj and (vii) Changrabandha.

Jenkins reports that the quality of work at the courts was more or less satisfactory though there was complaints of corruption among the *amlahs*. The presiding officers of the courts were but poorly paid and so also were the *amlahs*. The pay was not disbursed out of the revenues of the State

but out of the fees, fines and forfeitures in those courts. The police, being under the establishment of the *Faujdar Ahilkar*, were expected to be paid by him out of the earnings of his court, and Jenkins observed that more often than not the earnings of the court of the *Faujdar Ahilkar* was insufficient to cover the salaries of the presiding officers of the courts and the *amlahs* and there was nothing left to pay the police.

This state of affairs continued till 1864. The British Government decided to take over charge of the State during the minority of the king Nripendra Narayan and deputed Colonel J. C. Haughton, the Agent of the Governor-General in the North Eastern Frontier as Commissioner in charge of the administration. The Commissioner was vested with full powers of the ruler of the State except with regard to certain specific points namely grants of lands, gratuities and pensions and the confirmation of capital sentences. These powers were reserved by the Government. H. Beveridge was appointed Deputy Commissioner and he assumed charge on 4 November 1864.

The state of the administration is best described in the words of the first Deputy Commissioner Beveridge from the *Annual Report for 1865-67*. "Before the appointment of a British Commissioner the government of Cooch Behar was in a deplorable condition. ... It was in fact a mongrel Government, being a cross as it were between the Bhutia or the Koch idea of government and those which the Bengali *amlah* supposed to be ours.

"There was no cohesion or real subordination in any part of the administration from the top to the bottom. Every officer did what was right in his eyes, and acknowledged no authority but that of the Rajah, and his subordination even to him was in most cases only lip-service. ...

"Former Commissioners had brought it also to the level of the zilla administration of their days, and at that point it had stuck."

Communicating on the poor pay of the officers Beveridge states: "while of course holding that expenditure should be reduced as much as possible I am of opinion that a greater increase in the expenditure of the State in Civil administration must be accepted as a necessary consequence of the appointment of a British Commissioner... it is impossible that a British officer can administer Cooch Behar without an efficient staff of subordinates and these can only be procured by giving liberal salaries."*

*The low salaries may be illustrated:

Ahilkar Rs. 100, *Sheristadar* Rs. 25, *Peshkar* Rs. 15, *Treasurer* Rs. 8, *Treasury Officer* Rs. 22/8/-, *Superintendent of Public Works* Rs. 18/12/-, *Dharmadhyaksha* or *Master of Religious ceremonies* Rs. 7/8/-, *Darogahs of thanas* Rs. 10, *Kotwal* Rs. 8, *Jamadar* Rs. 4, *Barbaddazis* Rs. 3.

All these in Narayani rupees which was about 60 per cent in value of the standard rupee.

Subsequent reforms worked in the following manner. Formerly, each office collecting revenue incurred expenditures out of the collections and only transmitted the balance if any to the Treasury or *Majudat*. The direction was given that all collecting officers were to send their entire collection to the Treasury and draw their disbursements by bills. This ensured regular payment of all grades of the staff. As the Maharaja was a minor the *Raj Sabha* court was abolished and the functions were transferred to the Commissioner's office. The composition of the Sessions court was retained but a retired Sessions Judge from Government service was appointed. The Sessions Judge was given appellate power over the decisions of the *Faujdar Ahilkar*. Two additional *Naib Ahilkars* were appointed to clear off the accumulated cases in the court of the *Faujdar Ahilkar*. The Indian Penal Code was introduced in 1866 and the Indian Evidence Act and the Code of Criminal Procedure were introduced in 1873 with consequent changes in the court and in the police procedures. The first subdivision was established at Tufanganj on 3 March 1866 and the four other subdivisions were created in 1872. The power of the *Faujdar Ahilkar* was enhanced to the infliction of imprisonment up to two years and a fine up to Rs. 200 in Narayani rupees and the *Naib Ahilkars* in charge of the subdivisions were given powers of taking cognizance. The spirit of the Bengal Cattle Trespass Act (Act III of 1857) and of the Gambling Act (Act II of 1867) were ordered to be followed in the courts. Formerly, the *Rajgans* or kinsmen of the Maharaja were not amenable to the jurisdiction of the criminal court. In 1871 the jurisdiction of the court of the Deputy Commissioner who now exercised the functions of the Sessions Court was extended to the *Rajgans*.

The state of the police was all along a weak point of Koch Bihar administration. Not only was the number of police personnel extremely meagre but their salaries were a mere pittance and that too were hardly ever regularly paid. The police force was reorganized in 1876-77 and consisted of one Superintendent of Police, three inspectors, eight sub-inspectors, twenty-six head constables and two hundred and forty constables. The number of police stations were increased to five, viz., Kotwali, Tufanganj (afterwards Fulbari), Dinahata, Matabhanga and Mekhliganj. The outposts were increased to seven.

On 8 November 1883 Maharaja Nripendra Narayan assumed charge and on the following day he issued the Memorandum of Administration drawn up by the Commissioner of Jalpaiguri and Koch Bihar Division. A Council of State was established with the Maharaja as President and three members, namely, the Superintendent of the State, the *Dewan* and the Head of the Department of Civil Justice as members. The Superintendent of the State was Head of the Department of General Administration, the *Dewan* was the Head of the Department of Revenue and the Judicial Officer was the Head of the Civil Justice. The Superintendent was to supervise, control and direct the

Police Reforms

Maharaja Nripendra Narayan assumes charge

Memorandum of Administration

administration of Criminal, Justice and the Police, the Military, Jail, Public Works, Education, and Audit Departments, and was to be the Sessions Judge to hear the Criminal Appeals. The *Dewan* was to be in charge of the Revenue Department and responsible for all collections and supervision of all proceedings in such matters. The Judicial Member was to hear all Civil Appeals and Revenue Appeals of certain classes and supervise the administration of Civil Justice and all final appeals to the Council.

In August 1885 the Commissioner of the Jalpaiguri Division was appointed by the Government of India to be the Ex-officio Political Agent of Koch Bihar and the Superintendent of Koch Bihar was appointed Justice of the Peace.

Modification
of 1891

In December 1891 the Memorandum of Administration was modified to some extent. The judicial functions of the Council were transferred to a Court of two members of the Council, the Bench being constituted by the Maharaja excluding that member against whose decision the appeal lay. In case of difference between the two members constituting the Bench the matter was reheard by the full Council with the Maharaja presiding.

The Civil Judge was appointed Sessions Judge in addition and the *Dewan* was made an additional Sessions Judge. The Sessions power hitherto exercised by the Superintendent ceased. The power of the *Faujdar Ahilkar* was redefined and made to correspond to the powers of a District Magistrate of British districts.

For the next fifty years, that is, till the merger of Koch Bihar State into West Bengal and its formation into a district the administrative pattern remained the same. The only change made was that the members of the Council were designated Ministers and their offices designated Secretariats.

Administration
in September
1949

After the signing of the Agreement of Accession on 28 August 1949, the Government of India issued an order entitled the Cooch Behar (Administration) Order 1949 and appointed a Chief Commissioner at the head of the administration in Koch Bihar. The Chief Commissioner was vested with all the powers which under the laws operating in Koch Bihar were exercisable by the Maharaja. All the laws in force in Koch Bihar or any part thereof immediately before 12 September 1949 continued to remain in force until repealed or amended by a competent legislature or authority. All Judges, Magistrates and other officers who immediately before this date were exercising lawful functions in Koch Bihar or any part thereof were to continue to exercise their respective functions in the same manner and to the same extent as they were doing before this Order, until other provision was made by the Chief Commissioner. All taxes, duties, cesses or fees which immediately before the commencement of this Order, were being lawfully levied in

Koch Bihar or any part thereof were to continue to be levied and applied to the same purposes, until other provision was made by a competent legislature or authority.

During the governance of the Chief Commissioner, that is, from 12 September to 31 December 1949 the administration in Koch Bihar remained the same as before. On 1 January 1950 Koch Bihar was merged into West Bengal by a notification issued by the Government of India on 31 December 1949 entitled the States' Merger (West Bengal) Order, 1949. A Deputy Commissioner and Administrator of Koch Bihar was appointed by the Government of West Bengal and from 1 January 1950 Koch Bihar became a district of West Bengal. As Koch Bihar was a part of India and a part of West Bengal already on 26 January 1950, the date on which the Constitution of India was adopted, the Constitution applied to Koch Bihar from that very date.

The administrative set up consisted of a Deputy Commissioner and an Additional Deputy Commissioner, one Senior Deputy Collector (who was the previous *Faujdar Ahilkar*), one *Naib Ahilkar* in charge of the Sadar subdivision, one *Naib Ahilkar* each in charge of the treasury and the *Khas Mahal* Departments, two Additional *Naib Ahilkars* for revenue work at Sadar and one Additional *Naib Ahilkar* for criminal case work of the Sadar subdivision. In each of the subdivisions of Dinhata and Matabhanga, there was one *Naib Ahilkar* in charge of the subdivision and one Additional *Naib Ahilkar*. In the subdivisions of Tufanganj and Mekhliganj there was only one *Naib Ahilkar* in charge of the subdivision.¹ Initially, the Subdivisional Officers acted as Munsifs and as Sub-Registrars also. Later, they were relieved of these duties and separate Sub-Registrars and Munsifs were appointed.

The police administration remained as before. The force was under a Superintendent of Police with two Deputy Superintendents at headquarters. Each of the eight police stations, viz., Koch Bihar (Kotwali), Tufanganj, Dinhata, Sitai, Sitalkuchi, Matabhanga, Mekhliganj and Haldibari was in charge of a Sub-Inspector of Police. At Matabhanga and Dinhata there was a Circle Inspector at each place.

The head of the district administration is the Deputy Commissioner who is also appointed District Magistrate under the Criminal Procedure Code. He is a member of the Indian Administrative Service. He is assisted in his administration by two Additional Deputy Commissioners. One Additional Deputy Commissioner is in charge of Estates Acquisition and Land Reforms while the other assists the Deputy Commissioner in General Administration. One

The present
set up

¹The Officers of the Cooch Behar State service had the designations of *Ahilkar*, *Naib Ahilkar* and Additional *Naib Ahilkar*. Till their final absorption in West Bengal cadres they retained their designations but worked as Deputy Collectors and Sub-Deputy Collectors and those performing Magisterial work were vested with powers under the Criminal Procedure Code. Gradually, the posts of the Subdivisional Officers were appointed from West Bengal State Civil Service.

KOCH BIHAR

Deputy Collector is in charge of the office of the Deputy Commissioner while another Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector is in charge of the Sadar Subdivision assisted by one Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector and one Sub-Deputy Magistrate and Sub-Deputy Collector. One Deputy Collector is the Regional Assistant Director of Panchayats and Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad while another Deputy Collector is the District Panchayat Officer. A Joint Magistrate is the Settlement Officer for Koch Bihar-Jalpaiguri-Malda Revisional Settlement assisted by a Deputy Collector who is Assistant Settlement Officer. One Deputy Collector is the General Manager of the North Bengal State Transport Corporation assisted by a Sub-Deputy Collector as Administrative and Personnel Officer. One Sub-Deputy Collector is Special Officer for Scheduled Castes and Tribes Welfare. A temporary Sub-Deputy Collector is the District Compensation Officer for Estates Acquisition. All these officers are stationed at Koch Bihar.

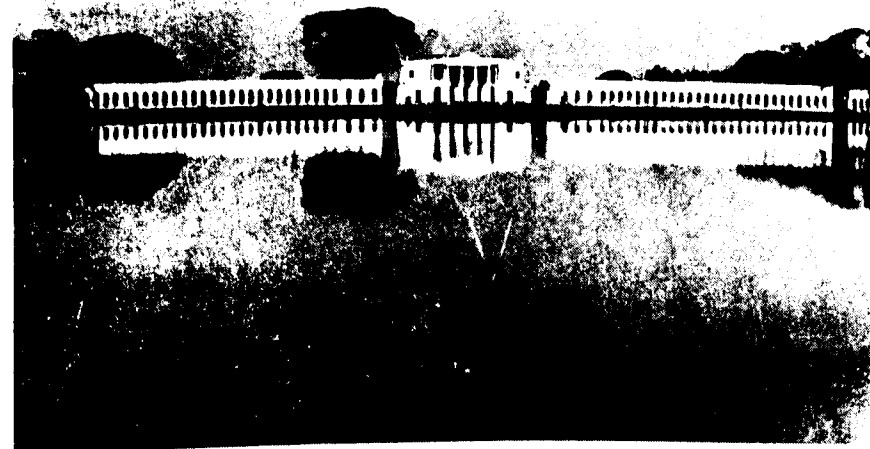
At Dinhata a Deputy Collector and Deputy Magistrate is in charge of the subdivision assisted by a Deputy Magistrate and a Sub-Deputy Magistrate for General Administration.

At Matabhanga a Deputy Magistrate is in charge of the subdivision assisted by two Sub-Deputy Magistrates for General Administration. At Tufanganj a Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector is in charge of the subdivision assisted by a Sub-Deputy Magistrate for General Administration. At Mekhliganj similarly a Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector is in charge of the subdivision assisted by a Sub-Deputy Magistrate for General Administration. Recently, the cadres of Deputy Collectors and Sub-Deputy Collectors have been merged for the whole of West Bengal.

A Superintendent of Police is the head of the police administration in the district assisted by an Additional Superintendent of Police, both of whom are members of the Indian Police Service. There are two Deputy Superintendents of Police at headquarters, one looking after the police lines, barracks and discipline while the other assists the Superintendent of Police in his work. At each of the subdivisions there is an Inspector of Police. The number of Police Stations continues to be eight as before. The



Deputy Commissioner's office, Koch Bihar



Old secretariat of Maharajas (now District Headquarters) facing Sagardighi, Koch Bih

personnel has been strengthened by adding one more Sub-Inspector at each police station. The number of constables has also been increased.

There are eleven Community Development Blocks in the district. These are Koch Bihar I, Koch Bihar II, Dinhata I, Dinhata II, Sitai, Matabhanga I, Matabhanga II, Sitalkuchi, Tufanganj, Mekhliganj and Haldibari. The Block Development Officer is generally a member of the West Bengal Junior Civil Service (now merged with the senior service) or a member of the Subordinate Agricultural Service. The other complement of staff are the Agricultural Extension Officer, the Social Education Officer, the Sub-Assistant Engineer, the Panchayat Extension Officer, the Inspector of Cooperative Societies, Lady Social Education Officer for women's programmes, Gram Sevika. The Gram Sevaks are stationed in the rural areas, one for each Anchal Panchayat.

Community
Development
Blocks



District Hospital, Koch Bihar



Jenkins School, Koch Bihar

CHAPTER X

REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

The earliest information available about the Land Revenue of Koch Bihar dates from 1773 when Purling, the Collector of Rangpur prepared a *hast-o-bud* of the Land Revenue of Koch Bihar. The land revenue was then realized in three parts appropriated respectively to the Maharaja, the Nazir Deo and the Dewan Deo. The total *hast-o-bud* was Rs. 2,71,687 inclusive of *abwabs*. Of this the share of the Maharaja was Rs. 1,00,764; the share of the Nazir Deo was Rs. 1,51,031 and the share of the Dewan Deo was Rs. 19,881. Purling deducted Rs. 72,558 from this on account of collection charges, *Jagirs*, *Brahmottar*, *Devottar*, etc. Half the net amount of Rs. 1,99,120, i.e., Rs. 99,560 was determined as the tribute payable in Narayani rupees. In 1777 this was converted into Rs. 72,207 *sicca* rupees and this amount became the tribute fixed permanently. The tribute due to the East India Company was collected by the company's own *sajwal*. Thus collection was made twice from each *jotedar*, once by the East India Company's *sajwal* for half the amount and a second time by the revenue collectors of the Maharaja for the remaining half.

Apart from the revenue-free lands such as *Brahmottar*, *Jagirs*, other *Lakheraj*, *Pirpal*, etc., the revenue paying lands were divided into three parts *Mal*, *Devottar* and *Khangi*. *Mal* was revenue proper which went to the resources of the State; the incomes from *Devottar* lands were appropriated for the worship of the deities and for other religious purposes; and the income from the *Khangi* lands went to the maintenance of the household of the Maharaja. After Col. Haughton, the Commissioner introduced the budget, the *Khangi* lands were merged with the *Mal*. Separate money-grants were provided by Haughton for the purposes for which the revenues of the *Devottar* lands were appropriated. From this time though the *Devottar* lands were kept separate for the purpose of accounts, the revenue realized from these lands lost their original significance.

The persons paying revenue to the State were called the *jotedars*. No regular *patta* appears to have been granted and the land had never been measured. The settlement was renewed from year to year and the assessment was not fixed. The unit of land was a *bish* which equals 12 *bighas* and 16 *kathas*. There were three different rates for assessment for different qualities of land. The rates were Rs. 20, Rs. 15 and Rs. 10 per *bish* of land. The mode of assessment and the system of collection were both irregular and the dishonesty and greed of the State officials caused great sufferings to the people. Large portions of the land were

alienated, new and irregular exactions were imposed and the administration of justice was perverted for the purpose of securing gratifications. The harassed and oppressed tenants left the State in large numbers. Purling's *hast-o-bud* of 1773 showed a net revenue of about two lakhs of rupees. After 15 years the revenue fell to Rs. 1,41,230 and in another four years it was reduced to Rs. 1,20,000 Narayani rupees. After deducting Rs. 99,560 as tribute of the East India Company very little was left for the management of the State.

To improve this state of affairs Douglas introduced the *Ijaradari* system in 1790. The country was divided into small parcels and put up to auction and the highest bid with approved security was accepted. The *Ijaradar* then distributed the total amount he expected to collect amongst the *jotes* comprised in his *ijara*. In addition to the *jama* formally fixed by the *Ijaradar* he used to collect an additional amount amounting to about a sixth of the *jama* as *Ijaradari* and *Saranjami* charge. Seven years after the introduction of the *Ijara* system Ahmuty, the Commissioner, wrote to the Governor General on the evil effects of the *Ijara* system thus:

"The system adopted in former years was the mode to obtain the highest possible revenue for a short period, but it appears from experience, ill calculated to promote the happiness of the people and the permanent prosperity of the country. Exclusive of the loss sustained by the proprietor the actual cultivators of the soil have suffered considerably from the lands being let at rack-rent to individuals, many of whom could have no interest in their welfare, and who availed themselves of every opportunity of extorting from them as much as possible. Consequently whole villages deserted and retired into the adjacent districts of Rangpur and Dinajpur, where they found greater security and encouragement of their labour under established regulations of Government, and a difference of more than seventy thousand of rupees was experienced in the *jama* of year subsequent to 1201."

The ladies of the royal seraglio, the relatives of the king, that is, the *Rajgans* and the principal *amlahs* of the State used to take out the *Ijaras* *benami* and by virtue of their position they could easily make exactions from the *ryots*. They got the best farms on easy terms, their influence prevented competition, and the deficiency in revenue was attempted to be made good by over-assessing the farms held by others. But the only change Ahmuty brought about was to enhance the period of these farming leases to five years from one year as originally introduced by Douglas. In the meantime Maharaja Harendra Narayan came of age in 1801 and the matter remained stuck up there. In subsequent years attempts were made by the British Government to introduce regulated administration in the State but the

¹ *Cooch Behar Select Records*, Vol. I, p. 47.

144

KOCH BIHAR

refusal of the Maharaja prevented any further interference. Further improvement in revenue administration had to await another minority of the Raja in 1864.

The only effective remedy for all these evils was a general survey of the whole State and preparation of a Record of Rights of all the tenants from the *jotedar* downwards and to determine the rents at each level. Haughton, the Commissioner accordingly applied to the Government of Bengal for the survey and O'Donnel, the Deputy Superintendent of Revenue Survey was specially deputed by the Government for the purpose.

Before the survey undertaken by O'Donnel a topographical survey of the State had been made by Pemberton, the Superintendent of Revenue Survey of the Government of Bengal in 1858. Pemberton's survey demarcated the boundaries of the State. The general topography of the country showing the position of the rivers, roads, towns, etc., was mapped. O'Donnel's survey measured the country in standard bighas of eighty cubits square (cubit=18 inches) and in *Kathas* and *dhurs*. The survey was made by the compass and a chain of 30 feet. O'Donnel divided the country into six *parganas* or circuits and within the *parganas* the *taluks* were geographically demarcated. He was assisted by Iswar Chandra Sen, a Deputy Collector.

The *jotes* or revenue-paying estates comprised within each *taluk* was demarcated. The interior filling of the *jotes* were made by the *Khasra* system by measurement with a rod or a rope and the compass was not used. The undertenures or holdings below the *jotes* were shown as made up of so many fields composing the *jote*. Accurate survey of the undertenures were not done. The map of the *jote* was plotted to the scale of 16 inches to the mile and that of the *taluks* to half that scale. The plots were arranged in serial order, their position in respect of each other, the length of the sides and the area and class of soil being noted in separate columns. The survey was concluded in 1870 and from 1872 under orders of Sir George Campbell, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal the *Ijaradari* system was abolished and *khas* collection was introduced from 1 April 1872. The collection *tauzis* were prepared by carefully putting together all the component parts of the *jotes* found by survey and by applying the accepted rate to these parts. The *jotedars* were to pay their revenue to the subdivisional *kutcharis*. Default of payment entailed annulment of the *patta*, holding the *jote*, which was generally for thirty years though lesser periods were fixed in some cases. Later the Koch Bihar Land Revenue Sales Act was promulgated under provision of which defaulting *jotes* were to be put to auction and sold for arrears of revenue.

The system of settlement had the appearance of a *ryotwari* system but in fact it was not so. Whatever may have been the original character of the *jotes*, by the time of the first settlement most of them had converted themselves to rent collecting interests and were therefore more *zamindari* in character than *ryotwari*.

While the survey of O'Donnel was in progress one Deputy Collector was placed in charge of the settlement of Mekhliganj then called Rahimganj *pargana*. Due to inadequacy of staff the operations dragged on for 16 years and ended in an erroneous reduction of the *jama* by about 40 per cent.

The experience of Mekhliganj showed the necessity of augmenting the settlement department and accordingly W.O.A. Beckett was appointed Assistant Commissioner for settlement operations. He was assisted by five Deputy Collectors. The work of the first Land Revenue Settlement of Koch Bihar was concluded by 1877. One important feature of the settlement operation was the resumption of the invalid rent-free lands, *Mokararis* and *jaigirs*. During the unsettled condition of the country beginning from the minority of Maharaja Harendra Narayan, large areas of land had been illegally alienated and turned into rent-free land and *jaigir mahals* by the clique in power. All these cases were subjected to a close scrutiny during the settlement operations and those held invalid were resumed. The general rates adopted for the settlement were:

	(Per bigha)		
	Rs.	As.	P.
For homestead lands and gardens	2	8	0
For bamboo lands	1	2	0
For other cultivated lands including thatching grass lands and small <i>bils</i> of less than 2 bighas	0	8	0
For fallow and jungle lands	0	1	0

The total amount of revenue secured by the first settlement was Rs. 9,38,610 which showed an increase of Rs. 5,74,471 over the old *jama* of Rs. 3,64,139.

Up till this settlement the State was not in possession of any information of the undertenures of the *jotes*. These undertenures running up to no less than six degree were noted at this settlement. They were, in order of successive lower grade, *Jote*, *Chukani*, *Dar Chukani*, *Dar-a-dar-Chukani*, *Tasya Chukani*, *Tali Chukani* and *Tasya tali Chukani*. The profit of each upper stage in collecting the rent from the next lower stage was also recorded.

The first settlement, concluded with the *jotedars*, varied from 8 to 13 years and ended in 1883-84. An extension of five years on the same terms was made and from 1886-87 Re-settlement was started. In the meantime another petty settlement known as the *Patit Charcha* settlement had taken place between 1884 and 1886. This settlement was taken

in hand to assess the fallow lands which had come under cultivation since the first settlement. The increase of revenue by the *Patit Charcha* settlement was Rs. 68,824.

Re-settlement
operations

In the Re-settlement operations from 1886 no survey of the State was done. The old papers of the first settlement and the *Patit Charcha* settlement were taken as the basis and such changes, whether in possession of or in the classification of the lands, as had taken place were recorded.

The table of rates applied in the Re-settlement* was as follows:

Class of land	Rates per bigha					
	First class		Second class		Third class	
	Taluk		Taluk		Taluk	
	Rs.	As. P.	Rs.	As. P.	Rs.	As. P.
1. Betel nut	4	0 0	4	0 0	4	0 0
2. Bastu	3	0 0	3	0 0	3	0 0
3. Udbastu	3	0 0	3	0 0	3	0 0
4. Garden	3	0 0	3	0 0	3	0 0
5. Bamboo	1	2 0	1	2 0	1	2 0
6. Tobacco 1st class	1	8 0	1	8 0	1	8 0
7. Tobacco 2nd class	1	4 0	1	4 0	1	4 0
8. Tobacco 3rd class	1	0 0	1	0 0	1	0 0
9. Awal	1	0 0	0	14 0	0	13 0
10. Duam	0	12 0	0	11 0	0	10 0
11. Saia	0	9 0	0	8 0	0	7 0
12. Chaharam	0	7 0	0	6 0	0	5 0
13. San	0	7 0	0	6 0	0	5 0
14. Laik Patit	0	2 0	0	2 0	0	2 0
15. Garlaik Patit	0	1 0	0	1 0	0	1 0
16. Jala	0	8 8	0	8 0	0	8 0

*The Re-settlement of 1886 was known as the *Rakam Charcha* Settlement on account of the detailed classification of land (i. e., *Rakam*) made

The total revenue obtained by the Re-settlement was Rs. 12,41,060, and increase of Rs. 2,88,418 over the first settlement and *Patit Charcha* settlement revenue of Rs. 9,52,642.

The rates thus fixed were the revenue rates at which the *jotedar* was to pay the revenue to the State. In the first settlement the rate of rent to be paid by the undertenure was not fixed. All that was done was to fix the rate of the *jotedars* and to provide that each class of superior interest was to get 25 per cent as profit.

Fixation of
rents under
tenures

The following scale was observed in the Re-settlement and has been observed since then:

- I. Where *Dar Chukanidar* was the last undertenant *Jotedar* 35 per cent, *Chukanidar* 15 per cent, *Dar Chukanidar* 10 per cent.
- II. Where *Tasya Chukanidar* was the last undertenant *Jotedar* 35 per cent, *Chukanidar* 10 per cent, *Dar Chukanidar* 10 per cent, *Dar-a-dar Chukanidar* 5 per cent.
- III. Where *Tali Chukanidar* was the last undertenant *Jotedar* 35 per cent, *Chukanidar* 10 per cent, *Dar Chukanidar* 5 per cent, *Dar-a-dar Chukanidar* 5 per cent, *Tasya Chukanidar* 5 per cent.
- IV. Where *Tasya tali Chukanidar* was the last undertenant *Jotedar* 35 per cent, *Chukanidar* 5 per cent, *Dar-a-dar Chukanidar* 5 per cent, *Tasya Chukanidar* 5 per cent, *Tali Chukanidar* 5 per cent.

A fixed profit was allowed to the *jotedar* in the above scheme to ensure security of the revenue of the State and to keep the *jotes* attractive, for, it was the *jotedar* who had to pay the revenue under pain of sale of his *jote* in case of default.

The *Rakam Charcha* Re-settlement was to expire in about 1918-1920. As there had been but only one survey of the State in 1868-70, it was decided to have another complete survey before the next Re-settlement. Accordingly, a traverse survey and a cadastral survey was undertaken from 1912 and ended in 1916-17. The expiring settlements of the *Rakam Charcha* settlement were extended and in 1927 a new Re-settlement was made on the basis of the new survey.

The rates and classification of land adopted in the Re-settlement of 1927 were as follows:

Class of land	Rate per bigha								
	First class			Second class			Third class		
	Taluk			Taluk			Taluk		
	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.
1. Betel nut	4	0	0	4	0	0	4	0	0
2. <i>Bastu</i>	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0
3. Garden	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0
4. Bamboo	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2	0
5. Tobacco 1st class	1	8	0	1	8	0	1	8	0
6. Tobacco 2nd class	1	4	0	1	4	0	1	4	0
7. Tobacco 3rd class	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
8. <i>Awal</i>	1	3	0	1	1	0	0	15	0
9. <i>Duiam</i>	0	14	0	0	13	0	0	12	0
10. <i>Saiam</i>	0	11	0	0	9	0	0	8	0
11. <i>Chaharam</i>	0	7	0	0	6	0	0	5	0
12. <i>San</i>	0	7	0	0	6	0	0	5	0
13. <i>Laik Patit</i>	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0
14. <i>Garlaik Patit</i>	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
15. <i>Jala</i>	0	8	0	0	8	0	0	8	0

The total revenue demand secured by the 1927 Settlement was a little over Rs. 18 lakhs. Previous to 1934 lands which were surrendered or lands which could not be settled were held by the *Dewan* and settled by him. Such lands were called *Dewan-bos*. There are quite a few *taluks* in Koch Bihar bearing the name *Dewan-bos*. From 1934 the State decided to have a *Khas Mahal* department and all lands which were surrendered or made *khas* at the Revenue Sales were transferred to this department to make *Khas* collection.

While most of the land was settled for a period there were some lands which were settled in perpetuity. These are known as *Mokaruri Mahals*. These were mostly created by Maharaja Harendra Narayan and were later mentioned in section 3(9) of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act. The *Mokararidar* was entitled to grant permanent leases on any terms agreed between him and the tenant within the meaning of section 77 of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act provided these terms were not inconsistent with other provisions of the Act or any other law for the time being in force.

Special types
of tenures
Mokaruri

Lakheraj or revenue-free grants were estates known under different names according to the purpose for which they were granted.

Lakheraj

Revenue-free grants made to a brahman were called *Brahmottar*. These were granted to celebrate some memorable events. The Panchgram brahmins living near Koch Bihar town in *pargana* Koch Bihar have been the recipient of *Brahmottar* grants more liberally than others. *Brahmottar* comprised three-fourths of the total revenue-free estates.

Brahmottar

Devottar lands were dedicated for the worship and maintenance of the temple and its incidents.

Devottar

Pirpal grants were made for the upkeep of the worship of Muslim Pirs or saints. There were only two such grants, both near Koch Bihar town in *taluks* Dhaliabari and Gudam Maharaniganj.

Pirpal

Petbhata grants originated for maintenance of the princes who did not succeed to the throne and for the maintenance of the other relations of the Maharaja. These recipients are known as *Rajgans*. *Petbhata* grants were of two kinds. The first kind was a grant for the life-time of the recipient and the second kind could be inherited in the direct male line. The former class was liable to be resumed on the death of the original recipient but by practice had been granted afresh to the successors of the first recipient. *Petbhata* lands could not be sold or transferred nor could they be encumbered by the creation of undertenures.

Petbhata

Lakheraj grants were granted to persons as a reward for good services done to the State. These were called *Baksisi Lakheraj*.

*Baksisi
Lakheraj*

There were a few *jaigirs* known as *Baksisi* or *Paitriki jaigirs*. These were rewards and no service was attached to these *jaigirs*.

The total number of revenue-free estates at the Settlement of 1913-1927 was found to be 539 comprising 53,328 bighas.

The *jaigirs* were created for the performance of services and were liable to be resumed when the service was no longer required or when the grantees failed or refused to perform

Jaigirs

the services. The Settlement of 1913-1927 recorded 143 *jaigirs* comprising an area of 7,277 bighas. These *jaigir*-holders were to render service either in the palace or in the *thakurbaris*. The *jaigir* lands could not be sold, mortgaged or transferred in any manner nor could they be leased out to an undertenure. On the death of the original grantee according to practice the lands were granted afresh to the successor. But the State could resume the lands and refuse to accept the services of the heir.

**Dakhalswatwa
Pattas in towns
and bunders**

The bulk of the lands in the towns and *bunders* were let out in a form of tenure known as *Dakhalswatwa*. There was a prohibition clause in the *pattas* granting these tenures to the effect that the holder could not create any sub-infeudation except with the permission of the authorities nor could they be transferred to any one except with permission. After the merger of Koch Bihar the new *pattas* for town lands issued by the Deputy Commissioner had permitted transfer but the transfer has to be registered with the Deputy Commissioner on pain of a fine.

**Present
Settlement**

The Settlement of 1913-1927 which was given effect to from 1334 B.S., i.e., from the year 1927-28 were about to expire in 1956 when the Estates Acquisition Act was enforced in Koch Bihar. The towns and *bunders* were settled in 1943-44 and as these settlements were for a period of ten years these also expired about this time. The Revisional Settlement Operations in Koch Bihar started from 1955. The Government issued a notification under clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 39 of the Estates Acquisition Act ordering preparation of Record-of-Rights. This order was necessary for Koch Bihar as an order for the revision of Record-of-Rights under clause (b) was possible only in case where Records-of-Rights were prepared under Chapter X of the Bengal Tenancy Act. As the existing Record-of-Rights in Koch Bihar was under the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act, action had to be taken under clause (a). By Notification No. 14886-L. Re., dated 5 August 1955, the Government, however, authorized omission of Traverse Survey, Cadastral Survey and Khanapuri and operations started from the stage of *Bujharat*. Due to the peculiar incidents of tenures in Koch Bihar and also due to the fact that the *jotes* originated long before any survey of the district had been done, there were some initial difficulties. There were no Revenue Survey Mouzas in Koch Bihar with a Jurisdiction List Number. The *taluk* boundaries drawn on the map was the best that could be done to contain the most part of *jote* within the *taluk* as demarcated on the map. But *taluks* had originated long before the country was mapped. So in spite of the best endeavours O'Donnel (the Surveyor) could not contain all lands of the *taluk* within its boundary shown. This resulted in the peculiar definition of *taluk* given in section 3(11) of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act according to which the "Taluk means an area included in the village map of Revenue Survey within the same exterior boundary and includes detached plots belonging to it situated outside the

exterior boundary." For the purpose of the Revisional Settlement the *taluk*, as depicted in the map with a Thak Number, was taken as equivalent to the Mouza of other districts but corrections had to be made for the detached plots. Though the Land Registration Act became operative in Koch Bihar with the passing of the Cooch Behar (Assimilation of State Laws) Act, 1950, no General Registers had been written and as such revenue-free lands held for public purposes which are shown in General Register B Part II in other districts had to be sorted out and separated from other revenue-free lands which now became charged with revenue in terms of the Estates Acquisition Act. The Cooch Behar Tenancy Act continued to be operative as an assimilated State Law by virtue of section 3(3) of the Cooch Behar (Assimilation of State Laws) Act, 1950 and that Act defined tenant to mean the holder of a tenure. Undertenure according to that Act means a person holding under a *jotedar*. The various types of undertenure holders enumerated in the Act came under the category of *Raiyats*. 'Cultivating undertenant' means according to the definition cultivating *raiyyat*. Thus a *krishi-praja* is also a cultivating *raiyyat*. All these different classes of *raiyyats* came under the purview of chapter VI of the Estates Acquisition Act. The *raiyyats* of all these various grades actually cultivating land had to be accepted as tenants directly under the Government and the ceiling of land holding had to be applied to each one of them. According to this legal position the entire chain of tenancies from the *Chukani* to the *krishi-praja* had to be recorded as *raiyyats* and there were 7 such grades one below the other. The *Khas Mahal Pattanidars* who have no right of sub-infeudation were treated as *raiyyats*.

It was essential for the purposes of West Bengal Estates Acquisition Act to determine which were intermediaries and which were *raiyyats*. According to section 2(i) of the West Bengal Estates Acquisition Act 'Intermediary' was a proprietor, tenure-holder, undertenure-holder or any other intermediary above the *raiyyat* or non-agricultural tenant. According to definitions given in sections 3(9) and 3(8) of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act. *Mokarari*, *Lakherai*, *Brahmottar*, *Devottar*, *Pirpal*, *Pethhata* and *Jaigir* lands were estates and so, also were the *jotes* held directly under the Government and the *joteswatwa* in the towns and *bunders* in accordance with section 3(1). As all proprietors of estates and holders of tenures were 'intermediaries', holders of *Mokarari*, *Dar-mokarari*, revenue-free estates mentioned above, *jainirs* and *jotes*, all were treated as 'intermediaries' in the present settlement. For determining the *raiyyat* the Board of Revenue laid down the following principle: "Where the dominant purpose of the tenancy is that the tenant should personally cultivate the land, then a *raiyyati* tenancy is created. If the land has been leased out for the purpose of bringing it under cultivation by inducting or for introducing tenants, then the lessee is a tenure-holder. Any person who is above a *raiyyat* is an 'intermediary'. The actual

user of the land normally is not the determining factor. Where the origin of the tenancy is not known, the continued user of the land may be the determining factor as to the character of the tenancy."¹

Applying these principles the character of the tenancy in each case had to be determined and Record-of-Rights prepared accordingly. All intermediary rent collecting interests above the *raiyat* were annulled. The next problem was to determine the rent of the *raiyats* who were actually cultivating the lands and who were accepted as tenants under the Government.

As stated already the person of highest status who could be a *raiyat* under the Government was the *Chukani* and the lowest the *Krishi-praja*. Leaving aside the *Krishi-praja* which was an illegal creation against the provisions of the Koch Bihar Sun-infeudation Act of 1888, the lowest rent paid was the *Chukani* rent which was 135 per cent of the *Jote* rate. The highest rent according to the principles of Cooch Behar Tenancy Act was 160 per cent of the *Jote* rate. The rate of rent of the tenant directly under the Government was determined in between the *Chukani* rate at 135 per cent of *Jote* rate and 160 per cent, the maximum rate under the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act. The Jamabandi Officers prepared average schedule or rates for each *taluk* (treated as *Mouzas*) and for each *taluk* one rate of rent was applied for the same class of land.

Ceiling

The ceiling of holding of agricultural land was 25 acres per individual and this was applied to the tenancies accepted directly under the Government. The West Bengal Land Reforms (Amendment) Act of 1971 brought down this ceiling to a maximum of seven standard hectares (about 20 bighas) and a minimum of 2.50 standard hectares per family, according to the number and nature of members of the family. There was a High Court case over this new ceiling which is *sub judice*.

Exemption of rent

From 1971 holdings of one acre and less have been exempted from payment of rent.

The administrative arrangement in the district for the collection and administration of land and land revenue matters had the Deputy Commissioner at the head. The Deputy Commissioner is assisted by an Additional District Magistrate who is vested with the powers of a Collector under the West Bengal Estates Acquisition Act. Rent is collected from the tenants by *thahasildars* who reside in the *taluks*. Ordinarily one *taluk* has one *thahasildar* but in cases of very big *taluks* like Sitalkuchi there are more than one *thahasildar*. Some small *taluks* are tagged together to form a *thahasildar's* charge. At the thana level is the Junior Land Reforms Officer assisted by a Circle Inspector at the thana

¹Memo. No. 11189/1(2)-EA, dated 3 November 1954, to the Director of Land Records and Survey.

Land Reforms Office. Rents are collected by printed machine numbered collection receipts called rent receipts. These rent receipt books are machine numbered with duplicate pages and the receipts are written by the *thahasildar* with indelible pencil using a carbon paper for the duplicate. Strict account of these books are kept at the office of the Junior Land Reforms Officer. There is one Subdivisional Land Reforms Officer at Koch Bihar to supervise the works of the Junior Land Reforms Officers.

Koch Bihar did not have a class of landless agricultural labour as in other districts. Each cultivating family had at least some land for itself and in addition served on the lands of the nearby *jotedar* or bigger cultivator. With the influx of a large number of migrants since 1950-51 a small class of agricultural labour has grown up. The rates of wages vary according to crop. Tobacco cultivation which needs great care procures the maximum wages of about Rs. 3 to Rs. 3.50 with food per day. For paddy and jute the average wage is about Rs. 2.30 per day. Agricultural labour

The following Acts are administered in the district: (i) The Bengal Finance (Sales Tax) Act, 1941, (ii) The West Bengal Sales Tax Act, 1954, (iii) The Bengal Motor Spirit Sales Taxation Act, 1941, (iv) The Central Sales Tax Act, 1956, (v) The Bengal Raw Jute Taxation Act. Other revenues
Commercial
Taxes

These are known as Commercial Taxes. The collections of these taxes may be stated as in the following table:¹

Year	Collection (in lakhs of rupees)
1971-72	33.48
1972-73	43.75
1973-74	50.27

The amount collected as Agricultural Income-Tax in the year 1970-71 was Rs. 2,02,339. Agricultural Income-tax

The Central Excise duties realized in Koch Bihar during 1970-71 and 1971-72 were as in the table below. Central Excise

Commodity	1970-71 Rs.	1971-72 Rs.
Tea	67,737.00	65,949.00
Plywood	16,841.00	19,352.00
Tobacco	45,42,277.00	58,37,991.00

¹Source: Commissioner of Commercial Tax, West Bengal. The figures include taxes for Alipurdwar subdivision of Jalpaiguri district.

State Excise
Duties

The collections from State Excise Duties were as follows.¹

Year	Rs. (in lakhs)
1971-72	16.57
1972-73	19.8
1973-74	20.64

Revenue from other sources may be stated as follows:

	Year	Rs. (in lakhs)
Entertainment tax	1971-72	5.50
Stamps		
Non-judicial	Do	10.68
Judicial	Do	1.86

The position regarding Land Revenue may be stated as in the following table.²

Year	Demands (in lakhs of rupees)	Collection (in lakhs of rupees)
1955-56	28.0	12.9
1956-57	44.7	19.9
1957-58	54.7	25.4
1958-59	55.8	25.1
1959-60	58.4	25.2
1960-61	58.1	26.9

¹Source: P. A. to the Excise Commissioner, West Bengal.

²West Bengal District Census Handbook 1961, Koch Bihar, 1966, p. 327.

CHAPTER XI

LAW, ORDER AND JUSTICE

In 1883 there were 8 criminal and 11 revenue and civil courts open. For police purposes, the State was divided into 6 thanas or police circles. In 1881-82, the regular police force numbered 300 officers and men. These figures show 1 policeman to every 4.3 sq. miles of the area, or to every 2,008 persons in the population. The system of village watch had been gradually introduced, and there were at the end of the 19th Century, 1,701 *chaukidars*. In 1874, 2,674 criminal cases were instituted, in which 2,614 persons were brought to trial, of whom 1,748, or 66 per cent were convicted, showing 1 person convicted of an offence to every 304 of the population. Out of property to the value of £770 reported to be stolen, £209, or 27 per cent, was recovered. There was one jail at Koch Bihar town. In 1874, the aggregate number of prisoners was 1,324, of whom 34 were females. The net profit from jail manufactures amounted to £478. The administration of Koch Bihar State was carried on by the Maharaja, assisted by a Council, consisting of three members, namely, the Superintendent of the State, the *Dewan* or Chief Revenue Officer and the Civil Judge. The Maharaja was the President of the Council, and in his absence the Superintendent of the State acted as Vice-President. The Superintendent of the State supervised, directed and controlled the administration of criminal justice, and the police, military, jail, public works, education and audit departments. He was also the Sessions Judge, hearing all criminal appeals which ordinarily lay to Session Judges in British districts.¹

THE EVOLUTION
OF CRIMINAL AD-
MINISTRATION

The people of Koch Bihar are generally peace-loving. In Table A is given the figures of cognizable and non-cognizable offences reported for selected years from 1876-77 to 1959. It will be seen that though from 1876 to 1959 the population had more than doubled itself there has been no appreciable increase in the number of cognizable offences. The number of non-cognizable offences also remained almost the same till 1952. After 1952 the number of non-cognizable offences had increased. This is partly due to introduction of several laws which were not in force in the erstwhile State of Koch Bihar and partly due to improvement in communications which enabled the people to approach the courts with comparative ease. Also offences of petty and trivial nature which were previously settled in the villages now find their way to the courts. As regards cognizable offences the number was 1,644 in 1876-77. The lowest figure was 1,350 in 1923-24. The highest figure was 2,214 in 1950.

Number of
offences

¹W. W. Hunter—*The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. viii, *Karens to Madnagarh*, Second Edition, London, 1886, pp. 325-27.

The next group of high figures were 1,704 in 1927-28, 1,730 in 1928-29, and 1,794 in 1929-30 and also 1,834 in 1951. The high figures from 1927 to 1930 were due to the new settlement of land, revenue and rent brought about at this time. This is common in all places when people having real or imagined grievances against the decisions of the Settlement Officers have recourse to paddy cutting theft cases as a preliminary to further litigation. The high figures of 1950 and 1951 were due to large scale migration of population across the Indo-East Pakistan border at this time and a general unsettled condition of the country. Barring these years the number of crimes, both cognizable and non-cognizable, have remained almost constant for over 80 years.

TABLE A¹
CRIMINAL OFFENCES REPORTED

Year	Number of cognizable offences	Number of non- cognizable offences	Total
1876-77	1,644	1,465	3,109
1901-02	1,366	1,182	2,548
1902-03	1,481	1,306	2,787
1903-04	1,490	1,474	2,964
1904-05	1,609	1,517	3,126
1921-22	1,530	1,110	2,640
1922-23	1,446	1,106	2,552
1923-24	1,350	1,018	2,368
1927-28	1,704	1,136	2,840
1928-29	1,730	1,172	2,902
1929-30	1,794	1,180	2,974
1933-34	1,454	841	2,295
1934-35	1,494	835	2,329
1935-36	1,627	946	2,573
1950	2,274	1,024	3,298
1951	1,834	897	2,731
1952	1,658	1,229	2,887
1957	1,327	2,566	3,893
1959	1,576	3,156	4,732

¹Figures from 1951 onward are taken from West Bengal District Census Handbook, 1961, Cooch Behar, 1966, p.320.

Though the people are generally peaceful, certain heinous crime like dacoity, robbery, murder and culpable homicide did occur in this district from olden times. Most of the murders had their origin in domestic intrigue or connubial infidelity and were hardly ever for gain. Lives were rarely lost in disputes over land or other property in this district. The Deputy Commissioner of Koch Bihar in the Annual Administration Report of 1872-73 writes: "The population is not much tempted to crime by want. In some places tigers and leopards hinder thieves from roaming about after dark, and in this respect act more efficiently than any Chaukidar. On the other hand the absence of Zamindars, who settle many petty cases in the Zillas...tend to increase the number of criminal cases brought to light."

The earliest record available of dacoities in any one year is for 1865-66, when there were 12 dacoities. In 1867-68 there were 16 and in the following year 14. In 1869-70 there were seven cases of dacoity and in 1870-71 five cases. In the famine year 1874-75 the number was 11 which seems to indicate that the people in general were not moved to crime by want. The peculiar geographical situation of Koch Bihar makes the district a convenient place for the offence of dacoity. It has been stated in Chapter I that there were enclaves within Koch Bihar which belonged to the district of Rangpur and that there were also enclaves of Koch Bihar within the districts of Rangpur and Jalpaiguri. It was thus easy for dacoits of Rangpur and Jalpaiguri to commit offences in Koch Bihar and escape into these enclaves and avoid quick apprehension. Similarly, these enclaves afforded easy shelter for persons of Koch Bihar who after committing the crime could escape to these enclaves. Actually, during the Sanvasi disturbances the enclaves of Koch Bihar in Rangpur district and the Baikunthapur territory of the Raikats offered them shelter and became their dens. The principal reason for the Government of the East India Company to attempt reorganization of the Police and the Criminal Courts in Koch Bihar during the reign of Harendra Narayan (described in Chapter X) was to prevent the offences of dacoity being committed by stray bands of the Sanvasis still at large within the district of Rangpur. Another offence which was rather common was the offence of kidnapping. In most of the cases this related to a run-away wife. This was so frequent in early days that the Cooch Behar State Government enacted a special law to empower the *Foujdari Ahilkar* to adopt a summary procedure for the apprehension of the run-away wife and her paramour and restoration of the wife to the husband.

Heinous crimes are, however, increasing since 1951. In 1951 there were 117 dacoities. This probably was due to the disturbed condition of the district due to large migrations across the border. The number fell to 47 in 1952, 27 in 1953 and 20 in 1959. In 1970 and 1971 the number of dacoities increased to 113 and 114 respectively. The number of murders were 6 in 1951, 11 in both the years 1952 and 1953.

but it rose to 18 in 1969, 26 in 1970 and 34 in 1971. The number of riotings were 67 in 1951, 84 and 74 in 1952 and 1953, but it rose to 453 in 1969 and to 583 in 1970. There was slight diminution in the number of rioting in 1971 which was 327 that year. These increases tend to show that the one-time primitive peace-loving community of Koch Bihar is gradually changing its character.

Police

The history of the development in the police force has been given in Chapter IX. The present strength of regular police in the district is as follows. The district police force is under a Superintendent of Police assisted by one Additional Superintendent and two Deputy Superintendents. There are two Police Circles each under one Inspector, one located at Koch Bihar and the other at Matabhanga. In addition, there is one Inspector for Koch Bihar Court and one each for the District Intelligence Branch, the District Enforcement Branch and Armed Police. The following table gives the distribution of the Sub-Inspectors, Assistant Sub-Inspectors, Head Constables, Constables, *Dafadars* and *Chaukidars*.

	S. I.	A. S. I.	H. C.	Naik	Constables	Dafadars	Chaukidars
Koch Bihar	7	6			68		304
Tufanganj	3	3			14		216
Dinhata	4	3			14	28	258
Sitai	2	1			8	5	70
Matabhanga	4	4			14		306
Sitalkuchi	2	1			10		130
Mekhliganj	2	2			10		82
Haldibari	2	1			10		71
Court	6	7			28		
D. I. B.	3	6			24		
D. E. B.	4	1			13		
Reserve	4				53		
Armed Police	3		30	49	548		
Miscellaneous	4	25			22		

Anti-corruption work in West Bengal is under a centralized organization under the Vigilance Commissioner. There is no prohibition in the State.

There is a District Jail at Koch Bihar and four sub-jails at Tufanganj, Dinhata, Matabhanga and Mekhliganj. The Koch Bihar District Jail is under a whole time Superintendent, while the sub-jails are under the Subdivisional Officers who act as ex-officio Superintendents of the sub-jails. The

sub-jails are merely judicial lock-ups and no sentence in excess of one month's imprisonment is executed in the sub-jails. Recreational facilities such as cinema shows, sports and musical and *yatra* performances are arranged. There is a Board of unofficial visitors for the district and the sub-jails.

Juvenile delinquents and political prisoners are not generally kept in the Koch Bihar jail but transferred elsewhere.

The crafts taught in the Koch Bihar jail include carpentry, making of jute twines, weaving, mat-making and works in bamboo.

A history of the evolution of the Criminal and Civil courts in Koch Bihar has been given in Chapter IX. Since 1950, that is, after the merger of Koch Bihar with West Bengal the following Criminal Courts are functioning in the district:

Courts :
Criminal
Courts of
Magistrates

- (a) Sadar Subdivisional Magistrate's Court with two subordinate courts.
- (b) Court of the Subdivisional Magistrate of Tufanganj.
- (c) Court of the Subdivisional Magistrate of Matabhanga.
- (d) Court of the Subdivisional Magistrate of Dinhata.
- (e) Court of the Subdivisional Magistrate of Mekhliganj.

There is one subordinate court at Matabhanga, Dinhata and Mekhliganj.

There was a Civil and Sessions Judge at Koch Bihar in 1950 and the Subdivisional Officers acted as Munsifs in addition to being Magistrates. From January 16, 1950 a District and Sessions Judge from West Bengal Cadre was posted at Koch Bihar. The following Courts were set up from 1951:

Civil and
Sessions Courts

- (1) One temporary Court of a Subordinate Judge for the district stationed at Koch Bihar.
- (2) One permanent Munsif's Court at Koch Bihar to be presided over by the Subordinate Judge.
- (3) One temporary Munsif's Court at Tufanganj to be presided over by the Subordinate Judge on circuit.
- (4) One permanent Munsif's Court at Matabhanga with a Munsif stationed there.
- (5) One permanent Munsif's Court at Mekhliganj to be presided over by the Munsif of Matabhanga on circuit.
- (6) One permanent Munsif's Court at Dinhata to be presided over by the Munsif of Matabhanga on circuit.

The District Judge, who is also the Sessions Judge for the district, functions as the Tribunal for the purpose of section 41 of the West Bengal Estates Acquisition Act and

160

KOCH BIHAR

as Special Judge for the purpose of sections 5A and 20 of the said Act in addition to his usual duties as District Judge. He is also the Competent Authority for the purpose of Rehabilitation of Displaced Persons and Eviction of Persons in Unauthorised Occupation of Land Act and the Authority under section 20 of the Minimum Wages Act in respect of the district for the purpose of hearing and deciding claims under the Act.

The Subordinate Judge is also the Assistant Sessions Judge of the district and exercises Small Cause Court powers up to the value of Rs. 750 within the local limits of the Sadar and Tufanganj Munsifis and functions as an Appellate Authority under section 19(1) of the West Bengal Land Reforms Act, 1955, within the limits of the said two Munsifis in addition to his usual duties as Subordinate Judge.

The Munsif of Matabhanga who also presides over the Courts at Dinhata and Mekhliganj is not vested with Small Cause Court powers. He functions as an Appellate Authority under section 19(1) of the West Bengal Land Reforms Act, 1955 within the limits of the said three Munsifis in addition to his duties as Munsif.

The Sessions Judge of Koch Bihar also presides over the Special Court of Koch Bihar created under the West Bengal Criminal Amendment (Special Court) Act, 1949. The Sessions Judge hears appeals, revision cases, motions, Criminal Miscellaneous cases arising out of orders and decisions of the Magistrates in the district. The Assistant Sessions Judge hears the appeals of persons convicted on trial by Second and Third class Magistrates.

The cases handled in the court of the District Judge are Original Suits, viz., Title Suits including contested Letters of Administration cases, Matrimonial Suits and their execution cases, Guardianship cases, Miscellaneous Judicial cases, Miscellaneous Non-Judicial cases, Title Appeals, Money Appeals, Rent Appeals, Miscellaneous Appeals and Special Miscellaneous Appeals.

The cases handled in the Court of the Subordinate Judge are Original Suits, viz., Title Suits, Matrimonial Suits, Money Suits and Rent Suits of value exceeding Rs. 2,000, Small Cause Court Suits of value up to Rs. 750 in respect of the Sadar Munsifi and their execution cases, Miscellaneous Judicial cases arising out of these suits and cases, Title Appeals, Rent Appeals, Money Appeals and Miscellaneous Appeals arising out of the decisions of the Munsif except where he himself acts as the Munsif in which case the Appeals are heard by the District Judge.

The cases handled in the Court of the Munsifs are Original Suits, viz., Title Suits, Matrimonial Suits, Money Suits, Rent Suits up to the value of Rs. 2,000 and their execution cases, Miscellaneous Judicial cases arising out of these suits and cases and Appeals under section 19(1) of the West Bengal Land Reforms Act, 1955.

The work of the *Panchayati adalat* has not yet started in the district. *Panchayati Adalats*

Previous to the merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal Bar there were no Mukhtears as the Cooch Behar State Government did not allow Mukhtears to practise in the Courts. After the merger some Mukhtears have been enrolled. There is a Bar Association of the Pleaders at Koch Bihar, Dinhata, Tufanganj, Matabhanga and Mekhliganj.

Petitioners adjudged as Paupers are allowed to file suits without the prepayment of Court Fees (other than fees payable for the service of processes). Undefended persons charged with murder are defended at State cost. *State assistance to litigants*

CHAPTER XII

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

AGRICULTURE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGRICULTURE

Agriculture

The officer of the Agriculture Department in charge of the district is the District Agricultural Officer who co-ordinates the activities of the Agriculture Department in the district, details of which have appeared in Chapter IV. There is an Agronomist holding the rank of Additional District Agricultural Officer. He gives expert opinion on the types of soil and the crops suitable for such soil and also on manuring. Both these officers are stationed at Koch Bihar. There is a District Agricultural Marketing Officer posted at Koch Bihar who collects marketing information and advises the cooperative marketing organizations. A Subdivisional Agricultural Marketing Officer is stationed at Dinhata.

Agricultural Marketing

Agricultural Engineering

There is an Assistant Engineer for Agri-irrigation stationed at Koch Bihar. He supervises and executes the minor irrigation projects in the district.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND VETERI- NARY SERVICES

The principal officer of the Animal Husbandry Department stationed in the district is the District Live Stock Officer posted at Koch Bihar. The District Veterinary Officer is in charge of the district except the Mekhliganj subdivision which is tagged to Jalpaiguri district. There is a Veterinary Hospital at Koch Bihar in charge of a Veterinary Inspector and there is a Veterinary Assistant Surgeon attending to the hospital cases. There is no Mobile Unit in the district and the Stationary Veterinary Assistant Surgeon at Tufanganj attends to the dispensary cases there. Besides two hospitals at Koch Bihar and Tufanganj there are dispensaries at Koch Bihar, Dinhata, Matabhanga, Tufanganj and Sitai.

COOPERATION

The Assistant Registrar of Cooperative Societies of the district is stationed at Koch Bihar. There is also a District Auditor, Cooperative Societies, stationed at Koch Bihar. Cooperative activities in the district started after the merger of Koch Bihar in West Bengal. Up till now not much headway has been made in this sector but several marketing and credit societies have been set up. Mention may be made of the Koch Bihar Central Cooperative Bank Ltd., Koch Bihar, with a branch at Matabhanga and the Tufanganj Large Sized Cooperative Marketing Society Ltd.

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRIES

Industrial Training Institute

The Cooch Behar State Press which was taken over by the West Bengal Government is run as a West Bengal State Press and the Superintendent of this Press is an officer of the Commerce Branch of the Commerce and Industries Department in the district. Under the Industries Branch there is an Industrial Training Institute at Koch Bihar under a Principal. The Cooch Behar State

Government had started an Artisan School in 1869 to impart technical education to the people of Koch Bihar in carpentry, blacksmithy, weaving, pottery, masonry and in the braziers' art. Col. Haughton, the Commissioner of Cooch Behar held high hopes of this institution. But the people were not enthused and gradually the institution shrunk owing to lack of pupils. In later years it was maintained as a production centre in carpentry and smithy to which a machine shop was later added. The weaving section gradually degenerated into a tailoring shop. In 1953 the Government of West Bengal took up the institution and converted it into an Industrial School and workshop. There were five trades in this School; three for girls, namely, weaving, tailoring and silk-waste spinning and the two trades for the boys were general mechanics training and motor mechanics training. In November 1959 this school was taken up by the Vocational Training Wing of the Industries Directorate and was converted into an Industrial Training Institute. The trades of the girls remained as before while eight trades for boys were introduced, viz., Draughtsman (Mechanical), Surveyor, Fitter, Turner, Welder, Motor Mechanic, Blacksmith, and Carpenter.

The District Industrial Officer, Koch Bihar, represents the Department of Cottage and Small-Scale Industries in the district. His function is to collect industrial statistics and make survey of industrial possibilities. He also inquires into applications under the scheme for State Aid to Industries.

COTTAGE AND SMALL-SCALE INDUSTRIES

The District Inspector of Schools together with the Assistant Inspector and Sub-Inspectors form the Inspectorate in the district to look after Secondary and Primary Education. Other Officers of the Education Department are the Principal, Victoria College; the Head Master, Jenkins School; the Principal, Koch Bihar Tol; the Head Mistress, Sunity Academy; the Head Master, Sadar M. E. School; the District Social Education Officer and the District Officer of Physical Education and Youth Welfare. The 13th Bengal Battalion of the National Cadet Corps is located at Koch Bihar.

EDUCATION

The Superintendent of Excise, Koch Bihar, is in charge of the Excise administration in Koch Bihar under the supervision of the Deputy Commissioner. He is assisted by Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors.

EXCISE

The Agricultural Income-Tax Officer, Koch Bihar Range and the Commercial Tax Officer, Koch Bihar Charge are stationed at Koch Bihar. There is also an Assistant Superintendent of Agricultural Statistics Branch of the Finance Department stationed at Koch Bihar.

FINANCE

The District Fishery Officer is stationed at Koch Bihar. His duty is to promote pisciculture and to organize fishermen's cooperative societies. There are quite a number of fisheries in the district in the inland lagoons. Some fishermen's cooperative societies have been organized and the fisheries have been leased out to them.

FISHERY

**FOOD AND
SUPPLIES**

There is no statutory rationed area in Koch Bihar. There is an Assistant District Controller of Food and Supplies stationed at Koch Bihar to look after the distribution of cereals under modified rationing. He also looks after distribution of other essential articles such as kerosene and baby food. There is also a Subdivisional Controller of Food and Supplies stationed at Koch Bihar.

**INFORMATION
AND PUBLIC
RELATIONS**

There is a District Information and Public Relations Officer at Koch Bihar and under him are two Subdivisional Information and Public Relations Officers at Matabhanga and Mekhliganj.

**IRRIGATION AND
WATERWAYS**

The Executive Engineer, Koch Bihar Division, is stationed at Koch Bihar and under him are two subdivisions, viz., the Koch Bihar Irrigation Subdivision and the Koch Bihar Investigation Subdivision each under an Assistant Engineer. Though there is not much scope of river irrigation in the district, the turbulent rivers, the Torsa and the Tista, keep them fully engaged.

PANCHAYAT

The Panchayat Department has two officers in the district, viz., the Regional Assistant Director of Panchayats and the District Panchayat Officer.

PUBLIC WORKS

The Executive Engineer, Koch Bihar Division, is stationed at Koch Bihar and under him are three subdivisions, each under an Assistant Engineer, viz., the Koch Bihar Subdivision I, the Koch Bihar Subdivision II and the Matabhanga Subdivision.

Roads Branch

The Executive Engineer, Construction Division, is stationed at Koch Bihar. Under him is the Koch Bihar Construction Subdivision in charge of an Assistant Engineer.

**Special Roads
Branch**

An Assistant Engineer of the Special Roads Branch is stationed at Koch Bihar in charge of the Koch Bihar Subdivision which is under the Executive Engineer, North Bengal Division I, with headquarters at Kurseong.

**REFUGEE
REHABILITATION**

The district had at one time quite a serious problem in rehabilitating a large number of migrant people from erstwhile East Pakistan. The problem has now somewhat eased. There is a Relief Officer of the Refugee Rehabilitation Department posted at Koch Bihar.

REGISTRATION

The District Magistrate is the District Registrar but immediate charge of the office is with the District Sub-Registrar. Under the District Sub-Registrar there are six Sub-offices, viz., the Sadar Joint Sub-Registry Office at Koch Bihar, the Dinhata Sub-Registry Office at Dinhata, the Tufanganj Sub-Registry Office at Tufanganj, the Mekhliganj Sub-Registry Office at Mekhliganj, the Matabhanga Sub-Registry Office at Matabhanga, and the Joint Sub-Registry Office of Mekhliganj at Haldibari. The Circle Officer (now B.D.O.) of Haldibari is the ex-officio Joint Sub-Registrar of Haldibari. Other offices are held by departmental Sub-Registrars. The Sub-Registrars also act as Marriage

Officers under the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955; besides, the District Sub-Registrar is the ex-officio Marriage Officer under the Special Marriage Act of 1954.

The Assistant Collector of Central Excise is stationed at Koch Bihar and under him there are three Superintendents of Central Excise at Koch Bihar, Dinhata and Matabhanga. There are two Deputy Superintendents of Central Excise, one each at Koch Bihar and Matabhanga.

OFFICE UNDER
THE CENTRAL
GOVERNMENT
Central Excise

There is an Income-Tax Officer posted at Koch Bihar.

Income-Tax

The Superintendent of Land Customs is posted at Koch Bihar.

Land Customs

There is a research station for carrying on research for the utilization of tobacco produced in the district as wrappers for cheroots and also for making tobacco more suitable for hookahs.

Food and
Agriculture

CHAPTER XIII

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

No details are available of the kind of rural administration prior to 1864. There was, however, an institution known as *dewanias*. These *dewanias* were large *jotedars* residing on their farms; and the neighbouring areas contained their tenants. There had been no survey or settlement of the country and the tenants were completely under the thumb of the *jotedars* or *dewanias*. These *dewanias* reigned as the civil heads of the community and arbitrated in all disputes amongst their tenants and dependants. Much depended upon the personal character and temperament of the individual *dewanias*, for good or for evil he reigned supreme and the only redress any one had against his vagaries was to appeal to the *Raj Sabha*. After the settlement operations, the power of the *dewanias* was to a great extent reduced. People then had a recorded right in their land which the State acknowledged. Agriculture improved and by and large the condition of the people improved. With increasing opulence the people began to feel the necessity of some organization for their security. In 1876 some petitions were sent to the Deputy Commissioner for organizing a village *Chaukidari* system on the pattern obtaining in Rangpur and Jalpaiguri. The inhabitants of the *taluks* volunteered to raise subscription for the pay of the *Chaukidars* and the State was requested to give them a badge and invest them with police functions. The prayer was granted and the scheme became popular till in 1882-83 there were 1,576 *Chaukidars* in the State. As it became increasingly difficult to pay this large body of men regularly by raising subscriptions the Cooch Behar Village *Chaukidari* Act was passed in 1893-94 on the model of the Bengal Act of the same name of 1891. The Collecting member of the *Panchayat* was appointed by the State and a *Chaukidari* rate in terms of the Act was levied on the residents of the *Panchayat* area by the Collecting *Panchayat* and deposited with the Subdivisional Officer. The Subdivisional Officer paid the salaries of the *Chaukidars* at quarterly pay parades at the *thanas*. This was the only partially self-governing organization in existence in Koch Bihar in the rural areas till they were replaced by the creation of Gram and Anchal *Panchayats* under the West Bengal *Panchayat* Act of 1957.

In 1885 the Cooch Behar Town Committee Act was passed and a nominated committee of ten was created under the Act to function as a municipality for the town of Koch Bihar. The *Faujdar* *Ahlikar* was to be the Chairman. Later by an amendment of the Act in 1897 the Superintendent of the State was made the ex-officio Chairman. Municipal functions performed by the Town Committee included maintenance of some of the roads made over to the Town Committee, street lighting, conservancy and

drainage and maintenance of the Town *Chaukidari* force. The finance was obtained partly by taxation of properties situated in the town and partly by a State grant. In 1897, the Town Committee Act was extended to the Subdivisional towns of Dinhata and Matabhanga and to the *bunder* at Haldibari. In 1931, the Act was extended to the Subdivisional town of Mekhliganj. In 1901-02, the Town Committees were invested with the power of recording births and deaths and for Registration of carts plying within the Town Committee area and to levy a tax on cartloads of tobacco and jute coming into the Town Committee area. From 1903-04 the Town Committees were authorized to keep cattle pounds.

The following statement will show the receipts and expenditure of each of the above Town Committees during the year 1903-04:

	INCOME			
	Cooch Behar Rs. As. P.	Dinhata Rs. As. P.	Matabhanga Rs. As. P.	Haldibari Rs. As. P.
Balance of previous year	0,221 10 7	819 4 0	1,019 12 4	230 11 3
State grant	17,210 0 0	1,148 0 0	1,500 0 0	1,500 0 0
Pound fund	3,600 0 0	200 0 0	500 0 0	
Taxes	9,141 8 9	550 3 0	681 5 0	974 13 0
Miscellaneous	2,311 13 6	2,180 9 5	384 5 3	754 14 6
State grant for Narendra Narayan Park	600 0 0			
Total	33,083 0 10	4,898 1 2	4,085 6 7	3,460 6 9
	EXPENDITURE			
	Cooch Behar Rs. As. P.	Dinhata Rs. As. P.	Matabhanga Rs. As. P.	Haldibari Rs. As. P.
Office establishment	2,286 1 0	381 0 3	290 11 0	290 15 0
Lighting charges	3,104 11 0	294 3 6	173 3 6	393 12 0
Narendra Narayan Park	2,030 1 8			
Town improvement	12,209 10 2	2,080 11 6	1,126 4 9	592 3 8
Conservancy	6,724 15 3	142 9 6	486 9 6	257 5 0
Chaukidari establishment	2,388 0 0	488 14 6	417 1 9	424 14 3
Miscellaneous	1,483 9 5	341 5 9	82 12 6	319 2 9
Total	30,237 0 6	4,278 13 0	2,576 11 0	2,227 4 8

The foregoing statements would show that the Town Committees mainly depended on the State grants for the functions. While the Koch Bihar Town Committee could raise a sum of little more than half the amount of the State grant, the smaller Town Committees mainly depended on the State grants for their existence.

In 1944 the Cooch Behar Municipal Act was passed and the Town Committee of Koch Bihar was converted into a Municipality. The previous functions of the Town

Committee remained and further functions were added like sanctioning of building plans, powers to demolish dangerous buildings, action for food adulteration, etc. The only Municipality in Koch Bihar even now is the Koch Bihar Municipality. The Town Committees of Dinhata, Matabhanga, Mekhliganj and Haldibari are still functioning as before. A brief account of Koch Bihar Municipality is given at the end of this chapter.

Panchayati
Institutions

The West Bengal Panchayat Act of 1957 was extended to the districts in various stages from 7 June 1958 to 8 June 1960. The whole district is now covered by Gram and Anchal Panchayats. The old Chaukidari Panchayats under the Cooch Behar Village Chaukidari Act of 1893 have been abolished and replaced by Gram and Anchal Panchayats. As the smallest territorial unit a Gram Panchayat, normally, has for its jurisdiction a revenue *mauza* with an approximate population of 1,000. The number of its members varies from 9 to 15 who usually hold office for four years. They elect one amongst them as the Adhyaksha and another as the Upadhyaksha. For every Gram Panchayat, there is a Gram Panchayat Fund to which are credited the sum or sums assigned to it under the provisions of the Act as also any gifts or contributions received and income derived from endowments and trusts made in favour of it.

The table below shows the number of Gram Panchayats as they existed in 1968-69 as also their combined receipts and disbursements for the same year.

Name of Block	Number of Gram Panchayats	Total receipts Rs.	Total disbursements Rs.
Koch Bihar I	87	31,100.00	27,050.47
Koch Bihar II	72	17,782.06	18,702.80
Dinhata I	54	15,157.21	9,440.25
Dinhata II	54	13,897.22	10,685.15
Sitai	21	8,347.01	2,565.56
Tufanganj	88	26,441.95	11,807.85
Mekhliganj	45	45,149.92	30,763.52
Haldibari	24	13,420.61	11,967.16
Sitalkuchi	41	26,906.73	18,176.58
Matabhanga I	54	17,134.30	11,592.48
Matabhanga II	44	15,325.18	12,432.30
	582	2,30,662.27	1,68,184.62

An Anchal Panchayat comprises some contiguous Gram Panchayats or Gram Sabhas. Normally, eight to ten contiguous Gram Panchayats with a total population of about 10,000 constitute an Anchal Panchayat. The area of the Anchal Panchayat is roughly that of the former Union Board. An Anchal Panchayat consists of members elected by its constituting Gram Panchayats on the basis of one member for every 250 members of a Gram Sabha. The President of the Anchal Panchayat is called the Pradhan and the Vice-President Upa-Pradhan.

The Pradhan and the Upa-Pradhan usually hold office for 4 years. There is besides a salaried secretary for attending to the day-to-day works of the organization. The functions of the Anchal Panchayat are assessment and collection of taxes, maintenance and control of *dafadars* and *chaukidars* and the proper constitution and administration of the Nyaya Panchayats. The functions of a Gram Panchayat, on the other hand, are to provide for sanitation, conservancy and drainage, curative and preventive measures, maintenance, repair and construction of roads, organizing voluntary labour for community work and other delegated and discretionary duties.

The table below shows the blockwise number of Anchal Panchayats and their combined receipts and disbursements figures for 1968-69.

Name of Block	Number of Anchal Pancha- yats	Total Receipts Rs.	Total disbursements Rs.
Koch Bihar I	14	1,40,557.30	1,30,025.29
Koch Bihar II	13	1,51,329.43	1,30,799.70
Dinhata I	10	1,26,222.73	1,03,885.58
Dinhata II	9	94,879.70	70,206.34
Sitai	4	54,430.43	37,537.98
Tufanganj	15	1,71,077.68	1,40,660.50
Mekhliganj	8	88,387.77	59,142.89
Haldibari	6	56,659.35	47,862.81
Sitalkuchi	8	1,28,913.10	95,842.71
Matabhanga I	9	1,10,049.20	98,762.37
Matabhanga II	9	1,21,403.36	1,13,933.10

Anchalik
Parishad

There are 11 Anchalik Parishads set up under the West Bengal Zilla Parishads Act, corresponding to the 11 blocks in the district. The Anchalik Parishad consists of the Pradhans within the Block, one Adhyaksha from each Anchal Panchayat, M.Ps. and M.L.As. elected from a constituency comprising the Block or a part thereof and the M.L.Cs. (since abolished) having a place of residence in the Block, two women and two persons belonging to a backward community. Each Anchalik Parishad has a President and a Vice-President elected by the members from among themselves for a period of 4 years. The Block Development Officer is ex-officio Chief Executive Officer of the Anchalik Parishad while the Parishad works through certain standing committees and has a fund to which are credited contributions, grants or loans made by the Central or the State Government or the Zilla Parishad and all receipts on account of tolls, rates and fees levied by it. The Anchalik Parishad has the power to implement schemes relating to agriculture, livestock, cottage industry, cooperation, water supply, irrigation, public health, etc.

Zilla Parishad

The Koch Bihar Zilla Parishad started functioning in 1964 but it now stands superseded.

Koch Bihar
Municipality

When the Koch Bihar Municipality (or Town Committee) was established in 1885, arrangements were made for conservancy and removal of refuse. The large tanks within the town, namely, the Sagardighi, the Jheeldighi, the Laldighi, the Bairagidighi and the bazar tank were all improved and converted into reserved tanks for the supply of drinking water. Later, Koch Bihar established its own waterworks in the present century. The drains were well-swept and trenching was done under constant supervision. Koch Bihar under the Maharaja had a system of watering of streets not only in the headquarters town but also in the important towns of Dinhata and Tufanganj. The Koch Bihar town is picturesquely laid out by means of straight and broad roads which intersect each other generally at right angles. Avenues of *Sissoo*, *Kadam*, *Mango* and *Talli* trees and other evergreens border the high roads. The receipts of the Municipality increased from Rs. 2.45 lakhs in 1951-52 to Rs. 4.24 lakhs in 1960-61. Expenditure increased from Rs. 2.03 lakhs to Rs. 4.04 lakhs in the same period.

In 1972-73, the Koch Bihar Municipality had 15 members. The demand and collection of rates can be stated as follows:

	Demand	Collection
	Rs.	Rs.
Arrear	6,14,334	1,97,262
Current	3,20,030	1,03,344
Total	9,34,364	3,00,606

The municipality had a population of 53,734 in 1971. Its total mileage of road is: metalled, 32.49 and unmetalled, 10.07 miles.

The municipality maintained one refuse lorry and two tractors for removal of refuse and night-soil. The water-works are maintained by the Public Health Engineering Department of the Government of West Bengal. There are 170 tube-wells in the municipal area. The total length of *pucca* drains is about 4 miles and that of *kutchha* drains about 60 miles. There are two slaughter houses, one of the Hindus and the other of the Muslims. The public works executed include the construction and repair of wooden culverts and also the repair of roads and embankments. The total expenditure incurred in 1972-73 on public works was Rs. 48,511.

CHAPTER XIV

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

The kings of Koch Bihar in different times maintained the traditions of Hindu monarchy of granting patronage to learning and letters. The earliest of such tradition dates back to the 14th century when Durlabhanarayan was the king of Koch Bihar. No real history of this king is available but the manuscript of a book written by Hema Saraswati states that he was a king of Kamatapur which was the residence of the writer. Hema Saraswati wrote two books, viz. *Narasimha Purana* and *Hara-Gouri Samvada*.¹ Harihar Vipra and Kaviratna Saraswati were two other poets of the court of Durlabhanarayan. Harihar Vipra translated the *Asvamedha Parvan* of the *Mahabharata* and Kaviratna Saraswati translated the *Drona Parvan* of the same epic.²

During the reign of Visva Simha (1497-1533) two poets of his court Mankar and Durgabar, wrote two books on *Manasa-mangal*. Mankar in his *Manasa-mangal* uses the name MARAIYA for Manasa. Marai means a scourge of death or epidemic. It has been mentioned in Chapter III that the worship of Bishahari (Manasa) is rather largely practised in Koch Bihar, though there are very few snake-bite deaths. The goddess is also propitiated to stave off epidemics and calamities. Mankar's view of Manasa bears this out and gives the clue to the different attitude to this goddess in Koch Bihar. About this time a poet Pitambar wrote a *Kavya* in verse called *Nala-Damayanti-Kakini*. He gives the date of the composition as 1466 Saka corresponding to A.D. 1544 and states that he wrote the book at the request of Samar Simha, son of Visva Simha. By 1544 Visva Simha was probably dead. He had many wives and Samar Simha might have been a son by one of his wives. Pitambar was thus not a poet attached to the Court but received patronage from the prince.

During the reign of Naranarayan (1533-1587) a poet of the court, Ram Saraswati translated the whole of the *Mahabharata*. The manuscript of the *Bhishma Parvan* of the same is still preserved in the Koch Bihar State Library. Ananta Kandali was another poet who wrote a *Kavya*, *Savitri Upakhyaṇa*. Naranarayan brought two famous Sanskrit scholars from Gauḍa, one of whom compiled a Sanskrit grammar named *Ratnamala*, comparable to *Panini* and *Mugdhabodha*. Another contemporary was Bikramananda Tarkalamkar. During the reign of Lakshminarayan (1587-1627), Vipra Visarad is said to have translated the

whole of the *Mahabharata*. Only the *Birat Parvan* is now extant. The date of writing of the *Birat Parvan* is given in chronogram as 1534 Saka (A.D. 1612). During the reign of Biranarayan (1627-1631), the court poet Kavi Sekhar translated the *Birat Parvan* of the *Mahabharata*. The manuscript is in existence in the Koch Bihar State Library. The poet writes that he composed it at the bidding of Biranarayan who was like Rama, son of Dasaratha and the composition was completed on Thursday the fifth day of the lunar cycle in the month of Magh. During the reign of Prannarayan (1632-1665), Srinath Brahman translated *Adi Parvan* and *Drona Parvan* of the *Mahabharata*. He also wrote a *kavya*, *Draupadir Svayambhara*. The manuscripts of the *Adi Parvan* and the *Drona Parvan* are preserved in the Koch Bihar State Library. Maharaja Harendranarayan (1783-1839) was himself a scholar in Sanskrit and Persian and was a writer and poet of repute. During his reign his court attracted quite a large number of scholars and poets. Harendranarayan himself translated *Aishik Parvan*, *Sabha Parvan*, *Salya Parvan* and *Santi Parvan* of the *Mahabharata*. Dwija Raghuram, a poet of the court of Harendranarayan, translated *Bhishma Parvan*, *Adi Parvan* and *Santi Parvan*. Under orders of Harendranarayan, five poets, Balaram, Ramnath, Paramananda, Raghuram and Madhavananda together translated the *Vana Parvan* of the *Mahabharata*. Dwija Kirtichandra translated the *Asramik Parvan*. Harendranarayan himself translated the *Sundara Kanda* of the *Ramayana*. The *Kiskindhya Kanda* was translated by Dwija Raghuram, Devinandan and Srinath Dwija; the *Uttara Kanda* was translated by Dwija Raghuram, Saradananda and Satananda. Dwija Raghuram composed the *Ayodhya Kanda*. Brajasundar composed the *Lanka Kanda* and Dwija Rudradev wrote the *Aranya Kanda*. Mahinath, who flourished during the reigns of Harendranarayan and Sivendranarayan made a free translation of *Markandeya Chandi*. Madhava, a court poet of Harendranarayan translated the *Vishnu Purana*; Saradananda, another poet translated *Kashi Khanda* of the *Brahma-vaivarta-Purana*. Dwija Jagannath translated portions of the *Bhagabata Purana* and Maniram Das translated portions of the *Garuda Purana*.

Amongst the Maharajas of Koch Bihar of earlier times, Maharaja Naranarayan is said to have received formal education at Varanasi. One outstanding work of his reign is the writing of Sanskrit grammar by the name of *Prayoga-Ratnamala* by Purusottam Vidyavagisa. It is said that the consort of the Maharaja encouraged the Pandit to write the grammar. This grammar has made its place in the grammatical literature of India.

The centres of learning in early times appear to have been the Royal court and its surroundings. The court was in early times located at Kamtapur and more than one poet, described before, mention Kamtapur as their residence. In later times when the court shifted to sites near the present Koch Bihar, Khagribari became a seat of learning. There

¹A late copy of the book in manuscript lies in the possession of Dr. Ajay Kumar Chakravarti of Dhubri.

²The languages of these works quoted by Dr. Ajay Kumar Chakravarti in his recent book *Literature in Kamata-Kochbihar Raj Darbar* is rather modern. Probably the language was modernized by successive copying.

were several *tols* located there and these were run on royal patronage. There are, however, no records as to the number of pupils taught in these *tols*. Apart from the writing of the *Prayoga-Ratnamala* grammar, no other outstanding work seems to have emerged from these institutions.

Beginning of
modern and
western
education

Before the time of Maharaja Narendranarayan, the patronage of education given by the Koch Bihar court only encouraged Sanskrit learning while Persian was taught in the royal family for State purposes. Education was thus kept confined within the bounds of an aristocracy in and around the court. What was the state of popular education cannot be ascertained and there are no records to show that the State ever encouraged it. In 1857, a vernacular school was started in Koch Bihar town for the purpose of imparting education to the kinsmen of the Maharaja. This may be said to be the first step taken towards popular education in the country. In 1861 Maharaja Narendranarayan offered a purse to Col. Jenkins, (Governor General's Agent in the North East Frontier, in recognition of the good services done by the Colonel during the minority of the Maharaja. The worthy Colonel tactfully avoided accepting the reward and suggested that the money would be spent for a good cause if an English School was founded with that money. Accordingly, an English School was founded in 1861 and named Jenkins School in honour of Col. Jenkins. In the beginning it taught up to the third class of the Entrance curriculum and later it received the recognition of the Calcutta University and sent up the first batch of five boys for the Entrance Examination in 1870 of whom three passed. In 1864, three other vernacular schools were opened in the interior and Ramchandra Ghosh, a State Official was appointed Honorary Inspector of Schools in addition to his other duties. From 1865 the supervision of the schools was placed in the hands of a local committee of Public Instruction, assisted by the Government Inspector of Schools of the North East Division. By 1870 the number of village vernacular schools went up to 58 of which 5 were meant for girls. A Madrasa for teaching Persian and three Sanskrit *tols* were also started.

With the gradual spread of education and extension of schools in the interior the need for a separate wholetime Superintendent of Education was felt and in 1870 Rev. Robinson was appointed to be the first Superintendent of Education. In the following year, Kasikanath Mukherji, lent from the Bengal Education Service, was appointed the Superintendent of Education. A Guru-training School was started in February 1873 and a Normal School, a nucleus of which had existed in 1870 was formally opened in 1875 with the full complement of classes, teachers and stipends. A network of schools and *pathshalas* covered the entire State and for proper supervision the establishment of the Superintendent of Education was augmented between 1876 and 1878 by the addition of a Deputy Inspector of Schools, a Sub-Inspector of Schools and four Inspecting Pandits. The

following remarks of G.J.B. Tuite Dalton, the Deputy Commissioner of Koch Bihar in the *Annual Administration Report* of the State for 1876-77 is worth quoting: "There is no feature of our administration of the Koch Bihar State on which we are entitled to look with greater satisfaction than the success which has attended our efforts in the cause of Education. A very few years ago there was hardly a school in the Raj and very few except the mukhtears or mohajuns could even read or write. At present Cooch Behar is ahead of Rangpur or Julpigoree (Jalpaiguri) and of all the Assam districts and can compare not unfavourably with some of the more advanced districts of lower Bengal.

"During the year under review the number of schools have increased from 282 to 323 and their pupils from 7,238 to 7,795, and the average daily attendance from 6,087 to 7,151. Out of the five boys sent up from the State for the University Entrance Examination four passed and two of them won first grade junior scholarships. A scholar from the Raj passed the First Arts Examination for the first time and another the final examination of the Medical School. At the minor scholarship competitive examination a native of Cooch Behar secured the second place in the general list. At the vernacular scholarship examination in competition with Assam. Cooch Behar passed as many candidates as three of the Assam districts together. At the general examination of the Normal Schools in the lower provinces Cooch Behar passed eight candidates against one for the neighbouring district of Rangpur. I mention these facts to show that while every year is swelling the numbers in our schools and increasing the percentage of our school going population, the quality of instruction imparted will compare favourably with the Government standard attained to in the neighbouring British districts."

The population of Koch Bihar was estimated by Dalton to be 5,32,565. Taking one-twelfth of the population as children of the school going age the figure comes to 44,380 and of this number 8,975 were in the schools of approximately one in five. Of the 323 schools 7 were run entirely at State expense. These were the Jenkins School, which was the only High English School, two Middle Vernacular Schools, two Normal Schools, one Boarding School and one Artisan School. Two hundred and thirty-one schools were Aided Schools. These were Middle English Schools 3, Middle Vernacular Schools 88, Lower Vernacular Schools 96, Girls' Schools 24, Night Schools 19, and Boarding School 1. In addition there were 4 Middle Class Schools, 15 Lower Class Schools, 32 *Pathshalas*, 10 Night Schools, 11 Girls' Schools and 13 *Makhtabs* which were privately managed. The total expenditure on Education was Rs. 74,516, of which the State's share was Rs. 49,526.

Establishment
of the first
college :

Victoria
College

In June 1888 the first college was established in Koch Bihar named Victoria College to commemorate the Jubilee of Queen Victoria of England. A sum of Rs. 25,000 was granted by the State for the initial expenses for house, furniture, books and other equipments and adequate provision was made to meet the regular charges of the establishment, library and scholarship. But this led to a heavy reduction in the expenditure on Primary and Secondary Education. The post of the Superintendent of Education was abolished, the Normal Schools done away with, and there was a reduction in the number of the *pathshalas* and village schools together with a curtailment of the stipends. The Jenkins School had up till then been a free institution and the pupils had to pay a nominal fee of annas eight. A system of graduated scales of fees was introduced in this school to make the school pay a part of the expenses. In July 1890 Entrance Schools were established at each of the Subdivisional towns of Mata-bhanga, Dinhata and Mekhliganj. A subscription of Rs. 25,000 was raised from the residents and a monthly grant of Rs. 125 was made from the State towards the expenses of these schools.

The budget for the Primary Education and Higher Education was separated from 1891 and by effecting savings in the Primary sector where more of people's cooperation was secured, the cause of higher education was advanced without much additional burden on the resources of the State. The Victoria College and the Jenkins School both made good progress and by 1890 the Jenkins School had passed 114 boys in the Entrance Examination. Though started with only 16 boys in 1888, the Victoria College made quick progress and by 1900 there were 168 pupils on its rolls and within 9 years had turned out 199 under-graduates, 73 B.A.'s, 4 M.A.'s and 4 B.L.'s.

During the last quarter of the 19th Century education made considerable progress and the number of persons able to read and write more than doubled during 1881 and 1901; in the latter years 5.9 per cent of the population were returned as literates. The number of pupils rose from 10,194 in 1892-93 to 12,670 in 1901-02 in which year 26.2 per cent of the boys and 0.36 per cent of the girls were at school. In 1903-04, there were 12,639 pupils with 333 institutions including one Arts College, 43 Secondary Schools, 37 Night Schools and 9 Girls' Schools. The expenditure was Rs. 79,000, of which Rs. 44,000 was contributed by the State, the rest being derived from fees, etc. The control was exercised by the Superintendent, assisted by an Inspector and Deputy Inspector and Circle Pandits.

According to the Census of 1971, 3,10,576 persons (including 79,240 females) were literates in the district. That figure comes to about 220 literate persons for every 1,000 of the population of the district as against the State figures of 330 literate persons for every 1,000 of the State

population. The percentage of literates in the district since 1901 may be seen from the following table (except for the year 1941).

PERCENTAGE OF LITERATES IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT: 1901-71

Year	Persons	Male	Female
1901	5.9	10.7	0.4
1911	7.4	13.4	0.6
1921	7.8	13.9	0.9
1931	6.6	11.3	1.2
1951	15.0	23.2	5.3
1961	21.0	31.4	9.3
1971	22.0	31.4	11.7

The Census of 1961 recorded 8,05,636 persons as illiterates, 1,29,518 persons as literates without any educational level and 84,652 persons having some education out of the total population of 10,19,806 in the district. The following table shows the picture of the literate persons in 1961.

NUMBER OF LITERATE PERSONS OF KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT: 1961

Educational Level	Total	Male	Female
Primary or Junior Basic	73,468	58,712	14,756
Matriculation or Higher Secondary	9,265	8,618	647
Technical Diploma	47	47	
Non-technical Diploma	962	845	117
University Degree :			
General	822	752	70
Engineering	14	14	
Medicine	33	33	
Agriculture	1	1	
Veterinary	3	3	
Technology	2	2	
Teaching	33	15	18
Others	2	2	
Total	84,652	69,044	15,608

The majority of illiterate persons are to be found in the rural areas, though the number is not quite negligible in the urban areas. The following table shows the percentage of literacy in both the rural and the urban areas in the district as obtained from the Census of 1961:

PERCENTAGE OF LITERACY IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT: 1961

Educational Level	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Illiterate	71.15	93.45	36.39	51.58
Literate without educational level	18.31	4.60	22.90	26.34
Primary or Junior Basic	9.36	1.89	29.69	20.14
Matriculation and above	1.18	0.06		
Matriculation or Higher Secondary			6.76	1.28
University Degrees and other technical courses			4.26	0.66

The rural areas lag behind in higher education, hence the persons qualifying for Matriculation and above have been grouped together, while in the urban areas persons qualifying for Matriculation alone are numerically greater than in the rural areas.

There has been great strides in education, both quantitative and qualitative, in recent years. With the growth of population the number of students in all stages of education, namely, primary, secondary, collegiate, technical, etc., has gone up. The following figures would bear this out with reference to the district which was a princely State only two decades ago.

NUMBER OF PRIMARY (INCLUDING JUNIOR BASIC) SCHOOLS IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT: 1963-64

Managed by			Total	Students		
State Government	District Board/ Zilla Parishad	Private aided		Boys	Girls	Total
10	941	19	970	61,170	28,072	89,242

In 1968-69, Primary schools alone numbered 874 which had 2,024 male teachers, 258 female teachers, 58,133 male students and 29,257 female students. The Junior Basic schools numbered 188 (including 6 for girls) the same year of which 177 boys' schools and 4 girls' schools were managed

by local bodies, while 7 were private-aided institutions. They had 686 male and 96 female teachers and 22,295 male and 11,146 female students.

There are two types of Middle or Junior High schools, some have 2 classes and others 4 classes. The following table shows the number of such schools and the enrolment in them in recent years.

ENROLMENT IN JUNIOR HIGH (MIDDLE) SCHOOLS IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT: 1957-69

	Number of institutions	Enrolment		
		Boys	Girls	Total
1957-58	98	6,728	3,599	10,327
1963-64	31	2,309	1,443	3,752
1968-69	43	3,767	1,475	5,242

In 1968-69, Government managed 1 school for boys and 1 for girls, while there were 29 boys' schools and 3 girls' schools which were private-aided. There were also 9 unaided private schools for boys the same year. Teachers of these schools numbered 159 males and 37 females that year.

The Senior Basic schools number 43 in the district of which 41 are earmarked for boys and 2 for girls. Some of the boys' schools are co-educational. Government manages 43 of them, while one girls' school is managed by private agencies. In 1968-69, all these schools had a total number of 172 male teachers, 20 female teachers, 2,920 male students and 925 female students.

There is no 10-class Government high school in the district. A good number of high schools is still managed by private agencies, some of them being aided by Government. The figures for 1968-69 showed that these schools had 269 male teachers and 89 female teachers. Some of these schools were co-educational. The following table shows the figures of enrolment in such schools in the district.

ENROLMENT IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS OF KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT: 1957-69

	Number of institutions	Enrolment		
		Boys	Girls	Total
1957-58	11	2,555	266	2,821
1963-64	16	4,209	1,811	6,020
1968-69	37	7,041	4,641	11,682

There are Higher Secondary (including Multipurpose) schools numbering 18 for boys and 3 for girls. Most of them are multi-stream schools, except one girls' school which has only one stream of study. These schools included the Government school for boys named Jenkins School, Koch Bihar (established 1861) and the Government school for girls named Sunity Academy, Koch Bihar (established 1884). Some of the boys' schools, specially those in the areas having no girls' schools, are co-educational. All these Higher Secondary schools had 380 male and 80 female teachers in 1968-69. The following table shows the figures of enrolment in such schools in recent years:

ENROLMENT IN THE HIGHER SECONDARY (INCLUDING MULTI-PURPOSE) SCHOOLS OF KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT: 1957-69

	Number of institutions	Enrolment		
		Boys	Girls	Total
1957-58	7	2,365	977	3,342
1963-64	11	5,072	1,459	7,131
1968-69	21	9,895	1,612	11,507

Several Engineering institutions impart training in the different branches of Engineering, namely, Cooch Behar. Industrial Training Institute, Cooch Behar Polytechnic, Cooch Behar Industrial School and Workshop and the newly established Cooch Behar Engineering College. The Industrial Training Institute had 37 teachers and 149 students (including 18 belonging to the Scheduled Castes and 2 to the Scheduled Tribes) in 1967-68, while the Polytechnic had 16 teachers and 159 students (including 15 belonging to the Scheduled Castes) in 1967-68.

There is a Government Junior Basic Training College in the district town which had 6 teachers (including 1 female) imparting training to 40 male students (including 13 belonging to the Scheduled Castes) in 1967-68. A similar institution, sponsored by Government, is named Nijamnagar Junior Basic Training College. It had 14 male and 6 female teachers and 222 male (including 38 belonging to the Scheduled Castes) and 278 female (including 3 belonging to the Scheduled Castes) students during the aforesaid year. A combined general and teachers' training college named the University B.T. and Evening College has also been functioning in the district town since 1965-66. The George Institute of Commerce and Telegraphy of Koch Bihar, a private institution, is affiliated to the Board of Commercial Education, Government of West Bengal.

There are two privately owned music schools in the district town imparting training in music and dancing, one is meant for males and the other for females. Together they had 10 teachers and 156 students (including 129 females) in 1968-69.

The only State-owned, the five private-aided and the only private-unaided *tols* for Sanskrit studies had altogether 38 teachers and 125 students including 54 girls in the aforesaid year. The two State-owned, two private-aided and the only private-unaided *madrassa* for Islamic studies had 24 teachers and 665 students including 115 girls the same year.

There were also 63 Adult Education Centres for men employing 82 male teachers and educating 4,619 male students in 1968-69. The district had also 31 such centres for women employing 61 female teachers and having 1,786 female students the same year.

There are a number of colleges in the district which are affiliated to the North Bengal University. The following table shows their names and enrolments as in 1970-71:

COLLEGES IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT: 1971

Name	Courses of study	Government/ Private	Enrolment	
			Boys	Girls
Victoria College, Koch Bihar (now named Acharya Brajendranath Seal College)	Arts and Science	Government	550	355
Dinhata College, Dinhata	Arts, Science and Commerce	Private-aided	632	150
Koch Bihar College, Koch Bihar	Arts and Commerce	Private	31	4
Matabhanga College, Matabhanga	Do	Do	172	46
University Evening and B. T. College	Arts, Commerce and B. T.	Do.	190	35
Tufanganj College, Tufanganj	Not available			

In all its branches Victoria College had 512 male and 330 female students, taught by 49 male and 1 female teachers in 1966-67. This college had 87 Scheduled Caste male and 25 Scheduled caste female students that year. Dinhata College had 698 male and 129 female students, taught by 22 male teachers the same year. This college had also 130 Scheduled Caste male and 8 Scheduled Caste female and one Scheduled Tribe male students on its roll that year.

CHAPTER XV.

MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

Before the year 1819 the system of allopathic medicine was unknown in Koch Bihar. The Rajas of Koch Bihar had from early times *Kavirajas* or *Ayurvedic* physicians. But this form of treatment was confined to the royal family and to the upper classes. It did not penetrate the masses who by and large had faith in *Ojhas* or village quacks. In June 1814, the Commissioner, MacLeod applied to the British Government to send a qualified medical man to the State but due to paucity of such men the Government were unable to send one. In November 1819 an Indian doctor was sent to Koch Bihar on a salary of Rs. 40 per month. There is no record as to what his qualification or training was. In 1841 Maharaja Sibendranarayan applied to the British Government for a qualified medical man and in February 1842 Dr. Syama Charan Sarkar, a graduate of the Medical College of Calcutta was appointed Medical Officer of the Maharaja's Court. In 1846, the Maharaja asked for a European Medical Officer and Dr. Ralph Moore was appointed on a salary of Rs. 350 to be the Medical Officer of the Maharaja.

Although there was a qualified Medical Officer since 1842, there was no attempt to open any hospital or dispensary before Col. Haughton took over charge of the administration during the minority of Maharaja Nripendranarayan. In 1865, the first dispensary was opened at Koch Bihar in the charge of a Sub-Assistant Surgeon. It was a humble establishment, partly supported by local subscriptions. In 1869-70, the medical establishment consisted of a Sub-Assistant Surgeon, two unqualified doctors and four compounders. The private subscriptions were done away with from this year and the establishment paid from the State Revenues. The Sub-Assistant Surgeon remained in charge of the medical establishment till May 1873 when the post of Civil Surgeon was created and Dr. Thomas Briscoe was appointed to the post. Henceforth an Assistant Surgeon remained in charge of the dispensary at Koch Bihar.

The first dispensary to be opened in the mofussil was on 13 June 1873 when the out-patients' dispensary was opened at Dinhat. Indoor arrangement was introduced in this dispensary from 1874-75. The Mekhliganj dispensary was opened on 9 August 1874 and the Matabhanga dispensary on 28 September 1874. Arrangement for in-patients was made in both these dispensaries in 1875-76. The establishment at each of these dispensaries was one Hospital assistant, one cook, one servant and one sweeper. There was at this time no qualified Medical Graduate or Licentiate in charge of the subdivisional dispensaries or hospitals. On 1 June 1885, an aided dispensary was opened

at Haldibari for out-patients only and on 5 July 1898 a dispensary was opened at Fulbari which was then the headquarters of Tufangaj subdivision. Indoor arrangement was made at this dispensary from April 1898. The following is the number of patients treated at the dispensaries and hospitals:

Year	In-patients	Out-patients	Total
1866-67	100	1,723	1,823
1873-74	334	4,654	4,988
1875-76	1,644	11,114	12,758
1880-81	1,280	13,236	14,525
1890-91	1,487	16,998	18,485
1899-1900	1,332	19,890	21,222

These dispensaries and hospitals were established at the State headquarters and at the subdivisional headquarters and were visited mainly by the people of the towns and those living close by. The rural people remained apathetic to the scientific treatment and still had faith in *Ojhas* and village quacks. When there was a serious cholera epidemic in 1881 only a few of the cases came to the hospitals. The principal ailments of the people attending the dispensaries and hospitals were fever, spleen, rheumatic affections, skin diseases, and goitre as the following table will show:

Diseases	1875-76	1880-81	1890-91	1899-1900
Total patients of all diseases	12,758	14,525	18,485	21,222
Fever	3,345	4,476	4,048	4,726
Spleen	461	480	496	792
Rheumatic affections	757	787	947	605
Skin diseases	1,098	1,553	1,893	1,805
Goitre	1,391	1,087	813	608

Prior to 1865-66 the 'inoculation' system was the only preventive against small-pox. But as the process was hazardous there had been hardly any preventive work done against small-pox. Modern vaccination was started in the

Raj family and by 1868-69 about 81 vaccinations had been performed. Col. Haughton, the Commissioner, secured the services of some vaccinators from the Government of Bengal during 1869-71, but there was serious opposition from the people and much headway could not be made. Later some local people were trained as vaccinators and the State set up an organization of its own and inoculation was prohibited. In the beginning the vaccinations were done by salaried staff of the State and a Deputy Superintendent of Vaccination was appointed in 1869-70. In 1883-84, when the period of the administration of the Commissioner came to an end with the Maharaja attaining majority, the paid vaccinators' organization was disbanded and only an Inspector was retained. The ex-vaccinators were licensed to practise and they were supplied with report forms, lancets and lymph from the State. These private vaccinators were allowed to charge a fee of two annas per case. They also received a bonus of Rs. 3 per 100 successful cases from which annas eight was deducted and paid to the Inspector.

The following figures give a picture of the progress of vaccination in the State between 1873 and 1900:

Year	Number of persons vaccinated
1873-74	4,449
1874-75	7,065
1875-76	7,825
1880-81	17,447
1885-86	28,127
1890-91	13,755
1895-96	20,709
1899-1900	16,895

A midwife was appointed to the Sadar dispensary from 1889-90.

By the year 1937-38 the Medical Department in Koch Bihar had been greatly improved. There was a foreign trained qualified Civil Surgeon in charge of the Department. The Koch Bihar Sadar hospital had an Assistant Surgeon as Medical Officer in charge. The clinical laboratory and anti-rabies department was in charge of a Sub-Assistant Surgeon, while there was another Sub-Assistant Surgeon for the outdoor department. The Civil Surgeon visited the hospital wards daily and treated difficult cases. The Sub-divisional hospitals remained in charge of a Sub-Assistant Surgeon. Four dispensaries had been opened at Bamanhat, Sitalkuchi, Sitai and Nishiganj, each under the charge of a Sub-Assistant Surgeon. During the year the scheme of

having an X-ray equipment at the Sadar hospital was taken up for execution. Major and minor surgical operations were being performed in the Sadar hospital and minor surgical operations were being performed in the subdivisional hospitals. The surgical operations performed in 1937-38 numbered 1,090 against 1,004 in the previous year. The people appear to have got rid of their apathy for the allopathic treatment and the hospital statistics show following attendance:

Year	Number of out-patients	Number of in-patients	Percentage of death of in-patients
1936-37	92,434	2,450	5.30
1937-38	89,142	2,627	5.59
1938-39	1,17,492	2,827	2.86

As malarial fever continued to be the principal ailment, a spleen index survey was regularly conducted. The result of this survey was as follows:

Year	Number of children examined	Number having enlarged spleen	Percentage
1937-38	10,516	3,959	38.59
1938-39	8,344	5,315	63.81

As a preventive against malarial fever free quinine tablets were distributed from the hospitals and dispensaries and free travelling dispensaries were started with centres at Rajarhat, Dodearhat, Dewanhat, Tapurhat, Sutkabarihat, Pundibarihat and Banerwar.

An anti-malaria department was started from 1937 in charge of a Sub-Assistant Surgeon. Stagnant pools of water were sprayed with larvicides and jungles and woods cut. The work was, however, confined to Koch Bihar town.

A vaccination department was maintained at State cost in charge of a Sub-Assistant Surgeon with 4 Inspectors and 25 paid vaccinators. The number of persons vaccinated in 1937-38 was 47,176 and in 1938-39 the number was 51,881.

The Koch Bihar State had introduced a system of collection of vital figures. The collecting Panchayats and the *Chaukidars* appointed under the Cooch Behar Village Chaukidari Act were by executive order made responsible for the supply of vital information. The Subdivisional Officers were the Subdivisional Registrars and the Civil Surgeon was the Chief Registrar of births and deaths.

Vital Statistics

KOCH BIHAR

The population of Koch Bihar remained almost static for some years up to 1941. This is corroborated by the vital statistics of the years 1936 to 1939 as follows:

Year	Births	Deaths	Birth rate per thousand	Death rate per thousand
1936-37 ..	11,978	11,754	20.02	19.04
1937-38 ..	11,798	11,862	19.27	20.08
1938-39 ..	13,584	11,299	22.98	19.81

The birth rates and the death rates were very close and there was no appreciable immigration during this time.

The Bengal Births and Deaths Registration Act was introduced into Koch Bihar from 1953 and vital information are available from that year. The following table gives the births and deaths in absolute figures and birth and death rates per thousand from 1953 to 1960.

Year	Total births	Total deaths	Excess of births over deaths	Birth rate per thousand		Death rate per thousand	
				(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
1953 ..	10,287	5,380	4,907	15.32	13.67	16.11	14.34
1954 ..	14,923	7,377	7,546	22.23	18.95	21.97	18.72
1955 ..	18,261	6,614	11,647	27.21	22.20	19.65	16.03
1956 ..	22,317	6,573	15,744	33.25	26.04	19.58	15.32
1957 ..	21,970	6,834	15,136	32.73	24.63	20.31	15.27
1958 ..	23,735	6,621	17,114	35.31	25.61	30.45	22.10
1959 ..	22,589	6,797	15,792	33.05	23.49	20.20	14.10
1960 ..	20,127	7,091	13,036	29.96	20.20	21.10	14.20

The following table gives the rate of Infant deaths:

NUMBER OF INFANT DEATHS IN THE KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT :
1961-65

Year	Urban	Rural	Rate per 1,000 live birth	
			Urban	Rural
1961 ..	8	1,151	5.5	63.5
1962 ..	10	1,106	3.4	76.1
1963 ..	17	988	14.2	53.8
1964 ..	12	667	6.3	50.4
1965 ..	1	546	0.6	38.1

(a) Calculated on the population of 1951 Census.

(b) Calculated on the estimated population on 30th June each year computed on the assumption that the population changed at a uniform rate from one Census to another.

The following table shows the number of deaths by age-groups in the district in 1966 including the deaths of infants below one year. It will appear, that the deaths of such infants are most numerous in comparison with those of others in any other age-group.

DEATHS REGISTERED BY AGE-GROUP AND SEX IN THE KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT : 1966

Under 28 days ..	327
28 days—11 months ..	476
Under 1 year ..	803
1—14 years ..	1,066
15—44 years ..	1,422
45—64 years ..	1,410
65 years and above ..	1,305
Age not stated ..	59
All ages ..	6,065

The large increase of the population of the district after 1951 is reflected in the above figures which show that though there was an increase in the birth rate per thousand over the figures of 1936-39, the death rate greatly fell from the corresponding figures of 1936-39.

The vital statistics for the years 1953-60 reveal that the disease causing the largest number of deaths in the district was fever which accounted for 21,071 deaths followed by respiratory diseases other than tuberculosis causing 4,539 deaths; dysentery, diarrhoea and enteric fevers accounted for 3,055 deaths; malarial fever caused 2,981 deaths and tuberculosis of the lungs caused 1,117 deaths. Deaths due to cholera and small-pox were few, being 28 and 89 respectively. These two diseases, specially the former, was a scourge of the district in earlier years. The preventive and curative aspects of the medical administration of the district after merger with West Bengal have shown excellent results in the suppression of these two diseases. Malarial fever also has been controlled. These figures also show that fever which accounted for the largest number of persons attending the hospitals and dispensaries during the period 1875-1900 was still the chief ailment from which most people suffered and of which they died.

The disease-wise figures of attendance at the hospitals show that the common diseases of the district are bronchitis, dysentery, goitre, gastritis, tuberculosis, typhoid, whooping cough, pleurisy and epidemic dropsy. This will appear from the following table:

Diseases common to the district.

Persons attending Koch Bihar Hospitals (20 per cent. sample) :

Disease	1962		1964		1966	
	Outdoor	Indoor	Outdoor	Indoor	Outdoor	Indoor
Bronchitis ..	17,922	28	19,628	24	12,389	5
Dysentery (amoebic)	12,260	127	21,701	116	26,396	22
Dysentery (bacillary)	8,152	39	6,265	42	6,293	13
Goitre ..	10,464	2	12,802	..	13,033	..
Gastritis ..	7,608	73	13,208	40	6,990	15
Tuberculosis (pulmonary).	2,653	248	3,041	318	1,600	86
Tuberculosis (respiratory).	76	7	32	53	390	7
Typhoid ..	753	143	1,041	150	377	31
Whooping cough ..	1,609	..	3,515	2	3,029	..
Cholera ..	3	..	..	..	4	..
Small-pox ..	4	..	14	10	5	..
Malaria ..	1,556	12	500	6	36	..
Pleurisy ..	1,872	10	226	13	993	..
Epidemic Dropsy ..	5,323	2	2,852	9	12,312	..

Goiter is an old disease of Koch Bihar and was recorded in the hospitals between 1875 and 1900. Bronchitis, pleurisy, malaria were probably grouped in the class 'fever'. Whooping cough and epidemic dropsy appear to be diseases which have started in Koch Bihar in recent years. The hospital attendance figures of 1938-39 show the following :

Disease	Number of patients	
	Outdoor	Indoor
Kala-azar ..	..	112
Dysentery ..	..	1,960
Malaria fever ..	..	44,450
Syphilis ..	..	81
Rheumatic affections ..	..	3,023
Worms ..	..	1,892
Respiratory diseases ..	..	7,814
Goitre ..	..	2,549
Diarrhoea ..	..	1,203
Spleen ..	..	506
Skin diseases ..	..	3,668

These figures show that the attendance of patients suffering from dysentery was much less than now and there were no cases of whooping cough or epidemic dropsy.

Deaths from certain selected causes of which figures are available for the years 1963 to 1966 are given in the following table :

Causes	1963		1964		1965		1966	
	Deaths	Rate (per 1,000)	Deaths	Rate (per 1,000)	Deaths	Rate (per 1,000)	Deaths	Rate (per 1,000)
All causes : West Bengal (excluding Calcutta).	2,17,710	6.5	1,97,144	5.8	1,98,506	5.0	1,88,019	5.0
All causes : Koch Bihar district.	5,658	5.1	4,817	4.2	5,529	4.7	6,065	5.0
Anaemias ..	..	0.2	111	0.1	191	0.2	210	0.2
Bronchitis ..	266	0.2	239	0.2	109	0.06	43	0.04
Dysentery ..	174	0.2	132	0.1	155	0.1	227	0.2
Gastritis, etc. ..	64	0.06	28	0.02	40	0.03	40	0.04
Metabolic and nutritional diseases.	96	0.09	130	0.1	203	0.2	240	0.2
Pneumonia ..	358	0.3	215	0.2	234	0.2	305	0.3
Pregnancy complications.	120	0.1	111	0.1	94	0.1	105	0.1
Small-pox ..	68	0.06	26	0.02	..	..	15	0.01
Tetanus ..	30	0.03	10	..	14	0.01	30	0.02
T.B. : pulmonary	41	0.04	20	0.03	31	0.03	63	0.05
T.B. : respiratory	102	0.09	80	0.07	90	0.08	124	0.1
Typhoid ..	112	0.1	108	0.1	101	0.09	116	0.01

At the time of the merger of Koch Bihar State with West Bengal the organization of the Medical Department consisted of one Civil Surgeon in charge of the Maharaja Jitendra Narayan Hospital at Koch Bihar with two Assistant Surgeons. The M.J. N. Hospital was provided with a Radiology department and a Pathology department with 125 beds. There was an outdoor department in charge of an Assistant Surgeon. The Jagaddipendra Narayan Hospital at Rajarhat near Koch Bihar was constructed as an Infectious Diseases Hospital with 25 general beds and 25 infectious disease beds. This was in charge of a Resident Medical Officer under the over-all supervision of the Civil Surgeons. Each Subdivisional headquarters had a hospital in charge of an Assistant Surgeon with an outdoor department and the same Assistant Surgeon attended the outdoor department. There were 8 beds at the Mathabhanga and Dinhat hospitals and 6 beds at the Tufanganj and Mekhliganj hospitals. There was in addition one hospital at Haldibari with six beds and an outdoor department also in charge of an Assistant Surgeon. Besides these hospitals there were 24 charitable dispensaries in the rural areas and some of these had a trained *dai* (midwife) for delivery cases.

The post of the Civil Surgeon which continued even after the merger was converted into the post of the Chief Medical Officer of Health according to the general plan of District Health set-up since 1959. He is the officer of the highest rank of the Health Department in the district and is in charge of both the curative and preventive branches. At the headquarters he is assisted by the Assistant Chief Medical Officer of Health, District Family

Organization of
the Medical
Department

Planning Officer, District Medical Officer, Medical Officer for School Health and the District Health Officer. In the outlying areas the Medical Officers of the Primary and Subsidiary Health Centres are mainly responsible for the administration of the Health Centres. There are ten Rural Health Circles, each in charge of a Sanitary Inspector responsible for Public Health and Sanitation of the rural areas under the supervision of the District Health Officer. The work of sanitation and public health is supplemented by the Health Centres within their respective jurisdictions. There is only one municipality in the district which is at Koch Bihar and the municipality is responsible for the sanitation work in the municipal areas. There is no *Ayurvedic* or *Unani* organization under Government management in the district. One *Ayurvedic* Charitable dispensary at Koch Bihar was functioning under the *Devottar* Department of the Koch Bihar State Government. This dispensary is still functioning as a private organization from the *Devottar* grants.

Ayurvedic and Unani systems

Present hospital and dispensaries

Maharaja Jitendra Narayan Hospital has been converted into the District Hospital. There are 125 beds and the staff consist of twelve whole-time and one part-time medical officer and 28 nurses. There is a well-equipped operation theatre. Specialist treatment in Surgery, Radiology and Midwifery is available at this hospital. It has also a Family Planning Service Unit, a Venereal Diseases Clinic and a Tuberculosis outdoor. Jagaddipendra Narayan Hospital at Rajarhat has been extended and now has 120 beds of which 100 are reserved for tuberculosis patients. It is a General as well as Infectious Diseases Hospital. There is a T.B. Specialist, one general medical officer and 18 nurses. The Police and the Jail Departments had separate hospitals under the Koch Bihar State administration. These hospitals are still running for the same purposes. The police hospital has 36 beds and the jail hospital has 8 beds. Both are general hospitals each under a medical officer.

Health Centres

There are at present eleven Primary Health Centres and twenty-two Subsidiary Health Centres in the district. The Primary Health Centres are of two categories, some with twenty beds and some with ten beds. The twenty-bedded ones are provided with two medical officers and four or five nurses, while the ten-bedded ones are provided with one medical officer and three nurses. All the Subsidiary Health Centres with the exception of those at Jamaladaha and Okrabari are provided with two non-dietic beds for maternity only. There are no nurses attached to the Subsidiary Health Centres.

The following is a list of the Health Centres :

I. KOCH BIHAR SUBDIVISION

KOCH BIHAR THANA

(a) Primary Health Centres—

- (i) Putimari-Fuleswari with ten beds
- (ii) Pundibari with six beds, temporarily upgraded

(b) Subsidiary Health Centres—

- (i) Chilkirhat
- (ii) Patlakhawa
- (iii) Bokalir-math
- (iv) Gopalpur
- (v) Baneswar at Kaljani

II. DINHATA SUBDIVISION

DINHATA THANA

(a) Primary Health Centres—

- (i) Dinhata with twenty beds and electricity
- (ii) Bamanhat with ten beds

(b) Subsidiary Health Centres—

- (i) Gossanimari
- (ii) Okrabari (temporary)
- (iii) Kismat Dasgram

SITAI THANA

(a) Primary Health Centres—

- (i) Sitai with ten beds

(b) Subsidiary Health Centres—

- (i) Nakarganj
- (ii) Adabari

III. TUFANGANJ SUBDIVISION

TUFANGANJ THANA

(a) Primary Health Centres—

- (i) Tufanganj with twenty beds and electricity

(b) Subsidiary Health Centres—

- (i) Natabari
- (ii) Balarampur
- (iii) Maradanga
- (iv) Salbari
- (v) Deocharai

IV. MATABHANGA SUBDIVISION

MATABHANGA THANA

(a) Primary Health Centres—

- (i) Matabhanga with twenty beds and electricity
- (ii) Kheti-Fulbari with ten beds.

- (b) Subsidiary Health Centres—
 (i) Sibpur located at Panaguri
 (ii) Pakhihaga

SITALKUCHI THANA

- (a) Primary Health Centre—
 (i) Sitalkuchi with ten beds
- (b) Subsidiary Health Centres—
 (i) Chhoto Salbari
 (ii) Jatamari

V. MEKHLIGANJ SUBDIVISION

MEKHLIGANJ THANA

- (a) Primary Health Centre—
 (i) Mekhliganj with ten beds and electricity
- (b) Subsidiary Health Centres—
 (i) Changrabandha
 (ii) Jamaladaha

HALDIBARI THANA

Haldibari Primary Health Centres with twenty beds and electricity.

Charitable
dispensaries

The Koch Bihar State Government had started 24 charitable dispensaries. Of these 14 have already been converted into either Primary or Subsidiary Health Centres. Among these are Kheti, Baneswar, Patlakhawa, Balarampur, Sibpur, Chilkirhat, Sitai, Jatamari, Jamaladaha, Okrabari and Deocharai and Sitalkuchi charitable dispensaries. The following ten are still being run as Government charitable dispensaries. Each is in charge of a medical officer. There are no nurses in any of them. These are located at the following places: Dinhat P.S.—(i) Dewanhat, (ii) Digaltaria, (iii) Shahebganj Hat, (iv) Nazir Hat, Sitalkuchi P.S.—Baranaricha, Mathabhang P.S.—(i) Ghoksadanga Hat, (ii) Nishiganj Hat, (iii) Ratherdanga Hat, Tufanganj P.S.—Balabhut, Haldibari P.S.—Dewanganj Hat.

Number of beds
and staff

The total number of hospital beds in the district in 1969 was 573 of which 133 beds were reserved for maternity cases, 106 were reserved for T.B. cases and 45 for infectious diseases. There are 38 medical officers of which 22 are medical graduates including two lady doctors and the remaining 16 are licentiates. There are 58 trained nurses and 24 untrained nurses, 8 midwives, 6 lady health visitors including public health nurses and 43 compounders. The number of beds work out at 8.8 per doctor, 6.4 per nurse and 12.2 per compounder. According to 1971 Census population figures, the number of beds per ten thousand o

population is 3.8. The T.B. beds work out at 0.75 and maternity beds at 0.92 per ten thousand of the population. The total number of persons attending the outdoors of the hospitals and the dispensaries was 9,67,516 in 1965 of which 4,76,584 were new cases; and in 1966 the total number attending was 9,43,251 including 4,61,871 new cases. The number of persons treated in the indoor beds was 2,937 in 1965 and 2,496 in 1966. The mortality in 1965 was 415 and in 1966, 376.

A scheme of examination of the health of the school children has been started under the general supervision of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. The medical officers of the Health Centres are to inspect the schools lying within their jurisdiction. In 1971 the medical officers visited 21 schools covering 3,009 students of whom 694 were found to have defective health. The result of the inspection and examination revealed that 125 suffered from skin diseases, 56 suffered from respiratory diseases, 71 had defective eye-sight, 48 had bad teeth and gum, 32 had enlarged tonsils and 75 suffered from malnutrition.

Public Health
Welfare work
School Health

Feeding under-nourished mothers and children with milk or specially prepared nourishing food had been taken in hand in the district for some years. Till the end of 1968 UNICEF used to supply skimmed milk powder. Since then CARE took up the work on an experimental basis. There are feeding centres in the district located at Koch Bihar Sadar hospital, Matabhanga Subdivisional hospital and at the Primary Health Centres at Tufanganj, Haldibari, Mekhliganj, Kheti-Fulbari, Sitai, Bamanhat, Dinhat and Sitalkuchi. Prior to 1970 the beneficiaries at each centre numbered 100 of which 30 were mothers and 70 were children. Since then the number of beneficiaries has increased to 150 per centre of which 30 are mothers and 120 are children. The food supplied at these feeding centres consists of milk prepared by dissolving skimmed milk powder and a food which is a mix of corn, soya-bean and milk solids.

Milk feeding
programme

A clinical approach was made in the first two Five-Year Plans for population control. During the third Plan a comprehensive scheme was drawn up with 100 per cent central subsidy on non-recurring and 75 per cent subsidy on recurring outlays. The post of a District Family Planning Officer was sanctioned for the district from 1962-63 to work under the general supervision of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. There are at present five urban Family Planning Centres located at the M.J.N. Hospital at Koch Bihar and in the Subdivisional Hospitals (Health Centres) at Tufanganj, Matabhanga, Mekhliganj and Dinhat. There are eleven Rural Family Planning Centres located at the Health Centres at Pundibari, Tufanganj, Dinhat, Putimari-Fuleswari, Bamanhat, Matabhanga, Sitalkuchi, Sitai, Mekhliganj, Haldibari and Kheti-Fulbari. Of the 22 Subsidiary Health Centres fifteen are provided

Family
Planning

194

KOCH BIHAR

with a sub-centre for Family Planning. A mobile Sterilization unit, a mobile I.U.C.D. (loop) unit and two units under the Oral Pill Project also work in the district. The following table gives the results achieved during 1968-72:

	Sterilisation		Total	IUCD	Condom	Dia-phragm	Jelly	Foam tablets
	Vasec-tomy	Tubec-tomy						
1968-69	1,689	195	1,884	267	6,354	89	839	3,177
1969-70	1,884	170	2,054	178	15,845	50	1,009	1,843
1970-71	2,441	172	2,613	94	61,392	26	784	898
1971-72	7,499	145	7,624	83	29,069	15	311	10

Anti-Tubercu-
cisis work

Koch Bihar district had all along a rather high incidence of respiratory diseases as figures given earlier would show. In recent years the incidence of tuberculosis is on the increase. To combat the rising tendency of the incidence of tuberculosis, a District T.B. Centre was opened at M.J.N. Hospital at Koch Bihar. A chest clinic also functions at Tufanganj Subdivisional-cum-Primary Health Centre. The following figures give the statistics of the activity of the T. B. Centre and the Chest Clinic during 1971-72:

Average No. of daily attendance		No. of examinations done		No. of new cases detected	Patients under treat-ment at the end of the year
Old	New	X-ray	Pathological		
47	7	1,100	112	639	1,579

There is one B.C.G. team working in the district. Up to 1969 the number of persons tested with tuberculin was 5,73,551 and the total number of persons vaccinated with B.C.G. was 3,07,827.

On the curative side there are 100 T.B. beds at the J. D. Hospital and 6 beds at the M.J.N. Hospital.

Anti-Malaria
activities

The National Malaria Control Programme was started in Koch Bihar in 1953. The programme consisted mainly of spraying of insecticides and surveys, but no home visit was made. In 1958, the National Malaria Eradication Programme replaced the previous programme and in addition to the continuance of the sprayings, a surveillance work was taken up. The staff of the Malaria Unit is under the executive control of the Assistant District Health Officer who also looks after the Alipurduars Subdivision of Jalpai-guri district. The district is divided into three sub-units, each under a Senior Malaria Inspector under whom there is a Malaria Inspector in each thana. The Malaria Inspector has under him a Spraying Gang consisting of one mate and six labourers. There is also a Surveillance Inspector under him with four workers.

The National Malaria Eradication Programme is implemented in the district in four phases, viz., preparatory phase, attack phase, consolidation phase and maintenance phase. The assessment of the performance is made and the decision for transition from one phase to the other is taken by an independent appraisal team set up by the Government of India consisting of representatives of the WHO and the USAID and the Directorate of Health Services of another State. At present a little less than half the area of the district is under the attack and consolidation phase (43 per cent) and a little more than half the district is under the consolidation phase. The following table gives the results of blood examinations during the years 1969 to 1971:

Year	Number of blood smears examined	Number found positive
1969	1,04,498	27
1970	95,176	15
1971	1,09,763	19

The Koch Bihar Municipality engage their own vaccinators for vaccination and re-vaccination in the town area. The Town Committees at Tufanganj, Dinhat, Matabhanga, Mekhliganj and Haldibari also employ vaccinators, some of whom are whole-time and some part-time workers, for operations within the local area of such Town Committees. For the rest of the area of the district, mainly consisting of the rural area, the vaccinators attached to the Sanitary Inspectors' Organization perform both the primary vaccinations and the re-vaccinations. Anti-Cholera Inoculations are also made by these organizations. The figures of vaccinations and inoculations against cholera and small-pox from 1969 to 1971 are given below:

Year	Primary Vaccinations	Re-vaccina-tions	Anti-Cholera Inoculations
1959	49,357	1,72,326	95,845
1960	65,754	1,71,310	1,06,811
1969	58,584	1,38,600	55,788
1970	26,801	3,17,392	2,11,185
1971	4,64,095	62,532	2,50,116

CHAPTER XVI

OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES

There are only 13 factories in the district employing about 529 workers. Because of such a small number of workers, there have not been any noticeable labour welfare activities in the district.

There is no prohibition in the State and so this district, too, has none. However, one of the most important social services is the welfare of the backward groups. The backward classes and tribes of this district, as of the State, live interspersed among the general population. Mostly agriculturists, they live their own social life in their respective localities. With the attainment of Independence, the problems of the tribals received urgent attention of Government, and a special Ministry was set up in 1949 to co-ordinate the various welfare activities. In 1951-52 a special programme for the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes was introduced out of the grants received from the Government of India. The latter period synchronized with the merger of the former Koch Bihar State with the Indian Union, the beginning of the first Five-Year Plan, and the formation of a full-fledged Tribal Welfare Department.

It appears that in 1954-55, that is, during the first Five-Year Plan a sum of Rs. 26,950 was spent for the water supply schemes for Scheduled Castes people. Besides, the following expenditure was incurred on the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes the same year.

WELFARE SCHEMES FOR TRIBALS IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT:
1954-55

Name	Amount
	Rs.
Grant of stipends, etc.	250
Agricultural Demonstration Centre	2,950
One pumping plant	2,950
Rural water supply	1,700
Water supply in forest villages	2,100
Grant to three adult education centres	100
Grant for sports	150
Twenty-two forest villagers' huts	22,000
Small irrigation schemes	2,772

In 1955-56, 6 tribal students were given training in cottage industries at a total cost of Rs. 2,575 in the Koch Bihar Industrial School and Workshop. A cooperative grain gola

was opened for the tribals at a cost of Rs. 10,000 at Kutialer Bash the same year. This year a sum of Rs. 1,675 was spent on water supply schemes out of the State revenue in several tribal villages, namely, Natunpara, Chenglimari, Rabhapara, Lafabari and Putimari. Another grant of Rs. 1,750 from the Central Government fund was utilized for sinking 7 tube-wells in Marichbari, Aitaliguri, Atialdanga, Belakoba, Rabhapara, Haripur, Baro Salbari and Satranpur Part II villages. One hundred poultry birds were distributed among the tribal villages of Natuarpara, Bagora and Marichbari at a cost of Rs. 400. Two Agriculture Demonstration Centres were opened at Chatranpur and Badalgir at a cost of Rs. 193 and Rs. 419 respectively. A pumping plant was distributed free to the tribal society at Dasgram Gobrachara in Dinhat area for irrigation purposes. The Koch Bihar Industrial School gave mechanical training to four tribal candidates. A sum of Rs. 700 was also spent in giving book grants and boarding charges to six and four students respectively, and a sum of Rs. 500 was spent on sports, exhibitions and adult education centres. A sum of Rs. 1,100 was spent on the purchase of medicines for tribal patients through the dispensaries at Pundibari, Banewar, Tufanganj, Decharai, Natabari and Dewanhat. For the benefit of the Harijans, 38 tube-wells were sunk in different areas at a cost of Rs. 12,950 and a club house was constructed at a cost of Rs. 1,860.

During 1963-64 three hostels were constructed for the welfare of backward classes which were attached to different educational institutions. Their names were Petla Nabibox H.S. Hostel, Chowdhurihat Vivekananda Vidya-mandir Hostel and Dinhat Sonidebi Jiu H.S. Hostel. A scheme for eri-rearing, spinning and weaving was also taken up for Jalpaiguri-Koch Bihar area at a cost of Rs. 2.55 lakhs in the third Five-Year Plan period. A hostel attached to the Swedish Mission at Dinhat was also extended during 1965-66.

A Training-cum-Production Centre in leather industry was set up in Dinhat in 1965-66 for imparting training in shoe-making and making other leather goods to Scheduled Castes students. There were 10 seats in the centre and a stipend of Rs. 30 was given to each trainee. Vested land to the extent of 1,017.89 acres was allotted to 623 Scheduled Castes families in the district in 1965-66. Such land to the extent of 131.31 acres was also allotted to Scheduled Tribes families there the same year.

Old-age pensions are granted to indigent persons aged 65 and above. Such pensions are also granted to physically handicapped persons of 60 and above. In this district the sanctioned number for old-age pension cases is 400. Each pensioner gets a monthly pension of Rs. 20.

The State Government runs a Blind School, established recently, in the district at a cost of Rs. 38 per month per student.

Apart from the various measures taken by Government to help the people belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to improve their lot, several Missions have also been working on tribal problems in the different pockets of the district. The activities of the Swedish Mission (established in 1896), affiliated with the Santal Mission Northern Churches having their headquarters at Dumka, Bihar, deserve special mention. The Mission started work in Natuapur, about 7 or 8 miles from Koch Bihar, in the Sadar subdivision, around 1940 amongst a Garo colony. The Tribal Welfare Department has erected houses and schools, established grain golas and sunk tube-wells in this place. A small cooperative weaving factory has been started by the Mission. At Dasgram Gobrachara in Dinhata subdivision the Tribal Welfare Department has started a weaving factory amongst the inhabitants belonging to the different Scheduled Castes and Tribes of this place. A Kirloskar irrigation pump has also been set up here. In Jamadarer Bash and Kutialer Bash a new settlement of tribal refugees from East Pakistan, about six miles away from Dinhata has grown after 1961. Lands have been given partly by the Government and partly by the Mission to those displaced persons for settlement. The Mission has also supplied different materials for building houses. Some tube-wells have also been sunk. Pigs and poultries have been distributed by the Mission and the Tribal Welfare Department has established two pig rearing farms. Two irrigation tanks have been dug and two Kirloskar irrigation pumps have been supplied by the Mission. In Tufanganj subdivision some of the Mission's activities amongst the Garos and the Oraons are also found. There is a dispensary, a weaving factory and a high school in this place.

CHAPTER XVII

PUBLIC LIFE AND VOLUNTARY SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

The former State of Koch Bihar did not encourage any political party and hence there was none such prior to its merger with India. A sort of limited democracy was created by the State in 1938-39 for associating the subjects with the administration of the State. The king directed that a bona-fide non-official subject of Koch Bihar be included in the Executive Council as a full member, holding charge of certain departments and taking part in all the proceedings of the Council. Such a person was to be elected by the non-official members of the legislative council from among their members and to be responsible to them. There was much contest over that seat, and the Cooch Behar Hitasadhani Sabha nominated a member with their slogan that the economic resources and employment within the State should be left to be utilized best by the sons of the soil. After the merger that Sabha became defunct. It did not put up any candidate at the General Election of 1952. In the year 1947 a Congress office was opened in the district town to carry on the struggle for freedom under the aegis of the Congress movement in India.

At the first election of 1952 the district had 6 seats for the Legislative Assembly, 1 each for Mekhliganj and Matabhanga and 2 each for Dinhata and Koch Bihar constituencies. The following table shows the results of elections to the Legislative Assembly that year:

ELECTION IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT: 1952

Name of constituency	No. of seats	Total no. of votes	Total no. of valid votes polled	Percentage of valid votes to total no. of votes	No. of votes polled by successful candidate	Percentage of successful candidate's votes to valid votes	Parties contesting	Party winning
Mekhliganj	1	52,403	16,950	32.36	7,748	45.49	Congress and Independent	Congress
Matabhanga	1	50,541	21,609	42.76	15,871	73.45	Congress and Independent	Do
Dinhata	2	1,98,090	72,152	36.40	24,388	33.80	Congress, Communist, Independent, K.M.P.P., F. B. (M)	Do.
Koch Bihar	2	1,79,014	68,366	38.19	17,595	27.77	Congress, Communist, Independent, Socialist, K.M.P.P., F. B. (M)	Do.

The reserved constituencies for Scheduled Castes in Dinhata and Koch Bihar returned two Congress candidates who had polled 23,786 (32.97 per cent of valid votes) and 16,251 votes (25.65 per cent of valid votes).

As to the election to the House of the People this district was included in the North Bengal Constituency having 3 seats at that time.

The second election of 1957 showed the following results:

ELECTIONS IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT : 1957

Name of constituency	No. of seats	Total no. of votes	Total no. of valid votes polled	Percentage of valid votes to total no. of votes	No. of votes polled by successful candidate	Percentage of successful candidate's votes to valid votes	Parties contesting	Party winning
Koch Bihar	2	2,03,400	93,296	46.64	23,187	24.85	Congress, Communist, Independent	Congress
Matabhanga	1	62,774	26,864	42.79	14,668	54.60	Congress and Independent	Do
Dinhata	2	2,62,344	1,32,821	50.60	32,707	24.62	Congress, F. B. (M), Independent	Do
Mekhliganj	1	44,167	21,844	49.45	9,498	43.40	Congress, F. B. (M), Hindu Mahasabha, Independent	Do

The reserved constituencies for Scheduled Castes in Dinhata and Koch Bihar continued, while the seat of Matabhanga was earmarked for Scheduled Castes only. In the reserved seat of Koch Bihar a Congress Scheduled Caste candidate was returned who had polled 21,914 (23.50 per cent) votes as in Dinhata another Congress Scheduled Caste candidate was returned polling 41,495 (31.24 per cent) votes.

As to the election to the House of the People there was a constituency named Koch Bihar constituency having 2 seats in 1957. 11 candidates belonging to Congress, F.B. (Marxist), Communist, Praja Socialist Party and Independent parties were nominated, and 2 belonging to the Congress Party got elected.

The following table shows the election results of 1962:

ELECTION IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT : 1962

Name of constituency	No. of electors	Total no. of votes polled	Percentage of valid votes polled	No. of valid votes	No. of rejected votes	Percentage of rejection	No. of Parties contesting	Party winning
Mekhliganj	58,462	29,021	49.64	27,622	1,399	4.82	17,592	F. B. and Cong. Forward Bloc
Matabhanga (Scheduled castes)	81,025	35,896	44.30	34,252	1,644	4.58	18,770	Congress and C. P. I.
Sitalkuchi (Scheduled caste)	73,027	35,072	48.02	33,569	1,503	4.28	15,596	F. B., Congress, Forward Bloc Independent.
Dinhata	98,532	46,139	46.83	44,113	2,026	4.39	26,807	Do
Koch Bihar South (Scheduled caste)	65,526	28,421	43.37	27,526	895	3.14	6,101	Do
Koch Bihar North	71,952	31,677	44.02	30,662	1,015	3.20	19,296	F. B., Congress
Tufanganj	85,311	53,298	62.47	50,112	3,186	5.98	26,222	C. P. I., Congress, Independent.

In the aforesaid election a Forward Bloc candidate obtained 1,41,436 votes out of a total number of 5,33,835 electors and 2,59,577 votes polled was elected to the House of the People from the Koch Bihar (Scheduled Castes) constituency.

The following table gives the results of the elections of 1967:

ELECTIONS IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT : 1967

KOCH BIHAR

Name of constituency	No. of electors	Total no. of votes polled	Percentage of votes polled	No. of valid votes	Percentage of rejected votes	No. of parties contesting	Party winning
Mekhliganj (Scheduled caste)	71,682	51,497	71.84	49,060	2,437	4.73	31,402 F. B., Congress, Forward Bloc Independent.
Matabhanga (Scheduled caste)	74,881	44,670	59.65	41,815	2,855	6.39	26,872 C. P. I. (M), Congress. C. P. I. (Marxist)
Koch Bihar West or Sitalkuchi (Scheduled caste).	81,205	45,929	56.56	43,322	2,607	5.68	18,409 Congress, F. B., Independent
Sitai	64,646	44,737	69.20	41,816	2,921	6.53	20,485 Congress, F. B., Independent
Dinbata	77,337	56,238	72.72	53,395	2,843	5.06	29,371 F. B., Congress, Independent
Koch Bihar North	70,916	49,354	69.60	46,227	3,127	6.34	17,440 Congress, F. B., C. P. I. (M), Independent
Koch Bihar South	67,697	49,180	72.65	45,597	3,583	7.29	19,479 Do
Tufanganj (Scheduled caste)	72,106	52,357	72.61	48,970	3,387	6.47	27,283 Congress, C. P. I. (M), C. P. I., Independent

As regards the House of the People, a Forward Bloc candidate was elected to it, from the district in 1967, obtaining 1,67,971 votes (51.60 per cent) out of the total votes numbering 5,08,364.

The mid-term elections of 1969 and 1971 showed the following results:

MIDTERM ELECTIONS IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT :1969-1971

Name of constituency	1969			1971		
	Parties contesting	Winning Party	Votes secured by the winning party	Parties contesting	Winning party	Votes secured by the winning party
Mekhliganj (SC)	F. B., Congress, Proutist Bloc	Forward Bloc	25,678	F. B., C. P. M., Cong-O, Cong-R, Ind.	Forward Bloc	19,880
Matabhanga (SC)	Congress, C.P.I.(M)	Congress	23,845	Cong-R, Cong-O, Bangla Congress, C. P. M., Forward Bloc, Independent	Cong-R	21,302
Koch Bihar West (SC)	Congress, F. B., Loke Dal, Jana Sangha	Do	24,915	Cong-R, F. B., Cong-O, C. P. M.	Do	22,563
Sitai	Congress, F. B.	Do	26,982	Do	Do	20,969
Dinbata	Congress, F. B., Proutist Bloc, Independent	Do	29,764	Do	Do	24,249
Koch Bihar North	Congress, F. B., Loke Dal, P. B., J. S	Forward Bloc	23,810	Do and B. C.	Do	25,099
Koch Bihar South	Congress, F. B., Independent	Congress	26,029	Do	Do	21,582
Tufanganj (SC)	Congress, C. P. I. (M), L. D.	Do	30,808	Cong-R, Cong-O, F. B., C. P. M.	Do	28,678

A Congress (R) candidate obtaining 1,50,869 votes was elected to the House of People from Koch Bihar (SC) Constituency in 1971.

The following table gives the results of the General Elections of 1972 to the legislative assembly:

ELECTIONS TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FROM KOCH BIHAR
DISTRICT: 1972

Name of constituency	Parties contesting	Party winning	Votes secured by the winning party
Mekhliganj (SC)	Congress, F. B., Independent	Congress	25,816
Matabhanga (SC)	Congress, C. P. M.	Do	27,493
Koch Bihar West (SC)	Congress, F. B.	Do	30,804
Sitai	Do	Do	28,592
Dinhata	Congress, F. B. and Independent	Do	30,404
Koch Bihar North	Congress, F. B., Congress-O.	Do	29,142
Koch Bihar South	Congress, Independent, C. P. M.	Do	29,800
Tufanganj (SC)	Congress, C. P. M.	Do	36,304

The following journals of different periodicities are published in the district, namely, *Adhunik Sahitya*, *Balmik*, *Koch Bihar Barta*, *Koch Bihar Samachar*, *Deshbarta*, *Ganasakti*, *Geetika*, *Grameer Bhasa*, *Jugabarta*, *Mahakal*, *Nagari*, *Panchanan*, *Tribritta* and *Uttar Simanta Banga*. Calcutta dailies like *The Statesman*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Hindusthan Standard*, *Ananda Bazar Patrika* and *Jugantar* are also in circulation.

There is a blind school named Megha Mandir at Nilkuthi, Koch Bihar, which is managed by the Social Welfare Directorate of the State Government. It was established in 1965 for providing free shelter, education and food to blind boys below 18. General education and music lessons are imparted to them at present. The total expenditure incurred for the school in 1973-74 was Rs. 54,000. There is also a non-Government blind school of the Swedish Mission at Koch Bihar. It is a residential school for blind children providing food, shelter and education to them and it looks after their proper economic rehabilitation after completion of education.

The Social Welfare Section of the Education Directorate of the State Government runs a registered organization named Nirasraya Nari O Sisu Seva Bhavan at Koch Bihar. This Welfare Home was established in 1957. Subject to availability of seats and fulfilment of certain prescribed conditions, children aged between 6 and 14 and belonging to the socially and economically handicapped families are eligible for admission to the Home. There they stay until they attain 18 years of age, or pass the School Final or Higher Secondary Examination or complete a prescribed course of Vocational/Technical training. The sanctioned strength of such inmates of the home is 225. The actual number of the inmates, as it stood on the March 31, 1974 was 205. There is a Government grant at the rate of Rs. 55 per inmate per month; besides, at the time of admission an initial outfit grant of Rs. 150 per inmate for buying beddings, etc., is also allowed. Government also grants at flat rate Rs. 5 per inmate per month as tuition fees from class V to class X or XI, as the case may be.

The Department of Planning and Community Development of the State Government ran some Mahila Mandals in the district from 1969-70. The Government of India selected Koch Bihar II Development Block as the venue for implementation of the scheme of Composite Programme for Women and Pre-school Children. At that time two programmes named 'Nutrition Education through Mahila Mandals' and 'Demonstration Feeding' were undertaken in the said block. In 1971-72, the programme of Nutrition Education through Mahila Mandals was taken up in three Development Blocks, namely, (i) Dinhata I, (ii) Tufanganj and (iii) Matabhanga I. The Nutrition Education Programmes are financed by the State Government while the Demonstration Feeding is financed by the Government of India.

The Nutrition Education Programme arranges demonstrations showing better use of local food, introduction of balanced food, etc. through Mahila Mandals. A non-recurring grant of Rs. 500 for demonstration and kitchen equipment and a recurring annual grant of Rs. 250 for contingencies for each Mahila Mandal for two years are provided by Government. This is a time-bound programme and each Mahila Mandal after completion of two years does not receive further grant from the Government. The following table shows the amount spent on Nutrition Education in Koch Bihar II Development Block between 1969-74:

Year	Fund sanctioned Rs.	Expenditure incurred Rs.
1969-70	400	400
1970-71	3,195	3,195
1971-72	1,250	584
1972-73	3,062.50	3,062.50
1973-74	1,437.50	Not available

The following table further shows the fund sanctioned for implementation of Nutrition Education in other blocks of the district:

Name of Block	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74
	Rs.	R .	Rs.
Dinhata I	1,689	3,000	2,437
Tufanganj	Do	Do	Do
Matabhanga I	Do	Do	Do

The Demonstration Feeding Programme aims at Nutrition Education by demonstrating low-cost balanced diet based mainly on local food. The feeding which is confined to expectant and nursing mothers and children up to 5 years of age is undertaken 25 days in a month at the rate of 0.25 paise per adult and 0.15 paise per child. Besides, for each feeding centre a grant of Rs. 500 for kitchen equipment an honorarium at the rate of Rs. 35 per worker per month for two Associate Women Workers are sanctioned for implementation of this programme. There is also a provision for expenditure amounting to Rs. 100 for contingencies.

There is also a programme for the encouragement of economic activities of Mahila Mandals in selected Development Blocks. The scheme is financed by the Government of India and every year awards are given to selected Mahila Samitis for their economic activities. The following table shows the awards sanctioned in different Blocks of the district in recent years:

Name of Development Block	Number of Samiti	Awards	
		1972-73	1973-74
		Rs.	Rs.
Dinhata II	1	1,000	800
Matabhanga II	1	400	Nil
Dinhata I	1	400	Nil
Tufanganj	1	400	1,000
Total		2,200	1,800

CHAPTER XVIII

PLACES OF INTEREST

BAKSHIRHAT—It is situated 7 miles (11.2 km.) to the east of Tufanganj on the left bank of the Mara Sankosh with which it is connected by the National Highway. The place is at the border of Assam and West Bengal and is a good marketing centre. It is a flourishing village inhabited by a large number of merchants. A big bi-weekly *hat* assembles here on Tuesdays and Fridays dealing in rice, paddy, jute, mustard seeds and vegetables. The place is supplied with electricity and connected by telephone.

BALARAMPUR—It stands about a mile (1.6 km.) west of the Kaljani, 12 miles (19 km.) south-east of Koch Bihar and 12 miles (19 km.) north-east of Dinhata. It bears *taluk* No. 943 of *pargana* Koch Bihar and is now located within the area of Tufanganj P.S. It had a population of 12,897 in 1961. The place grew into importance since the time Maharaja Lakshminarayan appointed his brother Mahinarayan as the *Nazir-deo*. From this time Balarampur became the headquarters of the *Nazir-deo*, the hereditary Commander-in-chief of the Koch Bihar army. Gradually, the power of the *Nazir-deo* so increased that at the time of the treaty with the East India Company in 1773 the *Nazir-deo* realized nine-sixteenth of the total revenue of Koch Bihar. After the revolt of 1785 when the boy Raja Harendranarayan was abducted to Balarampur, the then *Nazir-deo* Khagendranarayan was dismissed from office and all his lands confiscated. The claim set up by him to nine-sixteenth of the revenue of the State was not accepted by Lawrence Mercer and John Lewis Chauvet Commission which recommended a pension of Rs. 500 per month and a *jagir* extending for two *kos* around his residence. Shortly after Maharaja Harendranarayan assumed power he stopped the pension. Later the matter was amicably settled at the intervention of Montgomery, the Collector of Rangpur and Khagendranarayan's *jagir* was re-demarcated to include land to the extent of one *kos* around his residence. This roughly represents the present *taluk* of Balarampur which is nick-named Kroschi-Balarampur.

The family of the *Nazir-deo* has become extinct and their old palatial dwelling is now in ruins. The area grows good mustard seeds and there is a colony of Muslim oilmen in the vicinity.

BANESWAR—It is situated in Koch Bihar P.S. and in Koch Bihar II Development Block and is connected by a good road with Koch Bihar and Alipur Duars. It is 6 miles (9.6 km.) north of Koch Bihar. It is a station on both the meter gauge and the broad gauge Railways. It had a population of 1,755 in 1961. A *hat* on Sundays and Wednesdays attract quite a large number of people. The place is famous for the Baneswar temple and is a place of pilgrimage for the people.

The temple of Banerwar Siva was built by Maharaja Prannarayan in about 1665. There is reason to believe that the present temple was built on the site of an earlier temple. Prannarayan also excavated the *dighi* at the place. The temple is square in shape and is surmounted by a dome which is about 50 feet high from the ground. The sanctum is a square in shape and the floor of the cella is about 10 feet lower than the terrace in front of the temple which faces west. The *lingam* and *yonis* together with the floor of the temple is now inclined towards the east as a result of the earthquake of 1897. Up to the height of the first storey the walls on the inside are vertical and above this the construction is changed into an octagon by putting an arch in the centre of each side and one at each corner, so that there is a continuous series of eight arches. The haunches between these arches are filled by pendentives made by projecting the corners of bricks at an angle as is done in edging pathways. Having thus obtained a complete circle, the drum projects inside by about 2" to 3" and rises about 3 feet about which is a semi-circular dome which rises from the drum by being recessed slightly behind it. The crown of the dome consists of a full-blown lotus. The walls of the sanctum are 8 feet thick and the vaults above the entrance on the west and north are pointed.

On the outside, the skyline of the shrine below the dome and of the cornice resembles the shape of a bent bamboo. Each face consists of a central pediment with four plain projections on either side. The dome comes very near the centre of the square on each side, but the space left at the corners is very much larger. There is a bronze image of Nandi 1' 6" high with a trident in each hand, resembling a bull or a monkey. There is a tank to the south of the temple.

CHANGRABANDHA—It bears *taluk* No. 154 included in Mekhliganj P.S. It stands on the bank of the Dharla (western) and was an important market place when the Dharla was navigable. It was connected by road with Patgram (now in Bangladesh) and before the partition had a brisk trade standing on the road joining Patgram with Jalpaiguri. Even now it stands on the road from Matabhanga to Mekhliganj and is connected with Jalpes and Maynaguri. It is a rail head connected by a broad gauge line to Maynaguri. With the opening of the new broad gauge line connecting Maynaguri with New Jalpaiguri, Changrabadha has become an export centre of jute and tobacco.

There is a colony of *doms* at the place and they make excellent articles of bamboo.

DAMODARPUR—It stands on the right bank of the Mara Torsa about 2 miles (3.2 km.) to the west of Koch Bihar and had a population of 70 in 1961. Maharaja Lakshminarayan built the *dharm* for the saint Damodara-deva on a raised round. A small *mandir* of Hari was also erected here. The diversion of the Torsa has eroded a considerable portion of the *dharm* and the place is now almost abandoned.

DEWAN HAT—It stands on both sides of the Koch Bihar Gitaldaha Road 8 miles (12.8 km.) south of Koch Bihar. The metre gauge Gitaldaha-Alipurduars Railway lines passes by the place. There is a Railway station named Dewan Hat.

DHALIABARI—It is 4 miles (6.4 km.) south-east of Koch Bihar and had a population of 1,456 in 1961. Here Maharaja Upendranarayan built a palace. There is a temple of Siva here. The temple is of the *pancha-rathna* style similar to Vishnupur group of temples in West Bengal with one central dome surrounded by four turrets at the four corners. The height is about 45 feet. When Dr. Buchanan Hamilton saw it in 1809, the central dome was missing. There is a deep niche covered by a multifoil arch corresponding to the *mihrah* in the mosques. To its south stood the palace of Upendranarayan, now in ruins. There were 14 tanks round this place but except the Phulbari and Sagardighi, all are filled up.

DINHATA—It is the headquarters of the subdivision of the same name with a population of 11,737 in 1971 and is located on the Koch Bihar-Gitaldaha Road, 16 miles (25.6 km.) to the south of Koch Bihar. The metre gauge railway passes by the east of the town and has a station here. The Dharla which is the southern channel of the Torsa passes by the west of the town. The *bunder* or the market place is called Chawra Hat. Dinhat has grown greatly after 1950. It now has a college and high schools.

* FULBARI—It is situated on the right bank of the Dipa-Raidak and was made the headquarters of the Tufanganj subdivision since May, 1896. A new town was built on the south-east of the Ranihat *bunder* in *taluk* Kamat Fulbari. The town is not even half a square mile in area. The *bunder* and the civil station are closed to one another.

GOSSANIMARI—It is 8 miles (12.8 km.) to the east of Dinhat standing on the road connecting Dinhat with Sitai. The Singimari or the lower current of the Mansai flows by the west and south. The place has a bi-weekly *hat*. The area grows good tobacco. Gossanimari stands on the site of old Kamtapur, the capital of the Khen kings which was overrun by Allauddin Hossain Shah in 1498. The remains of the city of Kamtapur are gigantic works of art and best peak of the great power and wealth of the king or kings who conceived the idea of the citadel. It is triangular in shape, long from west to east with a perimeter of about 20 miles. The two sides of the triangle met in the west and was protected by a high rampart and an inward and outward ditch covering a length of 15 miles while the old western Dharla protected the east side. There were two redoubts, one towards the north east and the other towards the north-west. There were four gates to the rampart called the Hoke-duar, Sil-duar, Bagh-duar and Jay-duar. The Sil-duar was apparently the main entrance and it is said that the door was a stone slab. The large quantity of brick and stone

debris at this place indicates that there were watch towers and sentry houses on either side of the entrance. Several large slabs of granite are lying about.

Within the rampart lies the *Raj-pat* or central citadel ascribed to Raja Nitambara, the last Khen King (1460-1498). It occupies a central position and is enclosed by a double row of walls with a counter scarp between them. The inner wall was of brick and outer one of earth and a ditch surrounded the whole. This is said to have been the residence of the king. In the palace there are reliefs showing figures in worshipful attitude, a male figure pulling out a garland, a native couple in a seated position, soldiers with swords, woman with child fondling the breasts, etc.

The present Gossanimari or Kamteswari temple situated here was built by Maharaja Prannarayan. It is situated in *taluk Bhitir Kamta* on the left bank of the Singimari, a mile from the *raj-pat*. There is no idol in the temple. A box whose contents no one is allowed to see is said to contain the *kabacha* of king Bhagadatta who was killed in the Kurukshetra war according to the *Mahā-bhārata*.

The temple is typical of the late 17th century Bengal architecture. It has the usual Bengali hut type of arch on the outside above which the dome rises. The vertical portion on the outside of the structure shows a multifoil arch on each side framed by heavy pilasters. The space above the arches is also ornamented with small niches of the same type. Internally each side is spanned by a pointed arch. Between the meeting points of these arches are the pendintives at the corners making an arch on which the drum is carried on three short projecting vertical tiers and on that is carried the hemispherical dome. The soffit has the usual *padma*. The walls of the sanctum have typical niches and other chases. The temple is inclined to the north as a result of the earthquake of 1897, but there are no fissures on the walls.

Inside the temple in the north side niche is an image of the Sun-God (Surya). The icon is 21 inches in height and Surya is in the usual standing position with two full-blown lotuses in either hand. The feet are as usual covered by high boots. The ears are decorated with *kundala* and behind the left hip is a small sword in scabbard. There are two long necklaces and the *upavita*, the necklaces reaching down to the boots. The usual figures of Dandā and Pingala are on the left and right and in front of these are two *chauri*-bearers. The figures of *Ushā* and *Pratyūsha* are there below the figures of Dandā and Pingala, shooting arrows. *Chhāyā* is placed in between the feet and in front is the small figures of Aruna, the charioteer. The seven horses face sideways. The sculpture appears to belong to the late Pala period. There is a bronze icon of Surya of a much later date. The horses in this icon all face front. The figures of *Chhāyā* and the *Chauri*-bearers are absent in this icon.

Inside the turret in the south-east corner is a standing figure of Vishnu, 37 inches high, made of basalt. It is the usual Trivikrama type. He wears a high *kiritamukuta* and a garland clasped at the middle. The *upavita* is prominent and the *vanamālā* falls below the knees. This also appears to be a late Pala period image. The temple was built by Kavimandal in 1665 by orders of king Prannarayan.

HALDIBARI—It is a small town of about half a square mile and has a population of 5,098 according to the Census of 1971. Before the Partition Haldibari was an important business centre being located on the railway line from Calcutta to Siliguri. That facility caused the place to grow up. At present trade is limited to traffic with Jalpaiguri. Separated by the Tista from the main land of the district, Haldibari has now a small hinterland.

HARIPUR—Haripur, situated on the north side of the old Jalpes Road, 7 miles (11.2 km.) north-west of Koch Bihar, is famous for the old temple of Mahadeva Harihar. The temple appears to be as old as the temple at Baneswar. It is square in shape and is surmounted by a pyramidal dome. The walls are massive and are 8 feet thick. The temple sank about a third of its height and tilted on one side due to the earthquake of 1897.

JAMALDAHA—It is situated in Mekhliganj P. S., 10 miles (16 km.) from Changrabandha. The Matabhanga-Mekhliganj Road passes through Jamaladah. It is a good market place and a *hat* assembles on Tuesdays and Fridays. A good business is carried out in jute, tobacco, rice and vegetables.

KOCH BIHAR—It is the headquarters of the district with a population of 53,684 in 1971. The town stands on the left bank of the eastern channel of the Torsa which bifurcates below the *taluk* Kaljani. On the west of the town is the old loop of the Torsa called Mara Torsa. On the east is the channel of the Bura Torsa which flows from north-west to south-east. The tract included between these two channels is the town of Koch Bihar. It is about two miles long from south to north and a little over a mile broad from west to east. Since the last devastating floods of the Torsa in 1954 a seven mile long embankment protects the town against rising of the Torsa. It is a station on the Alipurduars-Gitaldaha section of the N. F. Railway and the new broad gauge Railway line connecting New Jalpaiguri with Alipurduars passes close by the town where a station has been made with the name of New Cooch Behar. The National Highway 31 passes through the town and there is an airport used by the Indian Airlines.

The town is well laid out with straight and broad roads which generally intersect at right angles. *sissoo*, *Kadam*, *Nagkesar*, *Mango* and *Jack-fruit* trees are generally to be found on either side of the roads. There are quite a number of tanks in the town

which served as principal source of drinking water in the past. The most important of these tanks are the Sagardighi, the Bairagidighi and the Laldighi. The Sagardighi is the largest and the most beautiful of the three. It was excavated during the reign of Maharaja Harendranarayan in 1807 and is 954 feet long and 536 feet broad. Around this tank is situated the principal Government offices of the district which were burnt down by a riotous mob after an incident in the last week of August 1974.

A little to the east of the Sagardighi is the Bairagidighi. Formerly, there was a bustee of *bairagis* at the place, whence the name. Its original date of excavation is not known but it was re-excavated and brought into present shape in 1870. It is 446 feet long and 440 feet broad. The Koch Bihar Thakurbari and the Ananda Mayi Dharmasala are to the north of this tank while the Victoria College is to east. In the south are situated the Brahmo Samaj and the Club. The Laldighi is to the north of the Bairagidighi. To the north of the Laldighi is the market place and the Victoria Jubilee Tower erected in 1887. The tower rises to 70 feet and is provided with a winding stair-case. It has four stories, each opening into a hanging platform. The top is a dome with iron pillar forming a belfry.

At some distance from the north of the Sagardighi commences the palace grounds. The Koch Bihar Palace is a well defined two-storeyed building raised 4 feet 9 inches above the ground. It covers an area of 51,309 sq. feet. The facade consists of a range of arcade on the ground and first floors, and is accentuated in a pleasing manner at the north and south ends by the building projecting a little beyond the regular line at these portions, and in the centre by a porch and the basement of the dome. A pleasing effect is produced in these arcades by the alternate use of narrow and broad piers; the narrow ones having a single Corinthian pilaster on the face, and the broad ones having a wider rusticated pilaster in the centre with a Corinthian pilaster on either side. The caps and bases of the pilasters and the archivolt mouldings and key-stones are buff-coloured terracotta. The pilasters are plastered with portland cement. The dome, which forms the main feature on the facade is dodecagon in shape, is surmounted by a lantern of suitable size and flanked in front by two neatly designed towers the tops of which are 102 feet 3 inches above the ground.

KOCH BIHAR is now one of the main centres of trade in the district. The commodities marketed are tobacco, jute rice, pulses and mustard seeds. A sizable quantity of jute and tobacco are exported by air. It is the headquarters of the North Bengal State Transport Corporation which maintains passenger services to Calcutta, Assam and Bhutan.

MADHUPUR—It lies on the side of the old Jalpes Road, 4 miles (6.4 km.) north-west of Koch Bihar with a population of 533 in 1961. Several Hindu idols are enshrined here. The *dham* was established by Sankara Deva. There is a *Vishnupada* here

where *pindas* are offered by the devotees for their forefathers. The chief object of veneration, however, is a translation of the *Bhagavata* into the Rajbanshi dialect by Madhab Ray in the reign of Maharaja Naranarayan. It is kept on a *Simhasan* and a light is kept burning day and night. It is devoutly read by the chief priest every evening and then follows the *nama gan*. The *dham* is a well-known place of pilgrimage for the *Sankarpanthi* Vaishnavas. The priests of this sect are called *Bhakta* and they observe life-long celibacy.

MATABHANGA—Standing on the right bank of the Mansai, it is the headquarters of the subdivision of the same name and has a population of 9,167 according to the Census of 1971. The town is small, only covering an area of 0.73 sq. mile. It is held within a loop of the Satanga flowing by the south and west of the town. The Mansai has eroded a great part of the town and in 1880 the civil station had to be shifted to its present site. In 1952 and in 1954 there were further erosions of the town and the neck of land in between the Satanga and the Mansai was narrowed still further. The *bunder* and the *hat* ground take up the northern part of the town wherein are located some big firms of Bengali and Marwari merchants.

There is a High School for boys and another school for girls. There is a Post and Telegraph Office and a Telephone Exchange.

MEKHILGANJ—(26° 21' 27" north latitude and 88° 56' 42" east longitude). It is the headquarters of the subdivision of the same name and stands on the left bank of the Tista. It had a population of 3,777 in 1971. The small town is made up of the civil station and the *bunder* (or market place). The *bunder* occupies the southern portion of the town. There are several big shops of Marwaris and Bengalis round the *hat* ground. The importance of the *bunder* is in tobacco traffic. The biggest *hat* of the district is held here twice a week.

NISHIGANJ—It is in Matabhanga P.S. and is on the road connecting Koch Bihar with Matabhanga. It is 9 miles (14.4 km.) from Matabhanga and 17 miles (27.2 km.) from Koch Bihar. There is a pretty big bi-weekly *hat* held here assembling on Tuesdays and Fridays. It is a flourishing village and is a trade centre for jute, tobacco, cattle and vegetables.

PUNDIBARI—It stands on either side of the National Highway 31 and is 10 miles (16 km.) to the west of Koch Bihar. It is the headquarters of Koch Bihar II Block Development Office. It is now a station on the new broad gauge Railway line connecting New Jalpaiguri.

SIDDHESWARI—Six miles (9.6 km.) north-east of Koch Bihar in *taluk* Siddheswari is situated the Siddheswari temple erected by Maharaja Prannarayan. The temple is octagonal in shape and is of the same height as the Banerwar temple. The temple is dedicated to Bhagavati and the goddess is represented by a *Gauri-pat* placed in a cavity. The courtyard is raised and paved

The place is held very sacred and considered by the local people to be second only to Kamakhya in sanctity. It had a population of 2,278 in 1961.

SITAI—It is the headquarters of the police station of the same name with a population of 1,608 in 1961. It is 18 miles (28.8 km.) from Sitalkuchi. The trade centre contains houses of some big local merchants. Before the Partition it served as an important place from which trade was carried on with East Bengal districts. The area produces good tobacco and sugarcane.

SITALKUCHI—It is the headquarters of the police station of the same name and is also the headquarters of Sitalkuchi Block Development Office. It is 13 miles (20.8 km.) from Matabhanga with which it is connected by a good road. There are two important bi-weekly *hats* held, one at Sitalkuchi and the other at Gossairhat. It had a population of 12,302 in 1961.

There is a health centre, a library, an inspection bungalow and a high school here.

TUFANGANJ—It is the subdivisional headquarters of the same name situated to the east of Koch Bihar town. The town had a population of 4,209 in 1971. It has a Block Development Office, a college, schools, hospital, etc.

The Chilārāi tank and Chilārāi fort of Tufanganj are named after Chilārāi, a great fighter and the brother of King Naranārāyan. He established a separate kingdom in Assam and took the name of Sukladhvaja when he did not get any part of the kingdom of Kāmtā. The Chilārāi fort surrounds an area of about 140 ft. × 180 ft. It has a 7 or 8 ft. high mud wall.

Near the market place there is a temple of Madanmohan or Giridhārīlal Gopiballav on a high mound. It is one-storied and flat-roofed and is about 50 or 60 years old. It is said that there was an old temple here of the same deity built by King Lakhminārāyan. The temple now houses two big and two small-sized Radhakrishna icons. They are worshipped with much pomp during Rathajātrā, Rāsajātrā and Doljātrā festivals. During Doljātrā, a fair is held here for three days.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

General

- Chaudhuri, Harendra Narayan—The Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlements, Cooch Behar, 1963.
- Cooch Behar State—Annual Administration Reports of the Cooch Behar State from 1876-77 to 1940-41, Cooch Behar, 1877 to 1941.
- Government of India—The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. X, Oxford, 1908.
- Government of India—The Imperial Gazetteer of India—Provincial Series—Bengal, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1909.
- Government of West Bengal, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics—District Statistical Handbook, Cooch Behar (1971 and 1972 combined), Calcutta, 1974.
- Government of West Bengal—Census 1951—West Bengal District Handbook, Cooch Behar, Calcutta, 1953.
- Government of West Bengal—Census 1961—West Bengal District Census Handbook, Cooch Behar, Calcutta, 1966.
- Government of West Bengal, District Information and Public Relations, Koch Bihar—*Samviddhir Pathe Koch Bihar*, Koch Bihar, 1976.
- Hunter, W. W.—A Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. X, London, 1876.
- Koch Bihar Municipality—*Rasmela*, Koch Bihar, 1974.

CHAPTER I

General

- Abul Fazl-i-Allami—*Āin-i-Ākbari*, Vol. I (tr. H. Blochmann), Calcutta, 1939.
- Fleet, J. F.—*Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. III, Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings and Their Successors, Calcutta, 1888.
- Government of Bengal—Report on Cooch Behar-Jalpaiguri Boundary Commission, Demarcation of *Chhita*, Alipore, 1941.
- Government of Bengal, Irrigation Department—Report of the Northern Bengal Flood Committee, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1926.
- Government of India, Botanical Survey of India—Bengal Plants, Vols. I & II by D. Prain, Calcutta, 1963.
- Government of India, Indian Meteorological Department—Climatological Tables of Observatories in India (1931-1960), Nasik, 1967.
- Government of West Bengal, Home (Political) Department—Cooch Behar Manual, Alipore, 1953.
- Rennel, James—Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan, London, 1788.

CHAPTER II

History

- Ahmed, Shamsud-Din—Inscription of Bengal, Vol. IV, Rajshahi, 1960.
- Bondyopadhyay, Bhagavati Charan—*Kochbiharer Itihas* (in Bengali), Cooch Behar, 1289 B.S.
- Bhattacharya, Padmanatha—*Kamarupa Sasanavali* (in Bengali), Rangpur, 1931.
- Chatterji, S. K.—*Kirata-Jana-Kriti*—The Indo-Mongoloids—Their contributions to the History and Culture of India (Second Edition), Calcutta, 1974.
- Fleet, J. F.—*Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. III, Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings and Their Successors, Calcutta, 1888.
- Gait, Edward—A History of Assam (Second Revised Edition) Calcutta, 1926.
- Ghosh, J. M.—Sannyasi and Fakir Raiders in Bengal, Calcutta, 1930.
- Ghosal, S. C.—A History of Cooch Behar (translated from Original Bengali Work *Koch Bihar Itihas* by Khan Chowdhuri Amanatulla Ahmed), Cooch Behar, 1942.
- Government of India—Brief Accounts of the Indian States in Bengal, Delhi, 1933.
- Hamilton, Francis Buchanan—History of Cooch Behar (being an extract of a passage from Buchanan's account of Rangpur) in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. VII, Part I, 1838, Calcutta, 1838.
- Hamilton, Walter—Geographical, Statistical and Historical Description of Hindostan and the Adjacent Countries, Vol. I, London, 1820.
- Jenkins, Francis—Sketch of the Connection of the British Government with Cooch Behar (in the Selections from the Records of the Bengal Government, No. 5), Calcutta, 1851.
- Khan Chowdhuri, Amanatulla Ahmed—*Koch Bihar Itihas* (in Bengali), 1st Part, Cooch Behar, 1342 B.S.
- Mercer, Lawrence and Chauviet, John Lewis—Report on Cooch Behar in 1788, Vol. II, Cooch Behar, 1869.
- Ryley, J. Horton—Ralph Fitch—England's Pioneer to India and Burma, London, 1899.
- Sarkar, J. N.—The History of Bengal, Vol. II (Muslim Period), Dacca, 1948.
- Sen, Surendra Nath—*Prachin Bangala Patra Samkalan* (in Bengali), Calcutta, 1942.
- Sircar, D. C.—Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India, Delhi, 1960.

CHAPTER III

People

- Chatterji, S. K.—*Kirata-Jana-Kriti*—The Indo-Mongoloids—Their Contributions to the History and Culture of India, (Second Edition), Calcutta, 1974.
- Dalton, E. T.—Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal, Calcutta, 1872.
- Government of India, Census of India, 1872—Report on the Census of Bengal, by H. Beverley, Calcutta, 1872.
- Government of India, Census of India, 1891—Vol. III—The Lower Provinces of Bengal and their Feudatories—The Report, by C. J. O'Donnell, Calcutta, 1892.
- Government of India, Census of India, 1961—Vol. XVI—West Bengal and Sikkim, Part II-C(1), Social and Cultural Tables, Delhi, 1965.
- Government of India, Census of India, 1961—Vol. XVI—West Bengal and Sikkim, Part VA(1), Tables on Scheduled Castes, Delhi, 1966. Part VA(II), Tables on Scheduled Tribes, Delhi, 1967.
- Government of India, Census of India, 1961—Vol. XVI—West Bengal and Sikkim, Part VI(8), Village Survey Monograph on Madhur Bhasa, Delhi, 1972.
- Government of India, Census of India, 1971—Series 22—West Bengal, Part IIA, General Population Tables, Delhi, 1973.
- Government of West Bengal, Land and Land Revenue Department—The Tribes and Castes of West Bengal by A. Mitra, Alipore, 1953.
- Government of West Bengal, State Statistical Bureau—Rehabilitation of Refugees—A Statistical Survey, 1955, Calcutta, 1956.
- Grierson, G. A.—Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. V—Indo-Aryan Family, Eastern Group, Part I. Specimens of Bengali and Assamese Languages, Calcutta, 1903.
- Hamilton, Francis Buchanan—History of Cooch Behar (being an extract of a passage from Buchanan's Account of Rangpur) in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. VII, Part I, 1838, Calcutta, 1838.
- Risely, Herbert—The people of India (Second Edition), Calcutta, 1969.
- Sanyal, C. C.—The Meches and the Totos (Two Sub-Himalayan Tribes) of North Bengal, Darjeeling, 1973.
- Sanyal, C. C.—The Rajbansis of North Bengal, Calcutta, 1965.
- Watters, Thomas—On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India: 629-645 A.D., Vols. I & II, London, 1904-05.

CHAPTER IV

Agriculture and Irrigation

- Bandyopadhyay, Bhagavati Charan—*Kochbiharer Itihas* (in Bengali), Cooch Behar, 1289 B.S.
- Central Bank of India—Lead Bank Survey Report, Cooch Behar District, Siliguri, 1972.
- Cooch Behar State—Cooch Behar State Gazetteer (Statistics 1901-02), Calcutta, 1905.
- Government of India, Census of India, 1971—Series 22—West Bengal, Part IIA—General Population Tables, Delhi, 1973.
- Government of West Bengal—Economic Review, 1974-75, Calcutta, 1975.
- Government of West Bengal—Statistical Abstract, West Bengal, 1960.
- Government of West Bengal, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics—Statistical Handbooks for different years, Calcutta.
- Government of West Bengal, Development and Planning Department (Evaluation Section)—Handbook of Plan Schemes, 1969-70 to 1971-72, Vol. III, Jalpaiguri Division, Calcutta, 1972.
- Government of West Bengal, Forest Directorate—Proceedings of Symposia : West Bengal Forests Centenary, 1964, Calcutta, 1966.
- Government of West Bengal, Department of Forests—West Bengal Forests (Centenary Commemoration Volume 1964), Calcutta, 1966.
- Government of West Bengal, Tribal Welfare Department—Impact of the Tea Industry on the Life of the Tribals of West Bengal, Calcutta, 1964.
- Sinha, N. K.—The Economic History of Bengal, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1962.

CHAPTER V

Industries

- Central Bank of India—Lead Bank Survey Report, Cooch Behar District, Siliguri, 1972.
- Government of India, Census of India, 1971—Series 22—West Bengal, Part IIA, General Population Tables, Delhi, 1973.
- Government of India, Census of India, 1961—Vol. XVI, West Bengal and Sikkim, Part VI(8), Village Survey Monograph on Madhur Bhasa, Delhi, 1972.
- Government of West Bengal, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics—Statistical Handbooks for different years, Calcutta.
- Government of West Bengal, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics—The Survey of Small Industrial Units in Urban Areas of West Bengal, 1969-1971, Report : Results of Listing Survey, Calcutta, 1973.
- Government of West Bengal, Directorate of Cottage and Small Scale Industries—Directory of Small Scale Industrial Units in West Bengal, Calcutta, 1967.

Government of West Bengal, Directorate of Industries (Statistical Cell)—Handbooks on Industrial & Allied Statistics, District Cooch Behar, 1965, Calcutta, 1966.

Government of West Bengal, Finance Department—Economic Reviews for 1966-67, 1970-71 and 1974-75, Calcutta, 1967, 1971 and 1975.

CHAPTER VI

Banking Trade and Commerce

- Central Bank of India—Lead Bank Survey Report, Cooch Behar District, Siliguri, 1972.
- Government of India, Census of India, 1971—Series 22—West Bengal, Part IIA, General Population Tables, Delhi, 1973.
- Government of West Bengal, Cooperative Department—The Co-operative Movement in West Bengal, Calcutta.
- Government of West Bengal, Directorate of Industries (Statistical Cell)—Industry Directory—National Extension Service Block Areas, Cooch Behar District, 1960.
- Government of West Bengal, Development and Planning Department (Evaluation Section)—Handbook of Plan Schemes, 1969-70 to 1971-72, Vol. III, Jalpaiguri Division, Calcutta, 1972.
- Government of West Bengal, Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organisation, Development and Planning (T. & C. P.) Department—Development Plan for North Bengal (An Approach), Calcutta, 1974.
- Government of West Bengal, Finance Department—Economic Reviews for 1966-67, 1970-71 and 1974-75, Calcutta, 1967, 1971 and 1975.
- Reserve Bank of India—Statistical Tables Relating to Banks in India for the year 1972, Bombay, 1974.

CHAPTER VII

Communications

- Bandyopadhyay, Bhagavati Charan—*Kochbiharer Itihas* (in Bengali), Cooch Behar, 1289 B.S.
- Central Bank of India—Lead Bank Survey Report, Cooch Behar District, Siliguri, 1972.
- Government of India, Ministry of Railways (Railway Board)—Indian Railways : One Hundred Years, 1853 to 1953, New Delhi, 1953.
- Government of West Bengal, Department of Works and Buildings—Road Problems of West Bengal, Calcutta, 1960.
- Government of West Bengal, Finance Department—Economic Reviews for 1966-67, 1970-71 and 1974-75, Calcutta, 1967, 1971 and 1975.
- Rennell, James—M memoir of a Map of Hindoostan, London, 1788.
- Roberts, Fred. S.—Routes in the Bengal Presidency, Calcutta, 1877.

CHAPTER VIII

Economic Trends and Miscellaneous Occupations

- Government of India, Census of India, 1961—Vol. XVI—West Bengal & Sikkim, Part IIC(i), Social and Cultural Tables, Delhi, 1955.
- Government of India, Census of India, 1961—Vol. XVI—West Bengal & Sikkim, Part VI(8)(a), Village Survey Monograph on Madhur Bhasa, Delhi, 1972.
- Government of India, Census of India, 1971—Series 22—West Bengal, Part IIA, General Population Tables, Delhi, 1973.
- Government of India, Census of India, 1971—Series 22—West Bengal, Part IIB(i), General Economic Tables, Delhi, 1973.
- Government of India, Ministry of Labour and Employment (Labour Bureau)—Agricultural Labourers in India—Report on the Second Agricultural Labour Enquiry, 1956-57, Vol. II, West Bengal, Simla, 1961.
- Government of West Bengal, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics—Statistical Handbooks for various years, Calcutta.
- Government of West Bengal, Scheduled Castes and Tribes Welfare Department—Trends of Occupation Pattern Through Generations in Rural Areas of West Bengal, Calcutta, 1968.
- Government of West Bengal, State Statistical Bureau—Family Budget Enquiry in 23 Towns of West Bengal including Calcutta, 1950-51, Calcutta, 1954.
- Government of West Bengal, State Statistical Bureau—Family Budget Enquiry in 24 Towns of West Bengal including Calcutta, 1955-56, Calcutta.
- Government of West Bengal, State Statistical Bureau—Family Budget Enquiry in Rural and Urban Areas of West Bengal, 1959-60 and 1960-61, No. 3—Household Indebtedness in West Bengal, Calcutta, 1967.

CHAPTER IX

General Administration

- Bandyopadhyay, Bhagavati Charan—*Kochbiharer Itihas* (in Bengali), Cooch Behar, 1289 B.S.
- Beveridge, H.—Annual Administration Report of the Cooch Behar State for 1865-67.
- Ghosal, S. C.—A History of Cooch Behar, Cooch Behar, 1942.
- Glazier, E. G.—A Report on the District of Rungpore, Calcutta, 1873.
- Jenkins, Francis—Sketch of the Connection of the British Government with Koch Behar (in the *Selection from the Records of the Bengal Government*, No. 5), Calcutta, 1851.
- Mercer, Lawrence and Chauvet, John Lewis—Report Cooch Behar in 1788, Vol. II, Cooch Behar, 1869.

CHAPTER X

Revenue Administration

- Bandyopadhyay, Bhagavati Charan—*Kochbiharer Itihas*, Cooch Behar, 1289 B.S.
- Firminger, W. K.—The Fifth Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company, dated 28th July, 1812, Vol. II (Introduction to the Bengal Appendices to the Fifth Report), Calcutta, 1917.
- Khan Chowdhuri, Amanatulla Ahmed—*Koch Bihar Itihas* (in Bengali), 1st Part, Cooch Behar, 1342 B.S.
- Mercer, Lawrence and Chauvet, John Lewis—Report on Cooch Behar in 1788, Vol. II, Cooch Behar, 1869.

CHAPTER XI

Law, Order and Justice

- Barlow, G. N.—Annual Crimes Report of the Cooch Behar Division for the year 1871, Calcutta, 1872.
- Ghosh, J. M.—Sannyasi and Fakir Raiders in Bengal, Calcutta, 1930.
- Government of India—The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. VIII (Second Edition), London, 1886.
- Haughton, J. C.—Annual Crimes Report of the Cooch Behar Division for the year 1870, Calcutta, 1871.
- Haughton, J. C.—Reports on the Police of the Cooch Behar Division for the years 1866-69, Calcutta, 1867-70.
- Majumdar, N.—Justice and Police in Bengal, Calcutta, 1960.

CHAPTER XII

Other Departments

Based on Reports of the respective Departments of the State Government

CHAPTER XIII

Local Self-Government

- Government of West Bengal, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics—Statistical Handbooks for different years, Calcutta.
- Government of West Bengal, Cooperative Directorate—Annual Reports on the Working of Cooperative Societies in West Bengal for the years 1966-69.
- Government of West Bengal, Law Department—The Cooch Behar Municipal Act, 1944 (As modified up to 1 January, 1959), Calcutta, 1959.

Government of West Bengal, Legislative Department—The Cooch Behar Town Committee Act, 1903 (As modified up to 1 May, 1970), Calcutta, 1970.

Government of West Bengal, Legislative Department—The West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1957 (As modified up to 1 May, 1966), Calcutta, 1967.

Mukherjee, S. K.—Local Self-Government in West Bengal, Calcutta, 1974.

CHAPTER XIV

Education and Culture

Chakravartti, A. K.—Literature in Kamata Kochbihar Raj-Darbar, Dhubri (Assam), 1964.

Cooch Behar State, Education Department—The Annual Administration Report of the Education Department of the Cooch Behar State for the year 1910-1911, Cooch Behar, 1911.

Government of India, Census of India, 1961—Vol. XVI—West Bengal & Sikkim, Part IIe(1), Social and Cultural Tables, Delhi, 1965.

Government of India, Census of India, 1971—Series 22—West Bengal, Part IIA, General Population Tables, Delhi, 1973.

Government of West Bengal, Education Directorate—Septennial Review on the Progress of Education in West Bengal for the period 1957-58 to 1963-64, Calcutta, 1970.

Government of West Bengal, Education Directorate—Reports on Public Instruction in West Bengal for different years, Calcutta.

Government of West Bengal, Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organization, Development and Planning (T. & C. P.) Department—Development Plan for North Bengal (An Approach), Calcutta, 1974.

CHAPTER XV

Medical and Public Health Services

Government of India, Census of India, 1961—Vol. XVI—West Bengal & Sikkim, Part IB—Report on Vital Statistics, Delhi, 1967.

Government of West Bengal, State Bureau of Health Intelligence—Annual Report on Hospital Statistics, West Bengal, 1967.

Government of West Bengal, Directorate of Health Services—Directory of Medical Institutions, State of West Bengal (Corrected up to 31 December 1972), Calcutta, 1973.

Government of West Bengal, Directorate of Health Services—Health on the March, 1948-64, West Bengal, Calcutta.

Government of West Bengal, Directorate of Health Services—Annual Reports on the State of Health of West Bengal (Vital and Health Statistics) for different years, Calcutta.

Government of West Bengal, Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organization, Development and Planning (T. & C. P.) Department—Development Plan for North Bengal—(An Approach), Calcutta, 1974.

CHAPTER XVI

Other Social Services

Government of West Bengal, Tribal Welfare Department—Backward Classes Welfare in West Bengal (1952-56), Calcutta, 1957.

Government of West Bengal, Tribal Welfare Department—Annual Administration Report for 1965-66, Calcutta, 1967.

CHAPTER XVII

Public Life and Voluntary Social Service Organizations

Government of India, Ministry of Law—*The Delimitation of Council Constituencies (West Bengal) Order, 1951* (as corrected up to the 1st January, 1958), Delhi, 1958.

Government of India, Ministry of Law—*The Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies (West Bengal) Order, 1951* (as modified by Parliament).

Government of India, Election Commission—*The Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Order, 1956* (corrected up to the 31st March 1957), Delhi, 1957.

Government of India, Election Commission—*The Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Order, 1961* XIV, West Bengal, New Delhi, 1961.

Government of India, Election Commission—*Report on the First General Elections in India : 1951-52* (Vol. II), Delhi, 1955.

Government of India, Election Commission—*Report on the Second General Elections in India : 1957* (Vol. II), Delhi, 1959.

Government of India, Election Commission—*Report on the Third General Elections in India : 1962* (Vol. II), Delhi, 1963.

Government of India, Election Commission—*Report on the Fourth General Elections in India : 1967* (Vol. II), Delhi, 1967.

Government of India, Election Commission—*Report on the Fifth General Elections in India : 1971-72*, Narrative and Reflective Part, New Delhi, 1972.

CHAPTER XVIII

Places of Interest

Government of India, Census of India, 1961—Vol. XVI—West Bengal, Part VII-B, *Paschimvanger Puja-Parvan O Mela* (in Bengali), 1st Part, Delhi, 1969.

Government of West Bengal, Public Works (Archaeology) Department—*Koch Bihar Jelar Purakirti* (in Bengali), Calcutta, 1974.

INDEX

Abwabs, 142

Addikaris, 53, 55

Administration in 1949, 138-39; H. Beveridge on the state of, 136; modernized, 39, 40; present set up, 139-40; reforms of, 137; transfer of, 1

Agricultural diseases, 77; farm, 76; implements, 75-6, 85; Income tax, 153; labour, 153

Agricultural produce, marketing of, 97-8

Agriculture Demonstration Centre, 197

Agriculture Department, 77, 162

Agriculture, State assistance to, 81-2

Agronomist, 162

Ahmuty, Richard, Resident Commissioner, 134-143

Ahom King, 32; attacked by Koch king, 31

Ain-i-Akbari, 1f

Air Port, 121, 211

Air transport, 121

Alamgirnagar, changed name of Koch Bihar city, 32

Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudra Gupta, 1

Allauddin Hussain Shah, 28, 29, 30, 209

Amlaka, 135, 136, 143

Amo-Chu, name of the Toroa of Bhutan, 12

Ananta Kandali, poet, 172

Anchalik Parishad, 170

Animal Husbandry Department, 162

Aphsad inscription, 27

Artificial insemination centres 78

Artificial Insemination Programme, 79

Artisan School, *see* Industrial Training Institute

Atharokotha, Birnarayan transferred his capital to, 32

Aurangzeb, 32

Ayurvedic system of treatment, 182, 190

Bagdi, 50

Bahariethan-i-Ghaibi, 1

Bairagis, 53, 212

Bakshirhat, 122, 207

Balaram, court-poet, 173

Balaram, presiding deity of agriculture, 52

Balarampur, 207

Bamanhat, 184, 193

Bamboos, 15-6, 31, 64

Baneswar, 122, 207-08; temple, 33, 53, 207-08, 211, 214

Bangladesh, 5

Banking facilities, 90-3

Banks, Commercial, 80, 81, 90, 91-2; Cooperative, 81, 90, 92-3, 162

Bar Association, 161

Bare Bhumiya, 30

Beckett, W.O.A., Asstt. Commissioner, 64, 145

Bengali (language), 47

Betel leaves, 16-7, 51, 55, 59; nut, 15, 51, 55, 56, 59

Beveridge, H. on the state of administration, 136

Bhagadatta, King of Pragjyotisha, 27, 28, 29, 210

Bhagavata Purana, translated, 173, 213

Bhagavati (Goddess), 214

Bhaskarvarman, 28, 52

Bhavachandra, 28

Bhavaniganj, 135

Bhawariya, a priesthood class, 54, 55

Bhot, country, 29

Bhujadeva, 34

Bhutias, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37

Bikramananda Tarkalamkar, 172

Bile (marshes), 14, 15, 64, 65

Birnarayan, son of Lekshminarayan, 32, 173

Birth-rates, 55, 186, 187

Bish (unit of land), 142

Bishahari, *see* Manasa

Bisu, *see* Viswasimha

Biri (one paddy), *see* paddy under crops

Blaves map of 1650, 1

Blind School, 197, 204

Bodo, 47

Brajasundar, poet, 173

Brahmapala, 28, 29

Brahma-Vaivarta Purana, translated, 173

Brahmo Samaj, 212

Brahmottar land, 149, 151

Bridges, 120-121

Briscoe, Thomas, first Civil Surgeon, 182

British Government, 1, 134, 136, 143,

Bruse, Charles Andrew, 134

Buddhist monastery, 2

Buddhists, 50

Bura Thakur, 53

Bura Thakurani, 53

Campbell, Superintendent of Darjeeling, 39

Campbell, Sir George, Lt. Governor of Bengal, 144

CARE, 193

Cattle, 77, 213; census of 1966, 78; damaged by floods, 82; used for carrying loads, 114

Central Semen Collection Station, 79

Chakradhvaja, 29

Chamar, 50

Chandan, son of Jira, 30

Chandi (goddess), 52

Chandranarayan, adopted by Sivendranarayan, *see* Narendranarayan

Chandras, 28

Changrabandha, 91, 121, 135, 208

Chaukidari, system, 166

Chaukidars, 155, 166, 185

Chauvet, John Lewis, 38, 134, 207

Chekakhata, 36, 37

Chhits, *see* enclaves

Chila Rai, *see* Sukladhvaja

Chin Chu, name of the western Raidak in Bhutan, 12

Chit fund company, 90, 92

Cholera, 45, 183

Christians, 50

Circuit House, 121

Climate, 19

Code of Criminal Procedure, introduced in Koch Bihar, 137

Collectors of Rangpur, 37, 38, 43, 134, 207

Colleges, 176, 180, 181, 209, 212

Commercial taxes, 153

Community Development Blocks, 131, 141

Comotay, *see* Kamata

Composite Programme for women and Pre-school children, 205-06

Conveyances, 118-20, 121

Cooch Behar Hitasadhani Sabha, 199

Cooch Behar State Press, *see* West Bengal State Press

Cooch Behar Town Committee, 166-68; converted into a Municipality, 167

Cooperation Credit societies, 91, 93, 162

Cooperative grain gola, 196

Cooperative movement, 93

Cooperative societies, 93-4, 162, 163

Cornwallis, Lord, 134

Cost of Living Index, 129-30

Council of State, 137, 138, 155;—Establishment of, 137

Court/Courts, 134, 135, 155, 157, 158, 159-60, 161; Civil, 135; Criminal, 135; Revenue, 135; Raj Sabha, 135, 137, 166

Credit facilities, 91

Crops, 65, 67-74; Barley, 74; Jute, 18, 70-71, 77, 96; Mustard seeds, 73-4; paddy, 18, 67-70, 77, 96; pulses, 65, 74, 96; sugarcane, 74, 214; Tobacco, 71-3, 96, 214; wheat, 65, 74, 84, 96; damaged by floods, 82; *Kharif* and *rabi*, 65

Dacoties, 157

Dairy, 132

Dak Bangalow, 121

Dakkhaiswatwa (a form of land tenure), 150

Dalton, G.J.B. Tuite on education, 175

Damodar, Vaishnava preacher, 53, 208

Damodarpur, 208

Dangdhar (deity), 53

Dargas, 54

Darpadeva, the Raikat, 37

Dasgram, 197, 198

Death-rates, 186-87, 189

Demonstration Feeding Programme, 206

Devaraja of Bhutan, 36, 37, 38

Devendranarayan, son of Upendranarayan, 35, 36

Devinandan, 173

Devottar lands, 142, 149, 151, 190

Dewan, 137, 138, 142, 148, 155

Dewanhat, 122, 209

Dewanika, 166

Dhairyendranarayan, 36, 37, 38

Dhalnabari, tomb of Shah Fakir at, 54

Dharendranarayan, 37, 38, treaty of E.I.Co. with, 43-4

Dharla (river), 8, 9, 10, 12, 66, 67, 115, 209

Dharmapala, 28

Dharmaraja of Bhutan, 38

Dharma Sabha, established by Sivendranarayan, 39

Dharmashala, Anandamayi, 212

Di Chu, name of the course of the Jaldhaka in Bhutan, 8

Dickson, Lieutenant, 37

Dighis, 29, 208, 209, 212

Dinanarayan, adopted by Upendranarayan, 35

Dinhata, 60, 61, 79, 80, 81, 83, 84, 88, 91, 97, 209; Police Station, 6, 100, 101, 103-04, 108-11, 121, 122, 131, 135, 140, 158, 162, 164, 165, 167, 168, 169, 170, 176, 181, 182, 189, 191, 192, 193, 195, 197, 205, 206; revenue *pargana*, 6, 67; subdivision, 6, 14, 47, 81, 116, 128, 130, 131, 139, 159, 161, 191, 193, 198

Dipa (river), 13

Diseases, 183, 187-88, 194

Dispensaries, 182, 183, 184, 189, 192, 193, 197, 198

District Hospital, *see* under Hospital

District Judge, 159-60

District Planning Committee, 132

District Veterinary Laboratory, 79

Dolong (river), 8, 11

Dons, 208

Doobi copperplate of Bhaskaravarman, 28f

Douglas, Henry, Resident Commissioner, 38, 134, 143

Drainage schemes, 64

Draupadi Svayambara, 33, 173

Dravidians, 51

Drought, 82

Duduya (river), 8, 11

Dulal Ghazi, 29

Durgabar, poet, 172

Durlabhnarayan, 172

Dwija Jagannatha, 173

Dwija Kirtichandra, 173

Dwija Rudradev, 173

Earthquakes, 31, 82, 208, 210, 211

East India Company, 1, 39, 135, 142, 143, 157, 207; treaty of, with Bhutan, 38; treaty of, with Dharendranarayan, Raja of Koch Bihar, 37-8, 43-4

Education, 132, 138, 163, 174; Adult, 181; beginning of modern, 174; Collegiate, 176, 178, 180; expenditure on, 175, 176; G.J.B. Tuite on, 175; old time, 174; Primary, 176, 177, 178; Secondary, 176, 177, 178; Technical, 163, 177, 178, 180

Education Directorate, 205

Elections, 199-204

Electricity, Consumption of, 89
 Electrification of villages, 89
 Elephants, used by officials for tours, 118
 Employment, 126-27, 133
 Employment Exchange, 131
 Enclaves, 2-5; origin of, 5-8
 English school, first established by Narendranarayan, 39
 Entertainment tax, 154
 Epidemics, 45
 Excise duties, 153, 154; Assistant Collector of Central, 155
 Exports, 73, 96-7, 114

Fairs, 105-13
 Family Planning Centres, 193-94
 Famine, 82
 Ferries, 120
 Fertilizers, 76-7; consumption of, 77
 Festivals, 105-13
 Fish, 14, 19, 24-8, 80
 Fish Markets, 80
 Fisheries, 80, 132, 163
 Floods, 82, 211
 Forest Products, 80
 Forests, 82, 84, 80, 132
 Foujdari Ahlikar, 56-7, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 157, 160
 Fruits, 16; preservation of, 99
 Fulbari, 183, 209

Gadadhar (river), 14, 67
 Garo country, 29
 Garos, 188
 Garuda Purana, translated, 173
 Garuda, 28, 172
 Gaurinath Karji, 35
 Gauriprasad Bakshi, 35
 Geology, 15
 Ghargharia (river), 12
 Ghose, Ranchandra, 174
 Gidari, *see* Khutamara
 Giladanga, 135
 Gilandi (river), 8, 10
 Gitaldaha, 121
 Goitre (an old disease of Koch Bihar), 188
 Gopi Chandra, 28
 Gosanimari, 121, 209-11; temple, 33, 121, 210-11
 Grain golas, 198, 198
 Guptas, 27-8
 Guriahati, Rupnarayan transferred capital to, 34

Hailstorm, 82
 Haimanti (a kind of paddy), *see* under Crops
 Hajo, Koch Chief, 30
 Haldibari, 60, 61, 76, 80, 83, 84, 91, 119, 121, 122, 164, 167, 168, 169, 183, 189, 193, 195, 211; police station, 3, 6, 100, 113, 158, 192
 Hamilton, Buchanan, 1, 209; on Raj-banshia, 50
 Hara-Gauri-Samvada, 172

Harendranarayan, 38-9, 134, 135, 143, 144, 145, 149, 157, 173, 207, 212
 Harihar Vipra, 172
 Harijans, 197
 Hari mandir, 208
 Harivamsa, 27
 Hariya Mandal, 30
 Hasti-O-bud, 142, 143
 Hats, 207, 211, 213, 214
 Haughton, J. C., Commissioner, 39, 136, 142, 144, 182, 184
 Health, 132
 Health centres, 190-92, 193, 214
 Kema Saraswati, 172
 Hindi (language), 47
 Hindus, 50
 Hira, daughter of Koch Chief Hajo, 30
 Hospital/Hospitals, 183, 184-85, 188, 192-93; District, 190; Jagaddipendra Narayan, 189, 190, 194; Koch Bihar Sadar, 184, 185, 193; Maharaja Jitendranarayan, 189, 190, 193, 194; Police, 190; Subdivisional, 184, 185, 189, 193
 Hostels for backward classes, 197
 Hudumdeo, a tribal god, 54
 Humidity, 20, 22
 Hurricane, 82

Ijaradari system, introduced by Douglas, 143; abolition of, 144
 Imports, 96, 97, 114
 Indian Airlines, 121
 Indian Evidence Act, introduced into Koch Bihar, 137
 Indian Penal Code, introduced into Koch Bihar, 137
 Indigo factory, ruins of an, 75
 Indira Devi, Maharani, 40
 Industrial School and Workshop, *see* Industrial Training Institute
 Industrial Training Institute, 162-63, 196, 197
 Industrial Units, Small-Scale, 86; loans advanced to, 87
 Industries, Bamboo crafts, 87, 208; Eri weaving, 85, 87-8, 127, 197; Gunny, 85; Handloom, 86, 88, 127; Jute fabrics, 85; Old time, 85; Paddy husking, 86; Plywood, 85-8; Pottery, 85; Power, 89; Printing, 86; Smithy, 85; Tea, 86; Tobacco, 88-9; Village, 86
 Inspection Bungalows, 121
 Iradat Khan, Prince, 34
 Irrigation, 132, 164
 Ira Khan, 32
 Isfandiari Beg, 33
 Islam began to be preached in Kamarupa, 54
 Islam Khan, 32
 Ismail Ghazi, 29

Jagadeva, 34
 Jagaddipendra Narayan, 1, 40
 Jahangir, 32
 Jaigira, 145, 149-50, 151
 Jail/Jails, 138, 155, 158-59; Crafts, taught in, 159; District, 168

Jail manufactures, 155
 Jains, 50
 Jaldhaka (river), 2, 68, 67
 Jalia Kailarta, 50
 Jalpaiguri Division, Koch Bihar included in, 1
 Jaipes temple, 33
 Jamaldaha, 211
 Jayanarayan, 33, 34
 Jenkins, Francis, Agent of the Governor General, 134, 136, 174
 Jankins School, 175, 176
 Jhalo Malo, 50
 Jira, daughter of Koch Chief Hajo, 30
 Jitendranarayan, 40
 Jones, Captain, 37
 Jotedars, 142, 144, 145, 147, 188
 Jotes, (revenue paying estate), 143, 144, 145, 150
 Journals, 204

Kajali Kura tank, 29
 Kalidasa, 27
 Kalika Purana, 27
 Kajani (river), 12-3, 67
 Kamakhya temple, 31, 214
 Kamala Bank, 90
 Kamarupa, 14, 27-3, 32, 34, 48, 54; Koch Bihar, a part of, 1; legendary kings of, 27; under Guptas, 27-8; under kings of Koch Bihar, 32
 Kamarupānagara, 29
 Kamata/Kamta/Kamtapur (Koch Bihar), 1, 14, 28, 29, 30, 121, 172, 173, 209, 214
 Kamteswari, Maharani, 38
 Kamateswari temple (*see* also Gosanimari temple), 28
 Kantaduar Inscriptions, 28
 Karatoya (river), 27, 66
 Karindranarayan, adopted by Siven-dranarayan, 39
 Kashem Khan, 32
 Kashikanta Lahiry, Khasnavis, 38
 Kavimandal, 211
 Kavaratna, *Rajakhanda* written by, 33
 Kavaratna Saraswati, *Drona Parvan*, translated by, 172
 Kavi Sekhar, 173
 Khagendranarayan, Nazir, 35, 37, 38, 39, 207
 Khagribari, a centre of learning, 173
 Khan Johan Khan, Nazim of Bengal, 6
 Khangri lands, 142
 Kharganarayan, 36
 Kharsa system, introduced, 144
 Khon Kings, 1, 82, 209, 210

Khutamara, 8, 10
 Kidnapping, 157
 Kiratas, 27
 Koch/Koches, 2, 50-1, 82
 Koch country, over run, 29
 Koch Kings, 30-40
 Koch Bihar, Bhutia account of, 37; described by Ralph Fitch, 31; merged into West Bengal, 139; Merger Agreement of, 40-2; occupied by Mughals, 32; Origin of the name of, 1-2; Merger Agreement, 6; Municipality, 98, 170-71, 190, 195; Palace, 212; Police station, 100, 101-02, 105-07, 121, 122, 158, 162, 163, 164, 165, 190-1; Power House, 89; revenue pargana, 6, 66, 67; State Library, 33, 172, 173; State Railway, 40; Subdivision, 6, 14, 47, 60, 61, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 128, 130, 131, 139, 140, 190-91, 193, 204, 205; Thakurbari, 212; Town, 47, 91, 170, 185, 211-12, 214; Town Committee Act, 166-67
 Kotwali, 6
 Krosi-Balarampur, *see* Balarampur
 Kumlai (river), 8, 10
 Lakheraj, 149, 151
 Lakshminarayan, 32, 172, 207, 208, 214
 Lalbazar, revenue pargana, 6, 66
 Lalitnarayan, Chhatra Nazir, 38
 Land cultivated, 62; irrigated, 63, 66; *khas*, 62, 63; uncultivable, 62, 64 uncultivated, 62, 63
 Land revenue, demands and collections, 154
 Land-Border Agreement, 5
 Library, State, 33, 172, 173
 Life Insurance Corporation of India, 90, 94-5
 Lime, 14
 Literacy rates, 46, 176-78
 Living Index, cost of, 129-30
 Loans, agricultural, 81-2, 92, 93, 130; given to fishermen, 80; given to industries, 86; household, 131
 Macleod, Norman, Commissioner, 135, 182
 Madan, son of Jira, 30
 Madan-kam (god), 52-3
 Madhab Ray, 213
 Madhavananda, Court poet, 173
 Madhupur, 212-13
 Madrasa, 174, 181
 Mahabharata, 27, 172; translated, 33, 172, 173
 Mahadeva, 52, 211, legend of, connected with the name of the district, 2
 Mahakal, *see* Mahadeva

- Maharaja/Maharajas of Koch Bihar**, 1, 2, 6, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 142, 185, 170, 178, 182, 199
Mahesana Gupta, 27
Mahila Mandals, 205, 206
Mahinakaran, Nasir-Deo, 32, 33, 34, 207
Mahinath, poet, 173
Mahindranarayan, Grandson of Vishnu-narayan, 34
Mahiknuhi, 121
Mahitabe, 175
Malaria, 185, 187, 194-95
Malaria Eradication Programme, The National, 194-95
Maldah Madrasa Inscription, 28
Mal lands, 142
Mallanarayan, see Naranarayan, Manasa, 52
Manasamangal, 172
Mandasor inscription, 28
Manik Chandra, 28
Maniram-Das, 173
Mankar (poet), 172
Manasi (river), 9, 66, 67, 120, 213
Man Singh, Mughal Subahdar of Bengal, 32
Manures, 76
Marichi mati Aye, Kidnapper of the King, 38
Markandeya Chandi, translated, 173
Markets/bunder, 97-8, 99-104, 208, 209, 211, 213
Maraiya, see Manasa
Matabhanga, 60, 61, 66, 75, 76, 79, 80, 82, 83, 84, 91, 97, 121, 122, 162, 167, 182, 189, 193, 195, 205, 206, 213;
Police Station, 3, 6, 100, 102-3, 112-13, 158, 164, 165, 168, 169, 181, 191-92; **revenue pargana**, 6, 66, 67;
Subdivision, 6, 14, 75, 82, 117, 128, 130, 131, 139, 140, 159, 160, 161, 176, 191-92, 193
Mech, country overrun by, 29
Megha Mandir, see Blind School
Mekhliganj, 60, 61, 66, 76, 80, 82, 83, 84, 91, 97, 117, 121, 122, 128, 130, 131, 139, 140, 145, 159, 160, 161, 162, 164, 167, 168, 176, 182, 189, 192, 193, 195, 213; **Origin of the name of**, 85; **Police Station**, 3, 6, 100, 102, 113, 125, 135, 158, 164, 168, 169, 192; **revenue pargana**, 6; **Subdivision**, 6, 14, 66, 82, 193
Mercer, Lawrence, 38, 134, 207
Merger Agreement of Koch Bihar, 140-2
Muga of Koch Bihar, 1, 5, 6
Meteorological observatory, 19
Milk Feeding Programme, 193
Minto, Lord, 135
Mir Jumla, Governor of Bengal, 32, 33
Mir Lutfulla, Subahdar of Kamarupa, 32
Missions, 197, 198
Mitra (Mitter) Raja Rajendra Lal, 39
Modnarayan, son of Prannarayan, 33
Mokarari Mahala, 145, 149, 151
Money lenders, 80-1, 90
Mongolians, 51
Montgomery, Collector of Rangpur, 207
Moore, Ralph, Medical Officer, 182
Mughal invasions, 6, 35
Mughals, 32, 33, 34
Muhargam, 54
Mujnai (river), 8, 11, 66
Mukherji, Kasikanta, 174
Muslims, 29-30, 50, 54, 56, 57
Municipality, 167, 168, 170-71, 190, 195
Mustafi, Sivaprasad, 134
Naib Ahlikar, 135, 137, 139
Nala-Damayanti-Kahini, 172
Namasudras, 50
Nar Singh, 31
Naraka, 27
Naranarayan, 31, 53, 172, 173, 213
Narasimha Purana, 172
Narayani rupees, 32, 39, 136, 137, 142, 143
Narendranarayan, 39, 174
Nasarat Shah of Gour, 31
Natabari, 121
National Highway, 31
Nazir-Deo, 142; **family of**, 207
Nidhanpur Copper plate inscription, 28
Niladhvaja, 29
Nilambara, 29, 210
Nilkuthi, 75
Niraraya Nari O Sisu Seva Bhavan, 205
Nishiganj, 122, 184, 213
North Bengal State Transport Corporation, 118, 119, 140, 213
North Bengal University, 181
Nripendranarayan, 30-40, 136, 137, 182
Nutrition Education Programme, 205-06
Occupations, 132-33
O'Donnel (of Revenue Survey), 64, 144, 150; **Survey of**, 144
Ojhas, 182, 183
Orange trees, 7
Orans, 198
Pala period, 210, 211
Pancharatna Sabha, 33
Panchayat/Panchayats, 140, 164, 166, 168-69, 185
Pandit Sabha, see Pancharatna Sabha
Paramananda, Court poet, 173
Parganas, Country divided into, 144; **revenue**, 6-7
Parikshitnayan, son of Raghudev, 32
Pathealae, 174, 175, 176
Patil Charcha, settlement, 145-46, 147
Pemberton, J. G., Surveyor, 39, 144
Pensions, Old age, 197
Pensu Toma, representative of Bhutan to Koch Bihar, 36, 37
Persian, taught in the royal family, 174
Pethhata, grants, 149, 151
Pierard, Francis (Commissioner), 134
Pig rearing farms, 198

- Pinjarir Jhar**, 29
Pirpal, grants, 149, 151
Pirs, 54
Pitamban, poet, 173
Police administration, 137; **set-up**, 140-41
Police stations in 1849, 135; **in 1870-77**, 137; **in 1883**, 155; **in 1940**, 6
Polygamy, 56
Post Offices, 90, 95, 122-24, 213
Poultry, 78, 79
Pundibari, 213
Pounds, 167
Pragjyotisha (see also Kamarupa), 27
Prannarayan, son of Birnarayan, 32-3, 173, 208, 210, 211, 213
Prayoga Rahnamala, 173
Press, Cooch Behar State, see West Bengal State Press
Puberty rites, 56
Pulses, 18
Purling, Charles, Collector of Rangpur, 37
Purusottam Widyavagisa, 173, 174
Puspabhadra Copper plate, 28
Rabha (language), 47
Rabbas, 47, 48
Radcliffe Award, 46
Raghudev, son of Sukladhvaja, 31, 32
Raghuram, court poet, 173
Raghuvama, 27
Rahimganj fort, 37
Rahimganj pargana, see Mekhliganj
Raidak (river), 2, 13-4, 67, 115
Raikata, 30, 34; **of Baikunthapur**, 30, 33, 34
Railway, Koch Bihar State, 40
Railways, 119-20
Rainfall, 14, 19, 21, 64, 78
Raiyati, tenancy, 151
Rajakhanda, 33
Rajarhat, 189, 190
Rajbanshi dialect, 213
Rajbanshi, 50, 56, 57; **abjuring drink**, 59; **manners and customs of**, 50-1, 55-6; **music of**, 59; **religion and religious beliefs of**, 52-3; **women of**, 56, 57
Rajendranarayan, 37, 40
Rajgans, (Kinsmen of the Maharaja), Court's jurisdiction extended to, 137
Raj-pat, 1, 210
Rakam Charcha Settlement, 62, 64, 146f, 147
Ralph Fitch, description of Koch Bihar by, 31
Ramananda Goswami, Rajguru, 35, 36
Ramayana, 27; **translated**, 173
Ramnarayan, Dewan, 36
Ramnath, court poet, 173
Ran Saraswati, 172
Rangpur (Bangladesh), 2
Rati Sarma, 35, 36
Ratnamala, Sanskrit Grammar, 172
Registration, 164-65
Rennel, Major, 1, 12, 114, 115, 117
Resettlement operations (see also Rakam Charcha settlement), 146-48
Resident Commissioner, Office of the, terminated, 134
Rest House, 121
Rev. Robinson, First Superintendent of Education, 174
Revenue parganas, 6-7
Rice, 83-4, 211
Rivers, means of communications, 114
Roads, 64, 114-18, 132
Rudranarayan, Chhatra Nazir, 35, 36
Rupnarayan, 34, 35
Sadar subdivision, see Koch Bihar subdivision
Sadler, Lt., 39
Saktas, 53, 54
Salasthambha, Mlechchha king, 28
Samar Simha, son of Visva Simha, 172
Samudra Gupta, Allahabad Inscription of, 1, 27
Sankara, Vaishnava preacher, 53, 212
Sankosh, see the Gadadhar
Santanarayan/Santanunarayan, Chhatra Nazir, 6, 34, 35
Sanyasis/Sanyasi disturbances, 37, 88, 157
Saradananda, 173
Sarkar, Syama Charan, first Medical Officer, 192
Sarvananda Goswami Rajguru, 38
Sasanka, 28
Sashi Patra, Minister of Kamarupa, 29
Satananda, 173
Satanga/Sutunga (river), 8, 9-10, 213
Satya Pir, 54
Saulmari, 75
Savitri Upakhyan, 172
Scheduled Castes, 50, 196, 197, 198, 200
Scheduled Tribes, 50, 196, 197, 198
School, English, first established by Narendranarayan, 39, 174
School Health, 193
Schools, 174-75, 176, 178-80; **Entrance**, 176; **First Vernacular**, 174; **Guru-training**, 174; **High**, 179, 198, 209, 213, 214; **Higher Secondary**, 180; **Junior Basic**, 178-79; **Music**, 180; **Primary**, 178; **Senior Basic**, 179; **Technical**, 163;
Seed farms, 76
Sen, Iswar Chandra, Deputy Collector, 144
Settlement operations, 145-47, 150-51
Sex-morality, 56
Shah Jahan Nama, 1
Shah Jehan, 32
Shaista Khan, 33
Shamganj, 135
Shamajan (river), 8
Siddheswari, 213-14; **temple**, 213-14
Sikhs, 50
Singimari (river), 115, 209
Sihyasimha, 30
Sisu, see Sihyasimha
Sitai, 60, 61, 76, 80, 83, 84, 184, 198-214; **hat**, 122; **Police station**, 6, 100, 104, 111-12, 125, 158, 162, 168, 169, 191

- Sitalkuchi, 60, 61, 76, 80, 83, 84, 122, 125, 152, 168, 169, 184, 193, 214;
 Police station, 6, 100, 101, 103, 113, 158, 192
Sivaratni, 53
 Siva temples, 39, 53, 209
 Sivendranarayan, 39, 173, 182
 Smiths, W. Towers, 134
Smritis, 134
 Soil, 16; formation, 66-7
 Sola (pith), 14, 17
 Spices, 16
 Srinath Brahman, 33, 173
 State Bank of India, 81, 90, 91
 State Library, *see* Koch Bihar State Library, 33, 172, 173
 State Veterinary Hospital, 79
 Storms, 20
 Stuart, Captain, 37
 Subdivisions, creation of, 137
 Sukladhvaja, brother of Naranarayan, 31, 53, 214
 Sunity Devi, Maharani, 40
Surya (Sun-God), 210
 Sushitavarman, 23
Suvachani, 53
 Suvarna Kosha, *see* the Gadadhar Swedish Mission, 197, 198, 204

 Taluk, defined, 150-51
 Tanks, *see* *Dighis*
Tarikh-i-Bangala, 54
 Tea garden, 75
 Technical institutions, 180
 Telephone Exchange, 122, 213
 Temperature, 19-20, 22
 Timbers, 7
 Tista (river), 8, 66, 67, 120
 Tobacco, 14, 18, 59, 65, 96, 117, 125, 165, 209, 211, 213, 214; cultivation, 71-3, 76, 77; products, 86
Tols, 174, 181
 Toofanganj, 60, 61, 67, 76, 79, 80, 81, 83, 84, 91, 97, 214; Police station, 3, 6, 100-01, 104, 107-08, 121, 158, 162, 164, 168, 169, 170, 181, 189, 191, 192, 193, 195, 205, 206; revenue *pargana*, 6; Subdivision, 6, 14, 67, 81, 115, 116, 128, 131, 139, 140, 159, 160, 161, 191, 193, 198
 Toofanganj Subdivision, establishment of, 137
 Torsa (river), 8, 9, 11-2, 66, 67, 117, 120
 Torsa Pir, 54
 Tourist facilities, 121

 Town Committee, *see* Koch Bihar
 • Town Committee Act
 Town Committees, 166-67, 195
 Traffic in women, 59
 Training-cum-Production Centre, 197
 Tribal Welfare Department, 196, 197
 Tribals, 196-97
 Travels, 121
 Tuberculosis, 194
 T. B. Centre, 194
 Tube-wells, 66, 171, 197, 198
 Tufanganj, *see* Toofanganj
 Tyagasimha, Mlechchha King, 28

 UNICEF, 193
 Upendranarayan, 35, 209
 USAID, 195

 Vaccinations, 183-84, 195
 Vaccination Department, 185
Vaishnavas, 63, 213
 Vasudevnarayan, 34
 Vehicles, goods, 118
 Veterinary diseases, 79; hospitals and dispensaries, 79, 162
 Victoria College, 176, 181, 212
 Victoria Jubilee Tower, 212
 Villages, electrified, 89
 Vipra Visarad, 172
 Vishnu, 52, 53, 211
 Vishnunarayan, 32
 Vishnu Purana, 27; translated, 172
 Visvasimha, 30-1, 35, 172
 Wages for tea-garden workers, 129; for agricultural labourers, 130, 153
 Water supply (rural) 132; (urban), 170
 Weaving factory, 198
 West Bengal State Press, 162
 WHO, 195
 Widow-remarriage, 56
 Winds, 20, 23
 Women, dress of, 57-8; ornaments of, 58; position of, 56-7; traffic in, 59
 Wrapper and Hookah Tobacco Research Station, Dinhata, 88

 Yajnanarayan, son of Mahinarayan, 33
 Yasodharman, 28
Yoginidantra, 27, 52
 Yuan Chwang, 27, 48, 52

 Zilla Parishad, 140, 170