

CHAPTER: VII

CONCLUSION

Historically, Goalpara was a part of Kamrupa in ancient period. Goalpara was ruled by Non-Aryan people till rise of Kamata power in ancient time. Bhuyan chiefs established their power in Goalpara after defeating the descendants of Kamata rulers. The Kamata kingdom was splited into several fractions under Bhuyan chiefs. However, Bhuyan Chiefs of Kamata Kingdom came under the control of Koch. Haoria Mech, who was the progenitor of Koch dynasty has established a kingdom at Chiknajhar (Chiknagram) in Kungtaghat *Pargana* of Goalpara district and reached it zenith under Nar Narayan and his brother Chila Rai. After death of Chila Rai, the Koch kingdom was divided into two parts. One part was included the area Goalpara, Kamrup and Darrang which came under Raghudev, the son of Chila Rai. Another part was situated to the west of Sonkosh river which controlled by Nar Narayan. Lakshmi Narayan succeeded to the throne of Koch Behar after the demise of Nar Narayan and declared himself as an independent ruler. Raghudev refused to acknowledge the suzerainty of Lakshmi Narayan. Raghudev and Lakshmi Narayan were not in good relation and always tried to subjugate the territory of the others. Therefore, for the establishment of their own supremacy, both of them sought the support of Mughal and Ahom respectively. Finally, the descendant of Koch rulers reduced to the status of *Zamindar* under the Mughal Empire. Since that time, Goalpara had become an integral part of the Nawab of Bengal. *Zamindars* of Goalpara paid land taxes to the Mughal Empire. When the Mughal attempted to subdue eastern countries, they made Goalpara as their military station. The Mughal traders also did the trade of salt, muga, ivory, agor and other jungles products.

It was during the reign of Jahangir, English Company came to Mughal Empire with the proposal of conducting trade. Emperor Jahangir gave liberty of trade to English Company and permitted to establish factories anywhere of Mughal Empire. Further, English Company also got a permission for landing their goods at major ports of Mughal on the payment of fixed duties. After the payment of duties, English goods could be transported freely to any other English factories which were located in different part of Mughal Empire. Till the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, English Company could not maintain good commercial position in Bengal. When Furuksiyar occupied the throne of Mughal Empire, Murshid -Kuli- Khan became *Dewan* of Bengal as well as *Subahdar*. During that time, British East India Company obtained a *dastak* (trade permit) from Furuksiyar, the Mughal Emperor, which made exemption of payment of duties on export and import. When Shiraj-ud-Daula became the Nawab of Bengal, he suppressed all the illegal trade activities of British East India Company in Bengal which caused the battle of Plassey.

After the victory of battle of Plassey in 1757, the British East India Company organized good political stability in Bengal with the help of greedy royal officials of Nawab of Bengal. The British East India Company acted as king maker in Bengal and started to impose their policies one after another in Bengal. Bengal was in trouble situation with the demand of more financial concession by the British East India Company. Therefore, Nawab of Bengal made an alliance with the Nawab of Awadh and Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II against the Company. Finally, three powers came into alliance and fought against the Company at Buxer in 1764, where British East India Company won the battle of Buxer. As a result, British East India Company received *Dewani* right in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from Mughal Emperor as war indemnity under the treaty of Allahabad (1765), which completely changed the political and economic scenerio of Bengal. The *Dewani* right brought the Company close to *Zamindars* of eastern frontier of Bengal, who were taxpayer of the Mughal Empire in early period. The Company could not collect the land revenue directly from *Zamindars* of eastern frontier as the areas which were under the *Zamindars* were very far from Calcutta. So, the Company empowered military and magistrate power to salt merchants of Goalpara for collection of land revenue as well as to handle trading activities.

Goalpara was the most important trade centre of Bengal and Assam before the ascendancy of British East India Company. After getting *Dewani* right, British East India

Company strengthened their power and position in the field of politics and economics. Gradually, they captured the markets of cotton, silk goods, raw silk, saltpetre, sugar, opium, pepper, ginger, turmeric, ghee, oil, wax, spices, gunny bags and rice in Bengal. In 1765, Goalpara district was passed into the hands of British East India Company. British East India Company established trade centres at Goalpara with the aim of making profit and expansion of their trade boundary towards eastern countries. British merchants exported their merchandise through Goalpara to Assam and in return they imported raw materials from Assam. The merchants of British East India Company carried out trade with the traders of Assam at Goalpara town, Jugighopa and Rangamati.

All rivers of Goalpara district like Sonkosh, Gurfela, Gongia, Gaurang, Champabati, Ai and Manas along with Brahmaputra river were using as a means of transport before the construction of roads. The steamer service was introduced in Assam by 1848, which provided better transport system in the district. Goalpara town, Rangamati and Dhubri became an immediate river ports of Assam. The trade facilities of Goalpara pushed the district authority for the construction of roads in the district. The construction of the road was entrusted to Local Board of Dhubri. Local Board constructed many roads which were linked to all major trade centres. In 1902, the Government of British India had proposed for the construction of railway through the district of Goalpara to link between Bengal and Brahmaputra valley. Therefore, a railway line called Dhubri - Guwahati extension was constructed in 1902, which was completed in 1911.

The forest department had faced many problems for the extraction of Sal timber from the remote and thick forest due to lack of communications. Therefore, the forest department constructed Tram at Kochugaon in 1901, which provided immense help for extracting Sal timber from the forest of Goalpara district. In 1923, Tram was connected with the main line of Eastern Bengal Railway at Fakiragram station.

Salt was a valuable article in the markets of Assam as the people of Assam considered salt as gold because of its non - availability. Insufficient supply of salt from Naga Hills compelled Assam to depend on salt of Bengal. Mughal traders carried out salt trade at Goalpara and exported it to Kandahar *Chowky* of Assam before the establishment of political power of British East India Company in Bengal. The British East India Company came to know that if they conducted salt trade in Assam, they could earn handful amount. So, Company deployed private trade agencies at Goalpara with the aim

for carrying salt trade with the traders of Assam. The trade agencies were exercised magistrate and military power to solve all the dispute relating to trade as well as for the collection of land revenue. So, the salt trade opened a new political door to British East India Company for the establishment of political power in Assam.

By 1870, the Imperial Forest department came to know the revenue potentiality of the forest of Assam. The introduction of Railway in Assam required hard wood sleeper to stick the track on the earth. In 1897, sleeper operation was commenced by the forest department in *Duar* forests of Goalpara district in order enable to supply wood sleeper to Eastern Bengal Railway. The hard wood Sal timber (*Shoria Robusta*) was available in Goalpara district especially in Kochugaon reserve forest. Sal timbers were supplied to Serajgunj, Golando, Mymensingh, Bhairab Bazar and Dacca from Goalpara.

The minor forest products of Goalpara division also provided good revenue to the forest department. All minor products such as bamboos, canes, reeds and thatching grass were exported from Goalpara forest division and *Zamindary* estate to Rangpur, Bogra, Pubna and Mymensingh districts. Number of Elephants were found in Goalpara forest which also came under commercial purview. Elephants were most useful animal for extraction of timber and treated them as warlike animal also. The *Kheda* and forest department jointly conducted elephant caught operation in Goalpara forest especially in *Duars* forest. The caught elephants were sold to central India by *Kheda* department of Dacca.

Jute was an important fibre of India which was mainly available in Bengal. Bengal became world famous jute production centre and supplied to European countries. Jute trade of India could not be discussed without referring the district of Goalpara which was a flank area of Bengal, where huge quantity of jute had been grown. The damp alluvial soil of Goalpara became suitable for jute cultivation. Jute trade was carried out throughout the district of Goalpara and it was supplied to Bengal. The demand of jute fibre in the markets encouraged the peasant of Goalpara to grow more jute. Goalpara district became the largest producer of jute among the district of Assam. Still the people of Goalpara district are busy for cultivation of jute on marsh land in monsoon season.

Since the downfall of Koch kingdom, the Bhutanese ruled over the area below the foothills, which was known as *Duars*. The Mech (Bodo) were inhabited in *Duars*, who paid land revenue to the Bhutan government before the coming of British East India Company. The Bhutanese traders frequently visited the villages of Mech in winter season

to accumulate *endi* cocoon. They came down through *Duars* to Goalpara and Rangpur of Bengal for the purpose of trading. British sent several missions to Bhutan for having commercial relation but no positive response received from Bhutanese government. Aggressive commercial policy of the Company led to a war between British and Bhutan in 1864 which came to end by the treaty of Chinculla in 1866. As per the provision of the treaty, the Bhutanese had surrendered all *Duars* of Bengal and Assam to British India as a war compensation. Thereafter, British established many frontier *hats* and weekly market below the foothill of Bhutan to maintain peace and tranquility in the frontier area.

Garo Hills had good trade relation with Goalpara before British rule. The frontier trade of Garo Hills was controlled by *Chauduries* of Habraghat, Kalumalupara, Koraibari, Mechpara. The Garos had supplied cotton to Goalpara and purchased cows, pigs, goats, fowls, salt, earthenware pots, swords, spearheads, clothes etc. from the frontier markets of Goalpara. Cotton of Garo Hill was very good quality which supplied to Dacca and Mushidabad during the colonial period.

Goalpara, Jugighopa and Rangmati were the principal trade centre where merchants carried out their trade with the traders of Assam. With passage of time, British East India Company occupied the territory lying between Sonkosh and Manas river and established district administration in Goalpara. The district administration was set up at Goalpara (present Goalpara town) but it was shifted to Dhubri for better revenue administration. Since that time, Goalpara and Dhubri sprung up as towns of the district. Dhubri was the first municipal town of Assam which was created in colonial period. The district administration established many government offices at Bijni, Abhyapuri, Jughighopa, Sidli, Basugaon, Bidyapur, Bilasipara, Kokrajhar, Fakiragram, Sapatgram, Tipkai, Bogribari, Manikachar, Gauripur, Gologonj, Agomani, Dotma, Gossaigaon etc. which were also turned up most important places for business, education, and revenue administration. Many hats and weekly markets were coming up in the district due to the flourishing of trade which provided good markets system in the remote places.

The modern education also came up with the development of trade and colonial administration in the district of Goalpara. The traders and government employees push district authority to establish modern education system. Therefore, many schools were set up in the major places from where colonial administration and business could run. On the other hand, Christian missionaries were also established English medium school in

the district which also encourage for the enhancement of modern education system in the district.

The growth and development of trade in Goalpara changed the monetary system of the district. Originally, there was not credit system in Goalpara but mortgage system was existed. With the coming of Marwari businessmen, the old system was replaced by a new financial system in the district which was known as credit facility. The Marwari merchants provided credit facilities to the people of Goalpara district and they also started giving loan to the farmer in term of agriculture production. In 1904, British Government enacted Co-operative for providing credit facilities to the public. Thereafter, a good co-operative movement was started in Assam which led to create some agricultural credit societies in Goalpara district. After that some banks came to Dhubri for providing financial facilities.

Britisher were facing lots of problem for conducting trade in India including Goalpara. There were different types of coin which created is confused for the transaction. . Therefore, the British East India Company introduced uniform legal tender money of one rupee silver coin of 180 grams in Madras in 1818 for regular transaction. Hereafter, Britisher issued different types of coins and paper note denomination for circulation in the markets.

Numbers of immigrant were increased in Goalpara with the establishment of colonial trade. Most of the Marwaris were traders and money lender by profession who served as intermediary in new foreign oriented commerce. Since the establishment of British trade in India, the Marwaris had taken a great responsibility for buying and selling of foreign goods. They migrated into Goalpara and established many *golas*. The people from Sylhet, Dacca, Mymensingh, Rangpur and central India also came to Goalpara in search of jobs in British administrative offices. By 1870, British East India Company came to know that Goalpara had good forest resources which could help to develop British India economy. As local peoples did not participate in the extraction of timber, the forest department compelled to bring tribal labours from Jalpaiguri district to extract Sal timber. Those tribal peoples who came to Goalpara for timber operation did not return to their original places and settled down on marsh land to overcome permanently the labour problem. Large number of railway *coolies* came to Goalpara and later on they settled down there. A group of Santhal was brought by British to Goalpara from Chota Nagpur for plantation of tea. Slowly and steady those Santhals were settled down and occupied the vacant land of forest.

In 20th century, under the “Colonisation Scheme” of British India, the peasant immigrants started to settling on *Char* lands of Brahmaputra. The local people had no interest in the *Char* lands and did not bother about the newcomers. The relinquish habit of local people on land compelled *Zamindars* of Goalpara district to allot land to the Muslims peasant to grow more commercial crops for enhancement land revenue. Subsequently they ushered new era in the agricultural fields of Assam by producing of different types of crops in the same plot of land within the definite period of times. Virtually, they launched Green Revolution in Assam. When provincial was electoral politics started in Assam, the Muslism peasant were enrolled in the electoral roll.

Thus, the British East India Company discovered a good market in Goalpara from which they earned lots of profits. Salt, timber and jute of Goalpara district were very valuable articles which had a great demand in the markets of British India. Last but not less, the trade activities of Goalpara district in colonial period occupied a space in the economic history of world.