

CHAPTER: IV

TRADE IN UNDIVIDED GOALPARA DISTRICT

Trade of Goalpara mainly confined to salt, forest and agriculture products especially jute in colonial period. Salt was an essential commodity in the market of Assam during colonial period. Assam did not produce salt, therefore, people of Assam imported salt from the Naga hills but it was very costly. So, Assam mainly depended on salt of Bengal.

Forest products either major or minor became a source of income to British India. Sal timber of Goalpara forest became precious one among the trees due to its quality and durability for using as sleeper of railway track. Consequently, the forest department along with private timber traders extracted huge mature Sal timber from Goalpara forest for the construction of railway line. In 1901, the forest department established Tramway with the aim to extract more timber from Golpara forest. After the establishment of Tramway more timbers were cut down and transported to Gurfela river *ghat* from where all the timbers floated down to sale depot of Sapatgram, Bogribari and Dhubri. Due to frequent change of river courses, transportation of timbers became unsuitable. To solve the problem of transportation of timber, Tram line was extended up to Fakiragram in 1923.

Agricultural products occupied very important place in internal and external trade in Goalpara. Goalpara district produce raw jute in large quantity which supplied to Calcutta and then to European markets.

The chief articles of local trade in Goalpara district included rice, paddy, kalai pulses of different sorts, jute, lac, eria and muga silk, pipali or long pepper, wax, china kaon, mustard-seed, ivory, oil, timber logs, castor-oilseeds, canes, rattans, molasses, tobacco, mats, cotton, earthen pots of various description brass and bell-metal, utensils, baskets, dry fish, country clothes, beads, betel-nuts, country made wooden furniture such as stools and boxes, long country knives, vegetables, reeds, grass and bamboos. Besides, considerable number of animals like cows, bullocks, buffaloes, goats, sheep and pigs were also important items for trade. The principal seats of trade and commerce in the district were in Goalpara, Bilasipara, Bijni, Dhubri, Jogigopha, Dumaria, Gauripur, Patamari, Agamani, Simlabari, Kherbari, Dimakari, Bogribari, Marnai, Ranjuli, Damra, Jira, Nibari, Singimari, Rajabala, Putimari, Manikachar, Koraibari and Dalo.¹

IV. 1. SALT TRADE

There was no record of production of salt in Assam during the pre-colonial and colonial period. No doubt, small quantity of salt brine was found in Sadiya and Burhat of Naga Hills. However, that brine could not make affordable to the people of Assam. Majority of the people of Assam used *Khar* which was made of burn ashes of plaintain and sesame as salt because the scarcity of salt during that period. In Assam, salt became a symbol of wealth as well as upheld high status in the society. Only rich families could afford the hand made salt from the brine of Naga Hills. During the time of Mughal, salt was imported to Assam from Bengal through Goalpara. In the colonial period, sufficient salt was supplied from Bengal to Assam. Salt of Bengal was cheaper than the hand made salt of Naga Hills. So, the people of Assam gave more emphasis to the salt of Bengal which they could buy within their capacity. Godowns and Warehouses of salt were built in Goalpara for smooth functioning of salt trade in Assam. Salt was transported by Bengal traders from Goalpara to Kandahar *Chowky* from where Assam merchants received salt cargos.

Salt is an inevitable food item for human being. Even, the animals also prefer salt mixed food stuff. Since, the discovery of cooking science, salt became an indispensable food item. In a modern world, salt is extracted by boiling saline water of the sea. Beside, organic salt is extracted from various kinds of fruits and vegetables.² Generally, salty

water of sea has been allowed deposit in shallow ponds and allowed it to evaporate by means of the sun and wind to make salt. In fact, small amount of salt production was carried out from the brine of Borhat and Sadiya of Naga Hills.³ The brine spring was virtually controlled by the Nagas and Adi tribes respectively.⁴ Supply of salt from the Naga Hills was a very little and could not meet the need of the people of Assam. In this regard it asserted by Shiabuddin Talish that,

“Salt was found at the foothills of Assam however, its taste was very bitter and also caustic in nature. Some natives of this country used to cut the young banana trees and dry them on the sun and then the trees were burnt into ashes and ashes were kept in a canvas bag. The canvas bag packed with the ashes was put on a high platform and water is poured over it. In this process, it is distilled and used as salt, though it was very acidic”.⁵

The people of Assam knew the science of extraction of organic salt from burned ashes of plantain trees which was popularly known as *Khar* or *Kharwi*. In some places, the sesame trees were burnt into ash and balls were made of ash by mixing water. It was kept for using as salt. Making of *Khar* was a common practice of the people of Assam since ancient days. Even today, the Kachari people prepare their home-made *Kharwi* or *Khar* from plantain and sesame straw for cooking idigeneous curries like *Ondla* (rice floor curry) *Engkur* (rice curry) *Mwita Unkri* (sour leaf curry) *Sobai Karwi* (black pulse curry) *Narzi Unkri* (jute leaf curry) and many more which does not require any readymade salt.⁶

Because of the scarcity of salt in Assam its value was considered as gold.⁷ It is described that a small quantity of salt (the brine being boiled down in the joint of bamboo) was brought down by the Nagas into frontier markets of Assam for sale.⁸ Besides, small amount of salt had been brought to Rangpur (the capital of Assam) in the joint of large bamboos from salt mine of Sadiya. The salt mine of Sadiya was supervised by an officer called *Mohong-hat Borua*.⁹ The people of Assam always had to depend on the imported salt of Bengal which was cheaper than the brine.¹⁰ So, large quantity of Bengal salt had been imported to Assam every year to meet the requirement of the people.¹¹ But salt from brine spring was considered as purer than the imported salt of Bengal.¹²

The production of salt from sea water was an ancient industry in Bengal. Salt was produced along the sea coast of Bengal from Chittagong to Joleswar which occupied 700 square miles. The areas between Chittagong and Joleswar became highly favourable

for salt manufacturing. On the other hand, the coastal jungle provided fire- wood for boiling sea water.¹³ Archibald Keir wrote the following line in connection with boiling of sea water with the jungle firewood:

“The places where the salt was then made in Bengal, were called jungles or woods. Those covered large tract of the country, most of which was formerly cultivated and paid a very great revenue to the government , and that not two hundred years ago. They were then, however, from the ravage of the pirates and wild beast, except only at the season when the salt-maker went there to cut wood and boilded their salt; or that either people came to deal with them or pass through in boats, in going and coming from the eastern to the western parts of the province; there being travelling there, at any rate, but in boats. The salt - makers or malangis cultivated and inhabited the adjacent area which were cleared and the salt water was kept out from them by means of back of earth. In certain district there were some khalaries, of a similar kind, near the their habitations. Others were situated in the woods”.¹⁴

Before 1757, manufacture of salt and its trade were controlled by indigenious merchants.¹⁵ Generally, Mughal Government had controlled over the production and distribution of salt. The Nawab of Bengal handled the salt trade for the purpose of revenue. Salt trade was assigned to the highest bidders who were known as *Faker-Ul-Tejar*.¹⁶ The Nawab of Bengal granted monopoly trade in salt to Muslim and the Armenians traders only. Salt trade of frontier was supervised by the *Faujdar* (frontier officer).¹⁷ In Assam, salt trade was controlled by *Faujgars* of Rangamati.¹⁸ In June 1793, the Mughal *Faujdar* of Rangamati appealed Raja Rudra Singha, the Ahom king to establish commercial relation with the merchants of Assam. Ahom Raja accepted the appeal of Mughal *Faujdar* with the replied that if the Nawab intended to establish commercial relation with us, should send his merchants to Jugighopa and Goalpara then our leading traders will proceed to Kandahar *Chowky* with large quantities of valuable articles for exchange.¹⁹

The king of Assam and Mughal *Faujdar* of Rangamati maintained a successful salt trade. The Mughal traders preceeded to Goalpara and Jugighopa from where they made contact with the Assam traders. As a result, Assam traders invited them at Kandahar *Chowky* (check point) where both parties exchanged their goods. All salt traders of Goalpara sought military protection from Mughal *Faujdar* and Assam Raja due to some external threats.²⁰ So, Mughal *Faujdar* of Rangmati provided security to Assam traders, who were at Rangamati and Jugighopha. On the other hand, Duria Barua gave protection to Bengal traders at Khandahar *Chowky* which was located at Hadira in Bausi *Pargana* opposite side to Goalpara town.²¹ Khandahar

Barua or Dhuria Barua established seven subordinate custom houses at several routes of river bank to prevent illicit goods transit. It was made mandatory that the duties of salt should be paid at Kandahar *Chowky*.²² All salt cargoes accompanied with *rowanas* were examined by frontier warden at *Chowky*. Each *rowana* contained well specified details of goods such as quantity of salt, name of the agency, destination, name of the proprietor and date of purchase.²³

Number of European merchants were doing trade in Goalpara before the annexation of Assam. Richard Edward, an English merchant of Kashim Bazar sent merchandise to Guwahati in 1669 for sale.²⁴ Colonel James Mill, another English trader joined in Ostend East India Company which established in 1722.²⁵ He became as free-lance merchant in Goalpara after the termination of Ostend East India Company in 1732. The French East India Company had also well organized trade at Goalpara under the supervision of Jean Baptist Chevalier, the Governor of Chandannagar and Commander-in-Chief of the French force of Bengal. In 1755, Jean Baptist Chevalier was transferred by French East India Company from Chandannagar to Goalpara for supervising the trade of Assam. He moved ahead to Sylhet and then to Goalpara.²⁶ He established a considerable trade outpost at Goalpara for salt trade.²⁷ Unfortunately, French East India Company stopped the trade in Assam because Chandannagar was captured by British East India Company on 23 March 1757. However, Jean Baptist Chevalier continued his trade in salt in Goalpara without support of French Company. He became a private salt trader at Goalpara under the protection of Mr, Samuel, an English chief of Dacca. After that, Jean Baptist Chevalier came closer to Vansittart, the Governor of British East India Company. He share the profit of salt trade with Vansittart.²⁸

Faujdar of Rangamti had sole right to trade with the merchants of Assam and the hills tribes. However, Jean Baptist Chevaliar managed himself as a mere salt trader of Goalpara under the protection of British East India Company till 1763.²⁹ In 1763, he left Goalpara and the agency was handed over to Mr. John Robinson.³⁰ Number of Frenchmen namely Laval, Giblot and Campanag also lived in Goalpara along with some English merchants for doing salt trade with Assam traders.³¹ Mr. Laval did salt trade with Assam traders without any hindrance until the outbreak of Anglo-French war of 1774.

The British East India Company came to Goalpara with the aim to expand their commercial boundary towards eastern countries. The resources of Goalpara region and its commercial prospects attracted the European traders.³² Gradually, Goalpara became a

centre of trade for English traders. Paul Richard Pearkes, an English merchant established regular trade with Assam, who erected a salt factory at Jugighopa. After Paul Richard Pearkes, there were two well known English merchants namely John Robinson and Hugh Baillie appeared at Rangamati and Goalpara respectively.³³ Among them John Robinson was the agent of Johnstone, Hay and William Bolt. Beside, Hugh Baillie carried out salt trade in Goalpara on behalf of Henry Vansittart. Hugh Baillie established a salt factory at Goalpara.³⁴ As per the Furrukhsiyar *farman* only the Company merchandise ships were exempted from custom duties but servants of the Company illegally claimed exemption on their private trade, which became dreadful to the subjects of Nawab. So, a dispute broke out between Nawab Mir Kasim and Company servants over the question of inland trade. In 1762, Nawab of Bengal made complaint to Henry Vansittart about the losing of trade in Assam and the trade position of Rangamati and Koraibari came under the control of servants of the Company. Henry Vansittart attempted to negotiate with the Nawab of Bengal but internal tension gradually increased which led to dethrone Mir Kasim and reinstalled Mir Jafar as Nawab of Bengal which was followed by battle of Buxer.

The British East India Company held a strong market position in Bengal after securing the *Diwani* right from the titular Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II on 12 August 1765. The Company attempted to trade with Assam under the 'Society for Trade' which was established by Lord Robert Clive in 1765.³⁵ Hugh Baillie was appointed by Robert Clive as trade agent of the 'Society for Trade' on 1st November 1765 acknowledging his previous experience of trade in those areas of eastern frontier of Bengal. He was posted at Goalpara to supply the articles of inland trade to Assam and other neighbouring countries.³⁶ In 1768, Hugh Baillie obtained salt trade of Goalpara from the Company in lease. He became monopoly trader as well as controller of trade in eastern frontier of Bengal.³⁷ But, his luck turned into bad with the end of the 'Society for Trade'. Hugh Baillie returned to England in the beginning of 1769 due to many circumstances after the abolition of 'Society for Trade' by the Court of Director.

The regulating act of 1773, created a new history in Bengal in terms of trade. Under this act, the British East India Company was authorized monopoly right over all trades. Subsequently, all trades of the remote areas made tender to the private merchants and trade agencies on contract basis under the protection of British East India Company.³⁸

When Hugh Baillie was in England, he had submitted several proposals to the Court of Director for establishment of trade relation with Assam.³⁹ However, the Court of Director did not notice the proposals which submitted by Hugh Baillie. Later on, he again submitted a memorandum to the Court of Director for having trade relation with Assam. The Court of Director considered the proposal which was made by Hugh Baillie and issued an order for the establishment of trade with Assam under the guidance of Hugh Baillie.⁴⁰ In the meantime, Bengal Government was also desired to appoint Hugh Ballie as a supervisor to look over the trade of Assam in consideration to his past experience.⁴¹ Thus, Hugh Baillie came back to India in July 1774 and sought the permission from Calcutta Council to allow him to live in Goalpara with a special license. In september 5, 1774, a meeting of Board of Trade was held in which it was decided to stay Hugh Baillie at Goalpara. However, Hugh Ballie could not earn handsome profit from salt trade due to huge competitors. In 1776, he again submitted third proposal to the Court of Director through the member of Board of Trade regarding salt trade.⁴² His proposal contained the request of proper management of salt trade either under government or gave sole agency to him.⁴³ However, he was removed from Goalpara agency on the charge of mismanagement and appointed him as a writer in the Company office of Bengal in February 1777. When Warren Hasting appointed him as office assistant under the collector of Sarkar Saran Bihar in April 1779, Hugh Baillie handed over all trading matter of Goalpara to his agent Khasinath Ghose.⁴⁴

In 1780, Baillie went back to England but his third proposal was anticipated by Henry Lodge, a member of Dacca Council who placed the proposal before Board of Trade in 15 November 1784 for renewal of salt trade with Assam under government control.⁴⁵ Fortunately, the third proposal was accepted by Court of Director and sent a letter to Calcutta Council in 21st September 1785 with the instruction to reopen trade relation with Assam.⁴⁶ The Court of Director expected to get gold dust and other articles from Assam with reopening of salt trade.⁴⁷ It was also believed by Court of Director that Mr. Baillie could render good service to the Company because of his eighteenth years experience of salt trade in Goalpara.⁴⁸ After six months, an order had been issued by Court of Director to Bengal Government to reappoint Hugh Baillie for conducting salt trade with Assam.⁴⁹ Accordingly, Hugh Baillie was recalled by the Calcutta Council. The Court of Director also wrote a letter to Warren Hasting, the Governor General of Bengal for granting a reasonable commission to Baillie in order to speed up the exports and imports of goods as well as to increase volume of trade with Assam.⁵⁰ On 9 July 1789,

Hugh Baillie was appointed by Bengal Government to do salt trade in favour of the Company. Hugh Baillie arrived in Bengal on 12 July 1787 and suggested Bengal Government not only to prohibit private merchants from selling salt in Assam but also not to carry it beyond to Rangamati. On 18 July 1787, the Governor General Council had issued a formal order to Calcutta Council for appointment of Hugh Baillie as Superintendent of company trade for Assam and Bengal.⁵¹ When he took the charge of Superintendent of trade, he made a request to Bengal Government on 16 August, 1787 to supply *Khulna* salt to Goalpara for sale.⁵² Taking the serious note on the request of Hugh Baillies, Bengal Government advertised a tender notice for transportation of 50,000 *mounds* salt from Narayangunge to Goalpara on 31st August 1787. Only the Greek sailors had the knowledge of navigation in the Brahmaputra river, so they applied for the transportation of salt to Goalpara.⁵³ Bengal Government decided to dispatch 50,000 *mounds* of *Khulna* salt to Goalpara under Greek Sailors on 15 October 1787.⁵⁴ Before actual starting of transportation of salt to Goalpara through Greek sailors, Hugh Baillies informed to Board of trade about the risk of salt transportation under Greek sailors. Considering the information about risk of the transportation of salt given by Hugh Baillie, Board of Trade immediately appointed two Englishmen to look after the transportation of 50,000 *mounds* of salt from Narayangunge to Goalpara. The rate of transportation cost was 26 rupees per 100 *mounds*. The Board of Trade directed to the collector of Dacca for proper checking and examining of all documents of the contractors and the condition of boats before and after loading of salt.⁵⁵ The Board of Trade also authorised Baillie to adopt necessary measures for checking all the documents and boats before loading of salt.⁵⁶

Hugh Baillie expected to sell 100,000 *mounds* at Goalpara in 1788 but could sold only 9,493 *mounds* of salt. The first load which consisted of 50,000 *mounds* of salt arrived at Goalpara in March of 1788. Out of which Hugh Baillie received only 46,873 *mounds* due to wastage and loss in transit.⁵⁷ He sold 6,266 *mounds* of salt to Burua of Assam and 3,227 *mounds* to sundry *paikars* at the rate of 6 rupees per *mound*. Total sale was amounted to rupees 56,957. In July of 1788, 25,000 *mounds* of salt and another 25,000 *mounds* were transported to Goalpara by August.⁵⁸

Generally, Bengal salt was imported to Assam through Goalpara and Jugighopa.⁵⁹ There was a good trade link between Dacca and Goalpara in the early decade of colonial

rule. Goalpara became an integral part of trade circuits of Narayangunj, Serajgunj, Murshidabad and the Mughal port city of Dacca.

George Lear, another English trade agent of Hume Watt came to Goalpara in 1769 with sole object of engaging salt trade.⁶⁰ When he obtained the permission from Bengal Government, a salt factory was established in Goalpara town. The expenditure amount incurred for the construction of salt factory was estimated at Rs. 21,742. He brought all warehouse and godowns of Dacca under his custody.⁶¹ In the meantime, Robert Bigger and Mc Cullam, both English merchants arrived at Jugighopa to engage salt trade with Assam traders. Robert Bigger acted as trade agent under Ganganarayan Roy, a merchant of Dacca. Later on he became trade agent of Robert Hunter, an English merchant of Dacca.⁶² Mr. Mc Cullam was also appointed as a trade agent of Goalpara by Robert Hunter. Afterward, he became a security personal of Robert Lindsay, the Collector of Sylhet. Robert Lindsay posted him at Goalpara for the purpose of salt trade with the responsibility to recover the estate of Daniel Raush.⁶³ William Dow, William, Wheatland, Cator and John Taylor were also other English salt traders who resided at Jugighopa.

Daniel Raush, a well known English salt merchant came to Bengal during 1766. He did salt trade in Goalpara from 1769 under David Kallican, the Company servant as well as Calcutta merchant. He renewed the trade activities in Goalpara after the abolition of Killican's monopoly trade and purchased Killican's factory with all appendages. Francis Hamilton said that Daniel Raush was a "respectable Hanoverian and the principal merchant at Goalpara in 1769".⁶⁴ Daniel Raush entered into an agreement with two Buruas of Kandahar Chowky. As per the agreement, Daniel Raush agreed to supply adequate salt to Assam without difficulties.⁶⁵

After the battle of Plassey, servants of the British East India Company always claimed engaging in private trade by misusing the *dastak*.⁶⁶ The *dastak* was given by Emperor Farrukshiar to British East India Company in 1717 to do trade in Bengal without customs duty. But servants of the Company and exclusive trade society were interfered into the trade policy of British East India Company.⁶⁷ In 1772, Bengal Government assumed full control over the salt trade by introducing new regulations. As per the new regulation, salt manufacture came under salt farmers for five years terms. Under this system, salt merchants agreed to pay advance money to the manufacturers for receiving salt.⁶⁸ Under the Regulating Act of 1773, the British East India Company

abolished all the private trades and established monopoly right over all trades in Bengal. The Company offered all frontier trades to private trade agency on contract basis to stabilise the trade balance of the Company. With the abolition of private trade and establishment of monopoly right, Warren Hasting could collect £120,000 from salt trade in 1775.⁶⁹ But in next, he could not earned much amount on salt trade because of the corrupt practices of local officers and seniors servants of the company.⁷⁰ So, the British East India Company appointed comptroller of salt and trade agents in each district to check the monopoly trade in salt. Although, the profit of salt was not satisfactory. The office of Comptroller of salt was abolished on 15 March 1793. The power and duties of Comptroller of salt was transferred to Board of Trade.⁷¹ Subsequently, the monopoly trade in salt ultimately ended with the introduction of agency system in 1780.⁷² The average annual profit in years 1770, 1771 and 1772 respectively was only £ 80,000. In 1776-77 salt revenue increased to £ 39,012 but it was decreased to £ 8427.⁷³ In 1781, the profit of salt rose to £ 321,912. In 1782 and 1783, the profit of salt increased to £603,076 and £655,646.⁷⁴

The rate of salt per *mound* in Goalpara are given as follows.....

Years	Rs.
1765	125.00
1766	247.00
1767	231.00
1768	148.00
1773	170.00
1778	312.00
1790	234.00/ 314.00
1796	308.00
1797	306.00

1798	380.00
1803-1804	342.00

Bengal produced 30,28,342 *mounds* of salt in 1796 and 26,99, 286 *mounds* in 1796.⁷⁵ Salt was stored in merchant's warehouses before the distribution to nearby wholesale markets, *bazaars* (regular markets), *hats* (periodic markets) in towns, villages and far-away wholesale markets.⁷⁶ Salt entrepots played a significant role for distribution of salt and regulated the balance of supply and demand.⁷⁷ It also helped in controlling prices of wholesale markets in general.⁷⁸

The Indian merchants namely Sooberam Palit and Gunny Sam Sarkar received *perwanas* from Muhammad Reza Khan, Deputy Naib Dewan of Bengal to carry out monopoly of trade in salt at Goalpara for three years.⁷⁹ Ganganayaran Roy was another Bengali merchant who purchased salt trade of 24 *Parganas* for the years 1775-77. He received *rawannah* from the Nawab of Bengal to do salt trade in Assam. On the other hand, his agent Robert Bigger erected a factory at Jugighopa after getting special permission from the Governor General of British East India Company for extending trade in Bijni Raj Estate and Rangpur district. Jagat Seth, a famous Banker of Murshidabad set up business in salt at Goalpara, Jugighopa and Guwahati. His trade continued till the end of 1815. All Marwari merchants in different places of Goalpara had extensive commercial relation with Jagat Seth.⁸⁰ Many Marwari traders of Marwar region of Rajasthan came to Goalpara along with British. The Marwari traders were known as *Keya* in Goalpara and Assam. They established many permanent shops (*gola* as called locally) in Goalpara. The Marwari shops were found almost in all villages of southern part of Goalpara district. The Marwari traders and shopkeepers used to visit weekly markets on schedule day in the week. Huge transaction took place in the weekly markets between buyer and sellers. The district authority organized *hats*, bi-weekly and weekly in some places like Bilashipara, Sapatgram, Gossaigaon, Kokrajhar, Goalpara town, Bogribari, Jughighopa, Alamganj and Agomani etc. These markets gradually developed into permanent commercial centres during colonial period. The Marwari trader acted as money-changers, banker and dealers of rice, mustard, grains, hardware and other articles.

The possession of salt trade in Goalpara had been repeatedly transferred from one to another European due to controversies among traders. In 1809, the Bijni Raj Estate

came under the management of a new collector of the Company.⁸¹ In previous years, the Europeans traders sold 10,000 *mounds* of salt at Goalpara annually.⁸² In 1809, Rs. 1, 92,500 came out from selling of 35,000 *mounds* salt.⁸³ In 1824-25, 25,000 *mounds* salt had been supplied from Goalpara to Assam.⁸⁴ In 1853, 100,000 *mounds* of salt of Rs. 3, 70,000 was imported from Bengal to Goalpara.⁸⁵

Year wise import quantity of salt from Calcutta to Goalpara are given below: ⁸⁶

Years	Quantity
1868-69	56,920 <i>mounds</i>
1869-70	45,418 <i>mounds</i>
1870-71	48,719 <i>mounds</i>
1871-72	55,797 <i>mounds</i>
1872-73	54,444 <i>mounds</i>
1876	36,823 <i>mounds</i>
1878-79	35,572 <i>mounds</i>
1882-83	26,770 <i>mounds</i>
1883-84	33,488 <i>mounds</i>
1884-85	35,022 <i>mounds</i>
1885-86	36,577 <i>mounds</i>
1886-87	44,156 <i>mounds</i>
1887-88	54,009 <i>mounds</i>
1888-89	62,585 <i>mounds</i>
1890-91	66,041 <i>mounds</i>
1891-92	79,512 <i>mounds</i>
1892-93	73,733 <i>mounds</i>

1893-94	73,081 <i>mounds</i> ,
1894-95	1, 11,365 <i>mounds</i>
1895-96	82,038 <i>mounds</i>
1896-97	78,343 <i>mounds</i>
1897-98	72,819 <i>mounds</i>
1898-99	57,618 <i>mounds</i>
1899-1900	64,293 <i>mounds</i> .

Zamindars of Goalpara district set up *hats* (weekly markets) at the *Duars* to keep good relation between the people of Goalpara and Bhutan.⁸⁷ William Robinson mentioned that some articles like pepper, ginger, wax, ivory, cotton, wool, yak tails, rubber and elephant tusk were bartered by the hill tribes for glass, beads, eri-clothes, salt, utensils and agricultural implements.⁸⁸ During winter season, the Bhutanese used to visit in some major frontier markets namely Kochugaon, Serfanguri, Dotma and Bijni for purchasing salt.

During the colonial period, *Zamindar* of Goalpara had partial monopoly right in salt trade. Salt was very important commodity which gave huge revenue to *Zamindar* of Bijni. The traders kept salt in warehouse in every market by paying rent to Bijni Raja. The petty traders purchased salt from the salt merchants at eight rupees per *mound* (84 10/15 S.A. a ser). For one mound of salt, the Garos were handed over three *mounds* of cotton to Bijni salt trader.⁸⁹ *Zamindars* of Goalpara district permitted all petty traders to bring any articles by paying some transit duties except salt for sale at frontier *hats* which were situated below the Garo Hills.⁹⁰

British came to know the internal political condition of Assam through salt trade. Daniel Raush was an important merchant who closely watched the political situation of Assam. When there was an internal disorder in Darrang, he played a crucial political role during the time of Ahom Raja Gaurinath Singha. The internal disorder was mainly because of unlawful appointment of Bishnunarayan as Deka Raja of Darrang by Raja Gaurinath Singh after having killed Hangsanarayan II, the Raja of Darrang and father of Krisnanarayan. Prince Krisnanarayan got angry with the unlawfull act of Gaurinath Singha and revolted. In the meantime Maomoriya rebellion broke out which created to

Ahom. So, Ahom Raja requested military support from Bengal Government through salt traders of Goalpara to suppress the rebellion. Finally, Lord Cornwallis, the Governor of Bengal dispatched Captain Welsh to invade Assam.

IV. 2. FOREST TRADE

Forest was the important natural resource of Goalpara district since early days. Forest of Goalpara district came under *Zamindars* and forest of Eastern *Duars* which were situated below the foothill of Bhutan was controlled by king of Bhutan. By the treaty of Chinsulla 1866, the whole of Eastern *Duars* came under Goalpara district. During that time, the people of Goalpara did not have any idea about the trade on forest resources. However, woodcutters of Bengal came to Goalpara district for the purpose of cutting Sal timber which was transported to Bengal. Generally, forest resources were divided into two i.e. major products related to timbers and minor forest products consisted of bamboo, cane, reeds, thatching grass, Rubber, animal and birds.

Timbers of Goalpara forest division turn into a major source of revenue to British India. Before the establishment of forest department in Assam, Sal trees of Goalpara were exploited by *Zamindars* and private traders for construction of houses, boats etc. Timber traders came to Goalpara district by boats from Dacca and Mymensingh during the rainy season to buy Sal timber.⁹¹ Timbers were tied to the boats and then it was floated down to the port of Narayanganj near Dacca. In the early colonial period, Sal trees of Porbatjhora and Khuntaghat *Pargana* were exploited by *Daffadars* and timber lumbers of Bengal.⁹² Timber merchants of Goalpara exported around 1500 canoes annually to East Bengal from the forests of Howraghat and Mechpara.⁹³

In 1850, Dalton, Collector of Kamrup district reported to the Commissioner of Assam that woodcutters of Bengal used to visit in the forest of Kamrup in search of Sal timbers.⁹⁴ Collector of Kamrup district suggested the Commissioner of Assam to impose tax on felling timber. He also advised the authority to stop felling the immature valuable trees in order to regenerate the forest. In 1852, tax was imposed at the rate of Rs. 15 per 100 logs or nearly 2½ *annas* per log. The timber tax would be estimated Rs. 500 to 600 annually.⁹⁵

On the request of British India, Sir, Dietrich Brandis, the Superintendent of forest of India, made a survey of the forests of Bengal and prepared a proposal for conservation of forest. On December 1862, he discussed with Dr. T. Anderson, the Superintendent of the Royal Botanical Garden of Calcutta about the matter for conservation in near future. On the 1st January of 1863, British India asked the Bengal Government to pay an attention for conservation of forests under their jurisdiction and established a proper administration.⁹⁶ Bengal Government appointed Dr. T. Anderson as a temporary Conservator of forest of lower province of Bengal. In September 1864, he conducted survey the forest of Bengal for conservation and submitted a proposal to Bengal Government in January 1865 including the forest of Bhutan *Duars*.⁹⁷

The process for setting up of forest department in Assam was started in 1868 under the supervision of Gustav Mann, Assistant Conservator of Bengal.⁹⁸ Gustav Mann carried out an inspection the forests of eastern portion of Bengal *Duars* starting from Sonkosh river to Manas river.⁹⁹ He reported that the valuable Sal forest of Eastern *Duars* of Goalpara district was exploited by Bengal wood-cutters. Such excessive cutting of Sal trees led devastation of forest of Goalpara district. In 1868, the forest department of Bengal province introduced new revenue system on the forest articles.¹⁰⁰ A tax was levied on timber cutters and also made a regulation that each timber cutters could extract only fifty logs in a year. As per the regulation, woodcutters had to pay Rs. 4, 4 *annas* per axe annually and also fixed the rate 2½ *annas* per tree.¹⁰¹ During that time, Sal log was sold to the trader at the rate of Rs.10 to 15 per pair.¹⁰² Mr. H. Leeds, the Conservator of forest of British Burma submitted comprehensive inspection report of the forest of Bengal *Duars* to Government of Bengal on 5th February 1869 with Letter No.57A.¹⁰³

Forest which was situated on the eastern side of Sonkosh river and western side of Manas river was transferred to Assam in 1874. In the same year, Gustav Mann was promoted to the rank of Deputy Conservator of Assam. In 1875, the Chief Commissioner of Assam established forest divisions in Goalpara, Guwahati, Tezpur, Golaghat and Cachar. The forests of Eastern *Duars* came under the jurisdiction of Goalpara division.¹⁰⁴ With the amalgamation of Eastern *Duars* to Goalpara division the area of the forest was 422 square miles including 80 square miles of good quality of Sal forest.¹⁰⁵ In 1875, the open forests of Bijni, Chirang, Ripu and Guma *Duars* of Goalpara district were also declared as reserve forest under the Act VII., of 1865. W.R. Fisher became the first Divisional Forest Officer of Goalpara Division with quarter of at Dhubri.¹⁰⁶ In 1879, Goalpara forest

division had several reserve forest like Ripu (65 square miles), Jengasi-Charaidaka (3 square miles), Ateabari (14 square miles), Chirang (250 square miles), Sidli (68 square miles), Bijni (33 square miles) and Guma (25 square miles).¹⁰⁷

Sixth types of trees were found in Goalpara forest as follows:

1. Sal Forest:

- (a) Bhabar Bamba Sal forest.
- (b) Terai Sal forest.
- (c) Evergreen Sal forest.
- (d) Xerophytic sal forest.
- (e) Lateritic Sal forest

2. Mixed Deciduous forest.

3. Evergreen Forest.

4. Savannah-

- (a) Dry.
- (b) Wet.

5. Riverain Forest.

6. Machilus - Eugenia Associes.

The forests are described as follows:

1. (a) Bhabar Bamba Sal Forest: Sal trees of the Bhabar tract of Goalpara forest were optimum conditions. Sal tree with 6 feet girth and 150 feet was considered as mature and recognized as first class tree.¹⁰⁸

(b) Terai Sal forest: Sal trees grown in Terai area were not much height or girth to compare to that of the Sal trees of Bhabar tract. It had 6 feet girth but

height was only 120 feet. The Sal tree of the Terai forest was in the second class category.

(c) Evergreen Sal forest: It was the mixed forest where very few Sal trees were grown.

(d) Xerophytic Sal forest: This type of the forest was found in the north - east corner of Maula block beyond the Sonkosh river.

(e) Lateritic Sal forest: This type of Sal forest was found only in the Guma forest. It fall under second and third categories.

2. Mixed Deciduous forest: It was found in well drained areas.

3. Evergreen Forest: This type of forest was found bellow the foothills of Bhutan between the Saralbhangra and Aie rivers.

4. Savannah:

(a) Dry Savannah: It appeared in the grass associates in alluvium and mix deciduous forest. The principal grasses were *Saccharum Narenga*, *Sachharum arundinaecum* and *Imperata arundinacea*. On the other hand, the plants like *Grewia sapida* and *Premma herbaces*, *Careya arborea*, *Eugenia operculato*, *Bombax malabaricum*, *Sterculia villosa*, *Butea frondos* were grown in dry savannah.

(b) Wet Savannah: Trees like *Saccharum procerum* associated with *Phramites Karka*, *Saccharum spontaneum*, *Apludavaria*, *Andropogon assimilis* and *Anthistiria gigantean* were grown. The different species of tress like: *Albizia procera*, *Bombax malabaricum* and *Bischopia javanica* were found in this forest.

5. Riverine Forest:

(a) **Khair and Sissoo Forest:** This type of forest was found on the loose soil of the river banks. These forests were found on the bank of Sankosh, Hell, Saralbhangra, Sukan Taklai, Kanamakra, Koklung and Mora Kuklong river.¹⁰⁹

(b) **Riverine Deciduous Forest:** The trees like *Bombax malabricum*, *Albizia procera*, *Wrightia tomentosa*, *Holorihena antidysenterica* and *Lagerstroemia partiflora* were found in this forest. The grasses like *Soccharam arundinaceum*, *Anthistiria gigantean*, *Erianthus elephantinus* grown in this forest. The soil of this forest area was suitable for growing Sal.

(c) **Silt Forest:** The silt forest was given by Mr. E.O. Shebbeare IFS. He divided the silt forest into four sub-types as (i) *Bombax malabaricum* or *Aloizzio procera* and the other species like *Lagerstroemia parviflora*, *Cedrela Toona*, *Cadrela microcarpa*, *Gmelina arborea*, *Bischofia jaranica*, *Trewia nudiflora* and *Anthocephalus Cadamba* were available. (ii) *Trewia nudiflora* and *Bischofia javanica* with a few *Dillenia indica* and other species. *Cedrela Toona*, *Gmelina arborea* and *Morus loevigata* appeared in very good numbers. (iii) *Bauhinia purpurea* type of species were grown (iv) The trees like *Garallia integerrima*, *Aesculus punduana*, *Engelharavita spicata*, *Machilus Gamblei*, *Eugenia Jambolana*, *Vitex glabrata*, *Crataeva unilocularis* and *Lagerstroemia Flos-reginae*. The grasses like *Phragmites Karka*, *Saccharum procerum*, *Erianthus elephantinus*, *Alpinia Allughas* were also found.

6. Machilus - Eugenia Associates: There were two dominant trees namely *Machilus Gamblei* and *Eugenia procera*.

In 1870, the Imperial forest department came to be known for revenue potential of the forest of Assam.¹¹⁰ Therefore, commercial exploitation on forest became dominant agenda under the colonial forest policy.¹¹¹ Total area of reserve forest in Eastern *Duars* were 348 square miles according to the government's Gazette of 1875-

76.¹¹² However, half of forest land came under *Zamindari* estate.¹¹³ So, considerable timber trade was carried out by *Zamindars* on their estate forest. Timbers were exploited from only accessible areas but not from remote area.¹¹⁴

First-class wood like *Artocarpus chaplasi*, *Michelia champaca*, *chinamonum* *Cecicodaphne*, *Largestraemia Flos-Regime*, *Amoora Spectabilis* and *Cedrela toona* were not of so much demand in the markets. In early period, very timbers were removed in the form of *Dhums* (short logs 7 feet in length) for domestic used but big size timbers were extracted from the forest for making of boats. Boat making industry was necessary for providing good transport services in the water. Sissu timbers were extracted in small quantity from the accessible area for selling and exporting to Bengal. The local carpenters did not have any idea for making the wheels of bullock cart and furniture from Sissu timber. But, the wheels of Sissu wood was imported from Cawnpore of Bengal into Goalpara as well as other districts of Assam.¹¹⁵ The forest articles like firewood, thatching grass, ekra and nal etc. were in demand for domestic purposes.¹¹⁶

The demand on timber of Goalpara was entirely foreign.¹¹⁷ Timbers of Goalpara forest division were transported to Dacca, Mymensingh, Faridpur and Pabna of Eastern Bengal.¹¹⁸ Mature Sal trees and a few first class woods including Sissu were usually converted into 7 feet lengths known as *dhum* which were dressed by hand for floating on the stream. Long pieces of timbers were slung by men up to river bank to drift away up to sale depot. Especially, Sal and Sissu timbers were floated to Dhubri sales depot.¹¹⁹ Short logs or *dhums* were used mainly for house construction.¹²⁰ The cost of *dhum* depended on girth of timber. There were two groups of people namely woodcutters and permit holders to cut down the trees in Goalpara forest. They jointly operated timber felling work, cutting the trees in the form of logs and transported those cutting timbers to sales depot. The wood cutters and permit holder equally shared their profit. They also bought 3 feet dead wood at the rate of 4 *annas* per cubic foot from the forest department and sold it to the purchaser at rate of Rs. 1. The forest department also sold all trees except Sal at the rate of Rs. 6 each.¹²¹

Dhubri depot was only the largest sale depot in the province where all timber were stocked for sale. The stock timbers of Dhubri depot were sold out every year. Besides, small quantities of timbers were also kept in stock at different timber depots for using public work. Gradually, the trade of timber developed sufficiently in Goalpara with the coming of timber merchants from Bengal.¹²² The large demand on Sal timber from

Goalpara forest developed many timber markets and timber depots in the district. Both green and dead woods were deposited into timber depot for sale. The extraction of timber from those remote forests could not be carried out on a large scale.¹²³ Since 1875, the local timber trader joined into Sal timber business and applied for permission from Range Officer for felling certain number of trees on payment of Rs. 10 per tree.¹²⁴ During 1876-77, *Daffadars* (timber traders) or wood-cutters extracted 21,813 pieces of Sal wood, out of which 17,513 pieces were sold and the remaining 4,300 pieces were stocked in Kokrajhar timber depot.¹²⁵ During 1878-79, the price of scantling Sal timber in Dhubri depot was gone up from Rs. 1, 10 *annas* to Rs. 2 per cubic foot.¹²⁶ Mr. W.R. Fisher, Divisional Forest Officer of Goalpara Division hiked the price of Sal timber logs which were brought from Garo Hills. Sal timbers which were brought from Garo Hills measured 6 feet in girth and 7½ feet in length. The cost of timber was Rs. 13 per log or about Rs. 1, 9 *annas* per cubic foot.¹²⁷

Progress Report of Forest Administration in the province of Assam furnished the following for the sold of timber:

Year	Number of timber logs	Cubic feet	Number of trees	Plank	Amount realized		
					Rs	Annas	Pies
1875-76		517	133		1,832	0	0
1876-77					14,363	0	0
1877-78	160	2,371		16	2,515	0	0
1879-80	9,341	16,538	1,658		34,271	0	0
1880-81	1,547	12,356	3,406		33,816	0	0
1881-82	1,581	14,833	5,465		48,845	0	0
1882-83	1,408	14,510	6,864		61,348	0	0
1883-84	1,312						
1884-85	1,064		285				
1885-86							

1886-87		81,120	2,064				
1887-88		1,61,70	5, 393				
1888-89							
1889-90	456	8,484			7,100		
1890-91	116	2,318			2,132	4	0
1891-92	429	5,855			4,381		
1892-93	289	5,351			3,794	14	0
1893-94	1,575	25,480			17,152	14	0
1896-97	1,872	24,517			11,848	9	0

In the first working plan of 1889, only 5 feet in girth corresponding to an age of 100 years old was being for commercial purpose.¹²⁸ There was no major demand for Sal wood from market except for railway. Practically, round timbers were exported to Dacca, Mymensingh, Faridpur and Pabna of Eastern Bengal.¹²⁹ There were local markets for sleepers at Fakiragram, Sapatgram, Tipkai, Kokrajhar, Bogribari, Bilasipara and Dhubri.¹³⁰

The railway network was built in the province of Assam to transport tea to the port cities of Chittagong and Calcutta.¹³¹ The demand of metre gauge Sal sleepers increased considerably, when Dhubri - Guwahati extension work started under the Eastern Bengal Railway.¹³² The construction railway line required hard wood sleepers to paste the track to the earth. The hard wood trees were available in Kochugaon reserve forest of Goalpara forest division. In 1897, the forest department commenced sleeper operation in order to supply hard wood sleeper to Eastern Bengal Railway. In Assam, only forest department of Goalpara division carried out sleepers operation for railway line construction.

In the second working plan of 1907, Sal trees of 6 feet girth corresponding an age of 120 were exploited for selling.¹³³ The mature Sal tree was sold at the rate of Rs. 10 per stem. The average net outturn was 40 cubic feet per tree, so, the rate was equivalent to 4 *annas* per cubic in 1906.¹³⁴ There were three types Sal logs extracted departmentally from the forests of Goalpara: first class ones, over 4½ feet in girth sold at Rs. 1 per cubic

foot, the second class one 3-4 ½ feet in girth sold at 12 *annas* per cubic foot and third class one under three feet sold at 8 *annas* per cubic foot.¹³⁵ A batch of 346 logs sold in the auction in January of 1907 at the rate of 15 *annas* per cubic foot. Metre-gauge Sal sleepers fetched at the rate of Rs.1, 14 *annas* to Rs. 2, 2 *annas* each delivered on the railway line.¹³⁶ Sal Scantlings were sold to the railway at Rs. 2 per cubic foot, which then used to yield a net profit of 6 to 8 *annas* per cubic foot.¹³⁷

Sal sleepers and logs sold from Goalpara division as per the Progress Report of Forest Administration in the province of Assam for the year 1897-1901.

Years	Sleepers	Logs	Cubic foot	Amount realized/Rs.
1897-1898	2,288			4,574
1898-1899	39	61,781		80
1899-1890	35,819, (at the rate Rs. 2, 3 <i>annas</i> per sleeper)	23,669, (at the rate of 7 <i>annas</i>)	2, 39,112	87,814
1900-1901	13,585, (at the rate Rs. 2, 2 <i>annas</i> , 9 pies per sleeper)			29,447

According to the Progress Report of Forest Administration in the province of Assam for years of 1901 to 1920, Goalpara Division supplied Sal sleeper and Sal timber to the railway department as given below:

Years	No. M. G sleeper	No. B. G sleepers	No. Special	Sal timber in C.ft	Supplied to
1901-02				29,299	Eastern Bengal Railway
1902-03	2,550			41,898	„
1903-04	21,406			36,404	„

1904-05	77,834				”
1905-06	59,966				”
1906-07	96,407				”
1907-08	6,466				Assam Bengal State Railway
1908-09	29,000				Eastern Bengal Railway.
1910-11	39,520				”
1911-12	1,01,093				”
	1,075				Assam Railway and Trading Co., Ltd
		8,066			Lower Ganges Bridge
1912-13	67,181	2,068	1,902		Eastern Bengal Railway
1913-14,	17,643	1,558			”
1914-15	40,469	50			”
1917-18				412	Local Board Carpentry
1918-19	12,570		8,419		Eastern Bengal Railway
1919-20	773				”

In the year of 1920-21, Goalpara forest division had received Rs.70, 227 from timber selling. No record of production of Sal sleepers in Goalpara forest division during 1921-22 but Rs. 53,674 had been collected from timber selling. In the working year of 1922-23, huge numbers of timbers were lying at Haltugaon timber depot in Eastern Range of Goalpara forest division due to shortage of cart to transport up to Kokrajhar Railway station. As a result, forest department forced to sell the Sal timber to the purchaser and earned Rs. 1, 16,979.¹³⁸ In the same year, Goalpara forest division earned Rs. 484 for supplying 658 cubic feet of timber to Tipkai Carpentry School.¹³⁹

As per the Report of Forest Administration in the province of Assam for year's 1923 to 1933, the selling of Sal timber to the railway department in the form of sleepers, logs, scantling, post, slaps are given below:

Years	B.G. Sleepers	M.G. Sleepers	Special Sleepers	Logs	Scantling	Tram Sleepers	Post	slaps	Amount realized
	No.	No.	C. ft.	C. ft.	C. ft	C. ft	C. ft	C. ft	Rs.
1923-24	18,458	3,452	705		2,579				
1924-25	21,340	7,607	9,111	1,54,463					
1925-26	7,067	2,416	18,701	5,49,472	6,196	3,633	4,455	10,883	1,53,024
1926-27	3,314	3,583	359	75,407	9,216	606	11,036	24,219	93,851
1927-28	---	9,978	74,767	19,789	12,026	482	10,419	126	1,25,452
1928-29	129	2,301	4,568	14,624	7016	6,011	2,859	6,360	44,611
1929-30				24,245	15,722	2,894	9,950		
1930-31				1,541	7, 1552		7,494		
1931-32				6,842	7,927		3,323		
1932-33				4,443	2,816		7,492		

In the year of 1929-30, only 13,138 numbers of dead Sal trees were sold to timber purchasers under public auction from Guma forest of Western Range.¹⁴⁰ During 1931-32 working years, there were 34 pieces of winds fall Sal trees that came under government auction in Western Range of Guma forest but only the price of 20 Sal wood had been deposited into government treasury as royalty.¹⁴¹ During the working period of 1930-33, there was no record of sleepers operation in Goalpara forest division. In 1935-36, 675 of Sal timbers had been exploited for logs and posts.¹⁴² Before the second World War in 1937-38, the forest department work out 20, 04,000 cubit feet Sal timber for railway sleeper.¹⁴³

The following figure is showing the selling of Sal sleepers from Goalpara division to railway department during year of 1939 to 1947.

Years	No. M.G sleeper	No. B.G sleepers	No. Special sleepers	Amount realized /₹
1939-40	39,250			1,12,843
1940-41	1,000	47,600	1,125	2,51,000
1943-44	40,000	50,000	3,807	6,22,560
1944-45	44,490	61,424	551	7,54,577
1945-46	42,004	43,072	4,520	6,40,451
1946-47	53,514	39,414,	9,141	7,71,938

The transportation of Sal timber to Bilasipara and Bogribari sale depots had carried out through the numerous tributary of Brahmaputra river. In Eastern *Duars* of Goalpara forest division, Saralbanga, Champamati and Gaurang were the main rivers for transporting timber to Bilasipara sales depot.¹⁴⁴ In Central Range of Kochugaon forest division of Goalpara district, Hell, Gurufela and Gongia rivers were utilized for transporting timber to Sapatgram then followed by Tipkai river to Bogribari sale depot.¹⁴⁵ Jakati and Janali river were also most frequently used in the Western Range for transportation of timber to Sapatgram and then to Bogribari by Tipkai river.¹⁴⁶ Timbers of Guma Range were floated down by Tipkai river to Sapatgram, Bogribari and Dhubri.¹⁴⁷ Timber logs and posts were sold to timber traders at Bilasipara, Bogribari and Sapatgram sales depot from where timbers removed by large country boats down the Brahmaputra river.¹⁴⁸

The forest of northern block of Goalpara forest division was divided by east and west parallel line at one mile interval which as ride, while in the southern blocks of Eastern Range and Guma range, divided by north and south into squares with an area of one square mile.¹⁴⁹ All ride lines could be used as fair weather roads.¹⁵⁰ The North Trunk Road passed through the southern portion of the reserve forests towards east which started from the Sankosh to Gurubasha, through Kochugaon reserve forest. The

Kochugaon-Dhubri road passed through the Guma Range connected and outlet road to Sapatgram railway station. Another road from the forest to Tipkai railway station was also existed.¹⁵¹ There was a Local Board Road from Gurubhasa to Bilasipara, which crossed the railway line at Kokrajhar. In Bijni, only watercourse became a means of transport during the rainy and dry seasons.¹⁵²

Tramway was a most important method of rapid transport of timber from Kochugaon to Fakiragram Railway Station of Eastern Bengal Railway.¹⁵³ Tramway was established in 1901 at Kochugaon for siding Sal timber to nearby the rivers and timbers were floated to sale depots of Sapatgram, Bilasiphara, Bogribari and Dhubri. There was an extension of 3 ½ miles from Kochugaon to Gurufela river where where from timbers were transported.¹⁵⁴ With the passages of time, the manually operated Tram was converted into steam haulage in 1912 and extended up to Fakiragram railway station in 1923. The length of the Tramway line from Kochugaon to Fakiragram was 17½ and 26 ½ miles inside the forest.

The year wise transportation of timbers by Tram are given bellow:

Years	No	Cubic feet
1901-1902	1,853	29,299
1902-1903	4,938	41,898
1903-1904	21,938	36,404
1904-1905		19,620
1905-1906		42,982
1906-1907		45,920
1907-1908		55,003
1908-1909		49,082
1909-1910		
1910-1911		55,056

1911-1912		7,877
1912-1913		47,452
1913-1914		34,369
1914-1915		79,348
1915-1916		
1916-1917		33,802
1917-1918		49,194
1918-1919		5,599
1919-1920		28,136
1920-1921		
1921-1922		56,471
1922-1923		90,017
1923-1924		30,749
1924-1925		1,24,154
1925-1926		2,47,957
1926-1927		3,92,836
1927-1928		4,14,256
1928-1929		273,848
1929-1930		43,0982
1930-1931		371,410
1931-1932		1,99,879
1932-1933		60,378
1933-1934		
1934-1935		1,18,216
1935-1936		1,16,117

1936-1937		
1937-1938		
1938-1939		2,34,900
1939-1940		1,65,971
1940-1941		173,460
1941-1942		
1942-1943		
1943-1944		
1944-1945		1,53,757
1945-1946		2,50,752
1946-1947		4,00,241

According to working plan for forest of the Goalpara Division, Western Circle, Assam, 1929 -30 to 1938-39, the prices of sleepers at Fakiragram and Kokrajhar are given as follows:

B.G. Sleepers.....Rs. 7, 8 annas each.

M.G.....Rs. 8, 6 annas each.

N.G.....Rs. 2, each.

Half- round M.G.....Rs. 2, 4 annas each.

Special Sleepers.....Rs. 3, 2 annas per C.ft.

Scantlings.....Rs. 2, 6 annas to Rs. 2, 8 annas per C.ft.

Pit Props.....Re. 1 each.

Slaps of M.G. Sleepers.....9 annas each.

Slabs of B.G. Sleepers.....Re. 1-2-0 each.¹⁵⁵

The price of round timber was Re.1-4-0 to Re.1-12-0 per cubic foot at Fakiragram sale depot, Re. 1-10-0 at Kokrajhar, Re.1-4-0 per cubic foot at Bogribari and Re.1-14-0 per cubic foot at Bilasipara sale depot respectively.¹⁵⁶ The timber purchaser paid 15 *annas* 6 *pies* per cubic foot as royalty to the forest department for timber felling, scantling, logging, carting and loading at Kokrajhar forest depot. In the Central Range of Kochugaon Forest Division, the total cost rose upto 14 *annas* per cubic foot including felling of trees and Tram fare. In some working places of Central Range, the price of timber was 10 *annas* per cubic foot. Only Re. 1-8-0 per cubic foot was the actual profit to the forest department. However, Rs. 15-0-0 per tree was obtained from specified timber sold in auction and the average volume of per tree was 40 cubic feet . Forest department earned 6 *annas* per cubic feet.¹⁵⁷

The area of forest reserved of Goalpara forest division are given below:

Name of the Reserve	Area	
	Acres	Square Miles
Chirang.....	149,568	234
Bentol.....	147,584	231
Manas.....	15,232	24
Manas.....	190,272	297
Kochugaon...	52,992	88
Guma.....	17,152	27
	Total- 572, 800	896

The minor forest resource of Goalpara Division also provided good revenue to the forest department. All minor products such as bamboos, canes, reeds and thatching grasses were exported from Goalpara forest division and *Zamindary* estate to Rangpur, Bogra, Pubna and Mymensingh districts.¹⁵⁸

The export quantity of minor forest products are given below:

Years	Bambos (Pole Pieces)		Canes (bundle)		Reeds (Bundle)		Thatching Grass (Bundle)	
	Government	Private	Government	Private	Government	Private	Government	Private
1881-82	3,600	---	215,911	---	39,942	800	6,422,300	647,800
1882-83	2,100	---	394,850	100	108,342	515	7,370,000	3,150,300
1883-84	6,544	---	225,570	39,890	30,678	2,706	922,222	121,244
1884-85	9,900	---	88,379	7,200	28,350	800	311,511	24,666
1885-86	22,330	---	327,424	19,935	75,676	9,300	613,011	178,583
1886-87	21,320	4,500	273,779	65,870	32,030	2,800	816,388	488,688
1887-88	20,917	---	229,835	49,600	43,416	20,923	1,012,551	701,101
1888-89	12,304	10,600	193,607	63,810	44,337	13,995	725,181	751,943
1889-90	9,100	5,100	370,331	58,412	29,280	17,524	1,009,206	799,550
1890-91	7,200	14,200	683,369	66,567	32,632	24,083	2,514,894	1,089,670
1891-92	250	20,600	325,465	27,800	43,378	14,017	1,793,412	936,278
1892-93	17,842	7,300	783,489	25,625	36,068	20,605	1,081,188	572,660
1893-94	2,950	11,778	734,836	103,100	36,375	30,220	797,200	632,399
1894-95	387	17,520	587,708	22,333	37,152	33,920	1,271,518	1,005,726

The Quantity Indian Rubbers exported from the Goalpara to Bengal by Steamer are given below:

Years	<i>Mounds</i>
1876-78	1,104
1878-79	1,170
1879-80	523

1880-81	840
1882-83	615
1883-84	1,484
1884-85	588
1885-86	728
1886-87	297
1887-88	221
1888-89	593
1889-90	298
1890-91	158
1891-92	
1892-93	110
1893-94	141
1894-95	
1895-96	
1896-97	21
1898-99	166
1899-00	668
1900-01	12
1901-02	39
1902-03	6
1903-04	7

Elephants were most valuable wild animal in India. They were given as royal gift and used in war. The forest department of Goalpara division caught some Elephants for using timber extraction. And sometimes, they were also sold to central India by the

Kheda department of Dacca. During the year of 1911-12, the forest department of Goalpara district received Rs. 35,322 from the caught of elephants. In the same year, the forest department fetched a sum of Rs. 34,500 as royalty for elephant *Mahal*.¹⁵⁹ In the year of 1925-26, the forest department of Goalpara and Bhutan jointly conducted operation for catching elephants. Altogether 212 elephants were caught in the joint operation and those elephants were handed over to *Kheda* department of Dacca. In return of that the Bhutan Government and Goalpara forest got Rs. 78,544 and equally shared by both parties of joint operation. This was great achievement of Mr. Bor, Deputy Conservator, who was in charge of the operation throughout the season.¹⁶⁰ The *Kheda* department of Dacca caught 346 elephants from Goalpara forest during the year 1925-26. The forest department of Goalpara received Rs.81, 642 from the *Kheda* department. In 1926-27, 212 (Two hundred and twelve) elephants were captured by *Kheda* department of which 150 were sold at rate of Rs. 1,600 per elephants.¹⁶¹

According to the Progress Report of Forest Administration in the province of Assam for the year 1875-76 to 1946-47, the year wise amounts received by the forest department of Goalpara division are given below:

Years	Revenue Receipts		
	Rs.	a.	p.
1875-76	502	8	0
1876-77	14,363	4	0
1877-78	9,553	0	4
1878-79	5,134	13	6
1879-80	16,989	2	5
1880-81	33,443	7	1
1881-82	44,164	7	7
1882-83	60,079	7	7
1883-84	34,867	14	6
1884-85	14,301	13	3

1885-86	16,923	3	5
1886-87	18,449	0	0
1887-88	39,852	0	2
1888-89	67,824	8	10
1889-90	1,01,915	14	9
1890-91	73,004	1	0
1891-92	39,936	6	1
1892-93	43,213		
1893-94	50,288		
1894-95	34,637		
1895-96	39,659		
1896-97	59,221		
1897-98	42,296		
1898-99	51,475		
1899-90	1,21,942		
1900-01	90,407		
1901-02	96,279		
1902-03	1,02,484		
1903-04	80,085		
1904-05	1,33,942		
1905-06	1,27,258		
1906-07	96,179		
1907-08	1,85,897		
1908-09	1,682		
1909-10			

1910-11	4,08,317		
1911-12	2,57,905		
1912-13	2,69,526		
1913-14	2,60,921		
1914-15	1,99,201		
1915-16			
1916-17			
1917-18	1,01,152		
1918-19	1,82,08		
1919-20	1,93,639		
1920-21	1,82,802		
1921-22	1,85,591		
1922-23	2,78,99		
1923-24	3,75,570		
1924-25	8,38,663		
1925-26	12,28,161		
1926-27	11,26,206		
1927-28	12,26,502		
1928-29	12,31,490		
1929-30	8,37,614		
1930-31	4,07,274		
1931-32	3,50,644		
1932-33	2,77,118		
1933-34	3,30,305		
1934-35	3,03,457		

In 1935, Goalpara forest division was divided into two division namely Kochugaon and Haltugaon by Mr. Milroy, the Conservator of Forests.

The revenue receipts from Kochugaon forest division and Haltugaon forest Division are given below:

Years	Revenue receipt from Kochugaon Division in Rs.	Revenue receipt from Haltugaon Division in Rs.
1935-36	2,85,506	88,771
1936-37	3,08,261	
1937-38	3,56,183	
1938-39	2,46,892	1,29,136
1939-40	3,10,611	1,23,912
1940-41	3,16,448	1, 67,779
1941-42		
1942-43		
1943-44		
1944-45	5,05,198	3,98,826
1945-46	3,76,822	4,32,797
1946-47	5,65,209	4,16,954

Timber of Goalpara forest occupied important market for railway sleeper. The mature Sal sleeper was stronger and durable than the iron sleeper. Therefore, the forest department itself exploited Sal timber of Goalpara division to meet the sleeper demand of railway department. There was a problem for extracting Sal timber from thick jungle, geographically backward area, shortage of labourers and lack of proper transportation. So, the forest department invited many labours from Bengal, who were mostly Mech and Rabha tribes to solve the problem of forest labours. The forest department allowed them

to settle and form villages in the forest land and to render service for extracting timber from remote forest. Sal timber transportation through the river route was done only in rainy season which did not satisfy the forest department. Thereafter, the Tram was established in Goalpara forest to transport Sal timber to various commercial centres. The Tram service gave huge amount of revenue to the forest department. The transportation of Sal timber by Tram from Kochugaon timber depot to Fakiragram upto post Indian Independence.

IV. 3. JUTE TRADE

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 jutes were grown. The damp alluvial soil of Goalpara became suitable for jute cultivation. For the trade purpose of jute many traders from Bengal and central came to Goalpara. Jute trade was carried out throughout the district of Goalpara and jute was supplied to Bengal. The demand of jute fibre in the markets encouraged the peasant of Goalpara to grow more jute. Goalpara district became largest producer of jute among the district of Assam. Jute fibre was supplied to Dacca, Murshidabad, Calcutta and then European market.

Jute fibre was very famous in India since the earliest time. It is recorded in 'Manu Smriti', an ancient Sanskrit socio- religious code that a peculiar kind of fibre clothes were made of bark of *Patta*, wore by the people of India.¹⁶² In Bengali jute was called as *Pat* or *Kostha* which denoted both jute fibre and the plant.¹⁶³ Jute was grown in the swamp areas of Eastern Bengal since immemorial time.¹⁶⁴ Dr. Roxburg planted jute in Calcutta botanical garden and he used the term of jute for the first time in 1795.¹⁶⁵ Probably, the term of jute was derived from phonetic rendering of the Cuttack vernacular *jhat*.¹⁶⁶ Dr. Roxburgh described the commercial value of jute fibre to the Court of Director of British East India Company.¹⁶⁷ No information about the commercial value on jute before 1828 was available. The British East India Company came to know the value of jute fibre after the exportation it to Europe.¹⁶⁸

Jute became second important raw material next to cotton in British market.¹⁶⁹ In 20th century, jute cultivation was rapidly developed due to operative trading enterprise under the British East India Company.¹⁷⁰ The successful spinning of the ligneous jute fibre in the machines of Dundee in the year 1832, heralded a new era in the history of jute manufacture. After a long year struggle, the Dundee enjoyed a virtual monopoly on the manufacture of jute articles and it became profitable goods items for export.¹⁷¹ So, Dundee merchants were keeping an eye on raw jute of India. German also purchased jute fibre from India for manufacturing blankets and carpet.¹⁷² So, the cultivation of jute was extensively increased in Bengal due to overseas trade.¹⁷³

W.W. Hunter pointed out that jute fibre was almost unknown at the time of the London exhibition in 1851. In early, the manufacturer gave attention only on Rhea and China grasses but it was very costly.¹⁷⁴ Thereafter, the British East India Company came to know that they could earn huge profit by exporting jute to manufacturing industries of Dundee (Scotland).¹⁷⁵ In 1855, first jute mill was founded at Rishra of Bengal by George Auckland. The demand for jute fibre in Europe continued to be active, owing to its increasing popularity not only for packing clothes and bags but also for carpets and rugs manufactured at cheap cost. The prices of jute continually increased due to competition between Indian and European Mills.¹⁷⁶

Before the nineteenth century, jute clothes and Gunny bags were the monopoly trade of handloom weaver of Bengal.¹⁷⁷ Jute clothes and gunny bags were generally used by the aboriginal tribes and villagers in Bengal.¹⁷⁸ Thus, the cottage industries for jute articles were deep rooted in Bengal along Hooghly river.¹⁷⁹ H.C. Carter wrote that Bengal province of India, only part of the world where jute was grown.¹⁸⁰ In the vast delta of the Ganges and Brahmaputra where warm humid atmosphere were available, created a condition for growing the plentiful jute crops.¹⁸¹ Jute was grown on river banks and low lying land, where the young plants could remain partly submerged in water for some time. In high land, it required plenty of manure and irrigation during the whole period of its growth.¹⁸² Very good jute was grown in high land of Bengal due to having sufficient water or containing dampness during whole period of growth.¹⁸³ Jute seeds were generally sown in *char* land or alluvial sandbanks in the month of April of the year and the plants were ready for cutting by August. When jute plants rose above the ground, it required too much water which made it to survive during heavy floods. Jute cut stalks were tied up in bundles and thrown into standing water to steep. When it was rotted to

such a degree, the bundles were taken out of the water, the fibre was extracted and carefully washed. It appeared as long, soft and silky threads and made it into ball to export.¹⁸⁴

Jute handloom articles were the principal source of income for the bulk of population of Bengal in the end of decade of 1850-60. Availability of power loom's articles obtained in cheap price from Dundee, which compelled the British East India Company to establish power loom industries in Calcutta. Despite the rapid growing of power loom materials in the market, the moderate demand on handmade articles continued due to superior in quality and more durable than the machine made.¹⁸⁵

Jute fabrics like gunnies, hessians and burlap were the premier packaging material during the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. Jute sacks were used to pack the grains, cotton, sugar, coffee, guano, cement and even bacon¹⁸⁶ All the commodities which were packed in the farms houses sent to the centres of consumption.¹⁸⁷

By 1885, twenty jute mills were set up in Bengal by Englishmen either on the both bank of the Ganga which was known as 'Dundee of Bengal'. With establishment jute mills in Bengal, the plantation of jute in lower Assam had been gradually increased to supply of raw jute to Bengal.¹⁸⁸ According to Tariq Omar Ali, "The Crimean War inaugurated the large-scale production and trade of jute as it interrupted Britain's supplies of Russian flax and hemp and led textile mills in Dundee, Scotland, to switch en masse to jute".¹⁸⁹ Initially, jute industries were concentrated in Dundee but during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century jute mills were also established in USA and in western Bengal.¹⁹⁰ The price of jute fibre had been changed in every year. When jute prices went down, the price of rice became dear. So, the Indian cultivator brought more land under rice than jute.¹⁹¹ Since 1903, the price of Indian jute had been increasing due to more demand in the world markets.¹⁹²

By 1910, about half of the world's jute manufacturing centres were located along the river banks of Hooghly to the north of Calcutta.¹⁹³ But, the outbreak of Anglo-German war in August of 1914 caused a sudden collapse in the price of jute which led to disappeared of jute markets in Bengal. However, jute again appeared with prosperity in Indian agriculture by March 31, 1917 and the value of export of raw and manufactured jute rose up to 25 per cent.¹⁹⁴

Jute became cash crop in the first half of 20th century in Assam.¹⁹⁵ With the growth of river borne trade facilities, the Marwari traders were taking interest on jute trade in Assam.¹⁹⁶ Jute plant thrive well in almost all the district of Assam. However, the bank of Brahmaputra and Teesta were the major area where abundance of jute were grown.¹⁹⁷ The district of Goalpara produce the largest quantity of jute among district of Assam.¹⁹⁸

The Brahmaputra river passed through the heart of the Goalpara district which facilitated means of water communications through which jute was transported to the markets.¹⁹⁹ Jute growing area was extended from Purniah to Goalpara. Jutes were growing on the area lying to the north of Ganges river and on both banks of Brahmaputra river extending from Purniah to Goalpara.²⁰⁰ Practically, the peasant proprietor could increase or diminish the cultivation of jute according to the state of market.²⁰¹ The Brahmaputra Valley occupied a good position for growing strong and healthy class of jute but it had less yellow colour to compare to that Bengal delta.²⁰²

The area of jute growing was mainly confined in damp and warm south- eastern part of Bengal.²⁰³ Large scale of commercial jute had been produced in Goalpara district of Assam and Sylhet district of East Bengal. Jute became highly profitable cash crop in Assam which gave double income to the cultivator than *Ahu* rice.²⁰⁴ By the end of nineteenth century, Assam Provincial Government came know that riverine areas of Brahmaputra river were suitable for jute cultivation.²⁰⁵ The riverine areas of western Assam were Nowgaon, Lakhimpur, eastern Darrang and Eastern *Duars*, Goalpara and Barpeta subdivision of Kamrup district.²⁰⁶

For the enhancement of commercial crop, *Zamindars* of Goalpara district invited East Bengal land hungry peasants to cultivate jute in settle tract and riverine areas of Brahmaputra river.²⁰⁷ According to F.C Manahan, Director of Land Record and Agriculture,

“Jute was grown primarily between the Lakhipur and the Mankachar area of Goalpara. On both the south and the north banks of the Brahmaputra, in the tract of the country to the north Dhubri lying west of straight line drawn from the station to the eastern boundary of the Guma forest reserve”.²⁰⁸

The cultivation of jute in the western part of Goalpara district had spread very fast.²⁰⁹ H.R. Carter mentioned that 444,761 people of Goalpara district cultivated jute crops on *char* land of Brahmaputra river basin and plain areas below the foothills of *Duars*. The *Uttariya* jute of Goalpara occupied popularity in Calcutta market for its length, colour

and fineness.²¹⁰ Almost whole jute products of Goalpara district was carried away to Sirajganj.²¹¹ About 30 per cent of jute of Goalpara district was *hessian* species.²¹²

Since 1880's, the production of jute became important and jute cultivation extended rapidly in the western portion of Goalpara district.²¹³ Large scale commercial jute was grown in Jamadhar Hat and Manikachar of Goalpara district.²¹⁴ Before the coming of Muslim peasants from East Bengal, jute was cultivated by several communities like Rabhas and Kacharis who had good skill of cultivating jute plants and produced superior quality of jute fibre.²¹⁵

In Goalpara district, 35,022 acres of land was under jute cultivation which yielded more than 3, 48,332 *mounds* in 1897.²¹⁶ During 1903-4, the jute cultivation area of Goalpara district was 41 square miles and 28,000 acres of land in 1906.²¹⁷ Total jute cultivation of Goalpara was 45, 904 acres of land in 1914-15.²¹⁸ By 1921, jute emerged second most important cash crop in Goalpara district.²¹⁹

Nibaran Chandra Chaudury furnished the following information of the area of cultivation of jute:²²⁰

1872	1880	1890	1897	1900	1906	1910	1917-18	1918-19	1919-20
Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres
5000	15,000	18,000	35,000	24,000	28,000	31,000	48,422	50,892	55,200

The percentage of the jute cultivated area of Goalpara was 10.4 out of total 2.5 % of Assam in year of 1919-20.²²¹ In 1937-38, the land of jute cultivation of Goalpara district was Acre 59,300.²²²

The following table show the production of jute by Individual jute farmer (1937-38):

District	Percentage of growers producing				
	0-5	5-10	10-20	20-30	Over
Goalpara	35.0	25.8	25.3	6.5	7.4

Jute trade was carried by local *beparis* or travelling hucksters who visited several remote places by using boats and bullock cart.²²³ There were three stages of jute traffic. Firstly, jute traffic was started from the villages to the primary assembling markets and jute farmer disposed off only three fourth of marketable surplus at their own home, while they sold one-fifth at the primary markets and *hats*.²²⁴ Secondly, it was from the rural areas to the secondary markets, i.e. baling centres, both *kutchra* and *pucca*. Thirdly, from baling centers to jute markets and jute mills of Calcutta.²²⁵

Native markets or *hats* were scattered different parts of Goalpara district. So, jute was sold in large quantity in the trade fair which held in the month of October or November.²²⁶ Raw jute passed through four stages of markets from producers to consumers as follows: firstly, it was primary or village markets known as *hats*, secondly, it was *muffassil* markets or secondary markets, to the Calcutta terminal markets in third stage and final stage was to the Calcutta market for overseas.

Jute markets were limited in the late nineteenth century due to poor transport network. The Hajong and Rabha communities brought small quantities of fine jute on their back of body to the *hats* of Gossaigonj, Salamara and Lakhipur for selling. So, all fine jute did not reach to Serajgunj as it was handled by the local traders.²²⁷ Jute was sold at Rs. 2, 5 annas, 6 pies per *mound* in the market of Dhubri.²²⁸ Patamari and Agamani were the old jute trade centres of Goalpara district from where jute was transported to Serajgunj.²²⁹ Jute fibre was brought by boats and carts in small bundles called *paties* and *moras* and later it was rolled into a bundle of 10 lb. weight.²³⁰ Several itinerant traders who were locally called *Bhasania* *beparis* made annual trips to Goalpara from Serajgunj in the month *Aughan*, *Pous* and *Magh* for purchasing jute.²³¹ The *Faria* or *Paikars* frequently visited many villages through the river route to purchase jute from the cultivators.²³² They transported jute through rivers to main trade centre like Goalpara, Gauripur, Dhubri, Manikachar and Bilasipara.²³³ Jute was disposed off to wholesale dealers from whom they received advance money.²³⁴

Jute sold by cultivator at various points of Goalpara district as per the record of the Report on the Marketing of Jute, and Jute Products, 1940 is given below:²³⁵

District	Villages	Primary Markets and Hats	Secondary and Baling Centers
Goalpara	62	26	12

As per the Report on the Marketing of Jute, and Jute Products, the surplus of jute handled by free lance *Beparisis* given below:²³⁶

Province	Percentage	Principal jute Districts	Percentage
Assam	78	Goalpara	83
		Nowgong	97
		Sylhet	40

According to Sarah Hilaly, jute fibre was pressed into balling blocks at the balling factories of Narayanganj and shipped to Calcutta in large drums of loosely twisted fibre.²³⁷ Few great trade centres had been seen in adjacent of Goalpara district. They were in Sirajganj and Narayanganj where from jute was transported to Calcutta by steamer or large native boats.²³⁸ The traders sold jute to the merchants at secondary markets situated nearby Trunk road, Steamer *ghat* and Railway station. The merchants disposed off their purchase to baling centre of Calcutta terminal market and then baling jute was exported to foreign countries.

Whole jute of the Brahmaputra valley was deposited to Goalpara for export to Calcutta.²³⁹ All jute carrying boats were usually registered at Sukchar and Manikchar. Some of the boats left via Gangadhar and Sonkosh rivers to avoid the registration.²⁴⁰

In 1828, the total export of jute was 364 *cwts* which earned £ 62.²⁴¹ A.J.M. Mills's *Report on the province of Assam* mentioned that 20,000 *mounds* of jute was exported from Goalpara to Calcutta in 1853 and earned Rs. 20, 000.²⁴² In 1848, 234,055 *cwts* was exported to European markets.²⁴³ The Crimean war cut off all the supplies of

Russian flax and hemp to the Forfarshire weavers of Dundee. As a result, textile industries of Dundee inclined on Bengal jute which became very popular in European markets. Jute companies of Dundee immediately adopted a new policy to bring special fibre from Bengal.²⁴⁴ Bengal cultivator also set themselves ready to meet the demand of Dundee.²⁴⁵ The Quantity of jute exported from Gossaigonj was 5,000 *mounds* of fine quality.²⁴⁶

The following table shown the quantity of jute exported from Goalpara District to Calcutta is given below:²⁴⁷

1868-69	1860-70	1870-71	1871-72	1872-73
2,595 <i>mounds</i>	4,035 <i>mounds</i>	5,935 <i>mounds</i>	6,504 <i>mounds</i>	11,076 <i>mounds</i>

The quantity of jute export from Goalpara to Calcutta during in six months of 1876 is given below:²⁴⁸

Goods	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Total
Jute	3,123	3,853	19,339	17,816	31,359	32,145	107,635
	<i>mounds</i>	<i>mounds</i>	<i>mounds</i>	<i>mounds</i>	<i>mounds</i>	<i>Mounds</i>	<i>mounds</i>

The below table shown the import quantity of jute from various places to Goalpara in six months of 1876 as per the record of W.W. Hunter A Statistical Account of Assam, Vol.II.²⁴⁹

Goods	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Total
Jute	249	106	355
	<i>mounds</i>	<i>Mounds</i>					<i>mounds</i>

In 1876-77, 28,900 *mounds* of jute was exported to Sirajganj of Pabna district from Gauripur of Goalpara district.²⁵⁰ In the year 1876-77, the register of export of jute was 26,977 *mounds* of which value was £ 8093.²⁵¹

Year wise export of jute from Goalpara district to Calcutta as per the record of is given below:²⁵²

1881-82	1882-83	1883-84	1884-85	1885-86	1886-87	1887-88
15,311 <i>mounds</i>	73,787 <i>mounds</i>	25,770 <i>mounds</i>	39,423 <i>mounds</i>	98,009 <i>mounds</i>	34,859 <i>mounds</i>	37,295 <i>mounds</i>
1888-89	1894-95	1895-96	1896-97	1897-98	1898-99	1899- 1900
96,977 <i>mounds</i>	2,05,871 <i>mounds</i>	1,60,060 <i>mounds</i>	2,37,076 <i>mounds</i>	85,872 <i>mounds</i>	83,154 <i>mounds</i>	99,648 <i>mounds</i>

Import of jute from various markets of Goalpara district to Dhubri is given below:

253

1881-82	1882-83	1883-84	1884-85	1885-86	1886-87	1887-88	1888-89
44,822 <i>mounds</i>	73,122 <i>mounds</i>	25,672 <i>mounds</i>	38,643 <i>mounds</i>	96,629 <i>mounds</i>	34,859 <i>mounds</i>	35,813 <i>Mounds</i>	92,171 <i>mounds</i>

About 17,964 *mounds* of jute exported to Calcutta from Goalpara district during 1893-94. In 1894-5, 3, 42,342 *mounds* jute was export from the Goalpara district to Calcutta.²⁵⁴ In 1896-97, the quantity of jute exported from Brahmaputra Valley to Calcutta was 3, 48,332 *mounds*. In 1899-1900 was 1, 59,537 *mounds* jute.²⁵⁵

Jute sale by the cultivators of Goalpara district during 1937-38 in percentages is given below:²⁵⁶

July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June
6.30	19.00	27.80	21.90	13.40	6.30	0.40	1.30	0.20	2.40	00	00

Thus, jute occupied an important place in the world markets for making clothes and packaging the goods. The cultivation of jute improved the agricultural economy of the district of Goalpara. The water routes immensely influenced the trading activities in Goalpara district. The demand of jute from the foreign countries gradually increased which could improve socio-economic condition.

Endnotes

- ¹ W. W. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Assam Vol. II*, Trubner & Co., London, 1879, p. 75.
- ² Ratnajyoti Dutta Purkayastha, *The Economic History of Assam(From The Earliest Time To The Twelfth Century A.D)*, PhD Thesis, Department of History, Gauahati University, Guwahati, 1973, Chapter- X, p. 3.
- ³ Rajen Saikia, *Social and Economic History of Assam (1853-1921)*, Monohar Publisher and Distributor, 2001, p. 65.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁵ Shehabuddin Talesh, *Tarikh-e- Asham*, Translated by Mazhar Asif, DHAS, Guwahati, 2009, p. 50.
- ⁶ Curry like Ondla, Sobai Karwi, Narzi, Mwita were main substitute food along with rice. These curries are related to national identity of Kachari. It is told by Biswanath Narzary, Age- 106, S/O - Bishiram Narzary, Village - Dangaon, Kajalgaon, Occupation- cultivators as well as Social worker.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*

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- ⁸ *Physical and Political Geography of the Assam*, Assam Secretariat Printing Office, Shillong, 1896, p. 58.
- ⁹ S. K. Bhuyan, *Early British Relation with Assam*, EBH Publisher, Guwahati, 2013, pp. 21 - 22.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ Srutidev Gossami, *Paper on The Eastern Nagas and the Salt Trade of Upper Assam*, p. 94.
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ Balai Barui, *Salt Industry of Bengal 1757-1800*, K.P Bagchi and Company , Kolkata, 1985, p. 5.
- ¹⁴ Archibald Keir, *Thought on the Affairs of Bengal, 1772*,p. 63 - 64, Indian Office Library& Records, Ref. IOL, T12378.
- ¹⁵ Balai Barui, *Op. cit*, p. 11.
- ¹⁶ Binod S. Das, *Changing Profile of the Frontier Bengal (1751-1833)*, Mittal Publication, Delhi, 1984, p. 184.
- ¹⁷ Balai Barui, *Op. cit*. p. 109.
- ¹⁸ Sanghamitra Misra, *Becoming a Borderland (The politics of space and identity in the Colonial Northeastern India)*, Routledge, New Delhi, 2011, p. 69.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid*, *The Assam Buranji, From the earliest times to the Swargadeo Gadadhar Singha's recovery of Guwahati from the Mughal in 1682*, p. 69.
- ²⁰ S. K. Bhuyan, *Anglo-Assamese Relations (1771-1826)*, LBS Publication, Guwahati, 2008, p. 49.
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