



SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE KOCH OF GAZIPUR DISTRICT



M. Phil Thesis

Researcher

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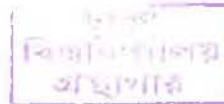
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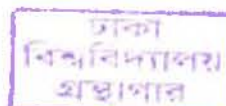
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M. Phil Thesis

By

Mst. Kamrunnaher

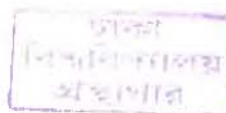
A Dissertation submitted to the Department of Anthropology, University of
Dhaka in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

*Master of Philosophy
in
Anthropology*

465137

**Department of Anthropology
University of Dhaka**

February 2012



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I have written this M. Phil thesis myself, it is an original work and that it has not been submitted to any other university for a degree. No part of it, in any form, has been published in any book or journal.

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DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA

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তারিখ.....২০০

Dated, the 1st March, 2002

CERTIFICATE

I do hereby certify that Mst. Kamrunnaher, my M. Phil supervisee has written this M. Phil thesis herself, it is an original work and that it has not been submitted to any other university for a degree. I recommend this thesis for final submission to the concerned authority.

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Acknowledgement

To acquire fruitful knowledge and to achieve success from a work, contribution of various people is a must. Anthropological research is such a work where we can gain novel and unprecedented knowledge but it does measure contribution of many people. This paper is culmination of my five years academic learning in anthropology. In submission of this thesis, first of all, I would like to express my acknowledgement and heartfelt gratitude to every individual who contributed in bringing me ever more closer to the core of anthropology a bit by bit.

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Contents

Declaration	I
Certification	II
Acknowledgements	III
Contents	V-X
List of Tables	.....	XI-XII
Glossary of the Selected Terminology	.....	XIII-XVI
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	.....	1-34
1.1 Introduction	.....	1
1.2 The Tribals of Bangladesh	.....	3
1.3 The Study	.....	11
1.4 Objectives of the Study	.....	13
1.5 Rationale of the Study	.....	14
1.6 Conceptual Framework	.....	15
1.6.1 Culture	.....	15
1.6.2 Diffusion	.....	16
1.6.3 Acculturation	.....	17
1.6.4 Concept of Assimilation	.....	17
1.6.5 Concept of Social Change	.....	17
1.7 Literature Review	.....	18
1.8 Research Methodology	.....	25
1.8.1 Selection of the Study Area	.....	25
1.8.2 Methods of the Study	.....	26
1.8.3 Sources of Data	.....	26
1.8.3.1 Primary Sources	.....	26
1.8.3.2 Secondary Sources	.....	26
1.8.4 Techniques used for Data Collection	.....	27
1.8.4.1 Observation and Rapport Building	.....	27
1.8.4.2 Key Information	.....	27

1.8.4.3	Participant Observation Method	28
1.8.4.4	Case Study Method	29
1.8.4.5	Informal Interview	29
1.8.4.6	Semi-structured Interview	29
1.8.4.7	Use of Checklist	29
1.8.4.8	Photography	30
1.8.5	Fieldwork Instruments	30
1.8.5.1	Field Note Diary	30
1.8.5.2	Recorder	30
1.8.5.3	Camera	30
1.8.6	Time Framework of the Study	31
1.9	Limitation of the Study	31
1.10	Pleasures and Pains of Fieldwork	32
CHAPTER 2: SOCIO-CULTURAL PROFILE OF THE KOCH		35-52
2.1	Introduction	35
2.2	Settlement Pattern of the Kochs	37
2.3	Settlement in Gazipur District	41
2.4	Nomenclature	44
2.5	Language	44
2.6	Education	47
2.7	Social Structure	48
CHAPTER 3: GEOPHYSICAL STRUCTURE AND DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS		53-69
3.1	Introduction	53
3.2	Description of the village under Study	56
3.2.1	Pattern of Land Use	57
3.2.2	Medical Facilities	57
3.2.3	Water bodies	57
3.2.4	Seasons	57

3.2.5	Types of Trees	58
3.2.6	Wild Life	58
3.2.7	The Effects of Geographical Factor on Koch Life	59
3.2.8	Relationship with other Communities	59
3.2.9	External Political Control	59
3.3	Demographic Feature of the Village under Study	59
3.3.1	Population	60
3.3.2	Household Pattern	61
3.3.3	Types of family	62
3.3.4	Marital status	63
3.3.5	Educational status	64
3.3.6	Land Holding Categories	65
3.3.7	Ownership of Land	65
3.3.8	Occupation	66
3.3.9	Income and Expenditure Pattern	67
3.3.10	Non-labor, Labor and Working Force	68
3.3.11	Sources of Loan	68
3.3.12	Religiosity	69
CHAPTER 4: ECONOMIC LIFE		70-90
4.1	Introduction	70
4.2	Housing	71
4.3	Household Structure	71
4.4	Household Furniture and Utensils	73
4.5	Pattern of Dress	73
4.6	Ornaments	74
4.7	Food	74
4.8	Drink	75
4.9	Preparation of Wine	75
4.10	Cooking Time and Eating Customs	76
4.11	Kitchen	76

4.12 Latrine	76
4.13 Personal Care	76
4.14 Daily Life of a Male	77
4.15 Daily Life of a Female	77
4.16 Nature of Land Holding	78
4.17 Cultivable Land	79
4.18 Agricultural Tools	80
4.19 Some Useful Instruments	81
4.20 Rice Farming	82
4.21 Homestead Gardening	83
4.22 Occupation	83
4.23 Monthly Income and Expenditure of the Koch Household	85
4.24 Market	86
4.25 Rate of Wage Labor	86
4.26 Sources of Loan	86
4.27 Rules of Property Inheritance	88
4.28 Deprivation	88
4.28.1 Loosing Lands by Cheating	89
4.28.2 Anomaly to Pay Amount	89
4.28.3 Delay in Payment of Wages	89
4.28.4 High Rate of Interest on Loans	90
4.29.5 Victim of the Feudal Behavior of the Muslim Neighbors	90
CHAPTER 5: SOCIAL ORGANIZATION	91-109
5.1 Introduction	91
5.2 Family	91
5.3 Koch Family Pattern	92
5.4 Types and Size of the Family	92
5.5 Relationship between Ownership of Land and Types of Family	94
5.6 Authority and Decision Making	94
5.7 The Koch Woman	96

5.8	Husband Wife Relation	96
5.9	Growing up Koch	97
5.10	Marriage	97
5.11	Marriageable Age	98
5.12	Types of Marriage	99
5.13	Bride Price and Dowry	100
5.14	Divorce System	101
5.15	Widow Re-marriage	102
5.16	Illicit Sexual Activities	102
5.17	Kinship System of the Koch	103
5.18	Kinship Terminology	103
5.19	Joking and Avoidance Relation	106
5.20	Kin Ties	106
5.21	Clan Organization	107
5.22	Samaj	108
CHAPTER 6: LIFE CYCLE		110-121
6.1	Introduction	110
6.2	Birth	111
6.3	Symptom of Pregnancy	111
6.4	Beliefs Concerning Pregnancy	112
6.5	Post Partum Pollution	113
6.6	Birth Rituals	113
6.7	Childhood	113
6.8	Adolescence	114
6.9	Marriage Ritual in Koch Community	115
6.10	Marriage Rules and Sex Life	115
6.11	The Way of Selection Life Partner	116
6.12	Marriage Ceremony	118
6.13	Preferable Time for Marriage Ceremony	120
6.14	Death Rituals	120

CHAPTER 7: POLITICAL ORGANIZATION	122-128
7.1 Introduction	122
7.2 Inter Village Organization	123
7.3 Intra Village Organization	123
7.4 The Moral in Village Administration	124
7.5 Selection of Moral	124
7.6 Role of a Moral in Koch Village	125
7.7 Sources of Power	126
7.8 Mode of Punishment	127
7.9 Participation in National Politics	127
7.10 Women Participation in the Politics	128
Chapter 8: Religious Organization	129-144
8.1 Introduction	130
8.2 Adopted Religion	130
8.3 Religious Beliefs	132
8.4 Daily Worship	133
8.5 Religious Festivals and Ceremonies	133
8.6 Some Brots of the Koch	137
8.7 Religious books	138
8.8 Beliefs about Purity and Pollution	139
8.9 Some other Customary Beliefs	140
8.10 Local Healing System	140
8.11 Process of Hinduism and Christianity	142
Chapter 9: Summary and Conclusion	145-155
9.1 Summary	145
9.2 Conclusion	154
Bibliography	156-163
Appendix	164-166
Photos	167-179

List of Table

Table-1.1	: Main Tribes and their Distribution (1981)	5
Table-1.2	: Distribution of the Ethnic Communities of Bangladesh by Population Size....	6
Table-2.1	: The Number and Distribution of the Koch in 1872-1881	40
Table-2.2	: Genealogy of the King of Vowal	41
Table- 2.3	: Language and Script	46
Table-3.1	: Geographic Unit of Gazipur	55
Table-3.2	: Population of Gazipur	56
Table- 3.3	: Types of Trees	58
Table- 3.4	: Wild Life of the Study Village	58
Table-3.5	: Process of Missonaries Help	60
Table-3.6	: Population Composition of the Study Village	61
Table-3.7	: Total Population According to Age and Sex Group	61
Table-3.8	: Household Pattern in Study Village	62
Table-3.9	: Types of Family	62
Table-3.10	: Size of the Family	63
Table-3.11	: Marital Status of the Village According to Age and Sex	63
Table-3.12	: Educational Status	64
Table-3.13	: Literacy According to Age Group	64
Table-3.14	: Land Holding	65
Table-3.15	: Ownership of Land (Household Basis)	66
Table-3.16	: Primary Occupation of the Household Chief	66
Table-3.17	: Monthly Income (in Taka)	67
Table-3.18	: Non-labor, Labor and Working Force	68
Table-3.19	: Sources of Loan and Rate of Interest	68
Table-3.20	: Religiosity	69
Table-4.1	: Materials Used for House Construction with Percentage	72
Table-4.2	: No. of Room per Household (Percentage)	72
Table-4.3	: Koch Woman Daily Routine	78
Table-4.4	: Land Holding	79

Table-4.5	: Ownership of Land	.....	80
Table-4.6	: Primary Occupation of Household Chief	.....	84
Table-4.7	: Level of Income (in Taka)	.....	85
Table-4.8	: Sources of Loan and Rate of Interest	.....	87
Table-5.1	: Types of Family	.....	93
Table-5.2	: Size of the Family	.....	93
Table-5.3	: Ownership of Land and Types of Family	.....	94
Table-5.4	: Sex of the Household Head	.....	95
Table-5.5	: Marriageable Age	.....	99
Table-5.6	: Kinship Terminology	.....	104
Table- 5.7	: Kinship Diagram (Shows Koch Kin term System)	.....	104
Table-8.1	: Religious Festivals	.....	134
Table-8.2	: Brotos of the Koch	.....	138

Glossary of the Selected Terminology

Atkura	–	Barren
Anno prasson	–	Name given ceremony of child
Atop chal	–	Non boiled rice
Aalo	–	Light
Aakash	–	Sky
Aam	–	Mango
Aagoon	–	Fire
Bridho	–	Old man
Bridha	–	Old woman
Bhalo	–	Good
Bon	–	Forest
Bhat	–	Rice
Batash	–	Air
Baba	–	Father
Bhagaban	–	God
Broto	–	Ritual promise
Biri	–	Cigarette
Biya	–	Marriage
Bhut	–	An evil spirit
Bash	–	Bamboo
Chagol	–	Goat
Chal	–	Rice
Chad	–	Moon
Chula	–	Hearth
Chokh	–	Eye
Chine pakki	–	Duck
Shishu	–	Child
Chamuch	–	Spoon
Chuani	–	Distilled liquid
Chowki	–	An improvised cot
Chele	–	Boy
Dharma	–	Religion
Dal	–	Pulse
Dhol	–	Drum

Durba	–	Green creeping grass
Dhup	–	Resin
Dailos	–	Magpai
Foshol	–	Crops
Fonti na	–	Puti fish
Gan	–	Song
Gach	–	Tree
Goru	–	Cow
Ghar	–	Home
Gunna	–	Cloth
Gung	–	Nose
Ghar jamai	–	Adopted son-in-law
Gamcha	–	Napkin
Gada	–	Horse
Ghosi	–	Fuel prepared from cow dung
Ghotok	–	Match maker
Gur	–	Molasses
Hari patil	–	Cooking pan
Hath	–	Hand
Halud	–	Termeric
Hat	–	Periodical rural market
Hangkal	–	Pit
Konnya pon	–	Bride price
Kamij	–	Upper garment of ladies
Kupi	–	Lamp
Kheer	–	Sweet rice porridge
Khatia	–	Rope bed
Khet	–	Field
Kacha	–	Green
Kan	–	Ear
Kapoor	–	Cloth
Kopal	–	Forehead
Khawa	–	Eat
Kathal	–	Jack fruit
Loha	–	Iron
Lungi	–	Wearing cloth for men

Lota	–	Water pot
Mod	–	Rice beer
Mala	–	Garland
Mukut	–	A head cloth
Meye	–	Girl
Mohila	–	Woman
Mondo	–	Bad
Morog	–	Cock
Morich	–	Chilli
Manush	–	Man
Mukh	–	Face
Mangsho	–	Meat
Ma	–	Mother
Mati	–	Soil
Nodi	–	River
Nak	–	Nose
Notun	–	New
Naru	–	Sweet drop
Nomoshkar	–	salutation
Ojha	–	Shaman
Para	–	Ward
Puran	–	Religious book
Prashad	–	Sweets offered to deities
Pira	–	A low wooden seat
Prodeep	–	Earth made light
Pitha	–	Hand make cake
Powati	–	Pregnant woman
Puja	–	Worship
Pani	–	Water
Pukur	–	Pond
Pa	–	Leg
Pan	–	Betel leaf
Rannaghar	–	Kitchen
Shakha	–	A conch Bangle
Salwar	–	Lower garments of ladies
Shakh	–	Conch

Shidur	–	Vermilion
Shurjo	–	Sun
Tari	–	Palm beer
Tulshi gach	–	A holly tree
Tentali fang	–	Tamarind tree
Thekacho fang	–	Mango tree
Uthan	–	Yard

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Tribal cultures in Bangladesh are changing. Societies differ one from the other and we find changes. It is the high time that we should assess the nature of this transformation. After forty years of independence with various socio-cultural interactions we have to examine the nature constraints operating in a given social system and their interactions at different nodal points with other societies in and around. This will enable the administrators, political leaders and the planners to overcome the surfaced problems of the so called tribal societies for their betterment. Social scientists are not only to examine the situations but also to suggest remedial measures in order to quicken the desired transformation. Bangladesh is a country we find few distinctive geographical zones with peculiarities in socio-economic life styles. These undoubtedly have created a mosaic pattern of disparities and diversities in the socio-cultural life of her people. Under such circumstances we cannot avoid a section of a people who are designated as 'ethnic minorities' in our constitution. The Kochs of Bangladesh is such a group who was deeply influenced by Hinduism and has developed closer social contact with Hindus and their organization, and whenever they say that they are Hindus, they really mean it.

However, smaller or sporadic the number of such Hinduized tribals may be, their style of life is markedly different from rest of their tribal brethren. The Kochs of Bangladesh, who are as a whole Hinduized and are closely associated with the Hindus.

Owing to the impact of the Hindus on the one hand, and forces of modernity like Christianity, education, industrialization and urbanization on the other, certain sections of tribals like the Kochs, have become acculturated and culturally alienated from their parent group. Subsequently, such tribals having developed different styles of life and network of social contact, have ceased to interact with their parent group with same frequency and intensity, in some cases their relation being strained and

marked by even mutual animosity. The term socio-cultural isolation refers to this situation from the angle of the parent group of the tribals, who are living in parts of India, who still stick to indigenous style of life. It appears that, while on the one hand, socio-cultural isolation creates certain problems among the tribals, on the other hand, isolation itself is a problem.

It is in this context Ghurye (1959) suggests that tribal population in India represented backward Hindus. Sahay (1973) holds the similar view and opines that “ Instead of talking in terms of ‘tribal’ and ‘Hindu’ (or caste) dichotomy, it is more scientific to consider the Hindu society as consisting of several layers (or grades) with corresponding social structure....’Folk Hindu Sub-culture’ ‘Peasant Hindu Sub-culture’ and ‘Sanskritic Hindu Sub-culture’ may tentatively be considered to be some of the layers within the broader Hindu culture...’ As such, differences between the tribals and the Hindus essentially reflect differences in cultural layers. The Kochs of Bangladesh reflect as a cultural layer of Hindu society.

The Kochs, also known as *kambojas* in earlier epigraphic records and as Kuvacas or Kuvacakas in later medieval literary works, were a mongoloid tribe. They inhabited Tibet and its adjoining regions before their coming down into the plains of Assam and north Bengal. In the beginning of the 16th century A.D., they developed a kingdom called Kooch Behar meaning ‘the residing place of the Koches’. The Koch ruled in Kooch Behar for a long period of time by thwarting invasions of the outside enemy. It is very likely that, during such an external invasion, a group of Koch left their habitat Kooch Behar and took shelters in the inaccessible areas of Garo Hills and forest areas of North Bengal and made permanent abode there. Their descendants are now living in a sizeable number in Myghalaya in India and in some regions of greater Mymensingh, Gazipur, Tangail, Dhaka, Faridpur, Khulna, Jessore, Kushtia, Bogra and Dinajpur in Bangladesh.

The Koch is one of the tribes of Bangladesh who has retained their own ethno-social traits and cultural identity even after their conversion to Hinduism. The precise form of Hinduism, followed by the Koch, seems to vary in different parts of the country according to the influences, to which they are subjected. In Rangpur, Dinajpur, Greater Mymensing, Tangail, Dhaka and Gazipur they profess to be vaishnavas, while

in Darjiling, where Tantric ideas are perhaps more prevalent (Risley, 1891:498). However, the Kochs as a whole are Hinduized, and are closely associated with greater Hindu society.

My observation of Kochs life of Gazipur under study reveals a very clear picture of oscillation from one place to another. First, gradual process of Hinduisation in the form of various Bhakti cults, in which Vaishnavite tendencies are reflected, is a peculiar Bengali-Hindu peasant culture. This is the main trend which is found in the Kochs of Gazipur under study.

Next, a line of development has taken place in some contact situations where the Kochs, including othe tribals converted to Christianity, got the opportunity of better education and economic improvement provided by Christian missionaries. This directly contributed, to a great extent, to the awakening of a sense of consciousness among the tribals about their deplorable conditions. However, our Koch people under study are divided into Bengali-Hindu peasant and Christian societies.

1.2 The Tribals of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a small country of about fifty six thousand square miles. It has several groups of ethnic minorities with distinct ways of life. These ethnic minorities are scattered all over the country, often living in hilly areas or peripheral zones of Bangladesh. The cultural prefecture of Bangladesh exhibits a luminous mosaic of about forty five different ethnic groups and over 20 languages and dialects mostly belonging to Austro-Asiatic (Munda, Santal, Mahali etc.), Dravidian (Oraon, Pahari etc.), Sinotibetan (Indigenous people living in Northwest and CHT) and indo-Aryan (Bengali) linguistic families. A colorful cultural landscape thus composed of majority of Bangalees and minority of the indigenous communities, for instance, Munda, Chakma, Marma, Santal, Oraon, Rajbangshi, Koch etc. Ornamented this country as both a product and producer of web of ideas and images assembled of sundry of migration of people and diffusion of ideas from different directions. Thus, village organizations comprise a colorful mixture of people belonging to several ethnic groups that significantly construct conditions for coexistence of multiple cultural traditions.

It has been said earlier that the so-called tribal groups are designated as 'ethnic minority' and actually they constitute the tribal groups of Bangladesh. They have traditionally been concentrated in certain parts of Rajshahi, Bogra, Rangpur, Dinajpur and Pabna districts on the northern border, popularly known as Barind region. The northern border of the country (Barind region) is inhabited mainly by Santals, Oraons, Malpharias, Gainjhus, Mundas, Kochas, Malos, Mahalis, Mahatos, Bhumijis, Tures, Bhuyasors, Choudhurys, Musahars, Kolkamars, Kuruks and Rajbansis.

The charm of its landscape, hills, hillocks and woods are as alluring as the people who inhabit its solitary woodlands. There are more than a dozen hill tribes in Bangladesh. There are the Marmas, Chakmas, Kukis, Murangs, Lushais, Tripuras, Mros, Banjogis, Bawna, Tanchengya, Uchai, Pankua, Khiang, Manipuri, Hos etc. They live in the hill tract region and forest throughout Bangladesh, like Rangamati, Bandarban, Khargachori, Chittagong, Sylhet, Rajshahi, Tangile, Mymensingh, Bogra, Rangpur and Dinajpur (Ali, A. 1998: 9).

The Mandis, Koch, Hajong, Dalue have been living in Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Netrokona Districts in the northern border and in Tangail district in the north center region of Bangladesh. A small group of people known as "Mandi" or sometimes as "Bormon" lives scattered among the Mandi in Modhupur. They speak Bengali and describe themselves as Hindus. Once they had their own language but that is lost now. The Hajong and the Dalue speak only Bengali and it is not clear whether they had any tradition at all or another language. Koch are also largely Hinduized.

Neither an accurate list of various tribes nor reliable statistics about their number of population are available at present. The censuses of 1961, 1974 and 1981 do not provide any information about number of the different tribal groups. According to the Census of 1981, they are 8, 97,828 in total, which constitute slightly more than one percent of the total population (B.B.S:1984).

But it is a fact that, the tribal population as recorded in 1981 census under the headline 'Tribes' without offering any indication, as to how the 'Tribes' broke down into various groups. Moreover, the number of communities which should actually be regarded as tribal, are recorded under such titles as, 'Scheduled Caste Hindu' or 'Buddist' or 'Christian'. Similarly, the tribals, who no longer speak any tribal

language and have Hindu(Bengali) names and adopted Hindu culture or converted in Christianity or Buddhism, are often excluded from the ‘Tribals’. If these people are taken into account, the tribal population would be more than one million (Maloney, 1984; 9). The total population and the main tribes of the different areas are shown in Table-1.1.

TABLE-1.1 Main Tribes and their Distribution (1981)

Districts (Old)	Main Tribes	Population
Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Pabna, Kushtia,	Santal, Oraon, Munda, Paharia, Rajbansi, Koch	201,796
Sylhet	Khasi, Meithei (Manipuri), Pathor, Tipra	106,823
Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Tangail, Sherpur.	Garo, Koch , Hajong	82,771
Chiitagong Hill Tracts, (CHT).	Marma (Mogh), Chakma, Tanchingya, Sak, Shendu, Tipra, Mro, Khyang, Bawm (Banjogo and Pankho), Khami, Lushai (Kulti).	464,057
Other districts (Dhaka, Faridpur, Barisal, Patuakhali, Khulna, Comilla).	Sections of various Tribes mentioned above in this column.	42,381

Source: B.B.S. 1984

Officially, the total population of the tribals in Rajshahi Division is nearly 3 lakh 22 thousand (B.B.S: 1984: 135, referred by Ali, A.1996: 9-11).

There are about 45 distinct indigenous communities in Bangladesh. The population census of 1991 puts tribal/indigenous population at around 1.21 million, and the current estimate is around 2 million. The largest concentration is found in the Chittagong Hill Tracts but other areas in which these communities live, include Chittagong, greater Mymensingh, greater Rajshahi, greater Sylhet, Patuakhali and

Barguna, Chakma, Garo, Monipuri, Marma, Munda, Oraon, Santal, Khasi, Kuki, Tripura, Mro, Hajong and Rakhain are some of the well known ethnic minority communities of Bangladesh. They follow Buddhism, Christianity as their religious faith. Their total number of population is estimated around two and half million. Their ethnic identity, language, religion, culture, traditions and way of life are totally different from that of the Bengali speaking Muslims (Solidarity-2006; 71, Bangladesh Adibashi Forum).

However, the data on the tribal are the most inaccurate of all that have been gathered together from the Census Reports. The net effect is to underestimate the number of tribal and correspondingly to overstate the number of other groups. Due to lack of reliable data, we have to collect the number of Koch population in Bangladesh, to some extent, with rough estimates based on information collected from local sources, though we have made use of official statistics whenever feasible. However, the data presented here are tentative and should be considered as such, but some of the outsiders who, for one reason or another, have been long in touch with these tribal areas, such as, the Christian Missionaries and the educated tribal leaders often proved to be good informants, and their opinions may be regarded as authentic to some extent.

In a few cases, the names of certain groups were found only in the 1991 Census Report. No such name, even a similar name with a different spelling was found in any other literature. These cases have been indicated by a note- "found only in the 1991 Census Report"- in parenthesis at the end of names of those ethnic communities.

Table-1.2: Distribution of the Ethnic Communities of Bangladesh by Population Size.

Ethnic Community	Population
Bawm (also spelt as Bum, Baum, Bam)	13571
Buna (found only in the 1991 Census Report)	7421
Chakma	252858
Garo (people prefer the name Mandi)	64280
Hajong	11540

Harizon (found only in the 1991 Census Report)	1132
Khami (also spelt as Khumi, Kami)	1241
Khasi (Generally known as Khasia)	12280
Khyang (also spelt as Khyen)	2343
Koch (also spelt as Kots, Kuch, Coach)	16567
Lusai (also known as Kuki, Mizo)	662
Mahat (also known as Mahatu)	3534
Manipuri (also known as Meithei)	24882
Marma (also known as Mag, Mogh, Mug)	157301
Mro (also spelt as Mroo)	126
Mrong (also spelt as Murang, Mrung)	22178
Munda (also Known as Mundari)	2132
Oraon (also spelt as Urang, Urao)	8216
Paharia (also known as Pahary)	1853
Pankho (also spelt as Pangkhu, Pangkhua)	3227
Rajbansi (also spelt as Rajbongshi)	7556
Rakhaine (a branch of Marma)	16932
Sak (also spelt as Chak, Tsak, Thak)	2127
Santal (also spelt as Saontal)	202162
Tanchangya (a branch of Chakma)	21639
Tipra (also known as Tripura, Tripuri)	81014
Urua (found only in the 1991 Census Report)	5561
Other	261743
Total	1205978

Source: Census Report 1991

The ethnic groups that constitute the branch or division of other major ethnic communities have been indicated in table -1.2 by providing the name of the major ethnic group in parentheses at the end of the names of those ethnic communities. Information about the possible splitting of major ethnic communities into branches and divisions were found in some of the available literature.

For reasons given earlier, the population data given in the 1991 Census Report about the ethnic groups Tipra and Tripura were added together and the sum was given as the

population size of Tipra in Table -1.2. Likewise, the data for the Kots, Kuch and Coach were added together and their sum was given as the population size of Koch.

The population data given in the 1991 Census Report under “other” perhaps include the smaller sections or sub-divisions of some of the ethnic communities listed in Table-1.2, as well as the ex- tribal groups mentioned in other sources. The name of ethnic group found in other sources in addition to those listed in Table-1.2 is perhaps lumped together under “other” in the Census Report. These additional groups are: Banjogi (similar to Pankho and Kuki), Dalu or Dulai or Dalui (a section of Garo), Hadi (a Hinduized group), Mahali (a sub-division of Santal), Mikir (a Hinduized group), Pathor (a Hinduized group), Riang (a section of Tipra) and Shendu (a branch of Khami) (For details please see Appendix-1).

Broadly speaking, there are three linguistic families among the tribes in Bangladesh. These are:

- A. *Tibeto-Burmese*: All the tribals of CHT, and the Garo, Koch, Tipra etc.
- B. *Austro-Asiatic or Mon-Khmer*: The Khasi, Santal, Munda, Mahali etc.
- C. *Dravidians*: The Oraon, Pahari etc.

The Tibeto-Burman languages fall into a number of distinct sub groups. The languages belonging to the subgroup known as “Bodo” are shown on Map-1. Most of these are spoken in northwest India, some close to the northern and eastern borders of Bangladesh, and three of them, Garo, Kak-Borak, and Kachari are spoken primarily in hilly areas. In addition to these three “hill” languages, several other Bodo languages, such as - Rabha, Boro, Lalung, and Chuitiya are scattered up and down the broad vally formed by the Brahmaputra river, and several others known collectively as the “Koch” languages, are spoken by a few small groups just to the west of the Garo hills. The place name “Cooch Behar” hints that Koch languages may once have been spread considerably further to the west as well. The Atong language is closely related to Koch, but it is spoken in the southeastern corner of the Garo hills, and inspite of their linguistic relationship to Koch, the Atongs consider themselves to be a sub –group of the Garos (Robbins Burling, 1997: 6-7).



MAP I. BODO LANGUAGES

The Chakma and Tanchingya speak a language which is a dialect variant of Bengali. The Rajbanshi, Pahari, Koch and Pathors have long lost their original language and have been speaking Bengali. This group of tribals may be captioned as 'Indo-Aryan' Linguistic group (Maloney, 1984:8).

Thus almost all the tribals, except for those who live in the interior part of the CHT, are now bi-lingual. They have learnt the Bengali language for communicating with the Bengali wider society, but they speak in their own language among themselves. In addition to the Bengali language, some of the Christian converts, Buddhists and a few Animists among the tribals have picked up a little bit of English as well (Ali, 1998:13).

These tribal people live in the hill forests with primitive social and administrative system with separate ethnic entity and age old tradition, customs, and beliefs. Ethnographic studies of hill tribes in Bangladesh are not many. There has been a

complete vacuum of socio-anthropological information based on hill tribes of Bangladesh. As the government of Bangladesh has given particular attention to understand the problems of the hill people to bring them to the mainstream of development, it has now recognized that understanding values and aspirations of the different ethnic groups in designing the development programs is a necessary precondition for deciding appropriate strategies to satisfy their respective desires in the process of overall development of the country. It has now been increasingly recognized by the planners, policy makers and top administrators that more sociological and anthropological studies should be undertaken on the hill tribes, as formulation of appropriate strategies, plans and programs for development of tribal communities need proper understanding of the needs and aspirations of tribal communities and hence, requires strategies, plans and programs for development of tribal communities as well as knowledge about resources base and development potential of these areas (Selina, 1995; 1-3).

These ethnic people are marginal communities in Bangladesh and it is paradoxically believed that these communities have been suffering from many socio-cultural problems and facing a good deal of opposition, conflict and disbelief due to many socio-economic and political factors. However, it becomes often difficult for the government alone to address all these problems. A good number of N.G.O's and voluntary agencies are at present working with them to solve the multidimensional problems. They are working on the socio-economic development of ethnic people. For this reason the tribal societies of Bangladesh are changing.

A study of the process of social change from the anthropological point of view of the tribals living in Bangladesh is an attempt to understand the agents of social change that are now operating vis-a-vis interaction with the traditions and modernization considering the mosaic ethnic influence. In Bangladesh, there are a good number of such tribal groups or aboriginal derivatives living for a pretty long time and there has not been any systematic study on all these groups, except some sporadic attempts where the counter-accounts have been consulted (Ali, 1998; 2).

Due to lack of traditional organization and symbolic economic relationship with the outsiders, a process of acculturation has long been continuing among the 'tribals'. The

Hinduized tribes have lost their traditional way of life. Thus, the Koch and Rajbansis, for example, identify themselves with greater Hindu community. They claim caste status like the Hindus and have personal names of Bengali Hindu origin. Many of the small ethnic groups have been so much mingled that they even lost their distinct tribal identity.

Hinduization is considered to be one of the important agents of change in which the tribal cultures in Bangladesh have been changed to a great extent. In Kaligonj, the Kochs under study are more influenced by Hindus. But they are not typical Hindus. They migrated from their original home in Koochbehar to Bangladesh under circumstances, had for a long time been in contact with both Hindu and Muslim neighbors and this prolonged and continues interaction brought in a number of changes in their attitudes and in their religious beliefs in course of time.

Christianity has been affecting the tribal life in various other ways. Christian Missionaries have played, and are still playing, a vital role in spreading education among the tribal people. This has brought new awakening in them and made them more conscious of their self-identity. Most of these tribal people until recently were very poor day-laborers. The Christian Missionaries took care of them and made them converts by showing sympathy and cooperation.

The present study is basically an ethnographic work which focuses on several aspects of the present Koch society, such as, their ethnic background and settlement pattern, social organization, economical life, political organization, belief system, expressive culture, recreation and so on. It deals with the problems they are now facing in a fast changing situation of the country. At last but not least, it discusses about their problems to be solved. It is hoped that this ethnography will satisfy the long felt need to understand the changing process of the Koch of Bangladesh.

1.3 The Study

The Koch is one of the ethnic communities of Bangladesh, which has its own cultural identity, distinct oral language, norms, rules and physical characteristics. It is amazing that the people of this community retain their own ethno-social traits even after their version to Hinduism. Kochs, the indigenous people of the Gazipur district, are

believed to have migrated from Koochbehar. The oral history of the present inhabitants states that the tribe has migrated to the present area about one hundred and fifty years ago from the aforementioned land, for the increase of progeny and clean jungle. The Vowal King brought them here.

The Kochs have their own customs and tradition, social organization, art and crafts, dress and ornaments, agriculture and way of life. But environmental surroundings and for many other reasons, they are going to lose their own history, culture, values and origin due to the pressure of various internal factors of larger community. It is the high time to protect and preserve their history, languages, cultures, values and life style. In a word, it may be said that their existence, traditions and unique identity, the researcher feels, as student of anthropology, to be attentive towards these people, feel the urgencies of preserving their resourceful unique culture. To learn and preserve the culture, it is urgently needed to develop an ethnography. The present study is an ethnography of the Koch of Bangladesh.

This research work presents a profile of the various aspects of life of the Koch; their social, economic, religious rites, political organizations with beliefs system and practice, folklores, legends, tales etc. These information is indeed, would be helpful for the students interested to know about the indigenous people, especially about the Kochs.

This research is an attempt to analyze the nature of social organization and changes that have taken place among the Koch community. Every society, savage or civilized, is constituted with a number of social units and institutions. Family, Clan, Phatry, Moiety, etc. are social units. The study of this ethnic community is important as it reveals the diversity of human life styles. This work will throw some lights on this Koch community which will help understand the nature of social organization their tradition and nature and dimension of socio-cultural changes.

Indigenous people throughout the world have been facing the challenges of extinction in a globalized world. This seems to be true for the Koch community of Gazipur district. The impact of the globalization is very dominant on this community. This is not merely a question of marginalization for these people it is a multi-pronged attack

on the very foundation of their existence and livelihood. For example, with the advancement of technology, the Koch ethnic community like the other ethnic communities, who are the user of primitive technology, cannot absorb themselves in to the export-led global financial market.

The Kochs of Gazipur district are solely agricultural labors who have no any cultivable land. They work in the agricultural fields as a seasonal labor. Besides this, in the age of globalization, no ethnic community can lives in isolation from the market system. Now all the people are bounded with market. Their economic life is not separated from it.

The Koch village under study has a good road connection link with the Gazipur Thana headquarter; one can easily buy commodities from there without spending much time. The process of urbanization is breaking their household base economy and kin relation. In the context of urbanization their traditional dependence on agricultural occupation has been gradually decreasing and their dependence has been shifting from agriculture. Somebody is serving in the missionary school as a teacher. Few Koch families have been migrated for villages and settled in different towns and are working there for their livelihood.

However, the present study on the Kochs of Gazipur District of Bangladesh is intended to focus on the process of social change among them. It attempts to highlight changes that have take place among the Kochs under study. It is intended to make an ethnographic study on them with a particular emphasis on the changing forces that have moulded the present life style of the Koch.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

In the present research a humble attempt has been made to understand the nature of social change among the Koch community. The main objective of the study is to understand the present socio-economic condition of the Kochs of Kaligonj village under study of Gazipur district. It aims to investigate the existence of the Kochs in Bangladesh as a minority group, their changing process in terms of assimilation, acculturation and integration with the mainstream of Bangladeshi.

The specific objectives of the present study are therefore:

- To prepare an ethnography of the Koch community living in Gazipur district,
- To make an in depth investigation into the socio-economic life of the Koch community and the problems encountered by them in the fast changing situation, and
- To know the impact of modernization and globalization on the ethnic community under study.

1.5 Rationale of the Study

The study of social change of the Koch community is significant from both academic and practical point of view. The Kochs are not studied deeply earlier; there is no intensive study especially on Social change about them. Few reports have been prepared by the NGOs about their present status and other organizations for their own interest. But no systematic anthropological research has been conducted on this community so far. The present research intends to obtain in-depth information about their life as well as recent change that have taken place.

The principale objective of the study is to assess and explore the socio-cultural changes among Kochs with a view to formulating effective means for their development. This study aims at finding out root causes of some unexpected situations like illegal land grabbing, oppression, ignorance etc. which may be helpful the planners and policy makers to acquire knowledge about Kochs in general and solve their peoblems in the light of findings of the study. It is thought that due to their ignorance, the problems regarding their income, property right is seriously threatened by village touts and greedy people. This research may be helpful in exploring some of vital causes and nature of the oppression. Recently, Bangladesh government has given particular importance to understand the problems of the ethnic people. The government and non-government agencies are trying to bring them to mainstream of development.

community. As a result, their social and economic condition is deteriorating day by day. So, it is the high time to protect their history, language, culture, values and life style, through the development of ethnography. The present study of Kochs will contribute in this regard.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

1.6.1 Culture

Culture is socially acquired behavioural pattern and life style of a group of people. It consists of many complex phenomena that mould a society. The ultimate goal of a cultural anthropology is to describe the cultures of human societies and to explain why a particular culture differs from and similar to any other culture.

Tylor in his famous book “Primitive Culture” (1871) defines culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society (Makhan Jha, 1983; 21).

David Bidney (1953), a famous theoretician of the Indiana University, pointed out their artifacts, socio-facts, agro-facts and menti-facts etc. should be considered as the characteristics of culture. In this connection he pointed out that no sharp line of demarcation can be drawn between the spheres of culture, on one hand, and that of the organic and psychological phenomena, on the other he further says that “culture is an attribute of human behavior, and is therefore, to be studied as an integral part of human behavior, not if it were a dynamic capable of acting and developing apart from the organism which express them through it (ibid).

According to Fedrik Barth (1994), culture is nothing but a way to describe human behavior. Scholars have used various terms to describe culture, for example, Durkheim has described it collective consciousness; Parsons as orientation that guide action; Mead as characteristic behaviors of human beings and social groups. In fact, the concept of culture is rooted in behavior, rites, rituals, institutions, language, every day habits, religion, festivals, artifacts, songs, dress, material life etc (Khaleque, 1982; 17).

Three factors are responsible for cultural changes. These are:

- Forces at work within a society;
- Contact between societies; and
- Changes in the natural environment.

1.6.2 Diffusion

Diffusion refers to the both transmission across space of cultural elements of traits. This transmission of elements material and non material culture may take place due to migration of their bearers into new territories, or by a process of transfer in culture contact (Macmillan Dictionary of Anthropology, 1986; 77).

In 19th and 20th century anthropology, there emerged diffusion theorists and theorists of evolution. Diffusion theorists have explained some conditions and characteristics of cultural diffusion which are as follows:

- Any cultural group may adopt a cultural trait of other cultural group, only when it appears to be meaningful and useful economically or socially or both for them.
- In course of diffusion, culture trait may not remain in original form, but changes in it can take place due to different environmental situations.
- Process of diffusion of cultural traits may follow from high culture to low culture or developed culture to under developed culture.
- Process of diffusion may create cultural change in groups adopting culture of other groups; sometimes borrowed culture traits get assimilated easily, but sometimes, they may be responsible for many changes.
- There may be some obstruction in cultural diffusion, such as lack of transport and communication facilities, ocean, river, mountain, desert etc.

O'Neil, Dennis also mentioned that when majority culture traits diffuse into a society on a massive scale, acculturation frequently is the result. In this situation the culture of the receiving society is significantly changed. However, there often is a syncretism, or an amalgamation of traditional and introduced traits, while acculturation is what happens to an entire culture, when majority cultural traits overwhelm it, and then

trans-culture is what happens to an individual, when he or she moves to another society and adopts culture (Khaleque, 1982; 17).

1.6.3 Acculturation

Macmillan Dictionary of Anthropology (1986; 1) defines acculturation as 'those phenomena which results when a group of individuals having different cultures come into first hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of both groups.

A second mechanism of cultural change is that it exchanges of cultural features that results when groups have continuous first hand contact. The cultures of either or both groups may be changed by this contact. With acculturation, parts of the cultures change, but each group remain distinct. Culture is also exchanged and blended foods, recipes, music, dances, clothing, tools and technology, in situation of continuous contact.

1.6.4 Concept of Assimilation

Assimilation refers to the system of absorption process. One of the outcomes of the acculturation process in which the subordinate or smaller group, absorb into larger or dominant one and become distinguishable from it in cultural terms. The concept of assimilation has been widely used in Anthropology and defines it as different dimensions of cultural interchange and social dominance in association of contract between different socio-cultural systems (Macmillan Dictionary of Anthropology, 1986; 18).

1.6.5 Concept of Social Change

Social change means an alternation in the established modes of life among the members of a social system. Events which are recurrent in a society cannot be called change even though such events appear to be novel to persons involved. For example, to become a father, may be a great change for a person concerned. But from the point of view of society, this is a recurrent change usually well recognized in the society. Modifications of social structure, diversification of economic life, emancipation of women are some of the phenomena, which can be termed as social change.

To understand the social change of the Kochs living in Bangladesh, is mainly limited to the intensive study of cultural change in a single Koch-dominated village, namely, Kaligonj village under Gazipur district. In other words, this is an enquiry about how economic, political and socio-ritual changes have taken place in the Koch village under study, was taken for consideration to understand the process of social change. However, it is evident from the present research that, the Kochs under study are well on the way to become a caste.

However, the process through which a 'tribe' becomes a 'caste' as well as intricacies in the hierarchy of land tenure as related to the present day ethnic minorities in Bangladesh has been taken into consideration to understand the process of social change that are taking place among the Kochs of Gazipur under study.

Many scholars worked on social change among the ethnic communities from time to time. The contents covering the very core of the social, cultural, economic, emotional and religious aspects of the tribe have been mentioned by them. Their writings are covering the ecological setting and way of life and other compilations made by the scholars are of immense value needed.

1.7 Literature Review

The Kochs are of profound social and anthropological importance. Elsewhere in Bangladesh, the Koch community adds confusion to the origin of and relations among the caste groups like Rajbanshis, Kshatriyas, Poliyas and Desiyas having the Mongoloid physical features. In social hierarchy, they are supposed to have separate status and rank interms of the established criteria of purity and cleanliness. They are the most numerous people in the Gazipur district of Bangladesh.

The earliest references to the tribal groups of Bangladesh are not available, except from a few reports related to undivided Bengal. There are few books written by the British administrators and Missionaries during the period between the middle of 19th century and the first quarter of 20th century. The works of Buchanan (1798), Macrea (1801), Lewin (1869,1870,1873), Risley (1891), Hunter (1876), Skrefsrud (1887), Gait(1895), Hutchinson (1906), Hudson (1937), Lorain (1940) etc. may be regarded as the classic sources on the tribal groups living in the British India. These books were

intended for administrative purposes, but these are the main sources of reference on the tribal communities. Census Reports and Districts Gazetteers compiled during the British rule contain valuable information about the tribal peoples and hence, these documents may also be regarded as good sources. The information from the Missionary sources is treated as the living documents about the tribal groups. All these literatures are reviewed in details in chapter two. As mentioned earlier, the research works on the Koch society of Bangladesh are not available. The work of Risley "Tribes and Castes of Bengal (1891, 1981)" gives an account of tribal groups and castes in British Bengal, where in a description about the Koch was depicted.

Risley's ethnographic glossary titled "*Tribes and Castes of Bengal*" (1981) gives an account of various tribal people living in undivided Bangla during the British rule. This book is divided into two parts. In the second part of his book, Risley gave a short description on the Koch ethnic community which is taken due to its relevance with our present study.

According to Risley, "At the present day the name Kochh, without doubt the original designation of the tribe, is so carefully tabooed in the districts where they are most numerous, and where there is every reason to believe them to represent the earliest permanent settlers, that in Kuch Behar itself at the Census of 1881 not a single Kochh was to be found.

In spite of their pretension to be kshatriyas, the social status of the Kochs is still extremely low, and no well-known caste people will take cooked food prepared by them or smoke in their *hookahs*. The caste as a whole may be described as agricultural, though many of them, as has been mentioned earn livelihood as fishermen, carpenters, black smiths, and money-lenders.

Risley's account on Koch marriage is that, a Koch may not marry a women in their own clan or section to which his mother belong to before her marriage. The Kochs marry their daughters at an infant stage, between the ages of four or ten years; but this custom has only recently been adopted. It is difficult to ascertain to what extent it is really followed, even among this sub-caste which professes to be pure Hindus. It is customary to give bride price to a Koch girl. They practice monogamy, but widows

may marry and are under no restrictions to choose a second husband. A widow can marry her deceased husband's younger brother if such a relative exists. Divorce is permitted and is allowed to marry again.

The precise form of Hinduism followed by the Rajbansis seems to vary in different parts of the country according to the influences to which they are subjected. Their favorite goddesses are *Kali*, *Manasa*, *Tistu Buri*, *Hanuman*, *Rishi Kishto* etc. When a drought continue for long, the Koch women make images of *Hudum Deo* from the mud or cow dung, carry them to the fields at night and strip themselves, and dance round the images, singing obscene songs, in the belief that this will cause rain fall.

The Kochs burn their dead; but this practice is not universal. The less Hinduised members of the caste resort to either burial or cremation as happens to be convenient. Children, lepers and persons who die of snake-bite are buried. During thirty days following the funeral, they take their meals in wet cloths, changing afterwards to dry, sleep on jute, eat atop rice, and abstain from fish, flesh, *pan*, *masur dal*, condiments and salt.

Subash Jengcham in his work "**Koch**" (2007), gives an attractive description of the way of life of Koch ethnic community. The writer mentions that there is no written manuscript regarding the history of Koch community in Bangladesh. It is one of the ethnic groups of Bangladesh who has retained their own ethno-social traits even after their conversion to Hinduism. Currently their settlement is confined in three upazilas of sherpur district, namely, Zhinaigati, Nalitabari and sribordi. But they are found in much greater number in the neighbouring Indian states of Koch Bihar, Jalpaiguri and Meghalaya. It is very likely that, during such an external invasion, a group of Koch left their habitat Koch Bihar and took shelter in the inaccessible areas of Garo Hills and forest areas of North Bengal and made permanent abode there.

The Koch society is divided into seven main groups. They are Wanang, Harigaiya, Satpari, Dasgaiya, Chapra, Tintheikia and Shanker. The Koch society is patriarchal; father is the head of the family. He controls each and every decision and action related to its member. The male offspring only inherits family property and they follow Hindu law of inheritance in this respect.

Both joint and nuclear family types are in vogue in the Koch. But presently the nuclear family type is becoming popular. If any problem occurs in them, they solve it through social process. There is a social institution known as *Gaonburo*.

The Kochs believe in *Sanatan* (traditional) religion. In spite of their adherence to it, they follow many traits of their early faith. They pay homage to some of the deities connected with their primitive religion. According to their pristine religion, the supreme deities of their faith relates to Rishi and his wife Jog or Jogmaya, the particular variation of Hindus, Har-Parvati. These two deities are regarded by the Koch as the creator of the universe who controls everything.

There are, generally, two systems of marriage in the Koch tribe. One is regarded as *biya* and the other is called *hadibaiya*. *Biya* is an accepted system, which is obeyed by all and has received social approval. *Hadibaiya* is a process of amelioration of family marital relationship. The widow or a widower is permitted to remarry again after the observance of *kur sheta*. In Koch Tanguage *Kur sheta* means severing the cord. If anybody breaks this code of conduct intentionally, he has to pay a fine.

The death and the related ritual ceremonies concerning death bear a great significance in the Koch society. The funeral ceremony commences with the congregation of all the relatives far and near. The eldest son of the dead usually applies the first fire on the mouth (*Mukhagani*) and kindles the funeral pyre. The Kochs also utter Haribole with due interval like the Hindus during the funeral procession, the final memorial rite (*sraddha*). Observed the dead called 'Marakham' in Koch language, is held after ten days from the date of the death.

Besides these works on the Kochs, few of the ethnographic works on the tribals of Bangladesh deals with their changing process of Hinduisation, Christianity and urban influences. The works covering the very core of the social, cultural, economic, emotional and religious aspects of the tribe have been mentioned by several researchers. In their writings, lucid descriptions of the ecological setting may be incorporated. These compilations made by the scholars are of immense value.

Santals of Bangladesh, Ali, A., (1998) discussed the process of the social change that has taken place among the Santals living in northern Bangladesh. The researcher

conducted research on five villages, whom four are situated at Barind region under Dinajpur, Naogaon and Rajshahi districts namely as Barokora, Furkuttidanga, Missionpara and Uttar Gobindhopur and the rest of the village is situated in Midnapur district of west Bengal in India named Bahurupa. It is based on intensive fieldwork. Through this study, author has focused on the recent social changes among the Santals of Bangladesh. So, it is an important work to understand the changing scene of the ethnic community in Bangladesh. The author has given an explicit idea about changing economic life, political life, ritual and belief system and pattern of changing social life of the Santals. This study is to understand the de-santalization process in Bangladesh.

The Strong Women of Modhupur, Robbins Burling, (1997) is an extensive ethnography written on the Garo women found in the Modhupur. Through this study author has mainly focused on the kinship structure, family pattern, religions and belief patterns, political affairs like the disputes and settlements, changing economic structure like farming, selling crafts and jobs etc. The author also depicted the impact of Christianity and education the changing occupations and life style of the Garo women.

The Marmas of Bangladesh, Selina Ahsan, (1993) provides an ethnographic picture of the Marma community found in Chittagong Hill Tracts. Marmas are the 2nd largest community found in Chittagong Hill Tracts. Most of the Marmas live in the CHT region of Bangladesh. A small fraction of them also lives in the coastal areas, namely in Cox's Bazar and Patuakhali. In this book the author states that the socio economic development efforts in Bangladesh did not receive adequate recognition in the past in the hilly areas of the country. She opines that development strategy should be integrated with due importance for development of the ethnic community. The Marmas of Bangladesh come from Burma and Arakan in different times through the different routes during the time of war between Burma and Arakan. The writer clarifies that there are similarities about religious and cultural life among the Maghs of Patuakhali, the Rakhain of Cox's Bazar and the Marmas of Bandarban hill district. This implies that Marmas, the Maghs and the Rakhains have the same origin, although they came in different times and following different routes and settled themselves in different places of Bangladesh.

The author mentioned that the material cultures of Marmas is changed to a large extent including changes in housing pattern , dress, ornaments, food habit and processing of food etc. Two types of families, namely nuclear and joint families are found in their social organization but the nuclear family is predominant. The husband is the head of *a family but* wife's roles are also significant and recognized in their society. Their kinship ties are very strong. The property is inherited by both female and male, but in recent time the system of ownership and property inheritance are changed due to the influence of plain land people and the govt. administrative system.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the Marmas living in Bandarban. Jhum cultivation is the primary agricultural pursuit for their livelihood. Gathering, hunting, brewing, weaving, trading etc. plays a vital role in Marma economic life. However, in the recent time, some changes are being noticed that indicate their inclination towards the market economy including trade and commerce. Recently some Marma families have started small retail shops in their settlements. Some of them have also taken different jobs as their source of livelihood.

The major changes taken place in their economic activities that have brought about changes in their cross- cultural interactions. The changed circumstances of population pressure and lack of adequate hill land to have led the people towards traditional Jum cultivation and other diversified works.

The life cycle of the Marmas are centered round their rituals. They believe that birth and death are influenced by supernatural power. They, therefore, perform various rituals to satisfy the supernatural power.

Marriage is a very important event in social life of the Marmas. Cross cousin marriage and monogamy is the predominant feature of this society. Polygamy is, however, not forbidden among them. The concept of child marriage is not in existence in the Marma society. Love marriage is the very popular form of marriage. Divorce is practiced; both men and women have equal rights in divorce, which is to be decided by the court of *Karbari*.

Marmas political organization is to some extent hierarchical. At the top there is a *Raja*; the lowest level is headed by headman. Chiefs have different types of function

which include collection of tax, settlement of the disputes, and maintaining good relation with government administration.

Tribal Religion: Religious Beliefs and Practices among the Santals, Troisi, (1979) is based on intensive fieldwork conducted in Pangro, a Santal village in Santal Parganas of Bihar in India. The author presents a detailed description about the social structure including social institutions of the Santals.

The author focused his study on the changing nature of the supernatural belief mainly the Santal religion. He described the changing nature and function of various rituals and ceremonies that are observed in Santal society. He also observed how these rites and ceremonies are at help of the benevolent spirits to ensure the safety and well-being of the individuals.

He also examines the nature and functions of magical beliefs and practices of the Santals and discussed the relationship between magic and religion as perceived by them. In the light of their belief, certain theories about the relationship between magic and religion have been evaluated by the author.

Importantly, the author examined the continuity and change of Santal religion in terms of its interaction with the two major religious beliefs and traditions called Hinduism and Cristianity.

Tribal Economy in Transition, Nair, M.K. Sukumaran, (1987) focuses on the state of Meghalaya of India which, for historical reasons, has experienced relatively early commercialization, market relations and some degree of monetization. What is significant to him is the fact that despite the exogamous factors usually associated changes in tribal society, the mode of production contains to be 'tribal'. That means, predominantly characterized by communal ownership of land and poorly developed productive forces, with little differentiation of the peasantry and kinship as dominant in economic and social relations. The author analysed the process and nature of the dynamic in the 'transitional' economy.

Nair's study, which forms part of his PhD thesis, is based on a survey of 60 tribal villages (487 households) in Meghalaya of India, covering three major tribal groups- Garos, Khasis and Jaintias. It was the part of a large ICSSR Project with collection of

data by trained investigators. Nair uses the data to show that despite the fact that a substantial portion of agricultural produce is sold in the market by all households, irrespective of the size of individual and holdings, there is no indication of a trend towards capital intensive farming. Surplus income is only marginally reinvested in agriculture, while there has been a gradual shift from the traditional pattern of jhum cultivation. His study assumes significance in understanding the nature of transition.

1.8 Research Methodology

The word research originated from the French word 'recherche' that means to reach again. But research can be organized with methodology in many disciplines including anthropology or other social sciences. Methodology is concerned to solve problem in connection with different behavior, beliefs, and customs and so on. But we cannot understand or explore the phenomena using common sense, where we can develop research. But any research for knowledge cannot go on without methodology. Methodology includes tools and techniques concerning research. The success and achievement of any research in social science depend on properly carrying out research methodology.

1.8.1 Selection of the Study Area

Selection of the study area is a vital to endure a proper research. Conventionally the anthropologists work at micro level. Ethnography developed on a single society can be done within short period of time. The present research aimed at spot-lighting the socio-economic life and changes that occurred in the Koch ethnic community. The researcher selected Kaligonj village as her research area due to a number of reasons:

- It is a large as well as ancient village where human habitation was initiated more than hundred years ago;
- The village is divided into small paras that help the researcher to collect the data easily;
- The key informants live in this village who are very cooperative and spontaneous; and
- Researcher lives in this Koch village and could easily build rapport with the villagers.

1.8.2 Methods of the Study

This study is an ethnographic account of an ethnic group named Koch at the micro level with a focus on their way of life, social change and their assimilation with the wider society. A perspective of social change is followed from the beginning to the end of the research. Considering the nature and type of the research the study was conducted in a Koch village which largely anthropological method for collection of data. The core data was analyzed and presented from Anthropological point of view.

Research method is very important factor for all kind of study. It does not a matter whether it is an action oriented or a pure academic research. Three kinds of empirical methods are usually used to study the human society and culture. These are:

- Participant observation,
- Case study, and
- Social survey method.

1.8.3 Sources of Data

In the Anthropological research collection of data is of vital importance. In the present study the researcher has collected data from different sources that can be divided into two categories:

- Primary sources
- Secondary sources

1.8.3.1 Primary Sources

Primary data was collected directly from the village people which include interviews, personal talking, observation, life history and story and such other relevant matters. Information or data were collected from the respected respondents directly considering individuals and householder as units.

1.8.3.2 Secondary Sources

Some data and information about the Koch were also collected from secondary sources that include books, journals, research reports, district gazeteers, internet etc. But we get very little information about the Koch from these sources.

1.8.4 Techniques Used for Data Collection

Specific methods and techniques usually guide the ethnographer in the process of data collection and its analysis. Various kinds of data collection methods have been applied at the different level of the fieldwork keeping in mind the objectives of the researcher. The present study based on the intensive fieldwork for data collection. The researcher lived with the people under study and observed their lives and livings closely on the basis of the details techniques that are used in the fieldwork.

1.8.4.1 Observation and Rapport Building

The researcher at the beginning of the field work developed a census schedule for collection of data for demographic aspects as well as economic life of the people under study. The intensive fieldwork depends mainly on a close acquaintance with the people under study and their customs. Therefore, it is necessary to be familiar with the Koch way of life before a researcher can say what is their socio-cultural system. With this idea in view, the present researcher has tried his best to be friendly with the inhabitants as she lived generally in a Koch household of the village under study to observe their life as closely as possible, eating with them in a friendly environment. The researcher is carrying out her research work mainly relied on the key anthropological method called participant observation. For this purpose, the researcher passed about one year from April, 2010 to January, 2011 in the study village called Kaligonj. The researcher has also followed some basic anthropological methods to collect data which mentioned here.

1.8.4.2 Key Information

Some people are more articulating, experienced and culturally sensitive than others. These individuals make excellent key actors or conformations in any social research, key informants can provide details historical data, knowledge about contemporary interpersonal relationships and a wealth of information about the nuances of everyday life (Fettermen, 1989, 58). So, key actors or informants can be extremely effective and efficient sources of data. The researcher collected data from few key informants of the village under study.

1.8.4.3 Participant Observation Method

Participant observation combines participation in the lives of the people under study with maintenance of a professional distinct that allows adequate observation and recording data. Participant observation is immersion in a culture. Ideally, the researcher lives and works in the community for a year or more, learning the language and seeing patterns of behavior over time. Long-term residence helps the researcher internalize the basic beliefs, fears, hopes and expectations of the people under study. Participant observation can also help clarify the results of more refined instruments by providing a baseline of meaning and a way to re-enter the field to explore the context for those (often unexpected) results. Participant observation is taking as main research method in anthropology for the following reasons:

- It makes possible to collect different kinds of data.
- It helps the researcher to reduce the problem of reactivity that means people changing their behavior when they know that they are being studied. Their curiosity becomes reduce when the researcher are only moving around the village. Lower reactivity means higher validity of data.
- For conducting micro-level village study in Bangladesh, it is the best method.
- It helps to formulate suitable question.
- Participant observation gives the researcher intuitive understanding of what is going on in a culture and allows him to speak with confidence about the meaning of data.
- The problem of question can easily overcome by participation with the lives of people and by close observation over a long period of time.
- It is possible to conduct household census along this method.
- This method helps the researcher to gather any kind of quantitative data. Even sensitive issues like land holding, income etc.
- The researcher can also make case studies by employing this method.

1.8.4.4 Case Study Method

Case study method was particularly important for the present research as it provides with some specific information within a time frame. In the present research case study method was adopted along with other methods because the research is aimed at describing, understanding and explaining the social organization and changing process of Koch people. The case study method was very important for the present study as it supplemented indepth knowledge about the problem under study.

1.8.4.5 Informal Interview

Informal interviews are useful throughout an ethnographic study in discovering what people think and compare the perception to each other. Informal interviews should be used friendly. In other words, they should be transparent to the participant offer a short period of time. An informal interview is different from conversation, but it typically merges with one, forming a mixture of conversation and embedded questions. So, informal interviews offer the most natural situations or formats for data collection and analysis.

1.8.4.6 Semi-structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews are verbal approximations of questionnaire with explicit research goals. These interviews generally serve comparative and representative purposes comparing response and putting them in the context of common group beliefs and them. The researcher can use a structured or unstructured interview at any time in the study. Semi-structured interviews are the most common in ethnographic work. The researcher uses informal approaches to discover the categories of meaning in a culture.

1.8.4.7 Use of Checklist

A check list can be both a reminder and a mechanism to guide the interview when a more efficient approach is desirable. Check list and forms help to organize and discipline data collection and analysis. Their construction should rely on some knowledge from the field to ensure their appropriateness and usefulness. Check lists and forms also require consistent use, thus allowing the fieldworker to compare. So, the researcher must continually modify old lists and forms and develop new ones throughout the study.

1.8.4.8 Photography

An important aid to the ethnographer for collection of data is photography. Still photography or camera can be a more objective observer than an objective fieldworker. But the use of camera in the fieldwork requires permission. The ethnographer may enter the lives of people of their terms, but may not invade individual privacy. The present researcher used camera during fieldwork and fix every photograph after confirming their permission.

1.8.5 Fieldwork Instruments

During the fieldwork, the help of some minimum instruments were taken, without which the fieldwork would not have been possible. The fieldwork instruments were basically some necessary things, which were used during the time of data collection in the fieldwork. Those include:

1.8.5.1 Field Note Diary

Pen and field note diary were carried in a bag during the time of field work. It was most dependable and reliable assistance for every indoor and outdoor visits. Field notebook was the most reliable instrument for data collection and afterwards during the time of data analysis. The important observation and events were noted down in the notebook during the fieldwork.

1.8.5.2 Recorder

During the fieldwork my mobile phone recorder was used with the permission of the informants. To record their traditional songs and native language, and during the conversation with the respondent, the mobile recorder was used accordingly.

1.8.5.3 Camera

In the present study, camera was used to documenting some field observations. This has provided a real picture of their economic, rituals, religious, political and other aspects of the way of life of Koach under study.

1.8.6 Time Framework of the Study

The formal survey commenced from April, 2010, and continued up to January, 2011, with occasional breaks in actual interview. All the days were spent with some informants of the Koch village and others of the community in their homes. In short, the researcher was in their midst for the whole period. The period of survey being the following sowing and transplanting season, the usual leisure period in rural life, was very congenial for our data collection.

Ever since the formal commencement of the research, researcher was also concerned with the official views and versions on the changing course of socio-economic conditions of the study. So, a procedure for procuring some secondary data from official and Government sources was outlined. District-level officers of some relevant departments were approached and interviewed for necessary information. Our experience is not one of unmixed happiness. Data were not available after prolonged and persistent efforts in some cases. Land-reform and agricultural officials extended partial cooperation to our enquiry.

After the completion of field work, the primary data were processed and arranged in tabular form by simple statistical method for securing an answer to our basic queries about demographic life as well as social pattern of the society. The secondary data was collected for supplementing primary data, wherever required and comparing the objective realities with the subjective trivialities of the proponents of social change. Thus the combination of methodologies and their nuances led us to record our findings and observations that are presented in the following chapters.

1.9 Limitation of the Study

It is so obvious that study in an unknown area create some problems definitely. The researcher cannot avoid those practical purposes which create certain difficulties. Anthropological study requires long time participation and observation for which the study is more valid than others. Though it was an anthropological study but for some reasonable causes sufficient time could not be spent with the people so as to build rapport in them. It was mentioned earlier that the people under study was not educated and no exception of key informants. It was difficult to make them understand about

the research. It is also true that they heartily helped the researcher to make the study genuine and valid.

One more important thing is mentionable here that, there are few important study which have been done by anthropologists except the Koch under study. So the secondary data was not available.

1.10 Pleasures and Pains of Fieldwork

One of the most significant features of any anthropological research is to complete the study by successful fieldwork. It helps in shaping the design set for the research to be carried out. In this regard, the most important element of fieldwork is being there to observe, to ask various questions and to write down what is seen and heard.

In this present study after getting the primary preparations of collecting materials and several other issues in regard to the problem of the study at hand, the researcher went to go for field work successfully. But it is obvious that all sort of anthropological fieldwork bear some problems as well as success. The pleasures of fieldwork are immense but the pains are not less. In a similar sequence the researcher of the present study also had some fieldwork experience including some happiness as well as pains.

At the primary stage of the field work there was no use of any interview schedule, camera or checklist. It takes few days for rapport building with the villagers and during those days I went to their houses and gossiped with them. On the first day of the field work I went to the village with my brother with the reference of his friend, who is respected by the Kochs and is a influential person in that area. So they were not suspicious about us and took cordially. In describing the purpose of the study and role to the people, I was introduced by my brother as an M phil researcher and he explained the purpose of going there. They understood it and accepted in gladly.

Since all the Kochs of Kaligonj could speak Bangla fairly well, full time interpreter was not required. However, assistance of two key informants was made available. Probin Koch, aged 45 years and Nicholas Norendra Koch, aged around 32 years were introduced with me. There were also female informants who were both married and unmarried were widely used to obtain information about the personal life of the study

village. For the ethnic background and some other important issues about the Koch and also for the area some of the elder Koch people as well as some elder Muslim inhabitants of Kaligonj were also included in the formal discussions. During the fieldwork it could not be possible to observe many of their religious and seasonal ceremonies or customs. But the information during the second to fourth trip, was collected by the researcher which was very helpful to supplement the data collected during the first trip of data collection.

My first visit to Kaligonj was with doubt and uncertainty. But I was determined to accept any challenge that involved in undertaking this research on tribal society. One more important thing is that, at first I decided to do my research in another village called Kumarkhada. But, when I noticed their non cooperation, I decided that, as a student of anthropology and as a citizen of Bangladesh, it is my duty to conduct an authentic research about the Kochs so that the society can be awakened. To achieve my goal, I need such a village whose inhabitants are moderately solvent compared to the inhabitants of Kumarkhada and live in association with other community. Moreover, they can spare me some time for discussion with me so that the study may be completed.

At the time of my first entrance to the study village and discussion with the inhabitants, the villagers guessed me as an agent of police, intending to take information about them. No doubt it acted against my work for some days. I took it as a challenge and within very short time, I built rapport among them. Some people thought me as a surveyor. But mainly they were afraid of a police agent. There are two reasons behind it. Firstly, they make and drink rice beer and wine. Secondly, due to their extreme poverty, sometimes they steal forest tree.

They are very peaceful ethnic community and their simplicity is quite remarkable. They are not involved in any offence except stealing wood. Some people think that most of the Kochs live in this area of Gazipur. The remarkable characteristic of the land of Gazipur is that, when it is dry, it becomes hard like rock but when it is wet, it becomes slippery mud. Most of the time of our fieldwork was spent in rainy days. To reach the Koch village, we had to pass two to three km by walking, which were

muddled with ram water up to our ankle. Besides this, we had to endure the bunt of Kalmi trees and the bites of ants from those bush.

However, I enjoyed my field work heartily and spontaneously. Lastly, if any researcher or administrator of our country finds any interest in my study, I will consider myself lucky and successful and the pains of my field work will be disappeared from the mind.

Chapter 2

Socio-Cultural Profile of the Koch

2.1 Introduction

Bangladesh is a small country of about 55,598 sq miles. It has several groups of ethnic minorities with their distinct ways of life. These ethnic groups are scattered and often living in hilly areas of peripheral zones in Bangladesh. Though in this modern world there is a great scope of argument about the word 'tribe', most of the people except it as '*ethnic group*'. Before discussing about the ethnic background of the Koch community under study, it would be better to clarify the term 'ethnic group' first.

The English term tribe or tribal was first introduced in Bengal by the British colonial administrators and foreign anthropologists. Since then the word has been more or less incorporated into the Bengali language. Many anthropologists have pointed out that the term tribe is problematic one. There is not a single definition which can be applied to define tribe in the South Asian situation. People generally understand who are the tribes and who are not. Nonetheless, when they are asked to describe what a tribe actually means, the picture which is presented rarely corresponds with the real situation. So-called 'tribal characteristics' such as being primitive, isolated, simple, underdeveloped, believers in local religions, or having specific tribal political and economic arrangements rarely any sense.

Dictionary of Anthropology by Charles Winick describes tribe as, "A social group, usually with a definite area, dialect, cultural homogeneity and unifying social organization. It may include several sub-groups, such as Sibs, or villages. A tribe originally has leader and may have a common ancestor, as well as patron deity. The families of small communities making up the tribe are linked through economic, social, religious, family or blood ties" (Winick, 1964: 546).

Maine (1861) characterized it as a group in which legal relations are based on the principle of status rather than that of contract. The term passes into general usage as a synonym for a Primitive social group (C. S. Smith, 1986: 281).

Oxford dictionary defines a tribe as “any primitive or barbarous people under a chief”. Encyclopedia Britannica defines a tribe as the families or small communities that constitute a tribe are said to trace their descent from a common ancestor”. According to ‘Imperial Gazetteer of India’ “a tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous, though originally it might have been so”.

Bailey (1961) has made an attempt to clarify the issue by using Durkheimian categories. The tribe is typically characterized by mechanical solidarity with the characteristic of ‘division of labor’ and ‘hierarchic relationship’. More specially, Bailey has stated the tribe as, “the larger proportion of a given society which has direct access to the land, the closer is that society to the tribal end of the continuum. Conversely, the larger is the proportion of people, whose right to land as achieved through a dependent relationship, the nearer society comes to the caste pole” (Bailey, 1961:4).

It may be noted that most anthropologists now use the term “ethnic group” or “ethnic community” instead of using the term “tribe” or “tribal group”. The people belonging to the ethnic groups often do not like to use the term “tribe” or “tribal group” to mean them, particularly in those situations, where these terms are used in a derogatory sense. The term “Adivasi” or “indigenous people” are sometimes used to mean the people who are otherwise referred to as “tribals”. But the use of this term is often confusing, particularly in those cases where it is hard to establish whether the group in question is the indigenous people of the area they inhabit or they migrated to that area from somewhere else. To avoid this kind of confusion and also to avoid the term “tribe” or “tribal group”, the different groups of people covered in this paper has been referred to as “ethnic communities” or “ethnic groups” (Khaleque, 1982:7).

The reorganization of these ethnic groups as tribes is a physical or regional stratification, who are inhabitants of a certain region having a distinct isolation in case of religion, caste, etc. The words ethnicity and tribes are applicable to the different communities and caste groups. The British and colonial administrators used the word tribal, first in the sense of caste group but not as aboriginal, isolated, simple, undeveloped, locale etc. as we general people perceive, it now. This particular political and economic position bears a little meaning.

The tribal people is now called in different terms and is identified by many indicators, such as *Tribes, Tribals, Indigenous groups, Aborigine, Adivasi, Jhumas*, ethnic community and so on. The word indigenous has become familiar since the observation of the year “Indigenous Peoples Year 1993”. This has taken a significant meaning for these people in the sense that, it transcends local, national or international boundary and this connect and aggregates them on the basis of the same belief and outcome. The word “aborigine” is widely used in Bengali and English. The word is mostly related with the indication of historical progression. It means the people who are in habiting since the beginning as such they proudly differ themselves from the others. The aborigines are more appropriately termed as, a political group than a social group.

However, the Sociologists and Anthropologists who have worked among the tribes have states to differ them from others in social system. They have remained their own marriage regulations; nearly all marry within their restricted local groups and are sometimes guided by their own elders or political chiefs in internal and external affairs. In other words, they are from socially distinct communities who have been designated as tribes and listed in a schedule for special treatment.

Now-a-days, people identify this ethnic group as Pahari, which is distinguished and construct a large class in a nation. Those people are Paharis who dwell in the mountain or hills. The mountaineers however recognize themselves as paharia to make them separate from the plain landers. These people have their common life style and undergo same experience.

By “ethnic communities” or “ethnic groups” a difference has been made to those people whose linguistic and/ or cultural background are different from the linguistic and cultural background of the mainstream population of Bangladesh.

2.2 Settlement Pattern of the Kochs

The origin of the Koches is still obscure and a subject of controversy. Although there is a general agreement to the fact that the Koches include the Meches, Kacharies, Bodos, Rajbansi, Garos etc. there is a still a difference of opinion about their racial origin. From the above idea, it may be safely presumed that the Kambojas were but Koches who migrated to India from Tibet, settled at first in the north and north-

eastern Bengal and then proceeded towards western part of Assam. Gradually they occupied large areas as far as in south and West Bengal where they came into contact with diverse racial elements including the Dravidians. For a short period they even held political power in those regions and some of their rulers ruled with the assumption of sovereign titles like *Paramesvara Paramabhataraka* or *Maharajadhiraja*. But their power gradually dwindled. The invasion of the Colas under their great king Rajendracola brought about the collapse of the Kamboja rule in the south. In the north, the Pala king Rajyapala, as proved by the Bhaturiya Pillar inscription, extirpated their rule from North Bengal before the middle of the 10th Century A.D. The political power became extinguished, and the masses remained tribal until the beginning of the 16th century, when they had a political and cultural renaissance under the leadership of Biswa Singha in the Brahmaputra Valley (D. Nath, 1989; 11).

Thus, during the period beginning from A.D. 1200 to 1500, the Koches might have maintained their existence in this or that form with certain amount of political influence in and continued to be so until Biswa Singha firmly established their hegemony in the western Brahmaputra valley in the first quarter of the 16th century.

The original name of Biswa Singha was Bishu. His father Hariyamandal was an inhabitant of the village Chikana in the Khuntaghat region in the present Goalpara district. Hariya was the recognized head of twelve leading Koch families living in that area. With this small hereditary resource, Bishu organized the different Bodo tribes of the region under his banner and launched a career of war and conquest and made the Koches a power to be reckoned with in the contemporary history of India (ibid, 1989:15-16).

This story of divine origin ascribed to the founder of the Koch kingdom is simply a fiction evolved to connect the Koches with some mythological Aryan figures and was definitely done while they were Hinduised. Such a device not only gave them an air of superiority but also helped them to get allegiance from the subject population. The Brahmins whose number was definitely negligible and who had to depend for their living upon the royal patronage, thus tried to please the ruling class by creating stories which traced their descent from Hindu God and Goddesses or mythological figures (ibid, 1989: 17).

According to Risley, "At the present day the name Kochh, without doubt the original designation of the tribe, is so carefully tabooed in the districts, where they are most numerous, and where there is every reason to believe them to represent the earliest permanent settlers, that in Kuch Behar itself at the Census of 1881, not a single Kochh was to be found. The transformation of the Koch into the Rajbansi, the name by which they are now known in Rangpur, Jalpaiguri, and Kuch or Kochh Behar, is a singular illustration of the influence exercised by the fiction in the making of caste. As described by Buchanan, at the beginning of the century and by Hodgson some fifty years ago, the Kochh tribe was unquestionably non-Aryan and non-Hindu. Now the great majority of the Kochh inhabitants of Northern Bengal invariably describe themselves as Rajbansis or bhanga. Kshatriyas - a designation which enables them to pose as an outlying branch of the Kshatriyas who fled to these remote districts in order to escape from the wrath of Parasu-Rama. They claim descent from Raja Dasarath, father of Rama; they keep Brahmans, imitate the Brahmanical ritual in their marriage ceremony, and have begun to adopt the Brahmanical system of *gotras*. In respect of this last point, they are now in a curious state of transition, as they have all hit upon the same gotra (Kasyapa), and thus habitually transgress the primary rule of the Brahmanical system which absolutely prohibits marriage within *gotra*. But for this defect in their connubial arrangements, a defect which will probably be corrected in a generation or two, as they and their purohiths rise in intelligence, there would be nothing in their customs to distinguish them from Aryan Hindus, although there has been no mixture of blood and they remain thoroughly Koch under the name of Rajbansi. Although there is no historical foundation for the claim of the Rajbansis to be a provincial variety of the Kshatriyas, it is a singular fact that the little Rajbansis serves much the same purpose for the lower status of the Hindu population of Northern Bengal as the title Rajput does for the landholding of northern Bengal for the lower status" (Risley, 1891; 491).

The Koch traces their descent from the progeny of Naranarayana and Chila Ray, the kings of Koch Bihar. They hold that they originally lived in their homeland 'Rasan Mukpark Tari' (the hill, where the sun first rises) or Udayagiri. Leaving this homeland they first settled in the Kamarupa region. Their next settlement was in the Hajo area, where they lived for a long time. Scared at the scourge of Parasuram they also felt compulsion to leave the place. The Koch demanded that Mukdi Kundi, the two daughters of Surya, were their female progenitors. Their male progenitor king Hajo first married Mukdi and at her demise married Kundi, her younger sister,

afterwards. The Koch race originated as an outcome from the matrimony of the king Hajo with these two female progenitors. Threatened by Parsuram the Koch left Hajo area and took shelter at a place named Sonapur and they reached Titili Hacheng later. A detail description of the place is available in the folklore. It informs that the geo-physical formation of the region was sandy, and each of its grain resembled a tamarind seed. For this reason the place was called Titili Hacheng (tamarind sand). They vacated Titili Hacheng due to adverse natural situation and started to live temporarily at Kusumbala, adjacent to Khasi hill. From there, they entered Garo hills and pitched their ephemeral abode at Rangjeng. With the passage of time, they also left Rangjeng and proceeded stoward southwest to reach the plain land on the west of present Meghalaya, where they founded a Koch principality under the leadership of a valiant pioneer. Consequently, the region came to be known as Koch Behar. From there, they gradually began to move into different areas in groups and in the process, some of the groups also reached in particular regions of present Bangladesh. Their descendents are now living in this country in more than one group, taking specific name and inculcate specific culture.

Table-2.1: The Number and Distribution of the Koch in 1872-1881

District	1872	1881	District	1872	1881
Bardwan	...	1,005	Kuch Behar	...	299,458
Bankura	3	224	Dacca	15,600	13,498
Birbhum	1	4,861	Faridpur	3,862	1,886
Midnapur	17	2,523	Bakarganj	572	924
Hugli	23	5	Maimansinh	32,351	31,997
Howrah	170	95	Chittagonj	10,866	180
24-Paganas	1,532	1,757	Noakhali	43	210
Nadiya	2,317	15,335	Tipperah	1,295	2,495
Jessore	...	4,758	CHT	...	41
Khulna	17,646	2,012	Gya	...	4
Murshedabad	446,641	17,582	Bhagalpur	164	38
Dinajpur	11,850	407,923	Purniah	61,724	71,833
Rajshahye	427,671	10,459	Maldah	63,217	60,700
Rangpur	15,649	19,055	Santal Parganas	352	61
Bogra	3,078	4,875	Orissa	...	27
Pabna	23,124	30,801	Hazaribagh	...	2
Darjiling	139,647	208,322	Manbhum	...	862
Julpiguri			Tributary States	...	116

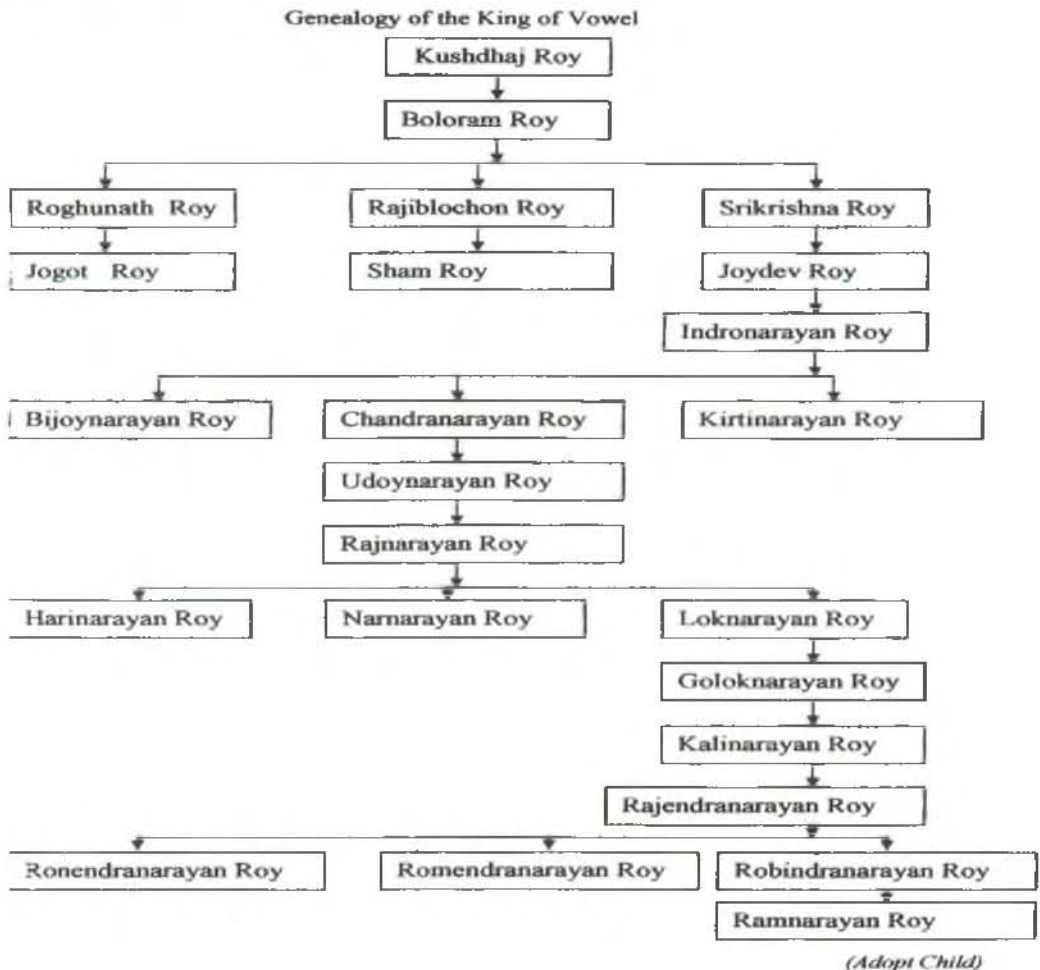
(Source: Risley, 1891: 500)

2.3 Settlement in Gazipur District

Once upon a time the people of various caste and religions came to the core of wild primitive Pargana of Vawal. The large portion of Pargana Vawal is now under Gazipur district. In the 9th century, feudal princes of the Buddhist era such as Iashpal, Shishupal and others established their small states in different places of this district.

In course of time, the Gazis occupied this area. It is thought that Vowal Gazi, the son of Kaiyum Gazi, was the first to come to Vowal. This area was therefore named after his name. In the law suit, in the boundary of Vowal, between the Gazi ruler and Nawab Nazim of Dhaka of that time, Kushddaj a learned Brahman won the area by his wisdom, foresightedness, intelligence and effort. Later, his descendant ruled Vowal or Gazipur. Koch tribe from Koochbehar entered into this area at the time of King Rabindra Narayan, the youngest son of King Rajendra Narayan and Queen Bilashmoni Debi.

Table-2.2: Genealogy of the King of Vowal



Some informants say that the Kochs are one of the race castes of Assam. Originally they were an aboriginal tribe, apparently of Mangolion origin, which at the beginning of the sixteenth century, came in power under their great leader Viswa Singh. His son Nar Narayan extended his conquests as far as upper Assam, Tippera and Manipur, and by the middle of the sixteenth century, the Koch King had attained to a position of such power that the aboriginal people were anxious to be enrolled as members of his tribe. The result is that, now the name is no longer used to mean a tribe but of a cast into which new, converts to Hinduism are enrolled. In Sibsagar and Laxmipur, these converts still retain their tribal name, and the Koch is respectable to the Sudra caste, which is not broken up into various sub-divisions. This is not the case in lower Assam and the different groups are there, and enjoy different status.

They also noted that, in the latter part of the sixteenth century Silarai, the brother of the great Koch King Nar Narayan, is said to have defeated the Raja of Sylhet. The territories of this prince were near to those of the Jainta Raja, and he is described as being a very powerful monarch. As has been already pointed out, Sylhet proper had been conquered by the Mohammadans two centuries before, but it was possible that the chronicle might be referring to the king of Ladhore or to some quasi-independent Raja, South of the Koochbehar. The battle lasted for three days, and it was finally decided by a furious charge, headed by Silarai, in which the King himself and an immense number of his followers went down. His brother Asirai Abandoned the unequal contest, and returned with Silarai to the court of Nar Narayan. The Koch prince restored to him, his brothers kingdom, but imposed a tribute of 100 elephants, 2000 horses, Rs. 3, 00, 000 and 10,000 gold coins.

Islam states that the Kochs of Mymensingh are more closely related to the Garos compared to the Assamese tribe, who are virtually Hinduised. It is probable that the Kochs inhabited the whole of the Garo Hills before the Garo invasion and possibly they represent an earlier wave of immigration (Islam, 1978: 59).

Koochbehar is the original abode of Koch community. They also live in Nagpur and Assam. Mainly they came to Bangladesh from Koochbehar. The Vowal King Rabindra Narayan bought many Kochs in this country for increasing the population of this area, cultivating land and for some other reasons. When they came here it was a deep forest. As they were forest based tribe, it was convenient for them to establish their residence here.

Kochs, the indigenous people of the Gazipur District are believed to have migrated from the Koockbehar. The oral history of the present inhabitants states that the tribe migrated to the present locality some one hundred and fifty years back from the aforesaid area for the increase of progeny and clean the jungle. The Vowal King brought them here. The king brought the Kochs here because at that time the Vowal region was full of deep forest and only the Kochs could live there. The King gave them plots of land called 'Baid' and chala to cultivate. They were a community without education. As a result, they did not bother about property document than possessions and also preserve the documents. But the British Government acknowledged their ownership of land and did not disturb them throughout the colonial period. The Kochs were the first to settle in the area and they initiated cultivation and plantation in the virgin land. Thus, through occupation and prolonged inhabitation, they gradually became the son of the soil and the indigenous people of the area. This process throughout the colonial period and the Kochs continued to live peacefully in the Vowal pargana of Gazipur area without any disturbance and intrusion.

An old man of the village under study, who is now about ninety years old, told that his great grandfather lived here. If it is true, then this tribe has been living in Bangladesh for the last three to four hundred years. It is also notable that, King Rabindra Narayan was the first ruler of the twentieth century. But none of the people of the research area or of the surrounding places could say about their period of settlement. Nevertheless, it is clear from their statement that they are very primitive inhabitants of that area. In Bangladesh, they entered Gazipur at first. Later they scattered at different parts of this area, and eventually in various places of Bangladesh.

Some of them opined that their forefathers were nomads. They used to travel from here to there. Hunting of wild animals with the use of bows and arrows were their main occupation. But regarding their original occupation, there has been a debate. Because some of the Kochs claims that they were hunters and gatherers, while others opinioned that they were cultivators. If they were nomads, they came here and started cutting wood and clearing bush and at last decided to settle down here.

The Koch is a tribe who also live in the Vawal Jungles and gain subsistence by agriculture and charcoal burning. From religious point of view, they are said to be

nominally Hindus, but they have no caste system and never amalgamate themselves with the people of the district. They came to Dacca about five generations ago. But a King named Dtigu, whose territory was in the Darning Hills in Assam and there is a traditional belief that they were forced immigration from their own country due to famine. But they are ignorant of their history. The number the tribe is numerous, but its members are so scattered throughout the jungle that the collector reports that it impossible to asses their numbers. According to the census of 1872 their number is estimated at 10,928. They live together in families and do not carry on their agricultural operations in common or according to the tribal system. Koch and Rajbansi are principally employed on clearing jungle, cultivating rice, oilseeds, cotton etc.

2.4 Nomenclature

There is no concrete record about the nomenclature of the Koch. They cannot remember their background. One of the respondents of the village under study opined that Koch was a title 'Khatriyas', like many other titles such as Sarkar, Mondol etc, which was originated from Kochbehar, their original homeland. Some Kochs said that definitely they had their nomenclature, but with the passage of time they lost it unfortunately.

2.5 Language

The origin of language is approached with caution by modern linguistics because they feel that is not possible to provide any reliable evidence on the matter. Indeed the 'Societies Linguistics de Paris' has one of its foundation, was excluded from its meetings of any papers on the origin of language. However, the question of the origin of language is obviously of interest from an evolutionary point of view; some fossils evidence exists from which the constitution of the vocal tract of earlier hominids and other factors which may have a bearing on the question can be deduced.

Most of the tribes or ethnic groups have their own language. Some of them have their separate alphabet and some have only the dialect. Broadly speaking, there are three linguistic families among the tribes in Bangladesh. These are:

Tibeto Burmese:-All the tribals of Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT), the Garos, Kochs and Tipra etc.

Austro-Asiatic or Mon-Khmer:-The Khasi, Santal, Munda, Mahali etc.

Dravidian:-The Oraon, Pahari etc.

The Tibeto-Burman languages fall into a number of distinct sub groups. The languages belonging to the subgroup are known as “Bodo”. Most of these are spoken in northwest India, some close to the northern and eastern borders of Bangladesh, and three of them, Garo, Kak-Borak, and Kachari are spoken primarily in hilly areas. In addition to these three “hill” languages, several other Bodo languages such as Rabha, Boro, Lalung, and Chuitiya are scattered up and down the broad valley, formed by the Brahmaputra river, and several others are known collectively as the as “Koch” languages, are spoken by a few small groups just to the west of the Garo hills. The name of the place “Cooch Behar” gives apprehension that Koch languages might once have been spread over further to the west as well. The Atong language is closely related to Koch, but it is spoken in the southeast corner of the Garo hills, and in spite of their linguistic relationship to Koch, the Atongs consider themselves to be a sub –group of the Garos (Robbins Burling, 1997: 6-7).

The Chakma and Tonehingya speak a language that is a dialect variant of Bengali. The Rajbansi, Pahari, Koch and Pathors have long lost their original language and have been speaking Bengali. This group of tribals may be grouped under the headline of ‘Indo Aryan’ linguistic group (Maloney, 1984; 8).

Thus, almost all the tribals, except for those who live in the interior part of the CHT, are now bi-lingual. They have learnt Bengali language for communicating with the Bengali wider society, but speak in their own language among themselves. In addition to Bengali language some of the Christian converts and a few Animists among the tribal have picked up a little bit of English as well (Ali, 1998: 13).

The Koch language is included within the Tibeto-Barman language family and their language introduced many words from Asamiya, Bangla, Garo and others. There are many similarities between the Koch language and the colloquial language of the Atong clan of the Garos. The Koch language does not have any alphabet and the

lingua franca of Koch language is now surviving in the country in Bangla. They use Bangla language in their daily transactions including instructions in the schools; and only the elderly member of the tribe use Koch language in colloquial form.

According to Risley, "Their language, however, is only Bengali, and they have no separate dialect or *patois*. That their adhesion to Hinduism is comparatively recent is shown by their own customs as regards to burial, food and marriage, as well as by the existence of the Dhimal, who might be defined as a non-Hinduized Kochh or Rajbansi among them and beside them" (ibid, 1892: 492).

Table- 2.3: Language and Script

Locale term	Bengali term	English term
Gan korbo	Debar roomga	I will sing
Hate jai	Hacha hinga	I go to hat
Mara galo	Ua shiai hingaia	He died
Chole geche	Ua shiai thikaya	He left
Aaj jonmo hoyeche	Dal hongaya	He born today
Jabi na	Chahing na ja	Don't go
Kanna kore	Gero poa	He cry
Kotha bolche	Kotha agan naya	He is talking
Andhokar hoye bristi asche	Nukha hibanaya	It will rain soon with darkness around
Akha	Chula	Hearth
Mera	Vera	Ram
Alo chal	Alo chal	Sunned rice
Bebong	Bang	Frog
Fattia	Khorgos	Hare
Uak	Shukor	Boar/Swin
Kattra	Kath Birali	Wild cat
Gijip	Chabi	Key
Khenta	Katha	Kantha
Fantai	Jubok/Juboti	Young
Budai	Briddho	Old
Dik/Kumbai	Kolshi	Jar
Khuppuri	Peyala	Cup
Sekkeu	Akash	Sky
Runchu	Chira	Beaten paddy
Jaba	Torkari	Vegetables
Gothethong dara	Kacha Mod	Rice wine
Rama	Path	Path

Source: *Fieldwork in Kaligonj*

Thus, the Koch community has a different language which has no alphabet or script. They only can speak this language. They informed the researcher that this language had no writing form and had come from Munda language. They speak among themselves in this language but with the outsiders they talk in Bengali. But they can speak fluently in both the languages. Gradually, their own language is being disappeared from their society, since they are speaking Bengali all the time. Some of them reported that they forgot some words of their own language.

2.6 Education

According to Nath, "It may be noted that all the early Koch kings were great patrons of education and learning and their rule saw flowering of early Assamese literature, popularly called the Vishnava literature. Biswa Singha, the founder king, was a patron of education and literature. As we have elsewhere pointed out, the famous Tantrik work *Yogini Tantra* might have been composed during his time. His sons Naranarayan and Chilarai, who had their education at Benaras, were themselves a great source of inspiration to the scholars and poets of the kingdom. As recorded by the *Maharaja Vamsavali*, Naranarayan himself was the author of the famous work called Malladevi Abhidhana. The tradition of encouraging education and literature was continued by the successors of Naranarayan till the end of their rule (D Nath, 1989; 178).

Education is very much essential for the individuals in Bangladesh. The percentage of literacy in Bangladesh is still very low. There are many ethnic groups in Bangladesh but they are not much conscious about education. They spend much of the time in earning their livelihood and their household works. The government is also sympathetic about their education.

This condition is now changing. The ethnic groups have become conscious. They understand the importance of education. And the government also has taken some steps to make them educated. Koch children are very bright and brilliant. There is a Primary school and a high school in Kochiapara and in the Kaligonj village. The Headmaster of the primary school stated with regret that Koch children were very bright but they stopped going to school and started earning due to poverty. He further

added that one of his students stood second in the inter school examination in class five. His hand writing was also very beautiful. A Member of Parliament bears his educational expenditure but other students could not continue for a long. Their memory is so sharp that they can remember their lesson of the previous day without going through the book. All teachers try to make their parents understand the necessity of learning. Nevertheless, they compel their children to work, because they need money for their survival.

Compared with other tribes living in Bangladesh, the Kochs are relatively backward in Education. The percentage of their education is only ten. The causes for such a plight are poverty and inadequate educational facilities.

Most of the older Kochs have learnt putting signature by the field workers of mass education. The Koch children have the eagerness for learning and their parents also want them to be learned. But their poverty stopped them from doing this. In this study, it is found that they are not very orthodox or wrathful or pungent. Their mentality is broad and wide. They are magnanimous and placid. They have very bright and sharp brain. So, if the Government takes the proper steps for their development, this country may get meritorious, sagacious and talented citizens.

2.7 Social Structure

The larger unit in the Koch social organization is the clan. A clan generally refers to a unilineal kinship group whose members believe them to be descended from a common ancestor but cannot trace this relationship genealogically. In case of Koch Community the researcher found that specific ancestors are often worshiped by the Koch people and also remain in their methodological figure. Clans are frequently named in different ways. Indeed, the clan of the Koch known as 'Nikini', rules and regulates the clan strictly.

Most of the tribes have clans and these are the sum-total of the families. The clans are known in different names i. e., sects, genes etc. Many of these are associated with some objects-animate or inanimate like plants and animals, and sometimes heavenly bodies. People have established association or mythological relationships with the members and such other bodies known as 'Totem'. Belief in totem and formalities relating to reverence, propitiation and restrictions constitute a belief system as

referred to in the earliest form of religion. Thus, relationship between the totem and the totemite, i.e., members belonging to a particular clan (Totem) group is very significant. However, there are a series of beliefs and formalities concerning the clan organization (Ali, 2008: 114).

The Kochs have a good number of clans and these have been recorded by many critics, from time to time. There are approximately more than one hundred groups or *nikinis* located so far. The names of some of these clans or *nikinis* are: Kama, Ranje, Kare, Pida, Maji, Bala, Hansur, Daheng, Mastak, Dalfa, Rangsa, Kora, Basar, Giri, Sku, Dasu, Rakho, Kasyap, Methun, Dasik, Snal, chisim, Nafak, Daring, Ricil, Dafo, Chiran, chianchi, Dambuk etc. Some of the sub-sects of the Gharos also bear similar names like the Koch, these are: Kama, Maji, Sku, Rakho, Snal, Chisim, Nafak, Richil, Dafo and chiran.

According to Risley, the Kochses, unquestionably “non-Aryan and non-Hindu”, were “a large Dravidian tribe of north-eastern Bengal among whom there are grounds for suspecting some admixture of Mongolian blood”(Risley, 1981:91). “...The Kochs are of Mongoloid origin having close affinities with other bodo tribes like the Meches, Rabhas, Dhimals, Hajongs and Garos. But in course of time and in some limited areas, they married with the Dravidians and gave birth to a mixed Mongolo-Dravidian race but having preponderant Mongoloid characters (D. Nath, 1989:4).

A medical officer, resident of Kochh Behar, whose opinion is quoted by Colonel Dalton, describe the Koch of that country as having flat square faces; eyes black and oblique; hair black and straight, in some curling; nose flat and short; cheek bones prominent; beard and whiskers rather deficient; color of skin in most instances black. Colonel Dalton says that the Rajbansi are all very dark, and that the Kochh display the thick protuberant lips and maxillaries of the Negro (ibid, 1981:492).

Agriculture was their main occupation; and all people were, directly or indirectly, associated with it. The Persian chronicles testify about the fertility and productivity of the soil in the Koch kingdom. The author of the *Fathiya-i-Ibriya*, for example, observed: “Koch Behar is well known for its excellent water, mildness of the climate, its fresh vegetarian and flowers. Oranges are plentiful, as also other fruits and vegetables”(D. Nath, 1989; 147). But today they are in search of alternative profession to change their fortunes. As they have lost control over land and also have threat to loss land so they cannot run their lives only depending on agriculture.

According to Risley, "The caste as a whole may be described as agricultural, though many, as has been mentioned above, make their living as fishermen, and carpenters, blacksmiths, jewelers, and money-lenders are also found among them. Most Rajbansis, however, are cultivating ryots with or without occupancy rights, some are landless day-laborers paid in cash or kind, and others hold their fields as *adhiars* or *metayers*, paying half the produce to their immediate landlord (Risley, 1981: 499).

The family is the fundamental unit of the social organization in the Koch community. Though the nuclear family is predominant among them, single and joint family is also found. Practice of joint family is the tradition of them. But now they prefer to practice nuclear family. The Koch society is patriarchal; father is the head of the family and controls each and every decision and action related to its member. The male offspring only inherits family property and they follow Hindu law of inheritance in this respect.

Marriage is a very important event of social life among the Kochs. Parallel and cross cousin marriage are strictly forbidden. Monogamy is the most normal system of marriage in the society. One can keep only one spouse at a time. Polygamy is not tabooed. It is permitted in their society. But now-a-days, they do not prefer polygamy because they are not able to maintain more wives at a time. "Polygamy was the usual way among the upper sections of the society and monogamy among the commonality" (D. Nath, 1989: 142).

The Rajbansis profess to marry their daughters at an early age i. e., between the ages of four and ten years; but this custom has only recently been adopted, and it is difficult to ascertain to what extent it is really followed even among those sub-castes, which profess to be pure Hindus. In the more primitive groups adult-marriage still prevails, and a breach of chastity before marriage is readily condoned, though the tendency is continually towards the adoption of what is believed to be the more orthodox usage (Risley, 1892: 494).

Every year on the eighth or ninth day of the new moon in the month of Bhadra (August-September) *sraddh* is performed for three generations of deceased ancestors by throwing into a river milk, wheat, *atap* rice, sesamum, barley, plantains, *bel* leaves and sprays of the *tulsi* plant, and uttering at the same time the names of the three ancestors, who are to be held in honor (ibid, 1892: 499).

The precise form of Hinduism followed by the Rajbansis seems to vary in different parts of the country according to the influences to which they are subjected. In Rangpur they profess to be Vaishnavas, while in Darjiling, where Tantric ideas are perhaps more prevalent, their favorite goddesses alleged to be Kali, Bisahari or Manasa, Grami, Tistu Buri, Hanuman, Bindur Tulsi, Rishi Kishto, Pethani, jogini, Hudum Deo, Bahastho, or Bahustho, Balibhadra, and Kora-Kuri are mentioned as among their minor Gods (ibid, 1892: 498).

Hinduization is considered to be one of the traditional process of cultural change in which the tribal cultures in India have been 'to greater or lesser degree' Hinduized. "Heterogeneous sects and beliefs prevailed in the Koch kingdom during the period under study. The non-Hindu tribals worshipped their deities and performed their religious rites according to their own ways without any interference from the government. Hinduisation till then was mainly confined to the ruling families or to certain areas, usually in the neighborhood of the capital cities. The Koch Kings, for political purposes, patronized both Brahmanic and tribal worship, although they themselves accepted Hinduism and were elevated to the status of *Kshatriyas* by the Brahmin priests. But a major change in the existing systems was brought by the Neo-Vaishnavite movement" (D.Nath, 1989; 165).

In Kaligonj, the Kochs were more influenced by the Hindus. But they are not typical Hindus. The study found that they migrated from their original home in Koochbehar to Bangladesh under compelling circumstances, had for a long time been in contact with both Hindu and Muslim neighbors and this prolong and continuous interaction brought about changes in their attitudes and religious beliefs in course of time.

In spite of their adherence to it, they follow many traits of their early faith, and they pay homage to some of the deities connected with their primitive religion. Now-a-days, many of the Koch people have changed their religion being subjected to greed or avidity. They thought that they would have got financial benefit from the people of the religion which they would follow. Some informants say that missionaries of Churches have initiated them into Christianity by tempting or alluring them of money and by assuring them to do tangible development for them. Another important and significant reason for changing their religion is their security. The impact of Christian

Missionaries was the most potent of the outside influences and organized activities to influence the life style of the Kochs. It influenced the life of the Christian ethnic communities in various non-religious aspects too.

Spreading of education through the Christian Mission is an important cause of conversion. Kochs children get free education in the Christian Missionary School, and sometimes other fringe benefits such as, books, hostel accommodation etc. It is reported that the behavior and attitude of the Missionaries toward the Koch children in these schools are very favorable and convincing. In other words, it may be said that it is an indirect Missionary means towards conversion of children into Christianity that has been adopted by them from the very beginning of their mission in Bangladesh.

Chapter 3

Geophysical Structure and Demographic Aspects

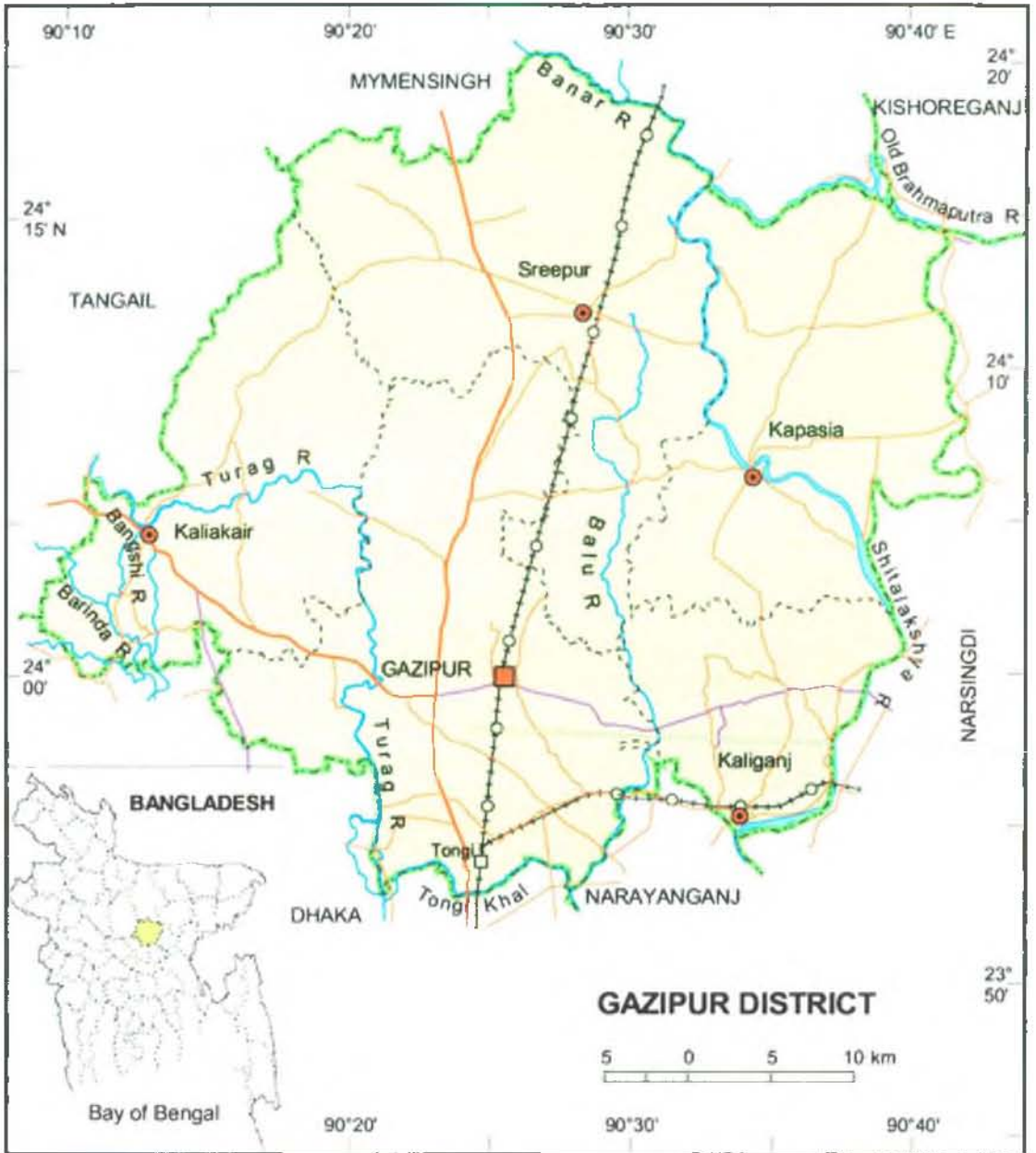
3.1 Introduction

The nature and quality of social life of any individual or group, to a large extent, are conditioned and shaped by the geophysical and social setting in which they are born and brought up. Bangladesh represents a diverse variety of geophysical conditions and it also exhibits a multiplicity of social and cultural life. Though the country is predominantly Muslim but there are several tribal groups in various parts of the country. Some of these tribal groups are the extension of other larger segments which reside either in India or in Burma. These tribal groups though ethnically possess distinct identity, yet over the years, due to the process of acculturation, religious conversation and cultural contact with outside groups, have affected the socio-cultural life of these cultural groups. As the society in Bangladesh is passing through a transitional phase, there is considerable amount of conflict between tradition and modernity. The tribal group is also passing through a phase where their traditional social structure and cultural practices are undergoing changes and many new forces of change are making impact upon their social organization and economic condition (Islam, 1086; 27).

The geophysical structure and social setting would not only enable us in understanding the structural realities but also provide an understanding of the process of change which is affecting the tribes in Bangladesh.

Gazipur District

Gazipur was originally a sub division of Dhaka district. It was upgraded to a zilla on the first March, 1984. The zilla was once prominent for the abode of a historically famous Gazi family. It is believed that the zilla was named after the name of Gazi family. It is bounded on the north by Mymensing and Kishorgonj zilla, and on the west by Tangail zilla. The total area of the zilla is 1, 741, 93 square kilometer (Bangladesh Population census 1991).



Gazipur district forms the eastern part of the Varanasi Division in Uttar Pradesh. Gazipur is the district head quarter. It lies to the east and north of Janupur and Varanasi district respectively. Gazipur district is situated between $25^{\circ}19'$ and $25^{\circ}54'$ north latitude and $83^{\circ}4'$ and $83^{\circ}58'$ east longitude. This location is around 67.50 meters above the sea level. The length of district from east to west is 90 kms and width from north to south is 64 kms. The Ganga River from one side and the Karamnasa River from other side divided it from Bihar. It is bounded by Balli district and Bihar in the east, Janupur, Varanasi and Azamgarh in the west, Mau in north and chanduali district in the south. The common language used by the people is Bhojpuri.

Gazipur district was constituted as a separate district in 1818. Originally the district was very big, which is including not only modern Ballia but also Narwan of Varanasi, chausa of Buxar (Bihar) and Pargana of Sagari, Ghosi, Mau and Muhammadabad in Azamgarh district. Early history of Gazipur district dates back to Vedic and Ramayana era. It states that this region was covered with dense forests and many Ashrams were situated here. It was an important centre of Lord Buddha's preaching.

Gazipur district is garlanded by the Ganga, Karamnasa and Gomti rivers, that make this region stronger in economic and geographic condition. The total geographical area of this district is 3384 sq kms. Gazipur is embellished with picturesque geographical environs. Geography of Gazipur district is a part of mid Gangetic plains. Total area is approximately 3, 33, 209 hectares in which 2, 52, 824 hectares are used for agricultural purpose. Approximately 38 percent of the soil is cattle field. This district does not contain any forest area.

Table-3.1: Geographic Unit of Gazipur

Geographic Unit	Year	Number
Union	1981	8
Union	1991	9
Mauza	1981	189
Mauza	1991	220
Village	1981	244
Village	1991	319
Municipality	1981	2
Municipality	1991	1
Ward	1981	6
Ward	1991	3
Mahalla	1981	61
Mahalla	1991	30

Source: Bangladesh population census: 1991

Note: No. of unions, mauzas and villages have been decreased in 1991 due to transfer of area from rural to municipal area.

Table-3.2: Population of Gazipur

Year	Male	Female	Total
1991	3, 16, 693	2, 71, 699	5, 88, 492
1981	2, 06, 461	1, 70, 872	3, 77, 333

Source: *Bangladesh population census: 1991*

Gazipur Thana occupies an area of 446.38 sq. km. including 0.31 sq. km. river and 54.52 sq. km. forest areas. It is located between 23⁰53' and 24⁰11' north latitudes and between 90⁰30' east longitudes. The Thana is bounded on the north by Sreepur Thana, on the east by Sreepur and Kaligonj thanas and Rupganj Thana of Narayanganj zilla, on the south Uttara and Mirpur thanas of Dhaka zilla and on the west by Kaliakair Thana and Savar Thana of Dhaka zilla (Bangladesh population census).

The Thana consists of 2 municipalities, 8 unions, 6 wards, 189 mauzas, 61 mahallas and 244 villages. The average population of the union, ward, mauza, mahalla and village are 40384, 44237, 1709, 4351 and 1324 respectively (Bangladesh population census 1991).

3.2 Description of the Village under Study

Kaligonj is under the Kawaltia union of Gazipur zilla. The radius of the Koch village is about 5 K.M. The total number of population is 2955, of which 1500 are males and 1450 are females. The number of Koch household is 431. There are 1135 Koch people in the study village of whom 588 are males and 547 are females.

The village is inhabited by both Hindus and Muslims but Muslims constituted majority of the population. Muslims have a cordial relation with Hindus and Kochs. Their economic condition is well compared to the Koch but the Hindus are wealthy compared to the Kochs. The Hindus treat the Kochs as lower caste. The density of population of the village is not in the alarming. The houses are scattered all over the village. It is surrounded by various kinds of trees like Sal, Gajari, Mango, Jack-fruit, Bamboo and many herbs and shrubs. Some ponds are seen in the village which are not used by the villagers except *bathma* and *washinu*. They drink tube well water.

3.2.1 Pattern of Land Use

The land of this area is very fertile. They utilize the land in three ways i. e., for agricultural purposes, constructing houses and for grazing cattles. Fertile land has been turned into paddy field. Paddy is grown throughout the whole year. There is such land which is not used in every season; it is used seasonal vegetables. There is fallow land as well as such waste land in the village which are used as shrubs, bushes, herbs, etc. These lands are not used due to their low productivity. People of the study village in the habit of gathering wood and timber of the sal and gajari forest for facing extinction. Even the Government Reserve Forests is not safe due to the villagers intervention.

3.2.2 Medical Facilities

The common diseases of the Koch are fever, dysentery and diarrhoea. For their treatment they usually go to the village Kabiraj. The Kobiraj apply various kinds of herbs and roots to cure these diseases. Their dependency on Kabiraj for treatment of diseases is mainly due to their age old traditional belief and poverty. Majority of them cannot afford allopathic and cosmopolitan mode of treatment due to their pecuniary condition.

3.2.3 Water Bodies

There is a stream called the Chilai which flows on the east side of the village and it falls on the Shitalakha. There is no pond in the village but there is a dam on the south side of the village which serves in all the seasons. All the villagers use tube-well and have tube-well of their own.

3.2.4 Seasons

In Kaligonj there are three distinct seasons: the winter, the summer and the rainy season. The cold weather begins in the middle of October and continues to the middle of March. The hot weather continues till the middle of June and the monsoon starts from the Bengali month and continues upto the end of September.

3.2.5 Types of Trees

The following types of trees are found in the area:

Table- 3.3: Types of Trees

Bengali Name	Local Name	English Term
Bash	Au	Bamboo
Thekacho fang	Am gachh	Mango tree
Theborong fang	Kathal gachh	Jackfruit tree
Therik fang	Kola gachh	Banana tree
Nayrol fang	Narikel gachh	Coconut tree
Panhon fang	Pan gachh	Betel leaf
Khayjal fang	Khejur gachh	Date tree
Habri fang	Peyara gachh	Guava tree
Khangkari fang	Kul gachh	Palm tree
Tentali fang	Tetul gachh	Tamarind tree

Source: Field work in Kaligonj.

3.2.6 Wild Life

The survival is threatened or extinct wild life lives of the village and also in the jungles are grouped as following:

Table- 3.4: Wild Life of the Study Village

Dominant	Threatened	Extinct
Fox	Monkey	Tiger
Crow	Pig	Bear
Snake	Tortoise	Elephant
Rat	Rabbit	
Owl	Mongoose	
Cow		
Pigeon		
Goat		
Sheep		

Source: Field work in Kaligonj

3.2.6 The Effects of Geographical Factor on Koch Life

The effects of the geographical factors and climate including environment may be traced on every aspects of Koch life, both physical and mental. The dark skin of the Koch may be due to high temperature of the area. Their surroundings provide them with a number of edible roots and leaves. The Kochs are depended mainly on rice, edible roots, leaves which are gathered by the woman folk from the nearly jungles although they are fond of animal food. Climatic influence may be seen on the construction of the Kochs huts and their furniture which they ordinarily use. Their huts have been constructed with walls of mud and roof of straw or leaves. These construction materials are available there.

3.2.8 Relationship with Other Communities

Muslims and Hindus have constituted the majority of the inhabitants of the study village although the number of Koch families is about 456. Most of the Muslims are land owners. But there are some service holders, teachers, businessmen and shopkeepers. Many of the Kochs work in the land as agricultural labor or day labor. Again, some Kochs have been able to manage small portions of land from the Muslim land owners for share cropping. Their relation with the Muslims is very cordial. They maintain their own religion peacefully and there is no severe conflict among them.

3.2.9 External Political Control

Lacks of empowerment and external political control have made the Kochs economically backward. Because of political subordination they face enormous economic problems. Discussions with the villagers revealed that it was an ordinary picture, whether parliamentary or local bodies, candidates of different political parties try to convince the Koch people by their lucrative commitments before election. But after election they forget their commitments. Moreover, they have no leader who can speak on behalf of the Kochs.

3.3 Demographic Feature of the Village under Study

In this part, the main emphasis is given on the demographic feature, major occupation, national literacy level etc. During the British rule, most of the Kochs were peasants.

But now, most of them have been turned into agricultural laborers, a few are van pullers, shopkeepers and labourers. A considerable number of the Koch have lost their lands because of legal tricks, fake deeds of the neighboring Muslim land owners and with the help of few corrupt land administrators.

In spite of urbanization, most of the villagers have a tilt towards Hindu culture and traditions. One Govt. Primary School, one High School and an Adult Night School are financed by the local Christian Mission for the enhancement of education of the Koch children, the old Kochs of both sexes of the village. The Christian Mission also looks after the health and hygiene of the villagers. It may be noted here that urbanization is acting as agent of Hinduisation in terms of modernization.

Generally speaking, our observation confirmed that a systematic help in terms of educational, medical and community development programme is being rendered by the Christian Missionaries at Kaligong village to uplift the life of these poor Kochs. In Table- 3.3, we have shown the forms of help to the Kochs of the village under study.

Table-3.5: Process of Missionaries Help

Village Name	Education		Health Programme	Community Development Programme
	Formal	Non-formal		
Kaligonj	One Govt. Primary School, one High School	Adult Night School	Free Family Planning programme and Free Sanitary Latrine	Yes

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

3.3.1 Population

The Koch village under study constitutes a total population of 456, of which 280 are males and 226 are females having 120 households. The table shows the Koch population composition of the study village.

Table-3.6: Population Composition of the Study Village

Village	No. of Household	Sex	Total Population	Percentage	Ratio
Kaligonj	120	Male	230	50.44%	1.02
		Female	226	49.56%	
Total	120		456	100%	

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

Table-3.6 shows the details of the total population with sex and age of Kaligonj village.

Table-3.7: Total Population According to Age and Sex Group

Age group	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
0-14	72	68	140
15-29	62	70	132
30-44	46	42	88
45-59	32	36	68
60-up	18	10	28
Total	230	226	456

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

3.3.2 Household Pattern

Almost all the houses in the village are made of mud. The roof of some of the houses is made of thatches and some are made of leaves of palm tree. Most of the houses are small and having only one room. It has been observed in many houses there is very little place in the varanda and is usually used for sleeping purpose. There are only two or three localities where few big houses can be seen with thatches roof or made of tins. They have made accommodations for their ducks, hens and goats along with the kitchen attached with homes due to lack of places inside. This is why every house has a balcony.

Table-3.8: Household Pattern in Study Village

Village	Used Room Per Household		Kitchen Room		Cow Shed		Total Household
	One room	Two/more room	Yes	No	Yes	No	
	82 (68%)	36 (32%)	96 (75%)	24 (25%)	18 (15%)	102 (85%)	120 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

3.3.3 Types of Family

Various types of families have been found in the study village that has been based on kinship and marriage ties. It can be broadly tumped into-

Nuclear family: A nuclear family includes wife and husband with or without unmarried children.

Joint family: Joint or extended family includes wife and husband with or without married or unmarried children.

Others family: Others family means a single man or woman family having one man or woman due to particular cases.

Table-3.9: Types of Family

Types of Family	No. of Household	Percentage
Nuclear family	101	84.17%
Joint family	34	11.47%
Other (single)	5	4.17%
Total	120	100%

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

For better understanding of the nature of families, we have given here the size of the family. In Koch village, the nuclear families are predominant which moulds the socio-economic profile of the Koch. As many as 80.33% of the families are nuclear, 11.67% are joint types, and the rest 4.17% are single family in the study village. It has been gathered that after getting marriage, the newly married couples do not feel comfort in

their parents family, since they want to live independently. However, few couples have been found to remain with their parents for getting share of land and property.

Table-3.10: Size of the Family

Village	Small	Medium Large	Large	Very Large	Total Household
	0-2	3-5	6-8	9-up	
Kaligonj	32	78	8	2	120
	26.66%	65%	6.67%	1.67%	100%

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

Small-size and medium-size families are common among the Kochs of Kaligonj village constituting 26.66 and 65.00 percent respectively. But in fact, the medium-size families are greater in number in Kaligonj village under study.

3.3.4 Marital Status

The Kochs have been classified into four distinct groups, in respect of their material status. They are as follows:

- Unmarried
- Married
- Widowed and
- Divorced

Table-3.11: Marital Status of the Village According to Age and Sex

Status	0-15		16-30		31-45		46-60		61-up		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Unmarried	50	56	12	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	120
Married	4	8	84	96	38	34	22	14	6	-	306
Divorced	-	-	2	-	2	4	-	-	-	-	8
Widowed	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	10	6	2	22
Total	54	64	98	98	40	38	26	24	12	2	456

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

Out of the total 230 males and 226 females in Kaligonj village, 62 are males and 58 females are unmarried. It is seen from table-3.9 that in the age group of 16-30, 12 boys and 2 girls are unmarried out of total 98 boys and 98 girls in the study village. It is clear from the table that marriageable age of a girl is usually between 16-30. In other words, it can be said that their marriageable age is, when they attain maturity. The total number of divorced males and females are 4 and 4 respectively constituting different age groups. But the dissolution of marriage generally occurs in the age group of 25 to 35 years.

3.3.5 Educational Status

Kochs, who can just read and write or put their signatures, or have read up to Primary level, are considered as literates in this study. On the other hand, persons read ranging from High school to Degree level are regarded as educated.

Table-3.12: Educational Status

Education Level	Male	Female
Illiterate	64	92
Literate	66	74
Primary level	58	46
Secondary level	32	12
College level	6	2
Degree level	4	00
Total	230	226

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

Table-3.13: Literacy According to Age Group

Total Population		Age Group (yrs)									
		0-14		15-44		45-60		61-up		Total	
Male	Female	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
230	226	36	42	84	32	12	0	0	0	132	74
										64.08%	35.92%

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

3.3.6 Land Holding Categories

Koch community was brought here in Bangladesh to cultivate land by cleaning the jungle. Their original profession was therefore agriculture. But with the passage of time their occupation has been changed to a large extent. Now they are engaged in various types of transient work including agriculture on daily basis. Not only the male but also the child and female are working as day laborers. Besides, they collect firewood from the jungle and sell these in the markets. They cultivate vegetables in the surrounding fields of their homes. Some of the Kochs are Government employees and a few of them expressed their desire to go abroad. They catch fishes in the canals and rivers blowing across the village.

Table-3.14: Land Holding

Categories	Number	Percentage
Landless	72	60.00%
0.01-1.00 acr.	28	23.33%
1.01-2.00 acr.	10	8.33%
2.01-3.00 acr.	6	5.00%
3.01-4.00 acr.	4	3.33%
Total	120	100%

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

Table- 3.14 shows that, among the Kochs of the study village 28 households have land between 0.01 and 1.00 acr. Only 10 households have almost between 1.01-2.00 acr. On the other hand, 72 households are landless out of total 120 households under study. Among the landless groups a few families have erected their homesteads.

3.3.7 Ownership of Land

Almost all the Kochs had more or less landed property of their own. But in course of time, they were deprived of their lands by the vested interest and were cheated. They became landless owing to their poverty and due to lust of the greedy people. In most cases, they were unable to repay the loan and finally they were compelled to sell out their land to the Bengali Muslim Mohazons and other money lenders at a very low cost. Many of the respondents informed that they had been victimized in getting actual price after selling land.

Table-3.15: Ownership of Land (Household Basis)

Status	No. of Household	Percentage
Own land	64	53.33%
Govt/khas land	48	40.00%
Share croppers	8	6.67%
Total	120	100%

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

Among the Koch household of the study village, 53.33% household has their own cultivable land. On the other hand, 40.00% household has Khas land and 6.67% households are share croppers.

3.3.8 Occupation

Agriculture was the main occupation of the Kochs. All people were, directly or indirectly, associated with agriculture (D. Nath, 1989; 147). But today they are in search of alternative profession to change their fortunes. As they have lost control over land and have been threatened to loose land, so they cannot run their lives only depending on agriculture.

Moreover, a small portion of them having higher education, are searching for jobs which will increase their income and will make scope for better life. A large number of Koch young men are coming to Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh for earning livelihood. Many of them are working as NGO workers, government employees, and house-servants etc.

Table-3.16: Primary Occupation of the Household Chief

Occupation	No. of Households	Percentages
Day labor	79	65.83%
Agriculture	18	15.00%
Riksha/Van Pullar	7	5.83%
NGO worker	5	4.17%
Kobiraj	3	2.50%
Missionary worker	2	1.67%
Teacher	2	1.67%
Service holder (Army)	1	0.83%
Carpenter	1	0.83%
Beauty parlor worker	2	1.67%
Total	120	

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

The household members are engaged in different jobs. Out of the 120 households in Kaligonj village, only 15.00% households are engaged in cultivation with agricultural lands and 65.83% households are engaged as day labourers and rest of them have taken it as their subsidiary occupation. Among the salaried persons, there are army personnel, teachers, missionary workers, NGO workers and beauty parlor workers. They are also landowners.

3.3.9 Income and Expenditure Pattern

The income level of the Koch under study is very low. With their meager income they are to survive in serious difficulties. It appears from the table 5.5 that most of the Kochs is extremely poor and there is serious income discrimination among the Kochs community like other inhabitants of Bangladesh.

Table-3.17: Monthly Income (in Taka)

Monthly Income in Taka	No. of Household	Percentage
0000-1500	10	8.33%
1500-3000	70	58.33%
3000-6000	32	26.67%
6000-10000	8	6.67%
Total	120	100%

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

From the above table it is observed that there is significant correlation between landlessness, poverty and occupation. The landless and some nominal landowners main occupation is either farming or working as day labor. Only a few landless people and nominal landowners earn their livelihood through petty business along with their traditional agricultural job. Present terms and conditions of the job of day labors are not favorable to them. They have to remain in their duty for around 9 hours a day. They get a break in the noon for their bath and meal but they can not enjoy enough leisure. So, their physical suffering is painful as they suffer from mental torture. They get only taka 100 to 120 after their day long hard job.

3.3.10 Non-labor, Labor and Working Force

Non-labor, labor and working of the Koch village under study has been assessed according to survey conducted by the researcher during fieldwork. It is significant to note that the working force of the Koch is higher compared to the labor force of 15-60 years age-group. This indicates the involvement of non-labor force in day-to-day economic activities, which has been accelerated by the opportunity of employment of the Koch in non-agricultural sectors during the agricultural off-season and employment opportunities in the offices of the Missionaries. Table -5.6 shows the non labor, labor and working force in the Koch village under study.

Table-3.18: Non-labor, Labor and Working Force

Village	Sex	Total Population	Non-labor Force		Labor Force	Working Force
			Age Group		Age Group	Age Group
			0-14	61-up	15-60	15-60
Kaligonj	Male	230	78	82	146	163
	Female	226	-	-	139	154

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

3.3.11 Sources of Loan

Our experience in the Koch village under study reveals that Koch farmers, and share croppers usually borrow money from the nearby Muslim money lenders and Morals at high rate of interest which is double or more than double of loan money, which is extremely high compared to bank rate of interest.

Table-3.19: Sources of Loan and Rate of Interest

Sources	No. of Household	Interest Annually	Term
Individuals belonging to Muslim money lenders outside the village as well as Moral of own village	34	90%	One year generally or six month
Government Bank	4	17%	One year
N.G.O. like BRAC, ASHA, DIP, PIDIM	110	25%	Six months or one year

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

3.3.12 Religiosity

There is only one small temple in the village under study which is meant for deity Kali. For major worship they go to the big temple of Shimultoli.

Table-3.20: Religiosity

Village	Existence of		Total Household by Religion		Total Household
	Mondir	Church	Animist	Christian	
Kaligonj	Yes	Yes	112	8	120

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

Our study shows that among the Kochs, both Animist and Christian groups are present in the Koch village. On the other hand, only Animist Kochs are found in a single village.

Chapter 4

Economic Life

4.1 Introduction

Economic structure of a community refers to the institutional and functional involvement of the people entered on the activities associated with the satisfaction of the material needs of the people. Every community has its own methods to meet the basic needs. Although they always live on the forest, there is an impact of this in their economy. The basic needs of the community are conditioned by natural and socio-cultural factors as well as by the level of technology available and practiced there.

Economic organization consists of the ordering and organization of human relations and human efforts in order to procure as many of the necessities of day to day life as possible with the attempt to secure the maximum effort. It is the possible through adapting limited means to unlimited needs in an organized manner (Majumder and Madan, 1994; 162).

Though the Kochs are traditionally agricultural laborers and they earn their livelihood working on the land of others, they are not self sufficient enough. They are very poor and most of them are landless. They are engaged as day laborers and work in either field or other activities. They work in the agricultural field as a seasonal labor. Man and woman both work together. The child labors are also found in the study village. They are very ill fed, ill clad and ill nourished. The agricultural production among the Kochs in the village mainly remains at subsistence level. Most of the families have to purchase household consumption goods from the local market and it seemed that they have no sufficient money to buy their daily necessities of life.

During my fieldwork, I had several discussions with them about share cropping and lease system production. They informed me that the land owners were willing to cultivate their land with their own supervision and they were not much interested for share cropping owing to the growth of population and fragmentation of land made that tendency among the land owners. Another reason for decreasing share cropping is high rate of production cost. As a result, the marginal cultivators became disinterested in share cropping.

4.2 Housing

Housing is one the basic human needs for any society. However, the type of housing and the use of construction materials are related to place, environment and culture of the respective society. People in the primitive societies lived in houses, they made for themselves (Selina Ahsan, 1995; 10).

In the hill districts, it is the common phenomenon for all the tribal societies that they live in bamboo made raised houses with an open platform. But in the high or plain land, where the tribes also live, such as Mymensingh, Modhupur, Tangail, Rangpur, Dinajpur and Gazipur generally live in earth built huts, the four walls are built with the clay earth and the roofs are made of straws. At present the people who can afford money, make their houses with tin, wood, brick, cement, sand, etc.

4.3 Household Structure

Almost all of the houses in the village are made of clay. The roof of some houses is made of thatches and some are made of leaves of palm tree. Most of the houses are small and have only single room in each house. It has been observed that in many houses the very small space in balcony is used for passing their nights. There are only two or three localities where a few number of big houses are seen with roofs made of tins. They make places for their ducks, hens and goats adjacent to kitchen of their homes due to non availability of space. This is why every house has balcony.

Some of the dwellers have used 'Tally' on the roof. These tallies were found to have been broken due to the heavy storm or shower. Tallies were set up in such a way that if any of the tally was broken were fall off. So there were alternative to reconstruct the tallies. Besides tallies had to be set up in wooden frames which were expensive. They (Koch) are trying their best to use tins. Poor people lives in long grass type thatches. In such type of houses it is cold in summer and hot in winter.

Koch people themselves make their houses. All members of a family help each other in preparing houses. Normally they begin making houses in the dry season. They usually select Katrik to Baishakh Bengali month for the construction of their houses. They smear the floor or wall of their houses with smudge mixed with cow dung.

Many people make designs in the walls. They use mat on the floor when they go to sleep. It is often found that the sleeping place is some houses in somewhat higher and it is used for their bedstead.

Table-4.1: Materials Used for House Construction with Percentage

Village	Total Household	Wall		Roof		
		Mud	Tinshed	Thatch	Tally	Tinshed
Kaligonj	120 (100%)	106 (88.33%)	14 (11.67%)	-	-	120 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

They churn or stir the ground which is the main item for making their houses and make square size big earth frame with smudge. The frame is then exposed to the sun for two to three days for drying. These are then set up side by side and also one over another provided the frames are properly dried. It is noted that the pira is not made before the wall was made. At first they dig the earth and set the frames for making the walls. After this, they make the pira. To join each of the frames with other, they use a kind of mixture made of mud and this mixture joins the frames very hardly with each other. When the house is totally dried, then they use any kind of paint. About seven thousand taka including labor costs is needed to construct a house in Bangram. As they themselves work to construct the house and give labor, they need only three to four thousand taka. They need one and half month to make such a house.

Table-4.2: No. of Room per Household (Percentage)

Village	User Room per Household		Kitchen Room		Cow Shed		Total Household
	One room	Two/more room	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Kaligonj	82 (68%)	38 (32%)	96 (75%)	24 (25%)	18 (15%)	102 (85%)	120

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj.

According to the respondent of Koch village of Gazipur, most of the Koch families live in a cottage having one or two room. Husband, wife, children and sometimes elder son with his wife live in same room. The respondent told the researcher that the old man and the unmarried male member sometime use veranda of the cottage for sleeping at night.

4.4 Household Furniture and Utensils

Koch people can not afford costly furniture. They use mat for sitting as well as sleeping purpose, which the Koch women themselves weave with palm leaves. There are some houses where bedsteads are also seen. They use mats if guests come. They do not use mattress. They use thick bed cover which may call rope bed. However, use of chair, table are observed in some families. They make shelf with earth for keeping their necessary items.

Domestic utensils which are primarily used for cooking, preserving water or crops and for purpose which domestic include pots, pans and pitchers of different sizes. Some of these are made of earth, and some are of aluminum. Some of the dwellers use plate, glass etc. usually made of steel.

4.5 Pattern of Dress

Koch people's dress and costume is almost identical compared to those of the common people. It is know from the Koch people that their forefathers were accustomed to use short cut limited cloth. But they have changed their traditional dresses with the change of time.

Male Dress

Around sixty years ago male Kochs preferred to use langhot or lengti which is now obsolete among the Kochs. Now the common and usual dress for the males is dhuti and gamcha. Now-a-days, they occasionally use Panjabi, shirt, lungi, and trousers for particular purpose. They also wear dhuti but in marriage ceremony and religious festivals, young boys wear pants-shirts. In their marriage ceremony the bridegroom wears dhuti. Male Koch used to wear a piece of small cloth for the lower part of the body in the past. The old people living in the Kaligonj village are still using the tradition dress.

Female Dress

The Koch women have their own traditional dress and many of them wear it till now. Their traditional dress is called *laffen* and the Koch women use it with shirt or inner garment. But the traditional dresses of the Kochs have been changed. Now-a-days they are found to use neighboring Bengali Womens' dress. The females usually put on printed saree with blouse and petticoat, on the other hand old women put on single colored saree and widows use white colored saree. The young girls put on shalwar, kamij and orna. The school going children are also using frock, shirts and pants like the Bengali children. But none of the males, females or children use sandals.

4.6 Ornaments

Gold ornaments are hardly seen in the Koch society. They use ornamental ring for wrist, earring, chain, bracelets made with silver and imitations; but the ornaments that they wear in their nose are made of gold. Many of them also use glass ornamental ring for the wrist. Boys normally do not use ornaments. But boys use rings made of silver or imitations. They have gradually changed their traditional dresses with the change of time.

4.7 Food

Rice is their staple food. Now-a-days, the Kochs of the study village are accustomed with Bengali food. With rice they take a simple sak, sabji, fried or boiled green vegetables and roused potato or dal or they may eat plain white rice with salt. Normally they eat pulses, rice and some seasonal vegetables which they produce themselves. They eat all kind of meat except beef. Besides this, they eat dead chicken, dead goat, dead birds like dove, pigeon, tortoise and kuicha (one kind of fish which is similar to snake). In their marriage ceremony they arrange rice and fish and if possible they try to arrange meat. In their religious ceremonies like Puja they eat domestically prepared sweets and fruits.

They use oil in their cooking; beside mustard oil, the soybean is also gaining popularity now- a-days. Like Garos they also relish food cooked with alkali or soda beside oil, and in this respect they add dried fish in the curry. At the time of draught they gather wild potato and vegetables as their alternative food, and they are equal with Garos in food gathering. During festivals, the use of rice cake is very popular as a source of enjoyment.

They have no particular eating time. They eat rice three times a day if they can afford. Again, if they do not have any money, they try to eat whatever they find around them. They do not have the habit of taking tea. However, some of them go to tea stall in their village for taking tea. There is a custom of eating betel nut in their society. And they also offer betel nut to their guests.

4.8 Drink

Alcohol is an internal part of their diet in their festivals and almost all ceremonies. Rice beer is their favorite and common drink. They consider rice beer as a part of their culture. Both Koch men and women are addicted in drinking rice beer. They must offer rice beer if guests come from father-in-law house. It is almost compulsory to arrange such beer in their marriage ceremony. It is also needed in Puja or other religious ceremonies. They drink rice beer almost every day. In their opinion, adequate quantity of such drinks can give enough energy to their body.

Now-a-days, some educated boys and girls have refrained themselves from it. Besides, they are influenced with the food habit of wider society. As a result, they are habituated and influenced with the food habit of the larger society.

4.9 Preparation of Wine

There is an interesting technique of preparing rice beer in the Koch society. At first they boil the rice partially. Then they pour the rice in earthen pot. After that they mix some tablets which are prepared by them. Now they cover it with a sack and thus keep it for three nights. On fourth day, they mix water with it. Usually they use 2.3/ 3 kg water for one kg rice. After five to six hours they serve it. Generally for making 2 kg rice beer, 20-30 tablets are mixed. Now it has been found to sell haria, wine or rice beer secretly. For each bottle they take Taka twenty. It is a highly demandable drink in the Koch society. While drinking, the Kochs usually eat a special food called *Khantamiri*; but there is no such specialty in its preparation. It contains sunned rice mixed with various kinds of leafy vegetables. They finely ground this mixture and add some spices, dried fish, salt and chilly with it. Then the powdered material is fried and pressed into the shape of a round and big *moa* (a local cake) and put under the sun to dry. Later on, these are served in the drinking session.

4.10 Cooking Time and Eating Customs

Usually the Kochs cook two times a day i. e. 7 o'clock in the morning and 1 o'clock in the noon. At night, they make the food hot which is cooked at noon and eat. Generally the female members and children eat earlier. The females normally serve the food while eating. They usually sit on mat. Before start eating, they pour water around the plate then eat. There is another eating custom that is called uposh thaka. During uposh they keep themselves abstain from taking rice, vegetables etc. During uposh, they can just take fruits and water. Especially the woman, who is a widow, usually performs it. At night they break uposh by taking rice and vegetables.

4.11 Kitchen

Isolated kitchen is not seen in most of the houses of the Kochs. They make kitchen very near to their homes. A few numbers of houses with isolated kitchen may be found where Koch people select space for keeping firewood that is far from the 'Chula'. Shelf made of bamboo is used for keeping utensils, pots and pieces, and such other kitchen articles.

4.12 Latrine

Koch people do not have so good latrine. They normally evacuate in the nearby jungle. Now-a-days, latrines are seen in their houses. Yet the children and boys evacuate in the nearby jungle. Their latrines are constructed with bamboo fence and tin. A small ditch is dug for passing the stool and urine. Latrine is always constructed a little bit far from the house.

4.13 Personal Care

Koch women and men take bath every day in the river, dam or in the tube-well. They wash their teeth everyday in the morning with charcoal. Most of the children do not clean their teeth. Most of them do not take bath regularly. The women use soap and special kind of mud to clean their hair. Most men and women do not wash their hands with soap or ash after evacuation. The women do not use soap at the time of their menstruation. They use soap for washing their clothes very rarely.

4.14 Daily Life of a Male

Anybody can hardly find any change or variation in the life style of the poor. Kochs are not exception to it. A male Koch begins his daily life looking for the source of income to meet his minimum daily necessities. As they do not have particular profession, they engage themselves in jobs they find around them. They are to look for works of any kind. They usually do agricultural works, make houses, collect firewood from the jungle, pull rickshaw and van, dig the soil and also participate in different 'NGO' programs. The Koch People are very industrious. When they engage in works, they try to give full attention to finish the work within specified time. But they never try to make deception. They take rest whenever they badly require. They try to save time by giving hard labour. They get enough time to take rest but they do not usually it. There is no tendency among the Koch people to improve their economic condition by earning extra money. They go to earn money only when the earned amount is spent.

Performance of religion is seldom observed among the Kochs. All of them follow the daily in the religious programs. But they participate in the religious programs which are arranged monthly or yearly. Those who perform their religious formalities regularly take a bath at noon and read the holy Geeta or Ramayana. They take wine at night regularly. It is their only the means of recreation. They also gossip and sing occasionally and arrange dancing program.

4.15 Daily Life of a Female

Koch women are more industrious compared to the males who work hard. They work as day labor besides their family work. They are engaged regularly in digging soil, collecting fire wood from the jungle, cultivating vegetables in the kitchen garden and participate in NGO. Koch women fully look after their children and have little activities opportunity for recreation. They gossip among themselves with each other whenever they have time.

Table-4.3: Koch Women Daily Routine

Types of Work	Time
1 Get up and refreshment	5.30-6.00 am
2 Clearing household and tending cattle to graze	6.00-7.30 am
3 Preparing food (break fast and lunch)	7.30-9.30 am
4 Feeding the children, send them to school and sending food to the field for her working husband	9.30-10.30 am
5 Taking meal and going to the field	10.30-11.00 am
6 working in the field	11.30-3.00 pm
7 Return from the field. Taking bath and lunch, and complete other household chores.	3.00-5.30 pm
8 Going to market	5.30-7.00 pm
9 Cooking food	7.30-9.00 pm
10 Feeding all and taking meal	9.00-10.30 pm
11 Retire bed	11.00 pm

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

4.16 Nature of Land Holding

Koch community came here in Bangladesh to cultivate land by cleaning the jungle. Naturally their original profession was agriculture. But with the passage of time their occupation has been changed to a large extent. Now they are found engaged in variety of professions on daily basis. Not only the males but also the children and females are engaged in transient laborers. Besides, they collect firewood from the jungle, sell these to the market, and grow vegetables in the field surrounding their homes. Some of them are Government employees in the office. Now-a-days, few of them left the village to go abroad. They catch fishes in the canals and in the rivers which are blowing across the village since there are no ponds or bills in the village.

Table-4.4: Land Holding

Categories	Number	Percentage
Landless	72	60.00%
0.01-1.00 acr.	28	23.33%
1.01-2.00 acr.	10	8.33%
2.01-3.00 acr.	6	5.00%
3.01-4.00 acr.	4	3.33%
Total	120	100%

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

Table- 4.4 shows that 28 household have only 0.01-1.00 acr. of land and 10 household have only 1.01-2.00 acr. land. Seventy two households are landless out of total 120 households in the study village. Among the landless dwellers a few families have their own homesteads, but no cultivable land.

One of the old informants told the researcher that almost all Kochs had more or less landed property of their own. But in course of time, they have been suppressed and cheated by the local people. Now they have become landless due to poverty. The greedy people as well as the Koch leader took the opportunity of investing money and food grains at a high rate of interest. In most cases, they were unable to repay the loan and finally were compelled to sell their land Bengali Muslims Mohazons other money landers at a very low cost. Many of the respondents informed that they had been victimized in case of getting price of land.

4.17 Cultivable Land

At present cultivation is not the only and chief occupation of the Kochs under study. Most of the Kochs have no cultivable land dwelling houses. A few of them have small piece of cultivable land on which they can not work round the year. So, they also cultivate low land if they are allowed.

Table-4.5: Ownership of Land

Status	No of Household	Percentage
Own land	48	40.00%
Govt./Khas land	64	53.33%
Share Croppers	8	6.67%
Total	120	100%

Source: Field work in Kaligonj

4.18 Agricultural Tools

Indigenous tools and implements used by them are mainly applied for cultivation and horticulture. These tools are mostly made of iron with wooden handles:-

Plough

This is the principal agricultural implements for ploughing land. It consists of five parts. The plough is a thick piece of sal wood about two and a half feet long. The plough shave is made of iron by the blacksmith and consists of a straight piece of iron from three quarters of one foot long and about an inch broad. It is fixed with to a groove in the upper part of the plough and fastened by an iron hook. The third part is the beam which is made of wood. The fourth part which is tied the yoke and is fitted with leather straps. The fifth part is the handle, a piece of wood, with a crook at the end. All the farmers do not have their plough. They borrow it from the owner of the land or from other farmers who have sufficient land of their own.

Harrow

The harrow is a narrow piece of wooden tool about two feet long with two apertures in it. Two thin bamboos or split pieces of wood are fitted with the two apertures and joined with the yoke at one point so as to form a triangle. It is worked by a man standing on the harrow and driving the bullocks attached with the yoke. The harrow serves to press down and pulverize the soil and to bury the seeds in, after they have been sown.

Leveler

The leveler is required to level fields and the soil.

Clod breaker

It is made of wood and used to break the larger clods of earth in the field.

Spade

The spade consists of two parts-namely a bamboo handle about a yard long and a flat iron blade fitted with the handle. It is used for earth work, digging fields, repairing and constructing ridges etc.

Kaste

Kaste is a tool used for cutting of crops. It is half round shaped iron made sharp blade fixed with a handle made of bamboo.

Dao

The dao is a weapon used universally throughout the country. It has a blade of about 18 inches long, narrow at the half and square and broad at the tip point less and sharpened on one side only.

4.19 Some Useful Instruments

The Koch villagers under study use some instruments for various purposes, briefly described below.

Axe

In most of the Koch houses, there is at least one axe which is used for cutting wood and for various domestic purposes.

Knife

Knives of different shapes and sizes are made of iron. It is used by the villagers for different purposes almost regularly.

Straw Pad

The farmers, day labors both men and women, make a circular straw pad for their head. They place pads on their heads for carrying crops, baskets, wood etc.

Shabole

A long piece of iron, of which one side is sharp, is called shabole. It is generally used for digging hole and such other purposes.

Pots, Pans

Pots and pans are primarily used for storing water, crops and such other purposes etc. These are of different in size and some of these are made of clay, aluminum and steel.

4.20 Rice Farming

According to D. Nath, "Rice is the staple crop. It has three main varieties: Ahu, Sali and Bao. Shifting is the usual method of Ahu cultivation and it is this variety of paddy whose use is most common. Its yield is smaller than that of Sali, but it was short maturing. Sali or wet rice requires transplantation and hence such fields which can retain water or can be artificially irrigated from adjacent streams are necessary for its cultivation" (D. Nath, 1989; 147).

Still today like other parts of Bangladesh, farming occupies dominant position in the economic activities of the study village. Like the neighboring Bengalis, the Kochs cultivate three varieties of paddy that are grown three times in a year. These are known as Aus, Aman and Boro.

The crop cycle begins with the ploughing of dry soil. Water is irrigated into the field and the land is further ploughed and harrowed to transplant seedlings. The Boro paddy is generally grown in the low marshy land. The seedlings are transplanted there when water recedes to the bottom. It does not require any tilling of the soil. But the Aus and the Aman require good tilling before sowing paddy seeds. Weeding is necessary for the rapid growth of the paddy plants. The Aus generally grows in the moist and low lands. The Aus is harvested in the months of Ashar and Sraban. Aman seeds are first spread over on muddy lands. When they grow up to one or one and a half feet in height, they are then transplanted in another plot of land prepared for transplantation. When they grow to a height of two or three feet ears of grains appear at the top. They become ready for harvesting in the month of Pous.

4.21 Homestead Gardening

Houses of the Kochs are scattered all over the village. So in many house, there is a piece of land where they can cultivate some seasonal vegetables like Onion, Garlic, Tomato, Chili, Brinjal, Cabbage, Lalshak, Puishak, Tishi, Cucumber, Bean etc. Small numbers of trees are seen around their houses. Bets and bamboos are scarcely seen. They sell a good quality of seeds, manioc and sweet potatoes and many kinds of fruits such as mangoes, papayas, limes, coconuts, jackfruits and small quantity of any other spices. They also cultivate a wide variety of crops for their own consumption. Vegetables for household use are generally grown in small kitchen garden near the homestead where they can irrigate during the dry season.

According to D. Nath, “Besides rice, people cultivate different kinds of pulses, fruits and vegetables. Mustard seeds, arecanut and betel-vines are the common articles of trade in the Koch kingdom. Cotton also appears to have been cultivated by a large number of people. Of the cultivated fruits, the most common are jack-fruit, coconut, orange, mango, olive, myrobala, bananas, emblica etc. and different kinds of citrus fruits like lemon and shaddock (D. Nath, 1989; 148).

4.22 Occupation

Agriculture was the mainstay of occupation; and all people were, directly or indirectly, associated with it (D. Nath, 1989; 147). Koch community was brought here in Bangladesh to cultivate land by deforesting the jungle. According to this, their original profession was agriculture. But today they are in search of alternative profession to change their fortunes. As they have lost control over land and also have threat to loose land so they cannot run their lives only depending on agriculture. Now they do any sort of works on daily basis. Not only the male but also the child and female are working as day laborers. Besides, they collect firewood from the jungle and sell these to the market, grow vegetables in the field surrounding their homes. Some are Government employees. Now-a-days some desire to go aboard. They catch fishes in canals and rivers blowing across the village although there is no pond or bills in the village.

According to Risley, “The caste as a whole may be described as agricultural, though many of them make their living as fishermen, and carpenters, blacksmiths, jewelers,

and money-lenders are also found among them. Most Rajbansis, however, are cultivating ryots with or without occupancy rights, some are landless day-laborers paid in cash or kind, and others hold their fields as *adhiars* or *metayers*, paying half the produce to their immediate landlord (Risley, 1981; 499).

Table-4.6: Primary Occupation of Household Chief

Occupation	No. of Households	Percentage
Day labor	79	65.83%
Agriculture	18	15.00%
Riksha/Van Pullar	7	5.83%
NGO worker	5	4.17%
Kobiraj	3	2.50%
Missionary worker	2	1.67%
Teacher	2	1.67%
Service holder (Army)	1	0.83%
Carpenter	1	0.83%
Beauty parlor worker	2	1.67%
Total	120	

Source: *Fieldwork in Kaligonj*

The household members are engaged in variety of professions. Out of 120 households in Kaligonj, only 18 (15.00%) households are engaged in cultivation who has agricultural lands and the rest, i.e., 79 (65.83%) households are engaged as day laborer. Others have taken it as their subsidiary occupation. Among salaried persons there are army personnel, teachers, missionary workers, NGO workers and beauty parlor workers. They are also landowners.

Case Study

Purnima Koch (42) is a teacher of a primary school. Four members have constituted in her family. Her husband works in a missionary press. Her elder son looks after the grocery shop in the village. Another son works in Dhaka city. Her youngest son is a student of class nine. They have six bighas of land of which three bighas have given to the sharecropper and rest three bighas are cultivated by them.

4.23 Monthly Income and Expenditure of the Koch Household

The income level of the study villagers is very low. With their meager income they are to survive in serious difficulties. It appears from the table 5.5 that most of the Kochs is extremely poor and there is serious income discrimination among the Kochs community like other inhabitants of Bangladesh.

Table-4.7: Level of Income (in Taka)

Level of Income in Taka	No. of Household	Percentage
0000-1500	10	8.33%
1500-3000	70	58.33%
3000-6000	32	26.67%
6000-10000	8	6.67%
Total	120	100%

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

From the above table it is observed that there is significant correlation between landlessness, poverty and occupation. The landless and some nominal landowners main occupation is either farming or working as day labor. Only a few landless people and nominal landowners earn their livelihood through petty business along with their traditional agricultural job. Present terms and conditions of the job of day laborers are not favorable to them. They have to remain in their duty for around 9 hours a day. They get a break in the noon for their bath and meal but they can not enjoy enough leisure. So, their physical suffering is painful as they suffer from mental torture. They get only taka 100 to 120 after their day long hard job.

The bulk of the income of the household is spent for food. Expenditure on food of course varies greatly according to the level of income. The wage-earners expenditure exhausted for their primary needs. The items of expenditure are usually food, clothing, educational expenditure of children, electric bill, washing and other simple consumers articles. The well-to-do family spends more money in various festivals.

4.24 Market

It has not been very long time since the naming of the village Kaligonj. People still consider it as a hamlet since there is no church in the village Kaligonj. There is no market or bazaar in this village. Chattar bazaar is only the bazaar in the locality which is situated outside the village. Kaligonj is situated just to the east and Chattar bazaar is at the last end of west of Kaligonj village. So they are to come to the bazaar walking a long path. May be the Koch is the poorest community. So the relationship with other villages may be developed through the local interaction. The Kochs do not go to the bazaar regularly. Because of their pecuniary condition does not allow them to buy things every day. However, they do not produce things that can be taken to the market for selling they usually work in day time therefore they have no time to go to the bazaar daily. Taking rice beer and gossiping at night is the means of their recreation because bazaar is far away from their locality.

4.25 Rate of Wage Labor

There is a close relationship between the market system and payment of wage. If the rates of essential goods are high in the market, the wage of labors will also be high. As regards the wage of the agricultural labors, it has been learnt that there is no big difference between the wage during plantation and harvesting period. But there is difference in payment between the sexes. The daily wage of male is ranged from Taka 180-200.

The Koch people mainly work as day laborers. Both men, women and children work here, but their rate of wages differs from one another. A man laborer gets higher wage compared to a woman laborer. It is clear example of economic differentiation between the two sexes. There is no fixed amount of wage labor. It is decided upon the types of work. Their wages are not depended upon the type of works; time is also a factor, because they work by contract.

4.26 Sources of Loan

It is revealed from the Koch village under study. The small farmers and share cropper borrow money from the nearby Muslim money lenders and from the village leader at a high rate of interest which is double or more than double of the interest rate of the government.

There are different NGOs working in the village. Some of the NGOs work extends loan and other works for the education, health and socio-economic development. BRAC, ASA, DIP and PIDIM give loan in installment. Women subscribers are large in number. NGO's are also interested to advance loan to women. Many of them are now self-sufficient with the help of the NGOs. Some of them are incurred loss, because of improper use of loan. Some of them are solvent. Now I shall present a case study of a woman who has been benefited from the NGO loan.

Table-4.8: Sources of Loan and Rate of Interest

Source	No. of Household	Interest Annually	Term
Individuals belonging to Muslim money lenders outside the village as well as Moral of own village	34	90%	One year generally or six month
Government Bank	4	17%	One year
N.G.O. like BRAC, ASA, DIP, PIDIM	110	25%	Six months or one year

Source: *Fieldwork in Kaligonj*

Case Study

Shilpi Rani Koch (32) completed her primary education. She has one daughter and one son. Her children go to the missionary school. She took loan several times from a member of NGOs namely ASA, DIP and PIDIM. When she got married, her husband had only a hut. At that time they did not have any land. Her husband worked on other's land and both of them worked as a day laborer. Shilpi and her husband Bhubon Chandra Koch took loan from two NGOs namely ASA and PIDIM. They mortgaged some lands against the loan. They cultivated in the land properly thus they started repaying the loan and bought cattle. In this way she increased her family income and started buying some lands. She also planted trees around her house, which became a source of income. Later on, she took loan from DIP and BRAC and bought further land. Maximum loans were taken in her name. But her husband utilised the loan properly. They consulted together regarding disbursement, repayment of loan, income and expenditure and

other family matters. Shilpi is very careful about the education of her children. She says, her husband is interested in education. Her husband studied up to class eight. He left his education because of economic problem. So he does not want that his children should face any difficulty due to lack of education. Her family is now affluent. But she still goes to the field with her husband and helps him in his works. Even she participates in all household chores. Shilpi is not only a successful woman, but also solvent economically and responsible mother too.

4.27 Rules of Property Inheritance

The Koch society is patriarchal; father is the head of the family. He controls each and every matters related to its members. The male offspring only inherits family property and the Koch follow the Hindu law of inheritance in this respect. A girl does not belong to her father's family after she has been married. Rather she will belong to her husband's family or clan. She gets nothing from her father's property excepting the dowry is given at the time of marriage. Sons equally share their father's property. If a couple is childless, all the property of the couple will be shared by the brothers or sons of brother's of husband. Wives will have no rights over the property. After the death of a man, all the properties belonging to him can only be demanded by his sons, his brothers or sons of his brother, but not by his wife. She is provided with food, cloth and shelter and be looked after by them. If they do not maintain for her, the respective society provides maximum requirements and looks after her. In such situation a female does not face any difficulty in their society. They think that dowry or what they get at the marriage is enough. They do not bear any thing in mind that dowry is not given to the daughter. It is surprising to note that females do not have any headache in this regard. They are habituated in such a system.

4.28 Deprivation

The Koch community is under serious pressure of exploitation in different ways. They get a very low amount of wage in the one hand and are being oppressed and cheated by the land owners on the other, which create impetiments towards their development.

4.28.1 Loosing Lands by Cheating

The Kochs are simple in nature. They easily become the victim of Muslim neighbors. For example, Kochs are religiously and culturally fond of drinking alcohol. Naturally, the Kochs become drunk very often. When they are in financial hardship they prefer to drink. In such a situation very often, they go to the local bazaar and take excessive alcohol with Muslim neighbors. He forgets that he is in financial hardship and drinks alcohol as much as he can. Taking this advantage very often Muslim neighbor gives him a big amount for buying alcohol. Finding no way he has to give certain portion of land to the Muslim neighbor as he has no money to back. Moreover, he has no idea about the difference between bigha and acre and as such, he is again cheated at the time of registration in the office. He does not get the money at a time. Naturally he can not spend it for some effective purposes.

4.28.2 Anomaly to Pay Amount

For certain job, Kochs are paid by paddy and in a number of installments. Muslims keep the account in writing and the Kochs try to keep it in their memory. Very often the Muslims take the advantage of his situation.

Case Study

Jibon Koch (35) was hired as a guard by a Muslim. According to verbal agreement he was supposed to get 25 maunds of paddy for working for 6 months. Later on, he received 20 maunds in few occasions, when his duty period was almost over. He demanded balance 5 maunds of paddy. But unfortunately the Muslim said that only 2 maunds were due to him. As he had no proof, he had to receive only 2 maunds of paddy. In this way Kochs are being cheated by the Muslim land owners and others.

4.28.3 Delay in Payment of Wages

The wage earned by the Koch laborers are not paid instantly the Muslims. It is partially paid after a long period of time. They are to remind their land lords very humbly again and again. Later on Kochs realize that they have no alternative way than to sacrifice the balanced amount of wage lying with the Muslim landlords. The female laborers are the most victims in such situation.

4.28.4 High Rate of Interest on Loans

The Kochs have to suffer for money and food during the month of Aswin-Kartik (sep-oct). This is the pre-harvest period of Aman season. Finding no alternative way they are to seek loan from the Muslim landlords. The village money lenders take the advantage of the situation. It has been found that at the time of field investigation that the Koch had to pay three times and even four times of their princely amount. The landless Kochs are bound to accept an advance labor contract of harvesting the ensuing Aman crop of the Muslim landlord at a very low rate.

4.28.5 Victim of the Feudal Behavior of the Muslim Neighbors

Kochs are very submissive by nature and usually never protest against the ill treatment of their Muslim neighbors. As a matter of fact they become the victim of some of the Muslim land owners. During harvesting season food grains are usually spread over the land. Naturally, grains are mercilessly attracted by the Koch poultries. But the Muslims kill the poultries mixing poison with the grains. Hence, the Kochs suffer a great loss but they never think of raising protest against their misdeeds.

Case Study

Prodip Koch (38) is a poor day laborer of Kaligonj village. He borrowed taka 20000 from a village money lender in 2008 for his daughter's marriage. The mahajan told him to return the amount when he would be able to. The mahajan did not give any pressure to Prodip Koch. However, after nearly one year he wanted pay back taka 25000 along with interest. But the mahajan proposed him to give the possession of his land adjacent to his (mahajan) land. But when he denied mahajan's proposal, he told him to give taka 30000. But he had no enough money at that time to meet the demand. So he had to sell his cow.

Chapter 5

Social Organization

5.1 Introduction

Social organization is the network of relations existing among the individuals and groups in a society. In it, mutual relations, obligation, elements of ideal behavior, anticipated behaviors etc. are all included (Ali, 1998; 113). Social organization or social institution refers to a group of social positions, connected by social relations, performing a social role. It can also be defined in a narrow sense as an institution in a society that works to socialize the groups or people in it. It is a major part of social life organized to meet some human needs. Social organization is an essence of human life and it grows up by social interaction and relationships among the human beings. In its mutual relations, obligations, element of ideal and actual behavior are all included.

Change and variation caused by externalities over time and space often transform social organizations. Some social institutions are strengthening the bondage of social system and social organizations may also become affected throughout the courses of global and local level changes in livelihood options. In order to grasp the impacts of changes, it is pertinent to focus on the existing forms of family, marriage, kinship, clans, inter tribal relations etc. of the Kochs.

Family is the basic unit of social organization in simple technological societies. Most of the needs of males and females are fulfilled in the family. Families are formed through marriages. After the family, the next unit of social organization is the clan. Clan is based upon the kinship organization.

5.2 Family

Family is the socially recognized inevitable institution of the society. People showed the tendency of living in a group from the primitive age. And this tendency later helped them to build up the family. Family is such an institution which preserves the culture and descendant of mankind.

According to Haviland, "Family is a residential kin group composed of a woman, her dependent children, and at lone adult male joined through marriage or blood relationship" (Haviland, 1999; 219). The aim of family is to socialize the successors, separation, which is going on everywhere in this age that is nuclear family is made up by breaking joint or extended family. Different tribes are now influenced by this change.

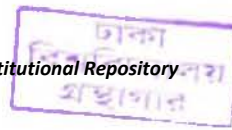
5.3 Koch Family Pattern

Practice of joint family is the tradition of the Koch community. All members of Koch family live together and take food from a Chula (kitchen). All members are usually united but due to the socio-economic changes of the community, the pattern of family structure has also been changed. Now they prefer to practice nuclear family.

Nuclear families are dominating in Koch community living in Kaligonj village under study due to a number of reasons. All of them are now supporting nuclear families. Economic pressure is the main reason behind this. There are some other reasons such as maintaining a good relation with others including maintaining one's family independently. Another important cause is the family discord. In a large family, female members are involved in conflict among themselves due to a number of reasons. After marriage, the sons usually like to live independently and maintain separation with the parents. Traditionally, the Koch houses are small. Naturally it is difficult to find enough places for sleeping. Besides, there is a lack of privacy in such circumstances. Another cause of breaking down the extended family is the influence of modernization

5.4 Types and Size of the Family

The present study has revealed three different types of family among the Koch community. The nuclear family, consists of father, mother and unmarried children, is predominant in the village under study. In the joint family, a married son with his wife and children live together and contribute to the parent fund, to be used by the head of the family according to the needs of its members. Types of families in the Koch village are shown in Table- 5.1.

**Table-5.1: Types of Family**

Types of Family	Number of Household	Percentage
Nuclear family	101	84.17%
Joint family	14	11.67%
Single family	5	4.17%
Total	120	100%

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

In Koch village the nuclear family predominates the socio-economic profile of the Koch. As many as 84.17% of the total families are nuclear, 11.67% are joint family and 4.17% are single type in study villages. It has been revealed that after getting marriage, newly married couple does not feel comfort in their parent's family as they want to live independently. However, few couples want to remain with their parent for getting share of land and property.

The Table-5.1 shows that the percentage of the nuclear family is much higher than the joint family. Once, joint family system was a tradition among the Koch. But now-a-days nuclear family has become more predominant. Now-a-days, the joint family has become evident due to poverty and for some other cultural changes. One respondent told the researcher that once there was separate residential facility such as bachelor dormitory for the adult boys and girls and therefore the joint family was predominant in those days in the Koch villages. Now-a-days, joint family has broken down due to their poverty and economic hardship and for the structural change in their society.

Although most of the families are nuclear one and the members of a family of the village under study is to 3 to 5 as shown in Table-5.2.

Table-5.2: Size of the Family

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Village	Small	Medium	Large	Total Household
Kaligonj	0-2	3-5	6-up	120 (100%)
	22 (18.33%)	88 (73.34%)	10 (0.33%)	

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

Table-5.2 indicates that only 18.33% families have less than 0-2 members, but 73.34% families have 3-5 members. On the other hand, about 0.33% families constitute 6-8 members.

The father is the head of the family and his authority is unconditionally accepted by all of its members, though women are found to be more active in decision making in the family affairs. It has been observed in the village under study that the wife works in the field with her male counterpart.

However, the family as an institution is in a process of disintegration from its traditional style, due to modernization, Christianization and spread of education. Their tribal customs and manners are also changing for all these reason. Though, some of the Kochs are maintaining Koch customs and manners in their families.

5.5 Relationship between Ownership of Land and Types of Family

The total 120 households under study have been classified according to the ownership of land and the types of family (nuclear, joint, others). From the following Table-5.3 it is clear that the families with large land holding size have the tendency to live in the joint family.

Table-5.3: Ownership of Land and Types of Family

Ownership of Land	Nuclear	joint	Others	Total
Landless	70	2	0	72
01/1.0 ace	24	4	0	28
1.0+	12	8	0	20
Total	106	14	0	120

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

5.6 Authority and Decision Making

The father or the eldest male member is the head of the family. The head of the family is the breadwinner and takes care of the family welfare. Koch custom told that the head of the family act well as the priest of the family, who usually offers a sacrifice in the name of his family on the occasion of religious festivals.

The Koch society is patriarchal; father is the head of the family and obeys all decisions by its members. The male offspring only inherits family property and they follow Hindu law of inheritance in this respect.

The father contributes to the community activities on various social, religious, and other ceremonies. He is respected by all members of the family. As the head of the family, the husband is mainly responsible for its proper maintenance. But the wife also plays an important role in this regard besides looking after children and household affairs. She also assists her husband in the family pursuit and in the performance of social and religious ceremonies of the family. On the whole, every member of a Koch family acts as an economic unit, each member contributes for the maintenance of the family. In the following Table-5.4 provided the information about the sex of the household head.

Table-5.4: Sex of the Household Head

Sex	Household	Percentage
Male	106	88.33%
Female	14	11.67%
Total	120	100%

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

Table -5.4 indicates that most of the household heads are male 88.33% and the female headed households constitute only 11.66%. Decision making and authority remains accordingly in the hands of the male household head.

Case Study

Aporna Koch is 28 years old. She has passed S.S.C and her husband is a graduate. She has two children. She lives with her husband, mother-in-law and sister-in-law. Aporna's husband was an employee of an NGO. But he has lost his job. Thus they were fallen in a bad situation. At that moment she started teaching in a local missionary school. Now her family is run by her own income. Though the family is run with the income of Aporna, but her husband leads the family. She is economically solvent but dependent upon her husband regarding the decision of the family.

5.7 The Koch Woman

The family is the most important social institution and woman plays a significant role in the family, as well as in the society. The Koch women, are the believer of either Hindu or Christian, work side by side with their husbands. According to our observation, the Koch women work more than male members of a family. Generally, they do all household works, for example, take care of the children, cook food, rearing animals and collect water etc. Every couple expects a son especially for the first time. The main reason for this, is to protect their property when son is the only owner of the same.

The researcher did not observe any type of controversy among the husbands and wives during her field work. However, females are to some extent independent in Koch society. The Koch women are given much importance in the social, economical and cultural life. The Christian Koch women inherit family property and the Hindu believers did not entitle to own family property.

According to D. Nath, "Daughters had no right to their father's property. A widow in a unilateral family, was, however, allowed to succeed her husband's property. Woman in the common to do households helped cultivation in every stage except ploughing. Besides doing the household duties and rearing up her children, she did spinning, and wove all the clothes required for the family. Thus she shared equal, if not greater burden of the family along with her husband, keeping herself busy till night. Life was thus hard for her. Those women, unable to eke out bare subsistence, engaged themselves in small trade like betel nut, fishing etc. Some women worked as nurses or maids (*Bandis* or *Betis*) in the houses of the affluent. Some were also attached to the temples. They were proficient in dancing, and called *Devdasis* or *Natis*" (D. Nath, 1989: 143).

5.8 Husband Wife Relation

It has been mentioned earlier that the Kochs are very calm, gentle and peace loving. They lead a very simple life. The relation between husband and wife is generally good. Husband is the head of the family and he has authority in making decisions about family affairs. If he wishes, he can discuss any matter with his wife and wife has no complain about this. It has been learnt from field investigation that sometimes in an extreme case, wives are beaten by the husbands and the wives also beat their husbands too.

5.9 Growing up Koch

In Koch society, parents show great affection to their children, although they are often unable to provide proper diet, health care, cloths, education and such other necessities of life. Adult attitudes towards parenting are more casual up to four years. Mother is very much concerned about her child's wellbeing. But the father is carefree about the whereabouts of their children. Children play throughout the whole day in the vicinity and eat anything whatever gets in their hands. Children between ages 8 to 11 are seen engaged gathering, baby sitting or herding goats or cows. Koch parents are seldom found teaching discipline their children. Normally the parents do not abuse or scold their children.

In Koch society, children are encouraged towards economic activities rather than education; extreme poverty is the basic reason behind this attitude. From the ages between 7- 8, it is observed that the Koch boys and girls start with their parents in various households and other economic activities.

5.10 Marriage

Marriage is a social institution that deals with the regulation of sexual activity and the attendant concomitants and cohabitation of men and women. An ethnic group would be institutionally complete in this respect, if the ethnic group is able to provide spouses or other sex partners for each member drawn exclusively from other members of the ethnic group. Most ethnic groups show a strong performance for 'endogamy' marriage within one's ethnic group and more or less resistance to intermarriage with outsiders. In the ethnic situations that usually draw the attention of sociologists (as well as anthropologists) that is, immigration movements in which the newcomers are subordinate to the native population and colonizing movements in which the newcomers are dominant over the native population-the confinement of marriage and other sexual relations, to ethnically endogamous unions is likely to be a serious problem. Ethnic migrations of either type are likely to be a serious problem and migrations of either type are likely to be adventurous affairs too, at least in the pioneer phases of movements, and tend to attract primary male. As a result, there has been a heavily unbalanced sex ratio. The impact of this situation on the sexual relation of ethnic has tended to take different courses for colonizing peoples and for subordinate immigrants (Rose, 1976; 68).

According to Carpo, “While the rituals and customs surrounding marriage may differ around the world, the concept of marriage may be defined as a socially accepted sexual and economic union involving a lasting commitment between two or more people who have parental rights and obligations to any children of the union. The functions of marriage as a social institution include channeling sexual behavior into stable relationships, fulfilling the economic needs of marriage partners regulating the gendered division of labor, perpetuating a society’s kinship groups, and providing an institution for the care of children until they become self-sufficient (Carpo,2002;24-25).

Marriage is a socio-cultural phenomenon, which recognizes union between a male and female and intended to give sexual rights in each other of the couple and to fulfill other social functions. There is various consideration being getting social approval and rights for the sex gratification. Marriage is the union between one or more women sanctioned by the society. It is an important institution of every society and the basis of elementary family and a new relationship is established between the two families through marriage.

The Koch considers marriage as an obligatory matter for every person of either sex. The Koch follows a number of rules and regulations before and after their marriage. Some important aspects of marriage rules of Koch that are found in the study area are discussed below.

5.11 Marriageable Age

Both child and adult marriages are found in the Koch community under study. But the child marriage is more preferable by the Koch. Since child marriage was the traditional pattern of marriage and permitted within the Koch community, and it is learnt that in some cases the parent emphasised on marriage of unborn baby in early days also.

Now- a-days Koch boys are married between fourteenth and twentieth years of age group and in some cases even at a lower age than fourteen. Also it is found that marriage is happened at a higher age than twenty five years. The Koch girls are generally married between ninth and sixteenth years of age and in some cases, at lower age than ninth and in a few cases at a higher age than sixteen years. Such late marriages are now occurring mostly due to poverty and other socio-cultural obstacles.

Table-5.5: Marriageable Age

Age Group	Frequency		Total
	Male	Female	
Below 18	12	40	42
18-20	18	50	68
20-25	98	58	156
Above 25	26	4	30
Total	154	152	306

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

From the above Table-4.5 it is clear that rate of early marriage is not so high. Only 12 male and 40 female respondent's marriage occurred below the age of 18 years.

5.12 Types of Marriage

There are various rules of marriage among the Kochs. Monogamy and polygamy is the popular form of marriage among the Kochs and no group marriage or polyandry is found. The rules of marriage now in vogue in the Koch community are discussed below.

Monogamy

Monogamy is the most preferred system of marriage in the Koch society. One can keep only one spouse at a time. Polygamy is not prohibited but it is permitted in their society in restricted way. Now –a-days they do not prefer polygamy, because they are not able to maintain more wives at a time.

Exogamy

It is another important rule in selecting the life partner. They strictly follow clan exogamy. No Koch can marry within his/her clan. They consider all clan members as the descendants of a common ancestor. So, they can not marry in their own blood. They generally practice village exogamy. They practice Endogamy also. But recently, the practice of village endogamy is emerging due to shortage of suitable partner.

Cross cousin

Basically Hindu community does not prefer cross cousin marriage; but there is no restriction about it among the Kochs. Anybody can marry his/her mother's brother's son or daughter of father's sister's son/daughter. On the other hand, parallel cousin marriage is prohibited.

Levirate

Levirate is permissible in the Koch society. However, the junior levirate marriage is permissible but senior levirate is strictly prohibited in their society. One can marry his elder brother's widow wife but not his younger brother's widow wife.

Sororate

Sororate is not forbidden among them. This type of marriage is rare in the study area. One can marry his wife's younger sister after the death of his wife but no one can marry his wife's elder sister.

5.13 Bride Price and Dowry

In Koch marriage system the parents of the bridegroom pays the bride price to the parents of the bride. The Bride price is not money rather different kind of things like cloth, ornaments and cosmetics. On marriage ceremony, bride's father also pays dowry. The dowry may be cash or kind, like cloth, paddy, cattle etc. They exchange gift to each other happily. But this situation has been changed to a large extent; some of them never support the dowry system due to social change.

According to D. Nath, "There was no system of dowry as well as of the Purdah. But these cases were applicable in case of the commoners only and particularly of the tribes, Hinduised or not. On the other hand, the contemporary literature records that the rich Bhuyans used to present even villages and cattle along with other valuable articles including gold, silver, clothes etc. to their daughters at their wedding ceremonies" (D. Nath, 1989; 142).

Case Study

Durga Rani (60) was married at premature age. She cannot recall how old she was at the time of her marriage. But she can remember that she escaped to her father's house often. She had to begin to maintain a family at the age when other girls just play toys. Now she is the mother of 4 sons and 3 daughters. A few days ago, she arranged the marriage of her granddaughter. She never supports the dowry system. She arranged marriage ceremony for three times for her three sons but she took no dowry. Durga Rani can understand well now that, this custom is not fair and she confessed this unfair custom is followed till, there is no change about it. The present social system compelled her to give dowry at the time of her daughter's marriage ceremony otherwise they could not get married.

5.13 Divorce System

System of divorce prevails within the Koch society which demonstrates the discontinuation of marriage contact between husband and wife. In this society, both husband and wife enjoy the similar privilege in making decision about seeking divorce. Instead of divorce, separation is more acceptable in this society. If a couple wants to get divorced, a *salish* is called where the members of jury take decision about the nature of divorce or separation. If the couple gets separated, the husband is bound to bear the wife's need at least for one year. Besides, the main grounds on which divorce is permissible are:

- Husband has no capacity to maintain the family;
- Wife is a 'kuria' or a habitual idle who neglects her household duties or cannot perform them properly;
- He/she has been caught in adultery;
- Wife is barren or the husband is impotent; and
- Conjugal conflict.

Case Study

Shantona Koch (29) got married 16 years ago. Her husband was a sharecropper. But he was too much addicted in 'Haria' (rice beer). He used to spend money for 'Haria' that caused problem in the family. Not

only that very often Shantona's addicted husband used to beat her. Then she divorced her husband and came to her parent's house and started working as a labor in the field. But the work was not regularly available. That's why she was in trouble. Though she was living with her parents, she cooked separately. Her brother has managed a job for her as a labor in road construction recently. Now she is solvent. At first Shantona was rebuked by her neighbors for leaving her husband. Now she has overcome the problem and she is now a self sufficient.

5.15 Widow Re-marriage

The practice of widow re-marriage is permissible in the Koch society. This is a simple procedure where a widow can marry only the widower. In this form of marriage the ceremonies are expensive and attractive compared to less regular marriage of a bachelor or a maiden marriage.

The widow or a widower is permitted to remarry again after the observance of Kur Sheta. In Koch language Kur Sheta means severing the cord. If anybody breaks this code of conduct intentionally, has to pay a fine. According to Koch custom, a widower can marry the younger sister of his dead wife only, but not any other member of this family. But in case of a widow, she is not allowed to marry any other member of her dead husband's family.

5.16 Illicit Sexual Activities

Pre-marital sex relation or extra marital sex relation is not uncommon among the Kochs. When pre-marital sex relation occurs in the Koch society, this is generally brought to the notice of the parents of the concerned boy and girl to get them married. But if they do not agree to marry after having such pre-marital sex relation, then the offenders are severely punished along with fine. In the case of married couples, if any clandestine relation is proved, it results into dissolution of marriage. Illicit relation of a Koch female with a non Koch male is considered to be a very serious offence. Illegitimate children, however do not suffer from any social problem in their day to day life.

5.17 Kinship System of the Koch

According to Robin fox, 'The study of kinship is the study of what man does with the basic facts of life such as mating, gestation, parenthood, socialization, siblings etc. This is a basic study in the social science because, these are most basic social bonds (Robin Fox, p-100). The people of Koch community like any other human society in the world are grouped together by two types of bond. They make a clear distinction between agnate (Bangsa) and affinal (Kutum) kin. All kins through marriage are known as *kutums* and all through lineage belong to the same *Bangsa*. Kinship plays an important role in the life of Koch community on certain occasions including construction of a new house, planting, harvesting or at the time of food shortage. The members of the kin in the village are usually the first persons to volunteer their service to help in case of birth, marriage and death ritual in a family. The members of the kin get priority in invitations.

5.18 Kinship Terminology

The exogamous kinship group of the clan still lays the foundation of the social system of the Koch. The application of different kinship terms in addressing different kins and relatives is the fundamental feature of this system. For example, a Koch addresses his father as *baba* but he addresses his uncle (father's younger brother) as *kaka*. In case of ego's own generation, the kinship system can be termed as classificatory system. Since a boy or a girl addresses his/her parallel or cross cousins with the same term, he/she addresses his/her old elder brother and sister. The researcher also found the influence of Muslim and others kinship terminology in the study area. Many terms have already been lost although they borrow different terms from their neighboring communities. The fact is that the Koch people are living with others. They have been living side by side for a long time. The terms of kinship are given in the following Table.

Table-5.6: Kinship Terminology

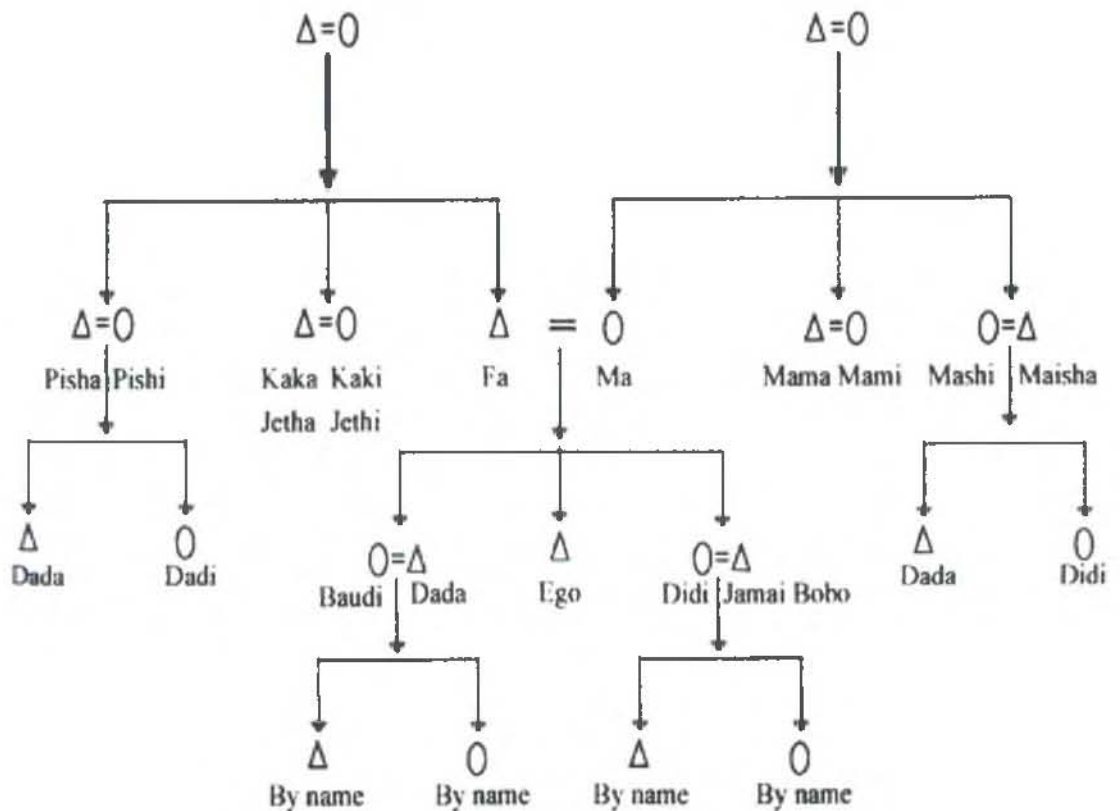
Terms of Reference	Kin Term	Terms of Address
1. Father	Fa	Baba/Babu/Fa
2. Mother	Ma	Ma
3. Grand father	Fa Fa	Thakurda
4. Grand Mother	Fa Ma	Thakurma
5. Uncle	FaBr (el) Fa Br (yo)	Jatha Kaka
6. Uncle	Fa Si Hu	Pisha
7. Aunt	Fa Si	Pishima
8. Aunt	Ma Si	Mashima
9. Aunt	Fa Br Wi	Jethi/Kaki
10. Brother	Br (el)	Dada
11. Brother	Br(yo)	By Name
11. Sister-in-law	BrWi(el)	Boudi
13. Sister-in-law	BrWi(yo)	Byname
14. Sister	Si (el)	Didi
15. Sister	Si (yo)	Byname
16. Brother in law	Si Hu (el)	Jamaibabu
17. Brother in law	Si Hu (yo)	Byname
18. Brothers son	BrSo	Bhatija
19. Brother's daughter	BrDo	Bhatije
20. Sisters son	Si So	Bhagne
21. Sister's daughter	Si Do	Bhagni
22. Grand son	So So	Nati
24. Grand daughter	So Da	Nati
25. Grandson's wife	So So Wi	Natbou
26. Granddaughter's husband	Do Da Hu	Nat Jamai
27. Father in law	Wi Fa	Shashur
28. Mother in law	Wi Ma	Shashuri
29. Brother in law	Wi Br (el)	Shumondhi
30. Brother in law	Wi Br (yo)	Shala

31. Sister in law	Wi Si (el)	Didi
32. Sister in law	Wi Br Wi	Boudi
33. Husband's brother	Hu Br (el)	Dada
34. Husband's brother	Hu Br (yo)	Debor
35. Husband's brother's wife	Hu Br Wi	Ja
36. Husbands sister	Hu Si (el)	Nonash, Didi
37. Husbands sister	Hu Si (yo)	Nonod (by name)
38. Husband's sister's husbabd	Hu Si Hu	Jamaibabu

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

As a patrilineal society person, traces his ancestor through father's line. The relatives on the father's line have specific terms as well as mother's side, by which one has no difficulty in tracing the line of kinship.

Table- 5.7: Kinship Diagram (Shows Koch Kin term System)



5.19 Joking and Avoidance Relation

It has been found in all societies that, there are certain types of coactive behavior patterns which exhibit regularity, a more or less permanent and definite structure. Such types of behavior, verbal and non verbal constitute kinship uses (Mazumder and Madan, 1994; 87).

Like other societies, joking and avoidance relationship is also found among the Koch. Joking relationship exists between a man and his wife's younger sisters, his elder brother's wife, his cross cousin, a woman and his husband's younger brothers. They are informal each other. It also exists between Grand Parents and Grand children, a man's and woman siblings of one sex and their spouse's siblings of another sex, between husband and wife's father and mother.

In the case of avoidance relationship the elder brother is highly esteemed by the wife's of younger brother and ethic customs is fully maintained in this regard. Avoidance relationship exists between man and his wife's elder sister and father in law and mother in law also. Normally, they avoid physical touch with each other, not sitting down, laughing, talking loudly are the indication of avoidance relationship by their customs. Sometimes joking relationship is also found in between an uncle and his nephew and nice.

5.20 Kin Ties

Kin ties among the Koch in the study area are very strong and cooperative. They live together, work together and assist each other keeping close contract in their distress situation. In connection with the affine and consanguine kinship system, the people of the study areas are segmented into clan (bangsa) and gosthi (patrilineal descent group). So kin relations among the Koch are important both from the socio-cultural and economic point view, as it is the effective means of maintaining community's stability and providing security in terms of economic and socio-political arena.

From the above discussion it can be said that the social institution and organization like family, marriage, kinship of the Koch have considerable social significance for the betterment of the community. It has given the Koch a sense of unity and scope of working together. It is also very much helpful in strengthening each others relation and protecting themselves from the enemies.

5.21 Clan Organization

A clan is a group of people united by kinship and descent, which is defined by actual or perceived descent from a common ancestor. Even if actually lineage patterns are unknown, clan members may nonetheless recognize a founding member or ancestor.

The larger unit in the Koch social organization is the clan. A clan generally refers to a unilineal kinship group whose members believe them to be descended from a common ancestor but cannot trace this relationship genealogically. According to Ali, "Most of the tribes have clans and these are the sum total of the families. The clans are known as different names, sects, genes etc. Many of these are associated with some objects animate or inanimate like plants and animals, and sometimes heavenly bodies" (Ali, 1998: 113).

In case of Koch Community the researcher found that specific ancestors are often worshiped by the Koch people and also remain in their methodological figure. Clans are frequently named in different ways. Indeed, the clan of the Koch known as 'Nikini'. The clan organization is a very important aspect of Kochs social life. The main function of the clans is to regulate marriage, inheritance, succession and affiliation. Clan membership is acquired either by birth or by marriage. On the basis of their clan organization, they practice different types of rituals. But in the Koch clan system, there is no clan hierarchy- they all are the same in status.

The Kochs have a good number of clans and these have been recorded by many critics from time to time. There are approximately more than one hundred groups or *nikinis* located so far. The names of some these clans or *nikinis* are: Kama, Ranje, Kare, Pida, Maji, Bala, Hansur, Daheng, Mastak, Dalfa, Rangsa, Kora, Basar, Giri, Sku, Dasu, Rakho, Kasyap, Methun, Dasik, Snal, chisim, Nafak, Daring, Ricil, Dafo, Chiran, chianchi, Dambuk etc. Some of the sub-sects of the Gharos also bear similar names like the Koch, these are: Kama, Maji, Sku, Rakho, Snal, Chisim, Nafak, Richil, Dafo and chiran.

The rules and regulations of a specific clan are followed strictly. Marriage between the same clan is strictly prohibited in Koch society. Since marriages are of practical significance to a Koch family, they have some formal guidelines about whom a

person ought or ought not to marry. Such marriage guidelines are exogamy rules. According to Ali, "People have established or associated mythological relationships with the members and such bodies are known as 'Totem'. Belief in totem and formalities relating to reverence propitiation and restrictions, constitute a belief system as referred to in the earliest form of religion. Thus, relationship between the totem and the *totemic*, i.e., members belonging to a particular clan (Totem) group is very significant" (ibid, 1998: 113-114).

The clan members of Koch community are related to one another by some common ties, the belief in descent from common ancestors and possession of a common totem. A general view among the Kochs like other totemic group and their clan is named by their totemic plants or animals. Every clan member show reverence for these and does not destroy their totemic objects.

They reverence their clan totem and they perform some ritualistic activity about their totemic objects and some rules and obligation they have to maintain. The general rule is that a member of the same totem will never kill or hunt the object, he derives his name from. However, totemism so far as the Kochs are concerned, is important for the fact that it reflects their social identity.

Among the Christian Koch, they use their clan name in their naming system but most of them do not show their respect about their totem. The informant, Norendra Nicholas Koch says that, their new generation does not know their totem object, it is the impact of Christian customs and rituals. On the other hand, the Hindu Koch still belief in their totem and in some cases they try to maintain the totemic rules and rituals.

5.22 Samaj

In Kochpara, samaj is formed by the aged people. Along with him, a person could also become the head of the society who is experienced, honored and respectable than others. Each occasion is performed by the head of the samaj. All the inhabitants of the village usually get his help and co-operation. If any problem occurs within them, they solve it through social process. There is a social institution named Samajik Parishad for the purpose. The chief of the institution is known as Gaonburo. He is assisted by a

group of seniors from the society as his advisors in the work of delivering justice. The Koch society respects the verdict of the Samajik Parishad as absolute.

There is no faction and conflicts among the Kochs because they do not allow any interference of the outsiders. They control their society by their own rules and principals. If in any case their headman fails to make any decision, the Koch people go to their neighboring village for help and assistance.

Chapter 6

Life cycle

6.1 Introduction

In a traditional society, ritual is a strong element and it exerts influence upon the tribal life in Bangladesh. It has an added importance because it is very often cuts across tribal boundaries and linguistic differences. Tribal identity is still a powerful force in modern state that has ritual background. In this chapter, we shall try to spot-light the rituals of the Kochs which reflect the changing aspects of the Koch society. Such changing aspects may signify the creation of a new concept in the form of a new tradition or redefinition of an old one. Our description is based on the study of Kochs, a tribe assimilated into the low caste Hindu society.

Life cycle refers to the process through which stages of life of an individual come to an end from birth to death. People in any culture go through the series of different stages of life which include birth, childhood, Puberty, old age and death. Life cycle studies provide basic material of understanding, the nature and characteristic of any culture (Selina Ahsan, 1995; 27).

Arnold Van Gennep was one of the renowned scholars to recognize the social importance of occasional rituals. Gennep used the concept “rites of passage,” which marks the passing of one stage of life and entry into another. He distinguished three kinds of rites of separation, transition rites and rites of incorporation or aggression. He noted that rites of separation often take prominence in the funeral ceremonies that transition rites may be important in pregnancy or initiation and that of incorporation are often highly developed in marriage ceremonies (Barnard and Spencer, 1996; 489).

However, the Koch community of Kaligonj village also considers these events as crucial and has laid emphasis in their community life, which should be properly studied. There are various ceremonies associated with the different phases of a Koch life, beginning from pregnancy to birth, puberty, marriage and death. Through these rituals an individual can overcome social stress and tension and earn new basic material for understanding the nature and characteristic of any culture.

6.2 Birth

Like many other societies child birth is regarded as a very happy occasion for a family in the Koch society. There is no preference for either a boy or a girl. Both the child receives equal importance among them. A newlywed Koch couple appear to be eager to have a child soon after their marriage. This is also an expectation of the kin group of the couple. A family without a child is considered to be an unfortunate family in the society. They believe that not having a child in a family is because of any kind of curse particularly for lack of blessings of God.

6.3 Symptom of Pregnancy

Stoppage of menstruation and all other symptoms of pregnancy are noticed. They also relate the state of pregnancy through other symptoms like vomiting tendency, lack of hunger, unwillingness of taking some daily foods and general physical weakness. The pregnant woman appears to have special performance for sour. Woman generally dislikes and avoids sexual intercourse with their husband during the advanced stage of pregnancy. There is no special kind of treatment and care for the pregnant woman in this society.

The pregnant woman performs all routine works for the household unless one is very weak or sick. Normally they do not go to the field after six months of pregnancy. There are no rules that the first baby must be born in its maternal house. It is their personal choice. When a woman becomes pregnant, she remains separate from others. This is the separation. Sexual intercourse is taboo during this time. From this time to the 8th day of the baby is the transition period. On 8th day the barber cuts the hair and nails of the baby. Then the mother and the child take bath and enter into the house. Before that they live in *Atur ghar* which is built temporarily outside the house. They believe that delivery is a profane period. When the mother and her new born baby enter inside the house, they call it *Noai Otha*. This is the incorporation period because from this day, the mother can do her household activities.

6.4 Beliefs Concerning Pregnancy and Child Birth

In the Koch community, pregnant woman performs all routine household work at the initial stage of pregnancy. During the advanced stage, most of the pregnant women are not allowed to do hard and industrious works, as it might cause harm to the baby in the womb. The Kochs of Kaligonj village both Christian and animist Hindu, due to their poor economic condition, the Koch pregnant woman do light works in their advanced stages.

Determination of Sex

The couples of this society normally dislike sexual intercourse after six months of pregnancy. They particularly believe that sexual intercourse during this time may cause miscarriage. They believe that if a couple has coitus in the first quarter of the night, the offspring will be a male; but if it happens in the last quarter of the night, the offspring will be female.

Avoidance of Pregnant Woman

The Koch pregnant woman has to observe certain restrictions otherwise there will be complications. She is restricted from going outside her house during midday and sunset. A pregnant woman should not keep her hair untied. During this time the evil spirits may come to see a pregnant woman and may cast their evil eyes on the child in the womb and affect its health. A pregnant woman is prohibited to visit the house where somebody is dead. They believe that if the pregnant women see the closed eye of the dead man, her new born child will be blind.

Food Restrictions

A pregnant woman is not allowed to take excessive salt and chili, for these are harmful. Women are fond of sour things during their pregnancies. Tamarind, boroi, green mangoes etc. are favourites during their pregnancies. Some pregnant women avoid joint fruits. Some of them think that it is the causes of twins, some one avoids ginger because of its shape. They think it may cause the baby to be crippled. Pineapple is forbidden because it is used to induce abortion. The diet of an expectant mother is not special but generally non-vegetarian food is preferred and their

traditional drink is avoided during pregnancy. The Koch pregnant is encouraged to take vegetable and snail. They believe that the snail make the oncoming baby's eye bright.

6.5 Post Parturient Pollution

The Kochs believe that a child should be born in a separate room of the household. In the past they used to build a separate house for delivery. It present, who are able to do, build atur ghar. But majority of them use their bedroom or veranda for delivery as atur ghar. Generally after child birth, a piece of iron and an earthen fire pot having incense and mustard seeds in it are kept inside the delivery room. Using this, the mother and child are fomented.

6.6 Birth Rituals

Like many other societies childbirth is regarded as a very happy occasion for a family in the Koch society. A newly wedding couple appears to be eager to have a child soon after their marriage. If a boy born the woman does ulu nine times and if it is a girl they do that to five times. The midwife or dai cuts umbilical cord of the baby. During the child birth the dai or her mother-in-law massage the belly with oil and lies the belly with a cloth. The dai cuts the placenta with sharp bamboo thread or with a blade. Atur ghar is taboo for the others. This is the period of transition.

After 8th day the barber comes and cuts the hair and nails of the new born baby. Then the other and the baby take a purification bath and clean all the clothes and bedding. Now she is free to do her daily work and can sleep with her husband.

6.7 Childhood

The Koch practice "mukhe bhat" and the Hindu rite of allowing a child to taste rice for the first time is called Annoprashanno. When the baby is of 6 months, the Brahmin is called and there arrange a worship. After the worship, the Brahmin gives the first loaf of rice to the child then the father of the child and later on the mother. They believe that if the Brahmin feeds the baby first, the baby will be blessed by the God.

The Koch mother looks after her child up to one year. So, mother child relation is not so much close. After that in some cases, the child's elder sister or grandmother looks after the child. Because, the Koch women works hard and they have to go to jungle or field and some other places for work. As soon as the babies reach 4/5 years of age, they play among themselves. Children start helping their parents at the age of 6/7 year. Normally the daughter works with the mother such as bringing water, cleaning the house, looking after the poultry, taking care of the younger brothers or sisters, washing the utensils, collecting firewood etc. The boys help in grazing the cattle in the field, in the jungles, in going to the shop etc. Most of them generally go to school at the age of 7/8.

6.8 Adolescence

The Kochs do not perform any ceremony or ritual at the time of first menstruation of a girl because they maintain secrecy about their menstruation. But they maintain the following taboos or prohibition during this period.

- During the menstrual period a couple cannot sleep in the same bed with her husband. A menstruating woman remains polluted. So they believe coitus at that time is harmful for both husband and wife.
- Women maintain secrecy about their menstruation.
- They believe that menstrual pollution must be removed by a complete bath and change of clothes. Then the woman is free again to take up normal work, have intercourse etc,
- During this period a menstruating woman or girl cannot enter in the kitchen for cooking because of profane.
- She cannot touch cow dung in this period or do not go inside the cowshed because cow is sacred to them.
- They do not perform any puja or if they go to see any religious ceremony watch that from a distant place.
- They also do not participate in the death ritual or touch the dead body.
- During the period of menstruation, a menstruating woman can not touch halud in the halud makha ceremony.
- To see or touch a new born baby is strictly prohibited.
- A menstruating woman cannot move from house during mid-day or during sun set having her hair untied.

They consider menstruation as profane and according to their custom, a girl is considered grown up after menstruation. From the first menstruation, the girls cannot sleep with their brother, father or any other male member of the family. There is no circumcision ceremony in their community, because in Hindu culture, circumcision is prohibited.

6.9 Marriage Ritual in Koch Community

There are certain rules and rituals regarding the day of marriage which are different from the other Hindus. The groom's party goes to the bride's house with band party to take the bride to the groom's house. In this journey only the aged relatives and neighbors can join. Along with the bride they come back to the groom's house with some relatives of the bride. Here in the groom's house, her mother-in-law welcomes her with durba grass, paddy and prodeep with ulu. Then, the girl is taken to the bride room and beautify for her nicely. During logno, they take the bride and the groom to the mandap (a place where thakur sits). Other rituals are as like as the Hindus.

6.10 Marriage Rules and Sex Life

Various rules of marriage are found among the Kochs. Generally, they follow monogamy and polygamy system of marriage and there is no existence of group marriage or polyandry in their society. The rules of marriages found in the Koch community are discussed below.

Monogamy is the most normal system of marriage in the society. One can keep only one spouse at a time. Polygamy is not prohibited. It is permitted in their society. But now-a-days, they do not prefer polygamy because they are not able to maintain more wives at a time. "Polygamy was the usual way among the upper sections of the society and monogamy among the commonality" (D. Nath, 1989; 142).

Exogamy is another major rule in selecting the life partners. Since marriage has social significance to a Koch family, these families have some formal guidelines about whom a person ought or ought not to marry. They strictly follow the clan exogamy. No Koch can marry within his/her clan. They consider all clan members as the descendants of a common ancestor. So they can not marry their own blood. They also

generally practice village exogamy. They practice Endogamy also. But recently practice of village endogamy is emerging, due to the shortage of suitable partner.

Basically Hindu community does not practice cross cousin system but there is no restriction among the Koch if he/she gets marry his/her mother's brother's son/daughter or father's sister's son/daughter. On the other hand, parallel cousin marriage is prohibited.

Levirate marriage is permissible in this society. However, it is the junior levirate marriage that is permissible but senior levirate is strictly prohibited in this society. One can marry his elder brother's widow wife but not his younger brother's widow. Sororate marriage is not forbidden among them. This type of marriage is rare in the study area. One can marry his wife's younger sister after the death of his wife, but no one can marry his wife's elder sister.

Although the practice of child marriage has been found as the tradition the Koch community, at present it is strictly prohibited. Due to the contact with the Muslim neighbors, adult marriage is considered to be the general rule among the Kochs now.

6.11 The Way of Selection of Life Partner

The Kochs have clan system; it is regulating their marriage as an exogamous system. It is considered necessary and sacred duties for the parents. As reflected in the marriage ceremony (during the study by researcher), the proposal for marriage usually comes from the groom side. Usually, two types of marriage are found in Koch society; these are:

Marriage by Negotiation

When a boy and a girl attain maturity, their parents take initiative for their marriage. When such information is spread out through verbal communication within the Koch society, a matchmaker called 'ghatak' brings information of probable partners to the parents.

In this system, after the verbal communication, the aged persons first go to choose the girl. After choosing the bride again goes to the bride's house to decide the date of

marriage. On that day, guardian of the bride draws a pot of sidur (vermilion) on the right side of the shoulder of the girl's guardians. This is called "chapa festival". It is a traditional custom; they decide a suitable day for the marriage ceremony.

Love Marriage

Love marriage is preferred by the younger generation and in this case, the bride and the groom select each other earlier. Usually, this type of marriage is not encouraged by the older generation, although the parents do not raise objection against love marriage. A Salish is called if a person gets married with Dhopa or muchhi, and is usually boycotted by the society.

There are generally two systems of marriage in the Koch tribe. One is regarded as *biya* and the other is called *hadidabaiya*. *Biya* is naturally accepted system, and is acceptable to all with social approval. The Koch guardians usually follow the *biya* system for their grown up boys and girls and as such send formal proposal for marriage. A third party can play mediator's role for smooth arrange of marriage. But the consent of the bride and the bridegroom is a vital factor in this process. *Hadidabaiya* is a process of social approval of faulty a marital relationship. In Koch language, Hadi means fault relating to marriage and *dabaiya* means social approval of a fault. When an unmarried couple flees after developing love affair and ultimately returns to their parental home in their own village later on, the *hadidabaiya* system is followed to recognize the young couple marriage and settle them in the society.

Case Study

Santosh Koch is a young man of 20 years old. He is a day labor. Basically he is the helper of a carpenter. He loves a girl named Protima of his own village. Protima is a girl of 16 years. Her father is an agricultural labor. The number of her family member is 5. Their economic condition is better than Santosh. Her father did not agree their relation. So, they flee from the village together and after four month came back. The Salish decided to expiate them with punishment and then permitted them to marry. Now they are quite happy. They have a beautiful daughter of one year. Both of them work outside. Sontosh Koch is a very bright man. He speaks with confidence and works hard for the amelisation of his lot. He is a hard worker. He makes his wife strong and now their economic condition is much better than the past.

6.12 Marriage Ceremony

In the Koch society the initiatives for entering into a marital alliance is invariably taken by the groom's side. Marriage through match making still occupies the dominant form in the society. Naturally, when a matchmaker finds a suitable girl then inform the parents of the groom. In case of selecting a bride, her maternal family condition social status, health condition, beauty and age etc. are taken into consideration. If both the parties reach on an agreement then on a fixed day, the relatives of the boy (along with the boy in some cases) go to the girl's house for final selection of the date of marriage. The Kochs do not usually arrange marriage in the months of Vадra, Chaitra, Kartik and Paush. Basically, they are the followers of inter caste marriage system. They never accept the marriage with muchhi, dhopa, krishi etc. However, they accept the marriage with nomoshudra and charral though they are out caste.

The marriage ceremony of the Koch is very broad. Almost all rules and rituals of marriage are similar to those of the Hindus. In our study village, however, some special rituals have been found which are different from others. These are now described below:

Ashirbad or Chappa Utshab

The relatives of the groom go to the bride's house to choose her. Only the respectable and old persons go there. As soon as they reach the girls house, they are cordially received by the relatives of the girl. After a short rest they are entertained with wine, sweets, rice, meat or fish. Entertainment with wine is obligatory because, it is a part of their tradition. If they are not entertained with wine, they take it as insult. When the girl comes, she is examined by talking and asking questions about the household affairs. If the groom's party is satisfied with the girl, they draw a spot with sidur (varmilon) on the right side of the shoulder of the girl's relatives. This ritual, called chappa utsab, indicates that the girl is selected or booked. After chappa utsab bridal party also visits the groom's house. They bless the groom there. This is called chhele dekha.

Logno Badha

The Brahmin examines the kushthi of the bride and the groom by seeing the pangika, selects the date and time for marriage, called longo. This is very important in selecting the date and time for marriage, since it is related to shuvo (good) and ashuvo (bad).

Halud Makha

Four persons, who are either friend or person of same age group, bring the decorative plate in the courtyard where some atap chal, durba grass, halud, paddy, pradeep etc. are placed. They give halud to the bride and also each other. They sing songs and in the evening, the relative of bride and their sister-in-laws are given in turmeric and entertained with rice beer. Same program is also arranged in the groom's house.

When they get a boy or a girl of their choice, they personally make contact, or take help of a mediator. After several successive attempts when the proposal is finalized, the agreement is celebrated through a ceremony, known to the Koch as Guipasha. In Koch language 'Gui' means 'betel-nut' and 'Pasha' means 'to feed' others. The ceremony is arranged in the residence of the bride. Some persons from the bridegroom's side pay a visit to the house of the bride on a stipulated date with a huge quantity of betel leaf and nut. They express their joy by exchanging betel leaf and nut, and other articles among the people present at the ceremony. Guipasha symbolizes the conclusive agreement for a marriage. '*Barpan* and *kanyapan*' are also finalized on this occasion. The marriage is solemnized in the house of the bride. The bridegroom starts from his house on the evening of a pre-fixed marriage day with friends and a party. They are received very cordially there and invited to sit in the *Bara ghar* (big house) of the homestead. The marriage ceremony is conducted inside a room of this *baragar*. At the beginning, the bride and the groom sit close to each other in a room; three heads of big fish and two earthen dishes are placed before them as needed by the marriage custom, one dish filled with water and the other with wine.

According to Riskey, "It is curious to observe that *sindurdan*, the smearing of vermilion between the bride's eyebrows and on the parting of her hair, which ordinarily forms the binding portion of the marriage ceremony of the lower castes, is relegated by the Rajbansi to a position of comparative obscurity. It is performed by two of the *bardti* women before the bridegroom arrives, at the time when the bride is washed

with turmeric. The bridegroom merely puts a small black spot (*Kajol*) of oil and lamp-black between the bride's eyebrows. In Darjiling, on the other hand, *sindurdan* holds its ground as the binding portion of the marriage ceremony, and as soon as it has been completed grass, water and rice, symbolising happiness and fertility, are showered upon the couple from the sieve and winnowing fan which lie ready" (Risley, 1892;497).

6.13 Preferable Time for Marriage Ceremony

Marriage is generally celebrated in the months of Phalgun (February-March), Baishakh (April-May) and Jaishtha (May-June). Marriage is generally avoided in the month of Bhadra, Aswin and Kartick (August through November) and Chaitra (March-April). Before fixing the date of marriage the match maker look over the *panjika* written by pundits (religious scholars) to fix the *shubhodin* (suitable day) and this is done on mutual consultation between the two parties.

6.14 Death Rituals

Kochs are very industrious ethnic group. In their society old persons also do hard works and remain quite active. Old women however in most cases play the role of mid wife. Old people of their society also play very important role in the settlement of disputes as judges of the *Salish*. In all social and religious occasions, these old people receive special treatment by the kinsman.

After death once they would cremate the dead body, but now most of them bury the corpse. Only who could afford, burnt the dead bodies in Kaligong village. They have no particular place for burial. For this purpose, they use the forest. When a person died they bring it at once under the "Tulshi mancho" because a dead person is considered profane to them. They guard the dead body with lamp and *dhup kathi*, if he/she dies at night in order to protect it from the evil spirit. After cleaning the dead body with water, they wear it clothes and put it on the bamboo made *khatia*.

If a female dies, whose husband is alive, is usually decorated with *chandan* and *sidur* like a bride. The *sidur* of a dead person's wife is swabbed by his toe. They call the name *Hari* (*Hari boll*) and start for burial or burning. There is no special rule for digging the grave. Before burial, the son or heir of the deceased burns its face three

times. After the burial ceremony, they all take bath and pray for the deceased in wet cloth. Then they eat sweets and kana.

The family members of the deceased do not eat oil, fish, meat, species etc. for 31 days. They only eat rice of *atap chal* with mashed potato or milk and banana. They keep light on the courtyard for those days and at noon they give same foods to the crow from their meals. They believe that the soul of the dead person comes to the house as crow.

The *sraddha* (funeral ceremony) is performed on the 11th or 31st days after death. On that day the barber cuts the nails of all males and females. He also cuts the hair of the deceased's son, brother and brother's son. After that they take bath and sit before the Brahmin. The Brahmin worships with *dhup, sidur, durba, paddy, chira, banana, sugar, alcohol, pulse, coconut, prodeep* etc. for the salvation of departed soul. After the worship, he gives *proshad* to the deceased's near and dear and by this worship they come back to their normal life. Thus their relationship with the dead person is ended.

According to Risley, "Every year on the eighth or ninth day of the new moon in the month of Bhadra (August-September) *sraddh* is performed for three generations of deceased ancestors by throwing into a river milk, wheat, *atap* rice, sesamum, barley, plantains, *bel* leaves and sprays of the *tulsi* plant, and uttering at the same time the names of the three ancestors who are to be held in honor (Risley, 1892; 499).

Chapter 7

Political Organization

7.1 Introduction

All societies do have some means of social control, so that their members do not live in total anarchy. Every society has developed a set of customs and procedures for making and enforcing decision and for resolving disputes and for regulating the behavior of its members. All societies must maintain social order. Every society has collective decisions about its environment and its relations with other neighboring societies and with disruptive behavior on the part of its member. This chapter deals with those cultural arrangement by which societies maintain social order, minimize the changes of disruption and cope with whatever disruptions occur.

Many societies have no such things as presidents, governors, civil servants, complex bureaucratic body, judicial institution, armed forces, political parties, ballot voting, written laws or constitution etc. We should not conclude from this that such societies do not have some form of political organization, if by 'political organization' we mean a set of customary procedure that accomplish decision making, conflict resolution and social control (Ferraro, 1992; 220).

According to D. Nath, "...the Kochs adopted an elaborate system of administration. The nature and designations of most of the officers like *Dewan*, *Ujir*, *Nazir*, *Sikdar*, *Piyada* and others indicate the influence of the Turko-Afgans or the Mughals in their administrative set-up which was but a natural one. The principles of Koch administration were based on the Hindu religious texts, and with the *Chatra* over his head and the *Danda* in his hands, the Koch king represented a typical Hindu ruler of Ancient India. Although tribal preponderance in the administrative set-up of the founder of the kingdom was marked, this was gradually replaced by the non-tribals in the reign of his successors. Beginning with the death of Naranarayan, the nobility became much powerful and after him the ruling class became so selfish that the welfare of the people, which was the main objective of the first two kings of the line, received scant importance from them (D. Nath, 1989: 128).

The political life of the ethnic communities of Bangladesh reflects on paradoxical situations in which democracy and monarchy co-exist. Every head of a community at different levels like clan, village and territory is generally honored, obeyed and accepted as the head of the group.

Two types of political organization of the Koch are-

- Inter Village Organization
- Intra Village Organization

Koch village level political organization is called 'salish' that is headed by an aged person who is respected and saluted by all inhabitants of the village. He is the supreme leader at the village level. Twenty two village morals all together formed a wider organization headed by bishar moral is not formed or selected by the twenty two village morals. The number of the village is changeable. Generally the level disputes are expected to be settled down within the 'salish' but if they failed, then the matter passes forward to the neighbor village. If the neighbor also failed then it passes forward to the moral. If that is also failed then it passes forward to Thana level.

7.2 Inter Village Organization

Each village level political organization is called 'salish'. It is an informal body of some men as general members and aged person as the head man. He is the supreme leader at the village level. In some cases, he is helped by the member. The position of the head man is not hereditary based. It depends on age, popularity, controlling power and experience. Normally, disputes over land, over marriage (divorce, separation, over inheritance, over adultery etc.) are brought to settle, maintaining law and order to the village organizations. Different religious and social gathering are also within the orbit of the Salish. Besides, the head also help the villagers in time of their needs.

7.3 Intra Village Organization

Though the Kochs are the ethnic community of the area, they have a good relation with their neighbor village. Their samaj is the member of bishar samaj. Bishar does not indicate that society, which must be formed with twenty two villages or samaj. The number of village may be more, but not less than twenty two. It means, to form a

bihser samaj, the number of samaj must be at least twenty two. And, the bisher moral is selected by the vote of all the members of bisher samaj. This is a wider political organization, when any disputes become complicated of the village panchyet, then the problem passes forward to the bisher moral. He then tries to solve the problem. In any case, if he fails to solve then it passes forward to the Thana level. But if he gives any petition, everyone is bound to accept it.

Generally Kochs are very timid community. They live in peace. They create a rare of disputes. So, they need not to go to seek any help from bisher moral. Basically they can settle down their small problems or disputes by their own effort.

7.4 The Moral in Village Administration

As the Kochs are backward section of people, they lead a traditional way of life in rural areas. Recently the role of Koch leader has become very wide and multiplied. The Moral is secular head of the village, performing different religious rituals, socio-cultural functions etc.

7.5 Selection of Moral

In this respect, the researcher interviewed some of the older and conscious people in the study village about their traditional leader and their appointing system. The informants told that selecting system of Moral was hereditary and authority was handed over from father to son of the same family. It is found in my study village, that the position of Moral is hereditary. However, the Moral should have the following criteria:

- A person must be economically solvent;
- He must be a sensible person of representative type;
- He should be intelligent and well wisher;
- He must posses such good character that he command respect from others;
- He should be physically able and a mentally balanced person;
- He should have quality in making appropriate judgment for settlement of disputes; and
- He should be known to other communities.

But in recent time it has become a matter of selection. One of the Morals of hereditary system told the researcher that, he did not expect his son to follow him if his son did not qualify on his own merits. He said that things have been changed to a large extent. Now people want that their opinions should be respected.

When a Moral dies or becomes incapable of discharging his duties, the village adult (male members) sit together to select a Moral for the village. There is no voting system to select a Moral. When a name is proposed for the vacant position, it is supposed to be accepted by the villagers. If the proposal is not considered, then the people may raise their hands against of the proposed person.

It is noted that educational qualification is still less important factor in selecting a Moral under my study village but economical condition is given much priority. Lineage and reputation are strong considerable factors along with the personal qualities in selecting leader. Besides these kinship network is also significant and dominant in case of a village leader in our study village called Kaligonj.

7.6 Role of a Moral in Koch Village

The Moral is considered as the protector and controller of his own community people. He is the first man to be informed about anything in the community. A village Moral is an administrator as well as a justice of the village under study. However, the functions and responsibilities of a Moral may be summarized as follows:

- Settlement of all disputes in the community.
- Maintaining peace and discipline in the community.
- Maintaining law and order in community.
- Management of all social and religious activities such as marriage ceremony, religious festivals and funeral rites.
- Arrange the local term and punishment violating the establish rule.
- To maintain friendly relationship with non Koch neighbor, people of his own village and neighboring villages.
- To look after the welfare activities of the locality.
- To assist the victims of the village community while cheating is found the time of selling land.

- To help protect themselves from the greedy people and helping each other in terrible situation or at the adversity.
- To play role in protecting culture and traditional value of the Koch community through communication and development.
- To help and assist the orphans and widows in protecting their properties.

According to Probir Koch, leader of the study village, a village Moral generally conducts all the affairs related to government i.e. people, political problem, Thana and court. In a sentence, he is the representative of the village. It is noted that the Moral has no economic or rural authority over the village. Naturally, he has no right to imposes tax upon the villagers. In addition, he has no power of enforcing his decision in the settlement of disputes without the consent of village *Panchayet*. The village *Panchayet* (administrative body) is composed of the elderly members of the Koch society.

7.7 Sources of Power

The political power of an ethnic group is measured by the ability of its members to influence the course of those governmental actions i.e. passage of laws, arrests by police, sentences by judges etc. that affect their daily lives (Rosa, 1976; 16).

There are some reasons which make a person powerful in a community. These reasons are the sources behind the power. In Koch village of Kaligonj, there are also some special factors that act as sources of power for anyone in the society. There are as follows:

Age: Aged people are very much respected among the Kochs. This is the main source of power. During the *Salish*, Koch always consider their suggestions with due respect.

Experience: Man having a lot of experience about life, society and culture and above all very much skilled in giving suggestion, is given priority in the Koch society.

Popularity: A man, who is very popular among the people of the village for his intelligence, modest behavior and cooperativeness.

Controlling Power: A man, who has the ability to control the behavior of the common people relating to disputes and exert influence over them.

Economic Strength: Economic strength is very important factor as source of power in the village community, specially the Koch.

Education: At present, persons with higher education are becoming influential and powerful in the village community in resolving disputes and litigations.

The villagers claim that, in the past, their community had been a strong and fairly well organized agency for regulating and conducting their social and religious affairs. But now the situation has been changed to large extent as a result of several socio-economic factors that have undergone some profound changes over the last few decades.

7.8 Mode of Punishment

To keep the society under control and social cohesion, the Kochs have been imposing various types of punishment and fine as their customary penal system according to the degree of offence. Money fine is the common mode of punishment and sometimes physical punishment is also given to the offended person. If the convicted person is not obliged to the punishment which is given against him/her, then the village council ostracize convicted person from the community and still it is prevalent among the Kochs under study.

7.9 Participation in National Politics

The Kochs under study are not isolated from the mainstream of political boundary of the country. Their traditional political field is now in the process of changing. The process of change is slow because its political organization is so intimately interwoven with the social fabric and religious custom of the people that it is practically hard to make it disappear altogether rapidly. But the present study has been found that they are well aware of the national politics.

At present, young and middle aged Kochs are trying to lead their community in their social and public issues, i.e. to nominate members of Union Parishad elections and to

participate in different political meetings. The Kochs are very much conscious about the national politics but they are generally supporter of Awami League. Almost all adult Kochs have voter registration. In the last national and U.P. election, almost all of them participated. According to the Kochs during the vote, there was no mastanization, no looting of ballot box or conflict among the voters in the election.

The Kochs have not been tortured or suffered from the neighboring Muslims. They heard that, in some areas, Hindus were tortured reportedly. They thought that this was their country and they would never be tortured. They would remain in the country till death. They felt themselves secured and had a very good and friendly relation with the majority people.

7.10 Women Participation in the Politics

Now-a-days, the role of Koch women in the politics has been increased and political awareness among the women has also been increased. In the national and union parishad election, women are eligible to cast their votes. Through they have the right to choose representative. They are often influenced by their father, brother and relatives. Different non-government organization and Christian missionary are playing vital role in this regard. Though Koch women are not directly involved in politics and yet they desire to establish their rights and to solve their problems.

Case Study

Chompa Rani Koch (28) is an illiterate woman who has four children. She does not possess land; so she cultivates others land. She wants to educate her children. But she cannot do it because of her poor economic condition. She has been enlisted in the voter list. She thinks that ethnic women are now more aware of their rights. As they are equally industrious compared to man, they need to be more aware of their political rights. At the time of election, candidates come to them and try to influence them in many ways. So, Chompa thinks that they should have clear concept about politics, so that they are not misguided in exercising their franchise.

Chapter 8

Religious Organization

8.1 Introduction

Religion is a cultural universal. It consists of beliefs and behavior concerned with the supernatural beings, powers, and forces. Religion establishes and maintains social control. It does this through a series of moral and ethical beliefs, along with real and imagined rewards and punishment, internalized in individuals. Religion also achieves social control by mobilizing its members for collective action (Kottak, 1974; 451). It is the most important aspect of culture. It finds expression in material culture in human behavior and in value systems, moral, and ethics and interacts with system of family organization, marriage, economics, law and politics; it enters into the realms of every aspects of culture due to its pervasive character.

Religion is the human response to the apprehension of something, or power, which is supernatural and supersensory. It is the expression of the manner and type of adjustment effected by a people with their conception of the supernatural. Religion had been regarded as a product of civilization until Tylor gave convincing proof that primitive societies have their own versions of religious activity, not very different from that of civilized societies. Ever since, Tylor's views were published and no ethnographer has reported any primitive society without religious beliefs and practices (Majumder and Madan, 1994; 130).

Gary Ferraro defines religion as a set of beliefs and patterned behaviors concerned with supernatural beings and forces. Since human societies are faced with series of important life problems that can not all be resolved through the application of science and technology, they attempt to overcome these human limitations by manipulating certain supernatural forces (Ferraro, 1996; 262).

Clifford Geertz's definition of religion is influential one, his definition of religion is that a religion is a system of symbols which act to establish powerful, pervasive and

long lasting moods and motivations in men by formulation conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (Geertz, 1973; 90).

Religion, in the former sense the implications is belief in, and observation of, signs of divine communication. In the latter sense, the implication is the performance of necessary actions which may bind together man and the supernatural powers. Both the implications are relevant in view of the fact that beliefs and rituals have found to be the main component parts of religion everywhere (Majumder and Madan, 1994; 130-131).

However, like all other ethnic groups, the Koch believes in various impersonal supernatural forces which control the destiny of human life. Traditionally, the Kochs believe in traditional Hindu religion. They are the followers of Aghori ideology (*Sanatan Dharma*). According to Sri Brohmmobroto Puran, Rajput was born by Kshatriyas semen and from the Karan daughter's womb. Again, Aghori was born by Karan father and Rajput mother. They also believe that the Lord Shiva has created the world including the paradise and hell. He came to the earth in different forms such as Brahmma, Shankar, Bholanath.

8.2 Adopted Religion

It has already been expressed that Kochs follow eternal religion. It is their old religion and they have been initiated into this religion from the very old age. They are now in a process of change. Their religion has accomodated many aspects from the surroundings to keep pace with the change in culture and arts. This will be discussed later, what is to be expressed now, is that, they are initiated.

The Koch people believe in sanatan (eternal) religion. In spite of their adherence to it, they follow many traits of their early faith, and they pay homage to some of the deities connected with their primitive religion. Their religious faith is an admixture of the present and the past.

With passage of time, they have been deviated from the religion of their fore furthers. Some of them have accepted Islam and some of them have been converted into Christianity due to a number of reasons. Some informers say that many of the Koch people have changed their religion due to greed or avidity. They thought that they

would have got financial benefit from the people of the religion, which they would follow. But whenever they understood that the Christians did not keep their words, they went back to their original (eternal) religion.

Harbert Risley, George Grierson and William Crooke wrote about animism in their book titled "*Ethnology, Languages, Literature and Religion of India*" that the tribes, whose beliefs are animism, are falling rapidly under the Hindu influence (1975, 148-149).

Koch people admit that the change of religion being subjected to greed is a great sin. But those who have changed religion do not admit that, they have done any sin. Because, they did not change their religion being subjected to avidity rather they did so because they realize the real thing. Those who have accepted Islam say that, mixing with the Muslims they realize the meaning of Islam. So they changed their religion. Moreover, there are some people, who changed their religion, without realizing or knowing anything. Another important and significant reason for changing their religion is their pecuniary problem. Some of them did not feel themselves secured as they were the followers of eternal religion, although they didn't suffer any loss in ryot. Yet they were distressed with fear. That is why they have changed their religion to save their lives. Anyway, there were two basic reasons for changing their religion and those are: poverty and security problem.

Case Study

Ibrahim Kha (55) is a day labor. He has one daughter and one son. He believes in small family. At the age of 16 he reprobates his religion and accepted Islam. For this he was rejected by his society. Before accepting Islam, he was a Koch. But after embracing Islam, he denied himself a Koch. His father and one of his brothers were also with him. He has a good relation with his other members of his family. He has good relation with the members of Koch community too. The reason behind his changing religion is relation with his Muslim friends, who has influenced him to embrace Islam. Now he says his prayer five times and reads Arabic. He has married a Muslim woman of other village. He leads his life just like other Muslims. Now he is quite happy with his present social condition.

8.3 Religious Beliefs

Koch People have trust in different sorts of religious beliefs in connection with heaven, hell reward punishment etc. They believe that their souls go away after the death and judgment is given according to the works done by them in the earth. Heaven is awarded for the good deeds while hell for misdeeds. They have the faith in reanimation. They believe that a person can be a living being of moral excellence in rebirth for his/her noble deeds in the earth. On the other hand, penalty is awarded for misdeeds. They believe in both rebirth and life hereafter.

The Kochs believe that, a person will suffer for his misdeeds after death. Like all other Hindus, they also believe in rebirth after death. If an individual in life works well and does goods he/she will be a man again after his/her death. But if he/she does bad and commits sins then he/she will born beasts.

The place where only peace and rest is the rule is said to be called heaven. One can find very tasty good food whenever he/she wants. Only the honest people, who never caused any harm to the human being and remain abstained from evil deeds, will be rewarded heaven. And the rest of the people who hurt other people did during life will be given hell as the punishment for misdeeds. After the death of the senior most person of their family or house, he/she as they believe, conies around the house for 31 days as crow. They believe in ghost which remains in solitary places.

It has been already mentioned that traditionally the Kochs are animist and they worship many gods and goddess. But Hindu influence is visible in the Koch religious life. Due to the Hindu cultural impact, they propitiate for the satisfaction of Gods and deities. The Koch considers Rishi, Har or Mahadeva as his or her own God. They worship Gods and Goddesses according to their faith. According to their religion, the supreme deities are Rishi and his wife Jog and Jogmaya. They are regarded by the Koch as the creator and the preserver of the universe.

The presume Siva is a non-Aryan god, who had intruded into the Aryan pantheon with the passage of time. The close affinity of Siva with the Koch is also known from

the Puranas. The goddess Kamakya is one of the supreme deities of the Koch. Consequently, the goddess Kamakya has a profound influence upon the Koch. The goddess Manasa is considered as a family deity of the Koch and they worship her on the day of *sankranti* in the Bengali month of Sraban. They venerate Manasa as a family idol, because they are very afraid of snakes (ibid, 2007; 493).

8.4 Daily Worship

Every male person utters some words to worship after their bath in the morning and offers some foods to their deities. The females generally light the lamp in front of the Tulshi and utter *ulu* and bow. It is mentionable that all the males and females do not participate in their religious deities. They have an open temple in the centre point of their village. A Brahman from the neighbor village comes here every day and offers worship. In the temple there is a statue of the deity Kali.

8.5 Religious Festivals and Ceremonies

The Koch belongs to the Sanatan religion. They believe in several religious festivals like other Hindus. Because of their poor economic condition, they are unable to perform those festivals or pujas. Once they would arrange all the pujas but at present they arrange at least four or five pujas. They perform autumnal Durgapuja, Kalipuja, Sarasvatipuja, Laksmipuja etc. following the Hindu rites, but they worship Gods and Goddesses of their formal faith.

A festival is a social institution which provides occasions for individual or communal worship of different Gods and deities for eating the special food, wearing fine clothes and meeting kith and kin. The primary theme of most of the festivals is religious but they have their social and psychological ends as well. The Kochs perform various rituals which is a part of their traditional culture. They celebrate a number of rituals and festivals of their own. These are as follows:

Table-8.1: Religious Festivals

Name of Festivals	Name of the Bengali Month
1. Baishakhi Puja	Baishakh
2. Gram Puja	Baishakh-Jaishtha
3. Jamai Shasthi	Jaishtha
4. Dal Puja	Vadra
5. Monosha Puja	Vadra
6. Durga puja	Ashwin
7. Laxmi Puja	Kartik
8. Kali Puja	Kartik
9. Atkura Puja	Agrahayan
10. Paush Sankranti	Paush
11. Shitala Puja	Magh

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj

Baishakhi Puja

On the first day of Bengali month they perform Baisaki puja. If they can, they cook *khiehun* and make *pitha*. On that day they do not tell a lie and do not perform any bad work. They arrange a puja in their villages but not in every year regularly.

Gram Puja

Gram puja is performed for the welfare of the villages. They believe that by performing this puja they can get rid of evil spirit. Everybody takes bath and then arranges puja with banana, sugar, milk, seven kinds of flower, wood apple leaves, water of gangas, honey, butter, parched nee (*khoi*), tulshi leaves, atop chal, batasha, dhup etc. They furnish all these in a decorated tray, then they place it in the temple where the Kali Devi's statue stands and then worship. At last they bell the conch shell. After the worship the villagers sacrifice a goat.

Jamai Shasthi

Jamai Shasthi is also known as shasthi puja. This puja is performed by the females mainly. This is performed in order to satisfy the shasthi Goddess. According to them,

shasthi Goddess looks after the children. So, if they can make her happy, their children will be healthy and happy. Sometimes they offer a vole to the deity for the welfare of their children. During the worship they beat the dhol and kasha and bell the conch shell. After that they round the tree seven times as they have no 'pukur.' Those women who have married daughter, bring their daughter and son-in-law and present their new clothes if they can afford. This puja is also not performed by the Koch always.

Dal Puja

Dal puja is also called Bishwakarma puja and sattyanarayan puja. It is performed by the unmarried and newly married women. At first they put soil in two baskets and there sows different kinds of seeds in these baskets. Those who sow, do not take food till the noon. A boy brings a twig of the Karam tree and hides it. Unmarried girls will seek that twig and plant it in the courtyard. Then they place baskets beside the twig. They keep the baskets for eight days. At that time they do not use oil in their hair, do not eat oil, turmeric, hot rice, sweet, etc. They eat only vegetables. On the 9th day the puja takes place. It is performed during the full moon. Those girls, who planted the twig, perform the puja that day. They do not take food before the puja. After the puja, they eat banana, parched rice etc.

Monosha Puja

It takes place on the last day of Bengali month Vadra. They do not construct any altar for the "Monosha devi" for their pecuniary condition. But they arrange a pair of pigeon, different kind of fruits, lotus, rose, many kinds of flower, five kinds of sweets, paddy, sidur, dhup, etc. and place these in front of the Kali. They give three spots of sidur on the altar and then worship. At the same time they bell the conch-shell and the women make the sound of ulu. After that they sacrifice pigeons. They cook curry with the meat of pigeons. They worship 'Monosha' to satisfy her, because she is the goddess of snake.

Durga Puja

Their second main religious festival is Durga puja. During this puja they all buy new clothes. But at present it is very difficult to buy new clothes and also to arrange this Durga puja in their village. It involves high expenditure. So, they go to see the

'protima' in the Shimultoli and Gazipur bazaar. They used to arrange their puja earlier but now they cannot afford it. During the puja women make some special foods. During the puja a fair takes place in Shimultoli and Gazipur bazaar. Different types of food, sweets, toys, household things, fruits, earrings, necklace, ribbon, chip etc. are sold in the mela. During the doshomi, they sacrifice the protima in the pond. Before sacrifice, they dance around the protima which is called 'Arati'.

Laxmi Puja

The Kochs perform Laxmi puja in order to satisfy the deity Laxmi. She is the Goddess of wealth. As their socio-economic background is very weak, they arrange this puja co-operatively or together with some families and all other participate. At first a woman paints alpana on the pira by rice powder then this pira is placed before the protima. They keep all the things that are essential for the puja on it. Then they perform the puja by wood apple leaves and tulshi leaves. Then they bell the conch shell. They pray to laxmi to be generous towards their family and remain with them in their homes throughout the year.

Kali Puja

In Kaligonj there is a Kali mondir. Member of Parliament of Jatio Party established this mondir for them. Every year they arrange Kali puja. Many Hindus are gathered to see the protima here. After the puja, every body takes 'Charanamaito'. They perform the worship by Baishnob system. While dram is beaten, the women make the sound ulu. After the puja those who were fasting drink water. Then the furnt offering (Joggo) takes place. During the furnt offering, they burns the twig of Baroi, 28 tulshi and wood apple leaves, banana, butter, honey, sand, gangas water, grass, paddy, barley etc. After that, they mix the ash of this mixture with water. Everybody decorates their forehead with the bindi of this mixture.

Atkura Sankranti

This sankranti takes place on the last day of Agrahayan. Basically this puja is performed individually in everyone's house. They believe that if they perform this puja, their children will not be barren. No Brahmin is needed for this puja. At night woman makes chitai pitha. They eat this in the morning. Everybody visits house of each other and eats this pitha.

Poush Sankranti

Poush Sankranti is one of the main religious festivals of the Kochs. They perform it on the last day of the month of Poush. During the dawn, all the Kochs including the males, females, Children, old people and adults take bath in the pond remembering the mother Gangas. Then they make the sound ulu. After bath they eat muri, chira and curds. They take banana, papaya, milk, leaves of wood apple, paddy, grass, sidur, dhup, many kinds of flowers and sweets in a basket and worship. This worship is performed in everyone's house. At last, they bell the conch shell.

Shitala Puja

It takes place on the 5th or 6th Magh of Bengali year. It is performed to satisfy the deity of epidemic. This puja is performed in Kali mondir. Some people keep fast on in that day. The barber comes to the village and cuts nail and hair; there is no idol for this puja. At first they place a banana leave on the ground and keep many kinds of flowers, fruits, dhup, vermilion, grass, sweet etc. and then keep a coconut on clay made pot. After that, the Brahmin starts the puja. When the puja is over, those who were fasting, break it by 'prashad'.

The above religious ceremonies and festivals have no existence of their own in the Koch community. They cannot arrange all the pujas because of their financial hardship. But they have faith in these pujas.

8.6 Some Brotos of the Koch

There was a time when the Kochs would perform some brotos. They used to practice different Broto rituals during Puja Archana for getting virtue, happiness, peace, offspring, food result etc. throughout the whole year. Basically Koch girls are comparatively more religious than the males. Some of those Brotos are furnished below:

Table-8.2: Brotos of the Koch

Name of the Broto	Name of the Months	Name of the Broto	Name of the Months
1.Hari Charan Brotos	Baishakh	2.Modhu Sankranti Broto	Baishakh
3.Chatu Shankranti Broto	Baishakh	4.Ghrito Shankranti Broto	Baishakh
5.Baishakhi Purnima Broto	Baishakh	6.Mongol Chandi Broto	Jaisthya
7.Jamai Shasthi Broto	Jaishthy	8.Bepattarini Broto	Ashar
9.Nag Panchomi Broto	Sravan	10.Janmashtami Broto	Vadra
11.Durga Sassthi Broto	Aashwin	12.Baikuntha Chalondashi Broto	Kartik
13.Laxmi Puja Broto	Poush	14.Vaimi Ekadashi Broto	Magh
15.Ashok Sasthi Broto	Chaitra	16.Satya Narayan Broto	Throughout 12 Month

Source: Fieldwork in Kaligonj.

8.7 Religious Books

In Bangladesh, the Kochs are basically divided into two line of belief system. One is animistic with Hinduized belief and other is the converted Christian. There are some holy books of Hindu community which are known by the Kochs. Though they cannot read those books, but they know some story, slok, advice, suggestions. Now-a-days the Koch can read those books. They mentioned some of the names of their sacred religious books during my fieldwork. These are:

- Shiva Puran
- Padma Puran
- Sri Bhagabat Geeta
- Ramayan
- Mahabharat
- Geeta

There is another religious book called 'Bed,' which is written in Sanskrit. Some people could utter or speak sanskrit but nobody could read.

8.8 Beliefs about Purity and Pollution

The Kochs of Gazipur District, especially the study people have various beliefs in connection with many things, that they consider as pure and impure. There are some beliefs that the researcher came to know from the study, during her fieldwork. These are in bellow:

- Gonga jol: The Koch ethnic people consider the Gangas water or (*Gonga jol*) as the most holly item. According to their belief, Gonga jol can purify their house and others impure things.
- Cow dung: It is also holly to them; they use cow dung to purify the house, temple, altar etc.
- Flowers: Not only the Koch ethnic people but also other people of the world consider flower as a symbol of love but the Kochs add a special value to it because the puja cannot be done without flower.
- Ghee: They call Ghee as *Paka* and consider it as a pure thing.
- Milk: Milk is also sacred thing to the Kochs.

The Kochs consider any kind of rotten thing as impure and profane. They also consider the following as profane and polluted-

- Menstruation: The Koch ethnic people consider menstruation as polluted. During the menstruating period of a female, cannot go inside the kitchen for cooking, enter into the cow shed and perform any worship; even she is not allowed to visit death ritual and touch a new born baby.
- Atur ghar: The *atur ghar* is considered as polluted to the Koch until the purification day of *Narta*. By the *Narta* ritual, the new born baby and the mother become purified by taking bath and cleaning all the clothes and bedding. After that the mother can do her daily work.
- Dead body: When a person died, they bring it at once in the *Tulshi manch*; because the dead body is profane to them and they guard the dead body from evil spirit.

8.9 Some other Customary Beliefs

The Kochs have largely been influenced by various customary beliefs in every sphere of life. Basically it is largely found among the traditional religious believers compared to the converted Christian Kochs. Here I mention some of the beliefs that I came to know during my fieldwork.

- If any kind of things is dropped from their hands, they believe that a relative may come to their house.
- If anyone is stumbled by a *Jhata* during walking or expectoration in eating, the Koch ethnic people believe that someone is reproaching or giving *Gali*.
- If a *Hottiti* bird flies across the roof a house, the owner of the house believes that there is a possibility of quarrel with his neighbors. So, avoid the quarrel at once, he pours a glass of water on the roof of the house.
- Again if any crow flies over a man and the sounds *ka .. ka .. ka...* they believe that some danger may occur.
- If a person is obstructed at the starting to go or to do something then he believes that he will not achieve success in his desired work.
- If someone dream a dreamt about the death of a person, who is not his/her kinsman, then he/she is in fear, because there is a possibility of death of his/her kinsman.

8.10 Local Healing System

The Kochs have faiths in modern as well as traditional medical practice. They have faiths in evil spirit. Some respondents informed that there existed evil spirits on this earth. Belief system associated with occurrences like long time illness, low production, different kinds of pains, barren women, pregnant death of women, continuous birth of dead child, accident etc. are caused by malevolent magic or due to evil spirit.

Advancement in education, modernization, urbanization and other internal and external forces have created new outlook to change their perception about the above matters. They are now proceeding towards modernization. Naturally, their belief in evil spirit and the practice of magic are now disappearing from the Koch society.

Though the practice of magic had become extinct, and yet they are not totally free from the local healers. Because, their treatment is less expensive, less time consuming and are available at the door step. It is found that, people take the shelter of these shamans or traditional healers when modern medicine fails to cure them. Basically there are two types of traditional healing.

- Shamanism or magical religious healing
- Natural or herbal healing

The first of these include magic and charms, holly words and holly action to cure diseases. The second of these involve the herbs, plants, minerals and animal substances etc. Both Shamanistic and herbal healing have been widely practiced in this village. Persons are engaged in this type of activities are known as Ojha, Tahir, Shadhu, Kabiraj etc. Hira Shadhu is a famous shaman or healer in the study village. He treats ailments of children and others, cattle diseases, women suffering from hysteria, stomach pain, fever, snakes bites and hydrophobia. He is an exorcist who drives out ghosts and defeats evil spirit by his exorcism and charisma.

In fact, Shamanism in Koch belief has been involved in fear of terrifying spirits. They believe in magic, charms and faith in unseen powers and nature spirits. They believe ghosts and demons commonly known as bhut. These *bhuts*, may be called ghosts, are believed to have been entering or leaving a body in various ways. Women are considered to be common target for the ghosts.

The Kochs respect the Shaman who normally uses religious texts and herbal root in their treatments. They consider him as a religious and pious man known as Shadhu. So, in their society, a Shaman like Hira Shadhu is a respectable person to all. The Shadhu gets the supernatural power through his dream and by incubation prayer by which he treats the patients.

Case Study

Raimoni (25) is an illiterate woman. She has a son. Her son was lost in a marriage ceremony of her relative. The boy came back with the help of a *kabiraj*. Raimoni has too much faith on *kabiraj*. Because, she got treatment from the *kabira* and she got back her children with the help of *kabiraj*. She believes in his supernatural power. She also believes that if she does not follow their customs, she will be in trouble.

8.11 Process of Hinduism and Christianity

Hinduization is considered to be one of the traditional process of cultural change in which the tribal cultures in India have been 'to greater or lesser degree' Hinduized. In the book "Rethinking Tribal Culture in India" P.K. Bhowmick mentioned the transformations in the tribal traditional cultural setting. He writes, though they were nearly self-sufficient, yet they had some specific needs which brought them into contact with higher societies or with the ruling class (P. K. Bhowmick, 2001; 200).

This Prolonged contact, however did not disturb their ways of living very much, and in course of time, Hindu ideas, rituals, beliefs and philosophy impregnated with their traditional ideas and philosophy, because the Brahmanical influence was not aggressive and did not jeopardize the normal ways of living of these people. As a result, we now find many of the Hindu festivals and rituals inextricably mixed up with the tribal forms, while they are observed both by the tribes and the neighboring caste Hindus. It is now very difficult to disentangle one from the other. Besides, various popular social and religious festivals of the Hindus, with their immediate human appeal, offered an attraction to the tribal people and their gradual absorption in the greater Hindu fold became quite pronounced. This in turn gave them a sense of security and self satisfaction. So, discontent due to irregular cultural accommodation or absorption was very rare (Ibid, 2001; 200-201).

Heterogeneous sects and beliefs prevailed in the Koch kingdom during the period under study. The non-Hindu tribals worshipped their deities and performed their religious rites according to their own ways without any interference from the government. Hinduisation till then was mainly confined to the ruling families or to certain areas, usually in the neighborhood of the capital cities. The Koch Kings, for political purposes, patronized both Brahmanic and tribal worship, although they themselves accepted Hinduism and were elevated to the status of *Kshatriyas* by the Brahmin priests. But a major change in the existing systems was brought by the Neo-Vaishnavite movement (D.Nath, 1989; 165).

In Kaligonj, they were quite different from the Koch. They were more influenced by the Hindus. But they are not typical Hindus. The study found 110 caste hierarchy

among them as they migrated from their original home in Koochbehar to Bangladesh under compelling circumstances, had for a long time been in contact with both Hindu and Muslim neighbors and this prolonged and continues interaction brought about changes in their attitudes, beliefs and practices in connection with religion and other aspects of life.

In spite of their adherence to it, they follow many traits of their early faith, and they pay homage to some of the deities connected with their primitive religion. Now-a-days many of the Koch people have changed their religion being subjected to greed or avidity. They thought that they would have got financial benefit from the people of the religion which they would follow. Some informants say that missionaries of Churches have initiated them into Christianity by tempting or alluring them of money and by assuring them to get jobs. Another important and significant reason for changing their religion is their security problem. The majority of the people do not feel the impact of Christian Missionaries to that great extent, but this was the most potent of the outside influences and organized activities to influence the life style of the Kochs. It influenced the life of the Christian ethnic communities in various non-religious aspects too.

Spreading of education through Christian Missions is an important cause. In the Christian Missionary schools, Kochs get free education and sometimes other fringe benefits such as, books, hostel accommodation etc. It is reported that the behavior and attitude of the Missionaries toward the Koch children in these schools are very loving and convincing. In other words, it is an indirect Missionary means towards conversion of children into Christianity.

Now the converted Christian believe in one God and also believe that 'the God has created the world' and Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden who are their ancestors. Although the Kochs were used to believe in their traditional animism, somehow they were practiced many animistic rites or rituals in their cultural and socio-economic life. The villagers inform that they do not celebrate the pujas now but it is observed that they are practicing the traditional rituals in their life cycle such as birth, puberty, marriage and death.

Though the Christianity introduced them with the western values and tried to modify Kochs way of life including belief system, marriage system, inheritance and even their individual naming system. In the study village, it is observed that all the Kochs, who are familiar with the western cultural practices, are now using their sons and daughters. Now-a-days the Kochs are naming their children as Michel, Nickolas, Bernard, Robert, etc which are shared by the thousands of western people. Traditionally, they follow naming custom and they are given the name of their children according to their grandparent's name. The Christian Kochs celebrate a name giving ceremony at the age of forty days of their child.

The study also has found the differences between the marriage system and law of inheritance of the Christians and Kochs. In the Christian law, there is no divorce and now the converted Kochs also practice that.

In the Koch inheritance system, there are no female rights to inherit property in their society; only males or sons can inherit property. But now-a-days, the Christian Kochs allow female or daughter the same rights in their property inheritance. Christianity also affects the food habit of the Koch people. The traditional Kochs are prohibited to eat beef but the Christianity allows them to take any kind of food whether it is meat or vegetable, if they like.

Chapter-9

Summary and Conclusion

9.1 Summary

The present study has focused on the socio-economic and socio-cultural aspects of Koch ethnic community of Gazipur district. The community is one of the smallest ethnic groups living in different parts of Bangladesh especially in the Gazipur district. In doing the present research, the researcher started fieldwork from April 2010, and continued up to January 2011, in Kaligonj village under Gazipur district. The findings of the study are as follows:

Bangladesh is a small country of about fifty five thousand square miles. It has several groups of ethnic minorities with their distinct ways of life. The Koch is one of them. They are still carrying on with their age old beliefs and ideas which are now changing. This ethnic minority are scattered groups, often living in jungle areas or peripheral zones of Bangladesh. In general, they lack satisfactory progress in comparison with the wider society.

The socio-economic structure of Bangladesh is changing for several reasons such as social, cultural, economical and educational factors. The Koch society is not out of that trend in Bangladesh. They are living in different socio-political and economical conditions which led them towards partly disintegration (isolation) from the wider Muslim society. Recent changes in the economic as well as socio-cultural life of the country accelerated the disintegration process of tribal communities. This disintegration leads to the transformation of tribal culture. All these are taken together contributed potently to mould their life style in different ways.

Kochs, the indigenous people of the Gazipur district are believed to have migrated from Koochbehar. The oral history of the present inhabitants states that the tribe migrated to the present locality some one hundred and fifty years back from the aforesaid area. For the increase of progeny and cleaning the jungle the Vowel King brought them here. The King brought the Kochs here because at that time the Vowel region was full of dense forest and only the Kochs could live there. The King gave

them lot of lands to cultivate. They were a community without education. Naturally, they did not bother about property document. However, the British Government acknowledges their ownership of the land and did not disturb them throughout the colonial period. The Kochs were the first to make settlement in the area who initiated cultivation and plantation in the virgin land. Thus through occupation and prolonged *inhabitation*, they gradually became the son of the soil and the indigenous people of the area. This continued throughout the colonial period and the Kochs continued to live peacefully in the Vowel pargana of Gazipur without any disturbance and intrusion.

The situation starts to change and deteriorate from 1947, when the British left this land and the subcontinent gained freedom with partition of the country and the emergence of two independent states, India and Pakistan. The area is inhabited by the Kochs became a part of East Pakistan. East Pakistan, through the liberation war of 1971, became the independent state namely Bangladesh, of which the present Kochs are citizens. Pakistan was a conceptual state created from a sense of Muslim nationalism of the subcontinent which emerged out of a fear of Hindu domination, our Muslim community in independent India. As the country was created out of a communal favor, it was but natural that the state ideologies and policies of Pakistan were shaped in a communal line. Pakistan declared itself as Islamic Republic and it was evident that various minority communities in Pakistan started to feel insecure in the country. There was a huge stream of migration of the minority community from Pakistan to India.

Initially the Kochs did not migrate, since they did not have the means and resources to face the risk of another migration. But, intrusion and persecutions started very soon. The dominant Muslim communities of the adjacent areas, who are socially and economically more powerful, taking advantage of the situation, gradually started to provoke and threaten them to hand over their land, cattle and other properties to them and leave Pakistan. The Kochs of the study area were very timid, so their neighbors did not disturb them this way.

As the Kochs were poor and illiterate and as they were a socially weak community, they could not resist this repression. The greatest matter was the religious state did not

give them protection rather the state machinery directly or indirectly helped the aggressors. The helpless Kochs had no other alternative than to decide escape in the jungle and keep quite. The creation of Bangladesh as a progressive secular country raised their hopes for a brief period, but the political change in 1975 again aggravated the situation and the existence of the Kochs again began to be treated and their perils did not end. The situation continued to be same till this time their economic and social condition was so weak and poor that they had nothing to loose. So they were not so much worried.

Chapter IV describes the economic life of the Koch people. The changing economic system and change in environment have destroyed traditional sources of hunting and gathering. Agriculture is the main occupation of the Koch living in Gazipur district. Besides this they are engaged in other important economic activities including wage labor, N.G.Os or private jobs, livestock etc. Both male and female participate in the economic activities and perform agricultural work, house construction and daily labor. The major changes in their economic activities have been brought owing to both their cross-culture interaction and the changing circumstances such as population pressure and lack of adequate land to continue their traditional cultivation. Most of the land is now owned by the main stream people that limit the availability of cultivable land. As a result, the economic condition of the Koch is very measurable; they are facing acute poverty. The Koch society is patrilineal and patrilocal. The daughter has no right in their brother's property.

Chapter V discusses the social organization of the Kochs as an ethnic group who have their own identity, distinct oral language, norms, rules, clothing and physical characteristics. Marriage between the same clan members is prohibited. Monogamy and cross-cousin marriages are the predominant features of this society. Child marriage is the tradition among the Kochs. But the trend is changing now. Love marriage is the very popular form of marriage. Divorce is practiced. Both man and woman have equal rights in divorce which is decided by the village headman (moral). Remarriage is allowed; this marriage is called Nikah. In the Koch community both affinal and consanguinal kin ties are in existence. Among the kinship relation, joking and avoidance relationship are in practice in this community. This clan is an exogamous group so that the same clan cannot establish marital ties among them.

Among the Kochs the clan named after plants or animals. Family is the basic unit of the society where nuclear, joint and single families are in existence. The nuclear family is however predominant in this community. The husband is the head of the household but the wife also plays significant role in the family.

Chapter VI describes the life cycle of the Koch community. Various ceremonies are associated with different phases of Kochs life, beginning from the time of pregnancy, birth, puberty, marriage and death. They believe that, all activities during this period have been influenced by the supernatural power. They therefore, perform various rituals to satisfy supernatural power.

Chapter VII describes the political organization of the Kochs. Decentralized political system is prevalent in the Koch society. The village head known as Moral maintains peace and order in the society and religious leader performs certain rituals. However, due to the changing socio-economical, political and ecological conditions of the village under study, the traditional Koch political organization has been changed in terms of its structure, meaning of justice and so on.

Chapter VIII describes the Kochs religion and religious factors which control the destiny of their human life. They perform certain rituals and formalities either to please unnatural forces to gain their favor or to overcome the impending disasters. Recent changes have occurred in the Koch religious life; the Christian culture has influenced the Koch of Gazipur district to a large extent. In my study village Christianity is the most dominating religious factor over the Koch. They celebrate a good number of religious festivals with feast, music, dance etc. Among these festivals, most are related with hunting and agricultural activities. However, now-a-days, the rites and festivals are not celebrated by the Kochs in original form due to poverty and other factors.

Now-a-days, the Kochs have lost many of their traditional ethnic characteristics. They have given up their traditional way of life. They have changed their traditional housing pattern, dress, food habit, dialect and the most important are their ethnic thinking morals, values etc. Here are some incidents that have formalized their way of life.

The traditional dress of the Koch has been changed now. Once, the women were used to wear shari over the knee of the feet. They did not use blouse or petticoat with shari. The woman wore light color and simple shari. But now they are dressing themselves as neighboring Bengali women. They are interested in varieties of printed shari and blouse. Change is also observed in the male Koch dresses. About 50/60 years ago, male Kochs preferred to use lengti which is now quite obsolete among the Kochs. After that the males would wear dhuti and gamcha. But now, lungi, shirt, trousers etc are widely used. Once they did not use shoes. But now there is a trend of using shoes or sandals. They used of gold or silver was very popular among the Kochs. But now they use ornaments made of glass, plastic and imitations.

They would use earthen and brass utensils in the earlier days. But now-a-days, they use aluminum and plastic utensils. In some houses, it is observed that they use glass and still made utensils. Now they do not use brass utensil because it is very expensive now.

Once, the Kochs were omnivorous; they used to eat everything. Rice and boiled vegetable are their main food. Now, there is a significant change in their attitudes toward the consumption of drinks. Homemade *haria* or wine is quite common drink among them. Comparatively the younger generations drink less compared to older people.

The family is the fundamental unit of the social organization in the Koch ethnic community. Though the nuclear family is predominant among them, extended and joint families are also found. Practice of joint family is their tradition. But now they prefer to practice nuclear family. Kochs are patrilineal and patriarchal; the husband is the head of the household and decision maker. Wife's role in the family and her freedom to take decision are also very significant and recognized.

Marriage is a very important event of social life among the Kochs. Parallel and cross cousin marriage are strictly forbidden. They are patrilineal and they are divided into several clans and they are the exogamous. In fact the converted Christian Kochs can make affinal relationship outside their community, but there is a condition that the other community must be Christian from where they make their affinal relationships. However, among the Christian Kochs divorce is possible. They strictly maintain

monogamy but their society also permits widow and widower marriage. But traditional Kochs practice divorce and allow divorce.

Kinship ties, affinal and consanguinal relationships are quite strong in the Koch society. Avoidance and joking relationship are practiced in their society. Regarding property inheritance, they follow their customary laws. Only the sons are the socially approved legal heir of all material property. The converted Christian Koch women are allowed the same right to inherit the property.

The economic life of Kochs has also been changed now. In the past, their main occupation was forest based agriculture. But now the Koch people are engaged in a variety of professions such as government service, daily labor, carpenter, rickshaw puller, garments labor, business etc. So their traditional modes of economic activities have been changed to a great extent.

Since the introduction of new agricultural tools, they are under pressure to adjust themselves with the new technology. Though they have not succeeded yet they know the names and uses of the agricultural machines. Now they use the chemical fertilizers in their productive purpose.

Due to socio-economic changes and the impact of national political system, the functions of the traditional political structure of the Kochs are now changed. In the past, the moral was secular head of the village, performing different religious rituals, socio-cultural functions etc. Traditionally the Kochs judicial systems are based on their political system and punishment is given according to their customary law. Presently the village affairs are largely controlled and regulated by the local union council.

Like all other ethnic groups, the Kochs believe in various impersonal supernatural forces which control the density of human life. Traditionally, the Kochs are animist in their socio-economic context. Though the traditional Kochs practice their community's ritual, they also perform various Hindu pujas and festivals. But converted Christian Kochs celebrate the Christian rituals now.

In the past, they used to go to their medicine man for various diseases. But now they go to the medicine man only for snake bite, abscess and for some female diseases. For fever, cholera, skin disease, measles, headache, stomach pain they go to the doctor.

The life cycle of the Koch ethnic community beginning from birth to death are connected with a number of rituals. They believe that birth, death and all activities during this period are influenced by supernatural power. Traditionally they used to burn the deceased person but now, due to high cost of wood, they bury it in jungles.

One of the positive changes that have been noticed in the area is that huge numbers of children are going to schools. For a long period, they were deprived of education due to financial hardship. The elder people are also attending in the adult education centers.

The impact of urbanization, industrialization, modernization and globalization on the ethnic group of Koch has changed their traditional characteristics. The Kochs usually maintain their society by some institutions, rules and regulations very strictly. But their previous traditional social life has been profoundly changed due to impact of the broader society, particularly due to the influence of Muslims. The impact of Christianity has a great influence among them. Their rules and regulations have been relaxed now.

It is already noted that though the Kochs have been living in the Kaligonj village under Gazipur district for hundreds of years; yet their rights over the land and their occupation have not been properly established. This has been partly due to the ignorance of the community. They are not properly aware of their right of a personal property and ownership of land. They consider land as a property of the community. As a result, in most of the cases, they don't possess necessary personal and official documents of their lands. They have very little knowledge about land laws, land dealing procedures, payment of land tax etc. Consequently, the Muslims are taking this advantage of the situation. They play varieties of tricks and techniques to grab landed properties of the indigenous people. As a result, landed properties have become an alarming problem and their existence has been threatened.

As the indigenous people like the Kochs are losing their ownership of land more and more and are becoming landless agricultural workers in others fields. Thus they are becoming subjects to more exploitation. They are being denied of proper wages. Women are paid lesser amount. As they are ignorant of labor laws, and hence they are sometimes subjected to work for 10-12 hours a day. They are not paid the amount, which was promised to be given by their employers due to their weak social position, they cannot seek any justice. In the labor market, the indigenous people are more exploited by the affluent employers. Thi deprivation of these people is related to their problem associated with the ownership of land.

The social condition of the Kochs has become an obstacle to their developments. Lack of education and addiction in wine and drugs of both men and women of the community have been major problem of their lagging behind. There is no long term development program of either government or non government agencies for the systematic development of the condition of the Kochs. As a result, Kochs are neglected and kept outside of the development efforts.

Koch is an ethnic community of Bangladesh with distinct characteristics of their own. But they are very much neglected. It is our duty to look after them and bring them at per with the main stream of the wider society.

- Kochs as well as other communities of the indigenous people of Bangladesh are losing ownership of their lands. This is the prime cause of their backwardness. This should be stopped at once by any means. Kochs should be given permanent possession of their land, they have owned traditionally. This can be done through the implementation of 'The UN draft Universal Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous peoples 1993' in which ethnic and indigenous inhabitants of a locality are protected by law to have permanent right over their land which prohibits acquisition of their land and any other kind of intrusion into their area.
- Kochs should be provided with adequate legal support from agencies like Non-Government Organization and Human Rights Organization. Minority Rights Activists and other social organization so that they can fight against

grabbing of land by the powerful interest groups. Kochs should also organize their own association and groups to raise their voice. This should be immediately geared up and public opinion also should be created in support of the rights of the indigenous people.

- The education system of the Kochs and other indigenous communities should be planned in such a way that they become aware of their situation and can contribute to change it. The Koch colloquial language is now being obsolete gradually. The medium of instruction in Koch school should be of their own language. It will help them learn knowledge easily and preserve their language.
- Poverty among the Koch community is in a very acute form. Human Resource Development is one of the most important aspects of poverty alleviation. It means a combined project for the community development of the Kochs which include education, health, self employment and other development programs. The Kochs should be considered as valuable human resource and as such proper developmental program for them should be initiated forth with.
- Drug addiction is an acute problem of their society. Campaign against the evil effect of drug may be initiated without further delay.
- All the characteristics of Koch community, their life style, food habit, religion, arts, rituals and music should be preserved and protected. They may be given equal opportunity so that they can ameliorate their lot. Constitutional protection can be provided so that their rights are guaranteed and they can preserve their culture and religion according to their sweet will.
- Organizations of the ethnic and indigenous communities should be strengthened and made more active so that they can place their demands before the policy makers and administrators who are entrusted with the task of implementation of their demands.

Though Bangladesh is inhabited by majority of the Bangalees and yet it is a land of diverse ethnic and tribal communities. These communities have added color and

flavor with our landscape and enriched our culture. They are an added wealth to us. But most of the people are ignorant about this. Much work should be done in this regard. Bangladeshis should be made aware that this is a country of many races, tribes and diverse cultures through publicity. The people should share the pleasure and pains of these indigenous communities. For the implementation of their developmental programmes, anthropologists can play a vital role. They can reveal the problems, prospects, and priorities of implementation with their micro level in-depth research in these communities. So, more and more ethnographic study should be done by the anthropologists for the development of the lot of ethnic groups.

We have already lost a considerable time to identify their burning problems. This is the period of time to go ahead with realistic plan for the preservation ethnic cultures including the Kochs. Otherwise, we will lose our valuable and most colorful communities from our country for which we may be proud of.

9.2 Conclusion

Bangladesh is a land of diversified and colorful cultures of a good number of ethnic communities. Preservation of ethnic cultures is of paramount necessity of the time. Because, the century old cultural heritage of Bangladesh has been threatened due to number of reasons including globalizing forces. Preservation and protection of ethnic cultures is a natural duty; since a nation can claim its superiority and maintain integrity by the preservation of ethnic cultures on the one hand and can uphold the pride and prestige of the nation by its continuous enrichment and inculcation on the other. But the preservation of ethnic culture is not an easy task; it is possible only when a country's people, politicians and government work together with a view to preserving its ethnic cultures and maintaining conducive political environment in the country. Because healthy socio-cultural relation among the people of different religions, strata and ethnic groups is of prime necessity for the preservation and inculcation of diversified culture for a nation. Fortunately, Bangladeshi people are very broad cultural minded whose different ethnic groups and peoples of different religious faiths have been living side by side from time immemorial without interfering cultures of one another. It is a country of peaceful co-existence of different religious faiths and heterogeneous cultures. Therefore, it can be confidently said that

the Kochs can preserve their own culture and also share Bangladeshi culture by sustaining and reinforcing each others culture in the days to come. The role of Bangladesh government in this regard should be constitutional protection and non interference in the cultural arena of the ethnic people including the Kochs. Further more, the role of the government should be like the guardian and custodian of ethnic cultures; it should extend its magnanimity so that the ethnic communities including the Kochs may come at par with the mainstream of larger society of Bangladesh.

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Appendix -1

Tribal People, Areas, and their Numerical Strength in Bangladesh

Sl	Tribal Identity	Places they are found	Numerical strength	Remark
1	Chakma	Ctg. Hill Tracts, Cox's Bazar, Ctg	300,000	Widely known and most influential tribe in Bangladesh. Govt. estimate is 239,419 (1991).
2	Tripura including Raing	Khagrachari, Bandarban, Rangamati, Ctg, Sylhet, comilla, Chandpur	85,000	Govt. estimate is 61,129 (1991).
3	Marma	CHT, Cox's Bazar	170,000	Govt. estimate is 142,334 (1991).
4	Bon	Bandarban	8,000	Govt. estimate is 6,978 (1991).
5	Usai	CHT	7,292	Govt. estimate is 5,232 (1991).
6	Chak	Bandarban	2,196	Govt. estimate is 2000 (1991)
7	Khumi	Bandarban	2,000	Govt. estimate is 1,241 (1991).
8	Kheang	Rangamati, Bandarban	5,000	Govt. estimate is 1950 (1991).
9	Lusai	Rangamati, Bandarban	1,000	Govt. estimate is 662 (1991).
10	Mro	Rangamati, Bandarban	30,000	Govt. estimate is 22,041 (1991).
11	Pangkho	Rangamati, Bandarban	3,604	Govt. estimate is 3,227 (1991).
12	Tanchangya	Rangamati, Bandarban	20,000	Claim to be real Chakma.
13	Rakhain	Patuakhali, Barguna, Cox's Bazar, Bandordan	35,000	They claim their numerical strength to be 150,000.
14	Garo	Greater Mymensingh, greater Sylhet	100,000	Some claim their number to be not less than 120,000. Within the last few years there has been a big influx of Garos in Dhaka city-one survey puts it to 3,000.
15	Santal	Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Bogra, Daibandha, Thakurgaon, Panchagar, Natore, Sylhet Tea Garden	165,000	Santal is the most influential tribe in North-western in Bangladesh. Some estimate their number to be 200,000.
16	Oraon	Greater Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Pabna, Sirajgonj, Mymensingh, Rangpur, Sylhet Tea Garden	7,500	Some feel Oraon population in Bangladesh is 120,000.

17	Hajong	Greater Mymensingh, Sunamgonj of Sylhet	9,500	
18	Banai	Greater Mumensingh	2,000	
19	Monipuri including Vishnupriya	Greater Sylhet and Dhaka	45,000	Most advanced among the tribals. They do not want to be called aboriginal.
20	Khasia and Jaintia	Greater Sylhet	26,500	Jaintias are Bangali oriented.
21	Munda/Mundaria	Greater Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Bogra, and Kushtia	25,000	
22	Paharia	Greater Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Bogra, Pabna, Kushtia	10,916	
23	Dalu	Greater Mymensingh	2,000	
24	Mahatto (Kurmi)	Dinajpur, Sirajgonj, Pabna, Bogra, Joypurhat and Rajshahi	65,000	
25	Mahali	Greater Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Bogra	15,000	
26	Singh	Greater Pabna	30,000	This is a distinct tribe by the name of Singh. Singhs in Greater Dinajpur consider themselves as Bangalis
27	Boshak	Greater Pabna	15,000	
28	Sora	Greater Sylhet	1,000	
29	Kharea	Greater Sylhet and Joypurhat	5,000	
30	Khondo	Greater Sylhet	2,000	
31	Gurkha		1,000	
32	Assam		2,000	
33	Karmakar	Greater Dinajpur	60,000	
34	Pahan	Greater Rajshahi		
35	Rajoor			
36	Mikhir			
37	Lahar	Greater Rajshahi and		
38	Turi	Greater Bogra		
39	Bhuimali	Greater Rajshahi and		
40	Bhoomij	Dinajpur		
41	Bhuiya	Greater Rajshahi		
42	Muriar	Greater Rajshahi		
43	Ramdas	Greater Rajshahi		
44	Ker	Greater Rajshahi	Their total number is estimate to more than 65 thousand	Most of those tribes were found in survey of Greater Rajshahi. They may be found in other districts. Their total number may be 65 thousand.
45	Hari	Greater Rajshahi		
46	Kharia	Greater Rajshahi		
47	Teli	Greater Rajshahi		
48	Lora	Greater Rajshahi		
49	Ruthia	Greater Rajshahi		
50	Musor	Greater Rajshahi and Dinajpur		
51	Rai	Greater Rajshahi and Dinajpur		
52	Pathro	Greater Sylhet		
53	Bedia	Sirajgonj		
54	Bakti	Sirajgonj		

55	Bagdi	Kushtia and Natore		
56	Kole	Rajshahi		
57	Buna	Rajshahi		
58	Pal	Rajshahi		
59	Rajbanshi, Koch, Polio, Barman, Khatria, Mandai, Hodi	Greater Mymensingh, Gazipur, Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Tangail, Dhaka, Faridpur, Khulna, Jessore, Kushtia, Bogra	16,00,000	Presently they consider themselves as Bangali, Hindus. Some have become Muslims.
60	Malo	Greater Rangpur, Dinajpur, Bogra, Rajshahi, Kushtia, Jessore, Khulna, Faridpur and Dhaka	270,000	Although numerous and spread out in different, the Malos are not as influential and organized. It is also not clear whether all consider themselves as tribals.
61	Barua Mixed Race, Bengali etc.		150,000	
62	Biharis		250,000	
63	Bedej (Gypsies with different names)		400,000	
64	Telagu		35,000	
65	Uria	Sirajgonj, Natore, Tea Garden	10,000	

Source: Bangladesh Statistical Bureau 1994

Household Census of Thanerbied Village

Name of the para.....

Date.....

Education Level of the Household Members								Occupational Condition of the Household				No. of Animal Husbandry					NGOs members			
Primary		Secondary and Higher Secondary		Degree & University		Can not read or write														
Boy	Girl	Male	Female	Male	Female	5-15 Y		16-up		Cultivators	Day-labor	Business men	Others	Cow	Pig	Goat	Hen/Ducks	Others	M	F
						M	F	M	F											

PHOTOS



An old Koch man



An old Koch woman



A Koch woman



Koch children in a family dining place



Three generation of a Koch family



Koch traditional house



Koch children in the classroom



Researcher with the key informant



A traditional Koch House



A Koch girl cooking food



Kitchen of a Koch family



Household utensils



A Koch tailor



A Koch carpenter



The pig



Koch traditional basket



A Koch Shiva temple



The God Shiva



A moment of cultural program



A Koch woman with her child



The God Mohadev



Happy Chritmas day