

CHAPTER V

CHANGING ECONOMIC LIFE OF RAJA MAYONG :-

Agriculture is the backbone of the economy of Assam. Approximately 69% percent of the total population of the state is engaged in agriculture and allied activities as per 1991 census. The village Raja-Mayong is becoming progressively a part of wider economy.¹ The economy of the village is based primarily upon agriculture, and hence the relations of production consist essentially of relation between categories of persons, contributing in different ways to the process of agriculture. Such categories include landowners, tenants and agricultural labourers. These, together with their interrelations, constitute the agrarian class structure of the village.

The economic activities of Raja-Mayong also consisted of agriculture, fishing, handicrafts, trading, small industry, (rice-mill) etc. Earlier the occupational caste, by and large followed their traditional avocations along with other permissible occupations from which the largest income could be derived. They were the potters, blacksmiths, fishermen, weavers, traders, cobblers, etc. In Assam the traders, peddlers and merchants were called banik, mudai, bepari, saud, sajai, sadagar, pohari, etc.

Traditionally, Raja-Mayong was a trading Centre. It was related to other Trading Centres like Sonapur, Beltola, Guwahati, Rani,

Palasbari, Barduar, Odalguri, Hajo, Goalpara, Rangamati, Jogighopa, Hadirachowki, etc. for both internal and external trade and commerce. The Articles of trade in the Raja-Mayong *haat*(market) were salt, blankets, yak tail, kasturi, sandal wood, cotton, dry fish, oil, rice, milk, honey, ghee, pulses, meat, black pepper, areca nut, betel leaves, cows, ivory, silk etc.²

Besides these, the boat was also necessary for the nadial or kaibarta, the class of people engaged in fishing activities. Naokata, Raja-Mayong Hiloikhunda and Ajarbari respectively in the kingdoms of Dandua, Mayong and Tetelia were famous centres of Boat-Making.³

Since the past, people from outside as far as from Darrang carried on economic transactions with the Raja-Mayong village. The Buddhist and Yogi pilgrims earlier came in groups with a variety of merchandise for sale in and near of Raja-Mayong. They also came to Raja-Mayong to learn magic. They also traded various Shields made of hide of the Buffalo and Rhinoceros, which were used mainly in warfare. They are found even today in almost all the area of Mayong. The main centre of shield manufacturing was Barukata, Chanaka, Kamarpur in the Raja-Mayong region.⁴

The cult of Manasha is prevalent in the area since the distant past. There is tendency of the people of the locality to link the place to the happenings in the folk epic named *Manasha Kavya*, which delineates the story of the Serpent goddess Manasha. According to the legend prevalent in the area Chando Sadagar, the father of Lakhindar came to Mayong by boat for the purpose of business. He anchored his boat at “Garaghat” near of the east-side of the Manaha Bridge. His boat suddenly sunk down at the *ghat*(port). So, the ghat is named ‘Garaghat’.

He, then, started the worship of the goddess “Manasha” and since then, the village near that particular *ghat* was known as Manasha, which later on changed to Manaha both in spelling and in pronunciation.⁵

It is also believed that gold was extracted from the sand of the river in two places namely Sonaipar and Sontoli, near Raja-Mayong. Both the names of the places are derived from *son*, which means gold.⁶

Milk, was abundant in Raja-Mayong as buffalos were reared in many places of the locality such as, Sontoli, Garmari, Tikhabori, Roumari, Manaha, Barhampur, Kacharigaon, Bilimari, Sildubi, Kamarpur, Garubandha, Lonmati, Kalsila, Hatimuria, Hariabari, Kalbari, etc. These buffalo farms produced plenty of the milk. Though buffalo farming has dwindled over the years people still remember the bounty quite nostalgically.⁷

The Katani caste people of Raja-Mayong were famous for the production of ‘Muga’ or silk. It is said that Raja-Mayong was traditionally famous for the production silk. Silk was produced at Hatimuria also. But this practice is no longer prevalent for various reasons but the people of the Katani caste are still there, who have undergone occupational change.⁸

Traditionally Raja-Mayong was famous for khar i.e. alkali which was produced from cinders of various things such as the plantain tree, banana peels, reed plants, etc. As salt was scarce, people used it as a substitute for salt and was produced for sale in the market.

Wild life was abundant in the area in the past particularly during the British regime. Hunters of the area killed wild pigs, deer, tortoise

etc. and sold its meat. They also sold buffalo hide, yak tails, etc. The story runs that people from far off places came to Raja-Mayong to buy these goods and the buyers included some British officers also.⁹

In addition to the traditional occupations, many new ones have merged in recent years. Some of these occupations take individuals outside the ambit of the villages and are engaged in teaching and technical occupations in towns such as Morigaon and Jagiroad. The expansion of new occupations and certain changes in the relations between pre-existing ones perhaps make it necessary to speak of a traditional and a modern sector in the economy of village.

The economic structure of Raja-Mayong does not have an autonomous existence, but is related to the economy of the wider region. The village is linked by complex distributive mechanisms to neighbouring market. Not all agricultural product of the area Mayong is consumed locally. On the other hand, many of the things which are consumed in the village are acquired from outside.

The economic life of Raja-Mayong is a checkered one. The people of Raja-Mayong have to suffer a lot every year as a result of the unpredictable flood waters. The agrarian economy of the area is very badly affected by such natural calamities every year and the people have to cope with this situation almost every year. Hardly has the farmer of the locality has harvested to his satisfaction. Untill recently the road communication to the locality from other neighbouring places were also cut off for almost three months every year. The major economic activities of Raja-Mayong village are agriculture, trade and business, holding of jobs in Government Offices and other establishments,

fishing, daily wage earning and miscellaneous occupations like honey collecting, mat making, carpentry etc.

“The 2001 census classified the workers in to seven major categories, e.g. (1) Main workers, (2) Marginal workers (3) Non workers (4)Cultivator, (5) Agricultural labourer, (6) Household - industry and (7) other workers which includes all others, according to the census, consists of all employees in offices, schools, factories and in other organizations, labourers in different works, those engaged in trade and business and in fishing, etc. All types of economic activities not covered by the first three, fall under this residual category.¹⁰

In the survey conducted in the village in 2006, this residual category has been sub-divided into six different specific groups in the context of the village, viz. Cultivators, Trader and businessmen, service holders in offices and establishments, daily wage earners, fishing and miscellaneous works.

The Boro paddy harvested in the month of April is named after the Boros who first cultivated them. Since the harvesting is completed before the onslaught of the floods, this variety of paddy has gained popularity in the flood-ravaged region. The shift from traditional crops to this variety of crops has brought a radical change in the agrarian scenario not only in the Mayong area but in the whole of Assam. The traditional cropping has been almost given up in Mayong area from the sixties of the last century, as in most cases it yielded a poor harvest or no harvest at all because of the floods.

In the context of Agricultural development a radical change took place. Boro paddy replaced “Ahu” or Bao paddy, which was cultivated in January, February. Ahu paddy and Bao paddy were completely rooted

out in area of Raja-Mayong. Generally, Ahu and Bao were not able to fulfill the demand for rice of the locality. Boro paddy in Raja-Mayong is cultivated in low-land before mid January (before Magh Bihu) in high land after Magh Bihu from the fourth week of January to the end of February.

The traditional summer crops were Jageelybur, Tepibur, Madhabshali, and Khalihar bur, and the like varieties of paddy which were not high yielding. The people switched over to winter paddy crops because of the floods around 1962-64. But production was not satisfactory till the year 1975. In the year 1975 the people of the locality switched over to the cultivation of the various high yielding varieties of paddy which could be harvested just in the beginning of the summer.

Agriculture is the prime occupation of the Raja-Mayong village on which land plays the most dominant role. The Circle office provided a machine for irrigation to the field of the cultivators of Raja-Mayong. The government also provided a pumpset at Garanga. Rabi crops such as mustard were quite popular as a cash crop. The people who were earlier totally dependent on the weather for their cultivation started depending upon their own mode of irrigation, mostly from tube wells, for agriculture. Agricultural yields also increased manifold. This brought a drastic change to the economy of the farmers. From a condition of penury and starvation, they rose to a position of at least living from hand to mouth.

The shift from traditional cropping to modern croppings can be regarded as radical change in the field of agriculture in the whole of Mayong. Traditional paddy yielded only 3.2 to 4 quintals of paddy while the new varieties yielded more than 10 quintals of paddy. Hence, the

threefold increase in production led to a threefold increase in per capita income of at least the agriculturists of Mayong.

The cultivators, the sharecroppers, agricultural labourers and workers in household industry are separately identified. Each household in the village was taken as constituting the economic unit although its individual members may have different economic pursuits. The respondent's occupation of the family, in all cases, was taken as the primary occupation of the household for the respective classification.¹¹

Table 1 shows the caste-wise distribution of the families in different economic pursuits in the village. In accordance with the classifications of the table it appears that 73.63%, i.e. 305 households out of 413 have agricultural occupations. Out of these 305 families 178 families are cultivators, 37 families are sharecroppers and 90 families are that of Agricultural labourers. But in reality, 96.36%, i.e. 398 families are engaged in cultivation as primary or subsidiary occupation. The rest 3.63% i.e. 15 families are outsiders who deal in Raja-Mayong and hold services in the village. On the basis of Agricultural produce and trading importance, the district administration is willing to categorize Raja-Mayong into a town but some villagers are not interested in giving the status of a town to Raja-Mayong.

On the basis of the classification of the different economic divisions (See Table 1) each of them is discussed below with a projection to their caste-wise position.

Cultivators:-

Cultivation is the main occupation in Raja-Mayong village. 51%, i.e. 178 families are main cultivators, 21.79%, i.e. 90 families are agricultural labourers and 8.95%, i.e. 37 families are sharecroppers.

Table-I
Caste wise categories of the Families of Rajamayong in different occupations

	Bihari	Rabha	Tiwa	Bodo	Ahom	Nepali	Nama shudra	Keot	Nath	Koch	Communities
178	—	—	—	—	2 (66.6%)	9 (47.36%)	2 (8.69%)	—	139 (45.27%)	26 (54.16%)	Cultivation
37	—	—	1 (33.3%)	—	—	2 (10.52%)	9 (39.13%)	—	18 (5.86%)	7 (14.5%)	Share- Croppers
90	—	—	—	—	—	3 (15.78%)	8 (34.78%)	—	79 (25.73%)	—	Agril Labourers
21	—	—	—	—	—	—	3 (13.04%)	—	16 (5.21)	2 (4.16%)	Daily wage earner
61	—	1 (100%)	1 (100%)	2 (66.6%)	1 (33.3%)	3 (15.78%)	—	6 (100%)	35 (11.40%)	12 (25%)	Jobholding
20	2 (100%)	—	—	—	—	2 (10.52%)	1 (4.34%)	—	14 (4.88%)	1 (2.08%)	Trade and Business
4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4 (1.30%)	—	Fishing & Mahalders
1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1 (0.32%)	—	Artisan
1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1 (0.32%)	—	Contractors
413	2	1	1	3	3	19	23	6	307	48	Total

Source : Survey conducted by this Investigator 2006.

The area of the village is 235.76 hectares, out of which 157.59 hectares are arable land cultivable land, 41.23 hectares are utilized for residential purposes and 36.94 hectares are wetlands and government land used for roads, governmental buildings and reserved forests.¹² Before independence, the wetlands or natural swamps were used by the king of Raja-Mayong and the king appointed the Mahalders (the post of thakuriya) of the Hira caste for fishing in the area. At present these swamps or beels or mahals are auctioned by the local unnayan committees.

Land ownership:-

The pattern of land ownership underwent changes as soon as the Assam government had acquired 16 square K.M. land for "Pabitara" wild-life sanctuary in 1987. People did not have clear title to all the land they cultivated in the Pabitara area. 22 families have been deprived of the title to land they had been using for more than 30 years after the land was incorporated in the Pabitara Reserve forest. The size of the arable land has ceased to increase after the declaration of Pabitara as a wildlife sanctuary in 1987. On the other hand, the number of households in Raja-Mayong were 255 in 1991 it increased to 325 households, i.e. 21.30% during 1991-2001 and the number of households at present is 413 i.e. the rate of increase is 21.53% during 2001-2006. A natural trend that is observed is that the amount of land holding has decreased along with the increase in population or vise-versa.¹³

Table II shows the caste-wise distribution of land of the total households of the village in 2006. It appears from the table that 135 families out of 413, i.e. 32.20% possess 1 acre or less of land per family. They can be classed as landless according to the World Agricultural census 1970-71. 52 families, i.e. 12.59% possess lands 1.00 acres. 28

families, i.e. 6.77% below 67 acres, while 38 families, i.e. 9.20% have land below 0.34 acres and 15 families out of 413, i.e. 3.63% have no agricultural land at all.

Table-II

Caste-wise classification of Households (100%) possessing lands of different size groups Size

Caste & Communities	Below 1 acre	1-3 Acre	3-5 Acre	5-7 Acre	7-9 Acre	9-11 Acre	11-20 Acre	Total
Koch	15	13	14	2	3	1	---	48
Nath	89	159	39	14	2	2	2	307
Keot	3	3	---	---	---	---	---	6
Nama shudra	15	5	2	1	---	---	---	23
Nepali	4	15	---	---	---	---	---	19
Ahom	---	2	1	---	---	---	---	3
Bodo	3	---	---	---	---	---	---	3
Tiwa	1	---	---	---	---	---	---	1
Rabha	1	---	---	---	---	---	---	1
Bihari	2	---	---	---	---	---	---	2
	133	197	56	17	5	3	2	413

It is found in the survey that only 349 families out of 413 have shown as having lands for cultivation. Again out of the 349 families 61 families depend on service as the primary occupation, 1 family depends on govt. contract work, 20 families depend on petty business 4 families on fishing and Mahaldari. These families also carry out agriculture as their secondary source of income.

The sizes of land holding of the cultivators are divided into four categories, viz.

(I) Medium and large holding (4.96 acres and above)

(II) Small holdings (between 2.47 and 4.96 acres)

(III) Marginal holdings (between 1.24 acres and 2.47 acres and

(IV) Submarginal holdings (less than 1.24 acres). This classification is based on the world Economic census, 1970-71.¹⁴

Table III

Agricultural land holding families in different holding sizes in Raja-Mayong and monthly income ranges

Primary & subsidiary	Below marginal	Marginal	Small	Large & medium	Total
Cultivation	9	91	59	19	178
Job holding	4	18	21	18	61
Trade & commerce	8	3	5	4	20
Daily wage	20	1	0	0	21
Agri labour	90	0	0	0	90
Sharecropper	3	30	3	1	37
Fishing	1	2	0	1	4
Artisanry	0	1	0	0	1
Contractor	0	0	0	1	1
Total	135	146	88	44	413

Source : Survey conducted by this investigator 2006

Table (III) Shows the distribution of the 349 agricultural land holding families into the above categories with their Primary and subsidiary occupations. Only 178 families, i.e. 43.09% of the total, have shown cultivation as their Primary occupation. They will be called here as the cultivators families. 2 cultivator families have fishing and 1

artisan family has cultivation as subsidiary occupation, 19,59,91 and 9 households, i.e. 10.67%, 33.14%,51.12% and 5.05% of the total surveyed families belong to the Medium and large, Small, Marginal and Sub-Marginal land-holding categories respectively. One of the cultivator families holds the largest acreage with total land of 23.3 acres.

The job-holding households are the second largest in number. They have agriculture as a subsidiary occupation. There are 53 families, out of 61 i.e. 12.83% of the total families. One job-holding family holds the largest acreage of land amounting to 30 acres. It indicates, therefore, that jobholders have no difficulty in carrying on cultivation as their subsidiary occupation, rather have the advantage of the regular supply of financial support for the latter. It is true that a tendency of accumulating more lands is observed among the job-holding families who have cultivation as subsidiary occupation. (see table III)

The families with trade and business are third largest in number, i.e. 20 families, have agriculture, as subsidiary occupation. This is also convenient way to run the cultivation. They can supply the economic support for the latter with the profits they earn in business.

Fourth in the array of the cultivator families are the sharecroppers and agricultural labourers. 37 and 90 families, 8.95% and 21.79% respectively depend on agriculture as their Primary source of occupation. Though they belong to the sub-marginal land holding category, 1 Family of Namashudras and 2 households of Nath caste engaged mostly in sharecropping, possesses 5 acres of own land each. It, therefore, appears that some of the sharecropping families are rich enough. 10 families of daily wage earners also possess sub marginal land holding for their subsidiary occupation. It, therefore, appears in

above analysis that agriculture common to all the categories of people in Raja-Mayong village. (see table II)

A caste-wise distribution of the agricultural land holding families, with cultivation as Primary or subsidiary occupation, in different land-holding categories is given in table II & III.

Table II shows that Koches, Naths, Ahoms have the highest amount of land (97.91%) while the Nepali and Namashudra community have the second highest amount of land(52.17%). The Major two castes Koch and Nath have the larger land holdings for agriculture in Raja-Mayong as the king of Raja-Mayong in early times had provided good lands of cultivation for these subjects. It has been said that the king of Mayong was the protector of agricultural land since 16 century A.D. there is a small population living in govt. quarters who are in govt. service. Though they are included in the population of Raja Mayong village, they do not possess any land in the locality.

Among the larger caste groups in the Middle order, such as the Nath caste has faced with the problems of land shortage for their respective households. Investigation shows that 15 families of Nath caste have no agricultural land though they have a small home stead lands respectively. So, they belong to the category of Agricultural labourer and they also prefer to work in this category in Raja-Mayong. It has been gathered through interview that 15 families are neo-settlers in Raja-Mayong and some of them are separated families from their original household. In the same way, Namashudra families have recently settled by buying land from the original families of Raja-Mayong and majority of them have no land and preferred to work in the categories of sharecroppers and agricultural. labourers.

The category of agricultural occupation shows that 19, 59, 91 and 9 families, i.e. 10.67%, 33.14%, 51.12%, 5.05% families respectively are of medium and large, small, marginal and sub-marginal families. 23 families out of the 91 families having marginal land holding have sufficient agricultural product for their subsistence. All the families belonging to the Sub-Marginal Categories have declared their Agricultural produce as “in sufficient”.(Table III)

The monthly income in terms of produce from the fields and from the secondary occupations of the 146, and 135 cultivator families (68.73% of the 413 families) ranges between Rs. 798/- and Rs. 1799/- and the income of the 132 families, (31.96% of the 413 families) ranges between Rs. 1800/- to Rs. 2301/-. (See table III). Out of the medium and large land holding cultivator families 3 families have an income range between Rs. 1501-2000/-.

Agriculture is the backbone of the economy of the village and as such the principal crops need to be described. The prime crop grown in the village is paddy while mustard, jute and other crops are also cultivated. Two kinds of paddy are grown and cultivated in the village, as mentioned earlier.

Boro

The Boro paddy is the most popular kind in the Raja-Mayong village. It comprises the main economy of cultivators as well as the jobholders. The process for the cultivation of this kind of paddy begins by November. Small well-fenced Nursery beds, called - kathiatali are prepared, generally, near of sallow pumps for convenience of water

supply. The seeds, i.e. the Bidhan, are preserved from the preceding year's high yielding variety of crop in bamboo baskets or in good gunny bag of plastic or jute away from insects and rodents. The seeds are sprouted at home by sprinkling water over them in the basket or gunny bag. When the plot is ready for sowing after watering it sufficiently the sprouted seeds are sown on the Nursery beds. Some amount of Urea is spread over the plots. ¹⁵

The fields are ploughed for 4 to 6 to times for growing the seedlings. The soil must be made sufficiently soft and completely muddy. In order to keep the fields watered they are divided into a number of compartments by small embankments.

The bed or Kathiatali should be low lying land or irrigation provided. The above cited plot for seedlings should be 10 meters in length and 125 c.m. in breath and the distance between the two plots of seedlings is to be 30 centimetres. About 650-1000 grams germinated seeds are to be sown on the nursery beds.

For any disease of seedlings or paddy like Majakhuwa galmiz, charaha, pesticide like Tarjan Pest and Ustard are applied respectively. The Transplantation of the seedlings begins by the early part of January or last part of January in Raja-Mayong and continues until February depending on the private irrigation of shallow pump. ¹⁶

The Boro paddy becomes ready for harvesting by April/May. The bundles of reaped paddy are thrashed in the dry yards of the house. Thrashing is with the help of bullocks as well as by the hand. While thrashing by hand the bundles of paddy are beaten against metal drums. The straw obtained, after thrashing, is preserved as the fodder for

consumption by the cattle of the family and the surplus quantity is sold out, which fetch higher prices in the urban areas. Beside these, Jagiroad paper mill also buys straw for the paper production.

The Boro paddy has a large number of varieties. To name some of these produced in the village are, Ranjit (most popular), Pankaj, Aijong, 516, Basmati, Luit, I.R. 50, 64, Boro 1, Boro 2, Culture 1, etc. Until around the year 2001, Aijong and Pankaj were the most popular high yielding varieties of Boro paddy in Raja-Mayong. At present, new high- yielding varieties of paddy called Ranjit and 516 have become more popular.¹⁷

Boro paddy, though it is highly productive, yet it is costly. One cultivator bears 50 litres of Diesel, 12 kg-urea 28 kg, super phosphate, 4 kg, potash, cost for labour for transplantation, reaping, harvesting etc. amounting to Rs 3500/- per Bigha. Besides this the cultivators have to work very hard in inclement weather and biting cold resulting in hazard to their health.¹⁸

Sali: The sali or the winter crop is the second popular kind in the village. This variety is cultivated by transplantation from the month of July in Raja-Mayong. The process of transplanting the seedling is same as that of the Boro paddy and is done in August/September. Harvesting is done in November and December. Some of the varieties of high yielding varieties of sali paddy which are cultivated in Raja-Mayong are Basmati, 516, Ranjit, Culture-I etc. I.T.T. while traditional varieties namely, Prasad Bhog, Moinagiri, Jaha, Kola Bora and Pakhoi Bora, Boka, Thiosali or Monoharsali, etc are also cultivated in the locality.

The size of the field of the Sali paddy growers vary from 1 bigha to 10 bighas. They use or apply both the traditional plough and modern power tiller. The majority of the cultivators have been doing double cropping. Boro and Sali are grown by the affluent farmers in the same plot of land. As soon as the Boro paddy is harvested the field is ploughed and by late August and early September Sali crop is transplanted. Of course, double cropping, is not so much popular because major proportions of lands are low lying and is not fit for double cropping.

Sharecroppers have full rights to use the land as they liked for Boro paddy but he has to pay at least 2 to 2.4 quintals to the landowners. If the sharecropper has his own shallow pump for cultivation, then he pays four mounds; other wise he has to pay six mounds of paddy.

In Adhi or agreement of equal partnership, the tenants would do the ploughing, and both the tenant and land owner bear the cost of items like seeds, labours, oil, fertilizers, etc. This system of calculation creates some problems between the tenants and owners.¹⁹

The survey shows that 90% cultivators used the traditional plough for paddy production. Every cultivator has his pair of bullocks for cultivation. There are ten power tillers in Raja-Mayong. It is general belief that the plough is essential for the paddy production and it has been used with great sanctity. Moreover the poor farmers cannot avail the service of power tillers and have to depend solely on their bullocks.

The women of the royal families and the job holding families are not seen working in the fields. But in case of the other families women and children also are associated with the activities of the cultivation.

Sometimes old women of the families are also engaged in the field. Every housewife and children of such families of Raja-Mayong has to help in the field. They accept it as their moral duty failing which they have to starve. Agricultural labourers from other places are also engaged on payment at times. Some of the people of Raja-Mayong engage agricultural labourers from the neighbouring Gasbari Char either on daily wage basis or on the condition of sharecropping.

The use of the *dhenki*, i.e. the pestle and the mortar for milling the paddy was quite common until recently. Now a days the rice mills have almost totally ousted the *dhenki* as a means for milling paddy. However, it is used only for making *pithaguri* i.e. powdered rice and pounding of spices occasionally.²⁰

“The work of transplantation and reaping are traditionally the functions of the women folk in Assam as well as in Raja-Mayong also. As a result, the terms “Rowani”, i.e. planter and the “Dawani” i.e. the reaper are essentially feminine terms. The skill of the women in both the works is an admired quality of women in the village.”²¹

In paddy cultivation both the male and female members of the household are required to undertake lots of strain at the time of ploughing and transplantation in the fields. The male members take out their ploughing implements and bullocks to the fields as early as 5 a.m. and plough the fields till 10 to 11 a.m. Food for the ploughman is carried to the fields by other members of the family by the mid morning. Women also carry the food to the field. Carrying food to the field has become a custom among the people of Raja-Mayong.

The works of reaping is also done by the women while the men do the carrying of bundles of grains to their houses. The women of Raja-Mayong form a unit of reapers for reaping in both Boro and Sali season. They charge an amount of Rs. 250 per bigha and distribute the amount thus collected among them.

The work of the women in the fields of Raja-Mayong begins from the very morning in the parts of the women except the house wife and the cooking women have generally attain in the fields as the feed to free in household work.²²

Chemical fertilizers:-

The village cultivators of Raja-Mayong are medium users of chemical fertilizer. There are two reasons for this. One of the reasons is that every flood leaves behind a natural layer of manure over the fields every year. Hence there is hardly any need for additional manure in the fields. Another reason is the belief of most of the farmers that application of chemical manure is harmful for the land. "In Assam, only 2 k.g. of chemical fertilizer is used per hectare of land compared to 22.74 k.g. per hectare in Andhra Pradesh, 37.46 k.g. per hectare in Tamil Nadu and 40.31 k.g. per hectare in the Punjab."²³ The cultivators of Raja-Mayong use cow dung composed natural manure in mustard, jute and in vegetables but in regards of the paddy; they prefer to use chemical fertilizer both in Boro and Sali. Of course, more chemical fertilizer is applied in Boro than the Sali paddy. Some cultivators do not use chemical fertilizer in Sali paddy cultivation.

The cultivators, who engage agricultural labourers from out side of the village, are seen to be using more chemical fertilizers than the native labourers of the village. The most common chemical fertilizers,

used by the villagers are Urea, Super Phosphate, D.A.P. and Muriet of Potash.

Pesticide :-

The villagers have a tendency to adopt pest control measures since they are generally aware of the fear of the damage to their crops by pests against which they express helplessness. They use pesticide as and when necessary, under the guidance of the Extension Officer of the Mayong development block. Pesticides like, Macheti, Bavisting, Thaiudin, Malathion, Durshban, Sumathian are some of the pesticide used by the cultivators.²⁴

Irrigation :-

The irrigation facilities are not adequate to the satisfaction of the cultivators. They have to spend a lot of money in irrigating the fields as it is done mostly by shallow pumps. The people of Raja-Mayong have their arable land outside the village near Garanga also. In this field the source of water for pumping to the fields is drawn from the Garanga swamp. In case of the other fields the source of water for pumping is ground water. The underground water is mostly drawn by diesel pumps while the water from the swamp is drawn by electric pumps. This system of irrigation began in the late seventies for cultivation of mustard though now a days it is used mostly for cultivation of paddy.²⁵

There are 87 pumps for irrigation in Raja-Mayong village. Apart from irrigating their own fields the owners of the pumps irrigate the field of the ones who do not have pumps. They charge remuneration for this in the form of 80 kg of paddy per bigha. But the system of irrigation is quite costly. And the sharecroppers and marginal farmers

can hardly afford it. The area is in need of a cheaper irrigation system and help from the government only can make it possible.²⁶

“The state of Assam falls in two opposite phenomena of heavy rain fall in the Rainy Season and draught in the winter. As a result both flood control measures and irrigation means have to be taken to deal with the situation as might be considered necessary.” but the fact is that the sky based water of Rains is not sufficient for high yielding kinds of the fields of the Agriculture. So, the system of irrigation is inevitable for high yielding paddy product.²⁷

During the last 10 years, Raja-Mayong paddy fields were affected by three major floods due to the onrush of the flood waters of the river Brahmaputra entering through rivers Kapili and Pakaria. Yet the people of Raja-Mayong do not face crisis of rice because, they harvest the Boro crops before the floods. Sometimes, floods occur before time and damage the crops before harvesting. As such winter cropping and irrigation is the only solution for people of Raja-Mayong.

Mastard:-

Mastard is cultivated in high and plain area by only four villagers in an area of around 30 bighas. Paddy cannot be grown in the area selected for mustard cultivation. They grow mustard as a cash crop and its cultivation has been recorded as second popular crop in the village Panchayat area.

Mustard seeds are shown in the month of October and November and plants become mature and harvested in January. “Mowa”, insect is the main enemy of mustard. Every year, this insect disturbs the cultivators. So, they spray insecticides such as Malathian, Rogor,

Darsban and Dimecron over the plants. Presently, manure, is applied in low quantities in mustard field also.

The important high yielding seeds of mustard are T.M. 2, T.M. 4 and Baruna. Of course, local seeds are also shown in the field. The amount of seed required per bigha is 1.3 to 1.5 k.g. Irrigation in mustard cultivation is not common. Only one villager has started irrigation in the field of mustard cultivation and reaped a good harvest. This may be a positive example for the rest of the cultivators also.²⁸

Jute:-

Jute is cultivated in the low lying and plain area where paddy cultivation is not possible. Jute requires considerable amount of labour and time. In fact, it was introduced in Assam as a commercial cash crop in the early part of the current century and grown in plenty in the District of Morigaon specially in Bhuragaon, Gerua, Japari and Dongapar Boralimari. It is known as “Golden fibre” because of its money value and demand in the international market.²⁹ Traditionally, Jute was popular but at present, after the introduction of Boro paddy cultivation of jute has decreased. Yet, three villagers cultivate Jute for their domestic needs only.

Bamboo:-

Another important plant Bamboo plays a significant role in domestic economic life of Raja-Mayong. Bamboo is planted in almost every household of the locality. There are three villagers in Raja-Mayong who have taken up commercial production of bamboo. Two of the families earn at least Rs. 4100.00 per year per family and one family has earns Rs. 1500. per year. Bamboo is used also as fire wood. The bamboo grown in the village is not used as firewood. People collect

bamboo for using as firewood and other day to day use from the nearby hills.

The people of Raja-Mayong mostly use firewood as their domestic fuel. The demand for this quantum of firewood is met by trees grown in the village to some extent and for the rest of the requirements they have to depend on the nearby hills. Of course some of the families have switched over to LPG as a fuel for domestic use. These families also use fire wood for various works other than cooking. The felling of trees for use as firewood is strictly prohibited in the hills also but the forest officials permit bringing of dead trees on special occasions such as wedding, funeral, etc.³⁰

Vegetable cultivation :-

Vegetable cultivation plays an important role in the economic life of Raja-Mayong. Whenever floods damage the Sali paddy, the villagers of Raja-Mayong choose to cultivate vegetables as alternative crop. Of course some villagers are regular producers of vegetables. Five villagers are known for vegetable cultivation in Raja-Mayong. One of them, namely Praphulla Deka, deserves special mention for his expertise in growing vegetables. These growers cultivate vegetables on a commercial basis in the winter. Of course vegetables are grown all the year round in the kitchen gardens for domestic consumption as well as for sale. The commercial growers of vegetable cultivate it in an area of 14 bighas.

Pesticides for the protection of the plants are essential against the insects and disease. The villagers of Raja-Mayong cultivate vegetables in scientific method. The vegetable growers get a good marketing facility as buyers from various places come to buy the village products

from the village market. Vegetables from Mayong are sent to different markets of the state as well as the markets of the neighbouring states, particularly the markets of Meghalaya. It seems that the growers get a reasonable price for their products. The principal vegetables grown in the locality are cabbages, cauliflowers, knolkhols, carrots, radishes, tomatoes, potatoes, beans, papayas, cucumbers, etc.

Horticulture, poultry farming, pisciculture and animal husbandry also adds to the economic wellbeing of the people of Raja-Mayong. Pisciculture has been taken up by some of the villagers on commercial basis also. One Gopal Nath has made considerable progress through pisciculture. The people earn a considerable amount from selling bananas, betel nuts, goats, eggs and poultry.³¹

Agricultural Implements:-

The farmers of Raja-Mayong use simple and primitive implements in their fields alongside modern equipments like the power tiller and the pumpsets.. The main implements used by them are the wooden plough (nangal), the harrow (moi), the hoes (kodal), and the sickles (kanchi). All these items are obtained within village. Prior to 1980, the farmers of Raja-Mayong used the above traditional implements. From the year of 1980 to 1990, the people with large land holdings used the modern implements in the agricultural field. That decade could be referred to as the decade of change to modern implements and ways of agriculture. In the last decade of the twentieth century the farmers of the area got organised and formed organisations called the Pathar Parichalana Samiti i.e. committees for looking after the fields. The use of machanisation in agriculture with the help of power tillers and irrigation with pump sets were looked after by these committees. The distribution of irrigation water, rates of tilling by

power tillers, rates of wages of the agricultural labourers, etc are some of the issues which are taken care of by these committees. Some self help groups also have swung into action for the development in the field of agriculture and the committee decides the quantum of their involvement also. The self help groups are instrumental in uniting all the farmers of Mayong under an organisation called the Mayong Krishak Club and agriculture has been increased to a great extent under this organisation.³²

Table-IV

Caste-wise classification of the skilled and unskilled daily wage earning families
As in January-2006

Caste	Unskilled	Skilled					Total
		Weaving	Carpentry	Tailoring	Artisanry	Barbars	
Koch	-----	1	---	---	---	---	1
Nath	5	2	5	1	2	-----	15
Nama-shudra	3	---	---	---	---	---	3
Bihari	---	---	---	---	---	2	2
Total	8	3	5	1	2	2	21

Daily wage earner:-

There are a lot of daily wage earners in the village. They range from agricultural labourers to craftsmen and artisans. Some of the people are engaged in gainful employment such as Govt. service or

other business like grocery, tea stalls, hiring of vehicles, etc. These people also have their own land where they cultivate with the help of hired labourers. Apart from these there are weavers, carpenters, masons, bamboo and cane workers and labourers engaged in other petty works such as raising a fence, digging a pond, etc. There are 21 daily wage earners in the village. Out of them thirteen are skilled labourers engaged in carpentry, weaving and handicrafts. The rest of the 8 labourers are unskilled. The skilled labourers earn a wage of Rs. 100/- to Rs 150/-. The unskilled labourers however have to be satisfied with a paltry sum of sixty rupees per day.

Interviews were carried out of the daily wage earners trade wise. During interviews, the carpenters said that they earned their livelihood from their trade. However, it was also revealed that they possessed some amount of arable land also. They cultivated rice in their plots of land. The size of their plots were however not very big. Every carpenter possessed two to three bighas of land. The agricultural product they harvested supplemented to their income to some extent. Work was not sufficiently available in the village. They could be gainfully employed only for some part of the year. During floods, they had to sit idle. Their wage ranged from one hundred rupees to one hundred and fifty rupees. Their average monthly income also varied from five hundred rupees to fifteen hundred rupees. The work of the carpenters range from building houses to making wooden furniture. Earlier the services of the carpenters were not required in constructing houses as the houses were built with mostly thatch and bamboo. Even if wood was used to some extent, its use was limited to posts. The villagers themselves could build such houses with the help of the neighbours. But gradually the house types have under gone a considerable amount of change. People have started building RCC and Assam Type houses, which require a lot of

skill in building them and the common villager, cannot do it without the services of skilled labourers like the carpenters and masons. The carpenters are engaged by the villagers for building as well as repairing of the Assam type houses. It appears that in Raja-Mayong the villagers have started construction of such type of houses after being prosperous by cultivating Boro paddy

The needs of the daily wage earners are supplemented by their agricultural produce also, as most of the wage earners do have some amount of arable land also.

21 workers of this categories belonging to both the sexes have been interviewed. Out of these 5 are carpenters, 3 are weavers, one tailor and 8 unskilled labourers. They depend primarily on their daily wage and their trades are not caste based. Table-IV shows the caste wise distribution of the families belonging to this category of workers. Daily wage earning is shown as the primary means of livelihood by these people.

The wages of the skilled workers are determined on the basis of nature of the job through negotiation between the two parties when the work is given on contract while the weavers work mostly on contract basis. The other skilled workers work under both the systems.

All the carpenters posses 2 or 3 bighas of land for cultivation as expressed in the interview. They get enough rice from their fields to last for the whole year and for other expenses they have to depend on their daily wage as a carpenter. The monthly income of the carpenters range between Rs.1500-3000.(See Table V). All these carpenters belong to the Nath community and are permanent residents of Raja-Mayong.

Weaving is common to all the families. All the families weave some amount of cloth in their household looms. But not all of them depend on weaving for an earning. These four families depend to a great extent on weaving for their livelihood. Weaving is generally carried out by the female members of the household. Of course, male weavers also used to weave cloth in the past. It is said that the great men, Sankardeva and Madhavadeva also wove cloth required for sanctum sanctorum of the Vaisnava prayer hall called the Namghar. Weaving is a traditional craft common to all Assamese families and a household in rural Assam is supposed to possess a loom among other things. Every woman in Assam used to be a born weaver. No Assamese girl who does not weave can expect to become an efficient wife. And she weaves fairy tales in her loom. This is what Gandhi observed about weaving by Assamese women.

Table-V

Monthly income ranges of the skilled and unskilled workers

	0-500	501-1000	1001-1500	1501-2000	Total
Weaver	3	—	—	—	3
Carpentry	—	4	—	1	5
Tailoring	—	1	—	—	1
Artisanry	—	2	—	—	2
Barber	—	—	2	—	2
Unskilled	8	—	—	8
Total	11	7	2	1	21

Source: Pensioner Interview with with the workers-2006

Since the early days weaving has been considered as an important economic activity of the female members in the household. It serves as a subsidiary source of income for the household, because besides meeting the needs of the household, woven clothes are also sold outside.

“The most common items woven in the household looms are the Gamocha (a napkin like towel with the normal size of 2’ ft x 5’ft), The Chaddar (a warpper used by women with the normal size of 3 1/2’ ft x 8’ ft), The Mekhela (a frock like apparel worn from waist to the prepared by joining the two ends of a sheet with the normal size of 4’ ft x 8’ ft together), Challeng (a thin cloth wrapped round the body and Bedsheets.”³³ The Gamocha is a common item of cloth found almost in all Assamese households. Traditionally, for showing respect or love to a brother, father, brother-in-law, father-in-law and friendly - relations a Gamocha is presented basically in the Rongali Bihu festival in the month of Bohag. In religious and social rites, such as the funeral rite, Marriage ceremony etc. also this piece of cloth is essential. The Gamocha is a typical cloth for the Bihu dancer. The Chaddar and Mekhela are the traditional twin-wear of the Assamese women. They are woven with either silk or cotton threads. The former is costlier while the latter is cheaper by far.

The Roja-mayong respondent weavers weave not only cotton clothes but also weave Thailand thread, silk threads. These clothes are normally woven for domestic use. But individual households sell them as and when required. They also take orders from the individual and societies to weave these items on contract basis.

The respondent weavers are all unmarried falling within the monthly income amount to below Rs.500 (table - V). In spite of the demand for the handloom products these weavers remain comparatively in a low income level for lack of finance for investment. The poor condition of the main road for marketing their produce is also one reason for their low income.

Eight unskilled daily wage earners were interviewed. All of them are Hand cart pullers who reside in Raja-Mayong belong to the Nath caste. They earn an average monthly income range below Rs. 500/- (see table - V). The rest of the unskilled workers are occasional daily wage earners as they have some amount of arable land also and get some amount of agricultural produce which needs to be supplemented by daily wage also. They work on odd jobs on daily wage ranging from helping the household owners in their domestic works as well as in the fields to that of working in the construction of roads, fences and houses. These workers can not be called agricultural labourers in the true sense of the term because they do not work solely in the fields. A distinction between the agricultural labourer and the unskilled workers in the rural areas is thin and confusing; but it has been maintained on the ground that the agricultural labourers do not offer their services for other kinds of unskilled manual labour.³⁴

Agricultural labourers :

There are altogether 90(21.79%) agricultural workers in the village. They belong to the category of landless workers. But for the lack of resources for Cultivation, like bullocks they prefer to work as agricultural labourers in other peoples fields. In return they borrow the bullock and the plough from the landlord for tilling their own little plots of land. At present, they receive as little as Rs. 70 as wage for the subsistence of their family. The 50 odd households in the Murarbari chuk of Raja-Mayong do not have enough land for paddy cultivation to suffice for the whole year. In the same way, barring three families, the Namashudras residing in the Hadugpar of Raja-Mayong, do not have sufficient land for sustaining for the whole year. Hence they also have to work as agricultural labourers to make both ends meet. This is because

the people of these two chuks or chuburies are recently-settled in Raja-Mayong village.

Trade and commerce:-

This occupation of the trade commerce is called commercial occupation and it plays a very important role in the economic life of a village. It introduces cash economy in the village by importing consumer goods from the urban centres involving heavy transaction and there by it links the village with the urban economy.”³⁵

On the basis of the information collected in the village in the beginning of 2006, there were 53(12%) shops of permanent nature. The earliest of them is one of the groceries started in 1975. All these shops are owned by the local residents. Among the group of 45 shop owners two are Bihari families, one working as barbers and the other working on quilts, pillows, etc. Three families belonging to the Nath community began dealing in Bamboo from the year 1989. Two families deal in Paddy. They purchase paddy from the neighbouring villages and supply to urban centres. Altogether 53 families of Raja-Mayong belonging to the occupation of trade and business have been interviewed. Twenty families out of the fifty three are fully dependent on the trade while rest, keep shops as a supplementary income to the family. In the proposed study, they are divided into groups on the basis of the nature of trade and commerce they carry on. The first group consists of the shop keepers who own shops of permanent nature in the village, the second group ferries their wares in the weekly markets and the third group consists of the paddy traders who own godowns of permanent nature in the village.(TableVI)

Table-VI
Different items of shop keepers and vendors in different trades (caste wise) in Raja-Mayong village.

Caste and community	Stationery and Pan	Groceries	Teastall	Biscuit shop	Cloth shop	TV Radio, watch shop	Paddy godowns	Mechand electrical store	Hardware	Quilt shop	Saloon	Vegetable stall	Betelnut and leaf seller	LPG Agency	Milk man	Mat maker	150-250 Honey collector	100-800 Tent house	Total
Nath	15	8	6	2	2	1	2	4	1	--	--	2	1	--	--	1	--	1	47
Koch	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	2
Nepali	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	--	--	--	2
Bihari	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2
																			Total =53

Monthly oncome of the shop keepers in terms of profit- 2006
Source personal interview with the shop keepers

The main market place of the village is located in the crossroad in Mayong Bazaar locality. The Majority of the residents of the area belong to the Nath caste and 93.3% i.e. 42 of the 53 shops are owned by them. Only one Biscuit seller with other goods belongs to the Koch caste. One shop keeper belongs to the Namashudras. Two are Nepali individuals, who collect milk from house to house in the village and supply it at Kolongpar, the centre place of business about 5 K.M. from Raja-Mayong village on the south-west side of the village.

One person is engaged in mat making and 5 persons are engaged in bamboo craft. One person in the village is engaged in collecting honey from the wild and selling it in the market as well as from door to door. These are subsidiary occupations and not substantive occupations. Yet they play a great role in the village economy. Specially, the honey collector is very popular in Raja-Mayong as well as the neighbouring villages under the Mayong gaon Panchayat area.

The shop keepers, excepting the vegetable vendors and biscuit seller, bring their commodities for sale from Guwahati. Though Marigaon is the nearer business hub people prefer to bring their wares from Guwahati because of better communication facilities to Guwahati.

The monthly income of the interviewed shop keepers ranges Rs. 250 to Rs. 10,000) (See table - VI)

Small Industry:-

There are no small industries in the village except three rice mills. All the mills run on electricity. They also run the mills with diesel as fuel, as supply of electricity is very erratic in the village. The monthly

income of the mills range from Rs. 1500/- to Rs. 5000/-. The mills play an important role in the village economy as well as life, as earlier the people had to depend on the pestle and mortar which was a tiresome method of pounding rice. Some of villagers can mill their paddy and sell them for a better price than paddy because of the existence of the mills.

Another cottage industry of the area, the mat making and bamboo crafts also is worth mentioning. The people engaged in these crafts are also earning some money from these crafts, which adds to the village economy. The craftsmen make various objects of utility of the household ranging from winnowing fans, fans, baskets of various sizes and shapes fishing implements, weaving implements, etc. Their earning ranges from Rs. 250/- to Rs. 400/- per month. Though this is not a huge amount it helps in supplementing their earning from other sources.³⁶

Job Holding :

Of 413 families surveyed, 61 persons i.e. 14.76% in the group have shown service as the Primary economic activity. Out of them 6 are pensioners. Two Pensioners have received award from the Governor and District respectively for their meritorious service as teachers. This is something that can be pointed out as a change in the way of life of the people as well as their occupation earlier almost all the people of the village were agriculturists with a few exceptions. The ones who were engaged in service were teachers in the nearest schools. The employed also had a very strong base of agriculture. They possessed land and cultivated with the help of labourers and sometimes by themselves. But it is noteworthy that over the years a sizable number of the population are primarily dependent on their employment in various jobs and have lost the agrarian base.³⁷

Table VII

Land-holding size of the employees working in and outside Raja-Mayong with cultivation as their secondary occupation

Land-holding	Working outside Rajamayong	Working in Rajamayong	Total
Medium and large holding	17	1	18
Small holding	18	3	21
Marginal holding	16	2	18
Sub-Marginal holding	4	----	4
	55	6	61

61 out of total Families served- 413
Including pensioner-6

Table-VIII

Level of Education of the employees of Raja-Mayong working in and outside

Educational level	Employed Outside Rajamayong	emolyed inside Rajamayong	Total
Post-Graduates	-----	-----	-----
Graduates	9	2	11
Under-graduate	2	-----	2
H.S.	9	-----	9
Matric	11	2	13
High-school	13	2	15
M.E. School	7	-----	7
Primary School	4	-----	4
Total	55	6	61

Except 6 families of pensioners and Doctors, 55 of the service holding families have shown cultivation as their secondary occupation. All are the original inhabitants of Raja-Mayong have their sufficient lands for cultivation. Fifty-five employees carryout their agricultural activity with the help of labourers and on contract whiles their place of employment are far away from the village. Six of the employees have the advantage of looking after the agricultural activities by themselves as they are employed in the village and can spare time to look after their fields as well as the labourers.(Table VII)

Employment potentialities in the offices and institutions in the village are not sufficient. But out of them 55 service-holders, work outside the village. From the sample taken it appears that higher technical service holders are employed outside. Table - VIII shows that 100% technical graduates work outside while Arts graduates and post graduates work in local institutions of the village and the G.P. area.

Table-IX

Pay scale of the employees with caste-wise distribution

Castes	No. of Families in different pay scales							Total
	Below 1500	1501- 2450	2451- 3130	3131- 4300	4301- 5725	5726- 8750	8751- above	
Koch	-----	1	-----	1	1	1	8	12
Nath	-----	3	1	2	4	6	19	35
Keot	-----	---	-----	-----	-----	-----	6	6
Nrpali	-----	---	1	-----	-----	1	1	3
Ahom	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	1	1
Bodo	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	2	2
Tiwa	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	1	1
Rabha	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	1	1
Total		4	2	3	5	8	39	61

As in December-2008

N.B.: The table includes 6-Pensioners.

The pay scales of the employees living in the village ranges between Rs. 1500 to 8751. All the employees earning Rs. 8751 and above are working out side of the village. Though the economic condition of the service holders of the village are considerably good a total of 233 families i.e. 56.41% of the families live below the poverty line which signifies that the economy of the village is in a precarious condition.(Table X)

Table-X

Annual income range of all categories of occupation in Raja-Mayong both in primary and subsidiary occupation

No of Families

Annual Income Range	Koch	Nath	Keot	Nama-shudra	Nepali	Ahom	Tiwa Bodo Rabha	Bihari	Total
6000-21600	24	170	----	21	15	----	1	2	233
21601-36000	14	81	----	--	3	1	--	-	99
36001-48,000	----	20	----	1	1	1	----	--	23
48001-60,000	2	14	3	---	---	1	--	20
60001-90,000	4	12	1	...	---	----	-----	--	17
90001 & above	4	10	2	1			4		21
Total	48	307	6	23	19	3	5	2	413

Source-Report on Questionnaire

Self Help Groups:-

There are 25 SHGs in Raja-Mayong, 54 SHGs in Mayong Gaon Panchyat and 671 SHGs in the Mayong Community Development Block which are crucial in the socio-economic life of Raja-Mayong Gaon Panchayat and Development Block. 25 SHGs of Raja-Mayong have

been interviewed. It has been found from these groups that women SHGs are very active and enthusiastic. These could be referred to as the new emerging economic units of the rural area. Every SHGs has Bank accounts in the State Bank of India, Raja-Mayong Branch. The savings of the SHGs range from Rs. 5000/- to Rs. 20000/- . 11 SHGs have been able to draw the loan of the State Bank. 6 of 11 SHGs have received an average of Rs. 53000/- bank loan 5 of 11 have received an average of Rs.30,000/- loan from the S.R.I.D. and have been provided 15% subsidy. Besides, every S.H.G. has received a regular grant of Rs. 10000 after the registration of S.H.G.s in the Block office. There is a training centre for training the members of the SHGs at Marigaon and the members of SHGs from Raja-Mayong receive their training in that Training Centre.³⁸

Each S.H.G. consists of 12 to 15 members headed by the president and the secretary and has to maintain a joint bank account by the president and the secretary. No economic help from the department of the Government is given without registration. They have to maintain a proceeding book and a cash book. Every S.H.G. has a monthly meeting by procedure and the proposals are taken for the discipline and accounting of the money which have already been distributed among the members.

Today most of the women of Raja-Mayong are related with S.H.G. In spite of having the house hold works, they attend the meetings of the S.H.G. Some save Rs. 10-20 for membership per month while some save to Rs. 50-100. This is very small unit for saving but it teaches that saving is the prime wheel for domestic economic needs. The S.H.G.s have started their business in poultry and animal husbandry in

Raja-Mayong. It has brought about a wave of change in economic life of the people of Raja-Mayong.³⁹

Bank Service :-

The Raja-Mayong Branch State Bank of India plays the significant position in Raja-Mayong area to maintain the whole economy of the people. It was established on 17 March in 1989. The locality demands were that a governmental bank is most essential in order to such particular but popular place of the District. At present, it has a total number of 2800 savings accounts and 1060 loan accounts in the Bank.⁴⁰

Thus it has been observed in the discussion in this chapter that the modernisation of agriculture and change in the cropping pattern has brought in economic prosperity to a certain extent. The machanisation of agriculture and irrigation by pumps have made winter cropping in the area possible. The summer cropping often is destroyed by devastating floods. Hence this switch over to winter cropping is a great relief to the farmers of the locality. The use of fertilizers also has added to the increase in production. In other fields such as trade and commerce and the service sector also people of the have made considerable progress and the economy of the village is proceeding towards prosperity in spite of all odds.

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