CHAPTER VI

AGRICULTURE

An appreciable percentage of the population has been recorded as "cultivators" and cultivating labourers whose produce finds a good market among the town dwellers. The low plain land in the outskirts of the town along its eastern, southeastern and western borders of the town provide ample space for agricultural activities. But the presence of marshes and waterpools everywhere and bad drainage system put a check to the cultivators implements.

Agricultural Products: Crops are mainly divided into two groups according to the season of production - kharif (cultivated in the rainy season) and Rabi (cultivated in the dry season).

Here the methods of cultivation is similar to that followed in other parts of the plain. The field is tilled with the help of ploughs and bullocks. Seeds are sown by broadcasting in May and early part of June on the carefully prepared, slightly muddy seed-beds or nurseries. The seedlings grow to nearly one foot in height within 30 to 45 days and then they are transplanted on the muddy paddy field, prepared by tilling.

Here the cultivators grow only "Sali" or Aman rice. Aman grows on stagnant water and hence bunds are constructed surrounding the plots, generally in quadrangular form. Transplanting is carried on from the beginning of July to the end of August. Here the transplantation is seen to be done women folk and harvesting is done by male members in winter (from late November to early January).

Though Aman rice may be mentioned as the dominant crop, other seasonal vegetables like potatoes, chillies and pulses—
Mati-Mah, Mati-Mug, Masur, and grown considerably.
Besides this millet, wheat, maize, tobacco etc. are grown here.

FRUIT GARDEN AND ORCHARDS

Practically every old settled family have at least one kitchen garden or an orchard. Such private garden, orchard etc. are mainly found at Uzanbazar, Jorpukhuripar, Chenikuthi and in some parts of Panbazar area. Fruits like banana, pine-apple, apple, lemon, orange, plum, betelnut, mango are seen grown in these orchards.

There is one Government Orchard on the bank of the Bharalu river near Kalapahar. In this orchard various kinds of fruit trees such as orange, lemon, Pine apple, banana, coconut, plum, pear and peaches including vegetables are scientifically grown here. Specially seedlings of various fruits and vegetables are scientifically grown here and supplied to people those who want.

Orchards are also found among the cultivators living on the outskirt of the town. In their orchards generally bamboo, betelnut and betel-creeper and other fruit trees are found. The cultivators also grow some kinds of vegetables and their products find a good market among the town dwellers.

Over and above this an experimental agricultural farm is also recently started at the Noonmati site. This farm will ultimately supply vegetables and fruits to the town-dwellers.

Live-Stock

The most essential requirement for stock-rearing is a stable supply of fodder-grain, root crops, meadow and pasture. Hilly pastures of the surrounding town support goats and cattle. Meadow and rough grazing are found to some extent in the outskirts of the
The town's livestock includes cattle, buffalo, sheep, poultry, and drought-horses. Of all the livestock, cattle is by far the most important animal.

**Cattle**:
The cattle of this area are slightly better than those found in Assamese villages. Their owners are mostly Nepalis, a professional grazier class. These Nepalis generally take much care for rearing cattle than the Assamese rearers. Bullocks are generally found to be reared by the cultivators of the outskirts of the town.

**Buffaloes**:
The buffaloes that are found on the outskirts of the town and Khanapara dairy farm belong to two distinct breeds-Deshi or indigenous and 'Bengali'. The indigenous variety has widely spreading horns.

**Goat**:
Goat are reared mainly for food or sacrifice connected with religious customs and beliefs.

**Sheep**:
A negligible number of sheep are seen here and these are entirely used for food.

**Horses**:
Horses are used as a drought animal and are reared mostly by the immigrants of the town for dragging carts.

**Poultry**:
Fowls, pigeons, and ducks are found to be reared in some residences of the town. Fowls are particularly reared by Muslims and so they are mainly seen in some Muslim residences of the town. A well-organised poultry farm is also located at Khanapara.

**Dairy Farms**:
There is no distinct dairy farm in the town. Generally Nepali graziers reared cows and supply milk to the town-dwellers. A well-planned Government Dairy Farm is established at Khanapara 6 miles off from Gauhati. Here large number of cows and she-buffaloes are reared. From here milk is particularly supplied to the hospitals and a little quantity to the town-dwellers.