

## PREFACE

This research venture traces the history of specifics and inherent under-currents of politics of the merger of Cooch Behar State with the Indian union spanning the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial experiences. An attempt has been made to outline the process of multifaceted factors and forces that Cooch Behar had to experience during the period of merger with India. A sincere exercise has been attempted to reconstruct the event of merger of Cooch Behar State with the Indian Union on the basis of historical documents as well as socio-economic, ethnographic data and to explain their need to reconstruct at the present time scale. This incisive study of a region and its people, both marginally placed and lulled in the lap of Himalayas largely silenced through a lack of visitability in academic research, is an outcome of the efforts by the researcher for the last three years. To be precise, the objective of the present study claims to be a part of academic exercise of regional history hitherto unattampted by the scholars of the field.

Studies on Princely India, relationship between Princely States and British India have been many of which mention be made of Lee Warner<sup>1</sup>, Ian Copland<sup>2</sup>, and such others. The most celebrated studies so far undertaken on the integration of the Indian States

have been contributed none other than by Mr. V.P. Menon<sup>3</sup> and during recently by Urmila Phandis<sup>4</sup>. Writings so far made on these two important areas such as relationship of Princely India with British India and integration of the Indian States have been thoroughly highlighted and referred in different parts of this dissertation work. Most of these writings are of general in nature seeking to establish general conclusions on the history of aggregates rather than history of specifics. The study under reference has been a maiden attempt to identify the factors and forces, events and issues involved in the process of merger of Cooch Behar State into the Indian Union. While doing so the researcher had to gather information and documents from different sources. Such relevant documents in the form of reports, leaflets, official notes and circulations, newspapers, articles, published books, gazetteers and letters etc. had been gathered from the National Archives, New Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru Museum and Library, New Delhi, West Bengal State Archives, Kolkata, National Library, Kolkata, Cooch Behar Collectorate Records Room, Cooch Behar, North Bengal State Library, Cooch Behar, Assam Sahitya Sabha, Assam, Kamrup Anusandhan Samiti, Assam, Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies, Assam and North Bengal University Library.

The present study is comprised of eight chapters and an epilogue. The chapters are intrinsically linked with each other and also are in consonance with the broad design of the study.

The first Chapter is the introduction to the study which initiates necessary issues and information relating to the research problem, objective, research questions and hypothesis, background of the issue of merger and integration of the Indian States.

The second Chapter examines the historical events and incidents and culturo-ethnographic considerations behind the process of State formation in India since time immemorial.

The third Chapter deals with the socio-cultural and historical perspectives of Cooch Behar state in north-east frame. The heartland periphery model has been attempted to understand the history of people and history of region of Cooch Behar in the north-eastern backdrop.

Chapter four details out the issues and events involved in the relationship between East India Company and Princely States in India during 1757-1813 with special reference to Cooch Behar.

Chapter five has been extension of chapter four in the sense that it deals with such relationship established during 1813-1857.

Chapter six presents a detail picture depicting the culmination of relationship during 1858-1919 between British India and Princely India with special reference to Cooch Behar.

Chapter seven deals with the issues and counter-issues in the Chamber of Princes and its bargainings with the British Indian Government ended with the enactment of Instrument of Accession.

The eighth Chapter has been significant in the sense that it has traced in detail the factor and forces, events and issues, involved in to accept or to contest the merger of the Princely State Cooch Behar with the Indian Union.

The epilogue deals with the findings of the study. It has also been attempted to understand a specific event of political history of India (merger of Cooch Behar) corroborated with other general events operated actively at an aggregated scale and to place such regional discourse to understand the background of the dynamics of present political history of this region in particular and India in general.

1. Warner, Lee Willium: *The Native States of India*”, 1910 (earlier 1894 - “*The Protected Princess of India*”), Macmillan and Company Limited, St. Marina Street, London, 1910, PP - 50-51.
2. Copland, Ian: *The Princess of India in the Endgame of Empire*, Cambridge University Press, Brumpton Street, Cambridge Street, Cambridge, 1997, PP- 45-47.
3. Menon, V.P.: *Integration of the Indian State*, Orient Longman, Madras, Reprint 1985, P-7.
4. Phandis, Urmila: *Towards the Integration of the Indian States (1919-1947)*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1968.