

PROLOGUE

A discourse on the political history of merger of Indian States with special reference to Cooch Behar warrants the attention to delve into the details of facts and events operating either tacitly or in a manifest manner both at the macro-historical plain as well as at the micro-historical perspective. Since the study under reference has been the State of Cooch Behar, an attempt would not be out of place to analyse the factors and forces operated directly or indirectly behind the process of merger of the Cooch Behar State into the Indian Union. While analysing the political history of merger of the Cooch Behar State, the researcher intends to emphasise on the deductive method rather than the inductive method of analysis which means the history of aggregates must be preceded by the history of specifics. Without taking into consideration so called assembled facts of history made by the Compradore historians or patronised bureaucrats and so called nationalist scholars, the present venture would be to understand the facts and events responsible for the merger of Cooch Behar State by exploring all the possibilities of getting access to the social, psychological, ecological, culturo-historical trends and events with

the help of epistemological and logical scientific reasoning. Although the macro setting would not be ignored, an attempt will be made to look to the fact that the micro local ambience is not overlooked.

Any study of merger cannot and should not ignore the politico-historical and ethno-religious factors and forces behind the process of integration of the Indian States into the Indian Union. A treatise on the history of merger of the Cooch Behar State should have to be analysed and explored in the light of the general trends and events of the merger of the Indian States. The merger of the Indian States has neither been a simple story of accession of small Princely States by the greater mighty Indian States, nor it has been a simple delineation of so called bargains between greater and tiny nationalism. In fact, an amalgated factors and forces, trends and events of variegated nature have been taken place during the period of accession of the Princely States with the Indian Union. As a result there has been multiplicity of considerations behind the bargaining process of merger. The strategy of the Government of India while acceding the Princely States had been a plural concept. Thus strategies rather than strategy had been undertaken alleviating the problems and tensions emerged during the time of merger in various Princely States. Above all, the Indian State followed most objectively the policy of persuasion while extending its control over the Princely States for their necessary integration with India.

However, oppression, suppression and use of military power had been other methods pursued by the Indian State, wherever and whenever the strategy of persuasion failed. It would not be a

misstatement to state that a hasty attempt on the part of the Indian State had been manifested in its exercise of persuading the Princely States for their necessary merger into the Indian State. It might be because of the urgency of the acute political situation and need of the time but it did not give much care to the cultural-ethnological issues of the merging states. Thus, in most of the cases, the Civil Societies of the integrating Princely States remained unattended and uncalled for. Here, in fact, lies the necessity of a specific type of historiography by way of exploring the historicity of the trends and events, factors and forces behind the entire process of merger of the Princely States into the Indian Union.

With this background in mind, the present researcher proposes to venture the definite factors and forces behind the merger of Cooch Behar State with the Indian Union both from a micro and macro perspective; i.e., attempting to analyse the political history of merger of Cooch Behar State under the local ambience in the backdrop of a generic setting of the historicity of merger of the Princely States in India. While making this attempt the researcher has attempted to explore the nature and meaning of integration as a politico-administrative concept as well the nature of governance in India through ages.

Any study of merger of Princely States into the Indian Union would have been a story of ultimate surrenderance of the Princely States to the mighty Indian State Authorities. The surrenderance of

sovereignty whether if any, by the Princely States has, ultimately marked the end of the old feudal Raj and the beginning of the era of Swaraj or Parliamentary democracy.

A detailed study of political history of merger of the Cooch Behar thus, has been of high order both conceptually and operationally. The relevance of the study lies in its commitment to explore the history of specifics in understanding the factors and forces behind the process of merger. A study under regional setting will help in building a general framework to understand the trends and events of the merger of the Princely States with the Indian Union. Above all no serious study has so far been undertaken on this important issue of merger of Cooch Behar with India. Such a study will also develop the possibility to provide a new kind of knowledge of this mostly intellectually un-explored region. Even a study will also be a help to the policy planners and policy makers to take logistic steps on any area of development by way of acting as a pragmatic reservoir on regional/local social history.

The primary objective of the study is to delve deep into the details of political history of merger of the Princely States with special reference to Cooch Behar. The study intends to experiment with certain important politico-administrative ideas after placing them on a definite historical settings of global, national, regional/local ambience. The study intends to make a comparative analysis of the trends and events behind the process of merger of

classified princely states. The analysis of the factors and forces behind the merger of the Princely State Cooch Behar will be primary focus of the study.

As has been stated, the study has been undertaken on the basis of deductive method. However, library method both for primary and secondary materials have been pursued. Since the study has been exercise of exploring the social history and history of the specifics, oral methods and method of investigation have been given a special consideration. To give the study an empirical shape participant-observation method has also been followed.

Scholarly discourse on history of integration of the Indian States has not been scarce. Any attempt to conceptualise such academic exercise reminds us the seminal task of V.P. Menon, having both conceptual and operational command on the studies of Indian States¹. Keeping in consideration to most of the important studies so far undertaken a single proposition may seem eluctable that the studies on integration cover in most of the cases a general ambience based on generalistic proposition. In this sense the studies reflect the history of aggregates rather than history of specifics of the integrating states. To begin with, throughout this academic venture, an attempt has been made to understand the underlying forces of the history of aggregates identified by the scholars and to understand the history of specifics by way of

accommodating the factors and forces, events and issues involved in the process of merger lulled in the lap of Himalayas, of the Cooch Behar State – a tiny principality, lulled in the lap of Himalayas situated marginally at the north-east of Bengal. The political history of merger of the Cooch Behar State calls for a detailed analysis of the general trends and tendencies operating behind the merger of nearly five hundred sixty two principalities with the newly emerged independent Indian State. Prof. Ian Copland's observation may well be put: "As the premier event in the history of decolonisation in Asia, the transfer of power in India has deservedly attracted much scholarly attention, particularly since the 1970's when the Government archives for the period began to be opened. However, the vast bulk of this research has focussed on the partition and the establishment of Pakistan, much of the remainder on the imperial debate over decolonisation; very little space has been given to the fate of the States. Similarly as against the vast academic literature that has been produced over the last few decade on 'British' India that is to say, on the provinces – perhaps a score of books have engaged in a serious way with the history of the two-fifths of the sub continent that remained outside the British rule. And, of these, only there grapple substantiality with the issues raised above; Steven Ashton's 'British Policy towards the Indian States'; Barbara Remusack's 'The Princes of India in the Twilight of Empire'; and the

volume edited by Robin Jeffery, 'People Princes and Paramount Power'. How can we claim to have developed a sophisticated historiography of Colonial South Asia when the dominant interpretations fail to take so much of the terrain into ^aaccount?"²

Indeed most of the scholastic writings have attempted to identify the issues, worries and interactions of various nature between the Government of India and the Indian Princes while integrating their principalities with the Government of India. Integration had been the principal consideration of the newly independent Indian nation. While realising this notion more than five hundred principalities were contacted to get them integrated with the Indian fold. Basically, tasks were many for the leaders of Indian nation: (a) to bring about immediate and rapid socio-economic transformation and (b) to bring the native principalities under the fold of India. Realisation of the second task had been difficult and complicated. In order to ease complications and lessen difficulties, the Indian State coined the concept of integration.

Integration literally means, "Joining or tying the two or many objects mutually opposed to each other, however, having with an intrinsic homogeneous elements must have some tacit or manifest ingredients with a perpetuity of nearly four hundred fifty years of inducements. Integration denotes three operational processes: (a) functional integration; (b) spatial integration; (c) psychobehavioural integration. While the first two processes indicate legal, political,

administrative and geographical postulates of integration, the third process concerns with the psychobehavioural perception of integration evolving out of within (psychological) while the former processes deals with structural and functional perspectives of integration.

Despite sincere attempts made by the scholars and the historians to present aciduously tested studies on integration of the Indian States with the Indian Union, some important areas still been unattended. The history of integration of the Indian States with the Indian Union had not definitely been a process of integration between two sovereign partners having equal status, it was rather a process of compulsion on the part of the native principalities to integrate with India if otherwise they would have been ceased to exist. Thus during the phase of integration Government of India had played the role of supra sovereign while the integrating principalities had been reduced to infra-sovereign units. Thus, it would not be an exaggeration to pay respect to the proposition that the process of integration with all its ingredients had not been duly attended to. Despite attempts to fulfill the ingredients by way of concluding treaties to legalise integration, it would have been more meaningful to propose that it was not the process of integration rather it had been the process of merger which unravels the politico administrative issues rather than the psycho-behavioural perspectives behind integration. An in-depth

study of political history of merger of the Princely States calls for a clear cut understanding on two definite issues: (1) the newly emerged Indian States emanated from the Government of India Act, 1947 and comprising of provinces used to be administered directly by the British Indian Government; (2) more than five hundred principalities remained out of the ambit of the newly formed Indian States. Thus the centre of gravity had been the Indian State with which the principalities had to be merged. Thus it was not integration in the intrinsic sense of the term, rather it had been the process of merger where the domineering role and control of the Indian States over the merging principalities had been almost absolute.

An understanding of the Princely State or the Indian State or native state seems urgent. Sir William Lee Warner wrote, "A Native State was a political community that occupied defined boundaries within India, subject to a common and responsible rules who has actually enjoyed and exercised, as belonging to him in his own right duly recognised by the Supreme Authority of the British Government, any of the function and attributes of sovereignty. The indivisibility of sovereignty, on which Austin³ insists does not belong to the Indian system of sovereign states. Sir Henry Maine on the other hand expounded the principles of 'divisible sovereignty'. He wrote, "sovereignty is a term which in International Law indicates a well ascertained assemblage of separate powers or

privileges. The rights, which form part of the aggregate, are specifically named by publicists, who distinguish them as the right to make over or place, the right to administer civil and criminal justice; to legislate and so forth. A sovereign who possesses the whole of these rights is called an independent sovereign, but there is not, nor has there ever been, in International Law anything to prevent some of these rights being lodged with one possessor and some with another. Sovereignty has always been regarded as divisible."⁴ Sir Henry Maine then went on to give examples of the German confederacy and the Swiss Cantons. "In fact", wrote Maine, "Europe was at one time full of imperfectly sovereign States, although the current events have for centuries set towards their aggregation into large independent monarchies"⁵. Lee Warner overruling Maine's claims, as not pertaining to the Indian situation, wrote "No native state in the interior of India enjoys the full attributes of complete external and internal sovereignty, since to none is left either the power of declaring war or peace, or the right of negotiating agreements with other states; but the sovereignty of native states is shared between the British Government and the chiefs in varying degrees. Some states enjoys a substantive immunity from interference in nearly all functions of internal administration, while others are under such control that the native sovereignty is completely destroyed. But communities whose rulers

ordinarily exercise ~~may~~, even the smallest degree of internal authority, are classified in India as Native States and excluded from the territories subject to the kings' law⁶. Lee Warner laid emphasis on the treaties, engagements, sanads, and usage when the question of determining the status of the Princely States vis a vis the British Government arose. His interpretations, obviously based on Roman analogy, pushed arguments to the length of claiming undaunted right of authority over the Princely States for the paramount power better described as 'paramountcy'. In fact, his book, 'The Native States of India' though very informative, appears to be in effect a justification of the claims of the Political Department⁷.

Another political definition of Indian State can well be found in the third schedule of Indian Act No. VII of 1871 which defines, "any State in India which is under the protection or political control of Her Majesty's Government or of which the Government has acknowledged the supremacy of the British Crown⁸. The definition had been applicable to the Indian States only after 1858 when all of them except Nepal came to occupy the position as per the mentioned definition. Such a definition had been objectively crafted to understand the changed nature of relationship that existed between East India Company and the States. Soon after the taking over charge of India by British Crown such a new relationship was in order to eliminate the difference in the status of the States and to uphold the theory and practice the paramountcy

of the British Crown over all alike. Thus precisely, the definition of Indian States in a reformulated manner provided a new era of relationship between the British India and the Indian States.

The concept of native state or the Indian State provided the emergence of a concerted concept of Princely States in India. Section 311 of the Government of India Act, 1935 provides a succinct definition thus: "Indian State includes any territory whether described as a State, estate, a Jagir or otherwise, belonging to under the suzerainty of a ruler who is under the suzerainty of His Majesty and not being part of British India."

Nearly two hundred years of British rule in India created a frame work comprising of two distinctive political geographies: (a) directly British administered provinces; (b) Indian States under the suzerainty of the British Crown. The Cabinet Mission in its announcements of 3rd June, 1946 categorically provided the plan for the lapse of paramountcy in India. Such a declaration provided the opportunity for the Indian States covering two fifths of the Indian geography to return to a state of political isolation. Such a situation of potential threat many Indian States within India had been circumvented by the accession of the States. Ultimately, however, provisions were included in the Government of India Act, 1947 which candidly provided the position of the Indian State in future. It was said that the suzerainty of His Majesty over the Indian States would lapse and the latter would have the option either to join India

or Pakistan or remain independent. As a matter of fact accession of the Indian States to independent India had been an issue of considerable importance. To deal with the situation a new State Department was created to function as a single organisation with an objective to resolve differences of opinion by mutual and amicable discussion. Both the British administered provinces and the Indian States were so integrally linked that it was impossible to think an independent India in isolation of the Indian States. V.P.Menon rightly observes, "during the course of a century the provinces and the States had been welded together"⁹.

The edifice of Central Authority had been rested on two pillars, one with foundations in the provinces and the other in the States. Such observations have been true because during the period, important cantonments and military installations were located in the States. For example, the Indian Railway system spanned the territories of the States as well as the provinces. Moreover, one of the provincial capitals was situated in a princely state. In posts and telegraphs, controls of arms and ammunitions, extradition and surrender of fugitives, control of opium and other narcotics, in the overall food policy, to mention only a few matters affecting all India security and welfare, the machinery of the Political Department and the residencies had acted as a co-ordinating agency. Thus it was extremely urgent to have an integrated administration both for Indian provinces and Indian

States. Without understanding the inevitability of accession, the declaration of the British Government regarding the lapse of Her Suzerainty over the Indian States created confusion and discontent and provided for ample room of worries and tensions.

According to V.P.Menon the decision of the British Government on the Indian States had been the result of the consideration of internal pressure of conservative politics in Great Britain rather than well chalked out decision for the future consolidation of Indian State craft. After the stipulated date of August 15th, 1947, the position of the States was one of great anxiety. During British rule the States had been protected from all internal trouble by the paramount power. Indeed few States had the capacity to deal with such a threat and most of them had not the necessary resources to cope with this. Moreover, the States did have no machinery to prevent the deteriorating communal situation. Because of country's partition and the presence of the isolated states the Indian Political leaders had to face immense potentiality of danger. The solution was to bring together Indian States under the fold of the Government of India. The problems were altogether peculiar and in the unsettled state of thing would sometimes demand hectic deliberations with the Indian States and quick decision.

Through a press communiqué, the Interim Cabinet of the Government of India declared the creation of the States Department under the leadership of Sardar Ballabhbhai Patel and V.P.Menon

was appointed as the secretary of the Department. The newly created department while drafting its terms and references had come to the conclusion that, "in view of the disposition of some of the rulers to cede in their lot with Pakistan or a few others to assert their independence, and the keen desire of all to safeguard their sovereignty, some sort of organic bond should be forged between the government of India and the States if the integrity of the country was to be preserved"¹⁰. The States Department argued that the Indian States which were geographically contiguous to India must be made to feel legally and morally that they were part of it. Primarily, it was decided that the Government of India would ask the Indian States to accede only on defence and external affairs without any other commitments. Since these subjects were handled by the paramount power and not by the States, the rulers would not be losing any of the rights enjoyed by them. It was hoped that if this scheme was implemented, a responsible Government for the whole of India would be established at the centre and as such would attract all the principal political elements. Another important subject like communication was added in the deliberation. The biggest advantage for Indian Government had been the absence of any compulsion of complying with the treaties concluded between the British Indian Government and the Indian States while providing suggestions to Patel, the Secretary, States Department

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argued, "We would be writing on a clean slate, unhampered by treaties." ¹¹

In fact no clear-cut terms of references was put before the Indian States, the States Department started deliberation with the Indian States for necessary integration with India. Since the nature and character and the issues involved had varied from state to state, there developed unique situation to be tackled in unique manner. In fact the Prime Minister and the Cabinet gave altogether a free hand to Sardar Patel in dealing with the Indian States. The States Department was convinced that in view of the disposition of some of the rulers to tilt to Pakistan, a few others to assert their independence, and the keen desire of all to safeguard their sovereignty, some sort of organic bond should be forged between the Government of India and the States and the integrity of the country was to be preserved. It was also categorically held that the States which were geographically contiguous to India must be made to feel legally and morally that they were part of it. Thus the emphasis was both on legal, political and psychological aspect of integration. Admittedly, during early forties, V.P.Menon drawn a scheme for the authorities of British India for the establishment of an interim Government as a solution of the then existing political deadlock. The scheme so drawn was an alternative to the federal proposal embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935 calling at a non-practical proposition during the war emergency. The

Government of India Act, 1935 provided such procedures for accession which entailed protracted negotiations for the adjustment of the treaty and fiscal rights and the creation of a new legislature, which again involved difficult administrative arrangement. In fact, **all these were too complicated to be embarked upon at such a time.** Defence, external affairs and communications had ultimately been the principal points of deliberation with the states for their accession to India. Thus, the tentative plan of deliberation for accession was ~~made~~ based on the important consideration of the security of the country. It was logically assumed that the rulers of the Indian States if acceded on defence, external affairs and communications, the Government of India would automatically have the right of entry into any state where internal stability was threatened on those grounds. Such was the tentative plan drawn by the State Department and was placed before Nehru for necessary approval. The whole thing was put before Nehru and certainly not in a written form because of the fear of leakage and publicity of the plan before hand. After getting green signal from Nehru the State Department went on implementing the plan. Lord Mountbatten was requested to negotiate with the rulers on the question of accession and also with a special task of dealing with Hyderabad and he responded positively. By November, 1949 only six of the 562 States that had acceded to India-viz, Hyderabad, Mysore, Bhupal, Tripura, Manipur, and Cooch Behar remained as separate entities within their old boundaries.¹²

Simultaneously, a preliminary draft of a 'Stand Still Agreement' between individual State and the two successor Governments was circulated by the Political Department. The draft provided for the discontinuance of the payments of cash, contribution and of the continuance of a district administrative arrangement in respect of such matters of common concern. While doing so, importance was given on economic aspect and on external affairs. However, the proposal made in the draft had been superceded by the specified scheme undertaken by the States Department and duly ratified by the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. It was made clear that every possible assistance from the Political Department would be welcome, however, the ultimate responsibility of negotiating with the rulers rest with the States Department. The statement for accession was drafted by V.P.Menon, Secretary, States Department and voted by Sardar Patel. To Patel the statement was 'concise and conciliatory in tune'¹³. The statement appealed to the rulers to accede on three subjects. It pointed out, "This country with its institutions is the proud heritage of the people who inhabit it. It is an accident that **some** live in the States and some in British India, but all alike partake of its culture and character. We are all knit together by bounds of blood and feeling no less than of self interest. None can segregate us into segments, no impassable barriers can be set up between us. I suggest that it is therefore better for us to make laws

sitting together as friends than to make treaties as aliens. I invite **my friends the rulers of the States and their people** to the councils of the Constituent Assembly in this spirit of friendliness and co-operation in a joint endeavour, inspired by common allegiance to our motherland for the common good of us all".¹⁴ It went on, "The States have already accepted the basic principles that for defence, **foreign affairs and communications** they would come into the Indian Union. We ask no more of them accession on these three subjects in which the common interests of the country are involved."¹⁵

This principle had been the principal mechanism for accession which categorically assured the princely order that the Indian national Congress has never and had never been enemies of Indian States and there would not be any question of the formation of dominant – dependent form of relationship between the Indian Government and the Princely order. The statement reassured that priority would not be domination of a mighty Government over the subordinate units rather it would be a domination of mutual interest and welfare. The statement ended with the appeal: "We are at a momentous state in the history of India. By common endeavour **we can raise the country to a new greatness** while lack of unity will expose us to fresh calamities. I hope the Indian States will bear in mind that the alternative to co-operation in the general interest is anarchy and chaos which will overwhelm great and small in a

common ruin if we are unable to act together in the medium of common tasks."¹⁶

Although the statement was drafted in a very cordial manner, the intention of the statement was very specific and clear. Answering a question on agreements between the states and the Government of India on matters of common concern, Sardar Patel emphatically argued: "whoever denounces such agreements takes the responsibility for the consequences".¹⁷ While the Government of India was advancing with the statement the Indian States, by that time, had been endowed with clause VII of the Government of India Act, 1947. Although the clause provided the Indian States a kind of autonomy on the question of either remaining independent or to be included either with India or Pakistan. The clause ended the suzerainty of His Majesty over the Indian States. This part of lapsing although the earlier treaties had been questioned by the eminent jurists, administrators and political practitioners. As Reforms Commissioner, V.P. Menon raised the question that even of paramountcy lapses, all agreements of a commercial, economic and financial character between the States on the one hand, and the British Government, the Secretary of the State, and the Governor General on the other would cease to be legally effective. It was pointed out by Menon that there were several important agreements which had been entered into for the common benefit of States and British India where paramountcy did not enter, for example, the

agreement of 1920 with Bhawalpur and Bikaner regarding the Sultage Valley canals project and Government of India agreement on salt with Jaipur and Jodhpur. Menon argued, the mutual rights and obligations of parties under such agreements could not be regarded as lapsing on the withdrawal of paramountcy. Thus these agreements should continue to be binding both on the States and on the successor Governments.¹⁸ Ultimately, however, it was resolved that all complications would have left the State and the provinces and the two new Central Governments as incuritors of all rights and obligations not falling strictly within the field of paramountcy and control over the States, thus preserving the status quo until changed by financial and economic agreements without, of course, impeding their future liberties of action. Ultimately, however, sub-clauses (b), (c) to clause VII of the Government of India Act, 1947 had been revised.

The days between July 1st to August 15th, 1947, had been very much hectic. On 10th July, a number of Rulers and States Minister met Sardar Patel. Patel urged that the States which had joined the Constituent Assembly should forth with accede to India on three subjects, and pointed out that such a course would enable them to have a direct voice in shaping the policies of the Central Government. The delegation of the States argued that the matters required careful consideration and a cautious approach. A series of informal discussions with the Rulers and their advisors should be

the requirement. A notice was served on 11th July by the States Department for the conference of the Rulers to be held on 25th July. Agenda to be included in the conference were: (1) Accession of the States on 'defence', 'external affairs' and 'communications', (2) Standstill Agreement; (3) Advisory Council for the States Department; (4) Channels of correspondence and representation of Central Government in the States.¹⁹

The policy of accession of the Indian Government was communicated to Pakistan's State Minister and Jinnah reacted strongly in a negative manner. He communicated a note to Lord Mountbatten stating that it was utterly wrong and publicly announced that he would guarantee the independence of States in Pakistan. Such a statement of the Pakistan premier evoked confusions in the minds of the States Rulers. The resentments against accession got regimented under the leadership of the Nawab of Bhopal. However, on 24th July, 1947, another delegation of Rulers met the Indian States Department and it was evident that they were prepared to come within India.

Meanwhile, the States Department produced a draft Instrument of Accession and revised the original draft of the Stand Still Agreement prepared by the Political Department. These two drafts were circulated to the Rulers at the special session of the Chamber of Princes on 25th July. The special session was addressed by Lord Mountbatten in his capacity as Crown Representative. He

advised the rulers to accede to the appropriate dominion in regard to the three subjects of defence, external affairs and communications. He also made it clear that though the Rulers were technically at liberty to link with either of the dominions, there were certain geographical compulsions which could not be evaded. According to him, out of something like 562 states, the vast majority are irresistibly linked geographically with the dominion of India. Mountbatten stressed the urgency of the situation and said, "If you are prepared to come, you must come before 15th August. You cannot runaway from the dominion Government which is your neighbour any more, then you can runaway from the subjects for whose welfare you are responsible."²⁰ He suggested for a negotiating committee comprising of representative Rulers of the States and Ministers of the Dominion Governments. The negotiating committee, accordingly, was spelt into two sub-committees, one to deal with Instrument of Accession and the other with the Stand Still Agreement. After a detailed deliberations in these two sub committees the drafts were finalized on 31st July, 1947. By the Instrument of Accession, the States acceded to the dominion of India on the three subjects of defence, external affairs and communications, their content being as defined in list one of schedule VII to the Government of India Act, 1935. Accession did not imply any financial liability on the part of the acceding states. This instrument was intended only for the rulers of the fully

empowered one hundred forty States. Besides these one hundred forty States the Estates and Taluks where the Crown exercised certain powers and jurisdictions were also counted as 'States'. These numbering over three hundred. Another Instrument of Accession was prepared for these estates and Taluks. While preserving the form of accession the document vested all the residuary powers and jurisdiction in the Central Government. Subsequently an ordinance was promulgated such as 'extra-provincial jurisdiction ordinance'. Another Instrument of Accession was devised for the States (Seventy in number) in Kathiwar, Central India and the Simla Hills to ensure that these Rulers did not exercise higher powers than they had prior to 15th August, 1947. All these three cases, the Stand Still Agreement was common. It laid down that all agreements and administrative agreements as to matters to common concern specified in the Schedule there existing between the Crown and the State should continue until new arrangements in this behalf were made. The Instrument of Accession together with its subject matter had been criticized in the strongest term because of the absence of financial commitment to it. They regarded the relationship to be evolved out of accession would be too nebulous. However, the critics could not understand the basic position and the urgency of the situation and did not give any thought to what would be the position of the States on 15th August if there were no accession, the States would be independent

and the border states would be at liberty to ally themselves with Pakistan.

Hectic political activities were going on to persuade the non-complying Rulers to accede with India. Some of the Rulers were either hostile to the plan of accession or were sitting on the defence. Some States announced their intention of declaring their independence and Hyderabad and Travancore gave the lead and their lead was followed by some others whose attitude was naturally causing the Government of India some anxiety. Meanwhile, the Muslim League leaders were also active to persuade some of the States to accede and were provoking the Rulers by offering concessions for joining Pakistan. The League leaders concentrating in particular on some border States. Another attempt was made by Nawab of Bhopal by initiating a move to form a third force out of the Princely States. Maharaja of Travancore and Maharaja of Jodhpur continued to be intractable, ultimately, however, put signature on the Instrument of Accession. Maharaja of Indore, Dholpur, Bharatpur, Bhillaspur and Nabha despite reservations ultimately signed on the accession document. In spite of the major success of the States Department under the leadership of Sardar Patel in acceding nearly four hundred forty States with India before 15th August, 1947, but some major States did not sign over the Instrument of Accession before 15th August, 1947. Protracted negotiations had been on to bring all those left before states both

strategically important and non-important within the fold of Indian Government.

Thus prior to independence, the Indian States numbering nearly five hundred sixty joined hands either during July-August 1947 or between 1947 to 1950. Two hundred sixteen States were merged in the existing provinces, sixty one were constituted into new Centrally administered areas, two hundred seventy five were integrated to create new administrative units, Rajasthan, Madhyabharat, Travencore-Cochin, Saurasta, PEPSU, Hyderabad, Mysore and Jammu Kashmir. While integrating States, linguistic and ethnic homogeneity or historical traditions were taken into consideration to the extent possible. It should also be mentioned that the Government of India had provided some kind of concessions for smoothening the process of accession. To V.P.Menon, "The grant of Privy Purses to the rulers was a sort of quide-proquo for the surrender by them of all their ruling powers and for the dissolution of their States".²¹ Apart from the Privy Purses, the Government of India permitted the rulers to retain certain private properties and guaranteed them the personal rights, privileges and dignities.

Thus the process of merger of the Princely States by way of accession had been a task of stupendous hazards and continuous perseverance. As the issue and contents of the Princely States had been different, there had been developed multidimensional mechanisms to resolve the heterogeneous hazards in the process of

accession. A thorough investigation with a descriptive note has been attempted to understand the ground realities behind the process of merger.

Differences in the modes of integration of the Indian States, as well as the fragmented pre-merger pattern of princely rule, have also had a considerable impact upon the process of merger. The common practice of speaking of the integration of the Indian States as if it were a single, undifferentiated process has tended to cloud and conceal these important differences. In fact there were three major ways in which the Princely States became integrated into independent India. The following table would speak for itself on the different modes of integration.

Modes of Integration

Model 1949 States Union	No. of States	Area	Population (Lakhs)
Rajasthan	18	128,424	152.97
Madhyabharat	25	46,710	79.41
MP&PU	8	10,899	34.68
Vindya Pradesh	35	24,800	35.77
Himachal Pradesh	21	10,600	9.89
Bombay	222	21,062	41.35
Goa-Cochin	2	9,142	376.03
PROVINCES			
	24	27,671	50.39
	15	31,749	28.34
	144	26,257	57.49
Maharashtra	18	10,870	27.85
U.P.	3	6,276	13.25
Madhya	3	1,592	5.19
Andhra	3	370	81
Bihar	2	623	2.05
West Bengal	1	1,321	6.41
Other States			
Jammu & Kashmir	1	84,471	402.16
Hyderabad	1	82,698	163.39
Mizoram	1	29,475	73.29
Kutch	1	8,461	5.67
Biharpur	1	453	1.27
Bhagal	1	6,291	8.38
Trinam	1	4,049	6.49
Manipur	1	8,620	5.79

Source: 1949: India and Pakistan Year Book and who's who 1949.

The table suggests that the largest numbers were grouped into seven States union and most of the rest were absorbed by

neighbouring British Indian provinces only a handful (Eight in number) retained their earlier political boundaries, either because of the large size or because of other special circumstances. It is also not surprising that different political patterns would emerge in these different political circumstances. It was expected that the States Union tended to be more fragmented politically than the other two types of arrangements. In the non-merged states of Hyderabad, Mysore, Jammu & Kashmir as well as in Travancore-Cochin (which comprised only two states) a concerted political regimentation was observed.

In addition to it there had been so many other occurrences taken place in the different parts of the country about the growing discontents against accession. During 1949-50 urgent measures and hectic attempts were undertaken to bring the different Princely States under the fold of the Government of India, for example, some States like Punjab Hill States, Bilaspur, Tripura, Manipur, Cooch Behar etc. were integrated with India as Commissioner's Province and some small states or estates of Southern and Eastern part of India had been viewed as isolated States and was merged with bigger States like Madras, East Punjab, United Provinces, Assam etc. However, while bringing some states to the fold of India the States Departments had to be much more attentive owing to the continuous discontents among the Rulers of those states to be merged with India. Examples are Hyderabad, Baroda and Jammu &

Kashmir. The events and issues, factors and forces behind the process of merger of the Princely States with India would lead us to certain important conclusions: (a) Integration or merger of the Indian States had been inevitable; (b) The Government of India through the States Department took active and positive role to realise the policy of integration. In fact all kinds of means from persuasion to coercion were used keeping situation into consideration; (c) Despite reluctance and discontents shown by some States Ruler, most of the Rulers had been more or less compelled to join with India. One can see, therefore, that there is nothing natural or immemorial about the territorial boundaries of independent India. They exist as the result of a particular mode of transfer of power from British colonial rule and of political negotiations between the leaders of independent India and the Rulers of independent States.

With this brief description one can well propose to venture the different perspectives of merger of the Princely States with special reference to Cooch Behar, one point is not out of order that while revisiting the merger history of Cooch Behar one should explore the necessary politico-historical canvas on which the State had been based. Since Cooch Behar is the gateway of north-east one can well propose the basic back ground of Cooch Behar State from the perspective of political history of north-east region of India.

The following chapter would necessarily be a study of background of State formation in India which would amply project the relevance of the psychological perspective of integration. A study would systematically be made to analyse the merger history of Cooch Behar on this projected canvas.

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