

**COLONIAL INDIA, PREDATORY STATE AND  
SOCIAL STRUCTURIZATION PROCESS  
'JALPAIGURI DISTRICT':  
A CASE STUDY (1865-1947)**

*Thesis submitted to the University of North Bengal for the Award  
of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Arts) in History*

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## To whom it may concern

Shri Shesadri Prosad Bose has completed his research within the stipulated period and according to the North Bengal University norms for the preparation of his dissertation entitled ***Colonial India, Predatory State and Social Structurisation Process: Jalpaiguri District; A Case Study (1865-1947)*** for the purpose of the award of Ph.D. in history.

The scholar has worked honestly and sincerely to consult all primary and secondary sources. So, I have no hesitation to recommend submission of the thesis for evaluation.

  
Tapas K Roy Chaudhury  
01.01.2005

## Preface

The history of the Jalpaiguri District is a relatively neglected field of research investigation. Whatever writings have been done so far have been either reiteration of the position held by the official chronicler employed by the local chieftains or the positions held by the British officials. Both of them do not qualify for any guidance for contemporary policy decisions after serious academic scrutiny. Besides, they do not appear to be tenable in many areas in whatever micro-study we have already done. In addition to it what is being felt now is that no scholar has so far explored and far less used the privates papers of the local chieftains, zamindars and jotedars to closely examine the system of land control, nature of intermediary tenure holdings, varieties of tenancy rights, production relations, impact of prices, market mechanism and the social structuration process.

The proposed scheme is addressed to the issues mentioned above to develop a full-fledged study of the Jalpaiguri district and to fill in the gaps in our knowledge for some practical purposes. The Census Handbooks and District Gazetteers too require updating of information for administrative purposes.

While the basic objective is academic the work, however, is needed for some very important practical purpose. The region being very close to Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, a large number of immigrants from across the border have settled in this district and presumably threatening to marginalise economically and demographically the original inhabitants of this region. The original inhabitants are Koch, Rajbansi, Mech, Dhimal, Totos, etc., and in the wake of large scale migrations of the people from different ethnic and socio-economic background, a good part of land being transferred from the locals to the immigrants. Besides, in the service sectors too, marginalisation of the locals is being felt. The land reforms which the Government of West Bengal has already done certainly reduced the unbridled authority of the landholders and they granted some tenancy rights to the occupancy ryots and bonded labourers. But the evil still persists. What we have felt in the course of our investigation that the crisis may be attributed to the genesis that remained embedded in the colonial policy decisions and perhaps it has not been properly addressed. Consequently, articulation of local resentment in the form of separation movements are taking place and violence is being restored to in the absence of constitutional redress. An effective intervention is immediately needed and the study purports to explain with primary data the total dislocation caused by the Colonial administration and has been perpetuated and aggravated over the years in the post-independence era for either lack of knowledge or due to pressure group politics, stifling the process of economic and social development in this sensitive region.

The proposed work purports to contribute to the understanding of the history of Jalpaiguri region which still remains a grossly neglected area of study.

## Acknowledgement

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*At Jalpaiguri, I have received help from the Librarian of Azad Hind Pathagar and the Librarian of Jalpaiguri Zilla Granthagar. The extensive help and hospitality offered by Mr. Pronoto Kumar Bose, son of Mrs. Pratibha Bose and Mr. Bose at Jalpaiguri Raikat House could not be forgotten. I had also had discussions with him and Mr. Umesh Sharma about the land tenure-system of the Baikunthapur estate. I owe a deep debt of gratitude for allowing me to consult the Raikat family papers and to take photographs of some rare maps of Jalpaiguri. I am particularly grateful to the management and staff of several institutions for providing access to source materials: The Indian Tea Plantation Association (Jalpaiguri), National Archives of Bhutan, National Archives of India, Delhi; West Bengal State Archives; National Library, Kolkata; West Bengal Secretariat Library; Cooch Behar District Library; Directorate of Land Record and Survey Office, Kolkata, Kolkata High Court and Jalpaiguri Municipality. I would like to extend my special gratitude to the Librarian of Azad Hind Pathagar, Jalpaiguri Mr. Manas Bhattacharyya and Bidisha Chakraborty, Research Officer of West Bengal State Archives; Surya Kanta Karmakar, Librarian at Directorate of Land Record and Survey Office, Kolkata and Suparno Pathak, Senior Editor of Ananda Bazar Patrika; Dr. Amal Das, Head of the Department of History, Kalyani University and Dr. Asoke Ganguly furnished me with useful primary and secondary source materials and have offered valuable suggestions for which I am beholder of them. In*

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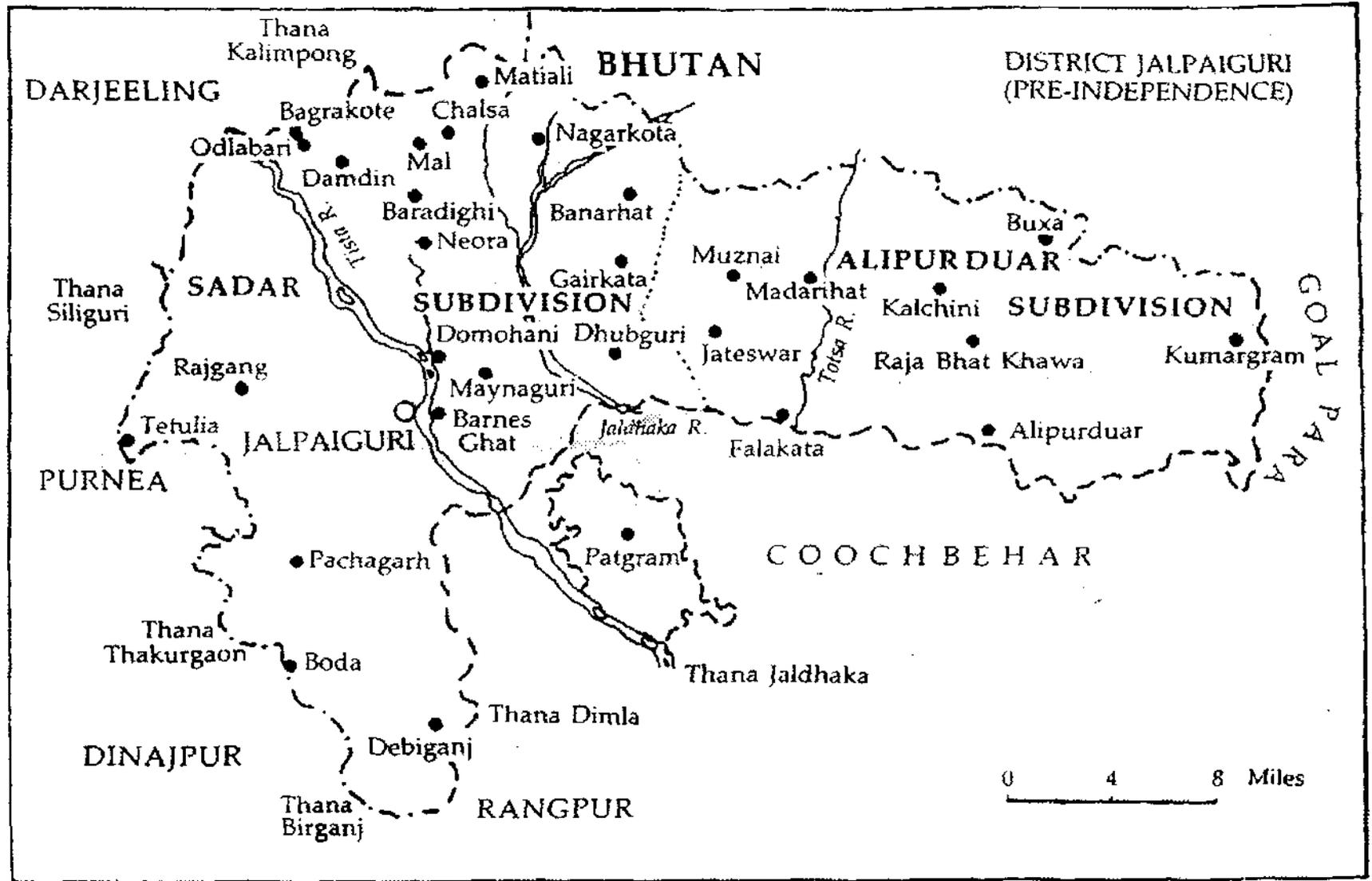
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Map of Pre-Partition Jalpaiguri District



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION: SITUATING THE PROBLEM IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COLONIAL PREDATORY STATE SYSTEM

Till now the major thrust of the academic/intellectual circle, while dealing with the Modern Indian history, is colonialism. But the major error which we often make is in equating Colonial India with a totally non-modern, traditional and a pre-capitalist society. But the characteristic backward features in true sense were not only the hallmark of the *Raj* only it was also the feature of the pre-colonial society, economy and polity; in fact backward aspects of British India's economy and society were rather well structured parts of modern Colonial economy. The failure of indigenous capitalism to industrialise the country did not mean that it was traditional or that it was overwhelmed by tradition, but that this incapacity itself was the product of the same process of Colonialism which gave birth to this capitalism in India. While for European capitalism the preconditions were provided by feudalism and pre-capitalism, for present day India, the basic precondition was provided by the Colonial economy and society which were parts of world capitalism.

It is quite ironical that the forces which were responsible for rapid industrialisation, social and cultural progress in Britain also the forces that maintained economic underdevelopment, social and cultural backwardness in India. In order to get a full grasp of the impact of British colonial policy on our society and economy it is necessary to discuss the different stages of colonisation of the Indian economy.

In order to study the stages of British colonisation in India it is necessary to keep in mind the mode of production, especially the system of extraction of surplus existing in India on the eve of British conquests; the other is the nature of British imperialism, which was subject to change as British economy was transformed under the impact of the Industrial Revolution.

In the pre-colonial period the primary method of surplus extraction throughout India was the levy of land revenue on behalf of or, in the name of the sovereign ruler. The way in which claims to land revenue were assigned, *i.e.*, how this share of the surplus was distributed among members of the ruling class defined the basic elements of polity. The Zamindars, a hereditary or semi-hereditary class of superior right holders over the land also took share in the surplus. Further a good degree of stratification existed within the peasantry. The village was usually the unit of assessment of land revenue and there was the imposition of various rates on the peasants by the upper strata of the peasants in order to fulfill the revenue demands of the state. Further there was a financial pool for "village expenses" and certain customary payments to village artisans and servants formed the basis of village community. This picture helps us to conceive that the pre-colonial Indian village community was a instrument of subsidiary exploitation of the lower segment of the peasantry and the village labourers by the upper strata. The ruling class and perhaps Zamindars found solace in these mechanisms since by authorising an unequal distribution of the revenue burden they ensured its fuller collection.

This was the kind of economy of which the English became masters in Bengal and Southern India during the decade and a half following the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The acquisition of *Diwani* in Bengal and *jagirs* in Northern *Circars* and elsewhere provided rationalisation for the main acquisition, the power to levy and collect land revenue and other taxes.

The East India Company was then controlled by the merchant-capitalists of London. These merchants imported Indian piece goods that was financed mainly by the export of treasure. Now, suddenly they found that through this new conquest they could be able to buy without having to pay, yet be able to sell at the full price. This could be possible by treating the entire revenue of the country as gross profits. From these "gross profits" all the expenses necessary for maintaining the government and army, and law and order – the costs of maintenance of the existing system of exploitation – had to

be deducted in order to yield the net profits. These could also be invested for the purchase of Indian commodities, the so-called "investment". The purchase of these commodities in conditions where the buyer had a monopoly, and their sale in markets throughout the world, further enlarged the profits before the "tribute".

Marx saw the tribute from India as a typical form of primitive accumulation in the colonies. The "tribute" in its earliest phase was one of the gross plunder of accumulated treasures and revenue sources of sub-indigenous rulers by the East India Company and its servants. In 1881 this tribute amounted to "more than the total sum of income of 60 million of agriculture and industrial labourers of India". By that time as England had become a capitalist nation it had no scope for primitive accumulation.

In this context the role played by the European Agency Houses should be mentioned. The Agency house was the "Characteristic unit of private British trade with the East". The origin of the Agency houses in Bengal was at the initiative of the British free merchants and the Company's servants. The operators of these Agency houses used to receive fund from their constituents free of interest, which they invested from time to time, as they accumulated in Government securities or remitted to Europe. They also sponsored the export trade by advancing capital from the public, treasury, not always in money but very often in negotiable paper for the China remittance and for the supply of indigo on contract. As a result of these inducements a huge amount of capital came to be invested in indigo factories, saltpeter works and other branches at industries where a huge rate of interest was allowed. Further, the opportunities offered by the Act of 1793 to private speculators, the indigo enterprises, the expanding export trade of Calcutta, favoured the fortunes of these Agency houses and they now could act as bill brokers, ship-owners, insurance agents and purveyors. The Charter Act of 1813 helped the European private traders to indulge in speculations. Now several Agency houses sought permission to send their own ships to England with sugar, cotton, piece-goods and other articles from India.

By the early years of 19<sup>th</sup> century the initial stage of the Industrial Revolution in England reached completion and the British Colonial relationship with India reached its second or "Opium" phase. As India slowly lost world markets for its craft products, so she could not pay the tribute by the export of its manufactures. So this sudden change brought a crisis in the realisation of tribute. India could not even pay in Indigo and Cotton in the face of West Indies and US competition, a failure marked by the fall of agency houses in 1820s. The ultimate solution was found in the export of opium to China. Two things now happened; one the Indian weavers which Furber was found to be a beneficial gift of the drain in its first phase disappeared and there was rapid extension of the cultivation of opium.

This new opium phase of primitive accumulation continued to rely totally on tax-rent extraction. As the tax-rent extraction intensified (outside the Permanent Settlement areas) certain changes were visible in the relations between the colonial ruler and the ruled. Unlike the previous regimes, where there were allowances for payment in kind, now there was insistence for money rent; thus the old customary community relationships, hitherto sustaining a limited "natural" economy were blown asunder. The occupation of the Western Duars occurred at this stage of matured colonial economy.

In the pre-independence era Jalpaiguri was the northern most district in Bengal presidency. It was bounded on the west by the Purnea district of Bihar and Darjeeling district, on the north by Bhutan and Darjeeling district, on the south by the districts of Rangpur, Dinajpur and the Princely State of Koch Bihar and on the east by Goalpara district of Assam. In 1947, under the Radcliffe Award the five police stations of Patgram, Tetulia, Pachagar, Boda and Debiganj went to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).

The district is divided into tracts; one tract which lay to the west of Tista river and also Patgram to the east of the river came under the British rule after the East India Company received the Dewani in 1765. The total area of this tract in 1931 was 879 sq. miles. The other tract lying to the east of Tista, known as Western Duars had an area of 2,053 sq. miles.

In the perspective of administrative history of the Bengal Presidency the creation of the district of Jalpaiguri was most recent. It came into existence in January 1869 by the amalgamation of the Tetulia subdivision of Rangpur district with the Duars region which was annexed by the British.

**(A) Brief political history till the annexation by the British**

Part of the older tract, specifically speaking the *Chaklas* of Boda and Patgram, was under Zamindari estate of the Koch Bihar Raj, who had the status of Zamindars even in the pre-British days. The rest of the older tract was under the Zamindari of Baikunthapur. Baikunthapur in all probability became an independent territory under the rule of the *Raikats*, a Collateral Branch of Koch Bihar Raj; Sishu or Sisyasimha the step brother of Visva, being the first *Raikat*. In the early years the *Raikats* acknowledged the suzerainty of the Koch Bihar Raj. But from about 1588 till 1770s, that is, for nearly two centuries Baikunthapur was in reality an autonomous semi-feudatory Kingdom paying tribute to the Mughal Govt. After the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa was conferred in 1765 upon the East Indian Company by Shah Alam, the Company entered into relations with Koch Bihar and Jalpaiguri. In 1774 the Raikat Derpadeva of Batrishazari or Baikunthapur, was confirmed to his possession by the Company but a revenue was assessed on his lands and he was treated as an ordinary Zamindar. After 1793, Baikunthapur was settled in perpetuity.

So far as the Western part of Duars in Jalpaiguri district is concerned it was once controlled by the State of Koch Bihar till the early part of the eighteenth century. Bhutan took possession of this territory later in the wake of internecine quarrels among the members of the Koch Behar Raj family. Many of them in their interest sought the assistance purely on verbal basis and never being authenticated by any treaty or protocol. British occupation of this territory took place in 1865 as a result of the Bhutan wars.

(b) **Brief description of socio-economic conditions before the British annexation**

The pre-British socio-economic state the region and her people under investigation resembles the Asiatic mode typology. The village communities developed the character of an enclave; production and consumption being guided by their own ethos and needs and had developed a culture of self-sustenance which was undisturbed by any demographic change or by the consumerist culture till the eighties of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

At the base of the revenue-collecting pyramid stood the bed rock of all social institutions, the village. Each village can itself be called a small pyramid.

The dominant village groups could be regarded from two aspects.

The dominant village groups from the economic perspective were divided into village-land holding class or rich peasant who employed the labour of sharecroppers and the agricultural labourers. From the political point of view the village oligarchy decided the affairs within the village and controlled its relations with the outside world through its headman.

Tweedie the Deputy Commissioner undertook an enquiry on the condition of the tenants of the Western Duars in 1866. He held the view that in the pre-British era there were at least three categories of people involved in the ownership and cultivation of land, *viz.*, *Jotedars*, *Chukanidars* and farm labourers. He also cited the existence of *rayat* whom he intended to distinguish from the *adhiars*.

Dr. Buchanan Hamilton made some critical observations in 1809 about the economic structure in Patgram, Boda and Baikunthapur regions. The Patgram estate which was the property of Cooch Behar, was let to large farmers; some of whom held under leases called *upanchaki* which were granted for a certain specified farm and not according to a particular area so that their rent cannot be increased not their lands measured.

There was the *Kharij Jotedars* who paid their rents directly into the office of the Raja's Collector and the *Dihibandi* group who paid their rents to the village officers.

The large farmers used to let out a part of their land to under-tenants who were capable of paying their rent and cultivated the remainder through *Prajas* on the usual sharing tenure.

In Boda there were about 402 *mauzas*, 27 large *Kharij* farms. Besides this there was the existence of rent free lands which had been given to religious persons and to his servants. There were wealthy farmers called *tahutdars* who were appointed by Raja according to the wishes of other tenants. The lands were not measured when the settlement of the Raja's estates was made. The tenants were averse to such a course, who had paid a small amount of rent. If any tenant had fled away, the others paid the rent until they could procure a new tenant or else they divided the land among themselves. In the year 1788 land measure was first undertaken in Baikunthapur estate which was divided into fifteen *taluks*. In this region there was the absence of large tenants. The rents were low owing probably to the vicinity of Bhutan and Sikkim, 'where there is much waste land and a large proportion of the tenants are constantly removing from one jurisdiction to another'. Originally the farms were let by guess measurement or by *Kaldari* or 'Plough', *i.e.*, a farm was estimated to contain as much as could be cultivated by a certain number of ploughs. There was no subordinate village establishment.

Socially speaking the Rajbansis even in the pre-colonial era constituted the most numerous group among the autochthons of the district. Their accurate origin, status and past history remain obscure. Existing history is largely based on the accounts left by the colonial administration and Colonial ethnographers. They belonged to a semi-tribal community who for a considerable period were settled agriculturists with regional diversities, raising crops mainly using a plough drawn by bullocks, though retaining traces of slash and burn practices or hunting and gathering methods.

The Rajbansi society was somewhat structureless either in forms of *varna* differentiations or in terms of economic definitions of classes. It is true that most of the Rajbansis are Hindus, but actually they were outside the pale of core Hindu culture. The dynamism of the erstwhile Rajbansi society was

sought to be derived from a sense of Kinship and supported by a feeling of each and every member of the society being born to either agnatic or utirine relationship to the other. Therefore, caste or for that matter *varna* categories of core Hindu society had never had much influence in their social structuralisation process. So the concept of untouchability was alien in the Rajbansi culture and the society was more or less egalitarian. Elitism in the old Rajbansi society was largely determined by the Patron-client relationship between the *Jotedars* and the rest of the community. The relationship therefore was vertical, though occasional cases of horizontal relationship among the elites, *i.e.*, *Jotedars*, through marriages, contributed only in the perpetuation of their elitist status.

Apart from the Rajbansis the Mechs were one of the original inhabitants of the Duars and adjacent tracts. Since the 13<sup>th</sup> century the Mechs experienced a process of both Hinduisation and Islamisation. The society and economy of the Mech community was the same as the Rajbansis; static and totally aloof from the outside world.

**(C) Methodological issues:**

Since the work is of empirical nature and to be done on the basis of archival materials, the approach to the study will be generally conducted by the analysis of the Universe originating from dependable variables. It is difficult to fit this kind of study into the framework of a paradigm. Because paradigms are generally being done on the tentative grounds. On the contrary, a non-paradigmatic approach assumes that the social constants being not clearly defined the study can proceed only on the basis of variables.

Therefore, on methodological consideration it may be assumed for this study that –

- (i) The economic situation is held under theoretical scrutiny is related to the operation of Colonialism.
- (ii) The Colonial state being predatory the quantum of extractions by the State as revenue should be interpreted for a meaningful

understanding of the issue with reference to percentage of the G.D.P.

- (iii) Colonialism penetrated into different regions with varied civilizational standards and had diverse penetrational strategies.
- (iv) The act of penetration is suspected to destabilise the erstwhile structure of society by releasing new structural forces and resulting in new structure in Colonial interest.

All these postulates are being held as dependable variables amongst many others which generally encumber a social situation and they may help to achieve a result of justifiable grounds. So it is always through formulations of hypothesis with all the logically related auxiliary hypotheses that the work can proceed.

#### (D)

Since the hypotheses can be examined largely in the context of the economy of the territory the conceptual changes in economic history required deeper attention. Recent decades have seen important changes in the objectives, techniques and methodologies of economic history. As a confluence of two different streams of thought and practice – that of the economic theorists on the one hand and that of general or political historians on the other – economic history often lost its course. Regarding the concept of universal theory, history and economics, these two branches of Social Science reflected the characteristics of its diverse ancestry. The historical methodology while treating theory as the child of empirical data in Social Sciences, prefers to contextualise any 'Unique' event in the background of space and time. The attempt to underrate theory have found expression in Sir John Clapham's article on 'Economic History as a Discipline' in the Encyclopaedia, where he strongly advocated of the possibility of a new kind of economic history with statistical records, while undermining the scope of abstract theory.

In this respect while distancing from the event as well of any universal theory, a historian collects the empirical data and then evolves a hypothesis on a number of variables.

Conversely in spite of its often high descriptive merits, the older type of institutional history was little regarded by economists; which according to them was too loosely constructed to conform to the canons of logical analysis. The study of prices, wages and profits provides an endless series of problems in the social development of early modern society comprising saving, investment, private and public borrowing, and the consequences of all these on production and consumption.

To assess the interaction of such variables we are likely to have to rely on data which an economist would dismiss as flimsy and unreliable. In this respect his primary objective is first to evolve an universal theory and then he selects dependable variables which fit into his theory.

But the most refreshing characteristic of economic historiography in the last quarter century has been a growing degree of integration between history and economic theory. This has been possible because of the flexible stance adopted by these two. The most notable recent change in the relationship between economic history and economic theory may be characterised as a move away from exogenous and towards endogenous theory. Purely exogenous theory was invariably proved either too general or wholly irrelevant to the needs of the working historian. Its logical modes will continue to be a successful source of working hypothesis; but his greater need is for working tools, and it is this which is creating new, empirical, statistical methods which are emerging endogenously from the stuff of history itself.

The new element in demographic and conjunctural history desires partly from its use of material, partly from its use of new techniques. Demographic movements often appear as universal grounds well due to some far distance occurrence or as an undercurrent or at least a continental scale. Their investigations therefore need to work on an international scale. So now even the historians accustomed to deal with 'Conjunctural' situations have admitted that certain tendencies recur and are recognizable to the historian whose vision is broad or long enough to discern the underlying similarities. So they had to subscribe to some of the universal aspect of theory which the economists propounded.

On the other hand the economists have shown much flexibility in selecting the dependable variables.

So the merger of this two diverse schools and practices produced a better scope for the economic history itself.

The core issue in the colonial socio-economic history so far have been whether the Colonial rule actually had been able to transform the erstwhile socio-economic structure of India. In short, whether the rule was predatory or not. While the traditional view postulating a qualitative transformation of the rural society has recently been questioned by the continuity school which views this transformation as a continuation of the pre-British system. But the present work is devoted to explore the mechanics of the process of penetration of the British Colonial authority in the capital market in the northern part of Bengal, and attempts to trace the nature and character of new socio-economic changes in the North Bengal society and polity for which the introduction of the *jotedari* system and the new land policy of the British was responsible. Further the present study attempts to examine the intensity of colonial penetration in the economy through the introduction of tea industry in North Bengal by a process of commercialising cash-crops.

In the socio-economic field it will suggest the socio-economic dislocations and the character and morphology of protest movements in North Bengal.

## II

The Western or Bengal Duars were eleven in number extending along the foot of the Himalayas between the Tista and the Manas river. (At present the Bengal Duars have an area of 1,968 sq. miles but were supposed to comprise about a 1,000 sq. miles more in 1865).

The Duars region is a strip to land about 20 miles in breadth from north to south. It is about 180 miles in length from west to east. Beginning from the eastern bank of the Tista river it extends eastward along the entire

southern boundary of Bhutan. It comprises the eastern part of Jalpaiguri district known as the Western Duars and it extends further east covering the northern strips of Goalpara and Kamrup and a north western portion of Darrang district of Assam. The term Duar means passes, gate. It is wrongly applied to the level tract upon which the mountain passes open. Thus a much wider meaning has become attached to the word than that which etymologically belongs to it. From west to east the Duars are named Dalimkote, Mainaguri, Chamurchi, Lucki, Buxa, Balka, Guma, Chirang and Bagh.<sup>1</sup>

The contemporary evidences throw insight not only on the history of Assam and Cooch Behar Raj State but also on the pre-colonial political conditions of the Duars region. The chronicles of the Cooch Behar Raj family show that Bishu, the grandson of King Hajo not only became the King of Kamrup in the 1522 but was the founder of Cooch Behar Raj family. His brother Sishu was the founder of Raikat family of Baikunthapur, the Rajas of Jalpaiguri. Sishu and his descendents held the Baikunthapur sub-kingdom originally as vassals under Cooch Behar Raj. Baikunthapur Kingdom of the Raikats included Moynaguri-Jalpesh areas of the Western Duars.

In earlier time the Kingdom of Cooch Behar expanded its empire upto Dalimkot on the east bank of the Tista river. In those days the Kingdom of Cooch Behar Raj included half of Assam and it extended beyond the Karatoya river in the west and upto the foothills of the Himalayas comprising the western sector of the Western Duars.<sup>2</sup> In this period and for a long time afterwards the Bengal Duars or the Western Duars not a well-defined territory. The Cooch Behar Raj had considerable portion of territory within his dominions in the Maraghat and Chamurchi are. For some tracts he used to receive tribute from the Bhutias. It is said that the Deb Raj of Bhutan paid tribute to the Maharaja Prannarayan of Cooch Behar.

The original inhabitants of Rangpur, Cooch Behar, Goalpara, Kamrup and Darrang districts had been predominantly the "Kochs", subsequently known as the Rajbansis. The Rajas of Darrang and Cooch Behar, the Raikats of

Baikunthapur and many other lesser chiefs of this class ruled over the entire region lying on the southern and western side of the Duars including the Western sector of the same.

From the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, there began the repeated invasions of the Bhutias into the Bengal Duars region. As there was no powerful chief to protect the local inhabitants had to purchase peace on payment of taxes demanded by the Bhutias. Later on, the Bhutias made permanent arrangements for regular collection of these taxes as land-revenue and capitation taxes. From these events it is clear that there was a rapid decline of the Cooch Behar Raj over the larger portion of the Duars region. Further the Raja of Baikunthapur who was holding both Jalpesh and Mainaguri became independent ruler.

During the time of the Mughal invasion of Cooch Behar Kingdom in the first decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (1710-11), the attempt of Raja of Baikunthapur to annex a part of the territory of the king of Cooch Behar by joining with the Mughals failed. On the occasion of a treaty between the Mughals and the king of Cooch Behar, the Raja of Baikunthapur made an arrangement for his large number of Muslim subjects in his territories and a good number of them were sent beyond Moynaguri areas of the Duars. But the majority of the settlers there had been the Rajbansis and the reclamation of jungles from the western sector proceeded eastward in a systematic way.

In the western sector, the Rajas of Baikunthapur fought many fierce battles with the Bhutias. Although many villages of the Rajas of Baikunthapur changed hands frequently in course of such conflicts but the Moynaguri and Jalpesh areas could not be annexed by the Bhutias.

In 1765 the East India Company got the right of Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. To drive away the Bhutias, the Cooch Behar Raj made a pact with the Company in 1772 whereby Cooch Behar virtually became a feudatory state of the Company, and the British forces drove away the Bhutias from Cooch Behar.

In the treaty of 1774 concluded between the Company and the Bhutias it was promised by the Bhutias that they would not make any incursion into the territories of the Rajas of Baikunthapur, who in the meantime had become a rent-paying Zamindar under the East India Company.

Even after these events the English could not evict the Bhutias from the Bengal Duars. The Bengal Duars were under the jurisdiction of Paro Penlop, the Governor of the Western division of Bhutan. The Tongsa Penlop's jurisdiction extended from the river Manas eastward and included all the Duars in Kamrup and Darrang in Assam.<sup>3</sup> These two chiefs were the key players in the Bhutan political circle. Next in rank to the Paro *Penlop* were Bhutanese officers known as "Soobah" or *Subah*. There were 3 such *Subahs* in the area between the river Tista and Gadadhar, the *Subah* of Dalimkote, Lakhimpur Duar and the Buxa Duar. Below the *Subahs* there were a class of officials known as *Kathams* who exercised immediate control in the management of the Duars.

Though subordinate in rank, the *Kathams* were the pivot of Bhutanese administration in the plains. It seems that the appellation "Katham" was prevalent only to the west of the Gadadhar. Eastward it took the forms of "Luskar, Wuzdar or Mondal".<sup>4</sup>

The demography under Bhutan had this peculiarity. They were not inhabited by the Bhutanese. The slopes of outer hills were inhabited by *Mechis, Garos, Cacharees, Parbatias, the Totos* and other tribes.<sup>5</sup> the plains were settled by the *Koch, the Rajbansis, Bengalees* and others.

It was during the annexation of Assam (1826), the Government of India realised the potentialities of the Duars region. In 1832 Robertson in his paper on Bhutan<sup>6</sup> expressed that the Bhutan could be reduced to "Our terms" by merely shutting up the passes and preventing the Bhutanese from coming to the plains or receiving any supplies therefrom. The expenses of retaining possession of the low-lands could be easily made by the establishment of "Hauts or market" on the principle of those in the Goalpara district. They would prove a "most fruitful source of revenue". In 1838 Pemberton in his

report remarked that “the Duars were the most valuable portion of Bhutan territory”.

It was from the Duars region that the Bhutanese obtained “almost every article of consumption or luxury”. Their trade was with the Duars and the priests and higher classes subsisted almost “exclusively upon their produce”. In 1841 Captain Jenkins in his letter to the Government of India expressed that the extensive tracts of the Duars could absorb the “out-pouring” of population from Rangpur and Cooch Behar. Their rich forest wealth could be well-utilised for the restoration of the timber trade of eastern Bengal. Before the outbreak of Duar war Ashley Eden, British Envoy to Bhutan tried to dispel the “mistaken impression” about the Duars. They were neither unhealthy, nor unproductive, “a portion of these under jungle may be unhealthy in the rains, but when the jungle is cleared and a free current of air admitted they will be just as healthy as any other part of the plains or healthier, for the natural drainage of the country is excellent...the soil is a rich black vegetable mould abounding with magnificent timber”. There is some of the “finest” grazing ground in India in the Duars.<sup>7</sup> From the Ambiok Camp he observed that “under a good Government”, the Duars would present a new panorama with flourishing “Cotton fields and tea fields and timber depots”.<sup>8</sup> Cecil Beadon the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal observed in his minute<sup>9</sup> that the Duars would provide a new field for the enterprise of European timber merchants and cotton planters. He stated that “there can be no reasonable doubt that the low lands of the Bengal Duars, being nearly ten times as large as Darjeeling Terai...would yield a revenue of not less than four or five lakhs of rupees while amount to be realised by the sale of waste land would be very considerable”. More information was gathered during the time of the Duars war; lime deposits near Buxa were so abundant that it would end the monopoly of Cherapunji in Assam. The country was rich in “tea soil, lime and timber”.

The *Dharma Raja* had prevented the agriculturists from “Cultivating tea lest the profitable trade with Tibet be affected”. Col. Haughton estimated that

the revenue of the rice tracts alone will yield two lakhs of rupees in a few years.

Slowly there was a visible change of the policy of the Government of India towards Bhutan. This change of policy was closely related to the rapid economic prosperity of Assam due to the extensive cultivation of tea. But Assam's resources could not however be fully utilised so long as Bhutan distracted the attention of the Government.

It is natural that the Governor-General asked Jenkins to submit a specific plan to end all existing disparities with Bhutan.<sup>10</sup> Jenkins expressed the view that the British Government without appealing to her (Bhotan) reason should not embark upon the strong arm policy.

On the occasion of murder of Gambhir, the Kacchari, Duar-Officer by some Bhutanese the relation between the British Government and the Bhotan Government became strained. Jenkins looked upon the incidence with concern. He had administered the Duar efficiently and had been particular about the payment of the British dues. Should the lawlessness in the Duars spread into the British frontier, there was no authority in Bhotan to appeal to.

In January 1839 Jenkins proposed the annexation of the Kalling Duar. He further stressed in favour of annexation on the ground that Bhotan had not paid so far either the arrears of the current year's tribute for the Kamrup Duars.<sup>11</sup>

The Government of India sent Jenkins a note sounding caution. From the year of Anglo-Nepalese war, whenever the British Government considered the question of adopting a strong policy towards the Himalayan countries, it also pondered the possibility of adverse reactions among the Chinese at Lhasa or of anti-British conspiracies among the Himalayan countries. The Government of India however did not object to a temporary attachment of any Duars "for which a heavy arrear due or from the managers of which atonement may be requirable".<sup>12</sup> The Duars were to remain attached so long as Bhotan was not free from political turmoil. But whenever Bhotan should be in a position to negotiate, the British Government would listen to her claims and adjust them.

Soon the Government of India got involved into a problem in the adjacent Duars region. Char Duar and Kuriapara were on the eastern frontier of Darrang, and at the extreme southern end of Bhutan. A group of chiefs known as *Sat Rajas*, a sort of tribal people of the hills, subject to the Raja of Towang who again was a tributary of Lhasa, blackmailed these Duars people. The Government of India aspired that with the cooperation of the Raja of Towang, they would be able to solve the problems. But contrary to the expectation of the British the Raja of Towang did not show any interest to the letters which Jenkins addressed to him. Therefore the British were forced to take action and in October 1839, the lower Assam Sibandis started operations in Darrang as well as in Charduar and Kuriapara.

However the Government of India wanted Jenkins to hold those Duars only upto the end of 1840.<sup>13</sup> This was partly due to Lord Auckland's heavy commitments on north-eastern frontier of India and partly due to the absence of an express approval from England. However these expeditions made two aspects clear first Jenkins foresight regarding the problems relating to the north-east frontier was superior to his counterpart Pemberton who had visited Bhutan. Secondly contrary to the British anxiety, the Chinese showed little interest in the recent British invasion in the Bhutanese territories. But it was difficult to predict that in the long run how much the Chinese at Lhasa could keep themselves aloof from these events. On the part of the British this was the first test of a forward policy and now the British were willing to watch and see the results.

The Duars officers however learned nothing from the British resumption of the Darrang Duars. From Sidli there were fresh Bhotanese incursions in the Khuntaghat Pargana of Bijne.<sup>14</sup> In response Jenkins favoured the occupation of the remaining Duars in Assam and even those of in Bengal. However equally he was prepared to offer Bhutan a share of the revenue of the annexed Duars.

Bhotan saw no harm in that proposal because her main interest was in the income from the Duars. So as regular and handsome subsidy from the

Government of India would compensate for the loss of territories which she could never claim as her rightful possessions.<sup>15</sup>

In September 1841, the Government of India agreed to the annexation of the five remaining Duars in Assam. On 8 October 1841 Jenkins ordered Lieutenant Scott to complete the annexation of the Darrang Duars and on 11 November, Captain Mathic annexed the Duars in Kamrup. But despite these measures Bhutan did not put any strong resistance to the advancing British.

The next objective of the British was the pacification of Bhotan. In order to maintain a good and cordial relation with Bhutan Lord Ellenborough rejected the requests of the chiefs of Sidli and Bijni who wanted their Duars to be taken under British protection. Even the recommendations on this subject made by Jenkins were not entertained by the Government of India.<sup>16</sup>

In 1846 when Bhutan made requests for the subsidy the Governor General's Agent on the North-east frontier released the first instalment of Rs. 10,000 for the year 1845-46. Next year, in addition to the subsidy for 1846-47, he also paid Rs. 30,000 for 1842-43, 1843-44 and 1844-45. The Agent to the Governor-General thought that such a huge disbursement of money to Bhotan would convince her in the honesty of the British and it would also induce her to enter into the agreement which the Government of India so much desired.<sup>17</sup>

In the Bengal Duars region soon the Anglo-Bhutanese relation became strained on account of the reconciliation of Hargovind Katham with Bhotan. In the factional fight between the two *Dev-Rajas*, Har Govind Katham sided with the Ex-Dev. In retaliation the existing Dev Raja placed Durga Dev of the Baikunthapur Raikat family against Har Govind Katham. He was the *izaradar* of the Ambari-Falakata region, but he was not contended with these territories. Naturally, after this offer of Dev Raja, Durga Dev became elated at the prospect of grabbing the territories on the east bank of the river Tista, then under the occupation of Har Govind Katham. Soon the whole region between the river Tista and Jaldhaka became a battlefield between Durga Dev Raikat and Har Govind Katham. To keep the British frontier free from troubles, the Government of India sealed the border of Rangpur.<sup>18</sup> Ultimately Durga Dev was able to defeat his rival.

Naturally the British could not turn a blind eye to these incidents as Durga Dev was first a British subject and then an *Ijaradar* under the British. In January 1842, Dr. A. Campbell in charge of civil affairs in Darjeeling, was deputed to enquire into the situation. After going through the whole affair he found Durga Dev Raikat as the sole culprit and the Government of India took strong measures against Durga Dev who was told not to go to Bhutan territory without prior permission from the Rangpur Magistrate.

In the meantime Bhotan became willing to transfer the *izara* of Ambari-Falakata to the Government of India in the hope of the regular receipt of its rent. The Government of India readily accepted to hold Ambari-Falakata in firm. In February 1842, on an annual rent of Rs. 800 – the Government took over the management of the territory that Warren Hastings as a mark of friendship had conferred upon Bhutan.<sup>19</sup>

Even after the Katham episode the Anglo-Bhutan border was not peaceful. There were repeated reports about Bhutanese incursions within the British territory. In spite of the desire of the Government to get the boundaries “clearly defined by some distinct and lasting mode of demarcation” nothing was done.

Soon a boundary dispute occurred between the Koch Behar State and Bhotan but the British Government was not bothered about it as long as Bhotan did not commit any act of violence within the British territory. In respect of the Assam Duars, the Government was aware of its sovereign rights; to the Bengal Duars, on the contrary, it accepted long ago the similar rights of Bhutan. As a result of the attitude of the Government the Bhutanese frequently plundered the frontier villages of Cooch Behar Raj. Further the passivity to the frontier incidents in North Bengal emboldened the local Bhutanese officers and their under agents. On the incident of an organised robbery in Kamrup by the chief of Dewangiri, Jenkins advocated immediate occupation of the Bengal Duars. The Government of India also took some strong measures and the measures produced good results. The Government of Bhotan apologised and Jenkins deducted nearly 3,000 rupees from Bhutan's

subsidy, being the estimated value of the property plundered by the chief of Dewangiri. Soon there was a case of abduction of Arun Sing, a hereditary Zamindar of Guma who had settled in Ghurla by some Bhutanese from Bhalka Duar. The people at the Bengal Duars promised to take up arms against Bhutan if the British Government sent reinforcements for fighting on their sides. Jenkins therefore proposed that the Bengal Duars be occupied and the Government of Bhotan given a share of their revenue.<sup>20</sup>

Both the reports of Jenkins and the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal stated the weak character of the Central Government and the growing power of the *Penlops* of Tongsa and Paro who became virtual rulers of east and west Bhutan. The Lieutenant-Governor therefore advocated in favour of formal warning to the highest authority of the Bhutan Government and should this warning go unheeded by them Ambari-Falakata and Jalpesh "part and parcel of the Bykuntapore Zemindaree of Rangpore" were to be first annexed. If further measures were necessary, portions of the Bengal Duars should be occupied.<sup>21</sup> Lord Canning accepted the recommendations of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal and he (Lieutenant-Governor) was requested to inform the Dharma and Dev Rajas of this decision of the Government. The *Penlops* of Tongsa and Paro also were to be duly informed. But in the meanwhile the Mutiny of 1857 stayed all proceedings.

Naturally then Jenkins advised the Government of India on 12 October 1857 not to embark upon a forward policy relating to the Bhutan Government. For if British relations with Bhutan takes a hostile character, the Government at this juncture of mutiny would find it difficult to spare troops for the Bhutan frontier. So threats unless well supported by armed forces would only exasperate not frighten the Bhotanese. It should be mentioned that in the Revolt when disgruntled feudal princes actively participated in the Mutiny, Bhutan was quiescent. When the Mutiny ended it increased the debt of India by about £38½ millions and the military charges augmented the annual expenditure by about £18 millions. Obviously, there was little scope for an adventurist policy against Bhutan. The Government of India therefore

understood the arguments of Jenkins and abandoned the idea of pressing its demands upon Bhotan. A forward policy suffered defeat before it could be applied at all.

However, soon the Indo-Bhutanese relation was again strained on the occasion of a robbery in Ghurla from the Guma Duar. This incident forced the Government of India to take a strong action. On 31 January 1860, Lord Canning ordered Ambari-Falakata to be occupied; he wanted the Bhutan Government to be informed that this territory would be released only after the British demands were met.<sup>22</sup> Till now the British were committed to any policy of retributive coercion.

The Viceroy Canning had realised before the Mutiny that opening of dialogue with Bhutan was one way of ensuring stability on the frontier. In 1861 Henry Hopkinson, Commissioner and Governor-General's Agent, expressed that a mission might succeed in establishing a permanent Agent at the Bhutanese Court. The latter would be the "best instrument for paving the way for friendly intercourse with Lhasa".<sup>23</sup>

Before leaving India Canning expressed in a note<sup>24</sup> that "it is very expedient that a mission should be sent to explain what our demands are and what we shall do if they are not conceded". He was doubtful "as to placing an Agent in Bhutan" and thought the question could be decided "after the result of the mission is known". In July 1862, a messenger named Mukund Singh was sent to the Court of the Dev Raja. The reply he brought was unsatisfactory and contradictory.

The next mission was of Ashley Eden who was appointed as the British envoy to Bhotan on 11 August 1863. Eden was furnished with a draft treaty, covering nine points, *viz.*, (1) Peace and friendship between the two Governments should continue; (2) the Government of Bhotan within 6 months from the date of the ratification of the treaty should release persons and properties carried off from the British territories, Sikkim and Cooch Behar; (3) after the restitution of those persons and properties, the Government of India would deliver Ambari-Falakata to Bhotan on condition the latter guaranteed

against future depredations. The Government of India, however was willing to pay her an annual subsidy on account of that territory, should Bhotan agreed to transfer it to the Government of India; (4) the Government of India was prepared for full investigation and assure full redress for any outrages committed by British subjects in Bhotan territories; (5) the Government of India also agreed to surrender any Bhotanese found to have taken refuge in British territory after committing any serious offence in his own country; (6) the Government of Bhotan would act likewise if such offenders from British territory took shelter in Bhotan; (7) the Government of Bhotan should abide by the arbitration of the Government of India in all disputes with Sikkim or Cooch Behar; (8) it should receive with due honour British envoys sent from time to time; and (9) there should be free trade between the two Governments and both of them should accord to equal treatment to each other's subjects.<sup>25</sup>

But the Eden Mission ended in fiasco. Not only Tongsa Penlop objected to certain terms of the draft treaty but Eden was forced to sign a treaty of Penlop's liking. It was natural that for all the humiliations suffered by Eden and his party all the faults should be cast upon Bhutan. Fear and distrust among the Himalayan people shaped their attitude towards the British power no doubt but that Eden failed because of the unfair, unsatisfactory and the aggressive policy of the British Government was also not true. In fact the weakness of the theocratic-monarchisms in Bhotan was the main obstacle to Eden's success. The *Penlop* of Tongsa did not allow any agreement with the British until his own claims were settled. So the chance of success of Eden was a remote possibility.

In the period between a return of Eden's mission and the outbreak of the Duars War (April-November 1864) it was the Bengal Government which decided on the issue of war.

A memorandum dated the 6<sup>th</sup> May 1864 drawn up Eden at Darjeeling related the initiative of the Bengal Government. He stated that military occupation of Bhutan could be effected "without difficulty" and further he expressed the fear that the Government of India might be unwilling "to go so

far as to give the whole of Bhutan the benefit of British rule" and recommended the permanent annexation of the Bengal Duars.

It seems that as late as the summer of 1864 the Government of India had the idea of a limited retaliation. Financial and political compulsions in the wake of the revolt of 1857 were yet to be solved. The Bhutan Government was told that the "district of Ambari-Falakata heretofore held in rent from the Bhutan Government is permanently annexed to British dominion and all payment of rent from that district and the revenue from the Assam Duars to the Bhutan Government has ceased forever".

The Secretary of State Wood was averse in either annexing Bhutan or to reduce it and to impose terms and withdraw. He clearly stated "...on the whole I am of opinion that the occupation of all the Duars in the first instance is the best course to be adopted".<sup>26</sup> Thus the idea of "slow and successive", "punitive" operation of 1857 was given up and the Duars war was not inevitable.

Here was a policy which marked a significant departure from the previous traditional thinking about Bhutan. George Bogle's observation that an invasion of Bhutan was strategically and economically a blunder had given way to the thinking that for the Bengal Duars it was worth undertaking. The possibility of Chinese or Tibetan involvement in case of rupture with Bhutan did not worry the Bengal civilians now. The course of events henceforth leading to the outbreak of the Duar War (November 1864) leaves the impression that the Bengal Government left no option for which Canning had so vigorously advocated.

The Anglo-Bhutanese war did not last long and soon the Bhutanese were compelled to withdraw. Negotiations begun at Sinchula between Col. Bruce and Bhutanese officers. The Bhutan Government was told to tender apology for the insult of the British mission under Eden and surrender the treaty extorted from the envoy, and they must give up the guns abandoned at Dewangiri within 2 months. The final treaty known to the Bhutanese as the "Ten Article Treaty of Rawa Pani" provides for the cession by the Bhutan

Government in permanent sovereignty of the "whole of the tract known as the Eighteen Duars bordering on the district of Rangpur, Cooch Behar and Assam together with the taluks of Ambari-Falakata and the hill territory on the left bank of the Tista upto such points as may be laid down by the British Commissioner appointed for the purpose.... (Article II). The Bhutan Government agreed to surrender all British subjects as well as the subjects of the Chiefs of Sikkim and Cooch Behar (Articles III, VI and VII). In lieu of the abstraction of the entire revenue of the Duars the treaty provided for the payment of an annual subsidy of Rs. 25,000.00, the said amount could be enhanced upto Rs. 50,000.00 provided the Bhutan Government behaves like a good neighbour (Article IV). The Bhutan Government agreed to "refer to the arbitration of the British Government in all disputes with or causes of complaint against the Rajas of Sikkim and Cooch Behar and to abide by the decision of the British Government" (Article VIII). The article providing for free trade prescribed "no duties shall be levied on Bhutanese goods imported into British territories, nor shall the Bhutan Government levy arms duties on British goods imported into or transported through the Bhutan territories" (Article IX). By an announcement dated 4 July 1866, the Duars ceded by the treaty of Sinchula were attached to the Bengal Division of the Presidency of Fort William and were placed under the immediate control of the Lieutenant Governor.

An official document expressed the view that the rights of the British Government to all the Bhutan Duars including those of Assam and *taluk* Ambari-Falakata and the hill territory of the left bank of the Tista had been recognised. These territories were now ceded unconditionally forever. Thus Bhutanese consent for the "resumption" of the Assam Duars in 1841 in which then "no written agreement had been made<sup>28</sup>" was obtained after twenty-five years by the treaty of Sinchula. It was now possible to cut off Bhutan from direct contact with Sikkim by a readjustment of boundary. Further this treaty made it possible for trade with Tibet through the Chumbi valley in as much as

it had ensured free trade with and transit facilities through Bhutan. Surgeon Rennie highlighted the importance of the treaty in the following words.

“Though direct communication with Lhasa within a moderate period may not be practicable more extended commerce with Tibet than now exists is not necessarily precluded and it occurs to me that our present relations with Bhutan might be turned to useful account with reference thereto.”<sup>29</sup>

The Treaty of Sinchula took the first step of controlling Bhutan's relations with foreign countries and the Duar war helped to shape the policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of Bhutan. Nearly 2,000 sq. miles of land was annexed in the Western Duars by the Treaty of Sinchula which now became the fertile ground for British capitalism.

The British held that before the annexation of the Duars there was practically no well coordinated administration in the region. So after the formation of the district, the main task of the Government was to lay the foundation of administration which would in future become a part and parcel of the British economic exploitative machinery. The first administrative step was to extend by notification in the Calcutta Gazette in 1866 with the following acts of the Western Duars region - Act VIII of 1859 (Civil Procedure Code), Act XXV of 1861 (Criminal Procedure Code), Act X of 1862 (Stamp), Act XIV of 1859 (Limitation). Then followed an attempt to make a land settlement, the disputes in connection there with being tried by the ordinary civil courts according to the provisions of Act VIII. As this procedure delayed the settlement operations, it was resolved to bring the territory more directly under the Lieutenant Governor and Act XVI of 1869 was accordingly passed which removed the Bhutan Duars from the 1874 jurisdiction of the civil courts. The scheduled district Act XIX placed the entire jurisdiction as regards all cases relating to immovable property, revenue and rent in the hand of a special officer, *i.e.*, Deputy Commissioner who came to enjoy and exercise much greater power and authority than the District Magistrates of the non-regulated area.<sup>30</sup> In his work of administration Deputy Commissioner was assisted by two divisional officers and Superintendent of Police, the officer in charge of the district police administration. Till early 1940 all these officials

were British and they supervised a large body of Indian assistants and clerks. The Act XVI of 1869 enforced certain rules which had been framed by Lieutenant Governor for the guidance 'of the officer appointed to carry out the settlement of the country'.<sup>31</sup> These rules constituted the only law under which questions relating to land in the Duars can be settled. These rules did not extend Regulation VII of 1822 to the Duars region but only gave the impression that the Deputy Commissioner was to be guided by the provisions of the said Regulation: "they make the orders of the said special officer appealable to the Commissioner, and provide for the order of the Commissioner being final, subject only to an appeal to the Lieutenant Governor himself".<sup>32</sup> As far as the old Regulation portion of Julpigoree was concerned, the Act XV of 1874 made but little change.

To this was added Ambari-Falakata which though not within the Western Duars region was annexed at the same time from Bhutan. This area also was kept under "*Khas*" management. Prior to 1874 Government revenues in these areas were collected by farmers and petty *Tahsildars*, but as this system proved to be causing inconvenience to the people, it was finally abolished and the *Tehsil* officers were transferred to the Government Estates.

The 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries saw the vigorous penetration of British Colonial authority in these regions (non-regulation tract). The British authorities intervened in the non-regulated areas when situation demanded; they would not tolerate any kind of disturbances in these tracts which could put a great toll on the British economic interests. They introduced important changes in the agrarian system prevailing in the tract annexed from Bhutan (the area separated from Rangpur district was already under the purview of the Permanent Settlement) started periodic measurements of land and reassessment of revenue, vigorously sponsored the expansion of the tea plantation systems. The growing intervention of the Colonial state came to have a deep and far-reaching impact on the economy and society in Jalpaiguri district.

While the administrative set-up represented a crucial component of the power-structure that emerged during British rule, there were several other

important elements, *i.e.*, the European planters and their assistants with their Indian counterparts who exercised power and control, in the regulation tract, the *Zamindars*, their *amlas*, the *jotedars*, the moneylenders, grain dealers and traders. In the Duars region all the latter elements except the *Zamindars* and their *amlas* were present. Under the British rule they consolidated their position.

### III

In the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, *Niladdhaj* a scion of the Khen dynasty established his empire which included Goalpara, Kamrup districts in Assam, Rangpur, Jalpaiguri, Koch Bihar and part of Dinajpur region. But the invasion of *Hussain Shah*, the Nawab of Bengal, disintegrated the Khen empire and a number of Koch feudal lords made their presence at this stage.<sup>31</sup> One of these feudal lords was Hajo and his two sons *Chandan* and *Biswa Simha*. *Biswa Simha* in later year became the founder of the Koch Bihar state, while his elder brother *Sishu Simha* got the title '*Raikat*' which signified according to W.W. Hunter both posts of Prime Minister and Military General. Nevertheless, *Sishu Simha* at that time was in charge of warfare and administration. So the title *Raikat* signified only the responsibilities which were associated with the post of Prime Minister or Military General. Under the able guidance of *Sisu Simha* Rangpur and most parts of Jalpaiguri were conquered and thus the foundation stone of the Baikunthapur Estate was laid down. During the time of next *Raikat*, *i.e.*, *Shib Dev Raikat* a battle took place between the Koch Bihar King *Laxmi Narayan* and the Mughals in which the *Raikats* assisted the Koch King.<sup>32</sup> The reign of the next two successive *Raikats*, *i.e.*, *Monohar Dev* and *Manikya Dev* are uneventful.

During the time of Koch King *Modnarayan*, the Cooch Behar state was passing through a stage of internecine quarrel. There was a joint attack by *Darpanarayan*, one of the pretenders of the throne, and the *Dev Raja* of Bhutan. But the king was able to repel the invaders with the help of *Mali Dev Raikat*.

After the death of Modnarayan, Darpanarayan again with *Dev Raja* attacked Koch Behar. But the news of arrival of *Bhuj Dev Raikat* and *Yajna Dev Raikat* they fled and *Basu Dev Narayan* was declared as the King of Koch Behar. But soon a fresh bid of incursion took place in which *Jagat Narayan*, the brother of Darpanarayan took a leading role; the other collaborators were *Yagnanarayan* and the *Dev Raja* of Bhutan. As the news of the death of *Basudev Narayan Bhuj dev Raikat* again came and was able to defeat the invading party and *Mohendra Narayan* was declared as the King of Koch Behar. During the tenure of *Bhuj Dev Raikat* and glory and prestige of the *Raikats* reached its apex. Pressure on the state was exerted in past also. During the time of *Bishu Dev Raikat* there was an invasion by the Mughals. At that time, the *Bhutan Dev Raja*, Cooch Behar Maharaja *Mohendra Narayan* and *Bishu Dev Raikat* made an alliance against the Mughals.<sup>33</sup> However, the allied forces did not succeed; the Mughals were able to occupy Boda and Patgram. The *Raikat* family too was not free from succession disputes and political assassinations. *Dharma Dev*, brother of *Bishu Dev*, killed his son *Mukund* and became the *Raikat*. *Dharma Dev* made a treaty with the Mughal representative *Zabardast Khan* and it was agreed upon as terms of the treaty that the Mughals would return the *Baikunthapur* areas in lieu of which the *Raikats* would be empowered to collect and remit the revenue of the said areas to the Mughals. During the reign of the two successive *Raikats*, i.e., *Bhup Dev* and *Bikram Dev* there was a constant conflict with the *Dev Raja* of Bhutan. After the death of *Bikram Dev*, his brother *Darpa Dev* became the next *Raikat*. Taking advantage of the weakness of the *Raikats* due to repeated *Bhutia* incursions the *Rangpur Faujdar* *Muhammad Ali* attacked the Kingdom of *Baikunthapur*. The result of the war was that *Darpa Dev* was defeated in the war and was compelled to sign a treaty. As terms of the treaty *Darpa Dev* agreed to pay enhanced revenue to *Muhammad Ali*.<sup>34</sup> In 1773 a tripartite treaty took place between the East India Company, *Nazir Dev* of Cooch Behar and *Dev Raja* of Bhutan by

which Cooch Behar State was freed from the Bhutanese control and *Darpa Dev Raikat* became a Zamindar under the jurisdiction of the East India Company. Since then, *Darpa Dev* ceased to have any supervisory role concerning the Koch Behar State.

*Raikat* relations with the East India Company opened a new chapter in Jalpaiguri history. Regarding the land revenue assessment of the area different versions are being preferred, obviously on account of the fact that the research on it is incomplete. The permanent settlement document cannot be traced. Depending on the Rangpur papers one version has been constructed by A. Mitra and later noted verbatim in the Jalpaiguri Gazetteer. And the other version has been furnished by Jagadindra Dev Raikat. When Baikunthapur was annexed in 1773, the Zaminder paid an annual tribute of Rs. 10,000, but after an enquiry was made with the resources of the country in 1774 the revenue payable was increased to Rs. 25,000, which was further increased to Rs. 30,000 in the following year. This was maintained in spite of the Raja's energetic remonstrances. In 1779 occurred what Glazier described as the 'fictitious rebellion' of Baikunthapur. Balances had been allowed to accrue for three years, and in 1779 a sezawal was appointed to collect the revenue from the country directly. The sezawal sent in report that the zaminder had employed dacoits to murder him. He retired to Narea in Pargana Boda, but his people were attacked, one bandukbaz was murdered, others were wounded, and some thrown into the river. The settler of Rangpur took vigorous measures and issues a proclamation, threatening the zaminder that if he did not deliver himself up within fifteen days, he would forever be excluded from the pension of his land, which should be made over to his brother. The Raja was caught without any difficulty and brought to Rangpur. Two amins were sent out to enquire in the matter, and they reported that the sezawal himself had sent decoits into Baikunthapur who had plundered the country. The zaminder was released and the sezawal was made over to the fauzdar for trial, with what result is now shown. In 1780 a deduction of Rs. 6,238 was allowed on account of lands made over to the Bhutias and the

revenue paid in that year was Rs. 25,935. On this basis the permanent settlement made.

It is necessary at this stage to mention that the above account given in the 1951 Census Handbook, Jalpaiguri and later summarised in the Bengal District Gazetteer, Jalpaiguri have overlooked a number of important developments that took place during this time. Subsequent to the 1773 treaty with Bhutan the East India Company transferred 77 mauzas to Bhutan, which caused a great deal of ill-feeling between the Rangpur Collector and the *Raikats*. One year after this transfer Darpa forcefully recovered some of the areas from Bhutan, which finally led to British intervention. Mr. Harwood, the President of the Dinajpur Council negotiated a peace settlement and persuaded *Darpadev Raikat* to transfer Ambari-Falakata and Jalpesh to Bhutan in 1780. Besides, with the British contrivance Bhutan spread its tentacles on a large number of *taluks* in Chikliguri, Bhalka and Majherdabri around 1800. And 1815 the East India Company transferred to Bhutan another set of *taluks* namely Parorpar, Tapsikhata, Panch Kholaguri, Kamsinghaon, Chakoakheti, Sonapur and Raichenga. Bhutan also succeeded to secure Falakata in 1784. Though the British initially refused to reduce their revenue demand, however, after Harwood's negotiation the amount referred to above was deducted from the original revenue assessment and the Company took Rs. 28,338 as its share of the revenue, and not Rs. 25,935.00. Incidentally, the revenue assessment was further revised in 1781 after new remonstrances from the *Raikat Darpa Deva*. On account of the territories other than Jalpesh and Ambari-Falakata having being given to Bhutan, in 77 mauzas a sum of Rs. 9,453.00 was again deducted and the revenue was newly fixed at Rs. 18,880.00. The family history claims that remission of Rs. 3239.00 was further granted in 1784. Strangely enough in 1785 the revenue demand was suddenly enhanced by Rs. 6,238.00 and even at the time of ten year settlement this additional burden could not be removed in spite of repeated pleading and finally the revenue fixed at Rs. 25,935.00.

So what has been written in the Census Handbook is far from true. Besides, *Darpa Deva's* nephew *Bhim Kumar* was involved at that time in a

complicity with the Nepali Ganga Ram Thapa trying to usurp his uncle's authority over Baikunthapur. The Sannyasi affair between 1780-1786 was caused by the economic dislocation after the five year settlement was effected. Cooks like Devi Singh ruled the roost on the one hand and the commercial policy of the Company severally hurting the Indian peddlers and weavers. *Darpa Deva's* involvement in the Sannyasi rebellion had been triggered by his frustration with the British on account of their intransigent attitude as discussed above. However, Capt. Stewart's operation against *Darpa Deva* in 1773 was caused by the developments that followed after Anglo-Cooch Behar incident and had nothing to do with subservient political developments in the eighty's and ninety's of the eighteenth century. The Sannyasis and Fakirs often caused disturbances to the East India Company. At the end of 1772 there was a report that a party of Sannyasis were moving towards Cooch Behar to join and reinforce the Sannyasi army raised under *Darpa Dev*, Raja of Baikunthapur. Now the Sannyasis numbering about 5000 took possession of the fort of Santoshgunj commonly known as Rahimganj.<sup>35</sup> The *Nazir Deo* of Cooch Behar sought British help who were his old patrons. Some measures were taken by *Warren Hastings* to suppress the activities of the Sannyasis and Fakirs. *Captain Stuart*, commanding the 19<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Sepoys, was directed on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 1773 to proceed to Jalpaiguri and prevent the Sannyasis lived by *Darpa Dev* from escaping westward. *Captain Jones* also marched from Rangpur and the Governor directed another battalion from Baharampore to march immediately to cooperate with *Captain Stuart*.<sup>36</sup> Thus a serious military offensive was undertaken to suppress the armed Sannyasis under the control of Raja *Darpa Dev* *Captain Stuart* reached Jalpaiguri on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1773. The party of the Sannyasis could not hold their ground before the disciplined might of the Sepoys of the Company and ultimately after the dispersal of the Sannyasis, *Captain Stuart* transformed. That part of his estate which was affected by the political turmoil at that time is mentioned below.

The revenue calculation given either by the Census Commissioner and updated without scrutiny by the editor of the Jalpaiguri Gazetteer turns to be

as much faulty as the calculation given in the family history written by Jagadindra Dev Raikat. None of them is sure about the original *jama* and therefore all the accounts of remissions calculated by both appear to be incomplete. The amount of Rs. 6238.00 stated in the Census Handbook to have been remitted in 1780 is said to have been added, according to Jagadindra Dev Raikat, to the total East India Company's claim in 1785. Besides, the Census Handbook did not mention remissions amounting to Rs. 9435.00 in 1781 and Rs. 3239.00 in 1785 respectively. After having examined the Baikunthapur Zamindari property in the *Tauzi* Nos. 1, 2, 3, 14/3 of the present Jalpaiguri district and *Tauzi* Nos. 8, 9 of the Rangpore district we came to the conclusion that the total demand fixed in 1793 was approximately Rs. 24,868.09. Phoolbari having being gifted out by the British in 1815 came later and was free from British revenue demand though Sikkim used to earn from the Phoolbari area a sum of Rs. 15,000.00 or so per annum.<sup>37</sup> This transaction was induced partly by the fact that in 1815 a number of *taluks* discussed above were transferred to Bhutan from the Baikunthapur Estate.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century a tripartite struggle erupted between Nepal, Sikkim and British India over the possession of a small strip of land named *Morang* which is barely 288 square miles and situated at the foothills of the Himalayas on the northern side of West Bengal. Till the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Eastern Morang region was a part of Cooch Behar Kingdom and its geographical boundary extended upto Tarhut in the west and approached the slopes of the Himalayas on the north, and was administered by the Baikunthapur Zamindars known as *Raikats*.<sup>38</sup>

The Company's Government was not at the initial stage interested in the permanent possession of the said region as her Government at that time was preoccupied with the issues concerning Oudh, Marathas etc. But the strategic importance and timber wealth of the Morang region were hardly negligible issues. Slowly in due course the British were involved in the power struggle concerning the Morang region.

Theoretically the Morang region was under the Cooch Behar Kingdom. But on account of the difficulties which the Cooch Kings faced for the

succession issues, and for the aggression of the Mughals, the inhabitants of the Morang region fully utilised this opportunity to ignore the Cooch Behar rule. Subsequently the Baikunthapur *Raikats* also failed to exert their authority on the said region. Taking advantage of the state of affair Sikkim king *Phuntsog Namgyal* annexed the whole Morang region in 1642.<sup>39</sup>

By annexing this region Sikkim could now exercising control over the trade routes through this region and this issue was responsible for the future occupational struggle. But this annexation proved to be short-lived; for in the wake of Nepali expansion after the Gurkhas came to power, in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, all signs of Sikkim administration in the Eastern Morang were wiped out during 1770 to 1786.

But in the meantime East India Company's policy towards Eastern Morang had undergone some changes for a variety of reasons. The Baikunthapur estate was severally affected by the expansion of Nepali power in the Eastern Morang region. After the Dewani Settlement in 1765 the *Raikats* initially refused to accept the Company rule and occasionally they refused to pay the revenues to the Company authorities with the active support of the Sannyasis and Fakirs who revolted against the Company's revenue and business policies. But these activities of the *Raikats* proved to be self-defeating as the Sannyasis and Fakirs often melted in the jungles of Baikunthapur in order to avoid the direct confrontation with the Company's army, leaving the *Raikats* high and dry. In further, the Eastern Morang region, owing to the inefficient administration of Sikkim became a safe heaven for all the rebels in the northern part of Bengal, and the new revenue and commercial policy of the Company seriously destabilised the socio-economic set up of the entire zone and disposed the zamindars and the peasant class alike. This process also endangered the textile and silk industries and ruined the economic interest of the peddlers and itinerant traders.<sup>40</sup>

At last after the realisation of the mistake, the *Raikats* eventually revised their policy and their dispute with the Company regarding the assessment of revenue was settled by Purling, the Collector of Rangpore.<sup>41</sup>

The Court of Directors in London became very much interested in the Morang for its timber. In the year 1770 Ducurel, the first English Superintendent of Purnea was in favour of extending the Company's influence over the said region.<sup>42</sup>

Captain Jones tried to influence Warren Hastings for the annexation of the western bank of the river mahananda.<sup>43</sup> The matter, in fact, was under consideration of the Murshidabad Resident and *Naib Najim* and they were contemplating to bring the 'low countries' under the possession of the Bengal *Subha*.<sup>44</sup> The urgency to help Sikkim during the Anglo-Nepalese War (1814-15) and necessity of a trade route to Tibet further motivated the Company's Government to formulate a definite strategy and policy towards the northern part of the Company's territory.

The Morang issue assumed serious importance in the wake of Nepali design to extend Nepal frontier in the East beyond Western Morang. The effort of *Prithvinarayan Shah* to persuade diplomatically Warren Hastings to let him possession of the Eastern Morang in lieu of payment of annual tribute failed.<sup>45</sup> After the death of *Prithvinarayan Shah*, the frontier administrators planned to conquer the Eastern Morang and the proposed. Conquest encouraged some dissident Company subjects who took asylum in the Morang, to enter into the north-western part of the Rangpore district in the Company territory. This conspiracy alarmed Purling, the Collector<sup>46</sup> who informed the Calcutta authorities and sought definite instructions.<sup>47</sup> In addition to these further there was a clash between Jitpal Mallik, the Chief Jotedar and the Faujdar of Eastern Morang in which the Faujdar was killed. In response Munshiram the son of Faujdar sought the assistance of the Nepali officials. One *Ganga Ram Thapa* a Nepali official seized the opportunity and invaded this area. The warring factions were able to realise the real motives of *Gangaram* and they jointly decided to repulse *Gangaram*. But their attempt failed and now *Gangaram* in reply to *Bogle*, the Collector of Rangpur built a case against the *Raikats* of Baikunthapur for non-payment of some dues, for justification of encroaching the Company's territory.<sup>48</sup> In response *Bogle* made

an overture for peace and instructed the Subedar of Sannyasi Kata to prevent both Munshiram and Gangaram from using the Baikunthapur for their predatory activities.<sup>49</sup> But nothing was done to put an end to the predatory activities of the invaders as the British then emphasised more importance on the issues concerning Marathas and the Mysore.

Taking advantage of the indifferent attitude of the Company, Bhim Kumar indulged in intermittent raids into his uncle's territory every year and eventually forced the ruler to take shelter in the forests of Baikunthapur. Further there was report of incursion of *Gangaram* into the Baikunthapur estate. In spite of the mediatory role offered by W. Duncans on the commander of the Rangpore Barkandazi troops, Gangaram was not willing to vacate the place and to release the kidnapped persons, unless the alleged absconding subjects were transferred to him by the British officials. However in the later stage the arrest of *Gangaram* by the Nepali officer of the Western Morang, confirmed the conviction of the British agents that the prior actions of *Gangaram* were not approved by the Nepal Darbar.

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## Chapter II

### THE LAND REVENUE POLICY OF THE BRITISH AND THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF NORTH BENGAL ORIGINATING FROM IT

In the pre-colonial agrarian order there was a close connection between the revenue collection structures and the land tenures; and this issue forced the British to come face to face with the question of basic tenure of land during their efforts to set up effective land revenue system in India. They thought that the answer to this question would help to determine the point on the tenorial scale at which a private property right should be lodged. The 'modern' form of proprietary right they preferred to attach not to the land itself but to its revenues. But the existence of a distinct customary right of physical dominion over the soil was never denied. An implicit intention of revenue land was it possible 'to weld the novel property attaching to the revenue collecting right to this primary right of dominion'.

The Permanent Settlement gave the property right to class of people whose function had been to collect revenue and remit it to Government, not to hold or exploit land as such. So a discrepancy was created between colonial revenue law infused with its particular concept of property and the manner in which land was actually held and operated in Bengal; and this tendency clearly demonstrated the legal classification of agrarian society far moved from its working structures.

In the Jalpaiguri district and particularly in the Duars region a different picture was found. After the annexation of the Western Duars from the Bhutias, the colonial authority here started a distinct tenorial and land revenue arrangements. The tracts which were on the west of the river Tista and also a small tract in the east were covered by the Permanent Settlement. The Bengal Tenancy Act (B.T. Act) of 1885 and all other laws in force throughout Bengal applied fully to this tract. But in the Duars region a highly colonialised feature was seen. Here the Duars part was branded as a non-

regulated area which meant that this zone was outside the purview of usual British revenue laws, tenancy laws which operated throughout Bengal Presidency. Mr. Teunon, Legal Remembrancer in 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1907 recommended the extension of the tenancy act to the whole of Western Duars. But the local officer protested vehemently against the proposal. The Duars region was divided into 180 grants or temporarily settled estates leased for tea-cultivation and five Khas mahals or 'Government estates'. These estates barring the reserved forests and tea gardens included all of the Western Duars region and were divided into four tehsils (revenue collection areas) of Mainaguri, Falakata, Alipur and Bhalka and also the tehsil of Ambari-Falakata situated on the west of Tista

In the Duars or specially the Khas mahal areas the Government's intention was to maximise revenue collection and to fulfill this motive a direct contact with the tenants was necessary; also necessary was to settle or lease out cultivable land for definite periods and to make a periodic revision of revenue.

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After the annexation of the Western Duars the colonial authorities' "policy followed was to collect all recognised dues without altering the amount".<sup>1</sup> To attain this objective an execution of settlement operation became necessary. Accordingly the first settlement took effect from April 1871 under the supervision of Beckett, the settlement officer. Beckett made a settlement of pergunnahs Chengmari, North Mynaguri, Moraghat, Laxhipur, West Madari, East Madari, Chakwakheta, Buxa, Bhatibari and Bhalka.<sup>2</sup> The settlement was made for a term of seven years but was allowed to stand for two years more. Under the instruction of the Board of Revenue he prescribed the following types of rates in the Western Duars.

**Table II: 1**  
**Rates in the Western Duars**

Description of land	In North Myanguri and Ambari Falakata (per acre)			In Chengmari and rest of the Dooars (per acre)		
	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P
Bastoo	1	8	0	1	0	0
Bamboo	1	8	0	1	0	0
Rupit	1	8	0	1	0	0
Doba	1	8	0	1	0	0
Faringati	0	12	0	0	8	0
Jungle and Waste	0	1	6	0	1	6

**Source:** No. 2C, dated Camp Mynaguri, the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1890. From D. Sunder, Esq. Settlement Officer, Western Dooars, Jalpaiguri to The Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division, W.B.S.A.

There is no indication in the Beckett's settlement report how the above rates were fixed; but a decision of C.T. Metcalfe, Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division, dated 13<sup>th</sup> May 1873 stated that "on the country being ceded by Bhootan a rough guess settlement was made".<sup>3</sup>

Commenting on the results of Mr. Beckett's settlement, paragraph 3 of Government of Bengal, Revenue Department letter No. 5109, dated 4<sup>th</sup> December 1872 said "The land revenue of the Dooars, when the settlement began, was Rs. 39,526; but as stated in the report on the Eastern Dooars settlement, the jotedars paid in other ways more than as much again as the land revenue and they had, moreover to pay a percentage to the farmers who collected the revenue.... A seven years' settlement has been made, yielding a net revenue of from Rs. 72,722 to Rs. 76, 622 after allowing 10 per cent commission in six and 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> per cent commission in three pergunnahs".<sup>4</sup>

The following chart will illustrate the settlement of waste lands under the new rules up to the end of May 1876.

Table II: 2

## The settlement of waste lands up to the end of May 1876

Name of the Tehsils	Number of applications received up to the end of May 1876	Number of acres surveyed up to the end of May 1876				Amount of fees realised			Total expenditure incurred			Number of acres remaining to be surveyed				Amount of fees remaining to be realised		
		Acres	A	P	L	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P	Acres	A	P	L	Rs	A	P
Buxa	359	11443	5	5	100	2478	10	8	1542	14	6	6607	8	0	0	430	9	0
Mynaguri	231	3919	6	2	4	792	13	2	584	13	10	6541	9	9	516	1285	14	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>15362</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>3271</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2127</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13148</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>1716</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>

Source: No. 806G, dated Julpigoree, the 6<sup>th</sup> September 1876. From F.W.V. Peterson, Esq. Deputy Commissioner of Julpigoree, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahye and Cooch Behar Division, W.B.S.A.

Meanwhile in the Mainaguri region the settlement works begun. Previously in respect of South Mainaguri region no settlement operations were undertaken but this region was leased out to the Raikats of Baikunthapur.<sup>5</sup> This arrangement lasted till the end of 1872, but at this time the lease of South Mainaguri to the Raikats expired. Then it was decided that the South Mainaguri region should be treated as Khas land and accordingly during 1873 and 1874 various proposals 'as to the proper rent was made by different commissioners in charge'.<sup>6</sup> Finally in the beginning of 1875 the Board of Revenue sanctioned the rates for South Mainaguri which became the standard rate for North Mainaguri, Chengmari, Moraghat and Ambari-Falakata. The following chart will illustrate the actual state of affairs in the Mainaguri tehsil.

Table II: 3

The rates adopted in North and South Mainaguri, Chengmari, Ambari-Falakata region

Name of the pergunnahs	Annual net increase of revenue	Number of jotes	Total increase of revenue	Corresponding increase of cess		
	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.	A	P
Ambari-Falakata	40	42	1680	165	0	0
South Mainaguri	14	917	12,838	802	6	0
North Ditto	13	1321	17,173	1073	5	0
Chengmari	13	940	12,220	763	2	0
<b>Total</b>	-	-	<b>43,911</b>	<b>2,744</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>

Source: No. 105, dated Julpigoree, the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1889. From E.H. Walsh, Esq. Settlement Officer, Julpigoree, to the Director of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, W.B.S.A.

In letter No. 249A of 25<sup>th</sup> April 1875, the Secretary to the Board of Revenue prescribed the following rates for different kind of lands for South Mainaguri region.

Table II: 4

## Rates of different kind of land in South Mainaguri region

	Per Acre		
	Rs	A	P
Bastoo	2	0	0
Bamboo	2	0	0
Garden	2	0	0
Rupit	1	8	0
Doba	1	8	0
Faringati	1	2	0
Waste	0	3	0

**Source:** No. 2C, dated Camp Mynaguri, the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1890. From - D. Sunder, Esq. Settlement Officer, Western Dooars, Jalpaiguri, to The Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division, W.B.S.A.

But the Government of India did not approve the rates offered by the Secretary to the Board of Revenue and the settlement of South Mainaguri was completed by the end of 1874 and the Settlement of Beckett ended. After the settlement of both Settlement officer and Commissioner were unanimous in their opinion that the rates were "extremely light".<sup>7</sup> Beckett wrote "... The rates at first fixed were much below those prevailing in the neighbouring districts of Cooch Behar, Goalpara and Rungpore, but as it was a new country I thought it advisable to recommend low rates; but these again were further lowered".<sup>8</sup>

When it was found that Mr. Beckett's settlement and survey had not been done in a proper way, a re-survey and resettlement of pergunnahs Ambari-Falakata, Chengmari, North Mainaguri, Moraghat, Lakhipur, West Madari, East Madari, Chakwakheta, Buxa, Bhatibari and Bhalka was ordered by Government after a conference which was held in November 1874 at Jalpaiguri by then Lieutenant-Governor Sir Richard Temple with local authorities. It was decided that a second settlement operation would be undertaken under the supervision of Lord H. Ulick Browne, Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division.

On the issue of rates at which the resettlement should be made, Lord Ulick Browne recommended the adoption of the south Mynaguri rates in

Ambari-Falakata, North Mainaguri and Chengmari pergunnahs; with the old North Mainaguri rates in Lakhipur, West Madari, and the rest of the Dooars rates in East Madari and Chakwakheti.

**Table II: 5**  
**Rates recommended by Lord Ulick Browne**

Description of Land	South Mynaguri rates			North Mynaguri rates			Rest of the Dooars rates		
	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P
Bastoo	2	0	0	1	8	0	1	0	0
Bamboo	2	0	0	1	8	0	1	0	0
Rupit	1	8	0	1	8	0	1	0	0
Doba	1	8	0	1	8	0	1	0	0
Faringati	1	2	0	0	12	0	0	8	0
Waste	0	3	0	0	1	6	0	1	6

**Source:** No. 2C, dated Camp Mynaguri, the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1890. From - D. Sunder, Esq. Settlement Officer, Western Dooars, Jalpaiguri, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division, W.B.S.A.

These rates, Lord Ulick Browne wrote were fair and would be generally accepted by the jotedars. The Board of Revenue although recommended the rates suggested by the Commissioner but at the same time reserving to themselves the right of reconsidering these afterwards, if necessary. But the Government of Bengal stood firmly by the side of Lord Ulick Browne and said "If the rates are accepted by the settlement holders, it would seem hardly necessary for the Board to interfere with them, and the Lieutenant-Governor assumes that they will not do so without good cause".<sup>9</sup>

The Government of Bengal (Revenue Department letter No. 286T, dated 5<sup>th</sup> June 1879),<sup>10</sup> sanctioned the South Mynaguri rates for Ambari-Falakata, Chengmari, North Mynaguri and Moraghat as recommended by the Commissioner and the Board of Revenue and "slightly modified rates from those proposed by them for the remaining pergunnahs, that is slightly higher than the old rates of the Dooars for pergunnahs like Lakhipur and West Madari, and somewhat lower rate than those for pergunnahs East Madari and Chakwakheti, the rate of waste being nowhere less than three annas per acre".

The total results of these modifications are as follows:

**Table II: 6**  
**Scale of Rates adopted after the modifications made by the**  
**Government of India**

Description of Land	In Ambari-Falakata, Chengmari, North Mynaguri and Moraghat			In Lakhipur and West Madari			In East Madari, Chakwakheti and Bhalka		
	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P
Bastoo	2	0	0	1	12	0	1	8	0
Bamboo	2	0	0	1	12	0	1	8	0
Garden	2	0	0	1	12	0	1	8	0
Doba	2	0	0	1	12	0	1	8	0
Rupit	1	8	0	1	4	0	1	2	0
Faringati	1	2	0	0	12	0	0	9	0
Waste	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0

**Source:** No. 2C, dated Camp Mynaguri, the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1890. From - D. Sunder, Esq. Settlement Officer, Western Dooars, Jalpaiguri, to The Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division, W.B.S.A.

In short, the total area surveyed was 1,119,322 acres, of which 2,64,680 excluding tea lands were assessed. The total tea lands area was 19,607 acres and "the remaining ... acres including reserved forests were unassessed".<sup>11</sup> This settlement resulted in increasing revenue of these 11 parganas from Rs. 88,618 to Rs. 151,862. But the above rates adopted proved to be too excessive on inferior jotes and "remissions amounting to Rs. 17,806 had to be granted in addition to Rs. 5,456 lost by relinquishments and desertions".<sup>12</sup>

## II

The second settlement operations expired on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1890; and in 1888 a new settlement operation under the provisions of the Bhutan Duars Act XVI of 1869 begun with Mr. E.H. Walsh C.S. as the settlement Officer. E.H. Walsh's tenure as settlement officer was short, because of ill health he was compelled to retire from his job. But during his brief tenure he tried to make a prediction about "increase of revenue to be expected from the resettlement".<sup>13</sup>

Therefore to fulfill his objective he took up ten jotes in Ambari Falakata, ten in South Mynaguri and ten in North Mynaguri the results of which are given below –

**Table II: 7**  
**Rates proposed by E.H. Walsh**

	Per acre			Present rate			Cooch Behar rates for first class taluk		
	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P
Homestead and Orchards	3	0	0	2	0	0	9	0	0
Bamboo	2	0	0	2	0	0	3	9	0
Rupit -									
First Class	3	0	0	1	8	0	3	10	0
Second Class	2	0	0	1	8	0	2	1	0
Third Class	2	8	0	1	8	0	1	8	0
Faringhati -									
First Class	1	8	0	1	2	0	3	10	0
Second Class	1	5	0	1	2	0	2	1	0
Third Class	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	8	0
Fourth Class	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	2	0
Follow up to two years	0	6	0	0	3	0	0	6	0
Waste and Jungle	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	0

**Source:** No 105, dated Julpigoree, the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1889, From - E.H. Walsh, Esq. Settlement Officer, Julpigoree, To - The Director of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, W.B.S.A.

He applied such rates on the basis of measurement of rice crop on certain fields in Ambari-Falakata and Siliguri parganas. His reason for fixing the same rate for thirds class *rupit* and first class *faringhati* was that "it is generally found that these two classes of lands are adjacent and continuous, so that it frequently becomes a matter of fine judgement as to where *rupit* ends and *faringhati* begins".<sup>14</sup> He thought that the application of the same rate of first class *faringhati* and on third class *rupit* would be a great "Concession" to the tobacco cultivators; because of the low rate which would encourage

tobacco cultivation. To strengthen his argument he showed the example of Cooch Behar settlement operation where tobacco was treated under a separate head.

In this respect it is pertinent to mention the special treatment which was shown to the Mynaguri area which was the most advanced area in the Western Duars. When Western Duars region was ceded to the British Government, Mynaguri tehsil was partially cultivated and there was hardly any sign of 'extension of cultivation within the jotes'. But slowly with the increase of cultivation, reclamation of new jotes took place.<sup>15</sup> At the initial phase in respect of South Mynaguri region no regular settlement operations were undertaken but this region was leased out to the Raikats of Baikunthapur.<sup>16</sup> This arrangement lasted till the end of 1872 and at this time the lease of South Mynaguri to the Raikat expired. Then it was decided that the South Mynaguri region should be treated as Khas land and accordingly during 1873 and 1874 various proposals 'as to the proper rate of rent were made by different commissioners in charge'.<sup>17</sup> Finally in the beginning of 1875 the Board of Revenue sanctioned the rates for South Mynaguri which became the standard rate for North Mynaguri, Chengmari, Moraghat and Ambari-Falakata. During E.H. Walsh's tenure as settlement officer efforts were made to standardise the revenue rates in the North and South Mynaguri region.<sup>18</sup>

Regarding the Mynaguri area Beckett's settlement did not fix the rates of revenue with any reference to the capabilities of the land or to the varying qualities of soil in the jotes or with any view "to securing the payment to Government of a definite share of the profits derived from the land".<sup>19</sup> One uniform rate for high land and another rate for low land was adopted which Commissioner E.H. Louis described as wise and prudent step.<sup>20</sup>

**Table II: 8**  
**Result of E.H. Walsh's settlement**

Names of pergunnahs	Annual net increase of revenue	Number of jotes	Total increase of revenue	Corresponding increase of cess		
	Rs.		Rs.	Rs	A	P
Ambari Fallacotta	40	42	1,680	165	0	0
South Mynaguri	14	917	12,838	802	6	0
North ditto	13	1321	17,173	1073	5	0
Chengmari	13	940	12,220	763	2	0
<b>Total</b>	-	-	<b>43,911</b>	<b>2744</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>

**Source:** No 105, dated Julpigoree, the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1889, From - E.H. Walsh, Esq. Settlement Officer, Julpigoree, To - The Director of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, W.B.S.A.

It was proposed by the Sub-divisional Officer that the Mynaguri rate should be applied throughout the Duars but Walsh was not inclined to accept this proposal on the ground that till then the survey operations were yet to reach each pargana in the Duars. Nevertheless Walsh anticipated the following net increase of revenue in the Duars -

**Table II: 9**  
**Net increase of revenue expected by E.H. Walsh**

	Rs.	Rs.	Cess	
			A	P
Mynaguri tehsil	43,911	2,744	7	0
Falacatta tehsil	17,024	1,064	0	0
Alipore and Bhalka tehsils	12,268	766	12	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>73,203</b>	<b>4,575</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>

**Source:** No 105, dated Julpigoree, the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1889, From - E.H. Walsh, Esq. Settlement Officer, Julpigoree, To - The Director of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, W.B.S.A.

After the brief tenure of E.H. Walsh, D.H.E. Sunder was appointed as the Settlement Officer. After the inauguration of settlement operations under D.H.E. Sunder in 1888-1889, the first problem that he faced was in classifying the soil. There were two types of crop yielding land in the Duars namely "*rupit*" from which aman paddy was obtained and the "*faringhati*" which gave the cultivator bhadoi or early paddy as all tobacco, jute and rabi crops.<sup>21</sup> The

amins of survey department had classified the *Rupit* and *faringhati* lands in three classes according to their supposed values and subsequently rates were sanctioned based upon that classification. But Sunder realised the practical impossibility of applying such divisions of land. The local jotedars also vehemently opposed this proposal. Sunder then argued that jotedars in the Dooars were willing to "pay an increase of three anna a rupee on the present rent in all good taluks, an increase of one anna a rupee on the present rent in all bad taluks".<sup>22</sup> In this effect the jotedars filed a petition and their prayer was granted and it was decided that the settlement officer should distribute this increased rate on different classes of soil "and work out rates for each class".<sup>23</sup> D.H.E. Sunder was allowed a discretion to classify jotes into first, second and third class with several facilities for communication with markets and qualities of soil, and to take more than three annas a rupee in less favourably situated taluks; "provided that the general result is not an enhancement of more than three annas a rupee on the whole".<sup>24</sup> Accordingly Sunder sought the permission for applying the following rates in the tehsils of Mynaguri, Falakata, Alipur, Bhalka and in Ambari-Falakata.

Table II: 10

Proposed rates of D.H.E. Sunder for the Western Dooars

Description of land	1 <sup>st</sup> class taluks, rate per acre			2 <sup>nd</sup> class taluks, rate per acre			3 <sup>rd</sup> class taluks, rate per acre		
	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P
Homestead	2	8	0	2	2	0	1	12	0
Bamboo	2	12	0	2	4	0	1	12	0
Garden	3	0	0	2	8	0	2	0	0
Doba	1	12	0	1	9	0	1	6	0
Rupit	1	12	0	1	9	0	1	6	0
Faringati	1	6	0	1	3	0	1	12	0
Jungle and Waste	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	0

Source: No. 26, dated Camp Mynaguri, the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1890, From - D.H.E. Sunder, Esq. Settlement Officer, Western Dooars, Jalpaiguri, To - The Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division, W.B.S.A.

Further, he categorically stated that a settlement officer should be allowed full discretion to classify into first, second and third class with

reference to their several facilities for communication with markets and qualities of soil.

But Lieutenant-Governor Charles Elliot made some modification on the rates proposed by Sunder. He suggested that the rates of Rs. 2 per acre for the homestead land and Rs. 2-12 for bamboo and betelnut garden should be abandoned and a separate class called *Basti* which was to include homestead, bamboo and betelnut garden should be adopted and charged at Rs. 3 per acre. Accordingly, after the suggestion the following rates were effected -

**Table II: 11**  
**Modified rates made by D.H.E. Sunder**

	Rates per acre			
	Rs	A	P	
Basti	3	0	0	
Rupit	2	0	0	In exceptionally favoured tract near a
	1	12	0	market or road and C
	1	6	0	In ordinary first class blocks
				Ditto second ditto
Faringati	1	6	0	In ordinary first class blocks
	1	2	0	Ditto second ditto
Waste	0	3	0	

**Source:** Resolution Read - A letter No. 399 T.S. dated 26<sup>th</sup> June 1895 from the Director of Land Records submitting the Settlement Officer's Final Report of the Survey and Settlement of the Western Duars in the District of Jalpaiguri, together with a note dated 24<sup>th</sup> November 1894 and a letter No. 455, dated 14<sup>th</sup> May 1895 from the Commissioner of Rajshahi, W.B.S.A.

Sunder then discovered certain types of tenures in the Western Duars and these were the Mal jote, time expired jote and arable waste land jote. In fact there were 9,971 jotes in Duars covering 3,84,895.91 acres of land; of these 7,228 were jotes of last settlement and 2,743 jotes were the outcome of Sunder's Settlement.<sup>25</sup> By the term 'mal jote', Sunder understood a jote which had existed 'at last settlement' and whose number at the time of this settlement was 4,221. While a time expired jote was granted for arable waste lands and 'the preliminary lease of which had expired'.<sup>26</sup> There was 898 jotes of such type. An arable waste land jote was a class of jote whose preliminary lease had not expired when the Sunder's settlement operation had started.

There were 1,581 jotes of this class; but on the request from the jotedars such type of preliminary lease was cancelled.

Now it is pertinent to enquire how Sunder treated the different kinds of jotes available in the Duars region. In the old jotes which were in existence prior to 1892-93 Sunder increased the revenue upto Rs. 88,786 or 38.75 per cent on the former revenue. He cited three reasons for the enhancement of revenue - "(1) extension of cultivation; (2) enhancement of rates; (3) assessment of excess area which had been held surreptitiously".<sup>27</sup> The profits of the owners of some jotes lying east of the Jaldhaka river had been fixed at 50% above the Government revenue. It was also stipulated that anything over "this has been absorbed in the increase of revenue obtained by this settlement". The following settlement will supply the details of the assessment of old jotes.

**Table II: 12**  
**Assessment of Old Jotes**

1	2	3		4		5			6		7		8	9	10
		Acres	D	Acres	D	Acres	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	Rs.	Rs.
Chengmari	943	724	56	18171	94	13521	18	83	71	12737	37	45243	76	-	56554
North Mynaguri	646	265	67	7179	64	4471	00	53	55	5804	38	17744	24	-	22322
South Mynaguri	1583	3323	82	34526	97	25220	23	406	51	23002	95	86480	48	-	115294
	<b>3172</b>	<b>4314</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>59878</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>43212</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>41544</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>149498</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>126627</b>	<b>194170</b>
Moraghat	1072	1946	22	21375	47	15894	53	330	67	16007	00	55553	89	-	57959
Lakhipur	103	165	60	2558	37	1664	42	64	06	2083	92	6536	37	-	5063
West Madari	341	159	55	4534	10	4781	37	158	97	9729	64	19363	63	-	13705
	<b>1516</b>	<b>2271</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>28467</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>22340</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>27820</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>81453</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>60065</b>	<b>76727</b>
Bhatibari	870	814	05	7391	86	3660	41	30	73	7269	92	19166	97	-	13155
Buxa	213	280	07	3786	78	1403	20	59	21	4978	78	10517	04	-	5618
Chakwakhetai	189	158	41	2634	80	1056	91	04	61	2854	34	6709	09	-	4298
East Madari	82	75	83	1912	78	1416	16	13	87	4440	17	7858	81	-	3931
	<b>1354</b>	<b>1337</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>15726</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>7536</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>19543</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>44251</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>24099</b>	<b>27002</b>
Bhalka	605	670	05	5910	70	1089	22	-	90	3717	53	11388	40	7830	9290
Ambari Falakata	56	254	17	3983	87	2843	20	36	83	2252	38	9370	45	10483	10701
<b>Total</b>	<b>6703</b>	<b>8847</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>113967</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>77021</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>1248</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>94878</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>295963</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>229104</b>	<b>317890</b>

Source: Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District, 1889-95 - D.H.E. Sunder, p. 122.

There are some jotes in South Mynaguri from which the Bhutia Government used to get the revenue at higher rate. The Commissioner treated the Bhutia revenue as fair and retained those rates.

As regards the new jotes who number was 2,713 Sunder fixed the total revenue payable at Rs. 46,198 of these jotes, 1101 were assessed at the rate of 12 annas and 156 jotes were assessed at 9 anna an acre. The remaining 1,483 jotes were assessed at the full sanctioned rates, because they were found to be well cultivated.<sup>28</sup> The following chart will illustrate the change made by Sunder in respect of new jotes.

**Table II: 13**  
**Assessment of New Jotes**

1	2	Class of soil assessed												Revenue payable according to		
		Basti		Rupit		Faringati		Doba		Waste		Total		Last settlement		Present settlement
		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10
		A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	Rs.	P	Rs.
Chengmari	223	18	14	752	88	968	81	7	90	3620	50	5308	20	-	-	5523
North Mynaguri	324	47	41	501	30	1308	79	8	50	3412	10	5308	10	-	-	
South Mynaguri	168	4	64	156	81	441	41	3	00	2038	54	2614	40	-	-	1380
<b>Total</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>2719</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>9103</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13410</b>	<b>85</b>	-	-	<b>12,466</b>
Moraghat	1075	73	06	2054	77	2440	74	84	47	19907	33	24640	37	-	-	19726
Lakhipur	154	5	92	131	11	124	30	-	06	3610	26	3571	65	-	-	2850
West Madari	407	22	95	682	64	1358	28	22	32	8135	75	10221	91	-	-	7080
<b>Total</b>	<b>1636</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>2868</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>3923</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>31733</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>38733</b>	<b>93</b>	-	-	<b>29664</b>
Bhatibari	109	17	02	236	43	227	83	3	33	1210	32	1694	93	-	-	787
Buxa	116	16	17	743	21	268	95	-	64	2078	22	3706	59	-	-	1396
Chakwakheta	64	4	26	135	74	164	28	-	-	980	02	1284	30	-	-	527
East Madari	29	1	82	84	44	64	51	-	-	663	59	814	36	-	-	478
<b>Total</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1199</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>4932</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6900</b>	<b>18</b>	-	-	<b>3188</b>
Bhalika Ambari Falakata	79	32	86	550	06	226	08	-	-	835	74	1651	64	-	-	880
<b>Total</b>	<b>2743</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>6125</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>7594</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>46603</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>60696</b>	<b>60</b>	-	-	<b>46198</b>

Source: Survey and Settlement of the Western Doars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95 - D.H.E. Sunder, p. 123.

There were 44 jotes in the vicinity of Jalpesh Temple area which had been left unassessed, because the income from these jotes was utilised for the up-keep of the temple. But under the orders of Government these jotes now "have been resumed and assessed to revenue".<sup>29</sup> The total amount payable for them was Rs. 2,465 annually.

**Table II: 14**  
**Assessment of Jotes in Jalpesh**

Name of Pargana	No. of jotes assessed to Revenue	Class of soil assessed												Revenue payable according to		Increase
		Basti		Rupit		Faringati		Doba		Waste		Total		Last settlement	Present settlement	
		A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	Rs.	Rs.	
1	2	3		4		5		6		7		8		9	10	11
Mynaguri	44	64	28	747	8	460	23	3	45	313	42	1618	46	-	2465	2465

Source: Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95 - D.H.E. Sunder, p. 123.

Colonel Hedayat Ali's lands represented the parganas of Morghat, Lakhipur and West Madari and these regions covered an area of 41,754 acres at the initial phase when these regions were leased out to Colonel Hedayat Ali by the British in 1883. These areas were leased out to the heirs of Hedayat Ali for 30 years at pargana rates. But as during the time of Sunder's settlement it was found that the clearance conditions were not fulfilled, an area of 19,191 acres of land was resumed and rent readjusted.<sup>30</sup> Sunder obtained Rs. 3,002 by assessment at half rates of "12,935.27 acres of land allowed to the heirs of late Colonel Hedayat Ali Khan".<sup>31</sup> The Colonial Government also settled certain lands with Rai Upendranath Duardar Bahadur who during the Anglo-Bhutan war helped the British Government. In return the Government of India decided, "... He should be offered a lease of the Buxa pargana only on the conditions formerly stipulated for the whole term of seven years plus any period that he may have been out of possession since it was concluded...or as an alternative to the above, he should be offered a tahsildari on Rs. 125 a month with a personal allowance of Rs. 15 a month to make the emoluments of the office upto Rs. 200 and should be guaranteed a special pension for life of Rs. 10 when he relinquished the office...."<sup>32</sup> So Upendranath Duardar was granted 2000 acres of arable land and certain other land in Alipur tehsil. The special feature of this grant was that this was the only rent-free jote in the Western Duars. The land which was granted rent-free in perpetuity was sold by Duardar for Rs. 20,000 before his death. Then it was decided by the Government of India in 1890 that the "land which had been granted rent-free for life should be allowed to the family of the Duardar at one-fourth rates for a period of 15 years from the date of Duardar's decease".<sup>33</sup> It was decided that Rs. 477 would have to be paid to the Government by the sons of Duardar.

About the mode of payment of revenue Sunder sanctioned two (kists) installments.

Table II: 15

## The Amount of Revenue payable for each Pargana

Name of Tehsil	Name of Pargana	Demand according to Present Settlement		
		Six-anna Kist	Ten-anna Kist	Total
1	2	3	4	5
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Mynaguri	Chengmari	22,258	38,819	62,077
	North Mynaguri	10,204	17,072	27,276
	South Mynaguri	44,860	74,888	1,19,748
	<b>Total</b>	<b>78,322</b>	<b>1,30,779</b>	<b>2,09,101</b>
Falakata	Moraghat	29,785	49,310	79,095
	West Madari	7,991	13,277	21,268
	Lakhipur	5,223	8,702	13,925
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42,999</b>	<b>71,289</b>	<b>1,14,288</b>
Alipur	Bhatibari	5,271	8,768	14,039
	Chakwakheta	1,866	3,081	4,947
	Buxa	2,706	4,540	7,246
	East Madari	1,654	2,755	4,409
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11,497</b>	<b>19,144</b>	<b>30,641</b>
Bhalka	Bhalka	3,802	6,368	10,170
Siliguri	Ambari-Falakata	4,011	6,690	10,701
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,40,631</b>	<b>2,34,270</b>	<b>3,74,901</b>

Source: D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 131.

Further Sunder also cited the demand of each tehsil in the Duars from 1889-90 to 1893-94.

Table II: 16

## The Demand and Collection of Revenue in Each Tehsil

Name of Tehsil	1889-90			1890-91			1891-92		
	Demand	Collection	Balance	Demand	Collection	Balance	Demand	Collection	Balance
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mynaguri	1,26,155	1,14,906	11,249	1,31,942	1,09,515	22,427	1,26,627	1,25,071	1,556
Falakata	54,484	44,078	10,406	67,541	49,198	18,343	64,623	45,845	13,778
Alipur	23,159	20,025	3,134	23,799	17,986	5,813	24,247	21,988	2,259
Bhalka	7,938	6,836	1,102	8,002	7,957	45	8,035	7,811	224
Siliguri	10,483	8,374	2,109	10,483	7,783	2,700	10,483	8,457	2,026
	1892-1893			1893-1894					
	Demand	Collection	Balance	Demand	Collection	Balance			
	11	12	13	14	15	16			
Mynaguri	2,09,101	1,73,447	35,624	2,09,101	1,86,430	22,671			
Falakata	64,950	44,902	20,058	1,14,288	96,127	18,161			
Alipur	24,099	22,625	1,474	30,641	20,798	843			
Bhalka	7,830	6,869	961	10,170	10,132	38			
Siliguri	10,483	7,734	2,749	10,701	7,979	2,722			

Source: D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Doors in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 131.

Previously 50 to 200 acres of land were given as jotes under the waste land rule. But after inspection it was found that many of these jotes were not well-cultivated and there were cases of non-payment of revenue.

After the appointment of Sunder as Settlement Officer in the Western Duars it was decided that "no person would be allowed to have a jote more than 25 acres without sufficient guarantee that the land would be brought under cultivation".<sup>34</sup> It was found that in comparison to bigger jotes, the smaller jotes were punctual in the payment of revenue.

Sunder presented a detailed account of the various parganas situated in the Western Duars region. In the Mynaguri Tehsil there were Chengmari, North and South Mynaguri parganas. The Chengmari pargana contained 18 taluks which were again subdivided into 1,247 jotes. The following chart will illustrate the nature of pre-Sunder settlement operations in the Chengmari region.

Table II: 17

Details of Jotes in the pre-Sunder era in the Chengmari Pargana

	Area	
	Acres	Dec.
1,166 jotes assessed to revenue	50,612	05
3 jotes being markets	28	03
Government and reserved for fodder and fuel purposes	4,162	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,801</b>	<b>29</b>
Add area of rivers, streams, road and C	26,741	47
Area of pargana	81,513	16

**Source:** D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 139.

The 1,166 jotes in the pargana were assessed by Sunder. The following chart will help to give an idea how Sunder applied the Government rates in different classes of jotes.

Table II: 18

## The rates of D. Sunder in the Chengmari Pargana

Pargana	Cultivated Land			Uncultivated Land				Total
	Rates	Rates	Rates	Rates	Rates	Rates	Rates	
	Rupit, 1 <sup>st</sup> class, Rs. 2, Faringhati, 1 <sup>st</sup> class, Rs. 1-8 per acre	Rupit, 2 <sup>nd</sup> class, Rs. 1-12 Faringhati, 2 <sup>nd</sup> class, Rs. 1-6 per acre	Rupit, 3 <sup>rd</sup> class, Rs. 1-9 Faringhati, 3 <sup>rd</sup> class, Rs. 1-6 per acre	1 <sup>st</sup> class waste, Rs. 1-3 per acre	2 <sup>nd</sup> class waste 12 annas per acre	3 <sup>rd</sup> class, waste 9 annas per acre	4 <sup>th</sup> class, waste 3 annas per acre	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Chengmari	452	391	228	44	8	19	24	1,166

Source: D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 138.

Sunder assessed the revenue of this pargana as Rs. 62,077 and "this revenue falls at Rs. 1-12-11 per cultivated acre".<sup>35</sup>

In regarding the Mynaguri area Sunder opposed Lord Ulick Browne's contention on the ground that during the second settlement operations there was a sudden increase in the total rent payable for a jote. Sunder did not consider that the rates imposed in Mynaguri tehsil were high.<sup>36</sup>

In 10<sup>th</sup> March 1890 a conference attended by Commissioner, Deputy Superintendent of Survey, Deputy Commissioner, Settlement Officer and Director of Land Records was held in Aipurduar. In that conference it was decided that there should be an enhancement of three annas in the rupee on the jotedar's jummas;<sup>37</sup> and in distributing the enhancement of three annas a rupee, the Settlement officer may be left to discretion to classify jotes into first, second and third class with reference to their several facilities for communication with markets and qualities of soil, and to take more than three annas per rupee in taluks which are more favourably situated in these respects, and less than three annas a rupee in taluks which are less favourably situated; provided that the general result is not an enhancement of more than three anna in the rupee on the whole, and that the jotedars and chukanidars are satisfied.<sup>38</sup>

The North Mynaguri pargana contained six taluks which were subdivided into 1,096 jotes as follows:

**Table II: 19**  
**Details of jotes in the North Mynaguri Region**

	Area	
	Acres	Dec.
960 jotes granted for ordinary cultivation and assessed to revenue	23,113	53
2 jotes assessed to revenue, but granted only for fodder purposes	58	84
120 jotes held khas by Govt. as reserved for fodder and fuel purposes	5,220	25
6 jotes being markets	172	12
	<b>28,564</b>	<b>77</b>
Add area of rivers, streams, road and C	1,647	22
Area of pargana	30,211	99

**Source:** D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Doars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 139.

Sunder commented that North Mynaguri area was a very fertile area where the rate of increase of cultivation was 158%.<sup>39</sup> The 970 jotes in the North Mynaguri pargana were assessed by Sunder between March to June 1891, the details are given below.

Table II: 20

## The rates of D. Sunder in the North Mynaguri Region

	Cultivated Land			Uncultivated Land				Total
	Rates	Rates	Rates	Rates	Rates	Rates	Rates	
Pargana	Rupit, 1 <sup>st</sup> class at Rs. 2,	Rupit, 2 <sup>nd</sup> class at Rs. 1-12,	Rupit, 3 <sup>rd</sup> class at Rs. 1-9,	Waste, 1 <sup>st</sup> class, Rs. 1-3 per acre	Waste, 2 <sup>nd</sup> class, 12 annas per acre	Waste, 3 <sup>rd</sup> class, 9 annas per acre	Waste, 4 <sup>th</sup> class, 3 annas per acre	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Mynaguri	323	396	125	11	24	33	58	970

Source: D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 141.

D.H.E. Sunder assesses the South Mynaguri pargana which was composed of 48 taluks and contained 1,881 jotes.

Table II: 21

## Details of jotes in the South Mynaguri Region

	Area	
	Acres	Dec.
1,790 jotes granted for ordinary cultivation and assessed to revenue	96,743	64
18 jotes being markets	280	13
120 jotes being khas by Government as reserved for fodder and fuel purposes	3,531	69
	<b>94,555</b>	<b>46</b>
Add area of rivers, streams, road and C	3,857	53
Area of pargana	98,412	99

Source: D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 142.

Here Sunder found the rate of increase of cultivation as 6.82%. He inspected and assessed 1,790 jotes. The detailed assessment of the different classes of jotes are given in the following chart:

Table II: 22

## The rates of D. Sunder in the South Mynaguri Region

	Cultivated Land			Uncultivated Land				Total	
	Rates	Rates	Rates	Rates	Rates	Rates	Rates		
Pargana	Rupit, 1 <sup>st</sup> class at Rs. 2, Faringhati 1 <sup>st</sup> class at Rs. 1-8 per acre	Rupit, 2 <sup>nd</sup> class at Rs. 1-12, Faringhati 2 <sup>nd</sup> class at Rs. 1-6 per acre	Rupit, 3 <sup>rd</sup> class at Rs. 1-9, Faringhati 1 <sup>st</sup> class at Rs. 1-3 per acre	Waste, 1 <sup>st</sup> class, Rs. 1-3 per acre	Waste, 2 <sup>nd</sup> class, 12 annas per acre	Waste, 3 <sup>rd</sup> class, 9 annas per acre	Waste, 4 <sup>th</sup> class, 3 annas per acre		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
South Mynaguri	617	918	127	-	110	3	15	1,790	

**Source:** D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 143.

The South Mynaguri area was the oldest pargana in the Duars and here the revenue payable according to assessment was Rs. 1,19,748 and this revenue "falls at Rs. 1-13-3 per cultivated acre".<sup>41</sup>

The Falakata tehsil comprised the tract of country lying between the Jaldhaka river on the west and the Torsa river on the east.<sup>42</sup>

Within the Falakata tehsil there were Moraghat, Lakhimpur, West Madari parganas; the details of their assessment are given below.

Moraghat pargana comprised 26 taluks. This pargana contained 2,357 jotes. The details of jotes in the Moraghat pargana are given below:

Table II: 23

## Details of jotes in the Moraghat pargana

	Area	
	Acres	Dec.
2201 jotes granted for ordinary cultivation and assessed to revenue	82,883	53
138 jotes held khas by Govt. as reserved for fodder and fuel purposes	10,039	69
18 jotes being markets	428	47
Add area of rivers, streams, road and C	2,834	22
Area of pargana	96,185	91

**Source:** D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 143.

Here Sunder found the rate of increase of cultivation as 25.62% and 2201 jotes in this pargana were inspected and assessed by Sunder. But there

was a difference between the assessment of Mynaguri. Here in Moraghat pargana, the land held and cultivated by the jotedar and his adhiars was assessed at sanctioned rates; and after obtaining the result, two thirds of the rent paid by the *Chukanidars* was the arrangement fixed as payable to Government as revenue of the jote.<sup>43</sup> The sanctioned Government rates were as follows:

**Table II: 24**  
**Rates of Assessment in Moraghat Pargana**

	Rs.	A	P	
Basti and Doba	2	0	0	
Rupit	1	12	0	per acre
Faringhati	1	4	0	
Waste	0	3	0	

**Source:** D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 145.

The revenue payable by Sunder's settlement here was Rs. 79,095.<sup>44</sup> In some areas it was difficult to implement the sanctioned Government rates as these areas were subject to ravage by wild animals. In this area a fair rent was implemented.

Next the Lakhipur pargana was assessed which comprised 623 jotes, the details of which are given below:

**Table II: 25**  
**Details of jotes in the Lakhipur pargana**

	Area	
	Acres	Dec.
569 jotes granted for ordinary cultivation and assessed to revenue	28,258	18
2 jotes being markets	125	95
8 jotes held khas by Govt. as reserved for fodder and fuel purposes	359	70
44 jotes held khas by Government, but available for settlement	14,779	09
Add area of rivers, roads and C.	1,158	27
Area of Khas land measured on scale of 2 inches to a mile	3,691	60
Area of pargana	48,372	79

**Source:** D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 146.

Here Sunder found that rate of increase at cultivation as 26.43%. The rate of assessment adopted as follows:

**Table II: 26**  
**Rates of Assessment in Lakhipur Pargana**

	Rs.	A	
Basti and Doba	1	12	
Rupit	1	12	per acre
Faringhati	1	4	
Waste	0	3	

**Source:** D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 147.

Here the system of assessment was the same as that followed in respect of jotes of Moraghat. The Moraghat system was adopted in Falakata, Alipur and Bhalka tehsils.

Next the West Madari pargana was subdivided into 905 jotes, the details of which are given below:

**Table II: 27**  
**Details of jotes in the West Madari pargana**

	Area	
	Acres	Dec.
772 jotes granted for ordinary cultivation and assessed to revenue	31,609	54
2 jotes being markets	924	33
125 jotes held khas by Govt. as reserved for fodder and fuel purposes	10,445	16
4 jotes held khas by Government, but available for settlement	402	40
Area of Khas land measured on scale of 2 inches to a mile	3,622	40
Add area of rivers, roads and C	1,123	44
Area of pargana	48,127	27

**Source:** D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 148.

Here Sunder found that the rate of increase of cultivation as 25.55%<sup>45</sup> and he inspected 1,398 jotes and the mode of assessment was carried on the basis of following types of rates:

**Table II: 28**  
**Rates of Assessment in West Madari**

	Rs.	A	
Basti and Doba	1	13	
Rupit	1	8	per acre
Faringhati	0	13	
Waste	0	3	

**Source:** D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 149.

After the application of the above Government rates on different type of soil the total revenue obtained was Rs. 21,268.

At the time of Sunder's settlement operation the whole of Alipur was not fit for survey and settlement operation as this region was in a backward state for want of proper communication system, markets.<sup>46</sup>

Within the Alipur tehsil there were Bhatibari, Buxa, Chakwakheti and East Madari parganas.

The Bhatibari pargana comprised of 21 taluks. This 21 taluks again contained 1,133 jotes.

The details of the jotes within the Bhatibari pargana are given in the following chart:

**Table II: 29**  
**Details of jotes in the Bhatibari pargana**

	Area	
	Acres	Dec.
1011 jotes granted for ordinary cultivation and assessed to revenue	21,326	08
4 jotes being markets	64	04
85 jotes held khas by Govt. as reserved for fodder and fuel purposes	2,421	15
33 jotes held khas by Government, but available for settlement	7,455	71
Area of Khas land measured on scale of 2 inches to a mile	61,617	48
Add area of rivers, roads and C	989	40
Area of pargana	96,873	86

**Source:** D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 150.

Further after the assessment in Bhatibari pargana the following rate was implemented -

**Table II: 30**  
**Rates of Assessment in Bhatibari Pargana**

	Rs.	A	
Basti and Doba	1	8	
Rupit	1	2	per acre
Faringhati	0	9	
Waste	0	3	

*Source: D.H.E. Sunder, Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95, p. 151.*

The Buxa pargana comprised 19 taluks and 523 jotes.

**Table II: 31**  
**Details of jotes in the Buxa pargana**

	Area	
	Acres	Dec.
jotes granted for ordinary cultivation and assessed to revenue	16,367	61
jotes being markets	28	02
jotes held khas by Govt. as reserved for fodder and fuel purposes	2,451	57
jotes held khas by Government, but available for settlement	13,661	30
Area of Khas land measured on scale of 2 inches to a mile	79,225	60
Add area of rivers, roads and C	1,421	92
Area of pargana	1,13,156	11

*Source: D.H.E. Sunder, Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95, p. 151.*

The rates of assessment implemented in the following manner.

**Table II: 32**  
**Rates of Assessment in Buxa pargana**

	Rs.	A	
Basti and Doba	1	8	
Rupit	1	2	per acre
Faringhati	0	9	
Waste	0	3	

*Source: D.H.E. Sunder, Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95, p. 152.*

A sum total of 818 jotes were inspected and assessed and the revenue payable to the colonial government stood at Rs. 7,246.

In the Chakwakheti pargana there were six taluks, containing 317 jotes.<sup>47</sup>

**Table II: 33**  
**Details of jotes in the Chakwakheti pargana**

	Area	
	Acres	Dec.
273 jotes granted for ordinary cultivation and assessed to revenue	8,839	22
1 jote being markets	23	51
33 jotes held khas by Govt. as reserved for fodder and fuel purposes	1,294	97
9 jotes held khas by Government, but available for settlement	2,437	65
Area of Khas land measured on scale of 2 inches to a mile	33,392	80
1 jote held revenue-free granted by Govt. to Late Rai Upendmath Duardar	36	06
Area covered by rivers, roads and C	654	78
Area of pargana	47,218	78

**Source:** D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 153.

The rates of assessment implemented in the following manner:

The following type of rates were applied in the Chakwakheti pargana -

**Table II: 34**  
**Rates of Assessment in Chakwakheti pargana**

	Rs.	A	
Basti and Doba	1	8	
Rupit	1	2	per acre
Faringhati	0	9	
Waste	0	3	

**Source:** D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 154.

After the assessment the total revenue stood at Rs. 4,944.

In East Madari pargana there were 6 taluks, which contained 187 jotes.

The details of jotes are given below:

**Table II: 35**  
**Details of jotes in the East Madari pargana**

	Area	
	Acres	Dec.
111 jotes granted for ordinary cultivation and assessed to revenue	8,673	17
1 jote being markets	16	80
42 jotes held khas by Govt. as reserved for fodder and fuel purposes	3,331	86
33 jotes held khas by Government, but available for settlement	7,923	85
Area of Khas land measured on scale of 2 inches to a mile	15,507	20
Area covered by rivers, roads and C	334	58
Area of pargana	35,787	46

**Source:** D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 155.

A total number of 111 jotes were inspected and assessed at a rate in the following manner:

**Table II: 36**  
**Rates of Assessment in East Madari pargana**

	Rs.	A	
Basti and Doba	1	8	
Rupit	1	2	per acre
Faringhati	0	9	
Waste	0	3	

**Source:** D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 156.

After the assessment the total revenue payable was Rs. 4,409.

Next within the Bhalka tehsil there was Bhalka pargana which had 14 taluks, contained 787 jotes and the Bhalka tehsil comprised the country "situated between the Rydak and Sankosh rivers".<sup>48</sup> The area of the pargana was as follows:

**Table II: 37**  
**Details of jotes in the Bhalka pargana**

	Area	
	Acres	Dec.
684 jotes granted for ordinary cultivation and assessed to revenue	13,040	04
2 jotes being markets	28	45
75 jotes held khas by Govt. as reserved for fodder and fuel purposes	5,850	83
26 jotes held khas by Government, but available for settlement	3,217	16
Area of Khas land measured on scale of 2 inches to a mile	45,670	40
Area covered by rivers, roads and C	672	78
Area of pargana	68,479	66

**Source:** D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 157.

After the South Mynaguri Pargana this pargana was the oldest cultivated one in the Duars. Sunder cited two reasons for the present sorry state of the pargana - (1) oppression of the Bhutias which compelled the people to abandon this place; (2) the idleness of the Rajbansis.<sup>49</sup>

Table II: 38  
Rates of Assessment in Bhalka pargana

	Rs.	A	
Basti and Doba	1	8	
Rupit	1	2	per acre
Faringhati	0	9	
Waste	0	3	

Source: D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 158.

After the assessment the total revenue payable was Rs. 10,170. Next within the Siliguri tehsil there was Ambari-Falakata pargana.

Ambari-Falakata pargana in the part was a well-cultivated pargana. Sunder found in his tenure the condition of the pargana in backward state and ascribed "Its present backward condition is due to cultivators of the *Chukanidar* and *adhiars* having left to squat on the superior lands which lie on the east of the Torsa river, and also to the neglect of Government to supply the wants of the people in respect of roads, markets etc."<sup>50</sup>

Sunder here did not give particulars of jotes being assessed but said that 9370.45 acres of land had been assessed to revenue and commented that area of waste land "has increased by 319.99 acres".<sup>51</sup> After the assessment of jotes the following Government rate was implemented:

Table II: 39  
Rates of Assessment in the Ambari-Falakata Pargana

	Rs.	A	
Basti and Doba	2	0	
Rupit	1	8	per acre
Faringhati	0	2	
Waste	0	3	

Source: D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 161.

The total revenue payable was Rs. 10,701.

Further, the following table shows the different castes to which the jotedars of the Duars belong; the number of jotes and area of land held by each caste; and how much of the total revenue of Rs. 3,74,901, which have been obtained by this settlement, is paid by each caste separately.

Table II: 40

Sunder's statement concerning the different castes to which the jotedars of Duars belonged

(A)

Caste	Mynaguri Tahsil				Falakata Tahsil				Alipur Tahsil			
	No. of jotes	Area		Revenue paid in Rs.	No. of jotes	Area		Revenue paid in Rs.	No. of jotes	Area		Revenue paid in Rs.
		Acres	Dec.			Acres	Dec.			Acres	Dec.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Paharia	103	4,274	31	5,388	34	1,450	20	1,272	7	283	83	147
Chatri	39	1,655	96	2,208	19	581	03	580	6	82	22	43
Oraon	80	1,889	51	2,432	33	943	04	745	3	67	44	48
European	55	3,309	04	3,888	02	630	96	473	-	-	-	-
Mech	262	5,751	03	7,793	404	9,759	36	7,850	53	3,300	60	1,567
Kapali	8	299	10	367	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Muhammadans	1,287	55,500	27	67,194	1,095	51,461	38	34,051	265	10,187	79	5,810
Shaha	35	1,403	23	2,114	20	1,411	62	1,729	05	406	65	223
Tanti	7	344	57	525	1	79	18	90	16	370	31	201
Rajbansi	1,855	77,346	14	102,335	1,613	55,672	73	49,931	1,254	35,285	64	19,493
Kyasth	43	2,100	96	2,669	72	3,837	37	3,242	62	1,463	83	844
Bhutia	1	12	87	24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brahman	39	1,637	04	2,106	122	7,087	05	5,343	21	1,879	53	1,008
Gope	19	1,540	03	1,466	25	1,220	24	1,094	3	308	28	124
Kyan	26	4,645	94	4,745	42	6,737	07	6,272	5	374	36	226
Napit (barber)	24	1,217	87	1,756	10	472	16	456	-	-	-	-
Hari	2	112	81	114	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table contd.

Caste	Mynaguri Tahsil				Falakata Tahsil				Alipur Tahsil			
	No. of jotes	Area		Revenue paid in Rs.	No. of jotes	Area		Revenue paid in Rs.	No. of jotes	Area		Revenue paid in Rs.
		Acres	Dec.			Acres	Dec.			Acres	Dec.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Banik	7	1,167	61	273	-	-	-	-	4	55	96	31
Majhi	1	25	29	30	-	-	-	-	2	52	37	17
Bairagi	8	183	27	275	-	43	96	42	-	-	-	-
Teli	2	91	35	132	-	-	-	-	1	83	98	81
Garo	2	79	77	96	26	724	99	538	5	133	70	60
Byadh	1	116	12	182	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mali	1	43	99	58	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Baidya	1	69	57	77	1	8	44	8	-	-	-	-
Kumar	6	370	40	471	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jugi	9	244	04	293	2	212	44	263	-	-	-	-
Dobasiya	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50	834	03	697
Jalda	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sutar (Carpenter)	-	-	-	-	3	133	10	166	-	-	-	-
Kamar	-	-	-	-	3	60	38	46	-	-	-	-
Kalwar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	26	53	21
Nepalese	-	-	-	-	3	69	60	67	-	-	-	-
Munda	-	-	-	-	4	111	58	87	-	-	-	-
Sanyasi	-	-	-	-	2	43	43	32	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,928</b>	<b>164,528</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>209,101</b>	<b>3,542</b>	<b>142,751</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>114,288</b>	<b>1,763</b>	<b>55,208</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>30,641</b>

Source: D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Doars in the Jalpaiguri District, 1889-95*, p. 130.

Table II: 41

Sunder's statement concerning the different castes to which the jotedars of Duars belonged

(B)

Caste	Bhalka Tahsil				Pargana Ambari-Falakata				Total			
	No. of jotes	Area		Revenue paid in Rs.	No. of jotes	Area		Revenue paid in Rs.	No. of jotes	Area		Revenue paid in Rs.
		Acres	Dec.			Acres	Dec.			Acres	Dec.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Paharia	3	55	72	38	-	-	-	-	147	6,064	06	6,815
Chatri	-	-	-	-	3	182	92	235	67	2,502	13	3,156
Oraon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	116	2,899	99	3,225
European	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	57	3,940	00	4,361
Mech	47	1,773	67	1,313	-	-	-	-	766	29,593	66	18,523
Kapali	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	299	10	367
Muhammadans	22	395	87	210	23	4,037	89	4,692	2,692	121,583	20	111,957
Shaha	16	221	92	181	-	-	-	-	76	3,533	42	4,247
Tanti	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24	794	9	816
Rajbansi	521	8,761	11	7,101	21	3,844	99	4,220	5,264	180,910	32	183,089
Kyasth	9	283	46	136	6	817	55	960	192	8,503	17	7,843
Bhutia	1	3	79	6	-	-	-	-	2	16	66	80
Brahman	17	429	20	352	2	283	53	382	201	11,316	37	9,191
Gope	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	47	3,074	53	2,594
Kyan	21	681	86	533	1	203	64	203	99	12,462	87	11,970
Napit (barber)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34	1,690	63	2,212
Hari	1	30	16	28	-	-	-	-	6	143	27	143

Table contd.

Caste	Mynaguri Tahsil				Falakata Tahsil				Alipur Tahsil			
	No. of jotes	Area		Revenue paid in Rs.	No. of jotes	Area		Revenue paid in Rs.	No. of jotes	Area		Revenue paid in Rs.
		Acres	Dec.			Acres	Dec.			Acres	Dec.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Banik	2	180	98	49	-	-	-	-	13	314	55	353
Majhi	2	35	33	23	-	-	-	-	5	112	98	72
Bairagi	3	43	17	24	-	-	-	-	13	270	34	341
Teli	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	173	33	216
Garo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	33	988	46	694
Byadh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	116	12	182
Mali	1	12	19	3	-	-	-	-	2	56	18	61
Baidya	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	69	01	85
Kumar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	379	40	471
Jugi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	456	48	556
Dobasiya	4	67	16	67	-	-	-	-	54	991	19	764
Jalda	2	31	36	20	-	-	-	-	2	31	36	20
Sutar (Carpenter)	11	109	44	75	-	-	-	-	14	283	54	211
Kamar	1	16	30	10	-	-	-	-	4	76	71	61
Kalwar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	26	53	21
Nepalese	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	69	66	67
Munda	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	111	58	87
Sanyasi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	23	43	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>681</b>	<b>13,040</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>10,170</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>9,370</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>10,701</b>	<b>9,971</b>	<b>384,303</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>374,901</b>

Source: D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Doars in the Jalpaiguri District, 1889-95*, p. 130.

D.H.E. Sunder's settlement made a hike in the revenue demand on the pretext that there had been an increase in the cultivation. The actual increase of revenue at this settlement was 60 per cent, of which 12 per cent was on account of the increase in the cultivation and 48 per cent was due to the enhancement of the rates. The following chart will help to show what the assessment was previously and what was the condition during the settlement operation of Sunder.

**Table II: 42**

**Actual increase and the Percentage of Increase on the old demand on each Tehsil**

Name of Tehsil	Assessable according to				Total demand according to		Increase	Percentage of Increase
	Last settlement		Present settlement		Last settlement	Present settlement		
1	2		3		4	5	6	7
	Acres	Dec.	Acres	Dec.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	
Mynaguri	150296	12	164528	09	1,28,627	20,901	82,474	65.13
Falakata	89338	08	142751	25	64,960	1,11,288	40,328	75.93
Alipur	47489	23	55206	08	24,099	30,641	6,512	27.14
Bhalka	11006	41	13010	01	7,830	10,170	2,340	20.88
Ambari-Falakata	9223	07	9370	45	10,483	10,701	218	2.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,07,328</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>3,81,895</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>2,33,999</b>	<b>3,74,901</b>	<b>1,40,902</b>	<b>60.21</b>

Source: D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Duars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 124

However, D.H.E. Sunder's settlement report was not above criticism.

The next settlement officer J.A. Milligan complained about the information given about the work of this settlement. Both Milligan and Beatson Bell an official criticised Sunder's style of classification of land in the Western Duars. Sunder classified the land on the basis of old Assam system of *Basti*, *Rupit* and *Faringhati*, *Doba* and *Patit*, but this system according to both Beatson Bell and Milligan was not workable into the Duars on the ground that the villagers of the Duars were not acquainted with these words. They argued "the words which they actually employ to distinguish the different classes of arable land are *Dohala*, *Sahari* and *Danga*. These words indicate low land, medium land and high land respectively".<sup>52</sup>

Milligan also criticised the inadequacy of the materials on which the assessment of the Western Duars by Sunder was made; and he pointed out that the relation of Government demand to the gross produce of the soil was not worked out "nor was a full analysis made of the sources of enhancement...."<sup>53</sup>

Sunder's settlement report was also criticised by P. Nolan, Esq. Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, who said that "...the most important part of a Settlement Report that which described and explains the assessment, Mr. Sunder's elaborate volume left much to be desired".<sup>54</sup> He said in the settlement report no information regarding the rental of the landlord was given, and "the history of past enhancements is wanting, also information as to the vicinity of markets and facilities of irrigation in respect of each local area, tabular statement showing particulars as to cultivated land; and account of coercive processes found necessary for collection, a statement showing changes in prices since the last settlement, figures showing the crops grown at the date of last settlement, and above all a table showing how much of the increase of revenue is due to extend cultivation, and how much to the enhancement of rent are wanting".<sup>55</sup>

Further he stated, "It will be observed that the Settlement Officer has departed very widely from his original system, erroneously attributed to Mr. Finucane of making progressive all enhancements exceeding 25 per cent".

### III

After the expiry of Sunder's Settlement a conference was held at Jalpaiguri from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> July 1906 at which the senior members of the Revenue Board, the Director of Land Records, the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner and the Settlement Officer unanimously decided in favour of a fresh resurvey of the Western Duars "including a boundary survey of tea grants and forests".<sup>56</sup> It was decided for the first time that the whole of Baikunthapur estate "should be included in the operations and the whole cost

incurred should be borne by the estate".<sup>57</sup> These proposals were sanctioned by the Government of India.<sup>58</sup> Further in 1910 it was proposed that the work of cess revaluation should be carried out as part of the proposed settlement operations especially with regard to Faridpur and Jalpaiguri and this proposal was granted. Finally, it was felt that the different legal sanctions in the following two areas needed some rationalisation.

**(1) Permanently Settled Area** - The permanently settled area is found to be regulated by an ordinary notification under the Survey Act, *namely*, Notification No. 12224 dated 28<sup>th</sup> November 1906, and an ordinary notification under the Tenancy Act, *namely*, Notification No. 12215C, dated 28<sup>th</sup> November 1906.

**(2) Western Duars** - (a) In an identical manner jotes have been held under leases in the Mal Jote from Notification No. 12223C, dated 28<sup>th</sup> November 1906, under the Survey Act, and Notification No. 142R of 21<sup>st</sup> January 1908 under the Bengal Tenancy Act.

(b) In other jotes land is held by the application of the Tenancy Act and restricted by proviso III of Notification No. 964TR, dated 5<sup>th</sup> November 1898, Notification No. 12223C, dated 28<sup>th</sup> November 1906, under the Survey Act, and Notification No. 12222C of 28<sup>th</sup> November 1906.<sup>59</sup>

J.A. Milligan while trying to evolve a land revenue administration raised some basic issues. His first concern was to find out the units of survey and record.<sup>60</sup> The whole district was divided into *taluks* which varied in size from a ten square mile area to about 50 square miles. The origin of the nomenclature in the Duars was described by the Commissioner of Cooch Behar Division in 1872 as follows 'A *taluk* is a tract of land arbitrarily selected by the Bhutiyas originally. There does not exist any demarcation of village lands that could be followed. In the survey of the Duars, a separate map of the each *taluk* had been prepared'.<sup>61</sup> Another official Major Boileau equated *mauzas* with *taluks* before Sunder's Settlement, which were then present in the most fertile zone of the Western Duars. He then proposed to the Government for sub-dividing the *taluks* into village of suitable size. But this proposal was

not accepted by the Government which thought that "...it was clear that the local *taluks* had been treated as *mauzas*. So that there was no necessity for asking the Board of Revenue to authorise us now to treat the *taluks* as *mauzas*".<sup>62</sup> In the final revenue-survey *mauza* was adopted as the unit of record throughout the permanently settled areas. Nominally the record was framed by *taluks*, but in case of any divergence the *taluk* was made to coincide with the revenue survey *mauza*.

In the Western Duars, the unit of record adopted was the *jote*. The Bengali word *jote* from its Sanskrit original *Yotra* implied cultivation or cultivable land. A local officer of Jalpaiguri noted in 1909 "The term *jote* is applied to any holding, large or small held direct from a proprietor or from a holder of a recognised tenure such as *patni*". Mr. Glazier mentioned in his Reports on Rangpur that a *jote* was a tenancy unit paying a rent of rupees 50,000 while the same term was also found to be used to describe the peasants holding a few.<sup>63</sup> The Survey and Settlement Reports of all the North Bengal districts of early 20<sup>th</sup> century referred to different sizes of the *jotes*.

Although a *jote* was the unit in the Western Duars, but a good part of the land in the Duars were not included within the settled *jotes*. The term used for them was *taluk* and so the *taluks* appeared to be the real units. "Traverse plots were prepared on the basis of the *taluks* as unit, but the Cadastro was prepared *jote by jote*".<sup>64</sup> In the Western Duars *jotes* were given on a ring-fence principle and those were treated as a separate entity for revenue purposes.

Sunder's settlement divided the 12 parganas of the Western Duars into two categories, *namely* -

- (1) Advanced parganas which included North and South Mainaguri and Chengmari regions.
- (2) Backward parganas which included the Moraghat, Lakhipur, West Madari, Chakwakheta, Buxa, Bhatibari, Bhalka and Ambari-Falakata regions.

But Milligan for assessment principles modified the above categories and introduced three sections, *namely* -

- "(1) The advanced parganas.

- (2) The eight backward parganas comprised in the Falakata, Alipur and Bhalka tehsils.
- (3) Ambari-Falakata.<sup>65</sup>

Milligan accepted Beatson Bell's classification of land. Mr. Beatson Bell modified the classification of lands as offered by Sunder and prescribed in favour of *Dohala*, *Sahuri* and *danga* type of land. He said "Broadly speaking, the old *rupit* has been sub-divided into *dohala* and *Sahuri* and old *faringati* has been shown as *danga*".<sup>66</sup> Further, a significant change was made in respect of *patit* lands. Sunder classified those lands as *patit* which he found uncultivated; but Beatson Bell branded those lands as *patit* "which is unfit from natural causes to bear a crop".<sup>67</sup>

After evaluating all types of lands in the Western Duars Milligan introduced the following types of lands -

- (a) *Basti* - Homesteads, garden, orchard and bamboos.
- (b) *Dohala* - Low, lying arable land.
  - (i) *Dohala-I* - Selected tracts of specially good paddy lands.
  - (ii) *Dohala-II* - Ordinary low arable lands.
- (c) *Danga* - High arable lands.
  - (i) *Danga-I* - Cultivated land.
  - (ii) *Danga-II* - Arable but not under cultivation.
- (d) *Sahuri* - A type of land between *danga* and *dohala*. This type of land was suitable for growing rice and jute.
- (e) *Doba* - A type of land permanently under water but pits were used for steeping jute and other non-arable depressions.
- (f) *Patit* - Land unfit for natural causes to bear a crop.
- (g) Unassessable - Such type of lands included public roads and other lands "falling within the periphery of a *jote* but not covered by the terms of the *jotedar's* lease".<sup>68</sup>

In the permanently settled area a much simpler system of land classification was adopted. Regarding these region it was emphatically stated that "only such classes of land as are understood by the people will be shown in our maps and records".<sup>69</sup>

In the permanently settled area five classes of land, *i.e.*, *Basti*, *Dohola*, *Danga*, *Doba* and *Patit* were introduced. After sorting out the problem of classification of lands Milligan ascertained the value of the land and its produce and to differentiate localities by this and other criteria. Milligan discontinued Sunder's system of dividing *jotes* into three classes. The classification of the assessment blocks was made by Milligan in regarding the advanced parganas on the following principles -

- (a) Relative fertility, (b) Accessibility to markets, (c) Sub-infeudation, (d) Selling value of the land.

Drawn on the rates based on the above principles the following chart will illustrate the changes made in the Milligan's Settlement operations.

Table II: 43

A comparative estimate between the application of rate of Sunder and Milligan in the advanced parganas

Class of Jote		Basti		Rupit		Faringhati		Patit					
		Rs.	A	Rs.	A	Rs.	A	Rs.	A				
Mr. Sunder's rates	I	3	0	2	0	1	8	0	3				
	II	3	0	1	12	1	6	0	3				
	III	3	0	1	9	1	3	0	3				
		Basti		Dohola		Shohuri		Danga I		Danga II		Patit	
		Rs.	A	Rs.	A	Rs.	A	Rs.	A	Rs.	A	Rs.	A
New Rates	I	3	0	2	4	2	0	1	8	0	10	0	2
	II	3	0	2	0	1	12	1	6	0	8	0	2
	II	3	0	1	12	1	10	1	4	0	6	0	2

Source: Final Report on the Survey and Settlement operations in the Jalpaiguri District 1906-1916 - By J.A. Milligan, p. 97.

The total effects of application of the new rates may be summed up in Milligan's statement, "Mr. Sunder assessed 3926 mal jotes of Rs. 209101. We found only 3,893 mal jotes remaining together with 260 jotes created under the Arable waste Land Rules. The demand from those 4,153 jotes before reassessment was Rs. 2,00,487. The new demand resulting from the new rates was Rs. 2,51,724".<sup>70</sup>

In Milligan's settlement there was an increase of nearly 4000 acres in the class of *Basti* and a new class of land called *Shohuri* was created which

absorbed 15000 acres of *Faringhati* type of land. Further there was a conversion of 31,000 acres of waste lands into a class of arable land called *Danga-II*. This type of land, i.e., *Danga-II* accounted for 15 out of the 25 per cent of the enhancement.

Regarding the issue of application of the principle of progressive enhancements in the advanced parganas it was first conceived that the Assam Rules of progressive enhancements would be suitable for the Duars. But some problems arose on starting this system. The Assam rules stipulated that the enhancements should not normally exceed 100% and “they provide for progression of rents at three periods by enhancement of –

- (1) upto 33 per cent,
- (2) anything over 33 per cent not exceeding 66 per cent, and
- (3) anything over 66 per cent, but not exceeding 100 per cent without orders”.<sup>71</sup>

All enhancements over 100 per cent were referred to Government for special orders. But British authorities found this system was not workable in the “...rapidly developing tracts like the Western Duars, where in the currency of the last settlement the area of cultivation has doubled itself, a normal level of enhancements was not to be expected, and in practice enhancements of over 100 per cent due entirely to increase of cultivation and not at all to increase of rates, were fairly common in certain parganas”.<sup>72</sup> Further Assam rules were conceived in such a way that in many cases, a major share of the enhancement occurred in the third period and thus deprived the Colonial Government a major share of the revenue.

After a long discussion on this aspect the Government of India in a letter No. 1859 of September 1913 finally granted progressive enhancements. The results of the assessment in the advanced part of the parganas were as follows –

Table II: 44

## Results of Milligan's assessment in the advanced parganas

Name of Pargana	Annual revenue payable during					
	First Five Years		Second Five Years		Remainder of Settlement Period	
	10 anna	6 anna	10 anna	6 anna	10 anna	6 anna
	kist	kist	kist	kist	kist	kist
	(Rs.)	(Rs.)	(Rs.)	(Rs.)	(Rs.)	(Rs.)
Chengmari	39,129	23,535	40,993	24,598	41,790	25,107
North Mainaguri	22,651	13,546	24,191	14,750	25,687	15,421
South Mainaguri	87,915	87,915	89,380	53,629	89,830	53,898
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,49,695</b>	<b>89,770</b>	<b>1,54,504</b>	<b>92,977</b>	<b>1,57,307</b>	<b>94,426</b>

Source: Final Report on the Survey and Settlement operations in the Jalpaiguri District 1906-1916 - By J.A. Milligan, p. 103.

The maximum revenue of the advanced parganas resulted from the assessment was Rs. 2,51,733.

In respect of the Backward Parganas the principles of assessment and the methods adopted in working out and applying the actual rates were the same as those of the advanced parganas with two exceptions, *namely*, (a) As the backward parganas were yet to experience full development the principle of pargana rates without differentiation of *jotes* into separates classes was retained.

(b) A new class was introduced into the schedule of land classification by the division of *Dohola I* and *Dohola II* while Sunder found only 1,10,000 acres of developed lands, Milligan's tenure saw over 2,65,000 acres of developed land in the backward parganas, excluding altogether the enormous increase in Tea cultivation.

The policy adopted in the advanced parganas of applying the increased rates only to better classes of land and sparing or reducing the rates in mediocre and bad lands was not followed in the backward parganas.

The results of the Assessment in the Backward Parganas were as follows -

**Table II: 45**  
**Results of assessment in the backward parganas**

Name of Pargana	Annual revenue payable during					
	1 <sup>st</sup> 5 Years		2 <sup>nd</sup> 5 Years		Remainder of Settlement Period	
	10 anna	6 anna	10 anna	6 anna	10 anna	6 anna
	kist	kist	kist	kist	kist	kist
	(Rs.)	(Rs.)	(Rs.)	(Rs.)	(Rs.)	(Rs.)
Lakshmipore	13,040	7,827	13,895	8,321	14,344	8,601
Moraghat	69,639	41,779	77,073	46,208	81,796	19,135
West Madari	24,189	14,335	26,576	15,937	27,831	16,680
Boxa	17,867	10,715	19,795	11,938	21,160	12,697
Bhatibari	21,767	13,009	23,379	13,979	24,158	14,479
East Madari	14,253	8,552	15,835	9,402	16,750	10,051
Chokoakheti	7,503	4,503	8,346	5,008	8,827	5,297
Bhalka	17,177	10,342	18,336	11,071	19,071	11,436
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,85,435</b>	<b>1,11,062</b>	<b>2,03,235</b>	<b>1,21,864</b>	<b>2,13,937</b>	<b>1,28,376</b>

**Source:** *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement operations in the Jalpaiguri District 1906-1916* -  
 By J.A. Milligan, p. 106.

The Ambari-Falakata region was promoted from the backward status to a moderate developed state during the time of Milligan. Hence the Colonial authorities did not hesitate to apply the principle of assessment in these regions. The following chart will illustrate the new rates in the Ambari-Falakata region.

**Table II: 46**  
**A comparison between Sunder's rates and Milligan's rates in the Ambari-Falakata region**

	Busti		Dohola		Danga				Doba		Patit	
	Rs.	A	Rs.	A	I		II		Rs.	A	Rs.	A
New Rates	2	0	1	12	1	2	0	4	0	1	0	2
Sunder's Rates	Busti		Rupit		Faringhati		Doba		Patit			
	Rs.	A	Rs.	A	Rs.	A	Rs.	A	Rs.	A		
	2	0	1	8	1	2	1	8	0	3		

**Source:** J.A. Milligan, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement operations in the Jalpaiguri District 1906-1916*, p. 107.

The result of the reassessment was a maximum demand of Rs. 12,822 against Rs. 10,699 but 8 out of the 56 *jotes* received the concession of progressive enhancements. The actual demands at different stages are:

Table II: 47

## Different stages of progressive enhancements in the Ambari-Falakata region

	First 5 years			Second 5 years			Last 10 years		
	Rs.	A	P	Rs.	A	P	Rs.	A	P
8 <i>jotes</i> in which progressive enhancement allowed	1260	15	11	1387	0	0	1526	8	8
48 others	11295	12	2	11295	12	2	11295	12	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>12556</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12682</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12822</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>

Source: J.A. Milligan, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement operations in the Jalpaiguri District 1906-1916*, p. 108.

Col. Hedayat Ali's estate which was leased out by the colonial authorities in the year 1883 expired during the tenure of Milligan. At the time of Milligan it was found that the total area was 28,495 acres of land. Milligan classified them in the following manner:

Table II: 48

## Classification of land by Milligan in Col. Hedayet Ali's estate

Basti .....	930.24
Dohola .....	6,915.22
Shohuri .....	6,174.01
Danga I .....	8,517.90
Danga II .....	3,990.41
Doba .....	307.52
Unculturable Waste .....	819.35
Unassessable .....	810.58
<b>Total -</b>	<b>28,495.23</b>

Source: J.A. Milligan, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement operations in the Jalpaiguri District 1906-1916*, p. 108.

On receipt of prayer from the *jotedars* for further concession the Government of India ordered "That the memorialists be informed that after a full consideration of their case the Governor in Council has decided that the lands should be resettled at three fourths of the pargana rates for a period of 20 years on term fixed for the present settlement in the Western Duars after which they will be assessed at full rates..."<sup>73</sup> But Milligan found it hard to implement this order. So he put forward a proposal and this was rapidly approved by the Colonial Government.

Table II: 49

**Proposal of Milligan regarding Colonel Hedayet Ali's estate**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> period of 5 years</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> period</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> period</b>
Rs. 17,000	Rs. 20,000	Rs. 22,790
The rents payable by the <i>Chukanidars</i> in the same periods being -		
Rs. 36,626	Rs. 41,965	Rs. 45,767
Having to the Colonel's heirs profits of -		
Rs. 19,626	Rs. 21,965	Rs. 22,977

Source: J.A. Milligan, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement operations in the Jalpaiguri District 1906-1916*, p. 109.

By the clause of the lease rules it was stipulated that after the expiry of 20 years which was concluded during Milligan tenure, Colonel Hedayet Ali's estate would be brought to line with other *jotes* in the matter of assessment and no further concessions would be granted.

The same treatment was shown to the lands of Late Rai Upendra Nath Duardar Bahadur who during his life time tried to extract a further concession in respect of his lands from the Colonial Government. But the *local government* in their letter No. 2669LR of the 15<sup>th</sup> July 1892 categorically stated that the concessions granted to him would cease after 15 years. During Milligan's tenure in pursuance of the above mentioned order it was resolved that "no special treatment other than the grant of progressive enhancements" was to be given to the heirs of late Rai Upendra Nath Duardar.

It is being observed that a definite policy regarding tribal land was gradually emerging. Certain measures seem to have been taken to prevent alienation of land from the tribals of the Western Duars. The most important policies adopted during the Milligan settlement are the following:

- (I) A block of land approximating 20,000 acres known as *Satali* was set aside as a reserve for Mechs and Garos. But no effort was taken to prevent sub-infudation and encroachments. As a result many outsiders settled in *Satali*. In 1907 the Board took initiative in checking this process and vide Board's No. 51 W.L/R of 4<sup>th</sup> December 1907 proposal it was decided to stop further encroachments.<sup>74</sup> In this respect various proposals were given but

on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1908 the Director of Land Records issued a special order to Milligan in this respect. The Director of Land Records instructed him not to "...make a record of rights or revise assessment in the Mech and Garo Colony...".<sup>75</sup>

Soon after this order the Mech exodus from the Duars began and in 1915 Milligan was informed that practically every Mech had moved over into Assam.

- (II) But regarding the Totos the Colonial Government's approach was flexible. Perhaps realising the unprofitability of keeping the *jotes* within Totopara, Milligan strongly recommended that the Totos be allowed to remain in undisturbed condition, and "that all transfers, mortgages, sub-letting or other disturbing practices be totally forbidden and prevented by the district authorities".<sup>76</sup>

In the Totopara region no lease was issued on the pretext that "peculiar incidents of the tenancy" of the region was quite an alien concept in the rest of the Duars but a provision was kept for issuing leases in Mondal's as village headman's name.

- (III) In respect of Santhal Colony, Milligan cited an important letter which clearly showed the Colonial Government's policy as regards the Santhals. It was specifically stated that the (1) Santhals should remain undisturbed; (2) "the Santhal block of cultivation outside the proposed western boundary should be settled with the holders as ordinary *jotes*...";<sup>77</sup>

(3) "no one in future should be admitted to settlement or given lands in the reserve, except with the permission of the Superintendent".<sup>78</sup>

(4) the Deputy Commissioner was prohibited to settle any land with Santhals within five miles of the nearest part of the outer boundary of the reserve.

Further on the recommendation of Milligan the Government resolved that "(i) that the revenue administration of the colony should be taken out of

the hands of the Superintendent of the Colony and placed in those of the Deputy Commissioner.

(ii) that the Deputy Commissioner should maintain a uniform policy for the preservation and isolation of the Santhal Colony, ejecting outsiders where possible and admitting none to settlement without consulting the Superintendent of the colony and having due regard to the wishes of the latter.

(iii) that no new settlers should be introduced other than Santhals and that so long as there is any land in the colony available and fit for reclamation, no settlement should be made with a Santhal within five miles of the colony.

(iv) that renewed leases should be given to the present settlers in the form approved by Government for the renewal of Mal jote leases with necessary alterations in the clauses relating to the right of transfer and sub-infeudation to suit the special condition of the Santhals."<sup>79</sup>

It was further stipulated in that letter that "future settlement of Santhals will be made under the Arable Waster Lands Rules".<sup>80</sup>

Milligan's settlement was remarkable in the sense that he first introduced a cess revaluation in Jalpaiguri which was a maiden venture not only in Jalpaiguri but also in East Bengal. A proposal to assess *nij-dakhaliya* lands of raiyats with a rent of less than Rs. 200 and a fraction of their holdings sub-let on the basis of the rent paid instead of the sub-letting value of the lands was overruled. Thus the total revaluation resulted in an increase of revenue to the tune of Rs. 58,126 from ordinary cultivation and Rs. 1,169 from tea gardens.<sup>81</sup>

In addition to these there were *maljote* leases. After the annexation of Western Duars various kinds of land tenures and land-holding system emerged and this created a chaotic condition. So to reduce this chaos to order and to evolve a definite land-policy and to define the obligations and rights of all classes of tenants, the Waste Land Rules of 1888 were framed, and Settlement of Mr. Sunder culminated in the *Mal jote* leases of 1891.

The term *mal jote* was applied to those jotes which were in existence at the time of annexation of the Duars from Bhutan. Mr. Sanders gave single

type of lease of all types of jotes during his time irrespective of their origin. His lease was branded as *Mal jote* lease which was distinct from the leases sanctioned by the Government under the Arable Waste Lands Rules. There were 4 classes of *jotes* in the Duars for which leases were prepared in Milligan's settlement, namely -

"(1) *Jotes* settled by Mr. Sanders under *Mal-jote* leases.

(2) *Jotes* settled subsequently under Renewed Arable Waste Lands Leases.

(3) *Jotes* under A.W.L. preliminary leases.

(4) *Jotes* created under *Amalmamas* for the reclamation of waste land for which no lease had yet been issued or prescribed."<sup>82</sup>

The *mal-jote* leases granted before 5<sup>th</sup> November 1898 were protected from the provisions of Tenancy Act. But this immunity was granted only to one renewal which means that "on the expiry of the leases which will now be granted" the Tenancy Act would come into full force.<sup>83</sup> But it was found that most leases in the *mal jote* form were issued after 1898 in place of Renewed Arable Waste Lands Rules. Mr. J.F. Grunning, Deputy Commissioner, then cancelled the *Mal jote* lease and replaced it with a Renewed Arable Waste Lands Lease.

Further, a huge quantity of land categorised as waste was leased out for tea cultivation. Under the Waste Land Rules introduced in 1896, a preliminary lease was made for a term of 5 years, the land being rent free for the first year and after that on a rental 3 annas an acre for the second year and an additional 3 annas for each successive year upto 12 annas an acre. Such rents were much lower than the backward portions of the district. Each grant was to be a compact one and to be capable of being enclosed in a ring-fence. This type of leases were entitled to renewal for a further period of 30 years, and to renewals for similar periods in perpetuity. The Government reserved the right to fix rents subject to certain lower and upper limits.<sup>84</sup>

Surplus lands of the plantation were utilised for settling the labourers as tenants.<sup>85</sup> Much of the land under tea-grants was also in excess of all the

requirements taken together. Thus it would be quite fair to say without such a land policy the tea plantations would not have got started at all.

Milligan's settlement received admiration from F.A. Sachse who was then the Director of Land Record, Bengal.<sup>86</sup> But F.W. Strong, Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri had some reservations regarding certain aspects of Milligan's settlement. He said "The meaning of the words "Where the settlement of waste land has been stopped" between pages 90 and 91 is not clear to me. It is true that new settlements of waste land in the Duars were stopped in 1915 by the Commissioner's order in expectation of such lands being required for settlement with soldiers after the war, and that this embargo has not been removed yet but this is only a very temporary stoppage. The Board of Revenue has only recently brought out a new and improved form of lease for settlement of waste lands.<sup>87</sup> Further, he objected to Milligan's contention about the mass exodus of Mechs from Satali to Assam. He said "I had an enquiry made into the circumstances of the colony in 1917 and the Sub-divisional Officer reported that there were 894 Mechs in the colony",<sup>88</sup> and he cited the information of Naib Tashildar of Bhalka who reported that in Bhalka there were 1700 Mechs.<sup>89</sup>

#### IV

Before discussing the impact of Colonial and revenue administration on the Baikunthapur estate it is quite necessary to discuss its economic relation with the East India Company in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. By 1765 Bhutan was supreme in the management of Cooch Behar and no decision could be taken without the sanction of her representative stationed at Cooch Behar. The *Raikats* of the time *Darpa Dev* entered into an alliance with the *Dev Raja* of Bhutan to overthrow the Raja of Cooch Behar. With the Bhutia troops he invaded Cooch Behar. Then the *Raja* of Cooch Behar prayed for British help and consequently in 1773 a treaty was concluded between the Cooch Behar state and the East India Company, whereby the Cooch Behar estate became a

feudatory state of the British. The latter ejected the Bhutia forces from Cooch Behar and the *Raikat Darpa Dev* was confined in those parts of Baikunthapur as had not already been ceded to Bhutan. A revenue was however assessed on his lands and he was treated on exactly the same footing as an ordinary zamindar while being deprived of all authority on Cooch Behar proper. But *Sri Jagadindra Dev Raikat* refused to acknowledge this zamindari status of the *Raikats* of Baikunthapur, on the contrary he asserted that then it was a princely state not under the tutelage of the Company.<sup>90</sup> But the subsequent events proved that it was a zamindari estate. The inclusion of Phoolbari in the Baikunthapur zamindari took place after the Anglo-Nepalese War in 1817. It has been mentioned in Consultation, 6 April 1835, No. 104 that Debiganj (which includes Phoolbari) was a fertile and populous district which was settled with inhabitants, with the Raja of Julpigoree in the year 1828 in compensation of injuries sustained by him. The Sikkim used to collect a sum of Rs. 12,000.00 as annual revenue from the place. In 1772 after the humiliation suffered at the hands of the East India Company, the *Raikats* of Baikunthapur estate was forced to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 10,000 which was increased to Rs. 25,000 in 1774 and to Rs. 30,000 in 1775. *Darpa Dev* in a petition of remonstrance against the heavy revenue assessed on him, which he addressed to the Collector of Rangpur, called himself the Raja of Batris-hazari.<sup>91</sup>

But despite this protest no change in policy of the British was visible in this respect despite an extra initiative taken by the Collector of Rangpur for lowering the revenue of the Baikunthapur estate. No explanation was furnished for the tough measures meted out to the *Raikats* by the East India Company. It is presumed that perhaps *Raikat's* secret alliance with the *Sannyasis* was responsible for their ill-treatment towards the Baikunthapur estate.<sup>92</sup>

Further on account of revenue collection by the East India Company's representative an unfortunate incident took place. It was held that revenue

balances had accrued of the Baikunthapur estate for 3 years and in 1779 *Sezawal* (rent-collector) was appointed for direct collection of revenue from the Baikunthapur estate but he reported that the *Raikats* took unfair means to evade the payment of revenue. After this a vigorous step was made by the Collector of Rangpur. In 1780 some reduction in revenue was made by the East India Company.

Further, *Sri Jogendradeva Raikat* mentioned a rift arose between *Darpa Deva* and the East India Company over the payment of revenues of Jalpesh and "Kalakata" (Falakata?) during the time of Dahsala Bandobast in 1793.<sup>93</sup> incidentally by the act of agreement 1777 "Kalakata" and Jalpesh region were given to the *Devoraja* of Bhutan.<sup>94</sup>

It is very difficult to form a clear idea about the land revenue policy pursued by the *Raikats* in the Baikunthapur estate. Because, Milligan complained about the position of the estate before his settlement operation as one of confusion and ignorance. Despite this difficulty some knowledge could be gained from the account left by *Shri Jogendra Dev Raikat*.<sup>95</sup>

He stated that the *Raikats* held land both in Jalpaiguri and also in the Rangpur district. Further, he also mentioned the exact amount of revenue in each *tauzi* (revenue district).

The following chart will help to illustrate the actual state of affair in the Baikunthapur estate.

Table II: 50

## A Description about the Baikunthapur Zamindari before the Settlement

## Operation of Milligan

Tauzi No. 1				
Name of the Mauza	Thana	Area of Land (in acre)	Revenue	
1. Sanyasikata	Tetulia Rajganj	25338.58	17445.14	
2. Baikur (Jorpakri)	Mainaguri	5295.65	Valuation	
3. Padmati	Ditto	4094.95	6000000.00	
4. Pechahati	Ditto	1035.80		
5. patkata	Jalpaiguri	17695.77		
6. Paharpur	Ditto	5978.61		
7. Dharmanagar	Mainaguri	6778.40		
8. Baikunthapur - Jangal Mahal	Rajganj	62531.68		
9. Barpetta - Natunbas	Jalpaiguri	11449.30		
10. Kawtadari	Rajganj	2921.99		
11. Shikarpur	Ditto	8258.34		
12. Chhat Shikarpur	Ditto	292.20		
13. Gujarimari	Ditto	1959.56		
14. Kisamat-Sukhani	Ditto	2099.54		
15. Pani Kauri	Ditto	3117.97		
16. Chhat Gujarimari	Ditto	2951.79		
17. Sukhani	Ditto	1314.67		
18. Kukurjan	Ditto	5601.56		
19. Satkhamar	Ditto	4343.93		
20. Khngi Kisamat	Ditto	971.73		
21. Mandal Ghat	Ditto	5359.19		
22. Boalmari	Ditto	4258.64		
23. Kachua	Ditto	3156.08		
24. Arazi Choraibari	Ditto	451.44		
25. Naowabari-Nababganj	BODA	1266.16		
26. Garalbari	Jalpaiguri	10904.34		
27. Bhitargarh	BODA	1982.61		
28. Binnaguri	Rajganj	1449.41		
29. Arazi-Binnaguri	Ditto	1669.41		
30. Shimulguri	Ditto	713.27		
31. Tiatibari	Ditto	675.92		
32. Saptibari	Mainaguri	9517.31		
33. Jabarmal	Ditto	9517.31		
34. Harsasashi	BODA	79.15		
35. Kajaldighi	Ditto	37.05		
36. Araj-Berubari	Jalpaiguri	5.29		
37. Araj-Naoatari	BODA	92.50		
38. Toldhar	Ditto	2.50		
39. Kakandighi	Parangram	231.76		
		<b>250470.16</b>		

**No. 2 Tauzi No. 2 Sixteen anna share**

	Name of the Mauza	Thana	Area of land (in acre)
	1. Kharia	Jalpaiguri	14886.60
	2. Bahadur	Ditto	8366.18
	3. Belakoba	Ditto	6002.58
	4. Arazi-Belakoba No. 1	Rajganj	391.08
	5. Arazi-Belakoba No. 2	Ditto	121.51
	6. Arazi-Belakoba No. 3	Ditto	212.00
			<b>29070.50</b>
Revenue	-	3641.18	
Valuation	-	79,00,000.00	

No. 4 Tauzi No. 4 - Exempted from paying revenue - 51.668

Jalpaiguri Collectorate

	Name of the Mauza	Thana	Area of land (in acre)
	1. Maguta	BODA	4.39
	2. Khatpura	Ditto	23.95
	3. Lakheraj	Ditto	538.69
	4. Lakheraj Jholgi	Ditto	76.38

(Jote Laxmikanto)

A)	Amount of rent taken from the projas	-	499.04
B)	Amount of Khasland	-	67.31 acre
C)	Amount of patit land	-	22.74 acre
	Valuation of Land	-	2000.00

Tauzi No. 1413 = eight anna share

	Name of the Mauza	Thana	Area of land (in acre)
	1. Garalbari	Jalpaiguri	185.59
Amount of Revenue	-	5157	
Valuation of land	-	2000.00	

Tauzi No. 6 exempted from paying Revenue Road toll tax - 38.00

Name of the Mauza	Thana	Area of land (in acre)
1. Natuatari-Debottar Land	BODA	286.66
Amount of rent taken from the projas	-	130.00
Amount of khas land	-	5221
Tauzi No. 7 - exempted from paying revenue - Road toll tax - 12 anna		

Name of the Mauza	Area of land (in acre)
1. Nauatari - 77B Registrar/89 Debottar	70.66

Amount of rent taken from the projas - 94.30

Amount of khas land - 55.00

Valuation of land - 2000.00

*Source: Sri Jagadindra Dev Raikat, Raikat Bangsha O tahader Rajjer Samkhipta bibaran.*

Further information about Baikunthapur Zamindari estates could be traced in the Rangpur district.

**Table II: 51**

**A description about the ancestral property of the Baikunthapur estate in the Rangpur District**  
8 No. - Tauzi No. 212

Name of the Mauza	Thana	Area of land (in acre)
1. Jibanpur	Mithapukur	189.67
2. Mithapukur	Ditto	2.30
3. Krishnapur	Ditto	4.52
4. Bhabanipur	Ditto	200.46
5. Chitli-Uttarpara	Ditto	324.02
6. Chitli-Madhyapara	Ditto	5.68
7. Chitli-Purbapara	Ditto	303.25
8. Baldi-Bathan	Ditto	464.66
9. Dullapur	Ditto	368.64
10. Chandi-Chandpur	Ditto	118.65
11. Saladipur	Ditto	6.78
12. Kashipur	Ditto	5.72
13. Garaihata	Ditto	19.63
		<b>1916.23</b>

Amount of Revenue - 2447.00

Valuation of land - 8000.00

### 9 No.: Tauzi No. 258 - within the purview of Permanent Settlement

Name of the Mauza	Thana	Area of land (in acre)
1. Baro Bagabanpur	Pirganj	356.98
2. Kuatpur	Ditto	367.74
3. Chasipur	Ditto	372.29
4. Kumarpur	Ditto	39.26
		630.27

Amount of Revenue - 437.00

### No. 10 Tauzi = Lakhe Raj land

Name of the Mauza	Thana	Area of land (in acre)
1. Kutipura	Kishoreganj	11.05
2. Mahiganj	Rangpur	2.9525

Source: Sri Jagadindra Dev Raikat, *Raikat Bangsha O tahader Rajjer Samkhipta bibaran*, edited by Nirmal Chandra Chaudhury, pp. 50-51.

The Baikunthapur estate owned a large forest area. Two tea gardens named Shikarpur and Bhandarpur were added to the property of the Estate in the subsequent period.

It is clear from the above mentioned charts that the total revenue collected from different *mauzas* amounted to Rs. 30197.82 and the total valuation of land owned by the estate stood at Rs. 13312000.

Besides, the *Raikats* held some *mauzas* situated in Boda, Kishoreganj and Rangpur areas, which were exempted from paying revenue. In this regard it is pertinent to mention that the South Mainaguri region was a former Bhutanese territory.

After the annexation of Western Duars by the British this region naturally came under the purview of the British who leased out this region to the *Raikat* of Baikunthapur.<sup>95</sup>

At that time the region was partially cultivated and it is known that the *Raikats* made no alteration in the old Bhutia land revenue system of extracting rents without taking into consideration any particular scale of rates. E.E. Lowis commented "As long as the Raikat held the lease of South Mynaguri he was supposed to collect according to Bhutia-rent-roll in fact collecting what he could".<sup>96</sup>

Meanwhile the Government of Bengal in Revenue Department letter No. 16T, dated 15<sup>th</sup> August 1871 resolved not to extend the term of lease granted to the *Raikats* of Baikunthapur regarding the South Mainaguri region. It was said that the lease "should not be renewed, but that a settlement of this *pergunnah* should be made..."<sup>97</sup>

In this context it may be mentioned that constant litigations among claimants of the estate put a heavy burden on the estate exchequer, and consequently the economy of the estate had deteriorated. On two occasions the estate was under court of wards – between 1800 and 1812 during the minority of *Sarba Dev* and again between 1857 and 1863 during the minority of *Chandra Sekhar Dev*,<sup>98</sup> and once again in the 20<sup>th</sup> century from 1904-1914 during the minority of *Prasannadev Raikat*.<sup>99</sup>

After the annexation of Western Duars a number of settlement operations under Beckett, Ulick Browne, D.H.E. Sunder took place. But no definite policy was visible in those settlement operations about a possible British land revenue policy in respect of the Baikunthapur estate. But after the expiry of the settlement operations under Sunder, a good deal of efforts were made by both Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner for a resurvey of the Western Duars "Correspondence ensued between the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner culminating in the Deputy Commissioner's Report of 1<sup>st</sup> August 1905, No. 2925, which gave a statement of the work to be done and his opinions as to the methods and agency to be employed".<sup>100</sup> This report was finally forwarded to the Government of India. Finally "The proposal approved by His Honour was for a revision of the survey of blocks of land in the Western Duars already settled or capable of being settled, and a settlement of rents under the Bengal Tenancy Act".<sup>101</sup> In addition to this the Deputy Commissioner proposed to survey and settle the char and forest lands belonging to the Baikunthapur estate. But this proposal was not then materialised but was stayed by the Board for the discussion at Jalpaiguri. In 1906 the Deputy Commissioner on behalf of the ward requested for the extension of settlement proceeding to the estate. At a conference held in Jalpaiguri from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> July 1906, at which the Senior member of the Board,

the Director of Land Records, the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner and the Settlement Officer were present.

It was decided in that said conference that –

“(1) That a complete new survey and record were necessary for the whole of the tract known as the Western Duars, including a boundary survey of tea grants and forests.

(2) That the whole of the Baikunthapur estate should be included in the operations, and that the whole cost incurred should be borne by the estate.”<sup>102</sup>

This decision was endorsed by the Under Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue and Agriculture through his letter No. 1973-426-3 of 3.12.1906.<sup>103</sup> So naturally during the settlement operations under J.A. Milligan, the Baikunthapur estate was also surveyed and assessed.

Although the Cess Act X of 1871 was implemented in Jalpaiguri in 1<sup>st</sup> November 1874 but here no step was taken for the extension of Cess Act to the Baikunthapur estate. During the settlement operations of Milligan in the beginning of 1910 both Deputy Commissioner and Director of Land Records were unanimous in their opinion about a fresh inauguration of Cess revaluation in the whole Jalpaiguri District with the Settlement Officer Milligan as the supervisor of the whole process. Further the Board proposed to the Government “with regard to Faridpur district, adding that if the proposals commended themselves to the Lieutenant Governor similar steps would be taken in Jalpaiguri and Mymensingh where settlements were in progress...”<sup>104</sup>

Ultimately taking into account the approval of both Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner the Board sanctioned the proposal in “their No. C.R. of 12<sup>th</sup> December 1910, following Government order No. 8972 of 30<sup>th</sup> November 1910”.<sup>105</sup> Further the Settlement Officer was invested with the powers of collector for the purpose of making revaluations of estates and tenures.<sup>106</sup>

The permanently settled area in Jalpaiguri from which recovery was made comprised about 930 square miles, including 80 square miles of forest in the Baikunthapur estate. Further statistics were collected for 600 square miles on which apportionment proposals for the whole area were based.<sup>107</sup> Milligan

valued in the permanently settled area 439 estates and 49,579 Cess-tenures.

Further the 439 estates comprised –

“122 revenue paying estates.

212 revenue free estates.

105 revenue-free Railway “B” class lands as against –

108 revenue paying and

169 revenue-free estates in the rolls of the last valuation.”<sup>108</sup>

Most of the above mentioned estates were insignificant in size. Only the estate of the *Raikat* of Baikunthapur and of the Maharaja of Cooch Behar accounted for nearly the whole area. During Milligan’s tenure with the exception of the forest areas “Covering 80 square miles, practically the whole tract is under cultivation”.<sup>109</sup>

The total cost of the settlement operations in the whole district was fixed at Rs. 1,907,000 of this total Rs. 7,60,000 was recovered from the permanently settled area as apportioned cost.<sup>110</sup> For making a basis for distributing costs, Milligan collected figures for 604 square miles. He found in the permanently settled area 850 square miles of rentable lands and the Government revenue payable by all the revenue-paying estates amounted to Rs. 1,36,747.<sup>111</sup>

During this cess revaluation process the issue concerning the valuation of the *nij-dakhal* lands of tenure holders in the permanently-settled parts of the Jalpaiguri district gave rise to a debate. The general principle followed by the Board was that for such portion of “His holding as a tenure-holding retains in his own possession the annual value will be the rent...”<sup>112</sup> which would be paid by a cultivating *raiyat*.

For the practical implementation of this principle Milligan prepared an empirical table of average rents of each grade of tenant for the locality. The *nij-dakhal* lands of all tenure-holders were valued as if it “had been let out to tenants of the class in the table immediately below the tenure-holder under consideration”.<sup>113</sup>

The following chart will illustrate the actual state of affair of the *nij-dakhal* lands in the Baikunthapur estate and in the Patgram and Boda areas.

Table II: 52

Statement of *Nij-dakhal* lands (in acres and Decimals) of landlords and tenants (For Zamindaries)

Serial No.	Name of Parganas	Baikunthapur	Patgram	Boda	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6
	Nij-dakhal area held by -				
1.	(a) Revenue-paying proprietors	82,314.791	1,550.69	9,233.48	93,098.961
2.	(b) Revenue-free proprietors	733.92	472.57	740.09	1,946.58
	Area occupied for public purposed	195.44	9.13	275.42	479.99
3.	<i>Nij-dakhal</i> area held by tenure holders -				
4.	(a) Rent-paying fixed	12,534.55	634.77	2,408.38	15,577.70
5.	(b) of enhanceable	41,209.34	8,809.46	38,464.73	88,383.53
6.	(c) Rent-free	1,518.81	208.11	379.38	2,106.30
	<i>Nij-dakhal</i> area held by raiyats -				
7.	(a) At fixed rents	5,754.58	1,284.08	3,675.67	10,714.33
8.	(b) Settled raiyats at cash rents	1,07,637.97	37,908.67	177,718.44	323,265.08
9.	(c) Settled raiyats at produce rents	4,403.38	1,390.22	7,968.54	13,762.14
10.	(d) Occupancy raiyats at cash rents	-	-	178.29	178.29
11.	(e) Occupancy raiyats at produce rents	-	-	45.09	45.09
12.	(f) Non-occupancy raiyats at cash rents	8,038.75	2,076.84	2,515.15	12,630.74
13.	(g) Non-occupancy raiyats at produce rents	1,384.58	622.77	818.58	2,825.93
14.	(h) Rent-free services	4.32	.74	78.66	83.71
15.	(i) Rent-free others	2,471.78	116.14	198.39	2,786.31

Table contd.

Serial No.	Name of Parganas	Baikunthapur	Patgram	Boda	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Nij-dakhal area held by under-raiyats-</b>					
16.	(a) Rent-paying cash	17,273.41	7,366.84	29,582.96	54,223.21
17.	(b) Rent-paying produce	1,422.42	1,198.85	6,693.83	9,335.10
18.	(c) Rent-free	111.30	39.70	127.42	278.42
<b>Rent paid by persons not falling in any section of Bengal Tenancy Act -</b>					
19.	(a) Rent-paying cash	336.816	-	49.25	386.066
20.	(b) Rent-free	15.523	-	3.58	19.103
<b>Chandina Basat -</b>					
21.	(a) At cash rent	-	27.53	17.76	45.29
22.	(b) At produce rent	-	-	.21	.21
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>287,381.67</b>	<b>63,617.11</b>	<b>281,173.30</b>	<b>632,172.08</b>

Source: J.A. Milligan, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement operations in the Jalpaiguri District 1906-1916*, Page X, Appendix No. 9.

In the test area of 604 square miles it was found that 58,334 acres were held in *nij-dakhal* by proprietors and 10,000 acres of lands were fixed for the proprietors of the *adhiars*. For the whole area of 850 square miles, the *nij-dakhal* of proprietors and tenure-holders "may be taken as approximately 82088 acres..."<sup>114</sup> Here the cultivating lands for the *adhiars* was of 14073 acres. This area of 14073 acres were valued at the same rates as the lands held by independent *adhiars*, i.e., Rs. 6-4-0 per acre and after applying this rate the total valuation stood at Rs. 87,956. For the remaining *nij-dakhal* lands, Milligan applied the following types of values:

Table II: 53

**Application of rates of Milligan of the *nij-dakhal* lands in the permanently settled areas**

<i>Nij-dakhal</i> of proprietors	(a) Baikunthapur	10 cents of land	= 1 anna
Ditto of Ditto	(b) Boda, Patgram and Kajirhat	6 Ditto	= 1 anna
Ditto of Jotedars	-----	4 Ditto	= 1 anna
Ditto of Chukanidars	-----	3 Ditto	= 1 anna

Source: J.A. Milligan, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the Jalpaiguri District 1906-1916*, p. 58.

The *nij-dakhal* of proprietors was of approximately 80,000 acres of which 71,000 (including 51,200 of forest block) acres of land was within the jurisdiction of Baikunthapur estate and 9000 acres were in other parganas. At the proposed rates this land was valued as follows:

Rs. 44,375	-	Baikunthapur <sup>115</sup>
9,375	-	Other estates
<u>Total</u>		<u>53,750</u>

Further, within the above mentioned area "about 340 acres cultivated by dependent *adhiars* whose lands have been already valued, should be excluded, thus giving a net total of Rs. 53,420 under this head".<sup>116</sup>

On the other hand the *chakla* estates were settled by operations in 1889-1900.<sup>117</sup>

With regard to the valuation of rent free lands two important orders of the Board should be mentioned, namely, letter No. 688C, dated 10<sup>th</sup> July 1911

to the address of the Director of Land Records and the letter No. 1476 Cess – T, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1911 to the address of the Secretary to the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam. Both these two letters reflected the Colonial Government's intention not to exempt the revenue-free estates or rent-free tenures from the assessment of Cess.

The general effect of newly introduced cess revaluation in the permanently settled areas was the enhancement of rents. Milligan found that "in general the jotes in Baikunthapur were liable to enhancement and that the rents had originally been based on tables of rates for each village".<sup>118</sup>

In applying the new rates of rents two aspects, *i.e.*, rise in price of staple food crops and unchanging pattern of rent despite an increase in area were taken into account.

## V

After the annexation of Western Duars, the Colonial authorities were faced with the legacies which they mistakenly held left by the Bhutia administration and they had a very nominal idea about the principles to be followed in respect of different types of tenants. If any legacy is to be attributed, it ought to be traced to the Cooch Behar revenue policy before the Bhutanese clandestinely continued to collect revenue from the region from the middle of the eighteenth century. In September 1865, Colonel Bruce, officiating Commissioner of Bhutan Dooars forwarded to Government a note by Mr. Tweedie on the 'land tenures of the Western Duars'.<sup>119</sup> Tweedie's conclusions were based on the 'local examinations conducted by ameens and on verbal information given him by residents...'<sup>120</sup> He made a detailed study of tenurial structure during the Bhutia rule and divided the tenurial structure into four categories, *i.e.*, (1) *Jotedars*, (2) *Sukandars* otherwise called *Mulandars*, (3) *Ryots*, (4) *Projas*.

At first he described the *jotedars* as "a person who holds in severally, joint or common, a piece of land for which he pays revenue directly to Government through its agents, the Tehsildar and the Soobah. His tenement

is a 'jote' and nothing else but land so held can be a 'jote' ...."<sup>121</sup> As the 'jote' constituted the focal point of the land revenue system he examined the various aspects relating to it, *i.e.*, *jote*. He said during the Bhutia rule a jote could be acquired by gift, by purchase or by grant from the king, represented locally by his *Soobah*. Among these procedures the most common course for obtaining a jote was by succession. While discussing about how a jote might be dealt with by a jotedar and by others he stated a *jotedar's* position, his obligations. "The jotedar may occupy his jote as himself tenant paravant, cultivating such crops as he pleases, and disposing of the produce as to him seems best, 2<sup>nd</sup> he may sublet the whole or any portion of the tenement to whom he pleases, on whatever terms he can get, 3<sup>rd</sup> a jotedar, whether holding in severally, joint or common may at any time sell his rights, provided that in doing so he do not prejudice the rights of any third person".<sup>122</sup>

A jotedar's rights during the Bhutia regime was the 'property of the family, not of the individual'.<sup>123</sup> In case when heirs of the original holder failed, and no legal alienation of the *jote* "has been made by the last holder, the crown may dispose of the jote in any way it pleases; similarly in case of desertion, or of throwing off of allegiance".<sup>124</sup> Regarding the liabilities of a *jotedar* Tweedie stated that a *jotedar* had to pay his fixed revenue, and the 'benevolence' to the kings of Bhutan. While discussing about a *jotedaree* tenure Tweedie made a very important observation, *i.e.*, a *jotedaree* right could not be sold on account of a default made by a jotedar.

Next came the *Sukandars* or the *Mulandars*. These two words were held to be synonymous. This class corresponded with the ordinary farmer-tenant of England. The *Sukandars* could hold farms for a fixed term being more than one year, paid to the *jotedar* for each year of occupancy as ascertained money rent. So their rights were temporary by nature and existed only by force of the contract 'which may have been made between the tenant and the landlord'.<sup>125</sup>

Next in downward gradation was the *ryots* who paid to the *jotedar* a yearly money rent for the land held by him. He thus differed from the *Sukandar* who held lands for a term of years. In this respect he made three

differences between a *ryot* and a *proja*. (1) A *ryot* was a tenant for a year, while theoretically a *proja* was a tenant-at-will; (2) a *ryot* paid a money-rent while a *proja* paid in kind half the produce of his fields to the *jotedar*; (3) a *ryot* with the help of his capital could conduct his agricultural operations, while in case of a *proja* the seed and often the ploughs and animal labour were supplied by his landlord. So in all respect a *proja* was a dependent class. Further "The *ryot* is the same for a year at a time; while in the '*proja*' is to be found the lowest species of rent-paying tenant, and in terms to which he has to submit are embodied in the current ideas of a 'rack-rent', as existing in the Western Dooars of Bhootan in the year of grace eighteen hundred and sixty-five".<sup>126</sup> Sir W.J. Herschel Bart Commissioner of Cooch Behar Division almost echoed Tweedie's view about *jotedar*'s position during the Bhutia rule. He too stated that during the Bhutia rule the *jotes* were not sold for arrear of rent and there is no documentary proof that any proprietary rights of the *jotedars* were created during the Bhutia rule. According to him then the *jotedars* of the Dooars were generally a *Chookanidar* in Cooch-Bihar or Patgram and "the *Chookanidar* was generally an *adhiar* from those parts".<sup>127</sup> In short after the annexation of Western Duars for the next six years the Colonial Government's policy was to collect all recognised dues without altering the amount. In this connection it is pertinent to state Commissioner Colonel Haughtoan's opinion; under whose supervision W.O.A. Beckett carried out the first settlement operations in the Western Duars. Colonel Haughtoan in his report for 1866-67 hinted at a proposal of the Deputy Commissioner "to dispose of certain '*jotes*' forfeited for treason by (1) settlement with the actual ploughman; (2) the putting up to auction of the *jotedar* rights and (3) the sale in like manner of the Zemindaree rights".<sup>128</sup> Colonel Haughtoan protested against such proposal on the ground that "...it would inconveniently anticipate the general settlement of the district, would create in a particular spot tenant-right, which the Deputy Commissioner believes non-existent and create a non-existent Zemindaree right..."<sup>129</sup> In his letter No. 2468, dated 24<sup>th</sup> September 1868, Colonel Haughtoan favoured a settlement with the *jotedars* whom he holds to have "right of occupancy".<sup>130</sup> The first settlement took

effect from April 1871 with W.O.A. Beckett as the settlement officer after a detailed measurement and classification of all cultivated lands. Mr. Beckett adopted verbatim Mr. Tweedie's definitions of the *jotedars* and of those who held under him. In effecting the settlement the area of each *jote* was measured and the *jotedar* was given a *pattah* at a rent, calculated on the rates. At this rent he was entitled to hold his whole *jote* for the term of the settlement 'notwithstanding any larger area which he might bring under cultivation within the limits of the *jote* as a whole'.<sup>131</sup> In this respect it is important to note that there was a striking similarity between the *jotedars* of Western Dooars and the *noabad talukdars* in Chittagong. The *noabad talukdars* like the *jotedars* of the Western Duars were not the creation of Government; they were in existence before "the Government acquired its title".<sup>132</sup> The *jotedars* were permitted to include in their holdings as much waste land as they chose. They 'appropriated 142,127 acres of waste against 80,395 acres of cultivation'.<sup>133</sup> Although the lands of *Chookanidars* were measured but no attempt was made either to record their rents or to fix their rents.<sup>134</sup>

But in the records of the *jotes* the rents payable by the *jotedar's* or *ryot's* sub-tenants were also recorded. "Thus the tenant leasing from the *jotedar* or *ryot* was called the *Chukanidar*, and he was recorded as liable to pay the *ryot* 50 per cent, over the Government rent. The rent of the tenant in the second degree (the *dar-chukanidar* who leased from the *Chukanidar*) was entered as 80 per cent over the Government demand on the *ryot*, and *dar-adar-chukanidar* had to pay 100 per cent over the original Government demand for the portion of the land occupied or cultivated by him."<sup>135</sup>

In this respect it is very relevant to quote Mr. Barlow's comments who was then the officiating Commissioner. He stated '...at the time the settlement was commenced, it was supposed that the lands in the Western Dooars were divided amongst *jotedars*, *Chukanidars*, and *dar-chukanidars* (the three classes of tenury being one below the other). In accordance, therefore, with the policy reported to the Board in the Commissioner's letter No. 2468 dated 24<sup>th</sup> September 1868, and the principle affirmed in Government orders No. 2468 of 20<sup>th</sup> September 1867, the settlement officer was instructed to record

the rights of only subordinate tenure-holders claiming and proving occupancy. As the inquiry progressed with the settlement, it was reported that there were no *dur-chukanidars* in the Western Dooars, and claims were not preferred by the next superior class, *chukanidars* either. The course thus adopted has actually been to grant all *pattahs* to all jotedars, and to show the name only of the Chukanidar, with the amount of land occupied by him in the settlement 'Chita'. Hence the latter has not gained any protection as to rates, and anything he may claim upon the ground of occupancy he will have to substantiate according to the provision of Act X of 1859 which the Government "Resolution upon the land revenue administration report for 1870-71 decides shall be held applicable to the Dooars. It should be added that in any case where land belonging to the Dooars has been leased out to persons engaging, these are bound by the terms of their lease to collect from under-tenants only at *pattah* rates".<sup>136</sup> Mr. Barlow's opinion was that it was too late to protect the under-tenants in Beckett's settlement but was in favour of taking into account this aspect in the next settlement. Nevertheless this view received the Government's consent through a Government order which stated "... For the prujahs who mostly hold under the ryots, pay a corn rent and often till with the ryot's cattle, no special protection can be given at the present settlement beyond any twelve-year occupancy right they may have in accordance with the terms of Act X of 1859. Their position may, however be considered hereafter...."<sup>137</sup> Beckett's settlement report attracted criticism. Sir W.J. Herschel Bart, Commissioner, Cooch Behar Division was unhappy at the hasty procedure adopted in recording the ownership of the tenures in Beckett's settlement operations. Such hasty methods he alleged resulted in insufficient information about the tenorial structure in the Western Duars.<sup>138</sup> Mr. Metcalfe who in his Land Revenue Report and General Report for 1872-73 expressed a strong dissent from the principles on which the settlement of Beckett had been carried out. He commented "...the rights of jotedars were recognised as proprietary rights. Miles and miles of valuable waste included in these jotedarees were leased away. The Dooars for which the Government

had fought were deliberately given away to men without the shadow of a title..."<sup>139</sup> He was totally opposed to the introduction of the *jotedari* tenure because its recognition would involve pecuniary loss to Government of revenue. But he urged to recognise the position of the *uporestha projas* or tenants of higher class, and to allow them to reap the advantages of the "difference between the rates imposed by Government and the rates actually in force between them and other cultivators for the present settlement..."<sup>140</sup>

But despite his objection the *jotedari* system in the Western Dooars received Government approval. The Board of Revenue through the letter No. 249A of 26.4.1875 endorsed the *jotedari* tenure in the Western Duars region and it was decided in the later stage that permanent transferable rights would be accorded to the *jotedars*, "...not from the operation of law"<sup>141</sup> but by the gift of Government as the owner of the soil.

The second settlement operation started with Ulick Browne as the settlement officer from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1880. Certain significant changes occurred in his settlement. First "The profits of each grade, *jotedar*, *Chookanedar* and *dur-Chookanedar*, where those grades existed, were limited to fixed percentages above the settlement rates".<sup>142</sup> Secondly, in this settlement the rents payable by *Chukanidars* were fixed for the term of the settlement 'provided that, where they did not exceed the revenue by 50 per cent', they could be "raised to that amount by the settlement officer, if after detailed enquiry, he found such a proceeding fair".<sup>143</sup> It was further stated that "When a *Chukanidar* has been in occupation for 12 years, the rate of rent he is to pay the *jotedar* will be settled by the arbitration of the Deputy Commissioner".<sup>144</sup> Ulick Browne further expressed his desire to apply the South Mainaguri rates in the whole Western Duars area; this proposal he thought was acceptable to the *jotedars*.<sup>145</sup> Although he admitted that plenty of land remained uncultivated; but he was confident that "there will be no difficulty, say the settlement officers, in obtaining the South Mainaguri rates from *jotedars* throughout, any more than in the *jotedars* obtaining in turn the rates paid by South Mainaguri under-tenants to their *jotedars*. Of course the usual

objections at first made in all large settlements effected at increased rates may be expected at first, but the leading *jotedars* will be settled with at first by the Deputy Commissioner and settlement officers, and then the rest will follow the example of the leaders".<sup>146</sup> Ulick Browne's proposal was supported<sup>147</sup> by the Government of Bengal and finally this proposal received the official assurance on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1879.<sup>148</sup> The grounds on which he enhanced the rates for the *jotedars* were "excess of land the owners of the rates, increase of cultivation".<sup>149</sup>

Further, Ulick Browne also made an arrangement for "the limitation for the period of settlement of the profits of the *jotedars* and middlemen to certain percentages above the rent they were to pay..."<sup>150</sup> Besides, by letter No. 968-400 L.R., dated 17<sup>th</sup> March 1884 to the address of the Board, Government approved the proposal put forward by Ulick Browne that "in the renewed leases to be granted to holders of expired preliminary leases obtained under the Arable Lands Lease Rules in the Western Doors, the same rate should be charged for waste lands as is charged to *jotedars* under the general settlement..."<sup>151</sup>

Now it is pertinent to discuss the position of the under-tenants apart from the *Chookanidars* whose status has been defined in the Second Settlement. The scheme of fixing the rights of every grade of under-tenants was not a novel one in view of the fact that such scheme had been previously put into practice during the course of Orissa Settlement operations by Sir H. Ricketts. But when Ulick Browne desired to copy the above action he was vigorously opposed by the Deputy Commissioner and the settlement officer. He was informed by both Deputy Commissioner and the Settlement Officers that implementation of such a proposal "would be a very distasteful to the *jotedars*..."<sup>152</sup> So the issue was dropped and there was no official effort in recording the rights of either *Dar-Chukanidar*, the *Dur-a-Dur Chukanidar* or the *adhars*".<sup>159</sup>

## VI

On July 1890 M. Finucane Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal reiterated the Commissioner's view (Commissioner's No. 352 Rct., dated 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1888) about the *jotedari* system. The commissioner doubted the desirability of the continuance of the *jotedari* system which was adopted due to the alleged "...convenience, but no pledge of its continuance was given".<sup>154</sup>

He stated that "if the country could be said to be sufficiently advanced to admit of our assessing the different grades, from the actual cultivator upwards, there is no reason why the rent payable by the *jotedars* should not take the form of a percentage of the profits enjoyed by him".<sup>155</sup> He was totally opposed to then Deputy Commissioner's proposal to raise the rate to six annas which he thought was "so high as a rate on land off which the *jotedar* gets nothing".<sup>156</sup>

Mr. Walsh after his appointment as Settlement Officer raised a vital point regarding the rates to be adopted in respect of the *jotedars* of the Western Duars. He clearly stated that the chief reason behind ascertaining the rates demandable by Government from the *jotedars* "lay in the fact that rent is for the most part paid to the *jotedars* by their under-tenants in kind not in money, and that there were no sufficient materials to show the average produce of the different classes of soil or its equivalent in money".<sup>157</sup> Therefore, he offered his solution suggesting to cut the crop and weigh the produce of a considerable number of fields sufficiently representative of the whole are. After this procedure he intended to work out fair rates of rent "according to a somewhat abstruse mathematical formula".<sup>158</sup> But Walsh's proposal seemed to Government to be too intricate. It was stated by the Government that the basis of assessment should primarily be the actual receipts of the *jotedars*, whether from *chukanidars*, *raiyaats* or *adhiars*.<sup>159</sup>

He was instructed by the Government to ascertain the yield in some *jotes* where the survey records had been completed, "What these receipts were, how the income of each class of tenant would be affected by the

adoption of his proposed rates, and what proportion of the produce they would represent".<sup>160</sup> It was pointed out that there was no sufficient grounds for enhancing the existing rates. In this respect M. Finucane clearly stated "The Settlement Officer should also show how much of the estimated increase in revenue is due to extension of cultivation and what increase in revenue would be obtained if existing rates were allowed to stand; the *jotedars* should be consulted as to what they consider fair rates. The *jummas* at the proposed rates should be worked out and the rentals for all classes of tenants ascertained and recorded. The parties should then be brought before the Settlement officer and the proposed rentals explained to them. Their objection should be heard; on hearing them the Settlement officer may see reason to modify his proposed rates. When all this is done well considered proposals for alteration of existing rates with the reasons in full can be submitted for the orders of Government. With the information at present available, it would be altogether premature to submit the case for orders of Government".<sup>161</sup>

Though in Ulick Browne's settlement it was decided that the *jotedar* should not obtain from his under-tenants more than 50% above what he paid to Government but no step was taken to enforce this rule and the *jotedars* continued to get the best terms they could from their under-tenants.<sup>162</sup>

Subsequently during D.H.E. Sunder's settlement operations certain alterations took place in the land tenure system in the Western Duars. Altogether 9,971 *jotes* covering 384,895.91 acres of land in the Duars came into existence; of these 7,228 *jotes* were *jotes* settled by Ulick Browne and 2,743 *jotes* were settled during Sunder's settlement.<sup>163</sup> Further, for the first time Sunder made a distinction between a resident and a non-resident *jotedar*. The number of resident *jotedars* at the time of Sunder was 21,724 while the number of non-resident *jotedars* was 1,615.<sup>164</sup> The latter category of *jotedars* were the subjects of the Koch-Bihar state, as also different professional groups such as pleaders, mookhtars, and Kyan traders and moneylenders of Jalpaiguri, Rangpur, Munger, Dhaka, Nadia and other districts of Bengal. Sunder defined a *jotedar* as a tenant with a heritable and transferable title in his holding but however

he added that his title possession of the land "included in his jote is, however, is always subject to the superior right to Government as proprietor...."<sup>165</sup> This official position had been reiterated by another official Major H. Boileau, Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri, who also equated *jotedars* with *Ryots*.<sup>166</sup>

It was cautioned by Nolan, the Divisional Commissioner of Rajshahi, not to take *Kabuliyats* from the *jotedars* but to depend on record made under Article XII of the schedule to Act XVI of 1869.<sup>167</sup> Because a *Kabuliyat* from a person bound him otherwise than by his own consent to accept certain terms. "A *Kabuliyat* from a person bound him otherwise than by his own consent to accept certain terms if he remains in possession of the land seems superfluous form, productive of some delay, and this form is not prescribed by the Bengal Tenancy Act or Act XVI of 1869".<sup>168</sup> He feared that a complication might arise out of the *jotedar's* refusal to accept *kabuliyats*. D.H.E. Sunder then proposed a simple system of assessment taking lump enhancement of three annas in the rupee on the total revenue of the estate. This lump increase of revenue was to be distributed in a manner as to equalise the "inequalities of the former assessment by taking more where circumstances justified it, and less where jotes less favourably situated...."<sup>169</sup>

Sunder cited five reasons for the enhancement of rent and they were: 1<sup>st</sup>, that the *jotedars* themselves were willing to accept the proposed enhanced rates. 2<sup>nd</sup>, the rates fixed at Ulick Browne's settlement were such as the worst *rupit* and *faringhati* land could bear for even the worst *jotes* were assessed at these rates. Sunder argued that if the worst *jotes* could bear the rates the more favourably *jotes* could bear higher rates. Thirdly, Sunder cited the price-lists provided by *jotedars* of staple crops stating that the prices during the currency of the second settlement rose by 50%.

Table II: 54

## Price List Statement of a Jotedar and Moneylenders of Mainaguri

A

Article	1880			1881			1882			1883			1884			1885			1886			1887			1888			1889			1890		
	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P												
Paddy	0	12	0	0	11	0	0	12	0	0	13	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	0	12	0	0	15	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Rice	1	2	0	1	5	0	1	6	0	1	8	0	2	3	0	1	14	0	0	9	0	1	11	0	2	4	0	2	8	0	2	8	0

B

Article	1880			1881			1882			1883			1884			1885			1886			1887			1888			1889			1890		
	Rs	A	P																														
Paddy	0	12	0	0	12	0	0	12	0	0	13	0	0	13	0	0	15	0	0	14	0	0	15	0	0	15	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Rice	1	4	0	1	7	0	1	5	0	1	12	0	1	12	0	1	14	0	1	14	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	8	0	2	8	0
Jute	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	1	12	0	1	14	0	2	2	0	2	8	0	3	4	0	3	3	0	-	-	-
Mustard Seed	2	4	0	2	4	0	2	4	0	2	4	0	2	4	0	2	2	0	2	4	0	2	4	0	3	0	0	2	10	0	2	14	0

Source: Statement of Balchand Mai Sri, son of Kanye Ram Mai Sri of Mainaguri, *jotedar* and moneylender (Courtesy Donald Sunder Settlement Officer, the 19<sup>th</sup> June 1890) W.B.S.A.

These price lists were from the *rojanamcha* or day book of Balchand Mai Sri. He traded in Mynaguri for about 12 to 13 years. He stated that the prices of rice and paddy, of jute and mustard seed slightly rose during the last ten years.

Further Sunder also cited the price lists provided by a *jotedar* Boida Nath Das of S. Mainaguri.

Table II: 55

Price List Statement of a *Jotedar* of South Mainaguri

Articles	1282			1283			1284			1285			1286			1287			1288			1289		
	1875			1876			1877			1878			1879			1880			1881			1882		
	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P																		
Haimanti Paddy	0	12	0	0	11	4	1	0	0	1	2	8	0	12	4	0	8	0	0	12	0	0	10	0
Ditto Rice	1	7	3	1	6	0	2	1	0	2	7	0	1	7	9	1	8	6	1	7	0	1	5	0
Bhadoi Paddy	0	10	3	0	10	2	0	15	0	1	0	0	0	13	0	0	7	3	0	10	10	0	8	10
Ditto Rice	1	6	0	1	5	4	1	14	0	2	3	0	1	10	0	1	2	3	1	5	0	1	2	1
	1290			1291			1292			1293			1294			1295			1296					
	1883			1884			1885			1886			1887			1888			1889					
	Rs	A	P	Rs	A	P																		
Haimanti Paddy	0	13	4	1	0	8	0	10	0	0	10	6	0	13	0	0	14	4	1	0	0			
Ditto Rice	1	15	0	2	2	0	1	5	5	1	8	3	1	15	3	2	2	0	2	3	7			
Bhadoi Paddy	0	11	4	1	1	2	0	9	0	0	9	2	0	15	0	0	13	4	0	15	9			
Ditto Rice	1	6	9	2	1	0	1	3	0	1	4	6	2	0	0	2	5	0	2	6	7			

Source: Average price of rice and paddy at Jorepukri near Khoirkhal and Harmoti talooks of South Mainaguri at per mound, one mound = 40 seers

(Courtesy Donald Sunder, Settlement Officer, the 19<sup>th</sup> June 1890) W.B.S.A.

Sunder studied the price lists to come to a decision. The primary source of price list provided by one *jotedar* namely Boidanath Das from his 'Khata accounts and from Khatas of other traders'. It was needed to argue for enhancement of rent.

The rate adopted in second settlement was criticised on the contention that due to the adoption of high rates many lands in the Western Dooars were left uncultivated by the *jotedars*. But this theory was dismissed by Sunder. He argued that existence of large number of waste lands in the Western Duars was not due to over-assessment but "that bad classification at the last settlement, coupled with a desire on the part of the *jotedars* to provide proper pasture for their cattle, have been the causes at work".<sup>170</sup>

Sunder's fifth argument was that the rentals at the rates proposed represented only a small portion of the value of the gross produce and were low in comparison with the rents of the similar lands in neighbouring areas.<sup>171</sup>

Sunder's contentions were also endorsed by E.E. Lowis who was then Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division. He too stated "on the whole I am satisfied that there has been rise of fifty per cent in the value of all produce, and an even larger increase in the value of the staple product rice. Under these circumstances, I do not understand why the Settlement officer does not venture to suggest a larger increase for first class taluks than he has proposed, except it be he felt that the soil in no taluk is throughout first class".<sup>172</sup>

He stated that the *jotedars* of the Western Duars depended mainly on winter rice and jute crops to meet the payment of the 10-anna *kist*. They also produced tobacco and mustard crops to pay the rent but "even as regards the winter rice and jute they cannot always dispose of their produce by the second week of February without the risk of suffering from forced sales, and have in consequence often to borrow money for the time being in order to satisfy the Government-demand".<sup>173</sup>

To strengthen his argument Sunder cited example of some *jotes* which were under the rules of Arable Waste Land Lease; under the A.W.L. rules a *jotedar* was bound to bring at least half the area of the grant under cultivation

during the first five years. The rent paid for these grants according to the rules was as follows:

Year of entry	-	Nil
1 <sup>st</sup> full year	-	Nil
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	-	3 annas an acre
3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> years	-	6 ditto
5 <sup>th</sup> year	-	8 ditto

Sunder argued that since first *jote* was taken up in 1879 no part of it till his tenure as Settlement officer was brought under cultivation and as the *jotedar* "is paying Rs. 15-4 annually for it, viz., at 8 annas per acre, without trouble or complaint"; there should be hesitation in charging rent at 3 annas per acre. He stated that implementation of such a scheme would reduce the revenue to Rs. 5-4 and there would be a minimum loss of Rs. 10 to Government.<sup>174</sup>

On 10<sup>th</sup> March 1890 a conference was held at Alipurduar in which Mr. Lewis, Commissioner, Major Boileau, Deputy Commissioner, Colonel Wilkins Deputy Superintendent of Survey, Mr. Sunder Settlement Officer, Mr. Finucane Director of Land Records were present. It was decided that there would be an enhancement of three annas in the rupee on *jotedars* former *jummas* and in distributing the enhancement of three annas a rupee the Settlement officer was given freedom to classify the *jotes* into first, second and third class "with reference to their several facilities for communication with markets and qualities of soil, and to take more than three annas per rupee in taluks which are more favourably situated in these respects, and less than three annas a rupee in taluks which are less favourably situated; provided that the general result is not an enhancement of more than three annas in the rupee on the whole, and that the *jotedars* and *chukanidars* are satisfied".<sup>175</sup>

Following chart will illustrate *jotedars'* relation with the tenants.

Table II: 56

**Status of *jotedars* in respect of the *chukanidars* as conceived by Sunder  
First class *taluks* (as classified by Mr. Sunder)**

Name of <i>Taluk</i>	Average rate						Actual rates		Remarks	
	Average rate actually paid to <i>chukanidars</i>			which should be imposed so as to leave 50 per cent profits to <i>jotedars</i>			proposed by Mr. Sunder			
	Rs.	A	P	Rs.	A	P	Rs.	R		
Mahadanga	2	9	0	1	11	0	1	12	Rupit	* It is not understood
Maomari	3	1	0	2	0	0	1	6		why the <i>chukanidar's</i>
Betgara	3	0	0	2	0	0	Faringhati			rates are so low in
Churabhandar	2	0	0	1	5	4*				this taluk. The lands
Khowrakhal	2	11	0	1	11	0				are said to be very good.

**Second Class Taluks (as classified by Mr. Sunder)**

Name of <i>Taluk</i>	Average rate						Actual rates		Remarks	
	Average rate actually paid to <i>chukanidars</i>			which should be imposed so as to leave 50 per cent profits to <i>jotedars</i>			proposed by Mr. Sunder			
	Rs.	A	P	Rs.	A	P	Rs.	R		
Brahmapur	2	4	0	1	8	0	1	9	Rupit	* It is not explained
Harmote	2	6	0	1	10	0	1	3		why the <i>chukanidars</i>
Salbari	2	2	0	1	7	0	Faringhati			pay such low rates in
Gartoli	2	0	0	1	6	0				this taluk
Bhuskadanga	1	11	0	1	2	0*				

**Source:** From M. Finucane Esq. C.S., Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, dated Calcutta, the 9<sup>th</sup> July 1890. (Office of the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal).

Finally the proposals put forward by Sunder received the approval from the Government.<sup>176</sup>

The tenant immediately below the *jotedar* was the *chukanidar* or *mulander*. When the Western Duars first came under the English rule there were as many kind of *chukanidars* as there were of tenants in the adjacent district of Rangpur: "some held at fixed rates, some at competition rates, some in perpetuity, some at will, some were tenure-holders with raiyats under them, some petty cultivators".<sup>177</sup> At the second settlement operation under Ulick Browne "all these were declared to have the rights which previously appertained only to a certain number..."<sup>178</sup>

It was held in the second settlement that the rent recorded as payable by the *chukanidar* could not be raised during the term of the settlement without sufficient reason and as long as the rent was paid by a *chukanidar* he could not be ousted from his holding. Then the *chukani* title like the *jotedari* title was declared to be heritable and transferable. He had the liberty to dispose of his *chukani* title.<sup>179</sup> During the time of D.H.E. Sunder no alteration was made in respect of the status of the *chukanidars*. But Sunder inserted a clause that a *chukanidar* would not be allowed under the provisions of the *jotedar's* lease to sublet the whole or any portion of his tenure but he was allowed to employ the *adhiars*.<sup>180</sup> It was found particularly in the Mainaguri area that many *chukanidars* let out their lands to *adhiars* and settled themselves. On arable waste land *jotes* with a deep conviction that their *chukani* title would not be interfered with by the *jotedar*.<sup>181</sup> So with the intention of making this class a resident cultivator Sunder introduced this clause. But P. Nolan then Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division criticised the above policy framed by Sunder. He stated that "I have some difficulty in following the reasoning which has led the Settlement officer to propose the forfeiture of 86 *chukanis* on the ground that the holders also own *jotes*. He states that the land was leased to the *chukanidar* for a specific purpose, *viz.*, that he should remain on it and cultivate himself a view quite inconsistent with the terms of the leases, where any exist. These provide with care for the payment of the rent, but leave the *chukanidars* free in other respects to live where they please and cultivate as they choose or to sublet".<sup>182</sup> Further he stated that no *jotedar* applied the non-residence clause to evict a *chukanidar*.

Mr. M. Finucane, Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal observed that the willingness of the *jotedars* to the enhancement of three annas in the rupee was conditional for they asked permission to enhance the rents of their *chukanidars* "in the same way that the rent or revenue payable by themselves to Government is enhanced. Mr. Sunder's report is silent on this point".<sup>183</sup> But his observation was not correct.

In respect of this class three important orders are relevant which made the allegation quite baseless. The Government of Bengal wrote to Sunder in letter No. 535 T-R, dated 12<sup>th</sup> September 1892 that "The Lieutenant Governor accepts your description of their present position, and agrees that it should be laid down that *chukanidars* have a permanent tenure and are entitled to retain their holdings through the settlement, subject to the condition that the rents paid by them can be enhanced if they do not already pay 50 per cent, above the *jotedari* rates. Where the rents actually paid are lower, they may be enhanced up to that ratio, and if so enhanced no further enhancement shall be allowed during the currency of the settlement".<sup>184</sup> In 18<sup>th</sup> October 1890 Mr. Buckland's letter No. 353 T-R two orders were mentioned: "(b) That the fact of the *jotedar's* revenue being increased be not of itself sufficient or any reason for enhancements of the rents now paid by *chukanidars*, but that if the *jotedars* can show legal reasons for enhancement of the rents of their *chukanidars*, they be allowed to institute suits for such enhancements either at the time of settlement or afterwards; (c) that the rents of *chukanidars* and *darchukanidars* as now ascertained and recorded continue unchanged. Until they are altered by a decree of a competent court".<sup>185</sup> Nolan stated that in the Mynaguri tehsil the above mentioned orders were hardly implemented. At the time of Sunder's settlement there were 14016 *chukanidars* in the Duars which covered an area of 128,288.12 acres; average area per holding was 11.4 of 14016 *chukanidars*, 13982 were resident and 34 were non-resident *chukanidars*. Most of the non-resident *chukanidars* hailed from Jalpaiguri, Rangpur and Kuch Bihar.<sup>186</sup>

Two tendencies developed in respect of this class. Nolan stated that "In several instances, which Mr. Sunder showed me, the *chukanidars* held a single year's lease and have continued or without a fresh one".<sup>187</sup>

At the time of Sunder's settlement there were 3,320 *chukani* holdings in Mainaguri *tehsil* of this number, *chukanidars* of 335 holdings had lease without any reference to the term of the lease, 25 holdings despite having a single one year lease continued even after the term and *chukanidars* of 2,960 holdings had no lease at all "of the *chukanidars* who have continued on the 25 holding after the lapse of the year lease, some have been on the holdings from 5 to 30 years without lease. In the 2,960 holdings having no lease at all, as also in the 335 holdings having lease which no term is specified, some *chukanidars* have been in possession from 5 years to 50 years without being disturbed in any respect by the *jotedars*".<sup>188</sup> At the second development was that the *chukanidars* were becoming *jotedars*. Sunder commented with anguish that "By allowing *chukanidars* to have *jotes* and become *jotedars* themselves while retaining their *chukanis* and cultivating them through *adhiars*, loss and trouble is caused to *jotedars* and much dissatisfaction exists regarding this matter".<sup>189</sup> *Chukanidars* with the help of the *adhiars* recovered their half share of crops as soon as reaped. But Sunder alleged they seldom paid the *jotedar* on due date and often not at all until the *jotedar* resorted to file a suit for the recovery of rent. It was stated by Sunder that *chukanidars* who were becoming *jotedars* "are useless middlemen and that in fairness to *jotedars* every such *chukanidar* should be allowed the option of either relinquishing their holdings, or be declared to have forfeited them".<sup>190</sup> The following chart will help to understand the changing status of *chukanidars* in Mainaguri *tehsil*.

Table II: 57

**Statement showing number of *chukanidars* who hold *chukanis* in Mynaguri *Tehsil* through *Adhiars*, while they have moved on and become *jotedars***

Serial	Pargana	Number of <i>Chukanidars</i>	Area of land held by them		Number of <i>adhiars</i> cultivating the land
			Acres	Dec	
1.	South Mynaguri	51	514	42	100
2.	Chengmari	31	279	53	60
3.	North Mynaguri	4	19	49	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>86</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>165</b>

**Source:** From - Donald Sunder, Esq. Settlement Officer, Western Duars, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, No. 415, dated Jalpaiguri, the 11<sup>th</sup> July 1892. W.B.S.A.

In the tenurial structure of the Duars after the *jotedar* and *chukanidar* class there was the *Dar-Chukanidar* class who had no rights at all and whose number at the time of Sunder's settlement was 3,739. The Government of Bengal, Revenue Department in letter No. 478 T-R dated 28<sup>th</sup> September 1891 clearly stated that the creation of *Darchukani* and *Dar-a dar-chukani* class in the Western Duars area was not the intention of the Government.<sup>191</sup> Accordingly these class of tenants were neither supplied with copies of *khatian* or anything was done to give him a title to his holding. It was stated that "The rents of *chukanidars* and *dar-chukanidars* remain as they are, unless it is found that increased assessment on the *jotedar* does not leave him the necessary profit..."<sup>192</sup>

At the bottom of the tenurial structure there were the *adhiar* class who had no rights. He paid rent in kind half of all crops "he may grow on land which is allowed to him".<sup>193</sup> Sunder stated he was trapped always in debt. For ploughing the land *jotedars* supplied him ploughs and other necessary items. Sunder mentioned a special category of *adhiar* named *Utung Kara proja* who "cultivates land of more than one *jotedar*. He is *proja* or *adhiar* of the man in whose land he resides, and *Utung kara proja* of the owner of the other *jote*. He used to get half of all crops which might be grown and reaped by him from the second *jote*.<sup>194</sup>

D.H.E. Sunder prepared two distinct charts to ascertain the amount of rents to be paid by the three classes of tenants. At first Sunder prepared a chart based on the different kinds of soils.

**Table II: 58**

**Statistics provided by Sunder for the rents payable by the tenants of the Western Duars on different kinds of soil**

**Dar-C - Dar Chukanidar**

**C - Chukanidar**

<b>Class of occupier</b>	<b>Basti</b>	<b>Rupit</b>	<b>Faringhati</b>	<b>Doba</b>	<b>Waste</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Rent paid by Dar C</b>	<b>Rent paid by C</b>	<b>Revenue paid by jotedars</b>
	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Rs.</b>	<b>Rs.</b>	<b>Rs.</b>
<i>Jotedars</i>	482	2,341	1,557	16	1,836	6,232	-	-	20,000
<i>Chukanidars</i>	622	4,858	3,532	22	2,885	11,919	-	23,105	-
<i>Dar Chukanidars</i>	72	1,069	782	2	419	2,344	5,428	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,176</b>	<b>8,268</b>	<b>5,871</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>5,140</b>	<b>20,495</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

**Source:** From W. Maude, Esq. Offg., Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, Revenue Dept., to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division No. 539 T-R, dated Darjeeling, the 12<sup>th</sup> September 1892.

Further Sunder also provided a detailed account of rent paid by the three classes of tenants in the 11 taluks of the Western Duars.

**Table II: 59**  
**Abstract of Areas and Rents in 11 Taluks in the Western Duars**

Name of taluk	Class of occupier	Basti	Rupit	Faringhati	Doba	Waste	Total	Rent paid	Rent paid by	Revenue paid	
								by dar- chukanidar to chukanidar	Chukanidar to jotedar	by <i>jotedar</i> to Government	
		Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	
Magurmari, Moraghat	pargana	Jotdar	1	17	9	-	16	43	-	-	-
		Chukanidar	100	821	493	-	324	1,738	-	2,886	-
		Darchukanidar	12	150	113	-	26	301	710	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>2,082</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,559</b>
Pandibari, Moraghat	pargana	Jotdar	4	45	22	1	27	99	-	-	-
		Chukanidar	9	96	52	1	54	212	-	750	-
		Darchukanidar	9	73	28	-	29	138	466	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>578</b>
Jakaikona, Moraghat	pargana	Jotdar	4	19	17	-	7	47	-	-	-
		Chukanidar	3	57	62	2	54	178	-	390	-
		Darchukanidar	-	9	12	-	4	25	72	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>302</b>
Gadhaikuti, Moraghat	pargana	Jotdar	1	-	32	2	197	232	-	-	-
		Chukanidar	24	345	484	4	956	1,813	-	1,730	-
		Darchukanidar	4	118	166	1	183	472	598	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>982</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1,336</b>	<b>2,517</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,899</b>
Boragari, Moraghat	pargana	Jotdar	91	475	362	2	380	1,310	-	-	-
		Chukanidar	172	1,340	930	9	501	2,952	-	-	-
		Darchukanidar	13	133	90	-	55	291	624	6,581	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>1,948</b>	<b>1,382</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>936</b>	<b>4,553</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,600</b>
Khaloigram, Moraghat	pargana	Jotdar	41	282	162	-	207	692	-	-	-
		Chukanidar	36	309	257	1	114	717	-	1,893	-
		Darchukanidar	5	76	56	-	6	143	489	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>1,552</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,223</b>

*Table Contd.*

Name of taluk	Class of occupier	Basti	Rupit	Faringhati	Doba	Waste	Total	Rent paid	Rent paid by	Revenue paid	
								by dar- chukanidar to chukanidar	Chukanidar to jotedar	by <i>jotedar</i> to Government	
		Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	
Gosainhat, Moraghat	pargana	Jotdar	83	276	236	6	221	822	-	-	-
		Chukanidar	111	421	344	-	142	1,018	-	1,944	-
		Darchukanidar	5	62	51	-	17	135	276	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>759</b>	<b>631</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>1,975</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,486</b>
Gadong, Moraghat	pargana	Jotdar	172	624	292	1	349	1,438	-	-	-
		Chukanidar	99	648	368	1	298	1,414	-	3,156	-
		Darchukanidar	11	115	79	-	44	248	661	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>1,387</b>	<b>739</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>3,101</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,774</b>
Bairatiguri, Moraghat	pargana	Jotdar	31	137	101	-	73	342	-	-	-
		Chukanidar	38	283	181	2	193	697	-	1,486	-
		Darchukanidar	2	84	56	-	25	167	468	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>1,206</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,126</b>
<b>Total for Pargana Moraghat</b>			<b>1,081</b>	<b>7,015</b>	<b>5,054</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>4,502</b>	<b>17,685</b>	<b>4,364</b>	<b>20,816</b>	<b>18,547</b>
Balasundar, Lakhipur	pargana	Jotdar	29	256	97	-	72	454	-	-	-
		Chukanidar	17	193	90	-	73	373	-	1,046	-
		Darchukanidar	10	151	63	-	15	239	668	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>1,066</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>849</b>
Bhutnirghat, Lakhipur	pargana	Jotdar	25	210	227	4	287	753	-	-	-
		Chukanidar	13	345	271	2	176	807	-	1,243	-
		Darchukanidar	1	98	68	1	15	183	396	-	-
		<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>566</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>1,743</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>873</b>
<b>total for Pargana Lakhipur</b>			<b>95</b>	<b>1,253</b>	<b>816</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>638</b>	<b>2,809</b>	<b>1,064</b>	<b>2,289</b>	<b>1,722</b>
<b>Grant Total</b>			<b>1,176</b>	<b>8,268</b>	<b>5,871</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>5,140</b>	<b>20,495</b>	<b>5,428</b>	<b>23,105</b>	<b>20,269</b>

Source: Government order No. 539T-R, dated 12<sup>th</sup> September 1892 addressed to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, W.B.S.A.

## VII

After the settlement of D.H.E. Sunder, the next settlement work was undertaken by J.A. Milligan which begun in 1906 and the technical part of the settlement procedure was based on the Bakarganj rule.<sup>195</sup> F.A. Sachse, Director of Land Records Bengal remarked that the Jalpaiguri District at the time of Milligan did not contain any of the 'complexities of sub-infeudation and conparcenary'.<sup>196</sup> But this observation does not tally with a remark of J.F. Grunning, the Deputy Commissioner. He said that the time of inauguration of the Settlement of Milligan, "The important question for decision at the next settlement is whether we are going to allow a class of middlemen, many of whom are speculators and absentees, to grow up. It is no use trying to prevent middlemen coming in as long as jotedars are allowed to transfer their jotes without restrictions. Mechs are being deprived of their land everywhere and speculators find them as easy prey".<sup>197</sup> Further he added that "The result of all this that the *jotes* of poor tenants ultimately pass into the hands of the speculators - either through civil court sales or ordinary deeds of transfer; and there being no restriction in the previous settlement leases, the said transfers take place in large numbers and without any check, and it appears that the numbers of such transfer is gradually increasing".<sup>198</sup> It is natural therefore that most parts of the settlement procedure of Milligan centred round on the issue of sub-infeudation.

Milligan endorsed the view point of Mr. Lewis who in 1890 described the actual position of the *jotedars*. "In one sense the *jotedars* are holders of land, but they are not land-holders as contemplated in the butwara law. A *jote* in the Duars is invisible; there may be shares within it who hold separate lands, and persons may have themselves entered in our towjee as having a certain interest in the *jote*; but such interest is never recognised as entitling the sharer to be entered in the towjee as in the possession of specific plot of land, nor can a share-holder claim, like the owner of a permanently-settled estate, to have certain specific lands marked off as representing his share and to have such portion treated as a separate estate on the towjee. While, then, we have

allowed persons to combine for the purpose of reclaiming waste and allowed the sharers to divide the land amicably amongst themselves and even to record themselves as possessed of a certain interest in the *jote*, the *jote* has always been considered one and indivisible, and we have always refused to accord official sanction to the division of land within the *jote*, or to recognise officially in any way the partition of *jotes* into specific portions".<sup>199</sup>

It was felt from the time of Sunder that there should be partitions in the *jote* for the interest of good administration. It was advised by then Lieutenant-Governor that there should be partitions of larger *jotes* in which distinct group of cultivators held ring-fence shares of not less than 50 acres; and such acts of partition would be executed "not as a judicial proceeding, but as an executive act".<sup>200</sup>

Milligan favoured partition of *jotes* in two respects -

- (a) Where distinct groups of resident cultivators hold distinct ring-fence shares in *jotes* above the normal size, provided that there should be a minimum size of 10 acres.
- (b) Where a non-resident capitalist had purchased or sold to a resident cultivator or ring-fence portion of a *jote*.

Milligan's rationale for executive partition of *jotes* by Government as landlord was a reflection of then Colonial Government's avowed policy to reducing the size of *jotes* wherever possible and settle them with resident cultivators.<sup>201</sup> Milligan further stated "If my suggestions were adopted, *jotes* held by resident cultivators and those held by absentee capitalists will be kept perfectly distinct and clause 4 of the new leases will operate to prevent any increase of the latter while directly fostering the medias of the former. This I conceive to be the desire of Government as landlord in the Western Duars".<sup>202</sup>

D.H.E. Sunder in 1891 created a temporary tenancy in which the right of transfer and inheritance was confined to the currency of the lease. But the leases issued under the wasteland Rules of new *jotedars* from 1888 onwards insisted on residence. But it gave *jotedars* a right which was really permanent.<sup>203</sup> But this residence clause aroused so much opposition among

the *jotedars* that the Colonial Government had no other option but to drop the residence-clause.<sup>204</sup> It was decided that the *jotedars* would have all the rights of permanent tenure-holders except the absolute right of transfer.<sup>205</sup> Finally in the settlement of Milligan a significant change in the Government policy took place in respect of the *jotedars* and tea-garden managers. Before the settlement of Milligan there was no definite policy of the Government in respect to the training and tapping of rivers and drainage and irrigation. Taking advantage of this indifferent attitude of the Government the *jotedars* and tea-garden managers did what they liked to do. But the new leases inaugurated in Milligan's settlement stated in a clear manner that "the permission of the Deputy Commissioner is an indispensable preliminary to any form of activity connected with river channels, and that the Deputy Commissioner is empowered to remove any unauthorised works of this nature".<sup>206</sup>

Next, regarding the *chukanidar* class Milligan made no significant departure from the settlement of Sunder. The degree of permanence allowed to a *Chukanidar* was still the same as that granted to a *jotedar*, but his right to inherit was now clearly stated; the right to transfer was specifically refused.<sup>207</sup> The permission granted by Sunder and by A.W.L. Leases to *jotedars* to fix initial rents of new *chukanis* by contract was exploited by the *jotedars* to secure a much higher profit than 50%. It was now decided that rents 50% in excess of those paid by the *jotedars* should be recorded in some cases but it was stipulated that no new *chukani* holdings should be settled at rates which leave more than that margin of profit. Milligan claimed that he had made elaborate arrangement to prevent the *chukanidars* from illegal exactions "by the grant of leases to them setting forth in full the incidents of their tenancy; and by giving them copies of the settlement khatians and rent slips, showing how their rents have been calculated...."<sup>208</sup>

*Dar-Chukanidars* were ignored by Sunder in his settlement report. He said that their rights were like that of the non-occupancy under *raiyats* and he ascribed their existence to their possession of whatever right of inheritance they had.

The notification No. 964 T.R. recognised this class, and Milligan stated “Chukanidars are forbidden to sublet on pain of forfeiture of their interest, so the dwindling ranks of the dar-chukanidars should receive no further recruitment.<sup>209</sup> He further noted the dwindling number of this class which occurred according to him due to the spread of *adhiari* system.

During Milligan’s tenure the *adhiars* got some importance. From the settlement of Beckett to the settlement of Sunder nobody was able to invest with the *adhiar* class with any form of rights. They were then busy in framing the policies to be adopted in respect of the *jotedar* class whom they thought were the close partner of the Raj.

But at the same time Government was viewing with alarm the rapid growth of *adhi* cultivation and the increasing number of *adhiars*.<sup>210</sup> McAlpin, the officiating Director of Land Records in 1914 commented that in both *Zamindari* area and the Government estates ‘there are areas on the margins of cultivation where the landlords supply everything in order to attract cultivators’. This class of cultivators were the *adhiars* over whom the *jotedars* exercised control.

Milligan provided two clues for the increasing number of *adhiars*. There was an increase in the whole Jalpaiguri district of the cultivation of cash crops such as Jute and Tobacco. Since the cultivation of such kind of crops was a labour intensive affair a large number of *adhiars* were employed.<sup>211</sup>

Milligan was concerned about the miserable condition of the *adhiars* and he resolved that ‘this settlement must at least make a beginning in the eradication of this gross injustice’. It was not easy to improve their status because of the ‘unanimity and rigidity of local opinion on the issue. Nevertheless, all the *adhiars* were recorded at first in the *khatians* of *jotedars* and *chukanidars* in the column for subordinate interests in occupation of plots. Subsequently, a register of *adhiars* was made in which length or time for which he held the same lands was specified as well as the detailed information about the possession of cattle and ploughs, the custom regarding advances, seeds, housing, the type of crops to be grown were mentioned.

Further many written agreements were collected by the Director of Land Records and it was thought that instances of such kind of written agreements 'created tenancies within the meaning of Bengal Tenancy Act and the Adhiars would in general be found to be yearly tenants'. But it was found that in most cases 'Where such a document was executed the giri was forcibly converting a cash-paying tenant into an adhiar - a common tendency throughout the district. Such kabuliyats were invariably found in the possession of the giri and no corresponding document was found with the adhiar'.<sup>212</sup>

Prior to Milligan, a Notification No. 964 T.R. on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1898 for the first time recognised the *adhiar* class as tenant who were termed merely as labourer in Sunder's settlement.<sup>213</sup>

In Milligan's settlement it was decided that all the produce paying tenants who possessed their own ploughs and cattle as *rai-yats* or under-*rai-yats* would be recorded;<sup>214</sup> and to note the possession of the remainder in the remarks column of the *khatians* of their superior.

But there is no proof that there was any marked improvement of their status. Although Milligan was strongly opposed to the increasing number of *adhiars* but available evidences indicate their growing presence in the whole Jalpaiguri District.

After this settlement of Milligan in Jalpaiguri District a settlement operation under B.B. Mukherjee took place in the year 1931 and this operation continued upto the year 1935. No significant change took place in the status and position of the *jotedars* and *chukanidars*. But it is pertinent to note that despite Colonial Government's aversion to subletting; during the last settlement operations (1931-1935) under B.B. Mukherjee different kinds of sub-tenancies under the title *dar-a-dar chukanidar* and *nim-dar-a-dar chukanidar* took place.

Although sub-tenants below *chukanidars* were created against the wishes of the Government, yet they according to B.B. Mukherjee were the actual tillers of the soil. For this reason in the fifth settlement tenants below *chukanidars* were recorded in separate *khatians* and fair rents were fixed for

them with a note in the incidence column that those tenancies were “not binding against the superior jotedars and the Government”.<sup>215</sup>

Although the *adhiar* class received attention in Milligan’s settlement but in the last settlement this class received no attention. No definite statement regarding the *adhiars* could be found; but the area of land held by the *adhiars* are shown through which it can be judged that compared to the tenure of Milligan the area of land held by *adhiars* decreased in Mukherjee’s tenure. This incidence indicates the gradual eviction of *adhiars* from their lands.

Their number grew upto the year 1947 and neither the tenancy act of 1885, or the act of 1928 did anything for checking this process.<sup>216</sup>

Among the permanently settled areas the condition of the different classes of tenants were not much different from their counterparts in the Western Duars. About the rents collected by the Raikats, Grunning remarked “The actual rent realised from the tenant is, I understand about  $4\frac{3}{4}$  annas per don of land, good and bad, containing 12,472 square feet, or about 0.86 of a Calcutta bigha. The maximum rent for a farm, 20 don in extent is said to be as follows: House and garden land, Rs. 15; first quality land Rs. 12; second quality land Rs. 9; third quality land Rs. 7; fourth quality land Rs. 4; total Rs. 47. Originally the farms were let by guess measurement, or by Kaldari or “ploughs”.<sup>217</sup>

Such kind of estimate was probably borrowed from the prevailing land revenue system of Kamrup where too a farm was estimated to contain as much as could be cultivated by a certain number of ploughs.

J.F. Grunning remarked about the prosperous condition of the tenants in the permanently settled portion of the district and pointed out the existence of low rents.<sup>218</sup>

The vast area of land was held by the *jotedars* who were mostly resident cultivators and they used to sublet their certain portion of land to *chukanidars* and cultivated the rest of the lands with the help of the *adhiars*. The local custom defined a *jotedar* as a class who used to hold land under a proprietor;

“his rent being liable to enhancement, having originally acquired a right either to cultivate it himself or to sublet it to others”.<sup>219</sup> His title was therefore both permanent and heritable; but he was permitted to transfer his title only after paying a *salami* to his proprietor. But in most cases the zamindars did not realise this *salami* from the *jotedars* and this incident created an impression that the *jotedars* had the sole right of transfers. Yet all *jotedars* were not treated as tenure-holders under the tenancy act, because many predecessors of smaller *jotes* took up *jotes* for own residence and cultivation.<sup>220</sup>

The *Chukanidars* in turn used to sublet their lands to *Dar-Chukanidars* and extensively used the *adhi* system in the rest of the lands.

A *chukanidar* or *mulandar* was defined by a local custom as one holding land under a *jotedar*. He used to pay money rent to *jotedar* which was liable to enhancement. His title was permanent and heritable and he owned the right to cultivate but not transfer his title which he could do only after the consent from the *jotedar*. In the *khatian* book a type of *chukanidar* named *Kolrayat* is mentioned whose nature of title was determined by the local custom.<sup>221</sup>

When Milligan started the settlement operations he found few instances of sub-tenancies like *dar-chukanidars*, *Dar-a-dar-chukanidars* and *nim-dar-a-dar-chukanidars*.<sup>222</sup> In the *khatian* book of taluk Bar-Patia Natun Bas I have found the tenants who were mostly Ryots or *Kolryots* but no instance of *dar-chukanidars*, *Dar-a-dar-chukanidars* or *nim-dar-a-dar-chukanidars* could be found.<sup>223</sup> The reason behind their meager existence was explained by Milligan for the prevalence of the *adhi* system of cultivation, and the preference shown by *chukanidars* as well as *jotedars* for developing their lands by this *adhi* system rather than by making settlements with cash-paying tenants. *Adhiars* were treated by the zamindars as mere labourers. This class used to till the lands of the proprietors, *jotedars* or *chukanidars* on half-share basis. They had no title at all and could be ejected from their lands without any notice. Their immediate superior landlord was called *giri* who supplied them with ploughs, cattle and even seed. Milligan summarised the position of the *adhiar* in the following manner: “...his *giri* supplies him with a free house and prescribed the crop he

has to grow; while in addition to growing that crop the adhiars works as a general labourer for hire on the lands of his giri or on those of his neighbours. In the jute steeping season and at the seasons of ploughing and reaping the adhiars can make a substantial income in cash besides being fed free by his employer for the day".<sup>224</sup>

After the inauguration of the settlement works under Milligan the first problem he confronted was that of locating a *Raiyat*. The Director of Land Records Mr. Beatson Bell admitted in November 1907 the difficulty of finding a *Raiyat* in the zamindari areas. The Section 5 of Tenancy stipulated that in finding a raiyat local custom and the purpose for which the right of tenancy was originally acquired – these two aspects should be taken into account. But Milligan found it difficult to abide by the norms set by local customs and instead preferred to trace as far as possible the purpose for which the tenancy was originally created. As predecessors of smaller *jotes* took up lands for mere residence and cultivation it was stipulated by Milligan that a *jote* would be classified as a *raiya* holding if the *jotedar's* homestead was within the tenancy and at least a third of the arable land was in his immediate possession (not including cultivation by *adhiars*) or if his homestead was outside the tenancy but half the arable land was in his immediate possession.<sup>225</sup> After the implementation of this proposal 41.8 per cent of *jotes* and 30 per cent of *dar jotes* were classified as *raiya* holdings.<sup>226</sup>

The *chukanidars* were divided into three categories, namely – (1) Tenureholders, (2) *Raiyats*, (3) Under-*Raiyats*. Milligan classified 7.6 per cent of *chukanidars* and about 1 per cent of the derivative *chukani* holders as tenureholders rather than a class of *raiya* interests.<sup>227</sup>

In the permanently settled areas and specially in the Baikunthapur estate the *adhiar* class were divided into two categories (1) whose tenancy right was recognised (2) whose tenancy right was not recognised. The formers were given separate *khatians* and were classed as *raiya*s or under *raiya*s.

The following table will suffice to show the position of landlords and tenants on the *nij-dakhil* lands in the permanently settled portion of Jalpaiguri

district. And finally the following chart will illustrate the result of classification of Milligan in the permanently settled portion of the district.

Table II: 60

**Result of classification of J.A. Milligan in the permanently settled parganas of the Jalpaiguri District**

Class	Area in Acre	Average rent		
		Rs.	A	P
<b>Tenure-holders</b>				
Rent paying fixed	63,867	0	11	0
Ditto enhanceable	3,92,159	1	2	7
Rent-free	15,623	-	-	-
<i>Raiyats</i> at fixed rents	12,795	1	2	11
Settled <i>raiya</i> ts on cash rents	3,66,505	2	1	11
Ditto on produce rents	14,745	-	-	-
Occupancy- <i>raiya</i> ts on cash rents	211	2	6	10
Ditto on produce rents	53	-	-	-
Non-occupancy <i>raiya</i> ts on cash rents	14,135	2	14	1
Ditto on produce rents	2,833	-	-	-
Rent-free	3,402	-	-	-
Under- <i>raiya</i> ts cash paying	58,617	3	9	0
Ditto produce-paying	9,937	-	-	-

**Source:** (i) A. K. Mitra, *Census 1951: West Bengal: District Handbooks: Jalpaiguri*, Calcutta, 1954, p. X6VIII.

(ii) From - F.A. Sachse, Esq. I.C.S. Director of Land Records, Bengal, to the Secretary, Government of Bengal Revenue Department.

No. XXV-13-4670, dated Darjeeling the 27<sup>th</sup> June 1919.

### VIII

In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century mainly due to the expanding tea cultivation there was a great demand for land in the Jalpaiguri region. Milligan pointed out the process of absorption of a large number of *jotes* by expanding tea cultivation and its consequences. This turned adrift a number of cultivators.<sup>228</sup> Further he commented 'A regular land boom occurred, the general tendency being for small jotedars to sell off their developed jotes at ever increasing prices...'<sup>229</sup>

Elaborating this aspect he said, 'A few years before the inception of the present settlement a wave of land speculation swept over the Duars, and it

seemed that the character of the jotedari interest would soon be entirely changed. Non-resident capitalists of every description bought up jotes right and left. To strengthen his argument he showed us some data out of 5,542 transfers which came to the notice of the Settlement officer, the purchaser in 3,444 were jotedars already in possession of other jotes, in 637 cases was a mahajan, in 83 cases a pleader, in 100 cases a tea garden or its representative, while in 1,298 cases the purchaser was a chukanidar and presumably a resident cultivator. In 1912 it was ascertained that out of 9,910 maljotes as many as 3,996 were held by non-resident jotedars'.<sup>230</sup> The following table gives an indication of the nature of alienation.

**Table II: 61**  
**Classification of alienation of jotes in Falakata Tahsil, 1905**

Class of people	Number of <i>jotes</i>	Percentage of <i>jotes</i>	Area in acres	Percentage of total area transferred
Rajbansi	1,638	39.80	58665.23	33.80
Muhammedan	1,092	26.50	40739.47	23.50
Mech	381	9.20	7599.52	4.37
Jaldha	19	0.46	577.16	0.33
Garo	17	0.41	302.28	0.17
Santhal	2	0.04	24.52	0.01
Oraon	263	6.40	6182.49	3.56
Nepali	140	3.40	4990.49	2.87
Marwari	115	2.80	6551.13	3.77
Uo-countrymen	272	6.60	14097.20	8.12
Kabuli	14	0.34	381.41	0.22
Assamese	18	0.40	1132.65	0.65
European	7	0.17	1036.19	0.59
All others including Bengali middle class	136	3.30	5074.22	2.92
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,114</b>	<b>99.78</b>	<b>1,73,523.46</b>	<b>99.08</b>

Source: J.F. Grunning, *Eastern Bengal and Assam district Gazetteers; Jalpaiguri*, Allahbad 1911, p.99.

Further the following chart will help to illustrate how much of the total cultivated land were sold.

Table II: 62

## Alienation of cultivated lands from 1889-95 to 1906-16

Tahsil	1889-95			1906-16		
	Total area of cultivated land	Area of land sold	% of land sold	Total area of cultivated land	Area of land sold	% of land sold
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mainaguri	113,537	4,546	4.01	106,883	24,023	22.48
Falakata	73,515	1,647	2.24	104,675	27,645	26.41
Alipur	28,181	251	0.89	124,753	62,950	50.46
Bhalka	8,487	93	1.10	29,854	4,716	22.61
Ambari	7,118	236	3.32	6,029	-	-
Falakata						
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,20,838</b>	<b>6,776</b>	<b>2.94</b>	<b>3,63,194</b>	<b>119,337</b>	<b>32.86</b>

**Source:** (i) D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Duars in the District of Jalpaiguri 1889-95*, op. cit., pp. 5, 12, pp. 136-60.

(ii) J.A. Milligan, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in Jalpaiguri District in 1906-16*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta 1919. Op. cit., pp. 544, 697. p. XIII (Appendix 10), p. XIX (Appendix 17).

As early as 1890, E.E. Lewis on his note on the proposals for fixing rates of rent in Mynaguri Tehsil commented that out of a total 3,383 jotes on the *totoji*, the following had been sold for arrears:

Table II: 63

1880-81	-	4		1887-88	-	7
1881-82	-	8		1888-89	-	10
1882-83	-	13		1889-90	-	21
1883-84	-	50				<u>143</u>
1884-85	-	6				
1885-86	-	17				
1886-87	-	7				

**Source:** Note on proposals for fixing rates of rent in Mynaguri Tehsil, E.E. Lewis, Commissioner, dated 5<sup>th</sup> July 1890 (W.B.S.A.).

Viewing such tendencies H.J.S. Cotton, Secretary to the Board of Revenue, L.P. wrote a very surprising note "...large number of jotes which are being transferred by private sale. If this process continues, it may be expected that the lands will gradually pass out of the hands of thriftless and incapable jotedars into the possession of men who will turn the property to good account".<sup>231</sup> Further Lord H. Ulick Browne, Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division supported the sale of *jotes* on the ground that "The sale of jotes certainly show that the jotes are worth buying, and if they are worth buying, they are also worth keeping, if the owners can manage to keep them".<sup>232</sup>

From the above official views it is quite apparent that far from checking the process of land alienation, *i.e.*, passing out the lands from the local people to the outsiders, they endorsed this process. Thus considerable alienation of peasant holdings to various categories of non-cultivating interest groups took place.

Apart from the land speculation there were other factors for land alienation; one of the factors was indebtedness. Available reports pointed out that there were two groups of creditors: (a) *jotedars* and substantial peasants and (b) non-agriculturist professional moneylenders or *mahajans* and traders. The indebted cultivators were burdened with heavy interest payment. An enquiry made in 1905 pointed out that the rate of interest in different parts of Duars varied from 12% to 75%. But Grunning commented 'It is doubtful if a cultivator is ever able to borrow at such a low rate of interest as 12 per cent, and it is probable that he was often to pay more than 37 per cent'.<sup>233</sup>

It is quite apparent that a substantial part of a peasant's income was absorbed by the interest payment and this made repayment of loans difficult. The moneylenders effort in getting hold of the land was observed both in the *District Gazetteer* and Milligan's *Settlement Report*. Grunning observed that the moneylenders were getting on the land probably to a much greater extent in the permanently-settled area than in the Duars. Thus by the end of the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Baikunthapur estate many of the *jotes* were held by middlemen. In the year 1905 in Falakata Tahsil about 15% of the

settled area were in the hands of the Marwaris, up-countrymen, Kabulis, and other persons many of whom were Bengali babus.<sup>234</sup> Out of 227 *jotes* comprised in the taluks of Tatgaon, Udlabari and Saoga Fulbari situated in the Mainaguri Tahsil, 102 or 45% were transferred in 1904-05 and many of them had passed into the hands of professional moneylenders. During the same year the tahsildar of Falakata gave a list of 71 *jotes*, covering 1,882 acres, which had been sold to known moneylenders. Further 'chukanidars appear to mortgage and sell their holdings freely to moneylenders'.<sup>235</sup> Though Milligan does not offer detailed data, but his finding in 1912 about land transfers clearly indicate that the process continued during the period of settlement operations.

The Colonial Government's sole purpose was to extract as much as possible the revenue from the Western Duars and for this purpose each settlement from the settlement of Beckett to the settlement of Milligan enhanced the revenue demand and this was another factor for land alienation. Beckett's settlement of 1871 raised the revenue from Rs. 39,526 to Rs. 86,330;<sup>236</sup> (excluding the South Mainaguri area); the next settlement of Ulick Browne which took effect from April 1880 for Duars as a whole excluding the South Mainaguri parganas, enhanced the revenue from Rs. 88,618 to Rs. 151,862. The assessment proved a costly affair for the *Chookaneedars* and cultivators and even the small *jotedars*. It was reported that "jotes held by rich jotedars though not yielding the full Government rent, Chookaneedars and cultivators..., some jotedars flourishing and several others in debt".<sup>237</sup> Perhaps it is interesting that some *jote* lands were even taken up by some ex-tea garden labourers like *sardars*, *baidars*, *chaprasis* etc. who had somewhat higher earnings than the ordinary labourers or coolies. Milligan reported in 1910 that 64,281 acres of *jote* lands were in the possession of ex-tea garden workers excluding the *Paharias* for whom no estimate could be made.<sup>238</sup> In the permanently settled area land was being lost by small *jotedars* and *chukanidars* most of them being Rajbansi Hindus and Rajbansi Muslims.<sup>239</sup>

Most of the owners of the *jote* in the Baikunthapur estate had names like Bhakra Das, Chamaru Das, Pathalu Singh etc. Further in the Khatian book different kinds of *jotes* titled as *Banu nasya*, *Fateh nasya*, *Fateh Mahmud* could be found. The original owners of such *jotes* undoubtedly belonged to the Muslim communities. Further one could discern the existence of Khan, Pathan titled Muslims who were perhaps new settlers in the Baikunthapur region. Most surprising is the existence of Marwari community in the region. In the *Khatian* book it can be seen that the owners of many *jotes* were Oswan titled Marwaris. J.F. Grunning explained that behind such influx of immigrants in the estate what was attractive was the existence of low rents.<sup>240</sup>

In the Duars too much land was going out of the hands of peasants belonging to the same social group. There the Mechs too suffered greatly. Investigations reveal that often force was applied by the *jotedars* upon the degraded tenants and thus resulting in land transfers. It was found that a *giri* (the local term for the landlord immediately superior to the tenant) was "... forcibly converting a cash-paying tenant into an adhiar, a common tendency throughout the district".<sup>241</sup>

It was observed as far back in 1873 that "the *jotedars* were rapidly demolishing all commencements of tenant right in the Dooars and rack-renting the men whom they had brought into the land to clear it, ousting them unhesitatingly where the rent they demand is refused".<sup>242</sup> Further Ulick Browne commented that the *jotedars* screwing up the rents of the ryots of *prajas*.<sup>243</sup>

The Government was not unaware of these evil effects of over-assessment but tried to put the blame solely on the *jotedars*. H.J.S. Cotton, Esq., Secretary to the Board of Revenue L.P remarked, "Government has recognised the necessity of reducing an assessment which in itself was excessive, notwithstanding that it was brought about by an unjustifiable act on the part of the *jotedars*".<sup>244</sup> The *jotedars*, it was alleged, often deceived the settlement parties by showing waste lands as cultivated lands. For this reason there were frequent incidents of over-assessment. The Board of Revenue

proposal to "striking out waste and fallows lands wrongly classified as cultivated" was not carried out in view of the great expenditure involved in such a massive work and H.J.S. Cotton feared that execution of such plan "would have a most disturbing effect on the jotedars...."<sup>245</sup>

The next interesting development in the Duars was the immigration from the neighbouring Koch Bihar state and Rangpur district which took place in the closing decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The main cause of this migration were the high rent and oppression in those territories. Further there was a huge demographic pressure on Rangpur. On the contrary in the Western Duars there were low rent, easy availability of land and fertility of soil.<sup>246</sup>

In recent work on the Duars tenancy issues two tendencies are observed with regard to sub-infeudation; the increasing number of immigrants in the Jalpaiguri District and the consequent increasing number of *Chukanidars* in the region.<sup>247</sup> With the steady progress of cultivation the necessity to bring more waste lands under cultivation decreased. So the immigrants' ambition to become *jotedars* by purchasing new *jotes* was not materialised, and they were compelled to become *chukanidars*. It was pointed out that the number of *chukanidars* rose by 26.66% between the 1889-95 and 1906-16 settlement periods and by 26.25% between 1906-16 and 1931-35 settlement periods. Although some migrants settled as *jotedars* and *chukanidars* but most of the migrants were absorbed in the ranks of *adhiars*. Further, to fulfill the demand of the tea planters, new tea garden labourers were recruited from the tribal peasants of Chotanagpur and Santhal Pargana.<sup>248</sup> Some ex-tea garden labourers also settled as cultivators, perhaps a very limited number as small *jotedars* or *chukanidars* but mostly as *adhiars*. These tribal people were considered by the district officials as eminently suitable for clearing of jungles, reclamation of waste lands and extension of cultivation in the Duars. A number of Rawani Kahars, Dhangars and Boonas immigrated into Bogra during the winter session around 1877-78 and were employed as bearers or as road making workers and jungle clearers. "The report for 1879-80 also discloses that during the cold weather labourers from Murshidabad,

Nadia and other districts migrated in considerable numbers into Bogra to engage themselves as reapers and returned home as soon as the harvesting was over."<sup>249</sup> The following chart will illustrate the pattern of growth of population in the Western Duars.

Table II: 64

The pattern of growth of population in the Western Duars from 1865 to 1931

Year	No. of Person	Rate of increase in population (%)	Density per square mile
1	2	3	4
1865-67	49,620	-	-
1872	1,00,111	101.76	51
1881	1,82,687	82.48	93
1891	2,96,964	62.55	151
1901	4,10,606	38.27	211
1911	5,19,372	26.49	267
1921	5,58,971	7.62	286
1931	6,04,234	8.10	311
1941	6,94,206	14.9	357
1951	7,47,356	7.66	385

**Source:** (i) W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol. X, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar State, p. 247.

(ii) D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 44.

(iii) B.B. Mukherjee, *Final Report on the Land Revenue Settlement Operations in the District of Jalpaiguri 1931-35*, Calcutta, Superintendent Government Printing Press, 1939, p. 11.

(iv) *Census of India 1921*, Vol. V, Part I, p. 66.

(v) A.K. Mitra, *Census 1951: West Bengal: District Handbooks: Jalpaiguri*, Calcutta, 1954, pp. 13-15.

Further the following table will illustrate the pattern of migration in Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and in Dinajpur.

Table II: 65

**Migration to Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur from contiguous and other districts between 1891 and 1921**

Year	From Contiguous Districts		From other Districts	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Migration to Cooch Behar</b>				
1891	12,997	15,192	3,262	1,201
1901	9,165	12,531	12,668	2,255
1911	11,000	13,000	5,000	2,000
1921	9,000	12,000	10,000	6,000
<b>Migration to Jalpaiguri</b>				
1891	30,920	27,835	12,431	7,641
1901	24,354	23,856	65,272	48,636
1911	18,000	15,000	15,000	10,000
1921	21,000	19,000	5,000	4,000
<b>Migration to Dinajpur</b>				
1891	22,670	18,819	9,308	5,894
1901	13,901	13,319	60,243	34,871
1911	19,000	16,000	12,000	6,000
1921	12,000	13,000	10,000	7,000

**Source:** Asoke Mitra, *West Bengal District Hand Books*, Calcutta, 1951. (Cooch Behar portion p. xxxvi, Jalpaiguri portion p. Iii, West Dinajpur portion p. xii).

The following tables are suffice to illustrate the pattern of immigration and migration in the Jalpaiguri district in different phases.

Table II: 66

**The pattern of migration and immigration in the Jalpaiguri District**

	Immigration into Jalpaiguri from			Emigration from Jalpaiguri into		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Darjeeling	1,347	894	2,241	2,097	1,808	3,905
Dinajpur	2,127	2,629	4,756	1,007	1,701	2,708
Rangpur	7,361	8,109	15,470	398	735	1,133
Cooch Behar	20,085	16,203	36,288	4,841	5,832	10,673

**Source:** *Census of India Report 1891*, Vol. III.

Table II: 67

## The pattern of migration and immigration in the Jalpaiguri District

	Emigration from Jalpaiguri into			Immigration into Jalpaiguri from		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Burdwan	5	-	5	105	61	166
Birbhum	-	-	-	72	27	99
Bankura	3	3	6	102	80	182
Midnapur	-	1	1	14	35	49
Hooghly	2	-	2	143	50	193
Howrah	-	2	2	21	24	45
24-Parganas	5	2	7	88	60	148
Calcutta	63	11	74	86	112	198
Nadia	4	5	9	587	207	794
Murshidabad	6	2	8	65	81	146
Jessore	7	1	8	260	46	306
Khulna	-	-	-	21	10	31
Rajshahi	32	6	38	86	92	178
Dinajpur	1,180	1,910	3,090	1,475	1,504	2,979
Darjeeling	2,248	1,893	4,141	960	1,052	2,012
Rangpur	537	739	1,276	6,126	7,190	13,316
Bogra	14	1	15	35	10	45
Pabna	17	6	23	313	138	451
Malda	9	3	12	16	7	23
Dacca	28	10	38	887	204	1,091
Mymensingh	-	-	-	120	43	163
Faridpur	11	3	14	284	106	390
Backerganj	-	-	4	89	24	113
Tipperah	2	-	2	8	1	9
Noakhali	1	1	2	21	3	24
Chittagong	-	-	-	36	15	51
Chittagong-Hill Tracts	-	-	-	-	-	-

\*Source: Census of India 1901, 190, Vol. VIA, Part II Imperial tables; Vol. Vi Part I, Appendix.

Table II: 68

## The pattern of migration and immigration in the Jalpaiguri District

	Emigration from Jalpaiguri into			Immigration into Jalpaiguri from		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Burdwan	-	8	8	137	87	224
Birbhum	4	3	7	71	47	118
Bankura	-	-	-	56	71	127
Midnapur	1	-	1	11	8	19
Hooghly	5	14	19	151	49	200
Howrah	6	2	8	31	8	39
24-Parganas	24	11	35	91	55	146
Calcutta	32	11	43	61	49	110
Nadia	24	19	43	781	268	1,049
Murshidabad	6	2	8	136	126	262
Jessore	7	9	16	556	141	697
Khulna	-	1	1	84	31	115
Rajshahi	56	8	64	151	166	317
Dinajpur	1,028	2,180	3,208	1,299	1,683	2,982
Darjeeling	1,634	1,124	2,758	1,828	1,656	3,484
Rangpur	973	1,272	2,245	9,315	7,453	16,750
Bogra	18	7	25	71	35	106
Pabna	16	21	37	520	215	735
Malda	7	2	9	40	17	57
Dacca	40	21	61	1,161	350	1,511
Mymensingh	9	3	12	238	65	303
Faridpur	18	17	35	589	178	767
Backerganj	2	5	7	302	91	393
Tipperah	14	1	15	82	25	107
Noakhali	1	2	3	169	6	175
Chittagong	-	3	3	80	19	99
Hill Tipperah	1	-	1	-	-	-
Cooch Behar	3,723	4,891	8,614	14,553	12,128	26,681

Source: Census of India 1911, Vol. V, Part II, Table XI, Part A.

Table II: 69

## The pattern of migration and immigration in the Jalpaiguri District

	Emigration from Jalpaiguri into			Immigration into Jalpaiguri from		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Burdwan	7	2	9	102	103	205
Birbhum	1	1	2	192	53	245
Bankura	4	2	6	92	70	162
Midnapur	2	-	2	32	25	57
Hooghly	10	2	12	84	41	125
Howrah	2	-	2	16	16	32
24-Parganas	41	23	64	61	138	199
Calcutta	135	30	165	86	118	204
Nadia	16	20	36	662	392	1,054
Murshidabad	17	12	30	105	182	287
Jessore	6	8	14	381	261	642
Khulna	1	3	4	109	85	194
Rajshahi	56	14	70	164	426	590
Dinajpur	875	1,562	2,537	986	1,607	2,593
Darjeeling	1,657	1,435	3,092	1,939	1,539	3,478
Rangpur	637	1,158	1,795	8,394	6,938	15,332
Bogra	21	18	39	87	27	114
Pabna	21	23	44	368	283	651
Malda	6	7	13	81	85	166
Dacca	44	29	73	1,086	646	1,732
Mymensingh	6	10	16	365	123	488
Faridpur	27	32	59	525	272	797
Backerganj	12	6	18	75	36	111
Tipperah	4	1	5	138	42	180
Noakhali	2	-	2	175	14	189
Chittagong	4	2	6	90	36	126
Hill Tipperah or Tripura State	6	1	7	-	-	-
Cooch Behar	3,101	4,230	7,331	9,677	9,119	18,796

Source: *Census of India 1921, Vol. V, Part II, Table XI, Part A.*

The sum total of these developments produced certain interesting tendencies. The first tendency was in relation to the 'land controlling interest'. It was composed of two underpinnings. One related to the desire to strengthen the position of the 'old land-controlling interests', *i.e.*, the big

*jotedars* and substantial peasants who had roots in the rural society and the other was the emergence of new land controlling interest group. The majority of this class derived their strength from liquid capital accumulated through grain and money-lending, trading operations and land speculation. Pleaders, Muktears, service holders and tea-planters came to form the "new land-controlling interests". Many of the *jotedars* now became non-residents, *i.e.*, absentees. While at the time of Sunder's settlement they constituted only 8% of all the *jotedars* but during Milligan's tenure the number and proportion of such *jotedars* though not precisely given, rapidly increased. Naturally all this contributed towards the spread of *adhiari* cultivation. In respect of the Zamindari areas the situation was not altogether different. The constant expensive litigation among the claimants in the Raikat house of the Baikunthapur estate was one of the stumbling blocks towards the improvement of agriculture.

The history of the factional fights within the *Raikat* house regarding the true heir of Raikat could be traced back during the time of *Bhupdev Raikat* (1724-1736) whose claim to the throne was challenged.<sup>250</sup> But despite this opposition he was able to take the throne. After the death of *Sarbadev Raikat* a factional fight was started between *Raj Rajendra Dev* and *Makranda Dev*. *Raj Rajendra Dev* tried to prove illegal the claim of *Makrandadev* on the ground that the latter had married a milkman's daughter, and in this respect he filed a suit in the Chief Civil Court and the Court gave verdict in favour of *Makrandadev* and stated that a mixed marriage could not be a hindrance for the accession to throne.<sup>251</sup>

Further *Jogindra Dev's* claim (1865-1877) claim although contested by his uncle *Phanindra Dev* but the former received a favourable Privy Council verdict in 1874.<sup>252</sup> After the death of *Jogindra Dev Raikat* a fresh problem arose over the actual heir as *Jogindra Dev* was childless.

*Jagadindra Dev Raikat's* accession to the throne was contested by his uncle *Phanindra Dev* on the ground that the former's claim could not be a valid one as he was the adopted son of *Jogindra Dev Raikat*. Although at the initial stage in 1882 by virtue of the High Court judgement *Jagadindra Dev*

took the charge of Baikunthapur estate but the Privy Council in 1885 gave the verdict in favour of *Phanindra Dev*.<sup>253</sup>

After the death of *Prasanna Dev Raikat*, *Rani Ashrumati Devi*'s claim was opposed by *Rupendra Dev Raikat*. Regarding *Rupendra Dev Raikat* the Calcutta High Court in 1949 supplied very interesting information. "The plaintiff in this suit claims to be the eldest son of the Raikat by a lady of the name of Srimati Renchi Devi, a Lepcha by birth, coming not from a very well-to-do family in the district of Darjeeling. It is alleged that she was married to the Raikat according to the Gandharva form of marriage. This form of marriage rests upon agreement and springs from mutual love. There is no doubt that the Raikats for many years lived with this lady Smt. Renchi Debi as man and wife, and had three sons by her..."<sup>254</sup> So *Rupendra Dev Raikat* claimed to be a legitimate successor of the Baikunthapur estate on two grounds: (i) there was no precedence in the Raikat house that a woman could be natural heir and (ii) as he was born to *Renchi Devi*, wife of *Prasanna Dev Raikat* so he was the natural heir of the estate.

*Rani Ashrumati Devi* on the other hand alleged that since *Renchi Devi* was a mistress of the "... Raikat, and, therefore, the plaintiff is not the legitimate son of the Raikat, and as such he is not entitled to succeed to the estate or to the title".<sup>255</sup> The judge of the High Court was faced with certain questions: "(a) to what extent has this family assimilated Hindu customs and habit; (b) whether marriage according to Gandharva form is valid in this family; (c) whether there could be marriage between a Lepcha female and a Koch male; (d) whether in fact there was a marriage between Raikat and Smt. Renchi Devi; and (e) how far, if at all has the family discontinued any custom if once adopted"<sup>256</sup> In fact these doubts solidified *Rani Ashrumati Devi*'s claim and she won the battle.

Particularly during the tenure of *Prasanna Dev Raikat* a number of suits were filed for enhancement of rents. A suit for enhancement of rent under Section 7 of the Bengal Tenancy Act was instituted on 14 December 1936, and a decree favouring enhancing the rent with effect from 14<sup>th</sup> April 1935, was

passed on 18<sup>th</sup> November 1937. "During the pendency of an appeal from the said decree, the Bengal Tenancy (Amendment) Act (Ben. Act VI of 1938) was passed whereby a new section 75A was inserted in the Bengal Tenancy Act...."<sup>257</sup> By this new inclusion the operation of the provisions for enhancement of rent in the Bengal Tenancy Act was suspended for period of ten years from 27<sup>th</sup> August 1937, and the Act came into force on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1938. Although passing of such Act brought a relief to the tenure-holders but retrospective character of the new Section 75A offered many landlords an opportunity of enhancing rents. A number suits were filed by *Prasanna Dev Raikat* for enhancement of rents. *Prasanna Dev Raikat* brought a suit against Purna Chandra Saha; alleging that Purna Chandra Saha and others "had let out 95 bighas of the tenure-land at a beneficial rent and that the lands could be settled at a fair and equitable rent at Rs. 30 per bigha. Accordingly he claimed an enhancement of the annual rent from Rs. 32-14 to Rs. 12,000".<sup>258</sup> On 23 February 1934 then Calcutta High Court judge J. Mukherjee gave the verdict in favour of *Prasanna Dev Raikat*. In his judgement he stated that "A claim for enhancement of rent is one sense a claim for assessment of fair and equitable rent; indeed Section 7 of the Bengal Tenancy Act itself says that the rent may be enhanced up to such limit as the court thinks fair and equitable. In the case of a claim for assessment of rent, where the tenancy is a yearly one, it has been held...that the value of claim is the value of year's rent [Pandit Dhanukdhari Tewari vs. Mani Sonar (7)]. I see no reason why the claim for enhancement should not be dealt with on the same footing. I am of opinion that court-fees should have been paid on the plaint on Rs. 2000 minus Rs. 32-14 as and that the court fees payable on the memorandum of appeal should be Rs. 2000 minus the amount upto which the rent was enhanced by the court below".<sup>259</sup> Further, on 20 November 1945 Privy Council also gave a judgement in favour of *Prasanna Dev Raikat* who wanted rent revision.<sup>260</sup> So it is clear from the above incidents of suits that the *Raikats* could not now afford to maintain a benevolent attitude towards their subjects which they earlier did before the settlement operation of Milligan. Further, the new cess

revaluation made by Milligan altered the rental structure of the estate and consequently the economic hardship of the peasants in the Baikunthapur increased.

It is quite surprising that despite the process of land-transfers caused by increasing burden of debt and rent and use of force, in the Jalpaiguri district as a whole these tendencies did not result in 'proletarianisation'. The 1911 *District Gazetteer* reported that despite the huge demand for labour, virtually there was no local supply. Further there was a rapid growth of an unprotected tenancy structure in the form of *adhiari*-system. Both Grunning and Milligan observed the poor condition of the *adhiars*; but it has to be remembered that this form of *adhiari* system turned out to be a mechanism for the spread of cultivation, the raising of crops demanded by the Colonial economy and enrichment and consolidation of the *jotedars* and elements having close links with them who proved to be the support base of the Colonial rule.

In the permanently settled areas the zamindars were the supreme authority in respect of realisation of rents. Between 1793 and 1880 there were incidences of enhanced rents from 120% to 180% in several permanently settled districts of Bengal. The increase of cultivable lands, rising prices of agricultural produce, increasing pressure of population of land – all these factors made the increased burdens of rent on peasantry an accepted fact. Heavy burden of rent, numerous growth of sub-tenants, failure of the Permanent Settlement to introduce agricultural improvement made the economic condition of the peasantry worse. Bigger volumes of rent extracted from the peasantry was absorbed in the expanding scales of sub-infeudation and also, to some extent in further enrichment of the large zamindars.

### Notes and References

1. J.F. Grunning, *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers: Jalpaiguri*, Allahabad, 1911, p. 11.
2. No. 2C, dated Camp Mynaguri, the 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 1890, from D. Sunder Esq., Settlement Officer, Western Dooars, Jalpaiguri, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division (W.B.S.A.).
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. Note on the proposals for fixing rates of rent in Mynaguri Tehsil, dated 5<sup>th</sup> July 1890, E.E. Lowis, Commissioner, W.B.S.A.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Note by officiating Secretary, Board of Revenue on letter from Commissioner of Cooch Behar - No. 602, dated 28<sup>th</sup> February 1874, W.B.S.A.
8. *Ibid.*
9. No. 2C, dated Camp Mynaguri, the 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 1890, from D. Sunder Esq., Settlement Officer, Western Dooars, Jalpaiguri, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division (W.B.S.A.).
10. Revenue Department letter No. 286T, dated 5<sup>th</sup> June 1879 (W.B.S.A.).
11. D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Dooars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 3.
12. Grunning, *op. cit.* p. 88.
13. No. 105, dated Julpigoree, the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1889, From - E.H. Walsh, Esq. Settlement Officer, Julpigoree, to the Director of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal (through the Commissioner of Rajshahye Division, Julpigoree).
14. *Ibid.*
15. From M. Finucane, Esq. C.S. Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, dated Calcutta, the 9<sup>th</sup> July 1890, Office of the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, No. 983. T.A.
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18. No. 105, dated Julpigoree, the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1889, From – E.H. Walsh, Esq. Settlement Officer, Julpigoree, to the Director of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal.
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20. *Ibid.*
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22. No. 2C, dated Camp Mynaguri, the 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 1890, from D. Sunder Esq., Settlement Officer, Western Dooars, Jalpaiguri, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division (W.B.S.A.).
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. Sunder, *op. cit.* 1889-95, p. 118.
26. *Ibid.* p. 118.
27. *Ibid.* p. 122.
28. *Ibid.* p. 123.
29. *Ibid.* p. 123.
30. *Ibid.* p. 127.
31. *Ibid.* p. 123.
32. J.A. Milligan, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the Jalpaiguri District 1906-1916*, Bengal Secretariat Book Dept, Calcutta, 1919, p. 110.
33. Sunder, *op. cit.* 1889-95, p. 128.
34. *Ibid.* p. 132.
35. *Ibid.* p. 138.
36. No. 427, dated Jalpaiguri, the 15<sup>th</sup> July 1892, from Donald Sunder, Esq. Settlement Officer, Western Duars, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division.
37. Memorandum of proceedings of a Conference held at Alipore Dooars on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 1890. Present Mr. Lewis, Commissioner, Colonel Wilkins, Deputy Superintendent of Survey, Major Boileau, Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Sunder, Settlement Officer, Mr. Finucane, Director of Land Records, Camp Alipore Dooars, the 10<sup>th</sup> March 1890.
38. *Ibid.*

39. Sunder, *op. cit.* 1889-95, p. 140.
40. *Ibid.* p. 142.
41. *Ibid.* p. 143.
42. No. 279C, dated Camp Alipore Dooars, 9<sup>th</sup> June 1892. From - Donald Sunder, Esq. Settlement Officer, Western Duars, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division.
43. Sunder, *op. cit.* 1889-95, p. 145.
44. *Ibid.* p. 145.
45. *Ibid.* p. 148.
46. No. 279C, dated Camp Alipore Dooars, 9<sup>th</sup> June 1892. From - Donald Sunder, Esq. Settlement Officer, Western Duars, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division.
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49. Sunder, *op. cit.* 1889-95, p. 158.
50. *Ibid.* p. 160.
51. *Ibid.* p. 160.
52. Milligan, *op. cit.* 1906-16, p. 34.
53. *Ibid.* p. 94.
54. No. 455 RCT, dated Darjeeling, the 14<sup>th</sup> May 1895. From - P. Nolan, Esq. Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, to the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture.
55. *Ibid.*
56. Milligan, *op. cit.* 1906-16, p. 27.
57. *Ibid.*
58. Letter from the under Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue and Agriculture, letter No. 1973-426-3 of 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1906.
59. Milligan, *op. cit.* 1906-16, p. 32.
60. *Ibid.* p. 32.
61. *Ibid.* p. 32.
62. *Ibid.* p. 33.
63. F.J. Mohanan to P.C. Lyon Jalpaiguri 21.6.1909. Notes on the extension of Survey and Settlement proceedings under the Tenancy Act to the

districts of this (Rajshahi) division, Progs. of the Conference of Census of Shillong, Oct. 1909. Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam - W.B.S.A.

64. Milligan, *op. cit.* 1906-16, p. 33.
65. *Ibid.* p. 94.
66. *Ibid.* p. 34.
67. *Ibid.* p. 34.
68. *Ibid.* p. 35.
69. *Ibid.* p. 35.
70. *Ibid.* p. 98.
71. *Ibid.* p. 100.
72. *Ibid.* p. 100.
73. *Ibid.* p. 109.
74. *Ibid.* p. 111.
75. *Ibid.* p. 111.
76. *Ibid.* p. 112.
77. No. 1617T-R dated Darjeeling, the 12<sup>th</sup> September 1900. From - F.A. Slacke, the Esq. I.C.S. Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division.
78. *Ibid.*
79. No. 1346 dated Calcutta, the 8<sup>th</sup> February 1916. From - Hon'ble Mr. L. Birley C.I.E., I.C.S. officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, to the Director of Land Records, Bengal.
80. *Ibid.*
81. (i) Milligan, *op. cit.* 1906-16, pp. 49-53.  
(ii) No. XXV - 13-4676, dated Darjeeling, the 27<sup>th</sup> June 1919. From F.A. Sachse, Esq. I.C.S., Director of Land Records, Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department.
82. Milligan, *op. cit.* 1906-16, p. 133.
83. *Ibid.* p. 142.
84. (i) Grunning, *op. cit.* 1911, p. 105.  
(ii) B.C. Ghose, *The development of Tea industry in the district of Jalpaiguri 1869-1968*, Jalpaiguri 1970, pp. 30-37.
85. Grunning, *op. cit.* 1911, p. 84-6.

86. No. XXV - 13-4670, dated Darjeeling, the 27<sup>th</sup> June 1919. From F.A. Sachse, Esq. I.C.S., Director of Land Records, Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department.
87. No. 325G, dated Jalpaiguri, the 20<sup>th</sup> August 1919. From - F.W. Strong, Esq. I.C.S. Deputy Commissioner, Jalpaiguri, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division.
88. *Ibid.*
89. *Ibid.*
90. (i) Jagadindro Dev Raikat, *Raikat banso O tahader Rajjer Samkhipta bibaran*, (ed.) Nirmal Chandra Chaudhuri, p. 33.
- (ii) It was stated that 'Thus in Rungpore, we have what, for want of better terms, may be styled the semi-feudatory estates such as Bykuntapore and Chaklas' - *The District of Rungpore*, p. 33, cited in Khan Chaudhury Amanatullah, 'Koch Biharer itihās', Calcutta, reprinted 2001 book, p. 234. Further it was stated that 'They (Zemindars of Boda and Bykuntapore) pay a certain sum annually without giving an account in what manner their collections are made' - Letter from Mr. J. Gross, the Supervisor of Rungpore to the Durbar Resident of Murshidabad, dated the 20<sup>th</sup> April 1770, Bengal District Records, Rungpore, Vol. I, p. vi.
91. Abdul Bari, 'The Birth of the District', in *Jalpaiguri District Centenary Souvenir*, Jalpaiguri 1970, p. 43.
92. Rebati Mohan Lahiri, 'Jalpaiguri Jelar Itihās', (Prachin Kal Haite 1868 khristabdo porjonto), in *Jalpaiguri District Centenary Souvenir*, Jalpaiguri, 1970, p. 15.
93. Jagadindro Dev Raikat, *op. cit.* p. 30.
94. *Ibid.* p. 30.
95. (i) E.E. Lewis, Commissioner, Note on the proposals for fixing rates of rent in Mynaguri Tehsil, dated 4<sup>th</sup> July 1890, W.B.S.A.
- (ii) No. 33A dated the 25<sup>th</sup> April 1874. From J. Geoghegan, Esq. Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Lower Provinces to the Commissioner of the Cooch Behar Division. W.B.S.A.
96. *Ibid.*
97. No. 2C, dated Camp Mynaguri, the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1890. From - D. Sunder, Esq. Settlement Officer, Western Dooars, Jalpaiguri, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division. W.B.S.A.

98. Jagadindro Dev Raikat, *Raikat banso O tahader Rajjer Samkhipta bibaran*, (ed.)  
Nirmal Chandra Chaudhuri, pp. 32-33 and 35.
99. (i) Grunning, *op. cit.* 1911, p. 83.  
(ii) Jagadindro Dev Raikat, *op. cit.* p. 44.
100. Milligan, *op. cit.* 1919, p. 26.
101. *Ibid.* p. 101.
102. *Ibid.* p. 27.
103. *Ibid.* p. 27.
104. *Ibid.* p. 49.
105. *Ibid.* p. 49.
106. *Ibid.* p. 49.
107. *Ibid.* p. 57.
108. *Ibid.* p. 54.
109. *Ibid.* p. 57.
110. *Ibid.* p. 57.
111. *Ibid.* p. 58.
112. *Ibid.* p. 50.
113. *Ibid.* p. 50.
114. *Ibid.* p. 58.
115. *Ibid.* p. 58.
116. *Ibid.* p. 58.
117. *Ibid.* p. 59.
118. *Ibid.* p. 70.
119. Note by Officiating Secretary, Board of Revenue on letter from Commissioner  
of Cooch Behar - No. 602, dated the 28<sup>th</sup> February 1874. W.B.S.A.
120. *Ibid.*
121. *Ibid.*
122. *Ibid.*
123. *Ibid.*
124. *Ibid.*
125. *Ibid.*
126. *Ibid.*
127. No. 622 dated Julpigoree, the 22-24 March 1875. From - W.J. Herschel Bart,  
Commissioner, Cooch Behar Division, to the Secretary to the Board of  
Revenue, Lower Provinces. W.B.S.A.

128. Note by Officiating Secretary, Board of Revenue on letter from Commissioner of Cooch Behar - No. 602, dated the 28<sup>th</sup> February 1874. W.B.S.A.
129. *Ibid.*
130. No. 211A, dated Fort William, the 25<sup>th</sup> March 1878. From - H.L. Harrison, Esq. Secretary to the Board of Revenue L.P., to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department.
131. Note by Officiating Secretary, Board of Revenue on letter from Commissioner of Cooch Behar - No. 602, dated the 28<sup>th</sup> February 1874. W.B.S.A.
132. Extract from the letter from the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Lower Provinces to the Commissioner of the Rajshahye and Cooch Behar divisions, No. 210A, dated 6<sup>th</sup> May 1878. W.B.S.A.
133. Grunning, *op. cit.* 1911, p. 88.
134. (i) Note by Officiating Secretary, Board of Revenue on letter from Commissioner of Cooch Behar - No. 602, dated the 28<sup>th</sup> February 1874. W.B.S.A.
- (ii) Grunning, *op. cit.* 1911, p. 88.
135. No. 197G dated Julpigoree, the 5<sup>th</sup> May 1888. From - H. Boileau, Deputy Commissioner of Julpigoree, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division. W.B.S.A.
136. Note by Officiating Secretary, Board of Revenue on letter from Commissioner of Cooch Behar - No. 602, dated the 28<sup>th</sup> February 1874. W.B.S.A.
137. *Ibid.*
138. No. 622, dated Julpigoree, the 22-24 March 1875. From - W.J. Herschel Bart, Commissioner, Cooch Behar Division, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Lower Provinces, Revenue Department.
139. *Ibid.* (Note).
140. No. 602, dated Julpigoree, the 28<sup>th</sup> February 1874. From - C.T. Metcalfe, Esq. Officiating Commissioner of the Cooch Behar Division, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Lower Provinces. W.B.S.A.
141. (i) Jalpaiguri S.S.R., p. 79.
- (ii) At a consultation held by Lietenant Governor with the local officials at Julpigoree to consider the question of the revision of the settlement of the Dooars dated 11.7.1878 present: His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Richard Temple; the Commissioner Sir William

Herschel; the Deputy Commissioner of Julpigoree, Captain Money; and the late Settlement Officer Mr. W.O.A. Beckett. W.B.S.A.

142. No. 677 R, dated Rampore Bealeah, the 8<sup>th</sup> January 1885. From - Lord H. Ulick Browne, Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, L.P. Lower Revenue Department. W.B.S.A.
143. (i) Extract from letter No. 1675G, dated March 14<sup>th</sup> 1884, from the Deputy Commissioner of Julpigoree, to the address of the Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division.
- (ii) Grunning, *op. cit.* 1911, p. 88.
144. No. 868, dated Julpigoree, the 2<sup>nd</sup> march 1878. From - Lord Ulick Browne, Commissioner of the Rajshahye and Cooch Behar Division, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, L.P. W.B.S.A.
145. No. 28 ct. R, dated Camp Bogra, the 11<sup>th</sup> December 1877. From - Lord Ulick Browne, Commissioner of the Rajshahye and Cooch Behar Division, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, L.P. W.B.S.A.
146. *Ibid.*
147. No. 2C, dated Camp Mynaguri, the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1890. From - D. Sunder, Esq. Settlement Officer, Western Dooars, Jalpaiguri, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division. W.B.S.A.
148. Revenue Department Letter No. 286T, dated 5<sup>th</sup> June 1879, Revenue Department.
149. Extract from letter No. 1675G, dated March 14<sup>th</sup> 1884, from the Deputy Commissioner of Julpigoree, to the address of the Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division. W.B.S.A.
150. No. 346 Rct. dated Darjeeling, the 11<sup>th</sup> July 1884. From - Lord H. Ulick Browne, Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Land Revenue Department.
151. No. 870 Rct. dated Camp Julpigoree, the 21<sup>st</sup> March 1885. From - Lord H. Ulick Browne, Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Land Revenue Department.
152. No. 868, dated Julpigoree, the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1878. From - Lord H. Ulick Browne, Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, L.P.
153. (i) No. 868, dated Julpigoree, the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1878. From - Lord H. Ulick Browne, Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division, to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, L.P. W.B.S.A.

- (ii) No. 136A, dated Fort William, the 20<sup>th</sup> March 1878. From - H.L. Harrison, Esq. Secretary to the Board of Revenue L.P. to the Commissioner of the Rajshahye and Cooch Behar Division. W.B.S.A.
154. From M. Finucane, Esq. C.S. Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, Office of the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, 102-104 to 112-114A, No. 983 T.A. dated Calcutta, the 9<sup>th</sup> July 1890. W.B.S.A.
155. *Ibid.* 1890.
156. *Ibid.* 1890.
157. *Ibid.* 1890.
158. *Ibid.* 1890.
159. (i) From M. Finucane, Esq. C.S. Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, Office of the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, 102-104 to 112-114A, No. 983 T.A. dated Calcutta, the 9<sup>th</sup> July 1890. W.B.S.A.
- (ii) From M. Finucane, Esq. C.S. Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division. No. 354T, dated Darjeeling, the 26<sup>th</sup> June 1890. W.B.S.A
160. From M. Finucane, Esq. C.S. Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, Office of the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, 102-104 to 112-114A, No. 983 T.A. dated Calcutta, the 9<sup>th</sup> July 1890. W.B.S.A.
161. From M. Finucane, Esq. C.S. Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, No. 354T, dated 26<sup>th</sup> June 1889 to the Commissioner of the Western Dooars. W.B.S.A.
162. *Ibid.* 1889.
163. Sunder, *op. cit.* 1889-95, p. 118.
164. *Ibid.* p. 118.
165. *Ibid.* p. 118.
166. From Major H. Boileau, Deputy Commissioner of Julpigoree, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division No. 197 G, dated Julpigoree, the 5<sup>th</sup> May 1888. W.B.S.A.

167. From W.C. Mcpherson, Esq. C.S. Offg. Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department No. 495T, dated Darjeeling, the 4<sup>th</sup> October 1892 (File 165-28/6). W.B.S.A.
168. From P. Nolan, Esq. C.S. Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, to the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal No. 691 Rct. dated Darjeeling, the 19<sup>th</sup> September 1892. W.B.S.A.
169. From M. Finucane, Esq. C.S. Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, Office of the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, 102-104 to 112-114A, No. 983 T.A. dated Calcutta, the 9<sup>th</sup> July 1890. W.B.S.A.
170. From E.E. Lowis Esq. C.S. Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division, to the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal No. 30R, dated Julpigoree, the 9<sup>th</sup> May 1890. W.B.S.A.
171. *Ibid.* 1890.
172. *Ibid.* 1890.
173. From E.E. Lowis, Esq. Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division, to the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal No. 286 Rct. dated Darjeeling, the 18<sup>th</sup> June 1891. W.B.S.A.
174. From D. Sunder, Esq. Settlement Officer, Western Duars, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division No. 384, dated Jalpaiguri, the 16<sup>th</sup> July 1891. W.B.S.A.
175. Memorandum of Proceedings of a Conference held at Alipore Dooars on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 1890. Present: Mr. Lowis, Commissioner, Colonel Wilkins, Deputy Superintendent of Survey, Major Boileau, Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Sunder, Settlement Officer, Mr. Finucane, Director of Land Records. Camp Alipore Dooars, the 10<sup>th</sup> March 1890. W.B.S.A.
176. From M. Finucane, Esq. C.S. Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, Office of the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, 102-104 to 112-114A, No. 983 T.A. dated Calcutta, the 9<sup>th</sup> July 1890. W.B.S.A.

177. From P. Nolan, Esq. C.S. Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, to the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal No. 592R, dated Pabna, the 28<sup>th</sup> July 1892 (File 16-S 19/6). W.B.S.A.
178. *Ibid.* 1892.
179. From E.E. Lowis, Esq. Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division, to the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal No. 286 Rct. dated Darjeeling, the 18<sup>th</sup> June 1891. W.B.S.A.
180. Sunder, *op. cit.* 1889-95, p. 118.
181. From E.E. Lowis, Esq. Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division, to the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal No. 286 Rct. dated Darjeeling, the 18<sup>th</sup> June 1891. W.B.S.A.
182. From P. Nolan, Esq. C.S. Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, to the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal No. 592R, dated Pabna, the 28<sup>th</sup> July 1892 (File 16-S 19/6). W.B.S.A.
183. From M. Finucane, Esq. C.S. Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, Office of the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, 102-104 to 112-114A, No. 983 T.A. dated Calcutta, the 9<sup>th</sup> July 1890. W.B.S.A.
184. Sunder, *op. cit.* 1889-95, p. 118.
185. (i) From P. Nolan, Esq. C.S. Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, to the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal No. 592R, dated Pabna, the 28<sup>th</sup> July 1892 (File 16-S 19/6). W.B.S.A.
- (ii) From C.E. Buckland Esq. Offg. Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal Revenue Department - Land Revenue - No. 353 T-R - 121A/111.
- (iii) From M. Finucane, Esq. C.S. Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, No. 138 T.A. dated Calcutta the 5<sup>th</sup> February 1891, 106-127A/116-117. W.B.S.A.
186. D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Duars in the Jalpaiguri District* 1889-95, p. 119.
187. From P. Nolan, Esq. C.S. Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, to the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal No. 592R, dated Pabna, the 28<sup>th</sup> July 1892 (File 16-S 19/6). W.B.S.A.

188. From Donald Sunder, Esq. Settlement Officer, Western Duars, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, No. 415, dated Jalpaiguri, the 11<sup>th</sup> July 1892. W.B.S.A.
189. From Donald Sunder, Esq. Settlement Officer, Western Duars, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, No. 418, dated Jalpaiguri, the 12<sup>th</sup> July 1892. W.B.S.A.
190. *Ibid.* 1892.
191. D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Duars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 119.
192. Demi - Official form, the Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division, to the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal dated Julpigoree, the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1890. W.B.S.A.
193. D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Duars in the Jalpaiguri District 1889-95*, p. 119.
194. *Ibid.* p. 129.
195. From F.A. Sachse, Esq. I.C.S. Director of Land Records, Bengal to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department No. XXV-13-4670, dated Darjeeling, the 27<sup>th</sup> June 1919. Revenue Department.
196. *Ibid.* 1919.
197. Quotation of J.F. Grunning cited in J.A. Milligan, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in Jalpaiguri District 1906-1916*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot. Calcutta 1919, p. 135.
198. Milligan, *op. cit.* 1919, p. 135.
199. Quotation of E.E. Lewis cited in J.A. Milligan, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in Jalpaiguri District 1906-1916*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot. Calcutta 1919, p. 81.
200. Milligan, *op. cit.* 1919, p. 82.
201. *Ibid.* p. 82.
202. *Ibid.* p. 82.
203. A. Mitra, *Census 1951: West Bengal: District Handbooks: Jalpaiguri*, Calcutta 1954, p. XCIX.
204. Milligan, *op. cit.* 1919, p. 136.
205. (i) *Ibid.* 1919 p. 137.  
(ii) A. Mitra, *Census 1951: West Bengal: District Handbooks: Jalpaiguri*, Calcutta 1954, p. XCIX.

- (iii) From F.A. Sachse, Esq. I.C.S. Director of Land Records, Bengal to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department No. XXV-13-4670, dated Darjeeling, the 27<sup>th</sup> June 1919. W.B.S.A.
206. Mitra, *op. cit.* Appendix-II-Contd. p. CXi.
207. Milligan, *op. cit.* 1919, p. 85.
208. *Ibid.* p. 86.
209. *Ibid.* p. 88.
210. *Ibid.* p. 92.
211. *Ibid.* p. 94.
212. *Ibid.* p. 91.
213. (i) Milligan, *op. cit.* 1919, p. 89.  
(ii) Land Revenue File 3-A/14 1-3 Nos. 18-19 of November 1914, Land Revenue Department.  
(iii) Mitra, 1951, *op. cit.* p. xcix.
214. (i) Milligan, *op. cit.* 1919, p. 92.  
(ii) Mitra, 1951, *op. cit.* p. xcix.
215. B.B. Mukherjee, *Final Report on the Land Revenue Settlement Operations in the District of Jalpaiguri 1931-1935*, Calcutta, p. 66.
216. Report of the Land Revenue Commission, Bengal 1938-1940 (Chairman Sir Francis Floud) Volume-I with minutes of Dissent, Superintendent, Government Printing, Bengal Government Press, Alipore, Bengal 1940, pp. 29-30.
217. Grunning, *op. cit.* 1911, p. 82.
218. *Ibid.* p. 83.
219. Milligan, *op. cit.* 1919, p. 74.
220. *Ibid.* p. 76.
221. *Khatian* book – Taluk-Bar-Patia-Natun bas, pargana – Baikunthapur, Volume-I, 20-12-1911, p. 31 (courtesy: Jalpaiguri Raikat House).
222. Milligan, *op. cit.* 1919, p. 74.
223. *Khatian* book – Taluk-Bar-Patia-Natun bas, pargana – Baikunthapur, Volume-I, 20-12-1911, pp. 1-485.
224. Milligan, *op. cit.* 1919, p. 75.
225. (i) Milligan, *op. cit.* 1919, p. 77.

- (ii) From F.A. Sachse, Esq. I.C.S. Director of Land Records, Bengal to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department No. XXV-13-4670, dated Darjeeling, the 27<sup>th</sup> June 1919. W.B.S.A.
226. Computed from J.A. Milligan, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in Jalpaiguri District 1906-1916*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot. Calcutta 1919. Appendix-II, pp. vii-xiii.
227. Computed from J.A. Milligan, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in Jalpaiguri District 1906-1916*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot. Calcutta 1919. Appendix-II.
228. Milligan, *op. cit.* 1919, p. 14.
229. *Ibid.* p. 15.
230. *Ibid.* pp. 135-136.
231. From H.J.S. Cotton, Esq. Secretary to the Board of Revenue, L.P. to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 743A, Revenue Department, dated Calcutta, the 17<sup>th</sup> August 1884.
232. From Lord H. Ulick Browne, Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, L.P. No. 677R, dated Rampore Bealeah, Land Revenue Department, the 8<sup>th</sup> January 1885.
233. Grunning, *op. cit.* 1911, p. 101.
234. *Ibid.* p. 99.
235. *Ibid.* p. 101.
236. Sunder, *op. cit.* 1889-95, Resolution, p. 2, Para 5-133.
237. From Lord. H. Ulick Browne, Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue No. 346 Ref., dated Darjeeling, the 11<sup>th</sup> July 1884, Land Revenue Department. W.B.S.A.
238. Milligan, *op. cit.* 1919, p. 14.
239. *Khatian* book - (pargana - Baikunthapur, Taluk-Bar-Patia-Natun bas), Volume-I, 20-12-1911, pp. 1-485 (courtesy: Jalpaiguri Raikat House).
240. Grunning, *op. cit.* 1911, p. 83.
241. Milligan, *op. cit.* 1919, p. 91.
242. From A. Mackenzie, Esq. Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue No. 893T, dated Darjeeling, the 18<sup>th</sup> July 1878, Land Revenue Department.

243. From Lord H. Ulick Browne, Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, L.P. No. 677R, dated Rampore Beaulah, Land Revenue Department, the 8<sup>th</sup> January 1885. W.B.S.A.
244. From H.J.S. Cotton, Esq. Secretary to the Board of Revenue, L.P. to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 99A, dated Calcutta, the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1885. Revenue Department.
245. *Ibid.* 1885.
246. Sunder, *op. cit.* 1889-95, pp. 46-47, Para 172.
247. Kanak Kanti Bagchi, *Land Tenures and Agricultural Development*, Delhi (First Published 2003), pp. 63-64.
248. (i) *Census Report of the District of Jalpaiguri 1891* (hereafter Jalpaiguri District Census), p. 26, Para 89.  
 (ii) Sunder, *op. cit.* 1889-95, p. 130, Para 684.  
 (iii) J.F. Grunning, *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers: Jalpaiguri*, Allahabad, 1911, p. 36.
249. Haraprasad Chattopadhyaya, *Internal Migration in India, A Case Study of Bengal*, K.P. Bagchi and Company, First Published 1987, pp. 62-63.
250. Khan Chaudhury Amanatullah Ahmed, *Koch Bihar Itihas* (Pratham Khnada), Modern Book Agency Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta reprinted 2001, p. 201. In this regard it is pertinent to note that neither Jagadindra Dev Raikat in his book 'Raikat banso O tahader Rajjer Samkhipto bibartan' or Khan Chaudhury Amanatullah Ahmed pointed out the person who opposed Bhupdev's accessions to the Raikat throne.
251. Khan Chaudhury Amanatullah Ahmed, *Koch Bihar Itihas* (Pratham Khnada), Modern Book Agency Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta reprinted 2001, p. 201.
252. (i) *Ibid.* p. 232.  
 (ii) Jagadindra Dev Raikat in his book *Raikat banso O tahader Rajjer Samkhipto bibartan*, Sampadana Nirmal Chandra Chaudhury, Uttar Banga Itihas Parishad, Jalpaiguri, third edition, 1983, p. 36.
253. (i) Khan Chaudhury Amanatullah Ahmed, p. 232.  
 (ii) Raikat, *op. cit.* p. 43.
254. Calcutta High Court judgement (Extraordinary jurisdiction) Banerjee, J. in Re: Kumar Rupendra Dev Raikat vs. Ashrumati Devi and others, 12 April 1949, *Calcutta weekly notes*, Vol. XXXVIII. It is quite surprising that

although Rupendra Dev was not then proved to be of *Raikat* origin but still the Calcutta High Court attached the title "*Raikat*" with his name.

255. *Ibid.*

256. *Ibid.*

257. (Civil appellate jurisdiction) Prasanna Dev Raikat, Plaintiff, Appellant v. Biseswar Das Gupta and others, Defendants, Respondents; Akram J. Pal; J 1943 Heard 15 January, Judgement 22, January.

258. (Civil Revisional Jurisdiction) In the matter of court fee, Prasanna Deb Raikat, Plaintiff, Appellant, vs. Purna Chandra Saha and others, Defendants, Respondents/ Mukherjee J. 1934, Heard 23, February, Judgement 27 February. *The Calcutta Weekly Notes*, vol. XXXVIII.

259. *Ibid.*

260. Privy Council [Appeal from Bengal] Prasanna Dev Raikat, Appellant, vs. Tanjina Khatun and others, Respondents; Lord Thankerton, Lord Goddars, Sir John Beaumont, 20<sup>th</sup> November 1945, *The Calcutta Weekly Notes*, vol. XXXVIII.

## CHAPTER III

THE BRITISH COLONIAL AUTHORITY AND ITS PENETRATION IN THE  
CAPITAL MARKET IN THE NORTHERN PART OF BENGAL

## I

The most lasting impact of the imperial rule in the Jalpaiguri District especially in the Western Dooars was the commercialisation of agriculture, and this process of commercialisation made an impact not only on the economy of West Bengal but also on society as well. J.A. Milligan during his settlement operations in the Jalpaiguri District in 1906-1916 was not impressed about the state of agriculture in the Jalpaiguri region.<sup>1</sup> He ascribed the backward state of agriculture to the primitive mentality of the cultivators and the use of backdated agricultural implements by the cultivators. Despite this allegation he gave a list of cash crops which were grown in the Western Duars. He stated, "In places excellent tobacco is grown, notably in Falakata tehsil and in Patgram; mustard grown a good deal in the Duars; sugarcane in Baikunthapur and Boda to a small extent very little in the Duars".<sup>2</sup>

J.F. Grunning explained the reason behind the cultivation of varieties of crops in the region due to variation in rainfall in the Jalpaiguri district. He said "The annual rainfall varies greatly in different parts of the district ranging from 70 inches in Debiganj in the Boda Pargana to 130 inches at Jalpaiguri in the regulation part of the district, while in the Western Duars, close to the hills, it exceeds 200 inches per annum. In these circumstances it is not possible to treat the district as a whole and give one account of agriculture which will apply to all parts of it".<sup>3</sup> Due to changes in the global market regarding consumer commodity structure suitable commercialisation at crops appeared to be profitable to colonial economy than continuation of traditional agricultural activities.

Among the cash crops tea was the most valuable grown in the district. The introduction and growth of tea plantation enterprise in the district as well as in Assam at the outset was not a native venture but was purely colonial

enterprise. The cultivation and maintenance of plantation economy needed the active guidance from the imperial Government. The Colonial Government was interested in this aspect because earnings from tea export played a vital role in Britain's international trade and capital flow-relations and in the maintenance of the British imperial structure.<sup>4</sup>

All the necessary conditions such as capital, enterprise, management, even the unskilled labour were brought from distant regions for the growth of tea plantation enterprise in the Jalpaiguri district. Although in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries witnessed phenomenal growth of tea industry but this growth did not generate any dynamic transformation process, *i.e.*, the tea industry remained within a certain restricted zone.

The whole Dooars region was not an attractive place for the "boldest pioneers" to settle in.<sup>5</sup> In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was covered with dense jungle, "giving shelter to all manner of wild life beasts and inhabited only by primitive tribes..."<sup>6</sup> A planter remarked that "this was a land only for the saints or the satans". But despite this allegation it should be mentioned that the considerable potential of Duars as a tea growing area was noticed as early as 1859.<sup>7</sup> In this connection it is pertinent to mention the state of a tea garden in Assam whose flourishing condition at that time inspired the British investors in Bengal and Britain to invest in the tea sector in the Jalpaiguri district. In 1837 the inauguration of some experimental tea gardens in Assam brought so much dividends that such kind of venture immediately attracted the attention of some capitalists both in India and Britain.<sup>8</sup> In 1858 there was only one company in the tea industry, the Assam Company, incorporated in Britain. By 1865 there were 62 registered companies and 30 Sterling Companies in India.

With these favourable background the first tea garden in the Jalpaiguri district was opened in 1874 by Dr. Brougham at *Gazaldoba*.<sup>9</sup> This *Gazaldoba* region was situated on the western part of the Western Duars and in that said tea garden, Richard Houghton, "pioneer of the tea industry in the Jalpaiguri district",<sup>10</sup> was appointed as manager of the garden. The District record

suggests that Dr. H.P. Brougham took the first lease 996 acres in *Gazaldoba* in 16.2.1876. He opened a tea garden in this area employing Richard Haughton who appears to be the pioneer tea planter in the Jalpaiguri District. *Fulbari* was the next place to be planted and was opened out by the Late Mr. Pillans Hat, who gave his name of the market called Pillans Hat, and was owned by Colonel Money.<sup>11</sup> Soon it was felt by all investors that the success at Assam could well be repeated in the Jalpaiguri district particularly in the Western Duars sector. In 1876 there were 13 gardens with an area of 818 acres and an yield of 29,520 lbs. of tea.<sup>12</sup> The year 1877 was a significant year. Because in this year the first Indian pioneer in tea industry Munshi Rahim Baksh opened a tea garden at *Jaldhaka* on 17.8.1877 on 728 acres of land.<sup>13</sup> In 1877 *Baintbarrie*, *Bamandanga*, *Ellenbarrie*, *Damdim* and *Washabarrie* tea gardens were started. In 1878 an interesting venture took place under Mr. Johnson who took grant on behalf of Land Mortgage Bank. This was known as Kalabari Grant in which 800 acres of land was taken on 9.3.1878.<sup>14</sup> Subsequently, this grant came into the ownership of Dr. Nilratan Sarkar, the famous physician of Bengal and Smt. Sarojini Roy. In 1878 *Good Hope*, *Rani Cherra*, *Manabarrie*, *Balabarrie*, *Altadanga*, *Money Hope* (Fulbari), *Chael* and *Batabari* grants were taken. Regarding *Altadanga* grant it should be mentioned that at first Kali Mohan Roy and Durgabati Sen got this grant of 310 acres on 19.9.1878 but soon they transferred this grant to Beharilal Ganguly. The latter subsequently passed the grant to Munshi Rahim Baksh.

The year 1879 is a landmark in the sense that it was the year in which the Joint Stock Companies were formed in Jalpaiguri for the cultivation of tea. The year 1880 was although a quiet year but in this year 30 years lease of the grant was issued for the first time. By 1881 the number of gardens rose up to 55, which means the number of tea gardens more that quadrupled and the area of lands under tea cultivation increased more than seven times in just five years.

At the time of Settlement of Sunders, 182 grants of land was leased out for the cultivation of tea, comprising a total area of 139,751 acres, or 218 square miles of which 38,583 acres or 60 square miles were really selected for

the plantation of tea. And such kind of entrepreneurship gave an out turn of over 18 million pounds. By 1890 Duncan Brothers had its agency in 12 gardens with a planted area of 5,795 acres, and at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the number of estates in the agency had risen to 25, covering 18,690 acres of tea. This development was confined to the region between the Tista and the Daina and on this issue C.J. O'Donnell, ICS wrote the following statement quoted in *District Gazetteer* "This important industry has increased so much in recent years as to change almost completely the physical characteristic of the submontane country over a great area thirty miles long extending from the debauchment of the Tista from the Darjeeling hills to a similar point on the Daina river on the frontier of Bhutan. The greater part of the primeval forest has disappeared and mile after mile has been replaced by great expanses of tea-gardens. East of the Diana a similar tract stretches for about the same distance as far as the Rajabhatkhoa forest reserve due north of Alipur. It is remarkable for its waterless character which prevents its occupation for tea or any other form of cultivation. A few springs are, however, found in limestone formations which occasionally crop out on its northern boundary. They are, however, almost immediately absorbed by the surrounding porous soil, and do not again appear on the surface for seven to eleven miles south of their sources".<sup>15</sup>

Due to supply of sufficient water, some gardens established in the area east of the Diana failed to operate for the time being. But the signing of water supply contract to Dooars tea gardens with Bhutan by the British the problem was solved. The water was brought down from the Bhutan Hills in pipes and soon the area developed as an important tea district.<sup>16</sup>

From the period 1911 to 1924 some tea companies in Jalpaiguri were started. In 1912-13 *Gour Nitai*, *Monmohinpur*, *Halmari* tea gardens and New Assam tea garden in Assam and *Sukna* tea garden were opened by the Jalpaiguri people. In this respect the initiative taken by the *Raikats* of Baikunthapur estate in opening the tea gardens in the Jalpaiguri District should be mentioned. *Sri Samarendra Dev (Taru) Raikat* stated that *Sri Prasanna Dev Raikat* inaugurated two tea gardens at *Shikarpur* and *Bhandarpur*. Further,

he also constructed a small rail-line between the above mentioned two tea gardens.<sup>17</sup>

In 1912 five tea companies in Jalpaiguri were registered and they were *Bengal Duars National Tea Co. Ltd.*, *the Eastern Tea Co. Ltd.*, *Gopalpur Tea Cp. Ltd.*, *Khayerbari Tea Co. Ltd.* and *Kohinoor Tea Co. Ltd.*

*Bengal Duars National Tea Co. Ltd.* purchased 1593.15 acres of land near the Dhawla river in Alipur Duar Subdivision of Jalpaiguri and the garden was called *Dhawalajhora Tea Estate*.<sup>18</sup>

The Eastern Tea Co. Ltd. venture in setting up a tea garden in Malbazar area proved a failure because of the advancement of Tista river into the plantation area. But another plot of land in Aphalchand Forest area under Malbazar was secured and the Rahut family of Jalpaiguri town opened a tea garden named *Kailashpur Tea estate*. In 1913 some lawyers of Alipurduar started *Patkapara Tea Estate*. In the year 1917 Sri Tariniprosad Roy started *Saroda Tea Co. Ltd.* after acquiring a large plot of land in Alipurduar subdivision and it became the largest tea garden amongst the gardens of Bengal tea planters. In 1931 the number of tea estates in the whole Jalpaiguri District touched the figure 151 of these 143 gardens were situated in the Duars and the remaining 8 were located on the western side of the Tista river near the Jalpaiguri town.

The tea industry witnessed many ups and downs in the world market and such fluctuations affected the tea industries in the Jalpaiguri District also. In the early 1860's due to the widespread speculative mentality the industry was faced with severe depression.

The following extract from the *Friend of India* given account of the confusion and reckless manner in which tea companies were promoted. "Land was roughly cleared without reference to its quality, elevation or requirements of tea cultivation. The product was represented in London or Calcutta markets as being of 'virgin soil, carefully selected, within thirty-six hours of Calcutta, reducible to four and twenty...specimens of tea, collected anywhere, left no doubt if its excellence...' Men of mark and position, if not high character, countenanced and falsehood and supported the speculators...

The great *Cheetam Tea Company Limited*, one of many similar instances, was soon launched, after paying to the late owner of that magnificent estate a consideration varying from £20,000 to £30,000.<sup>19</sup>

The tea industry collapsed in May 1866, and the shareholders became desperate in selling their holdings at whatever prices they were offered and such mentality deepened the crisis. Up to the end of 1866, 65 companies were registered in India but by the end of 1870, 33 of these had to be wound-up.

The entire period from 1874 to 1896 was one of the significant eras in terms of acreage under tea and production. Particularly between the year 1892 and 1896 the tea industry enjoyed an extraordinary prosperity. During this period 88,000 acres of land were planted in Bengal and Assam, about 50 new Companies were formed, more that 30 rupee Companies were reconstructed or absorbed and the sterling investment increased by 3 million pounds.<sup>20</sup> In 1894, 46 sterling Companies paid an average dividend of 7.9% as compared with only 5.2% in 1888.<sup>21</sup> In 1895 the yield on capital employed by 56 sterling companies was calculated to be 155.75%.<sup>22</sup>

In the opening year of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the dividends of the Duars gardens were moderate. In the First World War eras although the expansion was very limited, but the industry managed to earn high profits. In 1915 the dividends averaged as 47% and many of these dividends were tax-free. After a period of depression in profits and dividends in the last years of the decade, a sign of recovery could be seen in the 1920s and in the most part of the third decade the profits and the dividends remained quite high.<sup>23</sup> The following table will illustrate the development of tea gardens in the Jalpaiguri district.

Table III: 1

## Statistics of Tea Garden in Jalpaiguri District from 1874 to 1951

Year	No. of gardens	Total area under (in acres)	Approximate production (in lbs.)	Average in lbs. per acre of mature plants	Number of labourers employed		
					Permanent	Temporary	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1874	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
1876	13	818	29520	...	...	...	...
1881	55	6,230	1,027,116	...	...	...	...
1892	182	38,583	18,278,628	...	...	...	...
1901	235	76,403	31,087,537	441	47,365	21,254	68,619
1907	180	81,338	45,196,894	...	...	...	...
1911	191	90,859	48,820,637	583	56,593	18,622	75,315
1921	131	1,12,688	43,287,87	426	86,693	1,871	88,564
1931	151	1,32,074	66,447,715	534	1,12,591	4,262	1,16,583
1941	189	1,31,770	96,604,450	765	1,36,491	4,896	1,41,387
1951	158	1,34,473	1,37,194,660	1,020	...	...	1,78,009

Sources: For the years 1874 to 1892 and 1907 J.F. Grunning, *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers: Jalpaiguri*, Allahabad, 1911, p. 103, and the remaining years *Census 1951: West Bengal: District Handbooks: Jalpaiguri* by A. Mitra, Calcutta, 1954, p. iii.

The role of Colonial Government for the rapid growth and development of tea industry in the Jalpaiguri district particularly in the Dooars regions was a crucial factor in the tea plantation economy. The British Indian Government whether at the provincial or district level provided the planters indirect help and protection.

The fourth Settlement Officer J.A. Milligan was a popular figure among the tea-planters. Whether in the form of administrative policy of allotment of land, labour recruitment and control methods or promotion of transport and communication, forest policy, policy regarding hats and markets – all were explicitly designed by him to promote the European controlled tea plantation enterprise.

In this regard it is quite relevant to mention the land settlement policy adopted by the Colonial Government in respect of the tea gardens. The contemporary evidences suggest that by a contrivance, branded as Waste Land Rules introduced in 1896, the government granted a preliminary lease for a term of 5 years. On the expiration of the said period and of the lessee fulfilling certain conditions, the lease was again renewed for 30 years and so on or similar periods in perpetuity. The said land was treated rent-free for the first year and after that on a rental of 3 annas an *acre* for the second year and an additional 3 annas for each successive years up to 12 annas an *acre*.<sup>24</sup> Each grant was to be a compact one and to be capable to being enclosed in a ring-fence. Further on the expiration of the term of the first or preliminary lease which was granted for five years the lands were reassessed according to the *pargana* rates. This rate remained static for the next 30 years. It was found that during the currency of the lease not less than 15% of the total area of the grant had been brought under cultivation and actually cultivated tea plants the lessee was entitled to the renewals for similar periods in perpetuity.<sup>25</sup> Such process invariably needed the active guidance and assistance from the Colonial authorities. Major H. Boileau, Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri commented, "As there is still a large extent of unoccupied land in the Western Dooars, and as this land is gradually being taken up for tea-grants in large

blocks, or by native cultivators in small jotes or holdings, I propose that Mr. Brownfield be allowed to continue the survey and division of the culturable waste into symmetrical blocks of 800 acres to 1,000 acres in extent as he is now doing. Such of these blocks as may be leased under the tea lease rules should form whole mouzahs under names and numbers in the rent-rolls. Those blocks, the lands of which are suitable for the native crops should be leased to jotedars, so that there may be a certain number of small holdings in each block or mouzah".<sup>26</sup> So such statement illustrates the process of absorption by the planters of the cultivable lands for tea cultivation. Further there were reports about irregularities in respect of transfer of lands to the planters. A. Mackenzie, Esq. Secretary to the Government of Bengal quoted a statement by Mr. Wells which gave "an account of a transfer of certain lands by a jotedar to a planter who evades by so holding the clearance conditions attaching to grants under the tea-lease rule. The planter is said to have in this way got possession of 400 acres of waste. It is obvious that the planter can have acquired no rights beyond those belonging to the jotedar from whom he purchased".<sup>27</sup>

But the existing rules did not prevent a *jotedar* who had a transferable and heritable right from transferring his *jote* but it was cautioned that while getting the *jotedaree* right a planter must preserve his under-tenants interests and "do not eject the under-tenants".<sup>28</sup> A. Mackenzie, Esq. Secretary to the Government of Bengal hoped that "...no planter would probably ever take up a cultivated jote for tea purposes, and place himself in the position of a jotedar liable to frequent revision of settlement, if he knew that he could not oust the ryots, and so long as he could get land under the tea lease rules on such easy terms".<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, the above incidents clearly indicate that the inauguration of the tea plantation enterprise in Assam and the Jalpaiguri district was purely a European exercise; although some sorts of native capital began to pour in slowly. It was an industry which needed the active sponsorship from the Colonial Government and the latter happily provided it.

## II

Further the tea-industry did generate a secondary or tertiary economic activity in the form of pursuing a policy for the conservation of the forests. Because from the forests, timbers were procured which were necessary items for making tea-chests and railway sleepers. It is no wonder that the tea planters as well as the Colonial Government could not remain indifferent about the commercial potential of timber. In the Jalpaiguri District *Sal* was the most important tree.<sup>30</sup> The whole forest region naturally was composed of three main types-*Sal* bearing areas, *Khair* and *Sissu* bearing areas. The forest area of Jalpaiguri Division covered at the time of J.F. Grunning in 1911 an area of 182 square miles. They were sub-divided into four ranges, namely, *Apalchand*, *Lower Tondu*, *Upper Tondu* and *Maraghat* and consisted of twelve independent blocks.

Table II: 2

## Twelve blocks of forest area at the time of J.F. Grunning

Name of the blocks	Area in sq. miles
1) Apalchand	28.67
2) Malhati	0.50
3) Khairanti	0.10
4) Upper and Lower Tondu	79.03
5) Daina	25.01
6) Maraghat	21.50
7) Rahti	5.10
8) Dalgaon	2.30
9) Salbari	0.03
10) Dumchi	4.71
11) Khairbari	2.88
12) Titi	12.76

Source: J.F. Grunning, *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers, Jalpaiguri*, Allahabad, 1911, p. 65.

The forests had been selected out of unoccupied waste at the disposal of the Colonial Government. The selection of forests for reservation was begun in 1872-73 and from that period to 1878-79 various forests were gazetted as reserved. Specially in the year 1879 the first notification was published by which nearly 280 square miles of forest areas were declared to be reserved forest area.<sup>31</sup>

The northern Tondu block was transferred from the Darjeeling district in 1881 and formed a part of the *Upper Tondu forest*. But still the Colonial Government was not fully aware of the full commercial potential of the reserved forests; although from 1875 to 1888 "nearly all the exploitation work was done departmentally".<sup>32</sup>

D.H.E. Sunder during his tenure as Settlement Officer expressed dissatisfaction at the indifferent attitude of the Colonial Government in framing a definite policy regarding the forest management. "...year after year Government is losing money in the up keep of these forests. I have no desire to impute blame to anybody for this, but I do wish to observe that, if the rates for timber and other forest produce were reduced and if more facility was afforded to the public for obtaining timber without trouble and delay, managers of tea gardens and other would not be compelled as they are at present to supply their requirements of wood for tea boxes by procuring it from Japan and Burma..."<sup>33</sup> It is no wonder that the word "Public" used in Sunder's statement were the tea planters whose problems he sought to eradicate by (1) opening of good cart roads, leading to every forest; (2) speedy measurement of timber when purchased; (3) prevention of harassment to the people who reside in the vicinity of forests by forest officials and finally (4) further vigorous supervision by gazetted officers in charge of respective forest divisions and "closer touch with planters and the people generally".<sup>34</sup>

By April 1905 Mr. C.C. Hatt divided the Jalpaiguri forests into five working circles, namely, *Buxa, Borojhar, Nilpara, Haldibari* and *Bhutan ghat*. The main objective of such division was the proper utilisation of the forest timbers, i.e., *Buxa, Borojhar, Haldibari* working circles supplied large number

of mature *sal* timber; in Nilpara, Bhutan ghat forest areas efforts were taken for the proper utilisation of stock of damaged and over-mature *sissu* timber. In the above mentioned three areas where *sal* timber grew abundantly a high forest selection method was adopted.

“Improvements in fallings are also necessary: unsound and unpromising *sal* trees under 2 feet diameter are cut when they interfere with the development of better specimens, and trees of other species are cut when they interfere with *sal* or trees of other species more valuable than themselves”.<sup>35</sup>

Steps were taken for the sufficient growth of mature *sal* timber by clearing and weeding in places where seeds had fallen and by freeing the top portion of the young trees. Further the *sal* timber was sold to private purchasers on payment of a monopoly fee. Trees fit for cutting were marked in each range and tenders were called for. Such processes clearly indicate that a forest management policy was pursued.

For many years there was little demand for fuel from tea gardens, because, on their grants existed a large stock of fire wood. But as early as 1883 there was a demand for fuel. To solve this problem a working plan for the whole of the Jalpaiguri Division was drawn up in outline in 1892-93 by Mr. Manson and this plan was sanctioned by the Colonial Government in 1899.<sup>36</sup>

Further, in 1905 Mr. Traflord devised a plan which was sanctioned by the Bengal Government by which it was decided in principle to provide large quantity of fuel to the tea-gardens and at the same to obtain a fair supply of large timber trees.

Besides, with the opening of the Bengal Duars Railways in 1891-92 a free grant of mature trees was made and the value of this concession amounted to Rs. 30,000. The Eastern Bengal State, North Western railways were also provided with abundant supply of timber from the Jalpaiguri forest areas.

Among the forest produce *sal* was the most valuable timber which instead of being cut into railway sleepers were taken by local purchasers to

Alipurduar where they were sold to merchants coming from Dacca and Rangpur.<sup>37</sup> Then the traders floated the timbers to the markets in Eastern Bengal. As the Cooch Behar Railway line was of 2'6" gauge so for its small carrying capacity there was difficulty in carrying the forest produces. The timbers from the adjacent regions were brought at Gitaldaha Junction where 'it joins the Eastern-Bengal State Railway'.<sup>38</sup>

In the Calcutta market there was little demand for *sissu* trees which were nominally used for tea-box planking. In this context it is pertinent to mention Colonial policy in respect of Baikunthapur forests. The northern portion of the Baikunthapur estate consisted of 71 square miles of forest and this forest contained much *sal* trees. In 1809 Dr. Buchanan Hamilton commented – 'The woods of Battris-hazari or Baikunthapur have been nearly exhausted of *sal* and *sissu*, the only trees that are cut to exportation, although they contain a great abundance of timber in reality, perhaps more valuable'.<sup>39</sup>

The attitude of the forest department towards the forests situated in the Baikunthapur estate was that 'unless continuous control over a long period of years could be guaranteed, it was useless to take over this forest'.<sup>40</sup> It was difficult to get the consent from the estate because in that time the estate was under court of wards and subsequently then Prossano Dev Raikat was yet a minor under the guardianship of Sri Jagadindra Dev Raikat.<sup>41</sup>

J.F. Grunning, then Deputy Commissioner of the Jalpaiguri District stated that the preparation of a map and record of rights in respect of estate's forests was one of the primary reasons for extending settlement in the Baikunthapur estate. So it was proposed in 1904 to extend the Forest Act to this forest and it was provisionally placed in charge of the Deputy Conservator of forests, Jalpaiguri Division. But the manager of the estate protested against this transfer and in the meantime Sri Prossano Dev Raikat, the landlord, attained his adulthood and formed a definite opinion on the subject. He clearly conveyed to the British authorities that the forest areas situated within the Baikunthapur zamindari should not be reserved but should be left to his own management.<sup>42</sup> Due to this strong attitude finally in

1913 the forest department gave up their control of it – a control devoid of legal support from the Forest Act and support from the estate.

The following table will illustrate the amount of net profit gained by the Colonial Government from the forests situated in Jalpaiguri and Buxa Divisions.

Table III: 3

Statement of Revenue, expenditure and net profits from the forest areas situated in Jalpaiguri Division and Buxa Division

Year	Jalpaiguri Division			Buxa Division		
	Revenue (Rs.)	Expenditure (Rs.)	Net Profits (Rs.)	Revenue (Rs.)	Expenditure (Rs.)	Net Profits (Rs.)
1898-99	54,568	21,131	30,427	17,452	23,315	—
1899-00	56,780	34,378	22,402	28,826	33,683	—
1900-01	55,345	37,101	18,244	43,228	37,135	6,093
1901-02	56,774	44,918	11,856	62,675	40,032	22,643
1902-03	68,621	44,089	27,532	57,334	55,917	1,417
1903-04	55,199	31,738	23,161	63,255	76,691	—
1904-05	88,521	50,434	38,097	120,789	84,783	36,006
1905-06	99,403	43,807	55,596	132,434	91,671	40,763
1906-07	133,630	48,740	81,890	215,037	97,351	117,686
1907-08	104,730	41,662	63,068	220,893	121,220	99,673

Source: J.F. Grunning, *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers*, Jalpaiguri, Allahabad, 1911, p. 71.

III

The extensive jute cultivation in India particularly in the Bengal Presidency was not the outcome of indigenous needs; it was a creation from the pressure of an international event, *i.e.*, the Crimean War which took place in the year 1854. Raw jute was not an unknown agricultural product in Europe before the mid-nineteenth century. Constant threats of naval blockades during the Napoleonic war, high prices of flax etc. forced the

Dundee mills to think about using jute as a viable alternative. The total result was the inauguration of extensive cultivation of jute in the riverain plains of Eastern Bengal.

Certain factors were responsible for the cultivation of jute in the Jalpaiguri district. In the first place with the growth of world trade a simultaneous demand for packaging grew; secondly in the Jalpaiguri district the emergence of the Marwari communities as owners of the *jotes* was important since most of the Marwaris could see better prospects in investment in land than in money lending. In the Cooch Bihar Zamindari 'nearly all the lands in the vicinity of Saldanga had passed into the possession of a Marwari firm locally known as Saldanga Kaya'.<sup>43</sup>

In the Falakata tehsil according to enquiries made in 1905, 15 per cent of the settled areas were controlled by Marwaris, Up-countrymen, Kabulis and Bengali babus.<sup>44</sup> In the 1920s there was a huge influx of the Marwaris in the jute industry. This new entrepreneurial group entered into the industry either by setting up new mills or by purchasing shares of the existing expatriate companies.<sup>45</sup> The Marwari owners of the *jotes* had extra advantage than other communities in setting up a linkages with the Marwari mill-owners in Calcutta. Since jute was grown primarily in East and North Bengal there was no difficulty for the Calcutta mill-owners to carry jutes to Calcutta port from where jute was exported to several countries.

The most vital factor which influenced peasants' decision to cultivate jute was its high price. The table given below shows the prices of the chief agricultural products in different part of the *Chaklajot* estates in 1902.

Table III: 4

Prices of different agricultural products in the *Chaklajat* Estate and in Rangpur Estates in 1902

Products of Agriculture	Chakla Boda		Chakla Patgram		Chakla Purvabhag		Rangpur Estates	
	Rs.	As.	Rs.	As.	Rs.	As.	Rs.	As.
1. Paddy	0	14	1	6	1	2	0	12
2. Rice best sort	2	8	3					
3. Rice common sort	1	12						
4. Wheat	1	8	—	—	1	0	1	0
5. Barley	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	0
6. Pulses	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	0
Moog	—	—	—	—	5	0		
Khesari	—	—	—	—	0	12		
Musur	—	—	—	—	0	12		
Peas	—	—	—	—	1	8		
Jhakri	—	—	—	—	2	8		
Rahar					2	8		
7. Molasses	3	0	—	—	—	—	3	0
8. Potatoes	0	8	—	—	—	—	0	9
9. Mustard seed	2	8	3	8	3	0	3	0
10. Mustard oil	13	0						
11. Jute	3	12	3	0	3	12	3	2
12. Tobacco	8	0	10	0	—	—	6	0

Source: *The Chaklajat Estates and their Settlement of Rent*, compiled by Harendra Narayan Chaudhuri, B.L. Naib Adhikar, Cooch Behar, published under authority, Calcutta, p. 77.

Further Shri Harendra Narayan Chaudhuri who did the settlement of Rent in 1902 in the *Chaklajat* estates gave a graphic information about the alteration of price structure of the different agricultural products at different times.

**Table III: 5**  
**Agricultural prices of the Chaklajat Estates at different phases**

Name of Articles	Value per maund							
	1892 10 years ago		1882 20 years ago		1872 30 years ago		1852 50 years ago	
	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.
<b>BODA</b>								
Paddy	1	0	1	4	2	0	0	10
Good Rice	2	12	5	0	7	0	2	0
Common Rice	2	0	2	14	3	12	1	4
Mustard seed	3	8	2	8	2	4	1	4
Mustard oil	20	0	20	0	16	0	10	0
Jute	3	8	3	0	2	12	1	8
Tobacco	4	0	5	0	3	0	2	0
Molasses	3	8	3	12	2	28	2	0
Potatoes	1	0	1	4	1	10	2	0
Wheat	1	12	2	8	3	0	1	0
<b>PATGRAM</b>								
Paddy	1	6	0	9	0	7	0	6
Rice	3	0	0	14	0	12	0	8
Tobacco	10	0	5	0	4	8	5	0
Jute	3	0	1	8	1	0	0	12
<b>PURVABHAG</b>								
Paddy	0	14	0	12	0	10	0	8
Jute	3	2	2	8	1	14	1	4
Mustard seed	2	8	2	0	1	8	1	0
<b>RANGPUR</b>								
Paddy	—	—	—	—	—	—	0	4

**Source:** *The Chaklajat Estates and their Settlement of Rent*, compiled by Harendra Narayan Chaudhuri, B.L. Naib Adhikar, Cooch Behar, published under authority, Calcutta, p. 78.

In the Jalpaiguri district jute cultivation was taken up in 1880. It was then commented by Commissioner E.E. Lewis that "It is on the whole a more profitable crop than rice, and the rise in price since 1880 has been considerable both at the Sudder and in the inferior".<sup>46</sup>

These five price structures showed (from 1852-1902) in the *Chaklajat* area that the cultivation of jute brought more prices and consequently more dividends than the cultivation of other agricultural items. Further power driven spinning and weaving methods did not involve complex procedures which could easily be performed by local workers at low wages.

The farmers had no problem in getting loan from the money lenders and the latter being assured of getting back the advanced money had no hesitation in advancing loans at high interests to the jute cultivators. All these factors prompted jute cultivation in the Jalpaiguri district. Apart from the two tables (No. III: 4, 5) some different statistics provided by the three traders of Jalpaiguri district help us to highlight the price fluctuations of jute prices in the Jalpaiguri district at different times.

Table III: 6

## Statement showing the price of jute per maund for six years at Jalpaiguri

Article	1881-85			1885-86			1886-87			1887-88			1888-89			1889-90			Percentage of increase
	Rs.	A	P	Rs.	A	P	Rs.	A	P	Rs.	A	P	Rs.	A	P	Rs.	A	P	
Jute	2	4	6	2	2	0	2	9	0	2	11	0	2	7	6	5	2	0	122
	2	2	0	2	5	0	2	9	0	3	0	0	3	12	0	4	4	3	100
	2	1	6	2	9	0	2	11	0	3	7	0	3	14	0	3	14	0	81

Camp Mynaguri

Gyan Chand Kundu

The 14<sup>th</sup> June 1890

Jalpaiguri

Source: No. 2C dated Camp Mynaguri, the 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 1890. From D. Sunder, Esq. Settlement Officer, Western Dooars, Jalpaiguri. To the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, W.B.S.A.

The following chart will show the jute price fluctuation in the Rajganj area where high quality jute was found.

Table III: 7

## Statement showing price of Jute per maund for six years at Jalpaiguri and Rajganj

Article	1881-85			1885-86			1886-87			1887-88			1888-89			1889-90			Percentage of increase
	Rs.	A	P	Rs.	A	P	Rs.	A	P	Rs.	A	P	Rs.	A	P	Rs.	A	P	
Jute	2	1	0	2	2	0	2	5	0	2	10	0	2	9	0	3	3	0	51
	1	3	0	2	6	0	2	10	0	3	1	0	3	9	0	4	2	0	86

Camp Maynaguri

Kanai Lal Kundu

The 14<sup>th</sup> June 1890

Kharia, Jalpaiguri

Source: No. 2C dated Camp Mynaguri, the 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 1890. From D. Sunder, Esq. Settlement Officer, Western Dooars, Jalpaiguri. To the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, W.B.S.A.

The following list provided by Amir Mahomed Pramanik of Kharia, Jalpaiguri district showed the average price of Jute in Rajgunj Ambari Falaka region for the six years.

**Table III: 8**  
**Average price of Jute at Rajgunj, Ambari-Falakata for six years**

Article	1881-85			1885-86			1886-87			1887-88			1888-89			1889-90			Percentage of increase
	Rs.	A	P																
	2	0	0	2	2	0	2	4	0	3	0	0	3	6	0	4	4	0	112
Jute	2	2	0	2	4	0	2	6	0	3	5	0	3	8	0	4	8	0	117
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	8	0	—	—	—	—	—	—	

Camp Mynaguri

Amir Mahomed Pramanik

The 14<sup>th</sup> June, 1890

Kharia, Jalpaiguri

**Source:** No. 2C dated Camp Mynaguri, the 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 1890. From D. Sunder, Esq. Settlement Officer, Western Dooars, Jalpaiguri. To the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, W.B.S.A.

In the Bengal presidency the jute belt consisted of Dacca, Mymensingh, Faridpur, Tripura, Rangpur, Bogra, Pabna, Rajshahi, Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri. Among the above mentioned area only Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur district had marginal jute growing areas. In 1900-1901, these two districts accounted for less than 10 per cent of the total crop and 12.6 per cent of the rural population in the jute belt.<sup>47</sup>

Despite this dismal performance shown by F.O. Bell, the Settlement Officer in the district of Dinajpur, J.F. Grunning stated that the cultivation of jute in the Jalpaiguri district "has increased at a very rapid rate and the area under this crop has more than doubled in the six years between 1901-02 and 1907-08".<sup>48</sup> In the regulated portion of the district particularly in the Baikunthapur estate in the earlier period jute did not figure among the list of crops provided by the Manager of Baikunthapur to Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri in 1891.

The manager of the estate stated "with reference to your letter No. 18G dated 4<sup>th</sup> April, I have the honour to submit the following statement of food crops grown in Baikunthapur estate for the year 1890-91 ending in 31<sup>st</sup> March. Aman, Aus, Bhadoi, Wheat, Barley, Sugarcane etc. as usual as last year".<sup>49</sup>

In the regulation portion of the district slowly the cultivation of jute began and soon such was the extension of cultivation of jute that it absorbed twenty-five per cent of the land where *bhadoi* rice used to grow.<sup>50</sup>

However, the most striking advancement of jute cultivation took place in the Western Duars area. In 1895 when D.H.E. Sunder submitted his settlement report the area under jute was only 6,620 acres; the crop was confined mainly in the Mainaguri tehsil and was grown in the vicinity of the Kranti outpost. But its cultivation increased from 59,800 acres in 1901-02 to 125,500 acres in 1907-08.<sup>51</sup> In this peak period jute cultivation spread in the vicinity of Madarihat, the eastern terminus of the Bengal-Duars Railway and during the time of J.F. Grunning in the Alipur tehsil too there was the extension of jute cultivation. Although the best variety of jute was grown in the Rajganj block but in the whole district the condition of fibre was good.

It is now quite relevant to inquire who were the creditors to the jute farmers in the Jalpaiguri District. Several factors prompted the farmers to take advances from the creditors. First there were the burden of rental payments, secondly the creditors were quite inflexible in realising the debts from the farmers at the post-harvest periods, thirdly many peasant families had to buy rice at higher retail prices because of their inability to hold back the entire year's consumption out of the winter rice crop. Finally the most pressing factor was that since jute was a valuable commercial crop involving a greater amount of investment of capital than other crops the peasants naturally were compelled to take advances from the creditors. It is no wonder therefore that 64 per cent of the crop in East and North Bengal was sold immediately after fibre separation and almost 75 per cent of the total crop was sold by cultivators at their homesteads rather than at the nearby markets or *hats*.<sup>52</sup>

In the Bengal Presidency three types of rural creditors existed. The first type was the village *mahajan* who were always non-agriculturists and were interested in recovering his principal plus interest and rolling over his capital. In cases of default he used to execute a fresh bond on higher interest rates. The second category of creditors were richer peasants or the *jotedars* and in the third category the *dadandars* or trader moneylenders who lent cash only to facilitate crop purchase.

In the Jalpaiguri district both the village *mahajans* and the *jotedars* emerged as the creditors to the farmers. In the 1920s the Marwari community entered into this industry and they became a vital source of credit in the rural areas of Jalpaiguri district.<sup>53</sup>

In the Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri districts, *jotedars* generally combined substantial land holding with money lending and grain-dealing on corresponding scales. From investigations made in 1905 J.F. Grunning revealed that the existence of different rates of interest in the Jalpaiguri district "...the rates of interest in the Mainaguri and Alipur tehsils vary from 18 to 37½ per cent per annum and in the Falakata tehsil from 12 to 75 per cent, the average rate per annum being 36 per cent. It is doubtful if a cultivator is

ever able to borrow at such a low rate of interest as 12 per cent, and it is probable that he has often pay more than 37½ per cent".<sup>54</sup>

From the above statement it is clear that jute cultivation involved a greater risk than other crops and in Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur, the gains from jute cropping accrued almost entirely to the powerful *jotedars*. Further, the period of depression, which made the cultivators incapable of paying the loans, the passing of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act of 1935 by which any agricultural debtor could take his case to a Board which was empowered to declare a lower interest rate — all these factors made the *mahajans* wary about advancing loans to the farmers. The latter then had to look towards the *jotedars* for their advances. The transportation of jute from the rural North Bengal villages to the Calcutta mills and ports involved a long process.

During the post-harvest phase cash needs of the *raiya*s and the inflammable condition of jute compelled many cultivators to sell the crop immediately after preparation. Almost three-quarters of the harvested fibre was sold in the villages, only a fifth portion was sold at the primary markets or *hats* and a mere five per cent was sold directly at the up-country secondary markets.<sup>55</sup>

In villages the unfledged crop was bought by jute peddlers called *farias* who usually belonged to the cultivating class. This class while buying jute from the cultivators charged a deduction called *Dhalta*, i.e., a weight discount to compensate for the allegedly excessive moisture in jute and after getting this discount they sold the crop in the weekly primary markets or *hats*. In the *hats* the sellers were mostly *farias* and the affluent peasants and the buyers were *beparis* or the relatively better off traders, the agents of *aratdars* or secondary market merchants.<sup>56</sup> From Calcutta jute mills, the jute was exported.

It is now quite pertinent to observe that despite the favourable geographical condition, i.e., warm weather, abundant supply of ponds for keeping the crop, and the supply of labour forces which could be recruited at low wages, jute industry in particular in the Jalpaiguri district did not turn

into a plantation enterprise like the tea industry. In the East Bengal districts the inauguration of jute plantation system was an impossible task. Because the precondition of starting a plantation enterprise needed a low population area, and the chances of converting jute-cultivating area containing a huge population into a plantation area was beyond the means of the Colonial authorities.

But in Jalpaiguri district there was a low density population area and there was no hurdle in starting a plantation enterprise in the region. The only possible answer to this question lies in the term "plantation" which implies an enterprise with a combination of agriculture and industry. Although Jalpaiguri district supplied to Calcutta quite a moderate quantities of jute but it had no primary industrial infrastructure for starting a jute industry. On the other, Calcutta and its adjoining areas enjoyed many advantages in terms of geographic as well as economic. Apart from the Jalpaiguri district, the Eastern Bengal region was the supplier of huge raw jutes to Calcutta and further Calcutta enjoyed a special privilege of having an International Port from where jute could easily be exported. So all these factors prompted the European and at a later stage, the Marwaris to invest in jute, and with their Capital jute mills were set up on both sides of the Ganges. Presumably, existence of preconditions favourable to the growth of jute manufacturing industry in the Jalpaiguri district was quite unthinkable.

Jute crop like other commercial crops witnessed many fluctuations in prices, in several phases. In the first decade of the twentieth century due to the huge demand from Dundee for raw jute there was a corresponding rise in jute growing area and the prices were also increasing. The total area under jute doubled in the six years between 1901-02 and 1907-08.<sup>58</sup> A substantial rise in the price in 1906 resulted in a spurt in the jute acreage in 1907. Between 1907 and 1913, except for one or two bad years, the jute market enjoyed a boom period. With the outbreak of war in 1914, the prices fell suddenly by nearly 40%, but the prices recovered at the end of the First World War in 1919. Soon, during the slump period in 1920-1922 phase, prices again fell down. It was not until the year 1922 that prices could come into the pre-war phase.

During the phase of Great Depression of 1930's which affected the world economy, the jute cultivation again suffered a setback. The prices of jute touched a low scale in 1933 and 1934. Jute prices in these two years were 75% below the 1925 level and over 60% below the 1928 level. Prices rose again slowly from 1935, but jute was not to recover from the depression phase until as late as 1939.

This fluctuation in price structure affected the cultivators, particularly small *jotedars* and small peasants who constituted the bulk of the landowning rural population. They had to bear the major burnt of these fluctuations. J.F. Grunning stated that "In 1906-07 the price of jute ruled very high and in the following year cultivators grew large quantities of it; price however fell and they did not make as much profit as they had expected to do".<sup>59</sup>

So the sum total effect was the impoverishment of the peasants who invested so much capital for the cultivation of jute and got nothing in return. This reality forced the peasants to opt for cultivation of rice again. "...the people say that it is little use getting high prices for jute if they have to spend the money afterwards in buying rice for their own consumption".<sup>60</sup>

Another cash crop which was grown in the Jalpaiguri district was tobacco. The best *Faringati* land near the homestead of the cultivator was always reserved for this crop.<sup>61</sup> The crop required careful cultivation and much more labour and caution for its perfection. In February 1905, three-quarter amount of the crop was devastated by two night's frosts.<sup>62</sup> The best quality of tobacco grew on the lands lying between the Tista and Torsa rivers.<sup>63</sup> This crop was exported to Bhutan and also to Dacca and Calcutta and the chief markets for sale of tobacco were Dhupguri and Falakata.<sup>64</sup>

Among other cash crop, sugarcane was grown mainly near Pachagarh in the Boda pargana. Cotton used to be grown by Mechs and Garos in high lands towards the foot of Bhutan hills by their primitive method of *jhum* cultivation. But with the inauguration of tea plantation enterprise and laws of forest conservancy, the tribals were forced to stop their way of cultivation. So, due to official policy intervention cotton cultivation slowly decreased and in 1907-08 only 100 acres of land was under this crop. J.F. Grunning commented

“It is probable that the cultivation of cotton will die out entirely in a few years, as the opening up of the district in forcing the Mechs to abandon their migratory habits and to settle down to ordinary cultivation”.<sup>65</sup>

Apart from the above mentioned cash crops paddy was an important food crop. The cultivation of paddy suffered a setback with the introduction of jute. In 1901-02, the land under the paddy measured 637,000 *acres* but in 1907-08 the acreage decreased to 631,600 *acres*.

#### IV

In this connection, it is quite relevant to figure out the centres of trade and commerce in the Jalpaiguri district. During Sunder's time Kumargram, Falakata, Dhupguri, Mynaguri, Santrabari, Buxa were the main trade centres.<sup>66</sup> J.F. Grunning's tenure saw the emergence of many trade centres and he gave a graphic description of the trade centres. “The chief trade centres are Jalpaiguri, Titalya on the Mahanadi river where the Ganges-Darjeeling road enters the district. Rajnagar, Saldanga connected by road with the Chilahati station on the Eastern Bengal State Railway. Debiganj on the Karatoya five miles from Domar station. Baura the principal river mart of the district situated on a small tributary of the Tista, Joropakri, Maynaguri, Falakata on the Mujnai river and connected by road with Jalpaiguri, Madari Hat, Alipurduar and Buxa through which most of the trade with Bhutan passes”.<sup>67</sup>

Apart from the above mentioned trade centres different fairs occurred at village level and the *Hats* were also centres of trade and commerce. The following table will illustrate the different fairs which one held in different parts of the Jalpaiguri district.

**Table III: 9**  
**List of Important Fairs in the Jalpaiguri District**

Sl. No.	J.L. No.	Name of place where mela or fair is held	Time (English month) when mela is held	Local religious or other occasion of the mela	Duration of mela or fair (number of days)	Average total attendance number
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>SUBDIVISION - SADAR</b>						
<b>THANA: JALPAIGURI</b>						
1		Dinbazar River Ghat	September	Immersion ceremony (Durga Puja)	1 day	5,000
2		Rajbari	August	Manasha Puja	1 day	3,000
3		Sonarhat	September	Immersion ceremony (Durga Puja)	1 day	2,000
4		Gourihat	September	Charak Puja	1 day	2,000
5		Paharpur Goshala	October	Gopastami	1 day	3,000
<b>THANA: MAINAGURI</b>						
6		Jalpesh	Feb. & March	Sivaratri	1 month	more than 1 lakh
7	202	Bhandani	No fixed time could be given as the mela is held after Bejoya Dasami	In connection with Bhandani Puja	1 day	5,000
<b>SUB-DIVISION - ALIPURDUARS</b>						
<b>THANA: ALIPURDUARS</b>						
8	99	Alipurduar Hatkhola	September	Durga Puja	4 days	4,000
<b>THANA: KALCHINI</b>						
9		Hamiltonganj	September to October	Kali Puja	3 days	2,000
<b>THANA: MADARIHAT</b>						
10	18	Madarihath	September	Durga Puja	1 day	500
11	31	Harpara	September	Durga Puja	4 days	1,000
12	45	Birpara	September	Durga Puja	1 day	300
13	38	Sishubari	October	Kali Puja	1 day	200
14	10	Lankapara	September	Durga Puja	4 days	200
15	30	Mujnai	September	Durga Puja	1 day	200
16	32	Dumchipara	October	Kali Puja	3 days	1,000
17	33	Ramjhora	October	Kali Puja	3 days	800
<b>THANA: FALAKATA</b>						
18	98	Chuakhola	September	Durga Puja	5 to 7 days	500
19	80	Jharhbeltali	March	Dolejatra	7 days	700
20	82	Beltali Bhandani	March	Dolejatra	7 days	500
21	102	Chhota Salkumar	March	Dolejatra	5/6 days	500
22	72	Hedaitnagar	March	Dolejatra	5/6 days	600
23	61	Malsagaon	March and April	Barunisnan	7 days	700

**Source:** Census 1951: West Bengal: District Handbooks: Jalpaiguri, A. Mitra, Calcutta 1954, p. 151.

The principal fair of the Western Duars was held at Jalpesh in the Mainaguri *tehsil*. This fair centred round the Sivaratri festival. Bhutias came from Darjeeling, Buxa and Bhutan with cloth, ponies, skins, and various

articles which were sold at good profits,<sup>68</sup> and they took away cotton, wollen clothes, betel nut, tobacco.

Another important fair was held at Falakata where an agricultural exhibition was held in connection with it. A fair was started at Santrabari at the foot of the hill below Buxa for the objective of increasing trade with Bhutan. But on account of poor transport communication network this trade centre was shifted to Alipurduar.

Regarding local village markets, *i.e.*, *hats* administrative policies revolved around two issues – (a) whether to restrict the *Ijara* hat-days only in one day or to make it bi-weekly and (b) whether to charge exorbitant rates on residents shopkeepers who were continuing their business in different *hats* on the Jalpaiguri district. On the first subject, *i.e.*, issue relating to the *ijara hats* came to notice during the tenure of Milligan as the Settlement Officer.

The number of *Ijara hats*, *i.e.*, the hats which leased were out by the Government to the *ijaradars* in Sunder's time was only seventeen; but in Milligan's time the number decreased to fifteen.

Three factors compelled Milligan to take serious notice regarding the *ijara hats*. The first issue was that although the Government leased out the *ijara hats* to *ijaradars* the terms of the lease gave Government's representative, the Deputy Commissioner little control over the *ijara hats*. Milligan thought that unless a firm control over the management of *hats* was not established a major share of profit would be lost. So a revision of the terms of the lease was necessary for strengthening the hands of the Deputy Commissioner. Further, as most *hats* were held near the tea gardens, naturally tea garden labourers were the main customers of the *hats*. In this connection the question whether *hat* would be held on a single day or biweekly was crucial to the owners of tea gardens. In Milligan's words "The value of the tea industry of an universal hat day is enormous".<sup>69</sup>

Milligan made some modifications in the existing leases. The proposal of Milligan made it mandatory to spend money for upkeep and improvement of *hats* and specified the sum to be devoted annually for this purpose. The money meant for this purpose should be deposited to the Deputy

Commissioner every year and that about the date he proposed that "on which the hat is to be held should be specified in the lease".<sup>70</sup>

Another factor bothering the administration was the necessity of revising the rent of *ijara hats*. After getting the income of each *hat* estimated by Messers Harris and Hollow, Milligan proposed "...in the case of large hats to leave to the *ijaradar* as profit 40 per cent of the estimated gross income, requiring him to pay 40 per cent to Government as rent and to spend or to deposit with Deputy Commissioner 20 per cent annually for improvements and upkeep".<sup>71</sup> But in the case of smaller *hats* his proposal was to fix it at 20% as rent and 10% or less for upkeep. The proposal of Milligan was presented in the following tabular form.

**Table III: 10**  
**Proposal of Milligan in respect of Hats in the Western Duars region**

Pargana	Name of hat	Estimated annual income (Rs.)	Existing rent (Rs.)	Proposed		Remarks
				Rent (Rs.)	Deposit for upkeep (Rs.)	
South Mainaguri	Rahinganj hat	2000	200	800	400	
	Mallikerhat	1500	200	600	300	
	Baslidanga hat	500	10	100	50	
	Khagen's hat	300	10	60	30	
	Kalir hat	Too small for accurate estimate	25	25	—	
North Mainaguri	Bataigole	2000	50	800	400	
	Barodighi	1500	30	600	300	
	Kumlai	Too small for accurate estimate	15	15	—	Special note below
Chengmari	Kranti	2000	100	800	400	
	Dhugguri	1500	200	600	300	
	Kalirhat	150	10	30	15	
	Burmari	60	5	12	—	
	Bairagirhat	Too small to be estimated	5	3	—	
East Madari	Monsirhat	Ditto	3	3	—	
	Silbari	1500	65	600	300	

	Rs.
Total old revenue —	928
New revenue —	5048

**Source:** J.A. Milligan, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the Jalpaiguri District 1906-16*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1919, p. 21.

Milligan defended this enhancement of rents of *ijara hats* on two grounds; first with the growth of *hats* the *ijaradars* consequently derived 'enormous' profits, secondly as the rents of *chukanidars* were calculated at 50% above those paid by *jotedars* leaving the *jotedar* 33% of his gross collection as profits; "so in the light of this consideration my proposal with regards to hats will not seem extortionate".<sup>72</sup>

Next on the issue of practicability of restricting *hats* days the urgency of the Government to protect the tea-garden enterprise became transparent. On 4<sup>th</sup> July 1912 Milligan then officiating Deputy Commissioner passed an important order on the lessees of the Chalsa-Barodighi hat. The Chalsa-Barodighi *hat* was leased in 1893 for fifteen years and as this *hat* was biweekly nature several tea garden workers and agricultural populations of the neighbouring areas came here. But this biweekly nature of *hat* affected the interests of the Duars tea planters. In the words of Milligan "...the existence of the hat on two-week days resulted in heavy loss of labour to all gardens in these sub-districts".<sup>73</sup> But despite several representations made by the Duars Planters' Association nothing could be done in their favour because of the existence and continuance of the lease. But after the expiration of lease in 1909 the demand of the Duars Planters' Association became intense. On the other hand Milligan had an excellent rapport with the tea-planters and was ready to serve the interests of the tea-planters.

Some objections were put forward against the scheme of transforming Chalsa-Barodighi *hat* into a single day, *i.e.*, Sunday hat and the objections were – "(i) hardship to lessees, and (ii) loss of revenue if the hat is impoverished".<sup>74</sup>

Milligan stated the objections are not tenable on the ground that (i) hardship to the lessees would not occur as the new lease stipulated a rent based on Rs. 2,500 annual income, (ii) the restriction of Chalsa-Barodighi *hat* only to Sundays would not hit the agricultural population as the Malbazar hat which "is the more popular hat with the people and that they have made their profits out of the Coolies from all the gardens of Chalsa, Malbazar and Damdim who troop down to Barodighi on Tuesdays and Saturdays",<sup>75</sup> (iii)

and Milligan stated that it was useless on the part of Government to maintain a hat devoid of local demand. To strengthen Milligan's argument the Commissioner passed an order to 28<sup>th</sup> March 1913 stating "... There can I think be no question that if so advised Government may make it a condition of renewal that the hat is to be held only on Sundays, thus bringing it into line with the other tea-garden and Government hats in the neighbourhood".<sup>76</sup>

But against the settlement of *Ijara hats* by Milligan D.H. Lees, Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri put forward certain information. By the implementation of Milligan's order he stated that the Barodighi hat that was once an important hat became insignificant.

Further, the Government *hat* at Batabari, about five miles from Barodighi ceased to exist after the implementation of the above stated order. He further stated that if Barodighi and Kumlai *hats* were held only on Sundays then the "villagers will suffer some inconvenience in getting their market supplies...."<sup>77</sup>

Finally, the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department endorsed Milligan's position regarding assessment of rents of *ijara hats* and restricting the *hat* days only to Sundays.<sup>78</sup>

Apart from the *ijara hats* the local administration was also interested in establishing control over other *hats* situated in the Western Duars.<sup>79</sup>

Table III: 11  
List of Hats (Markets) in the Jalpaiguri District

Sl. No.	Name of the Market or Hat	Location	Main items of business	Days of Operation
1	2	3	4	5
SUBDIVISION: SADAR				
1	Jalpaiguri Dinbazar	P.S. Jalapiguri	Fish, vegetables, dal, gur	Daily (continuous)
2	Berubari	Do	Paddy, tobacco, cattle	Wednesday, Saturday
3	Rangdhamali	Do	Paddy, jute, tobacco, vegetables	Do
4	Denguajhara Hat	Do	Paddy, jute, vegetables	Friday
5	Gaurir Hat	Do	Do	Tuesday, Friday
6	Natun Hat	Do	Paddy, rive, vegetable, fish, jute	Monday, Thursday
7	Sabhar Hat	Do	Rice, paddy, vegetable, jute	Monday
8	Paharpur Hat	Do	Do	Monday, Thursday
9	Khayerbari Hat	Do	Tobacco, paddy, jute, vegetable	Sunday, Wednesday
10	Manikganj Hat	Do	Rice, paddy, jute, tobacco	Monday, Thursday
11	Sanyasikata	P.S. Rajganj	Paddy, jute, flattened rice, gur, goat	Wednesday, Saturday
12	Rajganj Hat	Do	Paddy, rice, flattened rice, gur, jute, potato, brinjal, cow, goat, fowl	Sunday, Thursday
13	Chaulhati	Do	Paddy, rice, gur, potato, cow, goat, fowl	Do
14	Kharkharia Hat	Do	Paddy, rice, jute	Monday, Friday
15	Fulbari Hat	Do	Paddy, rice, gur, jute	Thursday, Saturday

Table contd.

Sl. No.	Name of the Market or Hat	Location	Main items of business	Days of Operation
1	2	3	4	5
16	Saraswatipur Hat	P.S. Rajganj	Paddy, rice	Sunday
17	Belacoba Hat	Do	Rice, vegetable	Tuesday, Friday
18	Ramsai Hat	P.S. Mainaguri	Paddy, rice, vegetable	Friday
19	Amguri Hat	Do	Do	Wednesday, Saturday
20	Rahimganj Hat	Do	Jute, paddy, rice, cattle	Sunday, Wednesday
21	Barnish Hat	Do	Paddy, rice, vegetables	Monday, Thursday
22	Barnes Bazar	Do	Gur, pulses, mustard oil	Daily
23	Jalpesh Hat	Do	Rice, paddy, pulses, vegetables	Sunday, Wednesday
24	Mainaguri Hat	Do	Rice, paddy, pulses, gur, milk	Tuesday, Friday
25	Rather Hat	Do	Rice, vegetable, paddy, cinnamon	Sunday, Thursday
26	Mallick Hat	Do	Rice, pulses, vegetables	Tuesday, Friday
27	Rakhal Hat	Do	Do	Monday, Thursday
28	Gauranger Hat	Do	Do	Sunday, Wednesday
29	Sastir Hat	Do	Do	Tuesday, Saturday
30	Domohani Hat	Do	Do	Sunday, Wednesday
31	Helapakri Hat	Do	Rice, paddy, jute, pulses, vegetable	Tuesday, Saturday
32	Bhatparti Hat	Do	Rice, vegetable	Wednesday, Sunday
33	Jorepakri Hat	Do	Paddy, rice, jute, pulses	Tuesday, Saturday
34	Rajar Hat (Jiranganj Hat)	Do	Paddy, rice, jute, pulses, tobacco	Monday, Thursday
35	Krishnaganj (Bakali Hat)	Do	Paddy, rice, jute, pulses	Tuesday, Saturday
36	Luksam Hat	P.S. Nagrakata	Rice, paddy, vegetables	Sunday
37	Sulkapara	Do	Do	Wednesday
38	Nathoa Hat	P.S. Dhupguri	Rice, paddy, jute, mustard seed	Monday, Friday
39	Mogalkata	Do	Rice, paddy, vegetables	Wednesday
40	Tatapara Hat	Do	Do	Sunday
41	Champaguri	Do	Do	Do
42	Chamurchi Hat	Do	Orange, rice, tobacco, paddy, potato	Wednesday
43	Banerhat	Do	Rice, paddy	Sunday
44	Gairkata	Do	Rice, paddy, mustard, tobacco, orange	Do
45	Duramari	Do	Rice, paddy, mustard	Wednesday, Saturday
46	Dawkimari	Do	Rice, paddy, tobacco	Sunday, Wednesday
47	Dhupguri	Do	Rice, paddy, jute, dry-fish, mustard, pulses, cattle	Tuesday, Sunday
48	Chawhaddi	Do	Rice, vegetables	Saturday, Tuesday
49	Kattimari	Do	Do	Friday, Monday
50	Bhadani	Do	Rice, paddy, vegetable, fish, tobacco	Thursday, Sunday
51	Salbari	Do	Rice, paddy, vegetable	Monday, Thursday
52	Bataigot	P.S. Mal	Paddy, rice, vegetable, tobacco, fruit	Sunday
53	Kranti	Do	Paddy, rice, vegetable	Tuesday, Friday
54	Lataguri	Do	Do	Wednesday, Saturday
55	Baradighi	Do	Do	Sunday
56	Oodlabari	Do	Do	Do
57	Damdin	Do	Do	Do
58	Maulani	Do	Do	Friday, Tuesday
59	Mangalbari	P.S. Matiali	Paddy, rice, vegetables, fruits	Thursday
60	Metely Hat	Do	Paddy, rice, vegetable, tobacco, fruit	Sunday
<b>SUBDIVISION: ALIPUR DUARS</b>				
61	Madarihat Hat	P.S. Madarihat	Rice, paddy, orange	Sunday
62	Sisubari Hat	Do	Do	Thursday
63	Birpara Hat	Do	Rice, vegetables	Sunday
64	Jateswar	P.S. Falakata	Paddy, rice, pulses, jute, gur, tobacco	Tuesday, Saturday
65	Falakata	Do	Do	Tuesday, Friday
66	Hamiltonganj Hat	P.S. Kalchini	Paddy, rice	Sunday
67	Hashimara Hat	Do	Do	Do
68	Sitalbasti Hat	Do	Do	Thursday
69	Garopara Hat	Do	Do	Sunday
70	Jaigaon Hat	Do	Rice	Do
71	Nimti Hat	Do	Paddy, rice	Wednesday
72	Dalsingpara Hat	Do	Rice	Sunday
73	Jainti Hat	Do	Do	Monday
74	Rajabhatkhowa	Do	Do	Friday
75	New Town Hat	P.S. Alipur Duars	Rice, vegetables	Tuesday
76	Alipurduar Hat	Do	Rice, paddy, jute, mustard	Thursday, Sunday
77	Salsalabari Hat	Do	Rice, paddy, jute	Tuesday, Sunday
78	Dhalkar Hat	Do	Rice, paddy, vegetable	Monday
79	Bhatibari Hat	Do	Paddy	Sunday
80	Samuktola Hat	Do	Paddy, rice, kalai, mustard, vegetable, cattle	Friday, Monday
81	Salkumar Hat	Do	Paddy, rice, vegetable	Monday, Thursday

Table contd.

Sl. No.	Name of the Market or Hat	Location	Main Items of business	Days of Operation
1	2	3	4	5
82	Silbari Hat	P.S. Alipur Duars	Paddy, rice, jute, mustard, pulses, tobacco, vegetable	Wednesday, Saturday
83	Mathura Hat	Do	Paddy, jute, kalai, vegetable	Monday
84	Paikapara	Do	Paddy, pulses, vegetables, meat	Saturday
85	Gharghria	Do	Do	Sunday, Thursday
86	Damonpur	Do	Do	Wednesday
87	Barabisa Hat	P.S. Kumargram	Rice, jute, paddy, mustard, potato, pulses	Monday
88	Kulkuli Hat	Do	Paddy, rice, potato, mustard, pulses	Sunday
89	Kamakhyaguri	Do	Rice, paddy, pulses, jute, mustard	Sunday

## SUPPLEMENTARY LIST OF HATS (MARKETS)

## SUBDIVISION: SADAR

1	Talma Hat	P.S. Jalpaiguri	Paddy, rice, vegetable	Monday, Friday
2	Kadabari	Do	Do	Sunday, Tuesday
3	Dhupganj	Do	Do	Tuesday, Friday
4	Banjwer	Do	Do	Monday, Friday
5	Jaharir Hat	Do	Do	Wednesday, Saturday
6	Jalpaiguri Jute Market	Do	Jute, do	Daily
7	Jalpaiguri Municipal Market	Do	Vegetable, meat, milk	Daily
8	Sarogara	P.S. Rajganj	Paddy, rice, vegetable	Monday, Thursday
9	Simuldangi	Do	Do	Tuesday, Friday
10	Paglar Hat	Do	Do, Jute	Monday, Friday
11	Sakhani Hat	Do	Paddy, rice, vegetable	Tuesday, Friday
12	Thaljhora	P.S. Nagrakata	Do	Wednesday
13	Bagribari	P.S. Dhupguri	Do	Tuesday, Friday
14	Moynatali	Do	Do	Wednesday, Sunday

## SUBDIVISION: ALIPUR DUARS

15	Ramjhora	P.S. Madarihath	Vegetable, fish, meat	Sunday
16	Mujnai	Do	Paddy, rice, vegetables	Monday
17	Kumargram Duar Bazar	P.S. Kumargram	Rice, F. rice, orange, mango	Wednesday, Saturday
18	Daldali	Do	Paddy, rice, vegetables	Friday
19	Majhirdabri	Do	Do	Thursday

Source: Census: 1951: West Bengal: District Handbooks: Jalpaiguri - A. Mitra, Calcutta, 1954, pp. 152-153.

At the time of Sunder there were 17 hats in Mynaguri *tehsil*, eight in the Falakata and two in the Alipore *tehsil*. All these hats were established during the currency of the Settlement of Lord Ulick Browne who wrote, "without authority, only the rates for cultivated land of the same quality being realised for the sites of these hats".<sup>80</sup> It was then decided that no future permission would be given for the establishment of any private hat on the Government lands. And it was also decided that Government officers would take charge of the management of hats which had been already established and such hats would be leased to their farmer owners "on such terms as the Commissioner, with due regard to the outlay which may have been incurred in establishing them, may consider fair".<sup>81</sup>

The Government by its letter no. 103 T.R. dated the 25<sup>th</sup> September 1888 prescribed a certain rate of fees over the hats in the Western Duars, and again in 1891 a set of rates were prescribed by the Government.<sup>82</sup> It was found that the rates prescribed by the Government was not actually implemented by the

Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner.<sup>83</sup> T.W. Richardson, Esq. under Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department expressed his displeasure by commenting that "...it is not creditable to the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner that the rates then prescribed should have been lost sight of and never enforced".<sup>84</sup> And he was in favour of equal rates in levying fees on the permanent shopkeepers in the market places and on those who resorted to the markets on market days only.

Actually the rates prescribed by the Act of 1888 was so high that the officers in charge were not willing to implement their prescribed rates; despite Nolan's denial that "The rates have been the subject of much attention and were generally enforced".<sup>85</sup> Further Nolan was not in favour of applying a uniform rate of market-tolls throughout the Western Duars. The Act of 1888 was partially implemented as the high rates of fees prescribed by the Act could only be sustained by an affluent area. For this reason the rate of Rs. 50 an *acre* remained in force from the beginning in the Mainaguri tehsil which was the most fertile zone not only in the Western Duars region but on the whole Jalpaiguri district.<sup>86</sup> But in the Alipore subdivision this rate was not enforced. D.H.E. Sunder who was then Settlement Officer did not try to enforce the rates. Sunder stated categorically, "I do not know whether the rate of Rs. 50 per acre has been sanctioned by Government or not, but I beg to say that it is exorbitant, and if insisted on will have the effect of causing the petitioners to remove from the market and thereby break it".<sup>87</sup>

Further Nolan, then Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division stated that in the markets in Falakata tehsil rents realised from the permanent shopkeepers was Rs. 3 per acre annually till 1891-92 and though they were assessed at the rate prescribed by the Government, *i.e.*, Rs. 50 per acre annually from the year 1892-93, "the full amount cannot be realised in many instances".<sup>88</sup> The difficulty in implementing the rates prescribed by the Government was increased by the establishment of *hats* in the neighbouring Koch Bihar state and Colonel Boileau apprehended that practical

implementation of Rs. 50 an acre rate would encourage transfer of business to Koch Bihar State. D.H.E. Sunder proposed that "...the land held by the petitioners be assessed at Rs. 3 per acre..."<sup>89</sup> and Colonel Boileau's proposal was Rs. 10 per acre and further he suggested that rents collected from the private markets should be credited to the market-funds.<sup>90</sup> This suggestion of Colonel Boileau was based on the principle embodied in Rule 9 of the rules for the management of the Western Duars market-funds which contemplated the collection of rents from permanent shopkeepers being credited to the market-funds. Nevertheless, the local opposition and the threats offered by the neighbouring Koch Bihar hats compelled the local officers to stop the levy of all fees in the markets bordering on the Koch Bihar frontier.<sup>91</sup> C.E. Buckland and the Lieutenant Governor after receiving all sorts of proposals wanted certain informations regarding (1) the rates of fees actually levied at each market whether at the rate prescribed by the Government or in contravention thereof from permanent and temporary shopkeepers; (2) the quantity of land leased to permanent shopkeepers; (3) the amount of rent paid by the permanent shopkeepers; and (4) the rate per acre.<sup>92</sup>

R.H. Renny, Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri provided a graphic picture regarding the number of markets and the rates of rent be collected from the markets. He stated that no fees were levied from permanent shopkeepers on market days as they paid an annual rent for the land leased to them. The following table will provide information on the rates of fees which were actually levied on Mainaguri, Falakata, Alipur and Bhalka *tehsils*.

Table II: 12

A

## List of markets in the Mainaguri Tehsil, Jalpaiguri

Sl. No.	Name of Market	Rates of fee sanctioned by Government for permanent shopkeepers	The number and date of the Government order sanctioning the rates.	Rates of fees sanctioned by Government for temporary shopkeepers	The number and date of the Government order sanctioning the rates	Rates of fees actually levied from permanent shopkeepers	Rates of fees actually levied from temporary shopkeepers	The quantity of land leased to permanent shopkeepers				The total amount of rent paid by the permanent shopkeepers			The rate per acre of land paid by permanent shopkeepers	The number and date of the Government order sanctioning the rate referred in Column 11	Remarks
								A	D	P	L	Rs.	A	P			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				10			11	12	13
1	Mainaguri							1	8	5	29	76	5	0			
2	Amguri	Nil	Nil	As per table annexed, marked A	Land Revenue No. 1272 L.R. dated 20 <sup>th</sup> November 1891	Nil	As per table annex-	0	7	6	248	23	8	0	Rs. 50 per acre annually	Land Revenue No. 103 L.R., dated 25 <sup>th</sup> September 1888	No fees are realised from permanent shopkeepers as has already been reported in para. 3 of the letter
3	Ramshai						revised by the Deputy	1	13	9	96	93	0	0			
4	Chengmari						Commissioner under rule 5 of the Market Fund Rules, sanctioned by the	2	10	6	493	133	1	0			
5	Damdin						Government in its letter No. 1055 L.R. dated 18 <sup>th</sup> March 1892, marked B	7	13	6	294	392	3	0			
6	Manabari							3	10	4	99	182	7	0			
7	Batiagole							12	15	1	2	647	6	0			
8	Maliari							10	9	10	0	530	10	0			
9	Chalsa							0	4	0	0	12	8	0			
10	Altadanga							0	7	0	0	21	15	0			
11	Malane							0	1	0	0	3	2	0			
12	Rakhalhat							0	1	0	0	3	2	0			
13	Jalpesh							-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
14	Bhote Hat							-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
15	Hoochladanga							0	2	0	0	-	-	-			
16	Gopalganj							-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
17	Apalchand							-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
18	Nataguri							-	-	-	-	-	-	-			

Source: From, R.H. Renny, Esq. Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division No. 2230G, dated Jalpaiguri, the 14<sup>th</sup> December 1894 (W.B.S.A.).

**B**

**List of markets in the Falakata Tehsil, Jalpaiguri**

Sl. No.	Name of Market	Rates of fee sanctioned by Government for permanent shopkeepers	The number and date of the Government order sanctioning the rates	Rates of fees sanctioned by Government for temporary shopkeepers	The number and date of the Government order sanctioning the rates	Rates of fees actually levied from permanent shopkeepers	Rates of fees actually levied from temporary shopkeepers	The quantity of land leased to permanent shopkeepers				The total amount of rent paid by the permanent shopkeepers			The rate per acre of land paid by permanent shopkeepers	The number and date of the Government order sanctioning the rate referred in Column 11	Remarks
								A	D	P	L	Rs.	A	P			
1	Falakata	Nil	Nil	As per table annexed, marked A	Land Revenue No. 1272 L.R. dated 20 <sup>th</sup> November 1891	Nil	As per revised table annexed, marked C.	3	2	10	473	36	14	6	Rs. 50 per acre annually	Land Revenue No. 103 T.R., dated 25 <sup>th</sup> December 1888	No fees are realised from permanent shopkeepers as has already been reported in para. 3 of the letter. Nothing is realised from these two markets being less important, they having been started lately
2	Dudua							-	-	-	-	-	-				
3	Salbari							0	10	6	503	25	0	0			
4	Gairkata							1	10	6	470	-	-	-			
5	madari							-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
6	Lankapara							0	7	6	480	-	-	-			
7	Suliapara							5	7	7	325	-	-	-			
8	Dowkimari							-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
9	Kalabari							-	-	-	-	-	-	-			

Source: From, R.H. Renny, Esq. Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division No. 2230G, dated Jalpaiguri, the 14<sup>th</sup> December 1894 (W.B.S.A.).

C

## List of markets in the Alipur Tehsil, Jalpaiguri

Sl. No.	Name of Market	Rates of fee sanctioned by Government for permanent shopkeepers	The number and date of the Government order sanctioning the rates	Rates of fees sanctioned by Government for temporary shopkeepers	The number and date of the Government order sanctioning the rates	Rates of fees actually levied from permanent shopkeepers	Rates of fees actually levied from temporary shopkeepers	The quantity of land leased to permanent shopkeepers				The total amount of rent paid by the permanent shopkeepers			The rate per acre of land paid by permanent shopkeepers	The number and date of the Government order sanctioning the rate referred in Column 11	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				10			11	12	13
								A	D	P	L	Rs.	A	P			
1	Santrabari	Nil	Nil	As per table annexed, marked A	Land Revenue No. 1272 L.R. dated 20 <sup>th</sup> November 1891	Nil	Nil	0	4	0	40						
2	Shalshalabari							0	2	10	320	Nil					
3	Mahakalgori							0	1	1	240						
4	Chikligori							0	4	2	0						
5	Ghorghoria							0	2	6	400						
6	Silitorsa							0	12	6	0						

Source: From, R.H. Renny, Esq. Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division No. 2230G, dated Jalpaiguri, the 14<sup>th</sup> December 1894 (W.B.S.A.).

## D

## List of markets in the Bhalka Tehsil, Jalpaiguri

Sl. No.	Name of Market	Rates of fee sanctioned by Government for permanent shopkeepers	The number and date of the Government order sanctioning the rates	Rates of fees sanctioned by Government for temporary shopkeepers	The number and date of the Government order sanctioning the rates	Rates of fees actually levied from permanent shopkeepers	Rates of fees actually levied from temporary shopkeepers	The quantity of land leased to permanent shopkeepers				The total amount of rent paid by the permanent shopkeepers	The rate per acre of land paid by permanent shopkeepers	The number and date of the Government order sanctioning the rate referred in Column 11	Remarks		
								A	D	P	L						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				10	11	12	13		
								Rs.	A	P							
1 2	Kumargram Daldali	Nil	Nil	As per table annexed, marked A	Land Revenue No. 1272 L.R. dated 20 <sup>th</sup> November 1891	Nil	As per table mentioned in column 5	0	5	7	208	-	-	-	-	Land Revenue No. 103 T.R., dated 25 <sup>th</sup> September 1888	No fees are realised from permanent shopkeepers as has already been reported in para. 3 of the letter

Source: From, R.H. Renny, Esq. Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division No. 2230G, dated Jalpaiguri, the 14<sup>th</sup> December 1894 (W.B.S.A.).

Further R.H. Renny also stated in the following table the scale of fees which were to levied in Government markets in the Western Duars region in the Jalpaiguri district.

Table III: 13

**R.H. Renny's statement about scale of fees to be levied in Government markets in the Western Duars, district Jalpaiguri**

Sl. No.	Description of shops and articles on which fees are to be levied	Rates of fees			Remarks
		Rs.	A	P	
1	From each shop of cloth	0	1	0	
2	From each shop of brassware	0	1	0	
3	From each shop of spices occupying a stall	0	1	0	
4	From each shop of spices not occupying a stall	0	0	6	
5	From each shop of dahi	0	1	0	
6	From each shop of fresh fish	0	0	6	
7	From each shop of dry fish	0	0	6	
8	From each shop of salt, when the article exposed for sale exceeds ten seers	0	0	6	
9	From each shop of salt, when the article exposed for sale does not exceed ten seers	0	0	3	
10	For each shop of oil, when the quantity of oil exposed for sale exceeds five seers	0	0	6	
11	From each shop of oil, when the quantity of oil exposed for sale does not exceed five seers	0	0	3	
12	For each bhar of oil	0	1	0	
13	From each shop of betel leaf, when the value of the betel leaves exposed for sale does not exceed eight annas	0	0	3	
14	For each bhar of betel leaf	0	1	0	
15	From each shop of betel nut, when the value of the article exposed for sale does not exceed eight annas	0	0	3	
16	For each cart-load of betel nut	0	2	0	
17	From each shop of betel nut, when the value of the article exposed for sale does not exceed eight annas	0	0	6	
18	From each shop of molasses, when the value of the article exposed for sale exceeds eight annas	0	0	6	
19	From each shop of molasses, when the value of the article exposed for sale does not exceed eight annas	0	0	3	
20	From each shop of sweetmeats	0	0	6	
21	From each cart-load of sweetmeats	0	2	0	
22	From each shop of best sugar	0	0	6	
23	From each shop of ordinary sugar	0	0	3	
24	For each cart-load of sugar of any kind	0	2	0	
25	From each shop of fried-rice sweetmeats (Mowa Muri)	0	0	6	
26	From each shop of earthen pots	0	1	0	
27	From each shop of coats, caps, shirts, etc.	0	0	6	
28	From each shop of shoes	0	0	6	
29	From each shop of mats	0	0	6	
30	From each shop of blankets	0	1	0	
31	From each shop of hukkass	0	0	3	
32	From each shop of fancy (Monihari) articles	0	0	6	
33	From each shop of knives, scissors, hoes, etc.	0	0	6	
34	From each blacksmith working in the market on market days	0	0	6	
35	For each buffalo killed	0	8	0	The animals might be killed outside the hat, but nevertheless when the meat is brought for sale in the hat, the sellers will be charged at these rated
36	For each bullock or cow killed	0	4	0	
37	For each pig killed	0	2	0	
38	For each goat or sheep killed	0	2	0	
39	From each shop of Sankha (shell ornaments)	0	0	3	
40	From each shop of butter or ghee for every seer offered for sale	0	0	6	
41	From each shop of bottles	0	0	3	
42	From each seller of bamboos	0	0	6	
43	From each seller of vegetables, when the price of the article exposed for sale is not less than three annas	0	0	3	
44	For each duck or goose sold	0	0	3	
45	For each pair of fowls sold	0	0	3	
46	For every four pigeons sold	0	0	3	
47	For each buffalo, bullock, cow or pony sold, when the value does not exceed Rs. 10	0	2	0	
48	For each buffalo, bullock, cow or pony sold, when the value exceeds Rs. 10.	0	4	0	

Table contd.

Sl. No.	Description of shops and articles on which fees are to be levied	Rates of fees			Remarks
		Rs.	A	P	
1	2	3			4
		Rs.	A	P	
49	For each calf sold	0	1	0	
50	For each goat or sheep sold	0	0	6	
51	For each cart-load of rice or paddy	0	1	0	
52	For each pony or bullock load of rice or paddy	0	0	6	
53	For each load of rice or paddy carried by a man	0	0	3	
54	For each cart-load of oil-seeds	0	2	0	
55	For each pony or bullock load of oil-seeds	0	1	0	
56	For each load of oil-seeds carried by a man	0	0	6	
57	For each seller of jute for every ten seers offered for sale	0	0	3	
58	For each cart attending the market for the purpose of purchasing articles	0	0	3	
59	For each horse, pony or cattle kept permanently in the market by resident shopkeepers, per month	0	2	0	
60	For every seller of cheera, when the quantity exceeds five seers, for every ten seers	0	0	3	
61	For every seller of pulses, when the quantity exceeds five seers, for every five seers	0	0	3	
62	From every seller of tea, shearbut, etc.	0	0	6	
63	From each seller of Fota cloth	0	0	6	
64	From each seller of wooden made articles	0	0	3	
65	From each Chatki shop of miscellaneous articles such as hooks, lines, needies, maduli, thread, malas, etc.	0	0	3	
66	From each person occupying ground within the hat premises for the purpose of purchasing paddy, rice, jute, oil-seeds in large quantities	0	0	3	

Source: From R.H. Renny, Esq. Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri, to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division No. 2230G, dated Jalpaiguri, the 14<sup>th</sup> December 1894 (Appendix- A), W.B.S.A.

On receipt of the detailed account the Government took certain decisions. It was decided that from permanent shopkeepers in the established *hats* in Mainaguri area Rs. 50 a year per *acre* rent should be taken, but this rate of rent would not be applicable on *hats* which were situated on the undeveloped eastern portion of Mainaguri and it was decided that Rs. 3 per *acre* should be the minimum rate of rent leviable from resident shopkeepers in the Alipur subdivision, "and you are at liberty to fix a higher rate, up to a maximum of Rs. 10 per *acre*, in any hats which are sufficiently permanent and thriving to bear it".<sup>93</sup> However, it was asserted by C.E. Buckland, Secretary to the Government of Bengal that the decision was taken "not to discourage growing hats nor to disregard the competition of the markets in the Koch Bihar state".<sup>94</sup> It was further decided that only three classes of fees, *i.e.*, one anna, six pies and three pies should be levied on market days. So it was clear that the Government's policy regarding the management of hats was flexible at the outset. But later having realised the economic potentialities of *hats* it imposed tighter control over the management of *hats*.

## V

The state of transport and communication system in the Jalpaiguri district particularly in the Western Dooars region before the advent of the British was almost non-existent. Commissioner E.E. Lewis stated, "The subdivision was an outlying and remote one, containing but few roads. What roads there were, however led to Rungpore, the headquarters of the district to the south, and no north Dinagepore and Purneah to the west".<sup>95</sup> The whole of the Dooars region was in a sensitive and unsettled state without proper means of communication. But the regulation portion of the district had communication with other districts to the south and west, though the communication system across the Tista river to the east was virtually non-existent. It was felt in 1884 by the Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri that he did "not think that the Government, the landlord of the Western Dooars, does enough for the communications in its estate".<sup>96</sup> He thought that the disbursement of fund for the improvement of the communication system in the region would be "good investment",<sup>97</sup> and in this context he suggested taking loans for reproductive public works. Certain factors compelled the Colonial Government to look forward for the adoption of a well-defined policy for the improvement of communication system in the region. The first factor was the pressure from the tea-planters. Although with the active support of the rulers tea-plantation enterprise was started but the existence of a primitive mode of communication in the region nullified their whole efforts. It was found that the bad road conditions of the region compelled the planters to make private roads. The planters "...come forward with heavy contribution for public roads on the District Road Committee guaranteeing an equal sum".<sup>98</sup> The Government as protector of the tea-planters' interests could no longer turn a deaf ear to their, *i.e.*, tea-planters' demand. The second factor was the existence of low agricultural prices of the region, and the dismal performance of trade in the region. Before the annexation of the British it was found that "In the Dooars there was practically no trade at all, for the unsettled state of the country and the oppressive nature of the Government

did not tempt traders to venture in, while means of transport were wanting. In North Mynaguri and Chengmari cultivation was sparse, and there was not probably much surplus produce for disposal; whatever there was remained in the country".<sup>99</sup> So the picture found here was that of a stagnant economy devoid of support from the state with a primitive means of communication. The agriculturalists for lack of proper means of communication did not produce more for export, and consequently in the Jalpaiguri district particularly in the Western Dooars a low agricultural price existed.

This low price structure did not alter even after the advent of the British in the region. Commissioner E.E. Lowis described in detail how the lack of communication system affected the agricultural prices. "The rice brought for sale at the hats was purchased for local consumption, or if for purpose of export, it was bought in small quantities by residents, such as the two jotedars who have furnished enclosed figures transported on ponies or bullocks to the river bank, and there sold to Rungpore traders probably at rates resembling those current at the Sudder station, the profit, after deducting cost of carriage. Some few of the jotedars who could come and such means of transport were available, may have profited by these transactions".<sup>100</sup> Further, a low rate in the interior was maintained because want of communication prevented the cheaper Dooars rice entering into competition with the dearer Dinajpore and Regulation District rice at Jalpaiguri. This picture was almost the same at North Mainaguri, Bhalka and Chengmari where due to lack of proper outlet the prices of agricultural produce were low. Commissioner E.E. Lowis stated, "I have myself seen large heaps of straw lying outside a village, which I was informed would be burnt, as the cultivators lacked the means taking it to a market and therefore had no use for it".<sup>101</sup> So all the above mentioned factors suggested the construction of metalled roads and railways.

(1) The inauguration of railways particularly in the Western Dooars region was an outcome of the pressure created by the Tea planters of the Jalpaiguri district. The early Dooars planters were fortunate in that they

started their enterprises at a phase when India was very much railway minded and the Jalpaiguri district was benefited by this "progressive mood".<sup>102</sup> In the Jalpaiguri district the Eastern Bengal State Railway or as it was then called, the Northern Bengal State Railway and the Bengal Duars Railway played a crucial role in promoting the state of trade and commerce of the region.

The Northern Bengal State Railway was opened as far as Jalpaiguri in 1878,<sup>103</sup> and opened its metre gauge line on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1887 from Atrai to Jalpaiguri.<sup>104</sup> On 19 January 1878 this railway line was extended from Povadaha to Bheramara Ghat and from Sara Ghat to Atrai on the same day. This Northern Bengal State Railway was extended as far as Siliguri on 10 June 1878. J.F. Grunning remarked, "The railway enters the district near Haldibari station and runs in a northerly direction to Jalpaiguri where it curves to the north-west; south of Haldibari, it runs parallel to, and within a few miles of the district boundary so that it serves the whole of the tract to the west of the Tista river".<sup>105</sup> At that time, three railway stations, *namely*, Mondalghat, Jalpaiguri and Belakoba were on the line within the Jalpaiguri district. Despite its expanding network this railway was not above criticism. In 1889 the Dooars Planters' Association made emphatic complaint about the working of the North Bengal State Railway.<sup>106</sup>

The Bengal Duars Railway was opened for the explicit purpose of opening the whole of Western Dooars region to the outside world and in developing the tea industry. In 1891 the Government of India entered into an agreement with Octavius Steel and Co. of London for opening this railway. It was decided that this railway would run from Barnes in the eastern bank of Tista and to the opposite side of Jalpaiguri to Dam Dim. It was decided that a branch would be opened from Lataguri to Ramshaihat. The Government of India supplied the land free of cost, free timbers for making railway sleepers to Messrs Octavius Steel and Co. Further the said Company was also granted free use of the ferry service between Jalpaiguri and Barnes Junction.

The following table will illustrate how the different sections of this Railway were opened.

**Table III: 14**

**Different sections of the Bengal Dooars Railway in the Jalpaiguri district**

From	To	Distance (miles)	Year of opening
Parbatipur through Haldibari, Jalpaiguri, Siliguri			1878
Barnes	Dam Dim	31	1893
Lataguri	Ramshaihat	5½	1893
Barnes	Lalmanirhat (now in Bangladesh)	66	1900
Barnes	Barnesghat	1	1900
Dam-Dim	Bagrakot	7	1902
Mal	Madarihat	44	1903
Chalsa	Matiali	5	1915

Source: Barun De et al., *West Bengal District Gazetteers, Jalpaiguri, Calcutta, 1981, p. 167*

This railway line could not advance towards the eastern side owing to financial constraints. At present the only remnants of the railway which could be found in the sections Lataguri-Ramshai and Lataguri-New Mal Junction until the other day had also disappeared due to broad gauge conversion and for opening new lines.<sup>107</sup> During 1907 the railway carried 606,000 passengers and 144,000 tons of goods.

The principal items imported were – Coal 14910 tons, food grains 19507 tons, salt 4458 tons, metal manufactured 3397 tons and cotton goods 952 tons and the chief articles which were exported through railways were – jute 17106 tons, tea 16229 tons, tobacco 6342 tons.<sup>108</sup> Among the above mentioned items coal and food gains were imported chiefly for the use of tea gardens and tea garden workers respectively.

In this regard it is quite relevant to make a comment about the Cooch Behar State Railway because some branches of this railway touched some areas of the Jalpaiguri district. Although the Cooch Behar state came into contact with the British rule in 1773 but it was in the year 1863 that the first real effort was made to develop a communication system. The Cooch Behar State Railway came much later in 1891; it was a small feeder line, built on a gauge of 2'6". It ran from Gitaldah Junction on the Dhubri branch of the Eastern Bengal State Railway to Jainti station. From Gitaldah Junction it ran to

Buxa Road Station and from that point this railway line advanced towards Jainti. This railway line also entered Alipurduar and this section between Koch Bihar and Alipurduar was opened in 1900 after the construction of a bridge over the Kaljani river. This line was extended to Rajabhatkhawa in 1901 and to Jainti the same year. The latter section in the year 1910 was converted into metre gauge and was merged with the Eastern Bengal State Railway. The metre gauge from Rajabhatkhawa to Hasimara was extended in 1914.<sup>109</sup>

In the year 1892-93 the Cooch Behar State took a loan of eight lacs of rupees from the Government of India for construction of a railway in Cooch Behar. It was agreed that the principal and interest were to be paid off from the profits of the *Chaklajat* property. At that time a part of the *Chaklajat* zamindari were within the Jalpaiguri district and this zamindari "were hypothecated for the said loan".<sup>110</sup>

The loan of two and a half lacs of rupees was taken in 1897-98 on similar conditions up to the years 1903. Shri Harendra Narayan Chaudhury, the Naib Ahilkar of the Cooch Behar state commented that the loan "has not yet been fully paid up and the portion of the Mal estates in the district of Jalpaiguri is still mortgaged to Government".<sup>111</sup>

The total effect of starting the Railway project in the Jalpaiguri district was felt in the great changes particularly in the economic condition of the region. Commissioner E.E. Lowis commented that "A great change has been wrought by the opening of Northern Bengal State Railway for traffic in the beginning of 1878".<sup>112</sup> Before the year 1878 the Marwari businessmen used to establish their main business centres at main towns in the Jalpaiguri district "with agents in the interior, while a few have ventured across the teesta, and set up their own account in the Dooars".<sup>113</sup> But with the inauguration of railways the Marwaris took up courage to spread their activities across the District.

With the growth of tea-gardens and the consequential growth of the number of wage-earning population a great demand for agricultural produce

was created; but without the opening of railway line such demand could not be met.

With the opening of North Bengal State Railway and the Bengal Duars Railway the transportation of agricultural goods became easier and consequently the prices of agricultural produce increased rapidly. M. Finucane, Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture Bengal, commented in the year 1890 that "The Settlement Officer submits tables of prices + of staple crops, which purport to show that the price of paddy was risen by 33 to 50 per cent, during the last ten years in Mynagoree, while the price of rice is said to have risen by 100 per cent in Julpigoree and by 72 per cent in Mynagoree. The price of tobacco, which is an up land crop, is said to have risen by 37 per cent within the past five years".<sup>114</sup>

It was remarked by the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, L.P.H.L. Harrison that "...the opening of the Northern Bengal Railway, this part of the country has been much developed and rendered accessible, and therefore the value of land has much increased already and is likely to increase still more".<sup>115</sup>

The following tables will illustrate the net profit earned by the Railway Companies.

Table III: 15

Table showing the profit earned by the Railway Companies from 1903 to 1907

## A

Year	Original Line					
	Total capital outlay to date (Rs.)	Gross earnings (Rs.)	Net earnings (Rs.)	Net percentage on capital outlay	Earning per week per mile (Rs.)	Proportion of working expenses to earnings
1903	26,95,547	3,09,965	2,23,786	8.30	156	27.80
1904	26,64,642	3,46,277	2,56,651	9.63	175	25.88
1905	27,26,891	3,70,343	2,49,598	9.15	196	32.60
1906	27,33,098	4,08,623	2,96,703	10.86	216	27.38
1907	27,56,535	4,20,705	3,05,788	11.09	222	27.32

## B

Year	Extensions					
	Total capital outlay to date (Rs.)	Gross earnings (Rs.)	Net earnings (Rs.)	Net percentage on capital outlay	Earning per week per mile (Rs.)	Proportion of working expenses to earnings
1903	79,30,172	3,47,832	1,05,916	1.34	71	69.55
1904	84,97,571	4,15,179	1,08,680	1.28	68	73.85
1905	87,92,080	5,12,343	1,97,924	2.25	85	61.39
1906	89,99,516	5,83,852	2,91,256	3.23	96	50.11
1907	90,70,826	6,04,133	90,883	3.21	99	51.85

Source: J.F. Grunning, *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers: Jalpaiguri*, Allahabad, 1911, p. 115.

The bad road condition in the Jalpaiguri district particularly in the Western Duars region was a constant cause of worry of the planters because most of the tea gardens were linked by roads which were previously in a bad condition.

During D.H.E. Sunder's tenure as Settlement Officer there were "no metalled roads in the district".<sup>116</sup> He urged upon the Government for opening a road from Ghargharia market to Jaigaon and strongly recommended the extension of Jalpaiguri-Gaikata road. There was a distinction between the roads situated on the west of the Tista and the roads which were found on the Western Duars region.

The condition of communication network in the pre-colonial period may be assembled from the different sources in the following manner.

**Roads in the Jalpaiguri district before 1869 (between 1780-1800)**

- (1) From Darjeeling to Tetulia via Pankhabari and Phansidawa.
- (2) Siliguri to Jalpaiguri through Phoolbari and Baikunthapur.
- (3) Deogram to Sikkim via Sevoke and Kalimpong.
- (4) Rangpur to Jalpaiguri via Kargirhat.
- (5) Phuntsholing to Mainaguri through Buxa.
- (6) From Kalimpong to Dam Dim and Mougong through Algara and Garubathan route.
- (7) Eastern Nepal to Panchanai through Rajarjhar and Nijamattara.
- (8) There was route from Mongpong through Ambari Falakata to Rangpore across Teesta. The river communication through the Teesta after 1784 when Teesta changed its course and started flowing through the present channel started from Jalpaiguri to Rangpur and after 1869 from Rangpur through Brahmaputra and through the tributaries of Brahmaputra and Padma combine to the Calcutta port.<sup>117</sup>

A good number of roads existed in the Western portion of the Teesta river due to the absence of heavy rainfall in the said region and the subsequent recurring floods. But the Western Duars region was split up into

numerous rivers and their erratic changing courses made the maintenance of the roads quite difficult. For this reason many tea gardens in the Western Duars began to depend on Railway services. In this regard J.F. Grunning remarked, "A great change has been made by the opening of the Bengal-Duars Railway, before its construction the tea gardens of the Dam-Dim sub-district depended on the Jalpaiguri Dam-Dim and Fulbari Ghat roads to send away their tea to or get in supplies from Jalpaiguri or Siliguri; now nearly all the traffic uses the railway".<sup>118</sup> The local administration was aware of the plight of the roads and for the purpose of maintaining and making roads the Public Works department was formed; subsequently the Jalpaiguri district Board also maintained some roads. Nine roads in the Western Duars region was maintained by Public Works department. The nine roads which were under direct supervision of P.W.D. were (1) Lataguri-Meteli Road, (2) Ramshai-Sulkapara Road, (3) Sulkapara-Thaljhora Road, (4) Nagrakata feeder road, (5) Banerhat-Chamurchi road, (6) Ramshai-Gairkata road, (7) Gairkata-Birpara road, (8) Gairkata-Dhupguri road, and (9) Gairkata-Binnaguri road.<sup>119</sup>

It should be mentioned that for making the Ramshai hat Nagrakata road "75 acres and 30 poles of land" were taken and it was decided that "the estimate of the cost of compensation to be paid on account of the land which is to be taken over is hereby sanctioned debitable to the provision of Rs. 40,000 for land..."<sup>120</sup>

Further, for making the Ramshaihat-Gairkata road Rs. 2,430 was sanctioned;<sup>121</sup> and Rs. 13 was sanctioned as "compensation to be paid for land" which was acquired for the construction of the road from Lataguri to Meteli.<sup>123</sup> For making the Jainti-Rydak road Rs. 6,864 was paid of the cost of compensation for land.<sup>123</sup>

J.F. Grunning mentioned a road which was being constructed during his time from the Dam-Dim Station to "join a metalled road from the Fagu tea-garden in the Darjeeling district..."<sup>124</sup> The opening of the road, Grunning argued, would not only benefit several tea-gardens but also serve as an important feeder to the Bengal Duars Railway. In the west of the Torsa river a

road existed towards the Rajbhatkhawa station on the Cooch Behar State Railway. This road was mostly used by the tea-planters.

The Jalpaiguri District Board also maintained a total length of 24 miles of metalled and 778 unmetalled roads. The principal road under the Board existed on the eastern bank of the Tista river opposite Jalpaiguri town. This road stretched as far as the Eastern Duars region up to Alipurduar and it was called the Jalpaiguri-Alipur road and "thence is known as the Alipur-Haldibari Road".<sup>125</sup>

In the west of the Tista the most important road was Boda road which was 31 miles in length. Further, the other important roads on the west of the Tista were the Slliguri road, 23 miles long, which runs through Ambari-Falakata and the Titalya road, 26 miles long a road from Boda to Domar railway station. The cattle and sheep were driven from the Western Duars to the Assam through the Central Emigration Road. The Boda-Domar railway station road was used extensively particularly during the jute season. Before the opening of the Eastern Bengal State Railway an imperial road existed between Karagola Ghat on the Ganges to the foot of the hills. The main objective behind the construction of this road was to facilitate communication between the plains and Darjeeling.

Although Jalpaiguri district was split by several rivers; but few of the rivers were fit for navigation. The Tista was navigable by large boats as far as Jalpaiguri, "the Duduya up to the Jalpaiguri-Alipur road, the Mujnai as far as Falakata and the Kaljani up to Alipurduar..."<sup>126</sup>

The Baura hat within the Patgram Police Station which was situated on a small tributary of the Tista, business transactions took place through river. From Baura hat the merchants exported tobacco, rice and jute through the Tista river to Dhaka and other eastern markets. But with the inauguration of the railways this river-borne communication slowly decreased.

Besides, there were a number of ferries in the district. There were 125 ferries in the district of which 99 ferries were within the purview of the District Board and the rest of the ferries were within the provincial

jurisdiction. While the District Board gained a revenue of Rs. 18,740 in 1907-08 from its ferries; the provincial ferries earned Rs. 7,516.<sup>127</sup> The principal ferries were on the Tista and Jaldhaka rivers and the most important ferry was the Abden Ferry which was situated on the opposite the town of Jalpaiguri. This ferry was maintained and managed by the Bengal-Duars Railway Company. Other important ferries were situated at Paharpur, Premganj, Rangdhamali, Baikunthapur, Kharchibari and Fulbari, Helapakri, Kantimari, Boalmari. But the most important ferries were at the "points where the Jalpaiguri-Alipur, Ramshai-Gaikata and Ramshai-Suklapara roads cross the river..."<sup>128</sup>

It is natural that the establishment of tea-plantation economy in the Jalpaiguri district would also inspire the planters to create a proper infrastructure. The Dooars Planters' Association which was purely an organisation of the European planters was keen on the creation of infrastructure needed by the plantations in the form of railways, roads and bridges and pressurised the Colonial Government in practical realisation of their projects. The Colonial Government provided the planters a liberal assistance. The Bengal Dooars Railways (BDR) constructed railways under a contract signed in 1891 between the Secretary of State for India and the Octavius Steel and Co. of London. Further the Government provided to the BDR free grants of land, free supply of timber from the reserved forests. Although the planters' own contribution in upgrading the local communications were not encouraging but it was they who along with the ex-officio European members in the Jalpaiguri District Board were able to allot a sizeable portion of the annual budget in meeting the infrastructural requirements of the planters. So as all the infrastructural developments in the Jalpaiguri district were linked with plantation economy the total development in the fullest sense was not possible in the Colonial era; although it is true that during this era of building of railways, roads, this part of northern Bengal was linked with the outside capitalist market and such tendencies helped to transform at least economically the timid insular character of the region.

## VI

The term urbanisation has been defined as the process of becoming urban. Generally speaking the process of urbanisation is closely linked with the concentration of population into towns and cities but three linked concepts are applied in social-scientific study: (a) as a demographic phenomenon, urbanisation implies a process involving the absolute and relative growth of towns and cities within a defined area, usually a country due to dependence on census information; (b) the second concept states that the demographic process is related to the structural change in society consequent upon the development of industrial capitalism; and (c) the third concept states urbanisation as a behavioural process. It is known that in the urban areas particularly in the bigger cities social changes take place. In this expanded view of urbanisation, the demographic factor is presented as the dependent variable, the outcome of economic processes. But the above model of urbanisation has been criticised for relating the central role of the growth of factory production to the growth of urban centres. It has been argued that long before the Industrial Revolution there were urban centres in North-West Europe. Further capitalism does not require the continued concentration of population.

The establishment of British rule in India brought about basic changes in the structure of urban society, in the form of subordination of socio-economic activity in the South Asia to the capitalist economy of the metropolitan country. The changes which took place in India during the period of colonialism in cities and towns are best understood in the context of British effort in linking her empire in South Asia to her expanding capitalist economy.

In the Jalpaiguri district the process of urbanisation was linked to the establishment of plantation economy and so the character of urban growth in the district was very restricted.<sup>129</sup> Throughout the British period the Jalpaiguri remained essentially a rural and plantation district. Till 1951 Jalpaiguri although being the district headquarter and the only town recognised by the

Census authority had hardly any civil amenities. It did not have any electricity before 1933 and no waterworks before 1935. Alipurduar town, the second largest settlement acquired the status of a non-municipal town as later as 1951. Apart from these two there were some trading centres in the Duars. The 1911 District Gazetteer stated only six chief trading centres in Duars: Jorpakri, Mainaguri, Falakata, Madarihat, Buxa and Alipurduars. In the Regulation part the number of trading centres were only five: Jalpaiguri town, Tetulia, Rajnagar, Saldanga, Debiganj and Buxa.<sup>130</sup> Besides this Domohoni situated on the left bank of the Tista attained the characteristic of a railway settlement.

Among these settlements, Jalpaiguri town deserves special mention. The place served as headquarter of the Raikats since the second decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The British had a long cherished dream to make Jalpaiguri town a district headquarter. During the Anglo-Bhutan war in the southern part of the town an army cantonment was established to collect revenues from the North-eastern regions and to assess the potentialities of trade and commerce of the Jalpaiguri District region.<sup>131</sup> The decision to establish the Jalpaiguri town was determined by several factors. With the growth of tea plantation in the district the Bengali entrepreneurs slowly came to participate in it and their registered offices were established in the town. Further registered offices of the most of the Indian tea companies came to be located there. In the year 1878 the town was connected with Calcutta. Jalpaiguri town was connected with the Duars region through Barnes Ghat on the eastern side of Tista river by ferry. Further the town was transformed into a vibrant trading centre and provided a channel through which various articles of trade such as cotton cloth, corrugated iron and various consumer goods reached to the remote trading centers of the Duars region.

This town as exporting zone mobilised and siphoned off tea, jute, tobacco, timber etc. to Calcutta. The expanding networks of services and professional and economic interests within the colonial framework determined the socio-economic relations of the town.

There were two types of settlement in the Jalpaiguri town – (a) Cluster settlement and (b) Random settlement. These two types of settlements represented a picture of purely colonial enclave; the issue of racial factor being a crucial one in this respect. Within the sphere of cluster settlement on the right bank of Tista there were concentrations of elite European establishments. J.F. Grunning remarked in this respect that the principal buildings are residential. Among the notable buildings he mentioned the Post and Telegraph Office, the Hospital, the Jail, the Deputy Commissioner's Bungalow etc.<sup>132</sup> Further different European clubs, residential European bungalows also formed the parts of an elite zone. Away from the river and to the west was the sprawling native town. Here with the exception of the brick built palace of the Raikats all the houses were built with wooden and bamboo materials. J.F. Grunning expressed his concern in this respect, "Jalpaiguri has always been a bad place for fires owing probably to the inflammable nature of most of the buildings".<sup>133</sup> In 1878 most of the Government establishments including the Commissioner's office, the Deputy Commissioner's officer, the Judge's Court house and Munsif's Court were burnt. In consequence of the fire the Deputy Commissioner transferred the headquarter from Jalpaiguri to Rampur Boalia; but in 1888 after the appointment of Lord Ulick Browne as Commissioner Jalpaiguri again became the district headquarter.

The Random settlement area was divided into several paras or localities usually named after an occupation such as Babupara, Ukilpara, Muhuripara, Telipara etc. Within the random settlement mainly lower-caste agricultural population lived and the total setting of the town bore the imprint of many rural features.<sup>134</sup>

One of the major indicators for the development of the Jalpaiguri town was the growth of population which occurred due to the influx of immigrant populations in the town. The population growth in the town was rather sluggish from the outset. In 1872 before the establishment of Municipal Board the population of town was 6,598; but slowly the population grew and touched the figure 27,766 in the year 1941.

Table III: 16

Chart showing growth of population in the Jalpaiguri town

Year	Persons
1872	6,598
1881	7,936
1891	9,682
1901	9,708
1911	11,469
1921	14,520
1931	18,962
1941	27,766

Source: *Census Reports for the relevant years.*

Both Bengali Hindu and Muslim families from East Bengal particularly from Pabna and Rajshahi areas settled in the town. The professional background of the immigrant population was of bhadralok nature. An array of Government clerks, lawyers, teachers, contractors etc. settled in the town. Muslim traders from Dacca district and Marwari traders and merchants tempted by the rising economic potentialities of the town decided to settle in the town.<sup>135</sup> Both the Rajbansi and Muslim populations formed a small section of the population and their were looked down by the caste Hindus; while the Noakhali Muslims did not treated the local Muslims on equal footing. Further different types of lower category professional population such as washermen, barbers, sweepers also formed a significant part of the growing population of the town.

Apart from these the European population although formed a microscopic segment of the whole population but proved to be the leader of socio-political and economic affairs. Further they played the part of arbiters of all revenue, public works and criminal affairs.

The introduction of principles of municipal administration in Jalpaiguri town also bear long historical background. The Charter Act of 1893 emphasised the important of municipal administration in British India and following this Act in different presidencies Municipal Corporations were established. Further the Bengal Municipal Act of 1884 provided for slow

introduction of elective principles in small towns and the practical realisation of such principles was materialised in the formation of Jalpaiguri Municipality on 1.4.1885. In the all India perspective within 1900 in different district 742 municipalities were established.<sup>136</sup> Despite this the Colonial Government choose to a cautious path and refused to transfer the full responsibilities to the natives. After the establishment of the Municipality the Board consisted of 13 Commissioners of whom 3 were ex-officio members, the Deputy Commissioner being the Chairman while the rest were Government nominated members. Till 1916 the Deputy Commissioner confirmed to function as the Chairman and all the Municipal Commissioners were nominated. Thus it is clear from the structure of the Board that the Colonial masters had the final say in the municipal affairs too.<sup>137</sup> But despite this dominance in 1887 Rajendralal Raoy was appointed as the Vice-Chairman of the Jalpaiguri Municipality who became the first non-official native entered in the Municipality. In 1916 the famous lawyer Anukul Mukherji was appointed as the first non-official Chairman of the Municipality. After him, Prasanna Dev Raikat, Purnachandra Roy, Maulavi Abdus Sattar, Dr. Satish Chandra Das Gupta, Bipulendranath Banerji, Maulavi Makhlechar Rehman, Bhabani Kumar Banerjee, Jibankanti Roy serves as the Chairman of the Municipality.<sup>138</sup> In 1905 the town was divided into five wards and from these five wards ten representatives were elected as members while in addition to these three ex-officio members, three government-nominated members constituted the sixteen member Municipal Board.<sup>139</sup> During the tenure of Chairman Anukul Mukherji the municipal area was divided into seven wards and out of nineteen Board members, fourteen were elected members, four were government-nominated members and one was ex-officio member.

During Grunning's tenure the area within municipal areas was 3.71 square miles. The average income in the year 1907-08 was Rs. 34,363 and the expenditure was Rs. 33,503; "...the figures are increased by large grants made in 1904-05 and 1905-06 for the construction of a new hospital buinding".<sup>140</sup> The rate of taxation was Rs. 1-13-2 per head of the population. In 1907-08 Rs.

1,496 was spent on lighting, Rs. 8,576 on conservancy, Rs. 7,748 on medical relief, Rs. 4,497 were spent on roads and Rs. 763 on education.<sup>141</sup> The hospital was completed in 1905 and it was built at a cost of Rs. 31,303.

In the year 1890 under the supervision of District Board Engineer Mr. Lenard a project regarding survey of municipal areas was undertaken. Further the municipal authorities also took some measures for uplifting the civic standards of the town, *e.g.*, the authorities transferred the slaughter house at the outskirts of the town, in different parts of the town tubewells and wells were established. Further to solve the long standing water problem on 27.7.1929 the then Municipal Board decided to install a water-pumping machine. On 7.2.1935 a drinking water plant was inaugurated by Subhas Chandra Bose. In 1934 sixty-six street lights were installed in the town.<sup>142</sup>

In short, with the establishment of British rule in the Jalpaiguri district there was a simultaneous creation of plantation economy in the district. And such tendency created a conducive atmosphere for carrying out trading and professional activities in the Jalpaiguri town and the immigrant population particularly from East Bengal did not hesitate to seize the opportunities which the Colonial rule offered to them and they began to settle in the town and helped to acquire the epithet of settlers' town.

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## CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL TENSION IN THE RURAL NORTH BENGAL AND THE ORIGIN OF  
PROTEST MOVEMENTS IN NORTH BENGAL

The North Bengal region was not free from the protest movements during the Colonial period; although it must be admitted that the intensity and depth of the protest movements in the Southern Bengal received much attention than the movements of North Bengal. All the significant movements in North Bengal occurred in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were mixed in character; *Khshatriya* movement organised by the Rajbansi community of North Bengal was basically a caste mobility movement and the *Tebhaga* movement, originated from the demands of the sharecroppers.

The impact of the Sepoy Mutiny and of the indigo revolt was also felt in the North Bengal region.<sup>1</sup> The Sannyasi uprising, in fact, first movement against the colonial authority in India, originated in the Malda, Dinajpur and neighbouring district of Rangpur of Bangladesh. The employment of the Sannyasi mercenaries during the time of Anglo-Bhutan War of 1773 on the Cooch Behar succession question and later in the movement of the Baikunthapur Estate were observed by the contemporary British officials. Jalpaiguri district too was not spared, though the Sannyasi and Fakir activities in the Jalpaiguri district were different in nature than those which were noted in other areas. After the annexation of the Western Duars from Bhutan in 1865 the Colonial authorities started in the Western Duars land revenue reforms and as a result of those reforms some serious socio-economic tensions arose.

The economic forces released by the Colonial authorities created a conducive atmosphere for migration; particularly war, depression and famine in Bengal seriously affected the existing pattern of land-ownership in the different district of North Bengal.

After the Great depression the cultivators' plight became serious and their hardship was doubled by the traditional mahajan's refusal to advance

the rural credit. So the cultivators particularly the small *jotedars* and middle peasants were forced to sell off their lands. The rise in prices of food grains and other necessary items following the Second World War also seriously enhanced the deteriorating material conditions of life of middle and poor peasants and these culminated in the great Bengal famine. The beneficiaries from this crisis were the merchants, moneylenders and the speculators who were also investors of capital in land. Further, migration of a large number of outsiders to the Jalpaiguri district from different districts of Bengal and from outside the Bengal presidency also created a conducive atmosphere for land transfer to the non-Rajbansis. The attractions of this region were the abundance of land, low rate of rent, prospects of doing good business; job opportunities in government offices as the local people were not in a position to compete. Further, with the establishment of tea gardens, a huge labour market was created.<sup>2</sup>

Migration in the Jalpaiguri district in the mid nineteenth century had been triggered by a number of economic factors. With colonial intrusion this area was exposed to the potentiality of both plantation industry and revenue farming almost simultaneously. A great part of the west-land of this area was leased out to enterprising tea planters at a very nominal rate of rent and exemptions. Vast of quasi-forest, quasi-wet waste land area had been leased out with complete revenue exemption for the initial half a decade and later a rate of rent to the tune of Rs. 1.50 to Rs. 2.00 per acre per annum was assessed on the reclaimed plantation area. As a result, the tea gardens secured lease deeds for large acreage of land varying from two thousand hectares to five thousand hectares, while the actual land used for plantation did never exceed 40% of total leased area, the remaining land came to be used by the planters without any rent. For waste land reclamation and later for plantation a vast number of labour was needed. Migration of labour to this area on this account was a notable demographic feature in the second half of the nineteenth century. New and enhanced revenue demands also had suggested conversion of agricultural waste land into arable land in enhanced quantity. The urgency

of the colonial government to finalise land settlement from the time of Becket induced a good number of fortune-seekers from the neighbouring districts to venture into this otherwise held to be *terra incognita* by the Bengalis in general. The singular factor which induced a new class of revenue farmers to come to this region was the fascinating rent per acreage. It was found to be Rs. 5.5 to Rs. 6 in the adjacent Cooch Behar State and was as high as Rs. 8.5 to Rs. 9.00 in the districts of Rangpore, Dinajpore, Mymensingh and Dhaka. But for the Jalpaiguri Duars the bent cultivable land *i.e.*, *Rupit* could be secured on a nominal rate of Rs. 4.00 per acre. Besides, it was rent free during the initial three/four years of reclamation. Interestingly enough, the revenue and settlement policy of the British attracted only the revenue farmer class instead of the cultivators.

One of the reasons why the incidence of the revenue farmers was noticed amongst the Bengali migrants was that the majority of them were either involved in legal profession or were officials in the government service sector establishments and clerks in the tea gardens. The migrants from outside Bengal and other than those needed by the tea gardens were from Bihar, U.P. and Rajasthan. Many of the migrants from the north and eastern districts of Bihar came with the railways in the 1880's and thereafter. Some of them had diversified into small shop keeping. Though a minority group, but the economically dominant migrant community was Rajasthanis. Broadly classified as *Marwari* in local parlance the scions of the different *marwari* houses initially launched wholesale business in grain, jute, tobacco and later according to convenience they diversified into revenue farming and in the tea plantation industry. All these factors appear to be important demographic and social data inputs to examine the social structure determination function in the Jalpaiguri district. While this ethnic and cultural mix influenced the course of social development in North Bengal they had also added different shades to the protest movements in the district.

At the initial phase the major labour force in the tea gardens of the Western Duars region was composed of the people of Nepali origin. The local Rajbansis were not found of working in tea plantation, nor the members of the local tribal communities. But with the growth of the tea gardens a greater demand for tea garden labourers was felt. The Nepalis had already had some exposure to tea cultivation in Darjeeling. Besides, being migrants from Eastern Nepal they had no professional preference unlike the Rajbansis. The problem was aggravated by the reluctance of the local people to work in the tea gardens. Under the circumstances, the planters had to look elsewhere for securing labour force and the experience of the Assam plantations indicated the areas from where the labour force could be obtained. Within seven years after the establishment of the first tea garden in the Duars, a moderate number of labourers begun to come from the Chotanagar area. The 1881 census recorded 210 Oraons and smaller numbers of other immigrant tribal groups. The number slowly increased and by 1901 a significant labour force was built up. Although the tea gardens situated in hilly areas of the Western Duars region the Nepali immigrants from the Darjeeling district constituted a fairly large number of the labour force; but the overwhelming portion was recruited from the distant Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas of Bihar.

According to the 1901 Census Report there were 188,223 immigrants in the district as a whole. The bulk of them were enumerated in the Duars and 'about half of the immigrants were tea garden coolies from Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas'.<sup>3</sup>

The migration statement indicated the number of immigrants from Ranchi district 80,436 and 10,562 from Santhal Parganas.<sup>4</sup> Besides, the 1911 census showed that the number of persons born in Ranchi and enumerated in Jalpaiguri district was no less than 126,214.<sup>5</sup> This large influx of people influenced also the growing demand for land and consequently there was a sharp rise in land prices.

Table IV: 1

## Land Price (per acre in Rs.) in Western Duars from 1883 to 1894

Year	Tehsil				
	Mainaguri	Alipur	Bhalka	Siliguri	Falakata
1883	3.7	3.0	—	4.2	6.3
1884	5.7	1.5	—	2.1	4.9
1885	6.8	2.0	1.2	8.9	5.3
1886	7.1	0.8	1.0	7.8	4.1
1887	13.0	1.6	2.7	3.2	5.8
1888	12.7	2.0	1.9	6.0	7.2
1889	15.2	4.5	2.6	6.8	7.8
1890	10.2	6.1	3.9	4.8	4.7
1891	12.7	2.3	4.8	4.1	8.2
1892	14.5	4.7	4.4	2.4	11.1
1893	12.2	2.9	2.2	7.1	8.3
1894	14.9	4.3	1.5	3.5	7.8

Source: D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Duars in the district of Jalpaiguri 1889-95*, pp. 139-61.

Among the above mentioned areas the land prices in the Mainaguri areas being the most fertile areas fetched the highest land prices.

The local people, tempted by the increasing land prices, begun selling their lands to the outsiders. Thus, there was a great transformation of the local small and middle *jotedars* who became under-tenants, subservient to a new class of immigrant landed class. In Rangpur and Dinajpur the big *jotedars* and non-agriculturalists were the owner of the maximum number of *jotes*.<sup>7</sup> In the Jalpaiguri district while the Rajbansi owner of land decreased, on the contrary those held by Marwaris, the upper caste Bengali middle class people and others increased.<sup>7</sup> The professional classes like lawyers, doctors, Government officials and tea garden owners also purchased the *jotes*.

In the Cooch Behar district too the people connected with the administration of the State occupied a large number of *jotes*. In fact, this process of land transfer was not only a phenomenon of a particular district

but a general picture of the whole North Bengal itself and the Rajbansi community was the worst sufferer in this whole process.

This change in the land-controlling aspect made an impact on various fields. It has been rightly argued that the nature of economy of North Bengal till about the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century resembled the famous Asiatic mode of production type with every village producing for their own consumption.<sup>8</sup> In the absence of a proper market economy and a moderate transport communication system peasants were forced to consume their own produce. The problem was aggravated by the peasants' bondage to landlords who found no way out to start any new venture. The famous autobiographical narrative of Shri Upendranath Barman depicts a similar dismal picture of North Bengal village economy where cash nexus procedure was yet to mature and barter system was in vogue.<sup>9</sup> But this type of economy slowly begun to change with the beginning of commercialisation of agriculture, particularly tea plantation enterprise and the introduction of railways in the Jalpaiguri district. The gradual intrusion of different classes of outsiders and the money economy changed the entire picture and this change took place in the existing agrarian social structure. But this transformation did not generate any subsequent improvement in the material condition of the Rajbansi community. Most of the people of the Rajbansi community belonged to the *adhikar* class. They were the worst sufferers and this particular class was directly hit by the whole process.

Apart from losing their ownership of lands there was not any significant place of the Rajbansi community on the existing occupational structure of the North Bengal region despite the introduction of western education in the North Bengal region. The following table will suffice to show the placement of the Rajbansis in respect of occupations.

**Table IV: 2**  
**Occupational pattern of the Rajbansis**

Income from Labourers, Rent of land Cutters		Cultivators of all kinds		Agents and Managers of landed estates, planters, Rent Collectors etc.		Field wood etc.			
<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>		
3,767	537	414,812	9,110	482	1	23,230	385		
<b>Public Administration</b>									
Trader		Gazetted Officer		Others		Lawyers, Doctors, Teachers		Religious	
<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
3,009	1,863	18	(no F)	116	2	497	2	610	39

**Note:** Rajbansis of Darjeeling, Cooch Behar, Faridpur, and North Bengal are included here.

**Source:** *Census of India, 1911, Vol. V., pt. II, Bengal, Table XVI, pp. 374-7.*

But there are certain drawbacks in the above mentioned table. Although in the table 537 women have been shown who have been drawing income from rent, but their exact status is not known. Further, 640 male and female people have been branded as 'religious', but the available data do not indicate the existence of a priestly class who lived exclusively on religious profession. But despite these drawbacks it is quite clear that a minor section of the Rajbansi community were rent receivers and their presence in other subsidiary occupations was marginal. Majority of them belonged to the cultivator class and most of these cultivators were *adhiars* and field labourers. This event points that whatever be the magnitude, a vertical division along the economic lines within the Rajbansi community took place.<sup>10</sup>

So both in the agricultural and service sector the son of the soil, *i.e.*, the Rajbansis felt alienated and this sense of alienation solidified their ethnic demands. In later stages they began to clamour for their *Kshatriya* identities.

## II

The demand for *Kshatriya* identity by a section of the Rajbansis was not purely a 20<sup>th</sup> century phenomenon; in fact, there are several references to the

Rajbansis' speaking of their royal lineage and claiming *Kshatriya* status as early as in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>11</sup> This demand for *Kshatriya* status was repeatedly stressed towards the closure of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and finally the resentment was transformed into a vigorous organised movement from the early years of the twentieth century.

The basic ground for the movement was provided by the socio-political and economic changes that took place during the Colonial rule. In the social hierarchy of Bengal, the Rajbansis along with the Namasudras, the pods and other depressed classes were placed at the bottom of the structure. Two reasons can be cited for their demand for higher status in society. With the coming of the Colonial rule the traditional economic basis of the Indian caste system begun to collapse. With the spread of urbanisation and the opening of new career opportunities and the impact of modern Western education the traditional village societies failed to retain their traditional insularity. So, a section of the lower castes influenced by these tendencies aspired for horizontal mobility. But with dismay they found their existing lower caste status proving to be a stumbling block for their social upliftment. This motivated them to look for fresh avenue to rectify the existing social anomaly. Further, the caste policy devised by the Colonial authority helped them to find a way out, while remaining within the caste system itself.

From the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Colonial authorities decided to provide protection to the underprivileged groups. Whatever may be the design of the Colonial rulers it is undoubtedly true that this Colonial policy reinforced caste identities and indirectly sponsored caste mobilisations. The Colonial policy towards education stated that the Government would assist those who "belong(ed) to the very lowest classes of the Hindu social system, or...(were) outside the pale of caste altogether. Special schools were opened in the backward areas and education for them was made highly subsidised".<sup>12</sup> For public employment the Government prepared a list of the depressed classes and made job reservations for the members of these classes. All these protective measures infused a new spirit among the lower castes to work for caste solidarity in order to affirm their own separate identities. This

led to social segregation and generated tensions between the upper and the lower castes.

The local situations also helped to provide a sufficient ground for the Rajbansis' assertion of a *Kshatriya* identity. The immigration of the 'Bhadralok' class in the traditional Rajbansi society altered the erstwhile socio-economic pattern of the society. Apart from holding a large number of lands, on account of their proximity to the local administration and their control over administration they became a dominant group in the local society, economy and politics. Guided by the traditional Brahminical cultural values they despised the Rajbansis whom they branded as 'backward, uncultured and even antyaj'.<sup>13</sup> These upper class *bhadralok* called the Rajbansi community as *bahe*; implying their cultural inferiority. The word *bahe* was a distortion of the word *babahe* by which the Rajbansis generally addressed a person.<sup>14</sup> The locals, of course, used to call the outsiders as *Bhatias*. This social and cultural hiatus between immigrant upper caste Western educated Hindus and the Rajbansis produced a sense of alienation perhaps solidified caste solidarity among the Rajbansis.

The chronicles left by Upendranath Barman and Panchanan Barma have stated that even elite section of the Rajbansi community had to suffer the brunt of the Hindu upper caste arrogance.<sup>15</sup> This points out that the elite section of the Rajbansi community were seriously conscious about caste discrimination and this factor hindered their social upliftment despite their material and cultural progress. The Rajbansi elite community was also aspiring for a place in Government services and in various self-governing bodies. But they were not able to find a place because of the dominance of the upper-class Hindus in Government offices and in various self-governing bodies. Being sidelined by the upper-caste gentry in the race for power, the Rajbansi elites used the caste sentiments to voice their grievances. Thus, the ambition for higher social status and political power motivated the Rajbansi elites to develop among the poorer section of the Rajbansi community an articulate caste consciousness in order to launch a well-organised movement for social justice.

About the *Kshatriya* status of the Rajbansis, Report of Hamilton Buchanan was ambiguous, "In this district by far the most important and numerous of these tribes, by the Assamese, Nepalise and by all such Bengalis as are not under the influence of their chief, is called indiscriminately Koch and Rajbansi, and the subdivision and distinctions which they themselves have introduced are considered as effusions of vanity and of no importance, the whole being thought low and impure".<sup>16</sup> He categorically asserted that 'I have no doubt however that all the Koch are sprung from the same stock and that most of the Rajbansis are Koch'.<sup>17</sup> Writing in 1891 H.H. Risley stated "Koch, Koch-mandai, Rajbansi, Paliya, Desi constituted a large Dravidian tribe of North-Eastern or Eastern Bengal, among whom there are ground for suspecting some admixture of Mongoloid blood".<sup>18</sup>

Suniti Kumar Chatterjee's statement indicates that Rajbansis and Kochs were alike. He said that the Rajbansis "...now mainly be described as Koch, *i.e.*, Hinduised or semi-Hinduised Bodo who had abandoned their original Tibeto-Burman speech and have adopted the Northern-dialect of Bengali... they are proud to call themselves Rajbansis and to claim to be called Kshatriyas".<sup>19</sup> Charu Chandra Sanyal, the noted anthropologist of Jalpaiguri also stated, 'Kochs are non-Aryan in origin. Some of them adopted Hinduism and became Rajbansis'.<sup>20</sup>

It should be noted that in the nineteenth century the Rajbansi chiefs taking a cue from the Hindu scriptures and Epics claimed themselves to be *Kshatriyas*. Their arguments were tendered in the form that in certain areas (c2550-2350 BC) they were known as *Haihaya Kshatriyas* who being attacked by Parasuram and Sagar of the Bhrigu dynasty fled from Aryan territories and took shelter among the non-Aryans and in the course of time lost their *Kshatriya* identities and characteristics.<sup>21</sup> By basing on this argument the *Kshatriya* movement gained momentum. This *Kshatriya* claim by the Rajbansis was transformed into a movement at the time of the Census of 1891.<sup>22</sup> By this Census Report Rajbansis and the Kochs were treated on equal footing.<sup>23</sup> Several elite segments of the Rajbansi community protested against

this identity specially Harmohan Khajanchi to articulate the protest formed 'Rangpur Bratya Kshatriya Jatir Unnati Bidhayani Sabha'. It was impressed upon F.M. Skrine, then District Magistrate of Rangpur, to recognise Rajbansis as a separate from the Koch and to allow them to be identified as Kshatriyas in the Census. Skrine in turn sought the opinion of the Rangpur Dharma Sabha, an association of the Brahmin Pandits. The Dharma Sabha after various consultations with the various schools of Pandit Samaj gave the judgement in favour of the Kshatriya status of the Rajbansis and categorically stated that the Rajbansis and the Kochs were separate castes. It was also stated that the Rajbansis were the Bratya Kshatriyas, *i.e.*, the members of the warrior caste who had temporarily fallen from their higher caste status for the non-performance of rituals which were expected from the Kshatriyas. The District Magistrate then recommended to the Census Superintendent to allow the Rajbansis to be enrolled as *Bratya Kshatriyas* and a general circular was effected stating that the Rajbansis might write their caste as *Bratya Kshatriya* in official correspondence. After this declaration the Rajbansis were pacified and for the time being the movement was subsided.<sup>24</sup>

But again the demand for *Kshatriya* identity gained momentum during the Census of 1901. Following the recommendation of Skrine the Rajbansis hoped that their *Kshatriya* status would be recorded in the Census Report and they would be treated separately from the Kochs. It was learnt by them that in the census operations of 1901 they were going to be branded as Rajbansis only not as Rajbansi Kshatriyas. Further, in the said census of 1901 the Rajbansis once more was bracketed with the Koch.<sup>25</sup> It is not unlikely, though evidences are scant, that the opposition from the higher Hindu castes played a significant role in the official denial of *Kshatriya* status to the Rajbansis.

Nevertheless, the official approach sparked of a Rajbansi Kshatriya movement led by Panchanan Barma in the whole of North Bengal and particularly in Jalpaiguri.<sup>26</sup> Panchanan Barma, a lawyer by profession had to suffer humiliations at the hands of higher castes. He was well-supported by Rajbansi scholars and pandits who compiled materials from history, folk tales

and folk songs proverbs and sayings to support the Kshatriya status of the Rajbansis.<sup>27</sup> At this time the leaders of the Rajbansi Kshatriya movement prescribed social reforms and they advocated were the wearing of the sacred thread, reduction of the days of mourning on the death of either parent from thirty days to twelve days which was the mourning period for high caste Hindus, and change of surname from Das to Barman, Singha and Roy.

The Rajbansi communities situated in Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Goalpara and Purnea districts played to their respective District Magistrates to enlist them in the Census Report as *Kshatriyas* and to allow them to use the titles like Singha, Barma etc.<sup>28</sup> For his role in the awakening the Rajbansis Panchanan Barman emerged as the most respected and popular leader of the community. It was under his leadership that the movement gained a significant pace prior to the publication of the Census Report of 1911. In May 1910 a conference was held at Rangpur town in which mostly landlords, jotedars and affluent peasants from different district of North Bengal, assembled and in that conference, the Kshatriya Samiti was formed with Madhusudan Roy, a lawyer from Jalpaiguri, as President and Panchanan Barman as Secretary. They demanded that the Rajbansis and the Kochs should be treated separately and they should be given the status of Kshatriyas.

The then District Magistrate of Rangpur C. Tindal I.C.S., in 16<sup>th</sup> December 1910 wrote vide letter no. J-3738 to the Census Superintendent of East Bengal and Assam that he had no objection in treating the Rajbansis as Kshatriyas.<sup>29</sup>

Besides, on 21.1.1911 the Census Officer of Purnea district wrote to the Sub-divisional Officer of Kishenganj that in the Census Report Rajbansi and Koch communities should be treated separately.<sup>30</sup> The demands grew so persistently that O'Malley L.S.S., the Superintendent of the 1911 census operations in Bengal commented that 'a most persistent agitation was carried on by the Rajbansis'.<sup>31</sup> At last the demand for separation of Rajbansis from the Kochs was granted.

In the year 1913 the Census Superintendent O'Malley L.S.S. commented in his Census Report "The former request was granted without hesitation as there is no doubt that as the present day, irrespective of any question of origin, the Rajbansis and Koch are separate castes".<sup>32</sup> But their prayer for Kshatriya status was not granted.

The movement linked the ritual of *Upanayan Sanskara* or the wearing of the sacred thread to the readmission of *Kshatriya* status. In February 1912 several Rajbansis from different districts of North Bengal assembled at Debiganj on the bank of Karatoya and took sacred thread.<sup>33</sup>

The Kshatriya Samiti also took several steps for the spread of education among the Rajbansi people and raised community funds for providing loans to the Rajbansi agriculturists, urged the later to improve their standard of agricultural practices and called upon them to organise cooperative credit societies.<sup>34</sup> It condemned the Hindu caste system and the dowry system. Through its monthly journal *Kshatriya*, several socio-economic problems of the Rajbansis were highlighted. In order to attain national recognition this movement made a contact with the Bharatiya Kshatriya Mahasabha, an association of Rajput Thakurs in northern and western India.<sup>35</sup>

During the First World War in order to exhibit the martial abilities, the Rajbansi youths were encouraged by their Samiti leaders to join the British army and the Samiti leaders requested the British Government to raise two battalions composed exclusively of the Rajbansis. Responding to the call, several hundred Rajbansi youth from Jalpaiguri, Rangpur, Dinajpur and Goalpara joined the British army and got involved in the First World War. In recognition of his service to the Colonial Government in the war effort, the title of Raisaheb was conferred and M.B.E. (Member of the British Empire) on Panchanan Barman in 1919.<sup>36</sup>

In spite of its declared non-political stance practically the Samiti voiced many concerns which clearly showed their political inclination. For example, in the fourth annual conference held at Debiganj in Jalpaiguri in June 1913 the Samiti declared that the Rajbansi Kshatriyas were 'loyal subjects'.<sup>37</sup> The tenth

conference held in 1919 rejoiced at the British victory in the war. During the nationalist agitation and activities around constitutional reforms in the war years and in the immediate post-war years, in a representation to the Bengal Government in November 1917 the Samiti expressed its 'apprehensions of tendencies...of discontent and even disrespect for law and order';<sup>38</sup> and urged the Colonial Government for separate representation in future constitutional reforms.<sup>39</sup>

It is presumable that the Kshatriya movement was not welcomed by the upper caste Hindu gentry and the Bhatias or Bengali immigrants into North Bengal. Though they were accused of having tried to put block in the way of the movement<sup>40</sup> in one of the Annual Reports of the Samiti, the evidences of accredited caste Hindus opposition to the Rajbansi movement are very infrequent. On the whole this *Kshatriya* movement was an important step to find upward social mobility and status for the Rajbansi Hindus within a sphere of traditional conservative upper caste Hindu domination. It is noteworthy that even in the Cooch Behar State the Rajbansis faced stiff opposition from the state administration which did not approve of their *Kshatriya* identity. Panchanan Barman was expelled from Cooch Behar by the ruler Jitendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur. The administration being run by the upper caste Hindu gentry, the local backward Rajbansi people could not match with them for positions of power.<sup>41</sup>

In spite of the Rajbansi Kshatriya movement being disliked by the conservative sections of the upper-caste Hindu gentry, the Rajbansis did not try to break away from the four-fold structure of caste system. On the contrary, it tried to emulate the practices, norms and superstitions of the traditional Hindu society. Following the Hindu system it even advocated *purdah* system for their women.<sup>42</sup> The complexity of the movement may be realised by the fact that on the one hand they sought for the upper-caste status mobility on the other they tried to disassociate themselves from the ethnic identity of the Kochs or the Rabhas. Interestingly enough, the Rajbansis also disapproved the Rabha community's movement for an identical upward social mobility.<sup>43</sup>

In spite of the social tensions that tended to originate from the caste mobility movement Rajbansi participation in the nationalist movement and also in the *Tebhaga* movement was not inconsiderable. It is true that there was an underlying current of cooperation with the British at some level for some official favours. But involvement of the Rajbansi men and women in both the movements constitute an important chapter in the history of North Bengal. Recent researches have disclosed the range of Rajbansi participation almost on secular line. Initially there were some reservations observed among the Rajbansis particularly where the Rajbansis themselves were the targets of complaint. For strong Keenship bearings the Rajbansi peasant participation in the *Tebhaga* movement, which understandably involved some Rajbansi *jotedars* was scarce in the Jalpaiguri district. This incident had baffled the social theoreticians when they started examining the causes and the ...in the *Tebhaga* movement. The quick tribal *adhikar* response to the movement in the Mal thana area of the Jalpaiguri district posited the problem in a brighter light.

Later researches however have exposed the unknown episodes overlooked by the early enquiries. Association of Jagadindradev Raikat, the zamindar of Baikunthapur with the Congress politics and with him the participation of other national-minded Rajbansi freedom fighters was one episode of the story. Incidence of Rajbansi participation in the leftist movement of the Jalpaiguri district too became frequent. But what was particularly significant was the participation of Rajbansi women in the freedom struggle. Purneswari Barman, who was popularly known as *burima*, was undoubtedly a significant female leader in the annals of freedom struggle in the Jalpaiguri district. Her participation in the movement was in fact luminal; transcending the traditional kinship affiliation she did succeed in motivating people in favour of the 'no-rent' movement. Though not institutionally align to either the Indian National Congress, or the Communist Party of India, Purneswari Barman succeeded to collect around her a band of dedicated women workers which included both left and non-left minded

people. One such lady was the wife of the later CPML leader Charu Majumdar. So, even if the catalogue of events occasioned by Rajbansi participation and by Rajbansi leadership may not be furnished here the fact remain that whatever success was achieved by the nationalist movement in North Bengal might be partly attributed with certainly to the active participation of the Rajbansis of the Jalpaiguri district.

The Kshatriya movement however in a sense reactionary, as this movement remained confined among the large land holders, jotedars and better off peasants; the issues regarding improvement of the plight of the *adhiars* and poor peasants who constituted the bulk of the Rajbansi community were not very specific in their agendas. This limitation apart it would not be wrong to view it as 'a distorted but important'<sup>44</sup> manifestation of the socio-economic tensions and conflicts in the Jalpaiguri district.

### III

With the growth of tea plantation enterprise, the condition of tea-garden labourers too had deteriorated; consequently, a ground for labour movement was laid in the district.

The immigration from Chotanagpur, Ranchi, Santhal Parganas created a huge labour force in the Duars tea-gardens, but the method of recruitment adopted by the Duars garden differed from that adopted by the tea planters in Assam. The Duars labourers were 'free' in the sense that they were not indentured labourers subject to penal measures. The reason behind this special status to the Duars tea garden labourers was that "by the time the tea industry came to be started in the Jalpaiguri district, because of certain inconveniences of the indentured system experienced by the Assam planters and increasing labour protests in diverse forms, even the latter had given up their exclusive dependence on that system and had been introducing non-indentured recruitment through garden sardars".<sup>45</sup> Further as "the Duars was much nearer than Assam to its principal recruiting grounds", so the planters did not resort to such overt acts of coercion which was found in Assam.<sup>46</sup>

But it would be wrong to assume that tea plantation labourers were free from all types of coercion. The planters as well as their agents well-utilised illegal methods, in (i) getting labour, (ii) putting labourers to work and (iii) keeping them under control. Despite the handicap of inadequate primary source materials for the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and somewhat detailed account of conditions of labour as late as the early 1940s<sup>47</sup> make it clear that the Duars plantation labour was wage labour under various types of non-economic constraints. And such type of constraints severely restricted the mobility of labour and it turned out as 'labour held in bondage in a free market'.<sup>48</sup>

All sorts of unethical, coercive methods were employed in methods of recruitment of labour. At the time of recruitment the labourers were given an advance, partly refundable and partly non-refundable. This advance was given to the recruits to pay off debts in their respective countries and to enable them to meet road and sundry expenses.<sup>49</sup> This practice helped to create an impression on the labourers that they were not free to move. After their, *i.e.*, the labourers' arrival in the gardens they were put under various forms of oppression both physical and mental. This labour system – the labourers being separated from their countries and put under a alien geographical, ethnic, social, cultural atmosphere and various forms of explicit or implicit methods employed to them – all these process made their working places vulnerable to violence and coercion. Further as the Duars region was within a non-regulated area so the planters felt no obligation in obeying the ordinary laws and regulations.

Further, in order to seclude the labourers from the outside world the planters introduced the 'universal Sunday Hat'.<sup>50</sup> If there was any move to create an extra Hat-day the planters unanimously were able to prevent such move.<sup>51</sup>

The Labour Rules were devised in a way to control the labourers. In 1905 the Duars Planters Association set up a series of Labour rules by which it was decided that the gardens enticing labourers from other gardens would have to compensate the losing gardens the expense it had incurred on

bringing a worker to the Duars and the money it had advanced to him. So although theoretically the labourers were free to go anywhere but a set of labour rules restricted their freedom.

Further, the labourers were forced to work in an unhealthy climate and so high incidence of sickness resulting in absenteeism and heavy death toll among the workers were a natural consequence. The planters too were affected with various diseases and thought for some remedial measures.<sup>52</sup> In 1912 the Duars Labour Act was passed to see the matters relating to sanitation and public health. But there is no proof that there was any marked improvement on their living standards. The labourers were workers of all seasons and as stated by Sunder in the cold weather and rains plucking work was done from 7 a.m. till about 6 p.m. with two hours' leave.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to it under various supervisory staffs like *sardar*, *dafadar*, *chaprasi*, *head dafadars* they had to do many arduous tasks.

As far as the wage structure in the plantation area is concerned, the labourers were put under an unfavourable position. In the early 1890s the tea garden male workers got on an average Rs. 6 a month while their female counterparts got Rs. 4.8 to Rs. 5 and Rs. 2.8 to Rs. 3 was fixed for children.<sup>54</sup> The Deputy Commissioner in a report commented that in 1900 that the average earnings of the most hardworking labourer was not more than Rs. 60 a year.

Despite the sharp rise of 66% in the price of rice and wheat between the years 1893 to 1908, the staple food of the tea garden labourers, there was no change in the wage structure of the labourers.<sup>55</sup> Naturally with a paltry wages they soon became indebted to their *Sardars* and in some cases to the tea garden management.<sup>56</sup>

The tea-garden labourers were poorly paid, extremely controlled, illiterate, undernourished and infected with various types of diseases. So, a seed of protest movement was sown in the tea plantation area. Prior to mid-1946 there was no well-organised trade union among the plantation labourers in the Duars and they were unaffected by the nationalist movement. But the

economic grievances prompted them to start labour movements in the Duars region. The sort of exploitation and bondage under which the Duars labourers were subjected have been discussed previously. During the war years the extent of exploitation was greatly increased. In 1946 an official enquiry was conducted; which exposed that between 1939 and 1945 the cost of living in Duars plantation area increased by 200% while in comparison with this the labourers' total income including concessions had only doubled.

The workers suffered from irregular supply of essential commodities like rice, mustard oil, kerosene oil and sugar.<sup>57</sup> Besides, standard of commodities which were supplied to them were of sub-standard qualities. The war years however created a new awareness among the labourers about the new demands and new standard of living.<sup>58</sup> The acute shortage of labour during the second world war period also strengthened labourers' bargaining power.

There were reports about labour uprisings in Assam and Darjeeling labourers and now the Duars labourers joined in the movement. In the Duars region the labour protests took shape in the forms of petitions, representations, gheroas, sudden stoppage from works, physical attack on plantation officials both white and Indian. The frequent incidents of high prices, adulteration, short weight etc. made the labourers believe that the *Kayas* or Marwari shopkeepers were responsible for these and so there were attacks on the latter by the labourers. In the second half of July two strikes 'in one of which labour made an organised attempt to cut off the garden from the outside world and to sabotage the factory arrangement' took place.<sup>59</sup>

The Duars Planters' Association in a Committee meeting held on 30 July considered labour problem at Dumchipara, Banarhat, Naya Sylee and Jiti tea gardens. The immediate reason behind protest movements in Salbari, Dima, Kalchini, Gangutia, Raimatang, Chinchula and in some other tea estates was cut in the rice part of the ration. No only the workers even the peasants of the area also joined the revolt.

The active involvement of Communists in the labour movement was acknowledged by the Colonial Officials. But most of the Communist leaders the officials opined were outsiders. Among the notable communist leaders Ratanlal Brahmin, Parimal Mitra, Domohani Branch Secretary Bimal Das Gupta, Jadhunath Singh took part in organising tea-garden labourers. Apart from the Communists some Congress workers also took initiative in mobilising the plantation workers. But the Gurkha League proved to be a divisive force and backed by the European planters, it formed a separate regional political unit comprising Darjeeling, Duars, Koch Bihar and Assam.<sup>60</sup>

The British officials and the planters tried to counter the labour movements by (1) redressing some grievances of the labourers, (2) by tackling the labourers and the communists in a firm way, (3) by evacuating particularly the European planters from the tea plantation areas and (4) by the formation of alliance between European-Indian planters. In this alliance it is alleged that the Congress leadership was also involved and such participation of Congress party exposed the limitations of the nationalist movement.

#### IV

On the agrarian issues various movements were organised; and these movements were specifically organised by the leftist parties. The Krishak Samiti was formed on the single point agenda of sustained propaganda and patient explanatory campaign around issues of peasant grievances. The movement against economic exploitation and oppression on the peasantry and *adhiars* in particular became a regular feature of Krishak Samiti activity.

Two movements, *i.e.*, the *Hat-tola* movement and the *adhiar* movement may be called the precursors of the *Tebhaga* uprising. The *Hat-tola* movement was organised by the exploited peasants on the issue of *hat tola* or tolls collected by those who owned or leased in and controlled the *hats* (weekly markets).

There were numerous *hats* in the Jalpaiguri district. It was estimated that in the year 1940 there were 6,000 *hats* in the Bengal province which were mostly owned by local zamindars who either managed these *hats* through their subordinate staffs or leased out them to *Ijaradars*. In Boda, Debiganj and Pachagar thana areas of the Jalpaiguri district the *hats* were either directly owned or controlled by the Koch Behar Raj Estate and Baikunthapur estate. Further, these *hats* were leased out to big *jotedars* of the area. As elsewhere in Bengal the *hat* owners or the *ijaradars* exacted levy from the stall owners and the peasants who came here as buyers at exorbitant rates. The levy was exacted both in kind and in cash and in the case of cash exaction was both a fixed and high rate. In the case of collection in kind the amount was determined without any fixed norm. Not only the peasantry but various other sections of rural population such as teachers, village doctors, small shopkeepers were hard-hit to such kind of exaction.

Against such kind of illegal exaction the District Krishak Samiti Conference organised a movement in the year 1939 whose main agenda was to induce the peasants not to pay *tola*. This movement first started at Maidan Dighi *hat* under Boda Police Station. The police administration took the side of the *ijaradars*. After a meeting with Subdivisional Officer a compromise settlement was done.

This event showed that even the illiterate peasants could argue their case with powerful *jotedars*, *ijaradars* and Government Officials and the achievement of a settlement in their favour gave new confidence to the peasants.<sup>61</sup> Particularly the peasants in Boda, Debiganj, Pachagar thana areas were enthused at the success achieved at Maidan hat and slowly the movement spread into other *hats*.

In order to pressurise the Koch Behar administration the peasants under the active guidance from the Krishak Samiti boycotted the *Boda hat* and set up an alternative *hat* named '*dasher hat*' or the peoples' *hat* outside the jurisdiction of the Koch Behar estate. Thus, toll collection in *Boda hat* came to a standstill.<sup>62</sup>

*Tola* collection in *Lakshmir hat* too stopped. After the closure of *Pachagar hat* one of the largest *hats* in the area the District Board was compelled to fix *toll* rates and directed the *hat ijaradars* to collect *toll* at rate which was specified by the District Board.

The successful movement against the arbitrary *toll* collection proved to be a great stimulus to the peasant movement. This movement was based on a broad peasant unity and was able to offer a challenge to the established feudal order and the local administration. This movement received support even from a section of *jotedars*, particularly the lower ones and the middle strata of rural population.

This movement was immediately followed by the *adhiar* movement. The *adhiar* movement was a natural reaction to the economic exploitation of the *jotedars*. The *adhiars* stood at the bottom of the agrarian structure of the North Bengal society. Apart from taking a half share or *adhibhag*, *jotedars* also exacted various forms of *abwabs* or additional levies from the *adhiars*. The Settlement officer Milligan in his *Settlement Report* gave a hint about the possibility of imposition of some fresh exactions on the *adhiars*. It seems that particularly in the inter war years new levies were imposed and by 1939 this became most perverse.

In addition to it the *adhiars'* obligation to the *jotedar* also involved repayment of consumption of paddy and seed loan. Such borrowings were made mainly under three systems: (a) *Dera bari*, (b) *Duno bari* and (c) *Dar Kata*. Under *Dera bari* and *Duno bari*, the *bargadars* were compelled to repay the paddy borrowed at the rate of 50% (*dera*) or 100% (*duno*) interest for a loan incurred for a period of five or six months. Under the *Dar Kata* system a certain quantity of paddy was lent during the lean season in terms of prevailing high market price, and the loan was calculated in terms of money value of the paddy borrowed. Repayment had to be made after harvesting of the crop in the form of whatever amount of paddy was available at that amount of money. The price of paddy being low at the time of repayment naturally the *adhiars* had to pay more in terms of paddy than he had

borrowed. Further the practice of stacking all paddy by the *adhiars* at the *jotedars Kholan* or threshing place indicated *jotedar* or *Giri* farmers hold on the *adhiars*.

All these created resentment among the *adhiars*. The success of 'no-tola' movement encouraged the *adhiars* further agitations. The Krishak Samiti came forward to highlight the demands of the *adhiars*. The slogan 'nij kholane dhan tolo' was put forward to solidify *adhiars'* right in the choice of the threshing place and protect their interests from the various illegal exactions made by the *jotedars* and their hirelings.

The *adhiars* in Boda, Debiganj and Pachagar thanas and parts of Sadar thana spontaneously joined in the movement. Further, the movement also spread to the Thakurgaon subdivision of the Dinajpur district and Domar thana area of the Rangpur district. With the help of Krishak Samiti's workers the *adhiars* collectively harvested the paddy and stacked it in their own places or *Khamars*.<sup>63</sup>

The *jotedars* with the help of police used all kinds to threats against the *adhiars*. Being unable to control the movement the officials of Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur District were forced in January 1940 to call the joint meeting of *jotedars* and *adhiars* to settle the disputes. In the meetings although the officials agreed on the stoppage of illegal exactions and about fixation of maximum rate of interest on paddy loan; but they also ordered that the paddy had to be stacked in the *jotedars Kholan*. The *adhiars* of Jalpaiguri refused to agree to such a settlement and continued their movement.

So far the local and district administration was not averse to the demands of the *adhiars*. But soon the whole picture changed with the involvement of Musharruff Hossain who was a minister in the Fazlul Haque ministry and who himself had a large *jotedari* interest. In Jalpaiguri he held a meeting with the *jotedars* and under his guidance the police started to take repressive measures. Sometime in the mid-1940s Gurudas Roy, Madhab Datta and Monoranjan Das Gupta, Krishak Samiti organisers were arrested and

they were sentenced to prison. So the police repression caused a setback to the movement.

It is true that the *adhiar* movement was ultimately suspended but its contributions in various aspects could not be overlooked. It succeeded in forcing the *jotedars* to agree to a reduction in the interest rate in consumption loan and in mid-1942 the district administration was compelled by the pressure created by the *adhiars* to announce the limits on interest rate on such loans. For the first time in the history of peasant movement in Bengal, the cause of the *adhiars* or *bargadars* came into prominence.

But the agrarian agitation did not come to standstill. Again in the autumn of 1946 when paddy in North Bengal fetched a higher price than the *Tebhaga* propaganda was launched. As in 1939 the initiative was taken by the bigger *adhiars* who were willing to benefit from the high post-war level of agricultural prices. Some of them who had more land in *adhi* than in *jote* right conceded *tebhaga* to their *adhiars* in respect of their *jote* lands. The two-thirds formula of dividing the crop attracted the *adhiars*, especially in such a good year as 1946. In 1946 the Bengal provincial Kisan Sabha called the demand for *tebhaga*, i.e., two-thirds of the harvests in favour of the *adhiars*.<sup>64</sup> This demand was previously recommended by the Floud Commission in 1940. During November several *baithaks* (group discussion) and meetings were held in rural interior. The chief slogans were *tebhaga chai* – a demand for two-thirds share – and *nij Kholane dhan tolo* – urging the *adhiars* to take their own paddies to their own houses instead of *jotedars'* houses.<sup>65</sup> Removal of paddy from the fields by the *adhiars* and other Communist volunteers began their activities in the first week of December 1946. The first incidents took place in Atwari and Baliadangi thanas of Thakurgaon subdivision in Dinajpur. Slowly the movement spread into other regions. In Jalpaiguri, the Debiganj-Pachagar-Boda areas provided a favourable ground for *tebhaga* movement. Specially the first report on enforcement of *tebhaga* in Jalpaiguri district came from the village under Pachagar *thana* (Police Station, i.e., P.S.) in late November. The success achieved in Sundardighi Union under Debiganj P.S. roused the

morale of the poor peasants and the *adhiars* and the movement spread quickly from village to village under Debiganj, Boda and parts of Kotwali and Rajganj thanas. After harvesting the paddy it was stacked in *adhiars'* place and *jotedars* were asked to take his one-third share of the crop. But neither the *jotedars* nor the police dared to turn up.<sup>66</sup> The active participation of Rajbansi peasant and *adhiar* women activists like Sagari Barman, Buri Ma (Purnyeswari) showed the broad based structure of the peasant movement. For several weeks the peasants and the *adhiars* in particular continued their struggles and refused to bow down to the Colonial administration and to the *jotedars*.

In the face of unity many *jotedars* were compelled to come to compromise. Further the notification of a Bargadars Temporary Regulation Bill popularly known as Tebhaga Bill was published in the Calcutta Gazette on 22 January 1947. The main provisions of the Tebhaga Bill were as follows: where the *jotedars* supplied plough-cattle, plough and other agricultural implements and manure, the *bargadar* would get only half share of the produce; but if the *jotedar* did not supply these inputs, the *bargadars* would be entitled to two-thirds share. Seed would be shared according to who supplied it. The *jotedar* could evict *bargadars* if he wanted to cultivate the land himself or with the help of his family and if 'there has been any misuse of the land' or if 'he (the *bargadar*) has failed to deliver to the owner such share of the produce as he is bound, subject to the provisions of the Act'.<sup>67</sup>

Such announcement gave a tremendous fillip to the *tebhaga* movement in North Bengal. The *adhiars* in the unorganised sectors such as parts of Kharija Berubari union under Sadar P.S. and certain areas under Debiganj, Pachagar and Boda P.S. although previously untouched by the movement now on their own initiative without any directive from the Kishan Sabha leadership started the so-called *Kholan bhanga andolan*. This was second phase of the movement in the Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur and Rangpur districts. The peasants and *adhiars* began to seize paddy in the *jotedars'* stacks and removed them to their own places for their share.

But such acts of peasants prompted the *jotedars* to lodge F.I.R. to the police stations and a severe police repression started. In the face of such

repressions the gains attained in organised sectors could not always be defended. However, between late January-early February and April 1947 a peasant agitation around the issue of *tebhaga* flared up in the Oodlabari-Dam Dim-Mal-Chalsa-Barodighi areas. Although it is not known clearly that how the tribal peasants and *adhiars* of the area came to know about the *tebhaga* agitation but there is denying the fact that an elements of autonomy always existed behind the peasants' outbursts.

This struggle could not be sustained on account of police repression which had been stated previously and was intensified in later years.<sup>68</sup> Further the urban middle classes were not enthusiastic about the movement; although some of them reacted strongly against police atrocities. Nevertheless, despite its failure the *tebhaga* struggle had the most powerful lines of continuity to radical agrarian campaigns in post-independent West Bengal.

#### V

Apart from the agrarian issues nationalist politics also affected the Jalpaiguri district. Before the non-cooperation movement was launched in 1921-22, nationalist organisation in the district as well as in the town was not in proper shape. Perhaps the intensity of the *Kshatriya* movement in the Jalpaiguri district in the pre-non-cooperation era overshadowed all national issues. Nevertheless, the entry of Mahatma Gandhi in the national politics changed the entire picture and a large number of people of Jalpaiguri came to be involved in the Non-Cooperation-Khilafat movements inspired by the message and teachings of Gandhi.

To launch the Non-Cooperation movement a special Calcutta Congress session was held in September 1920. In that session a Non-Cooperation programme was drawn up in which Khagendra Nath Das Gupta (1898-1985), a noted Congress leader from Jalpaiguri, participated. In November 1920 he went back to Jalpaiguri and several of his former revolutionary associates extended support to him.<sup>69</sup> By mid-April a District Congress Committee was

formed in Jalpaiguri town with Jagadindra Dev Raikat as the first president. Jagadindra was the adopted son of the Baikunthapur Zamindar, the late Jogindra Deb Raikat and was highly respected by both immigrant Bengalees and the Rajbansis. After the Jalianwalabagh Massacre he refused the honorary magistrate post conferred by the British Government as a mark of protest.<sup>70</sup>

A district Khilafat Committee was formed and in that said committee Md. Sonallah, a rich jotedar of Jalpaiguri took a leading part. In various parts of the Duars too the local Khilafat Committees were formed and the participation of local Muslims in the Non-Cooperation-Khilafat movements was quite inspiring. To enlist the support of the rural masses Congress workers began to go to the village markers and distributing centres, locally known as *bandars*, like Boda, Patgram, Falakata, Madarihata and Mainaguri. The prominent Congress leader like Khagendranath Das Gupta and Congress workers like Byomkesh Majumdar, Makhan Sanyal worked in the rural areas. They propagated the message of 'Swaraj within a year' and built up an organisational network in the remote rural areas. However the small town petty bourgeoisie of Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar, the traders, pleaders, students and unemployed youths participated in the movement. The Congress Party assigned the BPCC for collection of Rs. 1 crore for Tilak Swaraj fund, for enrolling 1 crore Congress members and for introduction of 20 lakh *charkhas* in villages and homes. As part of this programme Jalpaiguri quota was fixed at Rs. 30,000 for the Tilak Swaraj Fund, 30 thousand Congress members and 6 thousand *charkhas*. It was stipulated that the said quota would have to be fulfilled by 30 June 1921.<sup>71</sup> At the outset Congress workers' efforts in getting the support of *jotedars* and substantial peasants in favour of the movement was not successful. The influence of Baikunthapur Zamindar Sri Prassanna Dev Raikat who was himself a staunch pro-loyalist proved to be major hindrance in getting the support of this substantial section of the agrarian society. But slowly both Rajbansi Hindu and Rajbansi Muslim communities enrolled themselves as Congress members and offered all sorts of help to the

Congress Volunteers. In Debiganj Nagendra Roy, in Pachagarh thana Debananda Roy, Shibkanta Roy, Nagendra Roy, in Amguri Mahendra Basunia, in Ratherhat Tarini Basunia actively participated in the movement.<sup>72</sup> A section of Muslim *jotedars* and masses participated in the non-cooperation movement on account of its proximity with the Khilafat issue. The village leaders mainly stressed on the Government repression on tea garden coolies at Chandpur and in other areas, economic grievances (*e.g.*, imposition of fines enhancement of rent, court fee and road cess extortions etc.) harmful effects of liquor and the revenue earned by Government.<sup>73</sup> Further, as law courts were viewed by the peasants as centres of oppression and harassment there was a call of boycott of British courts. Along with these programmes some constructive works were done. Two weaving schools, one in Jalpaiguri town and another one at Patgram bazaar were established.

However, in one aspect the Congress Organisation failed to make any impression, *i.e.*, in the plantation area. The fact that the tea-gardens were within an insulated areas and the said areas fell within the non-regulated areas proved to be the reasons for the failure of the Congress Workers in enlisting the support of the tea-garden coolies. Besides, many Congress leaders had affinity with the tea-garden planters; consequently, this relationship played a restraining effect on the former.<sup>74</sup> Despite this some sorts of disturbances among the tea-garden coolies could be heard. Defying Gandhian diktat and the congress agenda, the local Congress supporters resorted to non-payment of rent and Government revenue in February 1922. Thus the percentage of total land revenue demand actually collected declined from 97.31 in 1921-22 to 86.72 in 1922-23.<sup>75</sup>

In another form of movement boycott of tea garden *hats* and setting up of rival *hats* took place. Such step was taken in view of various exactions and oppression in tea-garden *hats*. Magha Roy, popularly known as Magha Dewania, became popular on account of his involvement in the closure of Kulkuli hat near Kumargram in March.<sup>76</sup> But it is interesting to note that only after the Non-Cooperation movement was finally called off the incidents of *hat* boycott took place.

The character of Non-Cooperation movement reflected two tendencies – one characterised by leaning to Gandhian ideology and another to popular mentality. These two tendencies ran side by side. Interestingly all sorts of people irrespective of their religions and castes joined whole-heartedly in the movement and this inspiring factor proved to be a moral booster for the Congress workers for further movements.

During the course of civil disobedience movement Jalpaiguri district was again affected. On 28<sup>th</sup> March a civil disobedience council was formed with Khagendranath Das Gupta as President and a definite programme was planned for launching the Civil disobedience movement in the Jalpaiguri district.<sup>77</sup> The Civil Disobedience movement in the district took shape in the form of violation of Government orders and demonstrations. The reaction of the Colonial Government to these activities was predictable. They resorted to repressive activities and the entire Duars region was brought under section 144. Several Congress workers were arrested for violation of Government orders and their attempts to organise *hat hartals* at different market places spread throughout the district. Most of the urban middle classes and rural gentry families of Rajbansi Hindu origin participated in the movement. Among the noted Congress leaders arrested included Khagendranth Das Gupta, Charu Chandra Sanyal, Sasadhar Kar. As a result of severe police repression the venue of *Daukimari hat* was changed to Bhandani. Despite this transfer the police action continued and the Rajbansi youths protested against police repression.<sup>78</sup>

In Alipurduar along with the wives of Bhabanath Barman and Ganada Barman several Rajbansi women participated in the movement. Following the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931 the Civil Disobedience movement was suspended. During the truce period, *i.e.*, from 5<sup>th</sup> March 1931 to December 1931 several attempts were made for carrying the message of nationalist politics to the rural areas. For example some meetings were held at Tetulia, Rajganj, Bhajanpur, Berubari, Pandapara, Debiganj and Pachagar in which several Rajbansi Hindu land-holders and peasants attended.

With the re-launching of the Civil Disobedience movement in January 1932 again the Jalpaiguri district had plunged into the movement. Again *hat hartals* started in many rural markets and there were reports of violation of Governments' prohibitory orders in Bhitargarh, Barnesh, Patgram, Boda, Debiganj, Changrabandha, Mainaguri, Dhupguri.<sup>79</sup> On twenty first January 1932 several Rajbansi Congress workers like Shibkanta Das, Chandradeb Das, Niran Roy, Binoy Das, Kedden Das, Hari Das, Kaichalu Das, Brojonath Das and Bhodo Das were arrested in Rajganj Hat for violation of Governments' order.<sup>80</sup> During the course of the movement Keshab Datta of Changrabandha and Debananda Roy of Bhitargar proved to be the two significant leaders of the movement.

To counter the movement the police administration started propaganda and publicity works through leaflets, coloured posters, distorted articles, news bulletins etc. Further the Meerut Conspiracy case, the teachings of Dr. Bhupendranath Dutta influenced the minds of Bengal youths as well as the Jalpaiguri district youths to communist ideas. The most significant event in this respect was that on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> February of the year 1939 during the course of Congress Conference in Jalpaiguri town several Rajbansi Hindu and as well as Muslim peasants under the banner of Congress Socialist Party came to participate in the movement.<sup>81</sup> Although at the outset they were prevented by the Congress leaders and workers to participate in the Conference but at the intervention of Subhas Chandra Bose who was then President of the conference they were allowed to participate.

The movement grew in favour of non-payment of rent and revenue. The Depression and the consequent agrarian distress forced the peasants, small land-holders to such acts.<sup>82</sup> As a result there was a sharp fall in the collection of land revenue. The total percentage of land revenue demand collected fell from 90.28% in 1929-30 to 78.38% in 1930-31 and 62.26% in 1931-32, 57.6% in 1932-33 and 55.69% in 1933-34.<sup>83</sup>

However, there were some drawbacks in organisation of the Civil Disobedience movement in the Jalpaiguri district. In comparison with the 1920-22 movement, the number of participation in the Civil Disobedience

movement in the district was much lower. Although Rajbansi youths joined in the movement but in terms of participation of rural areas the picture was not at all encouraging. Muslim participation was non-existent. But the most surprising thing was that despite the impact of Depression, the tea plantation workers remained submissive, and the Congress workers too did not intervene in the tea-garden areas. The Congress leadership showed their concern only towards the interests of *jotedars*, *chukanidars* and on the issue of jute prices.<sup>84</sup> During 1942 Quit India movement the Jalpaiguri district too was involved. In the Forty-two movement Khagendranath Das Gupta, Sashadhar Kar, Rabindranath Sikdar, Satish Lahiri were arrested.

In short the nationalist movement launched by the Congress despite its moderate success at the Jalpaiguri district could not overcome its class limitations. On several occasions the Congress party compromised on agrarian issues concerning the lower strata of the peasantry and such compromises created disillusionment among the people and thus paved the entry of the Communists who became vocal about the plight of the peasant and working class.

## VI

After having scrutinised the different movements from the seventies of the eighteenth century till India's independence it can be reasonably held that most of the protest movements originated from some serious economic and social dislocations in the area under investigation. North Bengal protest movements in general and those of them which surfaced in the Jalpaiguri district were *sui generis* having very little to do with metropolitan movements in a broader sense. The Sannyasi and Fakir movements, as they are generally identified, had very much to do with the (a) cotton textile and silk textile and raw silk production, (b) imposition of the Five Year Settlement uprooting traditional zamindars and exposing the farmers to exorbitant rent demand of the interloper revenue farmers, (c) disturbance of the trading activities of the Indian peddlers imposing them inconvenient road tax by the British

administration, and (d) interference in economic and religious activities of the mendicants. The Jalpaiguri region having remained outside the pale of colonial rule consequently was not affected by the early colonial predatoriness.

The situation certainly did change after the annexation of the Western Duars in 1865. The settlement activities discussed previously addressed colonial economic interest more than that of the locals. In the process of economic colonisation, cultural colonisation by the subversion of the traditional authority and legitimacy was also brought into operation. So, almost reckless commercialisation of crops, imposition of central market, indifference towards the question of feasible relationship between wage and price and the marginalisation of the local communities by the immigrants gave rise to some serious problems specific to the region. Therefore, those protest movements which were focussed on the issues enumerated above could elicit more agreeable response than others. Nationalist movements in the district too had assumed a complex character. The immigrant caste Hindu/Muslim leadership be it in the Congress or in the C.P.I. or Muslim League, or later in the Forward Block, was more interested to remain within the framework of the institutional decisions at the provincial and national levels than tailoring those decisions suitably to local needs. Interestingly enough, none of the local political leaders of the category mentioned above had ever mobilised sufficient political weight to advance local issues as inputs to influence decisions of the parties, even at the provincial level till independence.

Consequently, another stream of movements is found to have flown through the countryside venting the local grievances. The Rajbansi Kshatriya movement was the one to address caste disabilities, while the others were rooted in the economic exploitation of the peasants, labourers and of the middle peasants. The leadership, remarkably enough, came from the sufferers themselves furnishing qualified evidences of 'organic leadership'. The caste disability against which the Kshatriya movement was held to be an effective answer was not specific to the late nineteenth century social situation. The

problem was there, though at a dormant state. The awareness of caste discrimination was activated by the facts that (a) similar movements have been already started by the Parayars in the Tamil region by Jati Rao Phule in Maharashtra, Eurunarayan Swami in the Kerala area and also by the *namasudras* of East Bengal at earlier date, (b) the immigrant high-caste Hindus having formed an influential economic and social coterie and (c) severe attack launched on the traditional land control system, traditional authority and legitimacy. The social structuring process also assumed a new character by the intrusion of a class of professionals as a product of the British educational system and of the requirement of the emerging bureaucracy. Therefore, the movement suffered the limitations being very local, sectoral and non-secular. The Koch identity established by the Census Reports acted only as a catalyst in the movement. Right from the first census in 1872 the Koch-Rajbansi equation came into operation, though the protests surfaced twenty years later from the 1891 Census.

It stands to reason how the local economy and the relative geographical isolation of the district operated at different levels to prevent linkage with the nationalist movements at the early stage. The *Swadeshi* movement of 1905 was in fact of no consequence in the urban/rural sectors of the district. For some vested interests the Bengali elite of Jalpaiguri quietly suffered the constitutional disability in the management of the Jalpaiguri Municipality. It took almost thirty years after it was set up in 1885 to get a Bengali as the Chairman. It is true that the National Congress came to the district only at the time of the Non-Cooperation Movement (1921); however the only political awakening that took place in the district in the pre-Congress era was ushered in by some revolutionary organisations which surfaced during the Bengal Partition movement of 1905. Interestingly enough, the revolutionary cadre recruited from Jalpaiguri acted outside the district more frequently than within it, and in none of the movements like *Toll* boycott they could be held on reliable evidence to have had any role to play. Associations with the tea gardens either as shareholders or as proprietors, considerable

landed interest and also in the service sector subdued the urgency to rise against the colonial exploitations in an organised way till the Non-Cooperation movement attend the political scenario.

It certainly requires deeper research to explore the morphology of the protests and the composition of the revolutionary awareness in the district. One notable feature in the district was that it was almost free from any sense of communalism along religious lines until the Muslim League transplanted it. And even if the Muslim League politics of Nawab Musharaf Hussain was tinged with Muslim communalism, communalism did never triumph; district remained somewhat free from the type of social antagonism that was observed in many other districts of Bengal.

The ethnic and cultural identities of the Rajbansis were considerably confused by the colonial anthropology. A number of questions arise in the context of what has been paraphrased from the arguments tendered in the contemporary debate. Were the Rajbansis tribal indeed? In the earliest reference of the tribes of this region the Rajbansis were not mentioned; Minhaj-uddin-Shiraj, a thirteenth historian mentioned only the *Kochs*, *Tharus* and *mechs* in his *Jabaqt-i-Nasiri*. And the status of the three tribes of Minhaj appeared to be retained by the colonial government. Regarding the antiquity of the Rajbansis nothing is certain as historical evidence, the stories of *kalika Puran*, *Yogoni Tantra* and of some of the *Buranjis* from Assam were both a historical and certain cases apocryphal too. The confusion was further deepened by the rise of Koch Behar kingdom and the policy of sanskritisation pursued by the rulers. While the tribal identity of Koch Hajo, the founder of the Koch dynasty in their sanskritisation process released some important social dynamics to result in significant social homeostasis basically within the framework of the Hindu caste structure. Obviously, some people were over-enthusiastic to identify the Rajbansis with the sanskritised Kochs keeping in view the ethnological similarities. Dalton of course was wise enough not to include the Rajbansis in his *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*.

Now some important archaeological evidences being secured by controlled digging of the mounds of Gosanimari a review of the ethnic and cultural background of the Kamtapur State may be undertaken. The Kamtapur State preceded the Koch State by a century or so. It might have petered out after the aggression of Hussain Shah, the Bengal ruler, nevertheless its cultural character being noted by the Hindu cultural markers suggest a strong sanskritic foundation. Hinduism having spread into this region and beyond Kamrupa right from the pre-Christian era augmented evidences of sanskritisation. It is yet uncertain whether the Guptas were in effective occupation of this region at all in spite of the claims of Hari Sena, nor is it clear that the Palas and the Senas could ever spread their hegemony over this region. What is somewhat well evidenced is the march of sanskritic culture. Those who founded the Kamtapur dynasty had already had a sanskritic cultural background. The founder of the Koch Bihar kingdom imbibed this culture later. Though the ethnic background of Kamtapur dynasty was not explored presumably for lack of evidences it would not be too improbable now to held that the Rajbansis founded the Kingdom and therefore they do not have to be necessarily related to the *Kochs*. Interestingly enough, the term *Rajbansi* was coined almost simultaneously with the Kamtapur dynasty in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century.

The Hindu caste paradox influenced the course of activities of the *sudras* having assumed political authority for social identity. The legitimate social authority to rule being attributed to the *Kshatriyas* as caste functioned the non-*Kshatriya* assumption of political powers was always viewed a arrogation of caste function and therefore it was socially illegitimate.

This predicament was found to be suffered by whichever dynasty not originating from *Kshatriya* caste background had come to political power in India. Consequently, either they assumed Buddhism to thwart Hindu caste infections or to explore somehow their *Kshatriya* ancestry. The Mauryas, the Bardhans, the Palas being non-*Kshatriyas* embraced Buddhism to legitimise political hegemony in a Hindu society. The Kushanas were the Central Asian immigrants and therefore, *yavanas* in Hindu parlance; so, they could not have

any other means to make a Kushana rule socially approved in India except seeking to remain outside the caste structure by being Buddhist and so Indianised and sanskritised. Sivaji did not embrace Buddhism, but he certainly sought for his *Kshatriya* ancestry to secure Brahmanic approval of his coronation. Therefore, the *Rajbansi* posture in all appearances was an earnest endeavour of the founders of the Kamtapur Kingdom to elicit social legitimacy for their rule. The cultural evidences suggest a strong sanskritised background of the Kamtapur rulers. Confusing them with the Kochs was certainly a product of colonial anthropology. Panchanan Barma was somewhat true having referred to accept this identity. But his advocacy for securing tribal status for the Rajbansi at a later stage in the Bengal Assembly undoubtedly deepened the crisis. His approach might be pragmatic in the sense that a tribal status could attract more economic benefit than a scheduled caste status. Besides, a scheduled caste status too did not go in well for the argument furnished by him in the early phase of the movement for a *Kshatriya* caste status. Even the *bratya Kshatriya* status, which was granted to them by some traditional classical interpreters of the Hindu society, was not in consonance with the social position of the *antajas*. The economic backwardness of the Rajbansis in general may suggest appropriate measures for economic entitlement, but not certainly the denigration of the caste status which the colonial policy of scheduling some professional classes would imply. The colonial administration confused *barna* with *jati* indicated by the *People of India* of Risley, as the former indicated 'caste', while the latter noted 'profession'. Megasthenes too was plagued by this confusion. It remains to be explained why Panchanan Barma conceded to the scheduled caste classification while protested against tribal equation and sought for caste and therefore status mobility. Understandably, he was not very sure about his answer to the question raised by himself. The Koch Bihar royal family also, however, sanskritised, anglicised and brahmonised they were, did never renounce their Koch affiliation, which was reiterated by King Nripendra Narayan by his proclamation. The *Kshatriya* movement consequently did not secure either explicit or even tacit support from the Koch Bihar royal family.

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15. (a) Upendra Nath Barman, *Thakur Panchanan Barmar Jiban Charit* (Bengali), 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., Jalpaiguri 1387 B.S., pp. 13-14.  
(b) Upendranath Barman, *Uttar Banglar Sekal O Amar Jivan Smriti*, Jalpaiguri, 1392 BS, pp. 43-45.
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17. *Ibid.* p. 538.
18. H.H. Risley, *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, Vol. I, Calcutta 1891, Reprint Calcutta 1981, p. 491.
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20. Statement of Charu Chandra Sanyal cited in R. Das Gupta's book, *Economy, Society and Politics in Bengal – Jalpaiguri 1869-1947*, New Delhi, 1992, p. 13.
21. (a) Upendranath Barman, *Rajbansi Kshatriya Jatir Itihas*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Jalpaiguri, 1981, pp. 26-55.  
(b) 'Buchanan-Hamilton Account' in *Census 1951: West Bengal: District Handbooks: Jalpaiguri* – A. Mitra, p. CXXXV.
22. (a) Upendranath Barman, *Rajbansi Kshatriya Jatir Itihas*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Jalpaiguri, 1981, pp. 56.  
(b) Dharma Narayan Sarkar, *Raisaheb Panchanan*, Bagura, Bangladesh, B.S. 1391, pp. 22-22.  
(c) 'Some Notes on the Kshatriya Movement in Northern Bengal', in *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, Vol. XX, No. 1, p. 49.  
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24. (a) Upendranath Barman, *op. cit.* pp. 56-59.  
(b) A.K. Roy, 'Some Notes on the Kshatriya Movement in Northern Bengal', in *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, Vol. XX, No. 1, pp. 49-57.
25. (a) Upendranath Barman, *op. cit.* pp. 59-60.  
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(c) E.A. Gait, Superintendent of Census operations, Bengal for 1901 observed "The Rajbansis of North Bengal wished to be styled Bhanga or Brata Kshatriya and to be classed among the twice-borne castes". *Census of India 1901*, Vol. 6, Report of the Census of Bengal, p. 1, p. 382, Para 617.
26. For a life sketch and activities of Panchanan Barman the following reference books are important.  
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- (b) Sibendra Narayan Mondal, *Rajbansi Kshatriya Jatir Sankshipta Itibritta*, Gouripur, Assam n.d., pp. 48-51.
27. A.K. Roy, 'Some Notes on the Kshatriya Movement in Northern Bengal', in *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, Vol. XX, No. 1, pp. 54, 61-70.
28. Upendranath Barman, *Rajbansi Kshatriya Jatir Itihas*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Jalpaiguri B.S. 1388, pp. 9-10.
29. *Ibid.* p. 10.
30. *Ibid.* p. 10.
31. *Census of India*, Report 1911, p. 445.
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33. (a) J.A. Milligan, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the Jalpaiguri District 1906-1916*, p. 10.
- (b) Upendranath Barman, *Thakur Panchanan Barmar Jivan Charit* (Bengali), Jalpaiguri, B.S. 1387, pp. 20-30.
- (c) A.K. Roy, 'Some Notes on the Kshatriya Movement in Northern Bengal', in *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, Vol. XX, No. 1, pp. 56-57.
34. A.K. Roy, *op. cit.* pp. 57-58.
35. Upendranath Barman, *Thakur Panchanan Barmar Jivan Charit* (Bengali), Jalpaiguri, B.S. 1387, pp. 23-5.
36. *Ibid.* pp. 30-44, 86.
37. *Karya bibaranee fourth annual conference*, B.S. 1320, 8-18.
38. Statement of memorandum cited in R. Das Gupta's *Economy, Society and Politics in Bengal: Jalpaiguri 1869-1947*, OUP, 1942, p. 91.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Karya bibaranee eighteenth annual conference*, B.S. 1335.
41. List of various officials at various departments indicate the dominance of upper caste gentry. For the list of officials see the *Cooch Behar Gazetteer*, 1937, pp. 2-9. The position of the Cooch Behar State was clearly stated in the Government Notification of 1891, which implored the use of Koch Behar State instead of Behar State or Koch Hajo Estate in all government communications. So the Cooch Behar Gazetteer does not reflect on anything specifically related to caste status.
42. Swaraj Bose, *Dynamics of a caste movement. The Rajbansis of North Bengal 1910-1947*, Manohar, 2003, p. 75.

43. Swaraj Bose, *Dynamics of a caste movement. The Rajbansis of North Bengal 1910-1947*, Manohar, 2003, p. 82.
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46. (1) Griffiths, *op. cit.* p. 284.  
(2) Report of the Labour Enquiry Commission 1896 (hereafter LEC Report), Appendix Q. Mr. Thompson's and Babu Abhay Kumar Sirkar's evidences.
47. Government of India, Labour Investigation Committee, Report on an Enquiry into Conditions of labour in plantations in India by D.V. Rege (hereafter Rege Committee Report), Delhi, 1946.
48. R. Das Gupta, "Structure of Labour Market in Colonial India", in *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1981 Special Number.
49. J.C. Arbuthnot, *Report on the Conditions of Tea Garden Labour in the Dooars of Bengal in Madras and Ceylon*, Shillong, 1904, p. 2, Para 4.
50. Hamdi Bey, 'A Century Survey', in Duars Branch of Indian Tea Association, p. 67.
51. For example the Duars Planters' Association prayed to the administration for preventing of Baradighi hat for being opened on any day except Sunday, W.B.S.A., File P 46 B Nos. 103-10 of August 1913.
52. Milligan, *op. cit.* 1916, pp. 13, 16-7.
53. (1) D.H.E. Sunder, *Survey and Settlement of the Western Duars in the district of Jalpaiguri 1889-95*, p. 103, Para 553.  
(2) Royal Commission on Labour in India (RCLI) Evidence, Vol. VI Assam and the Dooars, Pt. II Evidence by Bhirsa F 4216-4219.
54. D.H.E. Sunder, 1895, *op. cit.* Para 554.
55. J.F. Grunning, *Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteers*, Jalpaiguri, p. 96.
56. J.C. Arbuthnot, *op. cit.* p. 5, Para 10 and p. 6, Para 11.
57. Detailed Report of the General Committee of the Indian Tea Planters' Association for 1945, Honourary Secretary B.C. Ghose's Report, pp. 21, 25-6.
58. Duars Planters' Association Report for 1946, p. XXIV.
59. FR 2, July 1946.

60. Sachin Das Gupta, 'Cha Bagan Anchalke Bangla Haite Prithak Kribar Prachesta' (Article) in *Swadhinata*, 3 October 1947.
61. Sachin Das Gupta, 'Jalpaigurir Adhiar Andolan' (Article), in *Madhuparni*, Jalpaiguri Jela Sankhya (Balurghat), B.S. 1394, p. 282.
62. *Ibid.* pp. 282-3.
63. Sachin Das Gupta, 'Jalpaigurir Adhiar Andolan' (Article), in *Madhuparni*, Jalpaiguri Jela Sankhya (Balurghat), B.S. 1394, p. 285.
64. Sugata Bose in his book *Agrarian Bengal (Economy, Social Structure and Politics 1919-1947)*, p. 263 stated that the decision of the Communist Party to support the *tebhaga* movement originated 'from its national and international concerns wholly extraneous to agrarian question in Bengal. It was an attempt by the party to rehabilitate itself having alienated in Indian public opinion because of its war-time collaboration with the British...'. But in support of his hypothesis he could not show any valid circumstantial evidences and further although he mentioned M. Abdullah Rasul's book *Krishak Sabhar Itihas* as one of the source materials but from the said book specially from p. 147 to p. 150 I could gather no such information to support Prof. Bose's thesis.
65. Sunil Sen, *Agrarian Struggle in Bengal 1946-47*, New Delhi, 1972, pp. 36-7.
66. R. Das Gupta, *Economy, Society and Politics in Bengal - Jalpaiguri 1869-1947*, New Delhi, 1992, p. 226.
67. Sugata Bose, *Agrarian Bengal: Economy, Social Structure and Politics in 1919-1947*, Cambridge University Press, p. 268.
68. Abdullah Rasul in his *Krishak Sabhar Itihas*, p. 173 ascribed the reasons behind the failure of the *tebhaga* uprising to the revisionist thinking of the leadership about the class interest of the peasants. He stated that the Krishak Sabha's policy of treating big and small *jotedars* on equal footing was wrong.
69. Khagendranath Das Gupta, 'Swadhinata-Sangrame Jalpaiguri Zilla' (Article), in *Jalpaiguri Zilla School Satabarsikee Smarak Patrika*, Jalpaiguri, 1976, pp. 4-5.
70. Nirmal Chandra Chaudhury, *Swadhinata Sangrame Rajbansi Sampraday* (Publisher - Uttarbanga Anusandhan Samiti), Jalpaiguri, p. 9.
71. *The Mussalman*, 29 April 1921.
72. Nirmal Chandra Chaudhury, *op. cit.* p. 12.

73. Speech made by Trailokyanath Chakravorty at a meeting on Patgram bazaar on 24 June 1921, W.B.S.A. Political Dept. Poll Br. Confidential No. 39 of February 1921.
74. Duars Planters' Association Report for 1946, p. vi.
75. Government of Bengal, *Report on the Land Revenue Administration in Bengal for relevant years.*
76. One poem relating to closure of Kulkuli Hat became popular:  
*"Bhat dim, Pani Dim, Khajna Dim na  
 Jan Dim, Pan Dim, Taxo dim na,  
 Ingrezer Khajna Dim na.  
 Bilaiti karma parum na,  
 Hat bandho Kulkuli.  
 Bandemataram Hamal Buli."*
- Source: Nirmal Chandra Chaudhury, *op. cit.* p. 13.
77. *Bangabani*, 2 April 1930.
78. Nirmal Chandra Chaudhury, *op. cit.* p. 22.
79. *Trisrota* 10, 17 and 31 January 1932.
80. R. Das Gupta, *op. cit.* p. 22.
81. *Ibid.* p. 28.
82. (1) Partha Chatterjee, *Bengal 1920-1947 – The Land Question*, pp. 166-7.  
 (2) Tanika Sarkar, *Bengal 1928-1934 – The Politics of Protest*, New Delhi, 1983, pp. 129-34.
83. Government of Bengal, *Annual Land Revenue Administration Reports* for the relevant years.
84. *Deshbandhu*, Vol. I, No. 1, 6 Falgun, B.S. 1344 (1937).

## Chapter V

### CONCLUSION

Throughout the preceding survey the intensity of Colonial penetration in the economy of the Jalpaiguri district has been shown. A number of momentous socio-economic changes have originated from those economic measures and for which the regularisation of the *jotedari* system in the non-regulated areas and the introduction of new policy of revenue farming according to the convenience of administration in the regulated area are held to be responsible. By shifting the data under a theoretical scrutiny one may tentatively conclude that a great deal of 'predatoriness in the Colonial policy *vis-à-vis* the district under study is more pronounced than otherwise'. It is presumable that the operation of the Colonial economy could not be any different in this case from other parts of Bengal. Nevertheless, the specific objective conditions of the area, as we have explored in the preceding chapters, tend to suggest that there are some characteristic properties in the Colonial encounter with region, which cannot be ignored. It is needless to say that the discussion about state assumed some new complexities after the participation of the neo-classical economists. In their urgency to signify state function as a major operative system in the developmental economies they have sought to posit 'predatoriness' as the negation of the normative 'welfarism' as the mandated objective of a state. For a colonial state 'welfarism' is not an invariant adjectival property and so to incarcerate it on its disqualification on that account would be no less than a very far-fetched exercise in social hermeneutics. So, the only search question that we can possibly formulate by being qualified by our exploration of the micro-level data is to underline how other is the pattern of colonial encounter here than is ordinarily held. However, a brief reiteration of the theoretical nature of 'predatoriness' in order to locate our question may not be all too irrelevant.

In comparative historical studies, the state is seen as a central and influencing factor in determining different growth patterns. Therefore, it is

consequential that the taxonomy of states has grown so fast – predatory states, minimalist states, developmental states, organic states are only some of the terms used in the recent literature.<sup>1</sup> Although the term ‘predatory state’ has not got currency in India but in most of the literature the Colonial state is perceived as a form of predatory state. Revenue maximisation is generally taken to be a major feature for the characterisation of the predatory state. Interestingly enough, this term could be applied in the case of pre-colonial India as well. Dharma Kumar suggests that there has been an attempt to equate organic state with predatory state but the element of internal constraint as found in organic state in the form of parliament is absent in a predatory state. She laments that while discussing the Colonial economy the critics fail to point out the ‘predatory’ nature of the pre-British economy.<sup>2</sup> Of late the reversal of process is observed.

The Aligarh view finely expounded by Irfan Habib in the first volume of the *Cambridge Economic History of India* stated that the Mughal empire with its tiny ruling group was able to extract a huge ‘surplus’ from the economy, unconstrained by political opposition or by other wielders of economic power such as merchants.<sup>3</sup>

The most recent work of the Aligarh school is that of Shireen Moosvi who reinforced the view of the Mughal state as predatory.<sup>4</sup> She estimated that the land revenue demand was generally one half of the total agricultural product; 30% of agricultural output was actually collected by the Mughal state at the end of sixteenth century. Further, she stated that 82% of the ‘effective jama’ (or collected revenue) went to the nobility, 13.79% supported the emperor’s personal establishment and 4.73% was hoarded.<sup>5</sup> Raymond Goldsmith too concluded that the revenue of the imperial Government alone amounted to well over one-fifth of the national product, the Zaminders’ charges further escalated this burden on the peasants to one-fourth of the national product.<sup>6</sup> Although this Aligarh view has been criticised for reading the whole period in terms of a simple rigid governmental structure and of ignoring processes of change and the strength of non-governmental forces in

particular, the merchants<sup>7</sup> but there is no denying the fact that the Mughal State collected a huge proportion of the land revenue than its contemporaries outside India.<sup>8</sup>

So in such atmosphere of indiscriminate exaction of land revenues and in a state of 'oriental despotism' capitalism could not flourish in full form. Such condition is vividly explained by Marx. He stated that the pre-British economy closely resembled the Asiatic Mode typology.<sup>9</sup> This system of production in Marx's conception consisted of two elements, the village community and oriental despotism. The former element signified self-sustaining petty production without individual bondage but with fixed occupations while the term 'despotism' expressed two features, *i.e.*, equation of tax with rent and the appropriation of the surplus through the agency of the state.<sup>10</sup> In such a society the village communities developed the character of an enclave. The system of production and consumption was guided by their own norms and there were hardly any capitalist intrusion into the village economy, and so the villages had developed a culture of self-sustenance which was not disturbed by demographic change or by money economy.

## I

The broad theoretical position today being what has been stated above our area suggests some exploratory work not completed by the broad-spectrum praxis of the contemporary debate. A good part of the pre-independence Jalpaiguri district was neither controlled by the Mughals, nor by their predecessors namely the Pathan Sultans of Bengal. It was for them a virtual *terra incognita*; their revenue decisions understandably could not have possibly influenced the rental customs of a territory which they did not own. The entire territory being controlled by the Cooch Behar state till the early decades of the eighteenth century a regional policy of land control evolved in this region, which was specific to the ethno-cultural overtones. It was

regularised by the Cooch Behar state ever since the ruler Naranarayan set out to expand and organise the state in the sixteenth century.<sup>12</sup> The disruption caused by Hussain Shah, the ruler of Bengal to the state formation process of the Kamatapur chieftains in the fourteenth century was confined to the institutional layer of the emerging state, the society and a economy virtually remained the same. So, Naranarayan, the successor of the Koch chieftain lineage of Biswa Singha and Siswa Singha did not find it too difficult to augment the appropriate state-building forces upon the cultural foundation of the previous state. The invasion of Sulaiman Karrani was too short lived to destabilise the state and the society, nor was the subsequent invasion of a fugitive Bengal Sultan of any significance. The protection tendered by the Mughal Governor Raja Mansingh on account of a treaty secured the economy and society very effectively indeed. The invasion of Mir Jumla, the Mughal Governor in the year 1661 threatened to be very destabilizing at the initial phase, but his pre-occupation with Assam and his final retreat from this region after a severe defeat in Assam set at naught the Mughal political and cultural influence.<sup>13</sup> The only visible influence of the invasions mentioned was the growth of a Muslim population either by migration and settlement or by conversion or both. The Jalpaiguri region ceded from the Cooch Behar state sometimes in the early eighteenth century to become an independent administrative entity under the *Raikats*, the umbrella bearers of the Cooch Behar kings and descendents of Siswa Singha.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps, on account of strong kinship bond with the erstwhile landed-aristocracy neither the structure of land control altered by the *Raikats*, nor did they seek to revise the customary rent policy. Even the territory that was periodically transferred by the British to Bhutan between 1773 to 1817 from the estate of Darpadeva comprising Damdim, Chamurchi, Mainaguri and Mekhliganj (Maclane Gunj) did not experience any imposition of any new revenue policy.<sup>15</sup> The Devraj of Bhutan appeared to have been specifically interested in kidnapping, labour tax and in extra-rentals.

But the British entry into this region first in 1772 in Cooch Behar and later after the occupation of the Bengal Duars in 1865 had radically altered the economic profile of the region. A great transition took place in the economy through the introduction of a quasi-feudalist order and capitalist exploitations of waste land through commercialisation of crops. The Jalpaiguri district under the British regime attained all the distinctive characteristics of a colonialised economic establishment. The system of special administrative arrangement in the form of demarcation of an extensive tract as non-regulated area implied the urgency to endow the particular administration with extended authority to devise policies and to bring them forthwith to operation in colonial interest. Application of an identical policy resulted in five settlement operation in the state of Cooch Behar escalating the rent to 450% over a period of seventy years or so. They intended to enhance the absolute value of the 50% share of the Cooch Behar revenue.<sup>16</sup> Although at the outset the British Government showed ambivalence in determining the classificatory attributes of *chukanidar*, *dar-chukanidar*, *dar-dar-chukanidar* as tenants and their tenurial rights particularly in the Western Duars region, but with the passage of time it became clearer that in the regular portion the Zaminders and in the non-regulated Western Duars areas the *jotedars* would be the supreme agent of the Colonial administration in realising the revenues. And whatever may be the terms the fact remains that the Government was always the supreme proprietor.<sup>17</sup> The *Raikats* of Jalpaiguri were initially treated as chieftains of a native state<sup>18</sup> but the arbitrary enhancement of revenue demand even during the life time of Darpa Deva served to indicate that the British Collector of Rangpur, the British controlled district of the border, altered his policy towards Baikunthapur. Though no formal settlement was executed after 1793, the Baikunthapur rulers were basically reduced to the position of a Bengal Zamindar.<sup>19</sup>

The proprietary right which the *jotedars* obtained after the Sunder's Settlement practically did not create any property in land for the *jotedars*. The *jotedars* utilised only the usufructuary rights either for a fixed term or for an agreement to pay enhanced rent whenever the Government would revise it.

In the classical feudal structure the real privatisation of land took place through transfer of property right. But here in the case of the *jotedars* of the Jalpaiguri district no such developments took place. Further, the inapplicability of the law of pre-emption, as was done in the case of zamindary estate, put the *jotedars* of the Western Duars region in an adverse situation. Such type of economy has been aptly described in the following manner: "It is feudalism of the Bloch, Gyanshop type originating from the recognition of the necessity to create serfdom of a different character and differentiable from the European model by denuded proprietary right and torturous revision of rent often enough.<sup>20</sup> The other model of feudalism as espoused by Henry Pirrine, Maurice Dobb, Takahashi, Eric Hobsbawm etc. where the emphasis was laid on the existence of class totality delinked from the production process and subsisting on surplus value from land and given to a consumer culture has no relevance to our situation.<sup>21</sup> In recent years Brenner, Terence Byers and the members of the Feudalism Study Society launched an attack on some of the basic tenets of the argument of Mark Bloch.<sup>22</sup> They have shifted unlike the orthodox Marxists, from the study of production organisation to production relations. In our study area all colonial legislations seemed to harden the production organisation than simplifying the terms of production-relations. A definite class character of the different components of the production organisation would privilege a production-relation analysis. But in the Jalpaiguri district the kinship linkages of the Rajbansis and of the Koches transcended the class categories of influence relational stereotypes in production. Only after the settlement operations escalation of revenue demand to the extent of 250% caused land transfer to the migrants, a new term of relational norm had emerged between the land holders and the rentier communities on account of caste influence.<sup>23</sup> During a period of three decades from Sunder's Settlement to that of Milligan native land holders mostly the Rajbansis and partly the Koches were dislodged from their holdings to the extent of 45% due to inability to pay revenue in time.<sup>24</sup> The process continued till the final settlement executed by B.B. Mukherjee in 1931-35 and even after it. Besides, a land market had gradually emerged due

to the new farming policy. The entry of caste Hindu professionals from the neighbouring districts and the Marwari business community in the area of investment in land within the Jalpaiguri district had, among other things, triggered land price movement. In some tehsils (revenue districts) such as Mainaguri, Falakata etc. land price had doubled, trebled and even quadrupled, and the price movement had partly induced the land holders, particularly those whose holdings turned out to be unprofitable, to sell their estates to the affluent migrants.

Just as enhancements of revenue distressed the local *jotedars* fragmentation of estates amongst the successors economically beleaguered many of them. Besides, in each settlement some waste-lands were sought to be converted into revenue-yielding arable land to maximise revenue income. Consequently, new and enterprising revenue farmers were attracted from outside the district to execute new revenue contracts. The revenue rate in the district varying between Rs. 3.00 to Rs. 4.50 per acre depending on the quality of the land classified as *rupit*, *faringhati* etc. though exorbitant with reference to the pre-annexation rate was nevertheless cheaper in comparison with the rates in the neighbouring districts. It was found to be between Rs. 5.00 to Rs. 6.00 in the Cooch Behar State, Rs. 7.00 in Rangpur, Rs. 7.00 to Rs. 7.50 in Dinajpore and Rs. 9.00 per acre in Dhaka. In the zamindari settlement area the picture was no different; from a payment of Rs. 18,650.00 as annual tribute in the 1780s the *Raikats* were burdened subsequently with the imposition of an annual revenue of Rs. 30,000.00 or so without even a formal negotiation for Permanent Settlement with them. The pressure of over-assessment gradually filtered down to the bottom layer of the under-tenants and landless cultivators who had to pay rent to the extent of 120% of the original rental settlement. Annexation of land transferred to Bhutan in the pre-Duars war period from the *Raikat* estate reduced the rental income from the estate to the extent of 20% of its initial rental receipts.

The British Government had no hesitation in declaring itself as the holder of 'superior interests in agricultural land so as to bring the actual cultivators into the position of the tenants directly under the Government.'<sup>25</sup>

But in order to place them in that said position it was necessary to check the process of sub-infeudation and subletting. In fact one of the objectives of tenancy legislations was to check unrestricted subletting. When the Act X of 1859 was passed the occupancy rights which it created were intended for the actual tillers. But the Act of 1885 failed to protect the actual tillers of soil. So, contrary to the Colonial Government's intention the process of sub-infeudation took place.

Sir Francis Floud who was the Chairman of Land Revenue Commission admitted that "the practical difficulties of preventing subletting".<sup>26</sup> Not only in the Western Duars but also in Chittagong Hill tracts and in the Cooch Behar State the experiences relating to issue of sub-infeudation were the same. Further, lack of any provision for punitive action created further scope for rack-renting of unrecognised sub-tenants below *Chukanidars*. As mentioned earlier the *adhiar* class were like agricultural serfs without any rights or title or deed; always at the mercy of their respective *Giris* or superiors. Although they were the actual producers but they were exploited to the best advantages of their landlords. The exploitation and oppression of the *adhiars* led to a strong movement organised by the *adhiars*.<sup>27</sup> They demanded for a higher share of the produce. Though the struggle ultimately failed but it was able to bring consciousness among the peasants particularly the *adhiars* about their legitimate rights and prepared the ground for progressive legislations in their favour in the post-independence period. In the regulated portion of the district the total picture was not different. In the Baikunthapur Zamindary area the *Raikats* were the supreme owner of the land.

It is quite-interesting that neither of the two major landlord families of the Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar areas belonged to higher caste Hindu category.<sup>28</sup> The *Raikats* in particular belonged to a Hinduised autochthonous group Rajbansi/Koch and on account of certain privileges historically attributed to them they rose to the position of a feudal power. As a result the kind of tension and contradiction found in most of the eastern and northern Bengal districts between landowning classes culturally, socially and ethnically

different from the peasant masses<sup>29</sup> were initially almost absent in Jalpaiguri. Further the benevolent attitude of the *Raikats* created a conducive rentier structure before the implementation of J.A. Milligan's cess regulations. Related to this feature was that oppression by petty zamindari officials or *amlas* belonging to caste Hindus was not very marked feature in Jalpaiguri.

The position changed considerably when a large number of migrant participation came to settle both in the district town and in the farm lands. Hindu and some Muslim professionals chose to acquire urban property. A good number of Muslims from the agricultural communities migrated from Noakhali and became *adhiars*. The morphology of the tenant *jotedars* in the regulated area too became very complex. Bengali Hindus, some Bengali Muslims, Marwaris, etc. entered into rental contracts with the *Raikats*, because the cess evaluation after Milligan's cess regulation caused sharp hike in the rate of rent. This factor on the one hand compelled the *Raikats* to involve the non-local participation in revenue management and on the other worsened the material condition of the peasant class. A great number of *adhiar* population lived in the zamindari areas but neither the *Raikats* nor the Government made any alteration in their semi-servile status.

The British ushered in the Jalpaiguri district a phase of commercialisation of crops. They started tea plantation and partly induced by the requirement of the jute mills of Kolkata controlled by the British capital and in response to the market demands in England jute and tobacco cultivation added a new dimension to the crop commercialisation process. The amazing growth of tea industry in the Jalpaiguri district initially with foreign capital and being managed by the Kolkata Managing Agency Houses like Andrew-Yule, the Duncans, the Goodricks, etc. and later modestly under Indian entrepreneurship would suggest a quantum jump in the economic growth of the region. Of the two hundred and forty five tea-gardens or so and thirty of them being owned by the Indian shareholders a considerable quantity of capital inflow had taken place in the plantation industry.<sup>30</sup> Given the fact that production fluctuated on account of climate and market the dividend statistics furnished in the different Annual Reports of the Duars Tea

Planters' Association was revealing. From 50% to 215%<sup>31</sup> did the annual rate of dividends vary making the tea-garden shares very edifying investment proposition. However, not even 1% of the combined profit from the tea gardens appeared to have flown into the regional investment sector either to generate local employment or to improve agricultural productivity. The tea auctions were held in Kolkata and so even a profitable retail trade in tea was stunted. That the industry had no spread-effect in the hinterland and was suggested by the fact that no tea-chest manufacturing industry came into existence in this region in spite of ready availability of timber. Whatever effort the industry could have made to generate any secondary or tertiary economy was not very focussed. Its transformative role was limited. It was primarily exhausted in clearing forests and in organising labour settlements centering around plantation. So the industry's contribution in building an economic infrastructure in the hinterland of Duars was of very limited consequence.

Apart from tea, cultivation of jute was the next popular venture in the Duars region. Incidentally this region turned into a mere supplier of raw jute to the Kolkata jute mills; no significant industry was built up here centering around this crop. Cultivation of jute was done at the expense of *aus* or *bhadoi* rice crops. Partly being induced by the Marwari land-holders and money-lenders and partly due to better income margin a large number of farmers had opted out for jute cultivation. Jute fetching Rs. 5.00 to Rs. 7.00 per maund was appreciably more than the income from paddy ranging from Rs. 2.50 to Rs. 3.00 per maund.<sup>32</sup> But the small *jotedars* and small peasants who were the cultivators of jute crop had to bear the burnt of price fluctuations due to uncertainties of international demand, and these fluctuations often meant impoverishment of the poorer sections and the consequent strengthening of the position of the large landed interests. The latter were the only class who derived some significant benefits from the jute economy.

One of the significant developments that was observed during the period was the phenomenal growth of grain markets. Larger quantity of paddy land being transferred to jute cultivation scarcity of food grains severely hit the area. To partly retrieve the area from this predicament an

import-market in food grains grew under the aegis of the Marwari business community. Grains were imported from the neighbouring food-surplus districts. Rice import from Bhutan was often recorded in the Bengal Annual Administrative Reports. Scarcity did certainly affect price in the local market, but its benefit could not be reaped by the farmers on account of the fact that the Marwari land-owners with commercial interest in the jute industry of Kolkata did not allow the farmers to exercise their options. Due to this import business in grains the local *huts* had not only proliferated but they did also assume new commercial significance. Imposition of administrative control over the *huts*, as we have discussed in a previous chapter, is explained by the revenue paying capacity of the *huts* freshly acquired from the grain trade.

## II

The second important change in the Jalpaiguri district is noted in the structural changes in the society principally based on the emergence of a new landlord community. The Colonial Government's desire to bring all the waste land under rent and to extract maximum possible revenue through *jotedary* settlement could only be materialised with a corollary creation of a land market. And in the Jalpaiguri district particularly in the Western Duars region this dream was materialised. Various factors such as commercialisation of agriculture, land speculations, periodic enhancement of revenue through successive settlement operations and immigration into the Duars region prompted the rapid sale of *jotes* to the outsiders who had no previous connection with the land. The new settlers brought with them a caste-based hierarchical social structure that was not specific to the local society.

The Rajbansi society was basically egalitarian in their code of social conduct. Even though they are a significant component of the Bengali Hindu society of North Bengal they have not imbibed the culture of hypergamy in their marriages. Nor do they entertain untouchability as it is ritualised in caste Hindu ethics. It is true that they belonged to the Hindu community but the

traditional Hindu cultures or norms failed to make an impact on them. The erstwhile Rajbansi society was held together on the kinship network than by the ideology of caste differentiations and caste immobility. So a non-caste society had operated despite the structural functional differences between the *jotedars*, *chukanidars* and *adhiars* enjoying social authority and legitimacy. Interestingly enough, in the stated situation of functional differences no rigid structure formation along feudal lines did take place in clearer terms with the potential to espouse class-conflict. The answer to this question perhaps lies in the operation of traditional philogenetic ties which had caused the above mentioned functional groups to overlap and fuse at different stages of social intercourse. At this stage of egalitarian social order the transfer of *jotes* understandably disturbed specially the traditional fabric of the society. As the new purchasers of the *jotes* belonged to different social, cultural backgrounds as restructuration of the society to perform multiple acts of new social requirements was all but inevitable. Stratification of the society both in terms of caste hierarchies and class differences gradually assumed a discernable shape by partial rejection of the erstwhile kinship dominated society.<sup>33</sup>

The professional communities which were purchasers of *jotes* had gathered in different urban centres in the district and their urban and middle class (*bhadralok*) backgrounds were not congenial to the growth of economic class stereotypes. But their influence on the traditional Rajbansi society was not at all negligible. It was the English education and the process of urbanisation that influenced the old society and they served to displace the traditional rural elites which was the stronghold of the Rajbansis. Both due to the governmental and private initiatives schools were set up even in the rural sectors. Rajbansi student population too had increased over the years.<sup>34</sup> The new elitist outlook gradually spread among the Rajbansi *jotedars* who encouraged their children to go to schools. Further, caste consciousness and absenteeism among the Rajbansi *jotedars* grew. One tangible result of this alienation was the derogation of physical labour or professions like farming which would involve physical labour by the new class of *jotedars*. The

formation of this 'bhadralok' mentality among the Rajbansi a section of the *jotedar* community created a social strata which was clearly distinguished from its parental background. Besides, occupancy rights being granted to a particular class of tenants by the Government a non-agriculturist class other than the *jotedars/zaminders* came into existence. Certain features of caste-based society also became pronounced. For long untouchability, even after their claimed assertion to the status of 'Bratya Kshatriyas' was kept at bay. But after the settlement of outsiders in the Jalpaiguri district particularly in the Western Duars region the influence of Hindu caste society turned out to be too overwhelming for them to resist. A feeling of caste consciousness could be found to operate among the Rajbansis of the Jalpaiguri district; the Rajbansi *jotedars* being payers of revenue held themselves superior to the rentier Rajbansi *jotedars* in the Permanent Settlement area of Rangpur.<sup>35</sup> For marriages particularly the Western Duars Rajbansis started refusing to consider their counterparts from Rangpur as equal in ritual status. In addition to that the Rajbansis of Western Duars did not consider Kochs or Rabhas to their status equivalent to and they tried to socially dissociate themselves from them. It is important to note that the position held by the Cooch Behar rulers on the Rajbansi-Koch issue was likely to have confused them. The rulers were taken for the political and cultural icons for the Rajbansi people. But the notification of Nripendra Narayan ordering the officials to use "Cooch Behar State" in all transactions as the only status affix state weakened the Rajbansi argument. This tendency manifests a trend towards the adoption of the culture of the 'primordial' public by those from the social periphery who had been pushed forward by their education and economy in their desperate effort for retrieval of status.

Due to a sense of professional conservation among the Rajbansis they were normally disinclined to change their traditional profession, *i.e.*, farming. After the opening of the tea gardens the Rajbansis refused to work as labourer in tea gardens. Consequently, the planters were forced to recruit workers from among the tribals of Behar. The Railways too failed to attract the local

population and thus created job opportunities for the workers who came from the United Provinces and Behar. Even during peak time when a labourer could earn as much as Rs. 1.00 a day in jute godowns the Rajbansi labourers were not available.<sup>36</sup> A total abstention from the non-family professionals was the marked feature of the Rajbansi society. But it began to change after the intrusion of the migrants. New professional strata gradually began to grow in Rajbansi society, who could be readily identified for their middle class orientations.

The social dynamics thus released gave rise to a complex crisis of identity in the Rajbansi society. Professional mobility unwittingly caused some sort of status mobility in inter-community relations. It had also indirectly influenced the intra-structural order within the Rajbansi society itself.

The occupational reasons forced the service class to leave the villages and thus it produced among them a sense of alienation from the villages and village communities. They adopted the new urban mode of living which accentuated the differences between them as a problematique in the rural-urban dichotomy. The professional changes in fact developed a sense of loss of identity both for those who adopted the new professions and those who choose to live within the fold of traditional economy.

The emergence of a professional category also disturbed the erstwhile patron-client diadic system of the traditional Rajbansi society. It is true it was not always possible for the service communities to play the role of patrons in relationship to the economically weaker section of the community. What was even more disorderly was the withdrawal of the structural and emotional linkage suggested by kinship and philogenesis. But the loss was partly compensated by the emergence of a new political elite. The new socio-economic situation had indeed given birth to a new generation of organic leadership. The Rajbansi Kshatriya movement which mainly centred on a demand for caste and status mobility was spearheaded by Panchanan Barman who was a lawyer by profession. Men like Panchanan Barman, Upendranth Barman with their high educational background had more proficiency in

communicative skills and in the mobilisation of opinion for their cause transformed them into the natural leaders of the community. In subsequent years also this leadership category gained in wider recognition and so it could extend the nationalist movement to the countryside with the active participation of some women leaders from amongst them. Therefore, the emergence of the new social structure opened an avenue for the Rajbansi society to reform the traditional outlook and their aversion to professional adaptations.

But the economic distress was so compulsive caused by land transfer and by the absence of any substitute gainful employment that the leaders could not sustain the logic of their caste status mobility movement within the framework of their initial agenda. They succeeded to secure a caste status in the subsequent census reports modification of the government policy to attribute to them a tribal status and therefore to include them in the tribal category in the population schedules of the early censuses. The *bratya Kshatriya* caste status too was legitimised by section of the Hindu interpreters of caste and personal laws. Later, in spite of the success achieved in the realms of caste mobility movement Panchanan Barman fought in the thirties for the scheduled caste status for the Rajbansis in the Bengal Legislative Assembly.<sup>37</sup> Scheduling of some castes was certainly suggested by the admission at the government level of the lower caste status of some Hindus at the foundation layer of the social hierarchy and their economic and social disabilities. Presumably, the *bratya Kshatriya* logic that was tended for status improvement of the Rajbansis was not in consonance with the caste status of the 'scheduled caste' community. Nevertheless, the economic benefit that was likely to be derived from the government policy of caste quarantine induced him to plead for the inclusion of the Rajbansis in the scheduled caste category.

### III

Colonial land revenue policy entailing revenue and rent burden on the local agrarian community, commercialisation of crops, random disposal of

*jotes* for non-payment of revenue in time, and the inflation of the number of *adhiars* caused by the burden of revenue and rent nurtured a spirit of rejection. The whole region was rife with economic discontent. Consequently, it did not take much time to mobilise the disgruntled under the banners of different shades of political leadership. Particularly during the Non-Cooperation Movement a strong possibility had manifested to enable the political leadership to interweave the Hindu Rajbansis, the Rajbansi Muslims, peasants, labourers and the tribals by the thread of nationalism. An awareness of colonial exploitation had engendered in them a bond of fraternity. But the local leadership originating from the Congress was involved in class contradiction. With landed interest and investment in the plantation industry the Congress leadership could not circumvent their class affiliation and class interest for the greater interest of the mass. Besides, their urban centrality disqualified them to be able to effectively interpret the basic agenda of the non-cooperation movement in the practical terms of the local interest. So, it had turned out to be the characteristic feature of the movement that the urban leaders had tendered unqualified support to the Gandhian agenda *per se*, while the rural sector outside Congress influence tailored it according to their requirements.<sup>38</sup> The experience during the Civil Disobedience and the Quit India Movements were not any different from the previous movement. Though there was an attempt made by the local workers of the CPI to narrow down the gap between the rank and file in addition to the efforts made by the limited number of revolutionary terrorists, but no substantial ground was gained.

The crisis was further deepened due to the fact that the Rajbansis in general were circumspect to the operation of the urban non-Rajbansi middle class political leadership. Rajbansi response to the *tebhaga* movement was not too enthusiastic. And even in the nationalist movement they were found to augment sufficient political will when the leadership originated from the rural elite and from with their own community. Significantly enough, wherever the movement roused spontaneous response it was specifically focussed on say reduction of *hut* tolls, non-payment of cess, no rent payment

etc. as the principal agenda of the movement. The tea-garden workers too had their praxis to interpret the nationalist movement. Revision of wages, regularisation of benefits of ration, equalization of male and female wages and labour exploitation by the managerial community appeared to be the most immediate and pressing demands to mobilise them under a political banner.

This fragmented political experience from the district is largely explained firstly by the sense of isolation which was engendered at the time of the *Rajbansi Kshatriya Movement*. Secondly, the *bahe* and *bhatia* economic and cultural dichotomy of the subsequent years waged a social fissure. The locals but socially out-distanced (*bahe*) and the immigrants (*bhatia*) turned out to be two ethno-cultural polarities with an intangible social linkage purported to be established by the middle class products of an indefinite urbanisation process. Being thwarted in quick measures from their primacy in the economy of the locality almost simultaneously by the plantation economy and the unequal competitiveness in land control from the migrants they came to nurture a condition of impossible social reconciliation between the *bahes* and the *bhatias* at every layer of the amorphous social structure of North Bengal. It assumed more complexity for the fact that the Santals, Oraons and the Mundas infesting the plantation labour population were set out to be bracketed as the *madesias*, the ethno-cultural order in the demographic mosaic of North Bengal. The colonial ethnology emphasised only on the Rajbansis and the Koches as the major ethno-cultural categories in the region, and in the process they ignored the Totos, the Dhimals, the Ravas and the Meches. It indeed baffles one seeking to explore the rationale of the ethnic classification in 1872, 1881, 1891 Censuses, in the context of the studies of Hamilton and Dalton,<sup>39</sup> during the same period, underpinning the Rajbansis and the Koches as two ethnological types. Further, the position which was held by Hunter in his *Statistical Accounts of Bengal*, Vol. X, also did not correspond with the position held by Risley in his *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, Vol. I. In order to integrate the tribal labour population in the tea-gardens a *lingua franca*, namely, *Shadri* had been crafted to be used as a linguistic cultural marker. It had been dignified

by the Linguistic Survey of India by the attribution to it the status of a *dialect*, just as the Rajbansi language had been classified as a dialect of Bengali. All of it had happened since the second half of the nineteenth century.

The process of land alienation gained in an incredible momentum first after the partition of India in 1947 and later during and after the Bangladesh movement. Though there is no decadal cadastral survey to ascertain the quantity of land transferred to the migrants during this period, nonetheless the irresistible forces to destabilise the economy of the locals were easily discerned. Besides, the development of any new industry at the level of private and public sectors is not seriously considered; so the concealed unemployment in the rural sector which is the principal habitat of the natives continues to survive. The service sector that has expanded during the last six decades has only addressed the needs of the urban unemployed, though very insufficiently. Incidentally it may be mentioned that one of the remarkable features of the post partition migration in this region is the migration of the agricultural community from the East Bengal. This migration has exacerbated both a qualitative and quantitative change in the agricultural sector. Introduction of new agricultural crops, crop rotation, augmentation of ready response to the scientific know-how in agriculture are reasonably attributed to the immigrant agricultural workers. The fact however remains in spite of some appreciable change in the agricultural sector entitlement to a tangible means of livelihood still alludes the native populace very substantially. The undercurrent of social tension that comes to surface very often in recent years is assumed to be sustained by the frustration that the natives have partly inherited from the nineteenth century and the feeling is partly intensified by the inadequacy of the development measures suggested for North Bengal.

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## Glossary

<i>Adhiar</i>	:	Sharecropper (term in use in North Bengal)
<i>Chukanidars</i>	:	Tenure-holder below the rank of jotedar
<i>Danga</i>	:	High quality arable land
<i>Dar-Chukanidar</i>	:	Tenure-holder below Chukanidar in North Bengal
<i>Dhangar</i>	:	Sweeper
<i>Doba</i>	:	A type of land always under water
<i>Dohala</i>	:	Low lying arable land
<i>Faringati</i>	:	High land where tobacco and rabi crops were grown
<i>Hat</i>	:	Weekly village market
<i>Jhum</i>	:	A tribal way of cultivation by which at first jungles are burnt down for preparing the lands suitable for cultivation
<i>Jote</i>	:	Cultivable land
<i>Jotedar</i>	:	Holder of cultivable land in North Bengal, often a substantial land-holder
<i>Kabuliyat</i>	:	Tenancy document
<i>Khatian</i>	:	Settlement document
<i>Mauza</i>	:	Village (revenue unit)
<i>Patit</i>	:	Land which is unfit to bear a crop
<i>Patta</i>	:	A document of purchase
<i>Praja</i>	:	Tenant
<i>Ryot</i>	:	Peasant; tenant under meaning of the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885
<i>Sahari</i>	:	A type of land between danga and dohala
<i>Taluk</i>	:	A type of tenure; usually the rent collecting right below the level of zamindar (in East Bengal)