

Land Settlements in Cooch Behar State: An Overview

The earliest information about the land revenue system of Cooch Behar State was not available before 1773. A regular history of land revenue administration of the State begins from that year as the State came into contact with the British through the Treaty of 1773. The dearth of any accurate records except the “*Rajopakhyana*” or the account of the kings of Cooch Behar written during the time of Raja Harendra Narayan, about the settlement of land revenue of the State does not give us the opportunity to know about the accurate revenue administration of the country. Naturally to get the account of the old institutional structure we have to depend on the sources based on surmises and speculation.¹

3.1. Pre-Colonial Land Management System of the Cooch Behar State

From the very beginning of its date it appears that the land of the state had been divided into two parts: revenue paying and revenue free. Persons holding the first kind of the land had to pay the revenue to the State. The holders of the rent-free land, on the other hand, were private individuals who obtained them for special purposes and enjoyed them free of any charge. The rent-free land was held for various purposes, such, as, the performances of religious rites, the maintenance of Brahmins and men of learning, reward for good services done to the state, and maintenance of the relations and connections of the ruling family.

The revenue paying lands were originally divided into *Mal*, *Debutter*, and *Khangi*.² The revenue from *Mal* directly went to the royal exchequer of the State. The second one was dedicated for worship or maintenance of the deities and for other religious purposes. And the third one was set apart for the maintenance of the Maharaja’s household. The *Khangi* lands were gradually vanished as a separate class when Colonel Houghton incorporated them with *Mal* lands in 1864. *Debutter* lands were also brought under the *Mal*. Thus these two kinds of land formed the two big sources of state revenue under *Mal*.

Simultaneously, there were some revenue-free tenure in the State such as *Brahmatter*, *Mukarrari*, *Petbhata*, *Bakshis*, *Debutter*, *Pirpal* and *Jagirs*³. *Brahmatter* lands were given to *Brahmanas* by the ruling raja for their support (Appendix-2). These grants were hereditary and transferable. *Mukarrari* grants are lands given at a fixed rate, free from all *abwabs* (extra cess) with the exception of *Batta*. These land grants were hereditary but on the case of failure of heirs lands were escheated to the state. *Petbhata* lands are rent free holdings generally given by a raja for the maintenance of his relatives. A *Petbhata* grant lapses at the death of the original grantee and his heirs must apply to the raja for a renewal. This land is not transferable. *Bakshis* land grants were given to some people for their extraordinary performance for the State. These grants are hereditary and transferable. These grants are escheated to the State on failure of heirs. This type of grant was same like *Lakheraj* grant. *Debutter* grants are lands given for the maintenance of an idol. They cannot be sold or alienated in any way. This land grant was not hereditary. In Cooch Behar State there were two types of *Debutter* lands- State *Debutter* and Private *Debutter*. *Pirpal* resembles *Debutter*, being land granted to *pir* or Muslim saints.

In *Jagirs* or service tenure system, the persons holding *jagirs* are bound to give certain pre-defined personal services for the land they hold. If they fail to do so, or if their services are no longer required, the land is liable to be seized by the State. *Jagirs* are not saleable or transferable. The right of the *Jagirs* can be inherited but State used to enjoy the discretionary power to bestow the right⁴

For revenue purposes rented lands were classified according to the nature of the produce.⁵ There are references to the *Baotali* (very low land where *Bao* paddy was sown), *Maghuwatali* (land for the cultivation of Rabi crops), *Ahutali* (where *Ahu* paddy was cultivated), *Rupit* (lands for cultivation of *Sali* or transplanted rice) etc. Assessment varied depending upon fertility of soil, amount of produce or number of ploughs used.⁶ There is no record to show that any survey of land was undertaken during the period of our study. But certain units of land measurement like those of *halsa* or *halisa*⁷ equivalent to one *bigha*, and *bish* equivalent to thirteen standards *bighas* of land were prevalent. Besides, there was another unit called *pura*⁸ consisting of four *bighas* of land. So it appears that there was variation in land revenue assessment based on variation in productivity of land. The First grade of land was

assessed at Rs. 20 per bish and second grade of land was assessed at the Rs 15 per bish. The peasants used to pay Rs 10 per bish for the third category of land.⁹

Although the actual procedure and rate of assessment in the Koch kingdom is not known it appears that some sort of *Paik*-system existed there. These *Paiks* had to serve the State with manual works, and to go to war as soldiers when necessary. In return they enjoyed some plots of free of revenue. Besides, the *Zamindars* like the *Bhuyans* and other high state officials like *Dewan*, *Kajri*, *Choudhury*, collected revenue from the peasants in their own way who were directly under their control, and sent a certain amount of their respective collection to the centre.¹⁰ After the Koch Kingdom had been annexed to the Mughal Empire, the system of collection of revenue was changed. The royal princelets and other *Zamindars* deposited with the imperial treasury a certain amount of their collections from the peasants. The settlement in such cases was made annually and the procedure was to “settle the *jama* agreeably to that of the preceding year”¹¹

Revenue was collected in cash or kind although the first was preferred. Khan Chaudhury points out to a tradition which states that in an inscription of the Kamata king Nilambar the king advised his successors to realise only a very few *Kowris* as revenue for each plough. By this reference it appears that during the rule of the early Koch kings the rate of the assessment was low, and the amount in terms of *Kowris* had been taken from the cultivators as revenue.¹² The *Katha Guru Charit* appears to inform us that the peasants were to pay $1\frac{1}{4}$ th of their produce as rent to the royal treasury.¹³ It is possible that the small revenue officers collected more than the original rate¹⁴ and made the life of the peasant sometimes miserable. The contemporary literature informs us that sometimes the poor peasants had to fall in recurring arrears of revenue as a result of which they had to mortgage their labour to the affluent neighbours.¹⁵

But the rate of the revenue assessment of the Koches was lower than the Mughals. This was substantiated by the fact that when Mirjumla left Cooch Behar for Assam, the peasants of Cooch Behar rose in revolt against Mughal revenue system introduced by Mirjumla. The reason behind the revolt was the new rules and regulations imposed by the Mughals for the collection of the revenue. The demand of revenue in cash might have antagonised the peasants of Cooch Behar against the Mughal rule.¹⁶ The process of collection of land revenue in the Koch kingdom

changed so many times from the time of Biswa Singha to the period of Dhairyendra Narayan. Biswa Singha could not introduce any new method for revenue collection. Nara Narayan allowed the former revenue collectors like *Bhuiyas* to collect revenue from the peasants.

For the dearth of sources it is very difficult to enumerate the exact amount of land revenue collected by the state both in the form of cash and kind. Early Koch rulers had collected the tribute through warfare. But the beginning of the Mughal-Ahom intervention in the State had increased the demand of revenue in cash when the tribute collection through warfare was stopped. From the contemporary literature an idea can be made about the amount of the collected revenue from the State. Annual tribute (peshkash) paid by Laksmi Narayan to the Mughal emperor was Rs. 100000 or 80000 *Narayani Tanka*.¹⁷ The *Darrang Raj Vamsavali* claims that king Raghudev Narayan had a hard cash of Rs 3crores in his treasury.¹⁸ Similarly Prana Narayan paid Rs. 550000 to Shaeista Khan, the Mughal Governor of Bengal in 1665 A.D. as an indemnity. After the Grant of Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the East India Company in 1765 revenue of the *Chaklas* of Boda, Patgram and Purbabhug had been began to be deposited to the Company's treasury as the Mughals had conquered these three from Rup Narayan in 1711.¹⁹

Cooch Behar State became a feudatory State to the East India Company by virtue of the Anglo-Cooch Behar treaty of 1773.²⁰ According to this Treaty of 1773; it is also noteworthy that the half of the revenue to be paid to the English Government is clearly marked out as a tribute and not as a tax. This tribute agreed to be paid to the British Government by this treaty, was collected by the collector of Rangpur²¹. Upto 1780 the tribute was realized by committing the total collections of the state to *Tehsildars* appointed by the British Govt, and from the total collections the *Tehsildars* deducted the half share of the British Government and paid over the other half to the State. Thus collection was made twice from each *Jotedar*, once by the East India Company's *Tehsildars* for half the amount and second time by the revenue collections of the Maharaja for the remaining half.²²

The persons paying the charge on the land immediately to the State, or to the persons authorised to receive the same, were called *Jotedars* and formed the first grade in the tenancy of the country.²³ Originally these men were perhaps the cultivators of the soil and residents of the State, and the different grades of under-

tenures did not probably exist.²⁴ When Mr Purling made the *Hastabood* or account of the revenue in 1774, he found that the revenue payable by the *rayat* consisted of two parts, namely *assal* or original rent, and *abwab*, or additional cesses, which were then consolidated into one.²⁵

Prior to the year 1773 the settlement was made with the *Jotedars* who paid revenue to the State. No regular *patta* (agreement deal) appears to have been granted and the land had never been measured.²⁶ The settlement was renewed from year to year and the assessment was not fixed. There were three different rates for assessment for different qualities of land. The mode of assessment and the system of collection were both irregular. The practice which was generally followed was to settle the *Jama* agreeably to that of the preceding year, and representations as to heavy assessment were attended to and remissions allowed afterwards. How the first and earliest settlement was made must, however, rest for ever in oblivion.²⁷

3.2. The Colonial Land Management System of Cooch Behar State

The collection was made by the State through its own officers called *Sajwals*. Over and above the rentals and *abwabs*, the *Rayats* had to pay certain charges called *maffasil khurcha*, which were not included in the public accounts. These formed about a fifth of the whole revenue. They consisted principally of *nuzzar* or *selami* to the State officers, of interest on money borrowed on the part of the *rayats* by persons employed in collections at a most exorbitant rate to make good arrears of rent and of *talabana* or allowance to peons.²⁸

The dishonesty and greed of the State officials caused great hardship to the people. Large portions of the land were alienated, new and irregular exactions were imposed and the administration of justice was not up to the mark to secure gratification.²⁹ The harassed and oppressed tenants left the State in large numbers. The income from revenue was reduced a lot. So after deducting large amount as tribute of the East India Company very little was left for the management of the State.³⁰ The number of the *Jotedars* as could naturally be expected was large, and stood in the way of successful *Khas* collection of revenue under a system of government not well organised and not properly administered. It was found more

convenient to farm out the revenue-paying estates to outsiders who were made responsible for the State revenue.³¹

Taking account of this disturbed state of affairs Lord Cornwallis, the Governor General of India appointed a Commission in 1788. On the basis of the report of the Commission Henry Douglas was appointed as the commissioner in 1789. He introduced the *Ijaradari* system in Cooch Behar for the collection of revenue in 1790 and to control the irregular affairs of the State.³² In fact it was a necessity of the time for securing large amount of State revenue. The measures adopted under this system are the following:

1. The country was divided into small parcels and put up to auction and the highest bid with approved security was accepted.
2. The *jamias* payable by the *Jotedars* to these farmers were generally settled agreeably to that of preceding year. When the lands were measured the farmers made their assessments according to certain fixed rate.
3. The settlements were at first made annually. From Mr Ahmuty's time they were for 5 years.
4. The *Ijaradars* used to collect from the *ryots* two charges called *Ijaradari* and *Saranjami* each forming one twelfth, and two together one sixth as their authorised share of profit.

But the *Ijaradari* system was unsuccessful and had given rise to greater abuses than the earlier one. In fact the defects lay at the root of the administration. Firstly, The ladies of the royal seraglio, the relatives of the king and the *amlahs* of the State used to take out the *Ijaras benami* and by virtue of their position they could easily made the exactions from the *ryots*³³ Secondly another evil result of this system was the extensive sub-infeudation. It is not known from what period the under-tenures, such as *Chukanis*, *Darchukanis*, and so forth have their origin. But it is also a fact that the oppressions and undue influence exercised by the official farmers converted many *Jotedars* into *Chukanidars* with a corresponding lowering of the status of the under-tenants below the *Jotedars*. Thirdly, the peasantry ruined by short term settlements.

Douglas was succeeded by C .A. Bruce in 1791 and the latter by W.T. Smith in 1795, who made over charge to R. Ahmuty in 1797. When Ahmuty was the

commissioner a regular register of the lands of the State was made. The only change Ahmuty brought about was to enhance the period of these farming leases to five years from one year as originally introduced by Douglas. In the meantime Maharaja Harendra Narayan came of age in 1801 and the matter remained stuck up there. And Mr. Ahmuty was directed to make over the administration to him. On the removal of the Commissioner in 1801 it appears that the administration and the superintendence of the police in Cooch Behar State had been transferred to the collector of Rangpur, but in January 1803 it was again found necessary to appoint a Commissioner, for the purpose of carrying better administration.³⁴

In subsequent years attempts were made by the British administrators to introduce regulated administration in the State but the refusal of the Maharaja prevented any further interference to the affairs of the State. Further improvement in revenue administration had to await another minority of the Raja in 1864.³⁵

To know the further details of the Land Settlements we have to know the tenorial condition of the State. The king was the actual owner of the soil, but the cultivator's right over their hereditary possessions was never questioned by him. The estates given to the relatives of the king were subject to be taken over by the king after the guarantee's death. The *Jagir* lands were allowed to be held by the State officers during the period of their service only and thus transferable. Available cultivable lands were distributed among the peasants and their records were kept by the concerning officers without allowing them to exercise their hereditary rights over them.³⁶

The revenue paying estate in the country was called the *Jote* and the holders of this estate were called *Jotedars*³⁷. They formed the first grade in the tenancy of the country. Originally they were the cultivators of the soil and residents of the State and the different grades of under-tenures did not probably exist. But after the contact with the British the land tenure structure had undergone a rapid change. It was not so much complicated like the system prevailed in the rest of Bengal. We got the information about the later structure of the land tenure from the report made by Mr W.O.A Beckett, Assistant-Commissioner in charge of the Cooch Behar Settlement, dated 12th Dec, 1874. According to his report it was seen that the *Raja* was the owner of the soil. The different classes of tenants found in the State were as follows:

*Jotedars, Chukanidars, Dar-Chukanidars, Dara-dar-Chukanidars, Tashya-Chukanidar, Tali-Chukanidar, Adhiars.*³⁸

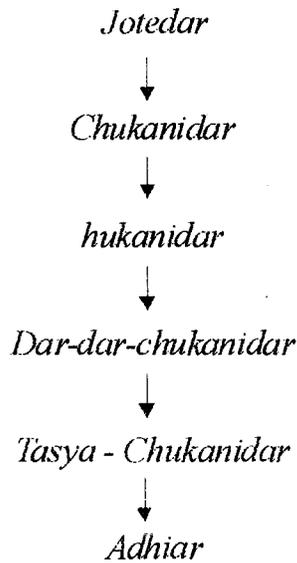
Persons holding revenue-paying land immediately under the *raja* was called *Jotedars* or proprietors of *Jotes*. A *Jote* was hereditary, transferable and divisible by the customary law of the country. It was liable to be summarily sold for its own areas of revenue; although the law on the subject was more lenient than Act XI of 1859 of British India.³⁹ The State always recognised the right of ownership, subject to the payment of revenue at the prevailing rate. The rent payable by *Jotedars* was liable to enhancement.⁴⁰ The *Jotes* were of two kinds-a) *Mukarari* or permanently settled and b) *Sarasari* or temporarily settled. The revenue of the former is fixed permanently and no increase can be made by the State unless the quantity of land in possession of the holder is found to be in excess of the original grant.

Chukanidar was a holder of a certain portion of the *Jote* or farm such holding being known as a *chukani*. He was the immediate under tenant of the *Jotedar*. He had the rights of occupancy. His portion was also hereditary. A *chukani* was a saleable under-tenure, but the consent of the *Jotedars* must be obtained to the transfer.⁴¹ He paid to the *Jotedar*, as rent, a sum not exceeding 25 per cent over the rates that the *Jotedar* was used to pay to the State.

A *Dar-Chukanidar* was the under tenant of a *Chukanidar*. This under tenure was hereditary and transferable, with the consent of the *Chukanidar*. A *Dar-Chukanidar* had to pay 50 per cent over the *Jotedar's* rates. A *Dar-dar-Chukanidar* is an under tenant of a *Dar-Chukanidar*. He had same rights as a *Dar-Chukanidar*, the rate of rent payable being 75 per cent over the *Jotedar's* assessment. In few cases *Dar-a-dar-Chukanidars* were again under-tenants of their own, styled a *Tasya-Chukanidars*, but this was a very rare occurrence. An *adhiar* or *praja* was a person who cultivates lands on the condition that he gets half of the produce of the crop; he is, in fact, a hired labourer, paid in kind. The *adhiars* had no rights on the soil. Each class of tenants usually cultivated portion of his land through *adhiars*. Thus there were *adhiars* under *Chukanidars, Dar-chukanidars* as well as *Jotedars*.⁴²

Thus the agrarian structure of Cooch Behar State showed that the *Jotedar* was at the top of the hierarchy. Another important thing should be mentioned that, while in Bengal, under the rulings of the High Court, only one class of holders under a

Zamindar can have occupancy rights; all classes of under tenants in Cooch Behar have these rights ⁴³



After the death of Narendra Narayan, his minor son Nripendra Narayan was become the king. Again the East India Company started interfering in the administration of the State. Thus, when Government took charge of the State one of the first steps taken by the Commissioner Col. J.C.Haughton was to rectify the abuses prevailed in the farming system. With this end in view he proposed and carried out a survey of the State under O'Donnel, the Deputy Superintendent of Revenue Survey, who was specially deputed by the Government to maintain a systematic procedure of revenue collection.⁴⁴

While bent upon reforming the *Izaradari* system Colonel Haughton was not doing away with it altogether. He wanted to create a middle class in the country like the *Zamindars* and *Talukdars* of Bengal, 'who should' to quote his words, "form the bones and sinews of the country"⁴⁵. He, therefore, proposed a measurement by *Taluks* and that the *Taluks* should be offered to the existing farmers after they had been properly demarcated. The Government, however, on receipt of his report declared themselves in favour of a *Khashrah* measurement and the settlement with the *rayats* directly.⁴⁶

O.Donnel divided the State into six *parganas* within the *parganas* the *Taluks* were geographically demarcated. These were named Mekhligunj, Mathabanga, Lalbazer, Dinhata, Cooch Behar and Tufangunj. The survey was concluded in 1870

and from 1872 under the orders of Sir George Campbell, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal the *Ijaradari* System was abolished.⁴⁷

In order to finalize a Comprehensive Settlement in the state, initiatives were taken in 1872. The entire settlement operations in the six *parganas* of the state are generally known as First Settlement. Mr. W. O.A Beckett, Assistant-Commissioner, had lately carried out the settlement operation. The work of the First land revenue settlement of Cooch Behar was concluded by 1877.⁴⁸ The features of the Settlement operation were:

1. It fixes the rates of rent payable by all classes of tenants.
2. This settlement was made for a period of 12 years.
3. The *Jotedar* pays direct to the State at rates fixed as follows: For bastu, ud-bastu, garden land and betel-nut land, Rs. 2.8 per *bigha* for bamboo land, Rs. 1.2 per *bigha* for bils or marshes, 8 anna per *bigha* for fallow land and jungle, 1 anna per *bigha*. These rates, which seem very favourable to the tenants, were sanctioned by the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal in 1872. It should be mentioned that the *Jotedars* are strictly prohibited from taking more than an increase of 25 per cent, on these rates from the *Chukanidars*, and the same proportional increase is allowed to each successive under-tenants.
4. Another important feature of this Settlement was the resumption of the invalid rent-free lands- *Mukarrari*, and *Jagirs*. During the unsettled condition of the state beginning from the minority of Maharaja Harendra Narayan, large areas of lands had been illegally alienated and turned into rent-free land and *Jagir mehals* by the clique in power. All these cases were subjected to a close scrutiny during the settlement operations and those held invalid were resumed.
5. One important feature of the operations was to record all the different grades of under tenures of which there were no less than six at the time. The holdings immediately below the *Jotes* were called *Chukanis*, and the successive lower grades were the *Dar-Chukanidar*, *Dar-dar-Chukanidar*, *Tasya-Chukanidar*, *Tali-Chukanidar* and *Tasya-tali-chukanidar*. Not only were these noted in the papers, but the amount of profit payable by each grade of tenants was also appointed, and the rental of each class fixed beyond contention.

6. The measurement was made in standard *Bighas*, *Kattas* and *Dhurs*.⁴⁹ It was conducted with the compass and the chain. Each *Jote* was mapped to scale, and showed the different fields held by the different grades of tenants. The area of the State was computed to be 24, 82,183 *Bighas*, excluding the big rivers which were not measured.

During his work as an Assistant Commissioner for settlement operations in Cooch Behar State Mr. Beckett was assisted by the five Deputy Collectors. The work of the First Settlement was concluded by 1877. The general rates for the different classes of lands adopted for the Settlement were as follows:

Table-2: Rent (per *bigha*) of Different Categories of Lands

Categories of Land	Rs.	Annas	Paise
For homestead lands and gardens	2	8	0
For Bamboo lands	1	2	0
For other cultivated lands including thatching grasslands and small bils of less than 2 <i>bighas</i>	0	8	0
For fallow and jungle lands	0	1	0

Source: W. O. A. Beckett, *Mekhligunge Settlement Completion Report*.

The State of Cooch Behar comprised six *parganas*, the boundaries of which correspond with those of the six main circuits namely *pargana* Mekhligunge, *pargana* Mathabhanga, *pargana* Lal Bazar, *pargana* Dinhata, *pargana* Cooch Behar and *pargana* Toofangunge. By analysing the details of the Settlement in different *parganas* it can be concluded that the rates of the rent payable by all classes of tenants have been defined by the First Settlement. Rent-free lands like *Brahmatter*, *Debutter*, *Mukarari*, *Petbhata* and *Jagirs* had been brought under tax system. This has been resulted in an increase in revenue in absolute as well as in percentage terms. The total amount of revenue secured by the First Settlement was Rs.9, 38,610 that showed an increase of Rs. 5, 74,471 over the old *jama* of Rs 3, 64,139.50. The total amount of revenue secured by the First Settlement from different *parganas* was as detailed below:

Table – 3: Amount of Revenue (in Rs.) Collected during First Settlement

<i>Pargana</i>	<i>Old Jama</i>	<i>First Settlement Jama</i>	<i>Increase</i>
Mekhlignunj	54169	129555	75,386
Mathabhanga	71246	172904	101658
Lalbazar	74476	134198	59722
Dinhata	76451	174034	97583
CoochBehar	71520	232040	160520
Tufangunj	16277	95879	79602
Total	364139	938610	574471

Source: H N Chaudhury, *The Cooch Behar State and Land Revenue Settlement*, p.453

The amount of increase obtained by the State did not, however, represent the increase which developed upon the *Jotedars*. Under the *Izaradari* system they had to pay two charges of *Izaradari* and *Saranjami* amounting to a sixth of the revenue, which were not charged under the *Khas* collection system. The actual increase of *Jotedars* had now to pay was the amount of the increase shown above, minus a sixth of the former revenue which amounted to Rs.60690 or a net total of Rs5, 14,781.⁵¹ As already noticed large quantities of invalid rent-free, *Mukarari* and *Jagir* lands were resumed in the course of the settlement operations and brought under assessment. *Khas* lands newly cultivated, and incorporated with, but forming no part of, the old *Jotes*, were also assessed with the lands of the *Jotes*. The revenue obtained from these two sources was independent of the assessment of the lands formerly comprised within the *Jotes*. The *Jotedars* paid nothing for these two descriptions of lands before the settlement, and the *Jamas* derived from them did not thus actually represent any part of the increase due to the assessment of the old *Jotes*. The *Jotedars* had now to pay this increase because they held so much land more than what was comprised within their original holdings. The net increase which could be attributed to the new settlement was Rs.3,85,996, of which Rs.66,739 was obtained in Mekhlignunge, Rs. 75,905 in Mathabhanga, Rs49,518 in Lalbazar, Rs73519 in Dinhata, Rs11,16,104 in Cooch Behar, and the balance, namely, Rs 4211 in Tufangunge. The whole increase was distributed over 5 years. Of the total amount of revenue secured by the First

Settlement Rs 7,188 was on account of the *Mokarari mehals* or permanently settled estates, which were not subject to future enhancement.⁵²

After the completion of the First settlement some rent-free lands had been resumed and some new grants had been made. Many *Khas* lands had been settled and an equally large extent of settled area had *Khas* by relinquishment or resumption. In this way the extent of *Khas* and rent-free lands as ascertained during the first settlement had suffered a change. The re-settlement papers show how it stood at the time of the subsequent operations.

The First Settlement was concluded with the *Jotedars* for a term which varied from 8 to 13 years for different *parganas* expired in 1883-84. An extension of 5 years on the same terms was made by the ruler of the State. Measures were, however, ordered to be taken for the assessment of *Patit* land (fallow lands) brought under cultivation since the last settlement and the recording of all changes in the rights of the several grades of tenants and under-tenants, which had taken place since that time.⁵³

Operations were started under two Deputy Collectors Babus Govinda Charan Dutt and Rarkrishna Das, who had hitherto been employed in Chaklajot Estates, early in December 1884, and completed in two years and a half. All the *patit* lands included within the *Jotes* during the First Settlement and brought under cultivation since, were measured and assessed at the rate of cultivated lands prevailing in the tract in which the *Jote* was situated. In cases where the quantity of the *patit* land shown in the papers was small, namely, 10 *bighas* and under, it was assessed as cultivated land without further enquiry. This settlement is known as the *Patit Charcha* Settlement.⁵⁴ The *Patit -Charcha* (fallow land) Settlement had taken place between 1884-86. The settlement was taken in hand to assess the fallow or waste lands which had come under cultivation since the First Settlement. *Patit* or waste lands did not pay any revenue, because still it was unoccupied. In Cooch Behar State there was no rule for the Settlement of waste land. The increase of revenue obtained by it was Rs. 68,824 for the whole State.⁵⁵ For special reasons certain tracts of the State were exempted from the *Patit Charcha* operations. These tracts were:

1. The portion of Pargana Tufangunj (east) of the Raiduk known as Bilat Bishguri.
2. The western portion of Pargana Mekhligung called Rahimgung.
3. The detached pieces of land called Telhar, Kotbhajni and Dahala-Khagrabari.
4. The Baishchalla *Jotes* in Pargana Mograhat within the Western Duars.

Term of extension of the First Settlement granted by the His Highness expired with 1888. The term of the *Patit Charcha* Settlement also expired in that year. The temporarily settled estates were thus open to resettlement from the beginning of the next year 1889. A general survey was not necessary, the whole country having been measured only 15 years ago. During the General Re-settlement of 1886-91 (known as the *Rakam Charcha* owing to the introduction of detailed classification of lands), the old paper of the First Settlement and the *Patit Charcha* Settlement were taken as the basis and such changes, whether in possession or classification of lands, as had taken place since those settlement were recorded in the Chittas.⁵⁶ The following measures were taken in this Settlement:

1. For the equal distribution of the increase and to avoid hardship from over assessment, the *Taluks* were divided into three classes according to the nature of the soil, their means of communication, and their advantageous position, such as, vicinity to markets and centres of trade and three different schedules of rates for the cultivated lands were fixed for them.
2. A detailed mode of classification of land was also adopted.

Following the old practice a deduction of a fourth in the rates was allowed in the case of *Girds Chowra* and *Shandara*. A departure was, however, made from the practice of setting the *Baish Challa Jotes* at the rates obtaining in the Western *Duars*, and the lowest schedule of the *Chowra* and *Shandara* rates were applied to them. The operations were concluded and the papers made ready by the end of April 1897. Only two tracts of country, one in the west of *Gird Chowra*, comprising nine *Taluks*, and the north- eastern portion of Pargana Toofangunge called *Bilat Bishguri*, as also a few *Jotes* in *Taluk* Daikhata in Gird Teldhar were , owing to their backward condition and thinness of population, exempted from the resettlement operation for 10 years from 1889. After 1889 these tracts were resurveyed and a new set of maps and *chittas* were prepared for them.

Before 1864, there was a seven-fold classification of the soil in the State. The entire cultivated area had not the same productive capacity and a variety was necessary according to the richness of the soil ⁵⁷

The classification of soil accordingly proceeded thus:

1. Betel nut garden,
2. Homestead-a) of *Jotedars*, b) of under-tenants
3. Garden
4. Bamboo,
5. Cultivated lands,
6. San or thatching grass land,
7. *Patit* or waste land.

At the time of the First Settlement the old classification was simplified and lands were brought under the following seven broad divisions: ⁵⁸

1. Homestead,
2. Bamboo,
3. Garden,
4. Cultivated land,
5. *Jala*,
6. San or thatching grass land,
7. *Patit* land or wasteland

In the course of the re-settlement operations the old operations the old classification of the pre-settlement period was revised. To begin with, the distinction made between homestead lands of *Jotedars* and those of the under-tenants was done away with. This was only an artificial distinction, for there was no difference between these two kinds of homesteads. It was, therefore, not retained. Land adjoining the house of a farmer, though not built upon or brought under cultivation, has a distinct use of its own, and can not be said to be as useless as the *patit* (fallow) land. It is used for the thrashing of corn, drying of grains, feeding of the cattle, and many other house-hold purposes, and is in fact as useful as the homestead land itself.

This description of land was thus made into a separate class under *Ud-bastu* or lands similar or adjoining to *bastu* or homestead land. The omission of the first classification is not recognizing the small fisheries were rectified, and a distinct class brought into existence under '*Jalas*'. All *patit* lands are not of equal value or use. Some are capable of cultivation, while others, such as private ways, burial grounds, places of rural worship, and so forth, can never be cultivated. *Patit* lands were thus classified into *laik* and *Gurlaik*, i.e., fit and unfit (for cultivation).⁵⁹

The most important feature of the *Rakamcharcha* (classification of land) Settlement was the adoption of several sub-divisions for the cultivated lands. The productive power of the cultivated area can not be the same everywhere and a system of classification which did not recognize this fact could never pretend to be comprehensive. The division of cultivated lands according to the richness of the soil was necessary not only for the purpose of consistency, but also for affording relief to the tenants by making the rent varying according to the nature of the soil.⁶⁰

The two main divisions created in the cultivated land were, -tobacco lands, and lands other than tobacco lands. Tobacco is a highly paying crop and differs from other crops in point of actual profit. Then, it does not grow equally well on every soil, or every part of the State. There are particular tracts which can grow tobacco infinitely better than others, even if the amount of labour and skill bestowed on the cultivation is the same in both. A good deal of the success no doubt depends on proper manuring of the field, but this does not negative the presumption regarding the natural fitness of the soil for such a crop. Tobacco lands thus came to be differentiated from other cultivated lands. Every plot of land does not, again, grow tobacco equally well; accordingly tobacco lands were sub-divided into three classes according to the quality of the tobacco it grows. Similar sub-divisions were like wise made for other cultivated lands, which were divided under four sub heads according to the richness of the soil.⁶¹

The following sixteen-fold classification was thus adopted for the re-settlement of the State:^{62]}

1. Betel nut land.
2. *Bastu* or homestead.
3. *Udbastu* or land adjoining to *Bastu* or homestead.
4. Garden.

5. Bamboo.
6. Tobacco first class.
7. Tobacco second class
8. Tobacco third class.
9. *Awal* or first class cultivated land.
10. *Duium* or second class,
11. *Saium* or third class,
12. *Chaharam* or fourth class,
13. *San* or thatching-grass land,
14. *Laik Patit*(fit for cultivation)
15. *Garlaik Patit*.(unfit for cultivation)
16. *Jala* or fishery.

This scale of classification was not applied to whole of the assessed area, but only to such estates or *Jotes* as was open to re-settlement. It is to be noted that there are *Mukararis* or permanently settled estate which had been in existence from before, and which were settled permanently at the time of the First Settlement. Some of the *Mokararis* and rent-free holdings, which were resumed in the course of the First Settlement, were settled at half rates for a fixed number of years or until a future contingency, such as, the death of the holder, should arise. These were not open to enhancement when the re-settlement of the temporarily settled *Jotes* was taken up. Some special tracts namely Chowara, Sandara, Bilat Bishguri were owing to their backward condition assessed differently. The table of rates applied in the Re-settlement or *Rakam Charcha* was as follows:

Table-4: Land Rent for Different Types of Land as Decided in *Rakam Charcha* Resettlement in 1888

SL. No	Classes of land	First class Taluk			Second class Taluk			Third class Taluk		
		Rs.	As	P	Rs.	As	P	Rs.	As	P
1	Betel nut land	4	0	0	4	0	0	4	0	0
2	<i>Bastu</i> or homestead	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0
3	<i>Udbastu</i> or land adjoining to <i>Bastu</i> or homestead	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0
4	Garden	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0
5	Bamboo	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2	0
6	Tobacco first class	1	8	0	1	8	0	1	8	0
7	Tobacco second class	1	4	0	1	4	0	1	4	0
8	Tobacco third class	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
9	<i>Awal</i> or first class cultivated land	1	0	0	0	14	0	0	13	0
10	<i>Duium</i> or second class	0	12	0	0	11	0	0	10	0
11	<i>Saium</i> or third class	0	9	0	0	8	0	0	7	0
12	<i>Chaharam</i> or fourth class	0	7	0	0	6	0	0	5	0
13	<i>San</i> or thatching-grass land	0	7	0	0	6	0	0	5	0
14	<i>Laik Patit</i> (fit for cultivation).	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0
15	<i>Garlaik Patit</i> . (unfit for Cultivation)	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
16	<i>Jala</i> or fishery	0	8	8	0	8	0	0	8	0

Source: West Bengal District Gazetteer-D. Majumdar 146

The total revenue obtained by the Re- settlement or the *Rakamcharcha* Settlement was Rs.12, 41,060⁶³ (ibid-147). The old *Jama* on the eve of the this settlement was Rs.9,52,642, the increase therefore came up Rs. 2,88,418. This increase, the details of which will appear later on, was distributed over 5 years, as in the case of the First Settlement. The re-settlement has been concluded for 30 years ending in 1928. Of the six parganas the re-settlement had effect from 1890.

Classes of land	Before the first Settlement of 1870-72						First settlement of 1870-72						Resettlement of 1889						
	Old Nirikhnama Rates						Classes of land	Rate		Classes of land	Rate in first class taluk		Rate in second class taluk		Rate in third class taluk				
	Schedule I (for the southern part of pargana Dinahata alone)			Schedule II (for the rest of the ordinary tracts)				Schedule III (for the special tracts, chowara, sandwa and Bilat Blahguri)			Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.			
1. Betelnut land	6	1	5	6	1	5	6	1	5	1. Betelnut land	2	8	Betelnut land	4	0	4	0	4	0
2. Jotedar's homestead	3	12	1	3	0	8	2	4	6	2. Homestead	2	8	Homestead (Bastu and udbastu)	3	0	3	0	3	0
3. Undertenant's homestead	3	0	8	2	4	6	1	14	5	3. Garden	2	8	Garden	3	0	3	0	3	0
4. Garden	3	12	1	3	0	8	2	4	6	4. Bamboo	1	2	Bamboo	1	2	1	2	1	2
5. Bamboo	1	8	4	1	2	3	0	12	2	5. Cultivated land	0	8	Tobacco 1 st class	1	8	1	8	1	8
6. Awai 91 st class cultivated land)	1	2	3	0	12	2	6. Thatching Grass	0	8	Tobacco 2 nd class	1	4	1	4	1	4
7. Doem (2 nd class cultivated land)	0	14	4	0	9	1	0	7	7	7. Patit (fallow)	0	1	Tobacco 3 rd class	1	0	1	0	1	0
8. Some (3 rd class cultivated land)	0	12	2	0	7	7	0	6	1			Awai 1 st class ordinary cultivated land	1	0	0	14	0	13	
9. Chaharam (4 th class cultivated)	0	9	8	0	6	1	0	3	7			Doem 2 nd ordinary class cultivated land	0	12	0	11	0	10	
10. Thatching grass	1	2	3	0	12	2	0	9	1			Soem 3 rd class ordinary cultivated land	0	9	0	8	0	7	
11. Laik-pati (Culturable fallow)	0	7	7	0	4	6	0	2	5			Chaharam 4 th class ordinary cultivated land	0	7	0	6	0	5	
												Jala (Fishery)	0	8	0	8	0	8	
												Thatching grass	0	7	0	6	0	5	
												Laik-pati (Culturable fallow)	0	2	0	2	0	2	
												No-Laik-pati (Unculturable fallow)	0	1	0	1	0	1	

Source: K.C. Ganguly, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operation in the Cooch Behar State 1913-27.*

At the *Rakamcharcha* Settlement, verbal settlements and settlements by unregistered documents were recognised. Under Section 3 of the Sub-Infeudation Act (Act 1 of 1888) the letting of land by any one but the *Jotedar* was prohibited. Verbal contracts of payment of rents were also prohibited in 1888.⁶⁴ The Cooch Behar Tenancy Act (act v of 1910) came into force in 1910 and sections 4 and 25 of this Act prohibited the letting of land by an under tenant lower than a *Chukanidar* and a *Chukanidar* might let only land which was in his *Khas* possession.⁶⁵

At the First Settlement no uniform rates for cultivating *rayats* were fixed. All that was done was to fix the rates for *Jotedars* and to provide that each class of landlords was to obtain 25 per cent as its share of profit. The result was that the rent demandable from *rayats* increased with the number of middlemen.⁶⁶

During the resettlement of 1889, the *Jotedar's* profit was raised to 35 per cent of his revenue and the total profit of the rent collecting under tenants was fixed at 25 per cent whatever the number of such under tenants might be. Thus where the *Jotedar's* revenue was fixed at Rs. 100, the rent assessed for the cultivating *raiyat* i.e., the last in the scale, was Rs 135 if he was a *Chukanidar*, add Rs. 160 if he belonged to a lower grade. The table below shows the percentage of profits allowed to the different grades of under tenants in the scale under different circumstances, the *Jotedar* getting a profit 35 per cent in all these cases-⁶⁷

Table-6: Percentage of Profit Allowed to be earned by Different Categories of Tenants

Last undertenant in the scale	<i>Chukanidar</i>	<i>Dar-Chukanidar</i>	<i>Dara-dar Chukanidar</i>	<i>Tasya Chukanidar</i>	<i>Tali Chukanidar</i>
<i>Dar Chukanidar</i>	25	.....	.....	.....	.....
<i>Dara-dar Chukanidar</i>	15	10	.....	.....	.....
<i>Tasya Chukanidar</i>	10	10	5	.....	.....
<i>Tali Chukanidar</i>	10	5	5	5	.....
<i>Tasyatali Chukanidar</i>	5	5	5	5	5

Source: Karali Charan Ganguly Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operation in the Cooch Behar state 1913-27, pp14

Under section 28 of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act, only the *Jotedar* and the cultivating under-tenant were benefited by the lapse of an under-tenure under Section 25 of that Act though the rents of several under tenants might have to be revised on account of such a lapse.⁶⁸ Practically, however, the cultivating under tenants very seldom derived the benefit owing to their ignorance and helplessness. Notwithstanding the provision regarding proclamation in Section 40(f) of the Act, the *Jotedars* can get information in but a small percentage of cases. Generally the immediately superior landlord of the lapsed under tenancy appropriates the extra profit. The provisions regarding lapse were meant for diminishing the number of intermediate under tenancies and also for discouraging sub-infeudation. In view of the creation of the innumerable illegal tenancies by verbal contract and of their recognition at successive settlements of the State, it must be said that the provisions in the existing Tenancy Act, though good in theory, failed to produce the desired effect. The propriety of the retention of the sections relating to lapse might, therefore, have to be considered during the next amendment of the Tenancy Act.⁶⁹ At this resettlement no reductions were, however, made in the rents already paid by contract, and the parties were left free as regards future contracts.

In all previous settlements rents were settled for all the legal under-tenants of the 6 grades in *Jotes* held directly under the State as well as for all tenants and under-tenants in revenue-free and *Mokarari* estates. According to the recognised principle in the State, the tenures and under-tenures comprised in the revenue-free and *Mokarari* estates are assessed under the rules applicable to other tenures and under-tenures, and copies of the final record-of rights and distributed among all tenants and under-tenants. Thus the resettlement of land revenue is accompanied by settlement of fair and equitable rents for all tenants in the revenue-free and *Mokarari* estates and for all grades of under-tenants in the State.⁷⁰

The areas were revised at the new settlement, wherever necessary. The total revenue-free area was 66,194 *Bighas* at the First Settlement and it came down to 56,952 *Bighas* at the *Rakamcharcha* Settlement.⁷¹ There was an increase at *Lakhiraj* area in all the Parganas excepting *Mekhliligang*.

Of the invalid grants resumed some were, on special grounds, settled with the holders at half rates either in perpetuity or for a fixed period. In cases, on the expiry of

the period originally fixed, the land has been assessed at three-fourth rates for another fixed period.⁷²

The service tenures or *Jagir* were created for the performance of service and were liable to be resumed when the services were no longer required, or the grantees refused or failed to perform them. Such tenures were not saleable or transferable. These tenures could not be overloaded by the creation of under-tenures. Some *Jagirs* were resumed at the First Settlement while a large number had been resumed and settled in *Jote* right since the *Rakam Charcha* Resettlement. The duties formerly discharged by the holders of the resumed *Jagirs* were being done by the paid servants.⁷³

There are some areas for which the revenue payable was fixed in perpetuity. These were known as *Mokarari Mahals* or Estates. Sometimes the *Mokararidars* had permanently let out lands at fixed rents, and the tenure thus created are called *Dar-Mokarari*.⁷⁴

Under the orders passed by the late ruler in council on the 12th October 1915 and the *Estaharnama* of that date, each holder of a recognised interest was to get *Terij* (Final record of rights) with the numbers of plots (*dags*) constituting the interests mentioned in the *Terij*, together with a copy or copies of the sheets, in which the interest was represented.⁷⁵ Under those orders it was obligatory for each recognised tenant to provide himself with a copy of map containing the plots constituting his interest and the applications for such maps were to bear a stamp of Rs.2 for each sheet, in which the applicant's interest or portion of interest might be comprised. It was also laid down that if such interest was distributed over more sheets than one, then for each additional sheet, a stamp paper of Rs. 1 would have to be supplied. In these applications, for which a prescribed form was adopted on the lines of the *Estafasar* (stamped applications for copies of maps) and form (written and verified Statement of rights) filed in the *Rakamcharcha* resettlement, the holders of recognised interests were to set forth the nature of such interests.⁷⁶

The *Rakamcharcha* Settlement concluded for a period of 30 years expired in Parganas Mekhligung and Lalbazar in 1918-1919 and in the other Parganas in the following year. In order that the next re-Settlement might come into force soon after the expiration of the above period, the operations in connection with the present re-

Settlement were started in 1912-13 and was to have been completed by 1921. The Final Report of the Survey and Settlement operations in the Cooch Behar State 1912-1927 submitted by Sreejut Karali Charan Ganguly, B.A., B.C.S, Settlement Officer, Cooch Behar State.⁷⁷ Babu Rajkrishna Das, I.C.E. was placed in immediate charge of the Settlement operations when they commenced. After his retirement in 1915 the direct charge of the operations developed upon the *Dewan* of the State.

Owing to various causes extensive changes had taken place in the topography of the country. In respect of the holdings also the maps prepared in 1868-70 in connection with the Revenue Survey of the State had become out of date and could no longer be relied upon. It was therefore decided to have a Traverse Survey as well as Cadastral Survey of the State on the lines adopted by the Government of Bengal. The Traverse Survey was accordingly began in 1912-13 and completed in 1916-17.⁷⁸

Kistwar (Cadastral Survey) and *Khanapuri* (preliminary record writing) began in 1913-14 and were finished in 1916 and 1917-18, respectively, but *Khatians* were not prepared in the field. Only the *Khasras* were filled up during *Khanapuri* and the *Khatiwans* of Parganas Cooch Behar and Mathabhanga were written up in Office in 1917-18.⁷⁹ Notes were made in the *Khasras* in the course of *Khanapuri* in respect of the illegally settled tenants, now recognised as *Krishiprojas* (cultivating ryots), and *Khatians* for these tenants were prepared in office for all the parganas.

After the distribution of *Terijes* (final record of rights) in two parganas in 1919, the late ruler Jitendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur, received several complaints regarding the grave errors and omissions in the records.⁸⁰ Mr J .A. Milligan, I.C.S, who was formerly the Settlement officer of Jalpaiguri, enquired into the grievances of the tenants, and ultimately took over the charge of the Settlement department from Mr N.N.Sen, the Dewan of the State.⁸¹

In January 1920 the State took the services of an Assistant Settlement Officer, Sreejut Jaladhar Ghosh, from the Government of Bengal and the enquiries made by him showed that the complaints made regarding errors and omissions in the records were well-founded. A requisition was then made to Government by the State for the loan of the services of an officer with Settlement experience and Sreejut Karali Charan Ganguli. B.A., a Deputy Magistrate and Deputy Collector of Bengal, was deputed to this State in June 1920 as Settlement Officer.⁸² He started revisional

operations November 1920 and began field Bujharat(local explanation of entries) with partial attestation and disposal of all objections.

Mr. Milligan was relieved by Mr. H.J.Twynam, I.C.S., in March 1920. After Mr. Twynam had taken over charge, the Director of Land Records, Bengal, with the assent of the Government, visited Cooch Behar and after making an inspection of the field work gave his approval to the procedure followed.

Mr Twynam's letter no 565, dated the 4th February 1922, containing the Settlement proposals regarding the Re-settlement of the Land Revenue of the State, and is reproduced below.⁸³

"1. It was brought to your Highness' notice in 1919 that some apprehension existed among the Jotedars that the Settlement record, which was supposed to have been completed in 1919, was in many respects inaccurate and was also tainted by the arbitrary enhancement of revenue known locally as the " Rent Test". With a view to enquire into these complaints, Your Highness obtained from Government the loan of the services of a Settlement Officer and a trained staff who joined here in June and November 1920, respectively. During the Field Season of 1920-21, *Bujharat* (local explanation of entries) on an extensive scale accompanied by Attestation and the hearing of objections was undertaken in Pargana Lalbazar. The result of this investigation indicated clearly that the old record is in many respects defective.

"2. For the sake of clearness, a brief explanation of the so called "Rent Test" is given here. The Settlement *Khasra* or Chitha and Khatiyān show that in respect of a large number of plots of land in Parganas Lalbazar, Dinhatā, Toofangunge and an entry made in red-ink of a higher classification. It has been proved, beyond possibility of doubt, that these red- ink entries have no relation to the actual character of the soil. Thus, I have myself seen instances of uncultivated plots of jungle which have been classed as "awal" (first class paddy land) or land actually. Producing paddy under the most unfavourable circumstances and low land or Khal, which could hardly produce paddy under the most favourable circumstances, has been classed as "Awal".

In the Resolution of Your Highness in Council, dated the 1st April 1920 published in the Gazette of the 26th April 1920, Your Highness ordered the elimination of all red-ink entries and the restoration of the original classification of soil. It was represented, however, that even after the elimination of those red-ink entries, the Settlement record was vitiated by a large number of errors made by the *Amins* in the field. Further, investigation showed that the representation was, in fact, correct. In pargana Lalbazar, the result of the field operations has been as follows:

Table-7: The Result of Field Operations in Lalbazar Pargana

Soil-classification raised	...	...	...	8 per cent
Do lowered	...	...	...	34 per cent
Percentage of change	...	...	...	42 per cent
As regards fields in respect of which red-ink entries had been made:				
Retained	...	...	...	30 per cent
Raised	...	...	...	5 per cent
Original classification restored	...	...	35 per cent	
Intermediate classification ordered	...	...	12 per cent	
Classification lowers than original Khanapuri classification			18 per cent	
				100 percent
Black-ink (original) entries not affected by 'Rent Test'				
Raised	...	...	...	10 per cent
Lowered	...	...	...	23 per cent
				33 per cent

Source: Karali Charna Ganguly Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operation in the Cooch Behar State 1913-27, p.27.

In dealing with about 24000 tenancies, the field-staff detected as many as 19400 mistakes (mostly of possession) in addition to 13,415 changes subsequent to Khanapuri, which it must be observed, was completed as far back as 1915-16. These figures make it clear that the elimination of the red-ink entries alone can not meet the requirements of the situation.”

“3. The existence of a large percentage of errors even after the elimination of the red-ink entries renders it imperative that the Settlement record should be thoroughly revised. It has been argued that the restoration of the original classification of the soil as made by the Amins in the year 1913 to 1917 would be sufficient and would save Your Highness the expense of carrying on Revisionary work for two more years. With that view I am compelled to differ for reasons given above. Moreover the Revisionary work now proceeding will tend to make the incidence of land revenue more equitable.

Under section 49 of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act, the Terij is prima facie evidence of little and conclusive evidence of possession, whereas in Bengal, where the Record of Rights is prepared with great care and where every entry made by an Amin is checked by a specially trained cadre of Kanungos.”

“4. Having attempted to explain the reasons necessitating the continuance of the Revisionary operations, I now propose to deal with the question of assessment.

In Letter No. 1331, dated the 12th March 1919, from the Registrar, State Council, to the Dewan of the State, Your Highness in Council ordered that in view of the instability of the then economic situation the rates per *bigha* at which land revenue is levied from the *Jotedars* would, until further orders, remain as at the *Rakamcharcha* Settlement of 1889 but the distinction then made between 1st, 2nd, and 3rd class *Taluks* would be done away with.”

Major C.T.C Plowden, I.A., took charge of the Department in November 1923 and drew up the final proposals for the Settlements after consultation with Mr, A .K.Jameson, the director of Land Records, Bengal. The director inspected both field and Office work and recorded his opinion on certain difficult problems connected with the Settlement. The proposals were then submitted to the Government of Bengal in April 1925 and their sanction was received in July 1925.⁸⁴

His Highness the late Maharaja Sir Jitendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur desired that the Settlement should be made for a term of 99 years and he intended to make a definite announcement on the subject after his return from England. But his death took place in England before he could carry out his intention.⁸⁵

The Regency Council which was formed after His Highness' demise drew up proposals for the re-settlement of land revenue of the State. These were submitted to the Director of the Land Records whose suggestions were embodied therein. The proposals were then published for any representations which the subjects of the State might make.⁸⁶

A conference at which the commissioner of the Rajshahi Division and political Agent for the Cooch Behar State was present was held by the Regency Council on the 23rd February, 1925 for discussing the proposals with the principal *Mokararidar*, 2 selected *Jotedars* and 4 representatives the Landholders' Association on whose behalf a counsel and a pleader also attended.⁸⁷

The representations both oral and written were considered by the Regency Council and their final report containing two alternative proposals viz. one for a 99years' and the other for a 30 years' Settlement, the former involving higher rates of revenue than the latter, was submitted to Government with all connected papers. Government accepted the second alternative proposal for a 30 years' Settlement and on receipt of Government orders at the end of June 1925, the Re-settlement Notification, dated the 13th July 1925, containing the final orders of the Regency Council was published in the Gazette for general information.⁸⁸

The final orders are reproduced below:-

1. The period of Settlement for 30 years was fixed for all lands except *Payasti* lands, lands in the towns and *bunders*. The term of settlement in respect of *Payasti*

lands, unsettled *Khas* lands and lands in town and *bunders* was fixed at 10 years but the Settlement of *Khas* lands was to be subject to such terms and conditions as might be decided upon from time to time.

2. a) The provisional rates of assessment per *bigha* for *Awal*, *Doem*, and *Soem* land sanctioned on the 1st April, 1922 and published in the State Gazette dated the 12th April 1922 are confirmed. The rates are:

Table – 8: The Provisional Rates of Assessment per *bigha* *Awal*, *Doem* and *Soem* (April 1922)

Class of land	Class of <i>Taluk</i>					
	First		Second		Third	
	Rs.	Annas	Rs.	Annas	Rs.	Annas
<i>Awal</i>	1	3	1	1	0	15
<i>Doem</i>	0	14	0	13	0	12
<i>Soem</i>	0	11	0	9	0	8

Source: Karali Charan Ganguly Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operation in the Cooch Behar State 1913-27, p. 30

b) The old rates for all the other 12 classes of land shall remain unaltered for the whole period of the Settlement.

3. Girds Chowra, Sundara and Bilat Bisguri –In case of these Girds:

a) the old rates for laik *patit* and nalaik *patit* land, viz., 2 annas 1 anna per *bigha*, respectively, shall be retained; and

b) the rates for all the other 13 classes of land shall be 7/8ths of the rates applicable to the *Jotes* in ordinary tracts. The table below shows the rates to be applied to the 13 classes of land in these three Girds:-

Table-9: Rates to be applied to the 13th Classes of Land in Three Types of Girds

Sl. No.	Classes of land	First class Taluk			Second class Taluk			Third class Taluk		
		Rs.	As	P	Rs.	As	P	Rs.	As	P
1	Betel nut land	3	8	0	3	8	0	3	8	0
2	<i>Bastu</i> and Udbastu	2	10	0	2	10	0	2	10	0
3	Garden	2	10	0	2	10	0	2	10	0
4	Bamboo	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
5	Tobacco first class	1	5	0	1	5	0	1	5	0
6	Tobacco second class	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2	0
7	Tobacco third class	0	14	0	0	14	0	0	14	0
8	<i>Awal</i> or first class cultivated land	1	0	0	0	15	0	0	13	0
9	<i>Duium</i> or second class	0	12	0	0	11	0	0	10	0
10	<i>Saium</i> or third class	0	10	0	0	8	0	0	7	0
11	<i>Chaharam</i> or fourth class	0	6	0	0	5	0	0	4	0
12	<i>Sankar</i> or thatching-grass land	0	6	0	0	5	0	0	4	0
13	Jala	0	7	0	0	7	0	0	7	0

Source: Karali Charan Ganguly Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operation in the Cooch Behar state 1913-27, p 32.

4. The rates and period of Settlement mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs for *Mal* and *Debutter Mehals* shall apply to the holdings in *Mukarrari* and *Lakhiraj* Estates.
5. Fair and equitable rents shall be settled for all grades of undertenants, including the *Krishiprajas* (illegally settled under tenants now recognised under the title of cultivating raiyats) on the basis of the classification of the soil and, as far as possible, according to the scale of profits hitherto in force and now slightly modified in order to provide for the cases of *Krishiprajas* (vide paragraph 7(e))

In the cases, however, in which the rents paid were in excess of the rents payable in accordance with the sanctioned scale of profits the procedure laid down below should be followed⁸⁹:

Where the existing contractual rent of an under tenure exceeds the rent calculated under the sanctioned scale of profits but did not exceed double that rent, the immediately superior landlord should be allowed either the existing profit or a profit of 50 percent in excess of that admissible under the sanctioned scale, whichever was less. Where, however, the contractual rent exceeded double the rent calculated

under the sanctioned scale of profits, the immediately superior landlord should be allowed double the sanctioned profit, provided that the contractual rent was realised for more than 10 years, the burden of proving which should be on the landlord. Failing such proof, the landlord should be allowed a profit only 50 percent in excess of that admissible under the sanctioned scale of profits.

6. In the case of *Krishiprajas*-⁹⁰

a) The illegal tenancies discovered in the course of the present revision-operations should be recognised and except as regards rents payable which should be governed by the orders now passed, should possess the rights specified in the State Council Report dated the 2nd May 1918, relating to illegal settlements. As already announced in paragraph 5 of the Notification dated the 8th July, 1925 published in the State Gazette (Extraordinary) dated the 9th July, 1925, no *Krishipraja* would be required to pay Rs. 5 stamp for the recognition of his rights.

b) Where illegally settled tenancies of more than one grade exist, those of the lowest grade alone should be recognised. If however, the intermediate illegal tenants held some lands in *Khas* possession they should be recorded as *Krishiprajas* under the legal tenants in respect of those areas alone and the old as well as the new rents should be split up on the basis of the areas under different classes in *Khas* possession of the occupants of each such holding.

c) Where an illegally settled tenant was sublet land by registered *patta* the tenant to whom the land was sublet should be treated as *Krishiprajas* provided that he holds lands in *Khas* possessions, and the case of the illegally settled tenant so subletting should be governed by the provisions of (b) above.

d) If in the case of verbal tenancy under a *Jotedar* or a *Chukanidar* there was an exchange of registered *patta* and *kabuliyat* since *Khanapuri*, such tenancy had to be treated as a legal *Chukani* or *Darchukani* respectively. The provision would apply also to those cases only of the nature described in which there may be an exchange of registered *patta* and *kabuliyat* within two months from the date of publication of this Notification.

e) The percentage of profits should be same in the case of the legal under tenant of the corresponding grades, i.e. for this purpose a *krishiprajas* under a *Jotedar* should be treated as a *Chukanidar*, one under a *Chukanidar* as a *Darchukanidar*,

and so forth. If any *krishiprajas* be found under a *Tasya-tali-chukanidar* the percentage of profit should be raised to 65 in the case of such a tenancy.

7. In the event of any under tenure being created contrary to the provisions of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act and of this Notification such under tenure should not be recognised but should be annulled and the lease of the creator of such under tenure should be liable to be cancelled by the Revenue Officer of the State and all the right, title or interest of the creator of such under tenure in the lands covered by the lease should thereupon be extinguished, or if the Revenue Officer of the State sees fit he might inflict a fine not exceeding Rs. 500 in lieu of cancelling the lease of the creator of the under tenancy. Such fines should be recoverable under the Public Demands Recovery Act.

Where the creator of such under tenure was a co-sharer, his right, title or interest alone should be liable to be extinguished and he alone should be liable to the fine prescribed above.⁹¹

In the event of any tenure being created by the proprietor of a revenue- free of *Mokarari* Estate contrary to the provisions of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act and of this Notification such tenure should not be recognised but should be annulled and the creator of such tenure should be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs. 500 by the Revenue Officer of the State. Such fines should be recoverable under the Public Demands Recovery Act.⁹²

Failure to register *pattas* and *kabuliyats* within 12 months from the date of creation of tenure not paying revenue to the State or under tenure should be treated as an illegal settlement for the purpose of this paragraph.

Naib Ahilkars and Additional *Naib Ahilkars* were empowered to enquire into such cases as are mentioned above either on application or on reference from other Courts and they should forward the papers with a statement of the case and their recommendations to the Revenue Officer of the State for the passing of orders.

In cases in which the right, title or interest in lands were extinguished as provided for above, the lands revert to the immediately superior landlord.

8. *Pattas* and *Kabuliyats* should be presented for registration within 6 months from the date of creation of a tenure not paying revenue to the State or an under tenure. Failure to comply with this order should be punishable with a fine not exceeding

Rs. 50 for each month or part of a month commencing from the date on which the period of six months referred to above terminates. *Naib Ahilkar* and *Additional Naib Ahilkars* were empowered to deal with such cases either on simple petition or on reference from other Courts. The proceedings should be summary and the fines should be recoverable under the Public Demands Recovery Act. In accordance with the orders contained in paragraph 8 no *patta* or *kabuliyat* should be accepted for registration after the expiry of 12 months from the date of creation of a tenure or an undertenure.⁹³

The classification of land made during the last *Rakamcharcha* Settlement was followed and the lands were divided into 15 classes each bearing a separate rate and the *Taluks* were also divided into three classes, each with a separate set of rates. Special rates were fixed for special 'Girds' or backward tracts with fixed profit for each grade of tenant.

As, since the completion of field *Bujharat*, numerous changes had taken place in land tenures, *Ekwal Jamabundies* (the Settlement rent-rolls) were published on the recommendation of the Director of Land Records and objections and appeals were heard before the records were finally framed.⁹⁴

In November 1926, Major Plowden was relieved by Lieutenant Colonel W.G. Hutchinson, I.A., O, B, E, under whose supervision the operations were brought to a close.

Along with the Settlement of temporarily settled lands, records of rights were prepared for *Mukarari*, Revenue-free and *Jagir* lands and fair rents settled for all classes of tenants in such lands.

The Cooch Behar State had many *Chittis* in Rangpur and Jalpaiguri Districts and certain Government *Chittis* were likewise included in the Cooch Behar Territory. The total area of the State according to the Present settlement after adjustment of boundaries is 1318.35 square miles in place of 1307 square miles as shown in the previous Settlement.

Rights of *Krishiprojas* (cultivating ryots) were recognised in this Settlement, the rights being heritable and transferable and the rents payable have been recorded in the *Terijes*.

The enhancement of revenue and rent was made progressive in cases where the new *Jama* exceeded 75 percent of the old *Jama*. High contractual rents were disallowed, and only double the sanctioned profit was allowed in cases where the rent had been realised for 10 years, the burden of proving which would be on the landlord. Failing such proof the landlord would be allowed 50 percent, only, in excess of the sanctioned profit.

Khatian slips were distributed to all tenants throughout the State and the original records were left open for inspection for one month to facilitate the writing of objections. The tenants were also permitted to prefer oral objections.⁹⁵

Wholesale *Bujharat* and partial attestation were undertaken to eliminate the mistakes and the Assistant Settlement Officers and *Kanoongoes* were authorised to make corrections in the records direct in the field.⁹⁶

Rules were framed for different stages of office work on the lines of the rules in force in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa with modifications to suit local requirements.⁹⁷

Revenue free lands were scrutinised so as to exclude additional or better class of land in place of lands originally granted. Excess of land up to 10 percent, was overlooked to allow for difference between the different system of measurements and the closeness of the Cadastral measurement. The same procedure was followed in the case of *Jagir* and *Mokarari* lands.⁹⁸

The *Taluk* was adopted as the unit of survey and record in the present Settlement and old boundaries of *Taluks* were generally allowed to stand. The number of plots in this State covering 1318.35 Square miles is as many as 23 lacs.⁹⁹ The work of checking and correction necessarily took a long time. The Reserved Forests have been included in the *Taluks* in which they are situated. Cooch Behar Town was treated as a distinct *Taluk* and was separately dealt with from other towns and *Bunders*.¹⁰⁰

The present form of *Terij* (final record of rights) issued to tenants differs from that issued at the *Rakamcharcha* Settlement to suit altered conditions and contains many more particulars.¹⁰¹ Separate maps and records were prepared for all towns and *bundars*, Cooch Behar Town being treated separately from other towns and *bundars*.¹⁰²

The Last Settlement or the Final Settlement was made on the basis of the new survey in 1927.¹⁰³ The then *Dewan* Mr. N.N.Sen, proposed to do away with the

classification of *Taluks* and to treat all *Taluks* as first class. As a result the land revenue increased. The raising of the 2nd and 3rd class *Taluks* to the position of 1st class *Taluks* was equivalent to the enhancement of the rates in those *Taluks*. The old rates for all classes of land remain unaltered for the whole period of the settlement. Fair and equitable rents were settled for all grades of under-tenants. The rates and classification of land adopted in the Final Settlement of 1927 were as follows: ¹⁰⁴

Table-10: The Rates and Classification of Land Adopted in the Final Settlement of 1927

SL. No.	Classes of land	First class <i>Taluk</i>			Second class <i>Taluk</i>			Third class <i>Taluk</i>		
		Rs.	Annas	Paise	Rs.	Annas	Paise	Rs.	Annas	Paise
1	Betelnut land	4	0	0	4	0	0	4	0	0
2	<i>Bastu</i> or homestead	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0
3	Garden	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0
4	Bamboo	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2	0
5	Tobacco first class	1	8	0	1	8	0	1	8	0
6	Tobacco second class	1	4	0	1	4	0	1	4	0
7	Tobacco third class	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
8	<i>Awal</i> or first class cultivated land	1	3	0	1	1	0	0	15	0
9	<i>Duium</i> or second class	0	14	0	0	13	0	0	12	0
10	<i>Saium</i> or third class	0	11	0	0	9	0	0	7	0
11	<i>Chaharam</i> or fourth class	0	7	0	0	6	0	0	5	0
12	<i>San</i> or thatching-grass land	0	7	0	0	6	0	0	5	0
13	<i>Laik Patit</i> (fit ation).	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0
14	<i>Garlaik Patit</i> . (unfit for Cultivation)	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
15	<i>Jala</i> or fishery	0	8	0	0	8	0	0	8	0

Source: West Bengal District Gazetteer-D. Majumdar 148

After the *Rakam charcha* resettlement some *laik patit* (culturable fallow) lands were, from time to time, settle at the rates for cultivated lands with the consent of the

Jotedars with whom the settlements were effected. During these general resettlements, however, under council orders, all *Jotes* were assessed at the sanctioned rates and on the basis of the existing classification of lands. According to the new revenue survey and settlement the area of the State became 25, 52,299 *bighas* which was 24, 82,183 *bighas* under First Settlement.¹⁰⁵

The total revenue demand secured by the Final settlement was a little over Rs.18 lakhs. This settlement was made for 30 years. The most important part of this settlement was that *Khatian* slips were also distributed to tenants of all the parganas in the State and to help them in identifying the plots of land, the separate possession of co-shares over individual were also shown in the *Khatian* slips.¹⁰⁶ The statement below shows the areas, *pargana* to *pargana* as ascertained at the different surveys.

Table-11: The Areas, *Pargana* to *Pargana* as ascertained at the Different Surveys

Pargana	First	Settlement	Present	Settlement
	Acres	Square Miles	Acres	Square Miles
Mekhligunge	124081	192.27	129442	200.58
Mathabhanga	140550	217.79	147919.6	229.22
Lalbazer	110522.3	203.87	112883	174, 93
Dinhata	131557.3	203.87	135523.3	210.01
Cooch Behar	200215	310.24	201759	310.65
Toofangunge	120468.6	186.68	123241.3	190.96
Total	827394.3	1,282.11	850766.3	1,318.35

Source: K.C. Ganguly, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operation in the Cooch Behar state 1913-27. p.51*

The temporary settled areas according to the different settlements together with the number of *Jotes* and amounts of revenue are given below:

Table-12: Temporarily Settled Areas, Number of Jotes and Revenue

Pargana	First Settlement			Rakam charcha Settlement			Present Settlement		
	No of Jotes	Area Bighas	Revenue Rs.	No. of Jotes	Area Bighas	Revenue Rs.	No. of Jotes	Area Bighas	Revenue Rs.
Mekhligung	1783	2,99,789	1,29,555	2321	2,97,265	1,75,470	2415	3,05,327	2,30,689
Mathabhanga	2276	3,89,460	1,72,903	2529	3,82,172	2,38,979	3034	3,96,075	3,26,909
Lalbazar	2510	293584	134198	2604	2,87802	181176	2943	3,01,147	2,58,180
Dinhata	3720	3,68,101	1,74,034	3980	3,61,599	2,38,805	4309	3,68,049	3,30,972
Cooch Behar	4851	5,24918	2,24455	5337	508614	282556	6473	524334	437138
Tufangunj	1219	289768	95479	2065	286244	124074	2582	309170	215096
Total	16,359	21,65,620	9,31,024	18,836	21,23,696	12,41,060	21,746	22,04,102	17,98,984

Source: K.C. Ganguly, *Final Report on the Survey and settlement Operation in the Cooch Behar State 1913-1927*, p.52

The following Statement shows the areas of the revenue free estates and the numbers and the areas of *Jagirs* at the First Settlement, *Rakamcharcha* and the Present Settlement. The number of revenue-free Estates according to the Present Settlement is given in the statement:

Table-13: Area of Revenue Free Estates and *Jagirs*

Pargana	First Settlement		<i>Rakamcharcha</i> Settlement		Present Settlement	
	Revenue Free Area Acre	<i>Jagir</i> Area Acre	Revenue Free Area Acre	<i>Jagir</i> Area Acre	Revenue Free Area Acre	<i>Jagir</i> Area Acre
Mekhligung	5138.66	.....	670.33	.....	1655.33	.....
Mathabhanga	869.66	977.33	2439.66	977.33	1543	56.33
Lalbazar	4936.33	297.66	5038.33	297.66	5072	.....
Dinhata	2229.66	112	2753.66	114.33	2630.33	93
Cooch Behar	3808.66	4566.66	5466.33	4518	5299.66	1900.66
Tufanganj	751.66	336.66	1615.66	463.33	1575.66	375.66
TOTAL	17734.66	6290.33	18984	6370.66	17776	2425.66

Source: K.C. Ganguly, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operation in Cooch Behar State, 1913-1927, p.53*

Table - 14: Khas Land of the State in Bighas

Pargana					Rakamcharcha Resettlement				Present Resettlement			
	Roads etc.	Sal, Sisoo Forest	Jungles Swamps and other Khas lands	Total	Road etc.	Sal, Sisoo Forest	Jungles Swamps and other Khas lands	Total	Roads etc.	Sal, Sisoo Forest	Jungles Swamps and other Khas lands	Total
Mekhligunge	2653	327	11451	14431	3270	277	25038	28585	1205	207	32814	34226
Mathabhanga	1329	85	13066	14480	1941	30	27357	29328	1436	101	33204	34741
Lalbazar	1793	72	19486	21353	2484	156	26088	28728	1516	35	18480	20031
Dinhata	2893	129	12632	15654	4606	218	28255	33049	1987	12	24337	26336
Cooch Behar	3586	359	33196	37141	4955	9442	44104	58501	3583	9687	36458	49728
Toofangunge	794	1687	63329	65810	1446	19685	55352	76486	926	30474	21850	53250
Total	13050	2659	153160	168869	18702	29803	206164	25674	10653	40516	167143	218312

Source: K.C. Ganguly, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operation in the Cooch Behar State 1913-1927*

The number of *Taluks* of different classes and areas of assessed and unassessed land (excluding towns and boundaries) according to present Resettlement are given below:

Table- 15: Number of *Taluks* of Different Classes and Areas of Assessed and Unassessed Lands

Number of <i>Taluks</i> and Chhitis				Unassessed Area in Bighas				Assessed Area in Bighas				
1 st Class	2 nd Class	3 rd Class	Total	<i>Khas</i> Land	Jagir (service land)	Revenue Free	Total (Bighas)	Mokarari Area	Land assessed at ½ rates and ¾ rates	Other temporary settled lands	Total	Total of unassessed and assessed areas in Bighas
<i>Taluks</i> Chhitis	<i>Taluks</i> Chhitis	<i>Taluks</i> Chhitis	<i>Taluks</i> Chhitis									
419 entire plus 10 partly 1 st class and partly 2 nd class 2	6.2 entire plus 1 partly 2 nd class and partly 3 rd class 69	133 87	1154 PLUS 11=1165	2,18,634	7,276	53,328	2,79,238	60,056	16,143	21,87,959	2264158	25,43,396

Source: K.C. Ganguly, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operation in the Cooch Behar State 1913-1927*

In 1773 during the conclusion of the treaty with the British Government, Mr. Purling ascertained the revenue of the state to be Rs. 1, 99,120-5-0 Narayani mudra equivalent to Rs.1, 33000 in modern currency. The tribute payable by the state is Rs.67, 700-15.

The following is a list of the total revenue at the successive settlements: ¹⁰⁷

Table- 16: Amount of Land Revenue (in Rupees) for the Temporarily Settled Areas at Different Settlements

1. On the eve of the First Settlement of 1870-72	3, 64,140
2. First Settlement of 1870-72	9, 31,024
3. On the eve of the <i>Rakamcharcha</i> Settlement of 1889	9, 59,830
4. <i>Rakamcharcha</i> Settlement of 1889	12, 41,060
5. On the eve of the Present Resettlement Operation	12, 62,154
6. The N. Sen Resettlement given effect to in 1991-20	18, 50,853
7. Present Revisional operation given effect to in 1927	17, 98,984

Source: K .C. Ganguly, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operation in the Cooch Behar State 1913-1927*, p.56

The total revenue demand secured by the 1927 Settlement was little over Rs.18 lakhs. Previous to 1934 lands which were surrendered or lands which could not be settled were held by the Dewan and settled by him. Such lands were called *Dewan-bos*. There were quite a few *Taluks* in Koch Behar bearing the name *Dewan-bos*. From 1934 the State decided to have a *Khas* Mahal department and all lands which were surrendered or made *Khas* at the revenue sales were transferred to this department to make *Khas* collection.

The Final land Settlement was in fact the last settlement of the Cooch Behar State during the tenure of the rule of the royal dynasty. It is to be mentioned that after the integration of the Cooch Behar State with independent India, the settlement operations had taken place through settlement operation of Jalpaiguri district. The Settlement of 1913-27 which was given effect to from the year 1927-28 was about to expire in 1956 when the Estate Acquisition Act was enforced in Cooch Behar.

After analysing the various Settlement reports, it was found that during a time of 55 years from 1872 to 1927 revenue of the State increased by about 394 per cent. The revenue income also registered an increase from Rs.3, 64,140 in 1872 to Rs.17, 98,984 in 1927. But the total land under cultivation and consequently having been settled with the *Jotedars* did not of course show a corresponding quantum change. From a total area of 24, 82,183 *bighas* in 1872 the area increased in 1927 to 25,

43,396 *bighas* i.e. an enhancement of 2.83 per cent only. Moreover the enhanced area under the First Settlement are partly explained by *Patit Charcha* Settlement and partly by resumption of land from the termination of the old service tenures and reclamation of unauthorised holdings under the tenants. The rise in land revenue therefore was caused by revision of revenue rates and the rental share of the tenants and under-tenants. By allowing 35 per cent profit to the *Jotedars*, 25 per cent profit to the *Chukanidars*, 15 per cent profit to the *Darchukanidars*, 10 per cent to the *Dardar chukanidars*, 5 per cent to the *Tashya-chukanidars*, 5 per cent to the *Talichukanidar* of the rental income the burden of rent borne by the cultivating *rayat* had gone up by 95 per cent and in some cases even to 150 per cent. So the burden of rent appears to have been raised to 194 per cent at the grass-root level of the *Krisiprajas* in successive settlements.

Under the circumstances it is likely that at every stage of revised settlement a part of the total *Jotes* had been surrendered by the erstwhile *Jotedars* on account of inability to pay enhanced revenue. The *Jotes* thus obtained had been settled with new *Jotedars*, many of them were immigrants from other districts. Originally the *Jotedars* were the cultivators of the soil and the residents of this state. Gradually there was an influx of the outsiders from other districts, they were more intelligent than the Cooch Beharis and they began to grab all real power in the State.¹⁰⁸ At the time of the Final Settlement more than half of the temporarily assessed area in the Cooch Behar State was owned by immigrant *Jotedars*. Even during the *Rakamcharcha* and *Patit Charcha* settlements, it is found that larger quantity of land in the State was included in *Jotes* belonging to foreigner than in those held by natives. The necessity of introducing effective rental law to prevent ousting of cultivating tenants by speculators was foreseen even during the First Settlement. Taking advantage of the backwardness of the local cultivators or poor *ryots*, the immigrant *Jotedars* began to exploit them.

Consequently, a number of critical issues had originated from drastic changes in the revenue reforms from the First Settlement to the Final Settlement. A number of areas of social unrest that caused a great deal of tension within the rural society of Cooch Behar might be attributed to the changes brought about in different Settlement operations.

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