

PREFACE

Cooch Behar - a tiny Princely State in the North Eastern region witnessed a tremendous process of change during the rule of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan (1863-1911), who was considered as one of the modernized rulers among the Princely States of India. This maiden study on the significant period intends to examine the nature and extent of modernization under his regime.

While Professor Barun De emphasizes the need for the study of the Princely State, so far a very few attempt has been made in India by the scholars of the profession. The works to be mentioned for example, V.K.Sawa : Hyderabad in Transition under Salar Jung I, 1853-1893 : An Indian State under British Influence (1967); Debdas Pillai, S. : Rajahs and Projas : an

De, Barun, "Bharatiya Itihaser Parjayakrama-O-Astadash Satabdir Tatparjya" in Goutam Chattopadhyaya Edited Itihas Anusandhan-3, K.P.Sagchi, Calcutta, 1989, p.21).

Indian Princely State - Then and Now (1975); Saklani Atul : History of a Himalayan Princely State of Tehri Garhwal (1937). All these studies concentrated mainly in the North, West and South of India. But as regards the history of the North Eastern Princely State - Cooch Behar, no work has hitherto been made by any Scholar. Hence this study is a humble attempt to know the important period of the history of Cooch Behar under Maharaja Nripendra Narayan (1853-1911) and it is expected to fill in a long-standing research-gap in this direction.

The books, memoirs, monographs etc. available on Cooch Behar are mostly written by the personalities supported by the then Cooch Behar State. Naturally they are partial in character and conventional in nature. To illustrate; Joynath Munshi: Rajopakhyan (Year not mentioned), translated by Robinson (1874); Lewin; An Account of the Cooch Behar State (1875); Bhagabati Charan Sandopadhyaya : Cooch Beharer Itihas (1892); Harendra Narayan Choudhary : Cooch Behar and Its Land Revenue Settlements (1903); Amanatulla Ahmed : Cooch Beharer Itihas (1935), Translated by J.S. Ghosal (1942); etc. may be taken into account.

In presenting the study, the researcher mainly sought help from the document, reports, leaflets, official notes and circulars, letters, gazetteers, articles, news papers and published books. The primary source materials have been

collected mainly from the National Archives, New Delhi; The West Bengal State Archives, Calcutta; National Library, Calcutta, Asiatic Society, Calcutta; Cooch Behar Collectorate Record Room; North Bengal State Library (Cooch Behar); Cooch Behar Sahitya Sabha, and Sadharan Brahma Samaj Library, Calcutta, Benares Hindu University Library and North Bengal University Library.

In order to complete the study the researcher had to under-go strenuous process of collecting information and to work hard for soliciting personal observations.

This study had been divided into seven chapters. Epilogue, Introduction of the study serves as the foundation on which the study has been developed. The objectives, hypotheses and research questions of the study have been analysed in the Introduction.

Chapter I depicts the historical process of the advent of the East India Company to the Cooch Behar State. It deals with the nature and objectives of the Company's intervention in the affairs of the Cooch Behar State.

Chapter II delineates the ancestral reign of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan. It gives special emphasis on the period of Harendra Narayan keeping in perspective the persistence of age old rigid traditional values and the dichotomy between the

Company and the Raja Harendra Narayan. In short, this chapter is a conflict analysis of tradition and modernity.

Chapter III elaborates the history of subjugation of the rulers of Cooch Behar to the British administration. It specifically mentions the course of events took place in the said period.

Chapter IV deals with the question of marking of a modern ruler under the influence of the dominant institutions and personalities of the contemporary history of Cooch Behar.

In Chapter V, the role of the Brahma Samaj, in bringing about the socio-cultural development has been examined in depth.

In Chapter VI, the vehicles of modernization have been studied and examined in various sections.

The epilogue of the study has been an attempt to make an appraisal of the reign of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan. It is an attempt in quest of the fundamental issue : how much modern the educated Raja was ?

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