

CHAPTER- IV

IMPERIALISM IN THE MAKING

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4.1 Appointment of the Political Agents

In the second half of the 19th century, the Indian sub-continent was finally divided into two distinct identities; the British Indian States, and the princely India. Initially, there were two ways to extend British rule: either by making conquest over the Native States or through inducing the voluntary consent of the Indians. The British Indian States, they ruled directly but the princely States, they ruled indirectly. The political Agents were, of course, nothing new in the British Indian administration. The British Residents and political Agents were appointed to the more important position to act as the “eyes and ears” of the Government.¹ They were expected, being on the spot, to observe and report regularly on all major events occurring in the states and to recommend appropriate measures where necessary. It was true that the company was, after all, more interested in profit making than in any civilizing mission.² During the period of 1870's that the political Agents, as instruments of reform and moderisation was realised, though such possibilities were anticipated by Lord Canning as early as in 1860.³

It was to be noted before that the Kamata Koch kingdom or Koch Behar State became Cooch Behar State during the period of Anglo-Koch treaty of 1773.

After that, the situation became complicated, when there was the clash between Nazir Deo Khagendra Narayan and Sarbananda Gosain (a mentor and favourite of the Queen). At that time Harendra Narayan, the minor king and his mother were seized and confined at Balarampur.⁴

For this stage, the East India Company sent an enquiry Commission to see into every detail of the administration. The enquiry Commission gave report to the Government and the Government accepted the recommendation of the commissioners and appointed British Resident or commissioner in Cooch Behar State in 1789.

During the period from 1789 to 1800, Henry Douglas, C. A. Bruce T. W. Smith and Richard Ahmuty were efficient Commissioners of Cooch Behar State and they played a vital role in controlling the Cooch Behar's administration. Their main objective was to take care of the land revenue administration. Lord Cornwallis assured the Raja of Cooch Behar (the Minor king Harendra Narayan) that the appointment of commissioner was temporary, and not permanent.⁵ A huge number of letters were exchanged with the Governor General, the Secretary and Sub-Secretary to Government and the Commissioners of the Cooch Behar State from time to time.⁶ The Commissioners informed to the Government of their day to day decisions with regard to the numbers of problem of the State. Infact, the Commissioners became the real administrator of the State. During this period, steps were taken up for the betterment of the Revenue administration.⁷ Other issues relating to administration or functioning of the State affairs, however

remained untouched. Henry Douglas was appointed the first British Resident in Cooch Behar in 1789 with a monthly salary of Rs. 1,500.⁸ He was instructed to manage the administration of the State and was also to guide the king properly and make him fit for administration. Incidentally, When Douglas took over the charge as British Resident or Commissioner in Cooch Behar, Harendra Narayan was only ten years old. The British Government was taken carefully so far as the young Raja's education and all the responsibility in this respect were concerned.⁹ Jay Nath Munshi was appointed as one of the tutors of Harendra Narayan.

It may be noted that some remarkable changes were brought in by Henry Douglas in the administration of Cooch Behar. Some of them were really outstanding and these are as under- (a) The Commissioner's signature and seal must be put-on side by side with that of the Maharaja.¹⁰ (b) Separate criminal and revenue courts were established and respective seal for each court was introduced. Henry Douglas' first attention was to look into the revenue administration of Cooch Behar State. When Douglas took charge of his office, the condition of the exchequer was very deplorable. He informed the detailed report to the Governor General on the condition of the State. He observed, "From the monthly accounts, which have been transmitted to your Lordship will have been perceived the very impoverished state of the Cooch Behar Treasury: that the expenses have exceeded the revenue and the deficiency has been obliged to be supplied by loans".¹¹

Henry Douglas observed many abuses and irregularities with regard to land Revenue settlement. First of all, there was too many taxes in the State, there was

no practice to fix rent.¹² The State was not given the regular deed of agreement to the cultivators. The *Ryot* had to pay *Nazzars* and *Salamis* to the officials, but there were not clear accounts. Sarbananda Gosain acquired large portion of the lands and Maharani enjoyed the whole of the Raja's private land. For this situation, real revenue of the State gradually deteriorated. Besides, the interest on money as reported by Douglas, "has never been regulated except by the avarice of the lender and the necessities of the borrower so that in common 72 percent has been considered as very moderate interest and what almost exceed belief that in many instances which come to my immediate knowledge, 360 percent has been exacted. Money lending was so profitable that the Sepoys of the company had to a share in this business. In 1783, Captain Duncanson had lent an amount of rupees 14,901 to the minor king of Cooch Behar. He was not satisfied with an annual return of rupee 21,000 as the interest was considered to be very low".¹³ Again he states, "as a result of extortion by the revenue collectors and the exploitation by the money lender a good number of Ryots fled from the state resulting in further reduction of the revenue of the state. Douglas had introduced certain reforms which helped to increase the revenue of the state and provided "great relief to the Ryots too. The first ever settlement was completed under his direct supervision".¹⁴

Therefore, Douglas had main attention to introduce a uniform system of Revenue collection pattern in the Cooch Behar state. First of all he introduced the *Ijaradari* system in land revenue settlement of Cooch Behar State. Before coming of Douglas, the revenue of the State collected by the State officer was named as

Sazwals. The land revenue settlement was made annually by the supervision of British Resident of Douglas. Douglas had placed so much faith as a suitable settlement for Cooch Behar.¹⁵

Charles Andrew Bruce became the Commissioner of Cooch Behar in place of Henry Douglas in 1791. The British East India Company ordered C. A. Bruce to see all the documents with regard to the revenue settlement of Cooch Behar State. Government also gave suggestions to Bruce that he might follow the previous settlement or to prepare any alternative plan which could be different from the system suggested by the previous Commissioner of Cooch Behar State.¹⁶ Bruce gave the proposal to the Government that previous revenue settlement was not sound and needed modifications. There was a serious defect and so he did not want the system to continue. The defect was the villagers and others who let them again the intermediate agents. Bruce gave some proposals to remedy the evils. He introduced his reforms in Boda, Patgram and Purbabhag. For these areas he introduced the farming system. Every village had prepared a farm and the farm was controlled by the *Pradhan* or the head Ryots of the village. The Ryots should pay the expense of the village *Patwaries* and other charges. Commissioner gave appointment to the *pradhan* for one year and paid the revenue in installments calculated on their crops. According to Bruce, this system was benefited both the Ryots and British Government. So Government accepted the proposals of Bruce.

After Bruce, W.T. Smith became the commissioner of Cooch Behar State on October, 1795. Smith followed the recommendations of his predecessor

Bruce.¹⁷ The British Government wanted to settle the lands problem by granting Pattas to Ryots. It is true that the British Government had a sense of superiority in the field of administration and it wanted to prove its worth in making experiments in the revenue settlement. Cooch Behar was by all means, a State to introduce such a formula from colonial point of view.

After W. T. Smith, Ahmuty became Commissioner of Cooch Behar State in 1797. During his period, the land revenue of the State increased. Ahmuty followed the new system and wanted to ensure a stable economic condition of the State.¹⁸ He observed that the Ryots had no right to till the land permanently and this effected the gross income of the State as well as of the Company.¹⁹ In the given situation, Ahmuty encouraged Ryots to expand more cultivable lands and gave incentive to bring more and more lands under cultivation. He got huge response from the cultivators. At that time there was no system of measurement of lands. Ahmuty at first tried to measure the Ryots' holdings lands and gave *Pattas*.²⁰ According to Ahmuty, the annual settlement of revenue was not continuing well, so, he raised the term at least five years. It was the first time in History of Cooch Behar State when there was a valid register of the lands.²¹ During this period, the Government wanted to set up uniform pattern of revenue collection system in Cooch Behar State, and this principle was first reflected in their revenue settlement and collection. It can be noted here that from 1789 to 1800 Henry Douglas, C. A. Bruce, W. T. Smith, Richard Ahmuty, were successively posted in Cooch Behar, as Commissioners and neither any change nor any remarkable

development could be seen in the administrative structure or system of Cooch Behar other than in the Revenue administration.

During the minority period of Harendra Narayan, the British officers controlled the administration of Cooch Behar State. The successive commissioners developed the revenue administration and revived the moribund economics of the State.²² The British Government withdrew the commissioner in 1801 and the State was handed over to Harendra Narayan. Raja of Cooch Behar State had appointed Kashinath Lahiri as Dewan of the state. Kashinath Lahiri praised the British administration and justice and their (British Officers) contributions to the development of the State.²³

When Lord Wellesley came to power, the British policy towards the Indian state changed radically. Lord Wellesley was basically haunted by an imperial design and his policy to Cooch Behar is a glaring example of his ambitious plan on the excuse of improving the administration of the State. At that time the conflict was going on between the Raja and the Dewan of the State and on this question the peace of the State was hampered. In this situation, Lord Wellesley communicated his desire to Harendra Narayan to appoint a Commissioner to act in consultation with the Maharaja for the collection of public revenue, administration of justice and of the Police.²⁴ In January 1803, Lord Wellesley appointed Francis Pierard as a Commissioner for the Cooch Behar State. Harendra Narayan was reluctant to accept the arrangement because according to Rajah of Cooch Behar, it was the interference with the sovereign authority of the Raja. The British

Government accepted “the Rajah of Cooch Behar as independent princes, subject only to the payment of the tribute” and deemed it inconsistent with “the dignity and however of the British Government to extend the regulations to Cooch Behar, in opposition to the inclinations of the Rajah”.²⁵ British Government wanted to establish with the concurrence of the Rajah for the important benefits, which must arise from the establishment of fixed laws and regulations in the territory of Cooch Behar State. After failure of the Pierard Mission, the British Government was appointed John French to act as a Commissioner of Cooch Behar in early 1805. John French’s primary objective was to establish with the concurrence of the Rajah, the Rule of law in Cooch Behar. At that time Lord Cornwallis became Governor General for the second time. Cornwallis followed the policy of non-intervention to the Native States. On the other hand, Harendra Narayan strictly followed his position. John French was failed in his efforts to convince the Rajah and was not able to deal with Cooch Behar administration. The British Government abolished the separate Commissioner’s office in Cooch Behar State. After that, the Collector of Rangpur was made responsible to see the British Policy in the Native State of Cooch Behar.

During the period 1805 – 1813, three successive Collectors of Rangpur – Archibald Montgomery, James Morgan and John Digby were the ex-office commissioners of Cooch Behar State.²⁶ They maintained the relations with Cooch Behar State from Rangpur. In this time, Nazir Deo or Dewan Deo made serious criminal charge against Cooch Behar Raj. Dewan gave the report to the British

Government that huge number of corruption, anarchy oppression and bloodshed were going on in the state. The British Government sent John Digby to the Cooch Behar State to make investigation. He was treated with disrespect and hostility, the British Government became furious "to adopt immediate measures for restraining his (Harendra Narayan) vicious and depraved conduct, and asserting the right of the British Government to interfere in the internal administration of the affairs of Cooch Behar.....for the prevention of anarchy, oppression and blood shed".²⁷ We have said before that the relations between Rajah of Cooch Behar and Dewan were not so good. During this time, Harish Chakraborty, a *Pujari* or worshipper of idols was in the service of Dewan Deo. Maharaja of Cooch Behar became angry and Harish Chakraborty was imprisoned and later he died. Dewan Deo gave allegation that Harendra Narayan caused the death of Harish Chakraborty.²⁸ The Collector of Rangpur interfered enormously in the matter of Cooch Behar administration. The Commissioner gave more important position to Dewan than the Raja. On 7th August, 1813, a Government resolution was passed to follow the betterment of Cooch Behar administration. But their actual objective was to interfere the administration justice, the settlement and the collection of the revenue.²⁹

After that Lord Cornwallis revived the post of Resident or Commissioner in 1813 and Narman Macleod was appointed as Commissioner in Cooch Behar State on monthly salary of Rs. 1500. Macleod's first target was to establish a rapport between the British Government and Harendra Narayan. J. Adam, secretary

to the Government wrote a letter to Harendra Narayan that “The just attention and difference with which you have listened to the advice and representations of the Commissioner offered in the name and express authority, of the Government, the methods, which you have made, to continue to abide by it, combine to assure me that you are convinced of the sincerity with which the British Government has sought your welfare, and of your determination invariably to act in a manner to merit its confidence and friendship.”³⁰ Mutual trust and cooperation between Raja and British Government did not last long, Macleod interfered all the matters of administration time to time. For this reason, Raja of Cooch Behar was unwilling to help Macleod. The result, Macleod could not be able to establish peace and prosperity. On the other hand, serious charges revealed against Harendra Narayan that Harendra Narayan met Raja of Nepal and they hatched conspiracy against British Government. But ultimately it was proved baseless and “the Government took the Commissioner to task for allowing himself to be carried away by false reports and rumours”.³¹

After this, there was a change in the British policy towards Cooch Behar and it was confined, “to abstain from all interference except in the form of advice and representation in the unlimited management of the affairs of Cooch Behar, and to restrict the powers of the commissioner to the exercise of diplomatic functions only”.³² It is significant here to note that J. Adam, ordered to Commissioner – “It is proper to observe that the less frequently advice is interposed, the more efficacious, generally speaking it is likely to prove, and that it is therefore

desirable to avoid as much as possible all interference in point of details, and matters of subordinate importance, which might be likely to produce irritation and disgust, and to reserve the full right and influence which the British representative must possess for occasions of moment. By adhering to these principles and by the observance of a mediate and conciliatory tone towards the Raja, it may be hoped that you will be able to establish an influence over his mind which will eventually effect a considerable amelioration of the system of his government and become productive of reciprocal benefit to himself and his subjects".³³

The British Government wanted to change the policy and try to follow the liberal policy towards Cooch Behar. After Macleod, David Scott took charge as a Commissioner of Cooch Behar State in 1822 and he was appointed as an Agent to the Governor General, the North-East Frontier. So, Cooch Behar affairs came under jurisdiction of his office. The Commissioner post was abolished. David Scott became the successor of British Agent. He was diplomatically dealing with the state of Cooch Behar. T.C. Robertson became the Agent in place of David Scott in 1830. The Agent of North East Frontier did not interfere in the internal affairs of Cooch Behar State.

In 1834 Captain F. Jenkins became the British Agent in North East Frontier and Cooch Behar State was also under his jurisdiction. Captain F. Jenkins visited as the Commissioner to the Cooch Behar State in 1836, 1841, 1847 and 1849 successively. F. Jenkins was a liberal British Agent and he had seen all the matters in Cooch Behar State sympathetically. First of all Jenkins appreciated Sibendra

Narayan's efforts towards the reorganization of the State economy. Jenkins remarked that the State witnessed the "great increase of Population and extension (sic) of cultivation during his reign." ³⁴ The British Government could not fail to take note of Jenkins's assessment and the Court of Directors came to the conclusion that there could not be any considerable "miss-Government" at Cooch Behar. ³⁵ Sibendra Narayan cleared all the arrears of tribute, which encumbered the state. First of all he gave attention to revenue matters and to the improvement of his state. Sibendra Narayan did not confine his attention only to the revenue matters but he also established 'Raj Sabha' in 1840, the highest Court of the state. He introduced western education in Cooch Behar. Sibendra Narayan's personal interest in the prohibition of *Sati* did evoke a favourable response from the British Government which in a letter to Jenkins admitted, ".....it is gratifying to the Government to find the Rajah so well disposed to conform in this respect to the benevolent intentions of the British Government for the general abolition of this is human rite". ³⁶ The prohibition of *Sati* came into effect so late as in 1849 after the death of Sibendra Narayan.

Sibendra Narayan's health condition gradually deteriorated and it also affected the internal condition of the state. This situation led to the increasing influence of the bureaucracy in the state affairs. This had even drawn the attentions of Jenkins and he reported to the Government that - "The Rajah, I am sorry to say, is very inattentive to business, partly owing to sick ness, and has entrusted all the affairs of his Raja to two or three Bengalees, who, I fear, commit

much injustice”³⁷ Superintendent of Darjeeling, Campbell charged the Native Government of Cooch Behar of inefficiency and mismanagement continuing and he sent letter to Jenkins why he reserved about his role.

Campbell addressed to Government of Bengal to interfere in Cooch Behar matters about the bureaucratic norms.³⁸ Bhandaree Aye (claim her, step mothers of Sibendra Narayan and a widow of Harendra Narayan) wrote letter to the Governor General that the inefficiency of Brojendra Narayan, corruption of public servants, anarchy, internal feud and total law-less-ness were continued in the state. She also wrote to Campbell her doubt about the efficiency and neutrality of Jenkins.³⁹ Government of Bengal wrote to Governor General about the gross maladministration in Cooch Behar State. Incidentally the report of Government of Bengal presented the matter in the style that “..... the management of Cooch Behar during the Rajah’s minority, the failure of the Agent to visit that little citation last season, and the insufficiency of that officer’s reports, in consequence of that failure, and for the failure of the chief officers of that state to visit him, leaves the Deputy Governor unable to form a satisfactory opinion. His Honour has seen with much pain the evidence, which the papers before him seen to afford of gross maladministration in Cooch Behar.....The Government can not but look with society to the receipt of the Agent’s report, after he shall have made his long Projected visit to Cooch Behar, and His Honour would recommend that the visit should be made without further delay. The Government will look to him for an unbiased account of the real condition of the country, and

for mature advice in respect to its future administration during the Rajah's minority".⁴⁰

Government of Bengal ordered to Jenkins to prepare a genuine statement about the condition of the princely State of Cooch Behar. Because Government of Bengal gave top priority about the opinion of Jenkins. Jenkins visited the Cooch Behar State in February, 1849 and he found that the complaint against mal-administration of the State as false and baseless. Government of Bengal accepted the Jenkin's report on the condition of Cooch Behar State. He observed with satisfaction about the improvement of agriculture and growth of population and that the Ryots had no allegation against the authority. Jenkins mentioned the lapses in to the administration on of the state and the excesses were committed by the Regent, Brojendra Narayan. When he submitted his report to the Bengal Government and he recommended the appointment of British Resident who would advise the Regent in his capacity as a Commissioner. The result the native administration of Cooch Behar controlled properly. But the Bengal Government did not accept any substance in his suggestion.⁴¹ The Government of Bengal highlighted all the demerits related with Cooch Behar affairs was responsible the Governor General on the North East Frontier to the Government of India Government of Bengal wanted to take over the administration of Cooch Behar during the minority of Narendra Narayan. For this situation, Cooch Behar came under dual responsibility. Bengal Government suggested to Government of India some possible matters which should be relieved that (i) ordinary administration of

Cooch Behar state (ii) Agent of the Governor General, North East Frontier should undertake Government of Bengal temporarily.⁴² Government of India accepted the suggestion of Government of Bengal and Jenkins, Agent of the Governor General of India came under Government of Bengal was satisfied with the role performed by Jenkins. Jenkins observed all the matters about Cooch Behar was concerned. According to Jenkins “the general administration, though marked by occasional abuses, appears, on the whole, a fair specimen of native rule, and the great increase of cultivation and the increase of the Ryots,are indicative of progress and wellbeing”.⁴³ British Government not only observed the general administration of Cooch Behar State but was also interested to give western education for Cooch Behar Raja. In general view the Agent of Cooch Behar wanted to spread English education all over the State.

In 1860, Jenkins made his tour to Cooch Behar State. He was fully satisfied at the administrative and Economic development of the State.⁴⁴ In 1861, Jenkins retired from his service but he was Agent of Governor General of North East Frontier for a long time.

After Major Jenkins, Hopkinson became the British Agent of Cooch Behar matters in 1861. Raja of Cooch Behar always trusted to the British Government and Cooch Behar State could not involve itself in sepoy mutiny. The British Government was forced to pursue a soft policy towards the native states after the mutiny. The ‘Doctrine of Lapse’ policy was withdrawn.

The British Government gave recognition to Nripendra Narayan as next king of Cooch Behar State in January, 1864.⁴⁵ Colonel J.C. Haughton, Governor General's Agent, North East Frontier took charge of the state from Hopkinson during the minority of Nripendra Narayan, as commissioner of the Cooch Behar state in February, 1864. The British Government took responsibility in providing care and education of the young Maharaja, for the security of the tribute and for the defence of the Bhutan frontier.⁴⁶ The Commissioner of Cooch Behar State had full authority of the entire administration in all its branches, except, in regards to certain specified points, such as the grant of lands, pensions and gratuities and the confirmation of capital sentences. It is also said that no change in present arrangements would be made without the sanction of the Government.⁴⁷ Colonel Haughton was continued in his duty still 1873. During this time, British Government also appointed one Deputy Commissioner in Cooch Behar to follow all the matters properly. H. Beveridge was the first deputy Commissioner in Cooch Behar State. One thing is that Colonel Haughton was not only an able man of administration but also could judge the matters on the State properly.

According to Dalton (Deputy Commissioner of Cooch Behar State) "Colonel Haughton appeared to have always exercised the full powers than confided to him and to have done so with a judgment and ability, which combined with the personal interest. Which he displayed is all, even the most trivial matters connected with the administration, fully justified the confidence reposed in him and inaugurated that system of judicial and political reform and financial

development, which in the hands of his successors have made Cooch Behar what it is.”⁴⁸ Colonel Brance took charge in absence of Colonel Haughton in June, 1865 until his return on December, 1866. In 1873, when Colonel Haughton left the Cooch Behar, Richardson and Metcalfe became as Commissioners upto March, 1874. Then W. J. Herschel was appointed Commissioner and continued his post till 1875. When F.R. Cockerell became Commissioner for one year and Cockerell was the first Commissioner of the Rajshahi and Cooch Behar Division. Lord H. Browne succeeded as Commissioner in 1876 and continued to be at the head of the Cooch Behar administration till the Maharaja attained his majority on October, 1883.

H. Beveridge, the first Deputy Commissioner of Cooch Behar, who took charge on the 4th November, 1864, was succeeded by T. Smith on the 1st May, 1866 and made over charge to Captain W. Lance in 1868. Captain Lance was relieved by W.O.A. Beckett on the 22 December, 1870, whose term was succeeded by Smith, who returned to Cooch Behar in February 1872 and remained to 11th April 1875, when Captain Lewis went on 6 months leave in April 1876 and Mr. J G B T Dalton was appointed to officiate and subsequently confirmed in the post. When he went on privilege leave, Captain Evans Gardon officiated till his return on December, 1882.

The British Government tried to form administrative arrangements when Nripendra Narayan became the Maharaja of the State. The Commissioner of the Rajshahi and Cooch Behar Division framed a memorandum of administration and

it was adopted by His Highness. A Council of State was established in 1883 with His Highness as President, and three members namely – the Superintendent of the State, the Dewan and a judicial Officer. It is said that in absence of President on the day “the Superintendent will act as vice President of the Council”.⁴⁹ The Superintendent supervised directly and controlled all the departments. He was appointed justice of the peace with-in the State for the trial of European British subjects intruding the laws of the country.⁵⁰

From 1883 to 1913, Lieutenant Colonel A. Evans Gordon, E. E. Lewis, D.R. Lyall, Major J. R. C. Colvin, E. L. L. Hammond, A. W. Dentith, B. Ghose were appointed Superintendents of the State and Vice President of the State Council. Incidentally none of them had brought about any significant change of the administration of the State rather were ornamentals to look after the affairs of the State as a whole.

The term of Mr. Dentith’s appointment as Superintendent of the State and Vice President of State Council, having expired on the 22nd April, 1913, His Highness was pleased to appoint E. W. Collin, ICS to the post with the approval of His Excellency the Governor of Bangal in Council.⁵² The Government of Bengal in their order No. 646 PD; dt 2nd May, 1912, vested the Commissioner of the Rajshyee division with the powers of a political Agent for the State of Cooch Behar for the purpose of the provisions of the Indian Extradition Act., 1903 (XV of 1903).⁵³ The Government of India in their letter No. 5300 P, dt. 8th November 1912 were pleased to order that Magistrates or Officers exercising magisterial

powers in Native States shall be regarded as Magistrates for the purposes of Rule 4 of the Rules under the Indian Security Act, 1886.⁵⁴

The post of the Superintendent of the State was abolished under His Highness orders on 1st June, 1916. His Office since then was styled Office of the General Department of the State and the Vice President of the State Council was placed in charge of controlling over all the Departments.

Milligan (1920-1923), Major Charles Terench (1923-1926), Colonel Hutchinson (1926-1931), Major K.A.G.E.Gordon (1931-1934), Colonel J.A.Bret (1934-1936), J.D. Taison (1936) were incharge but they had only supervised the departments under their jurisdiction.

His Highness the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur was invested with full ruling powers on the 6th April 1936 by His Excellency the Right Hon'ble Sir John Anderson, Governor of Bengal, who came to Cooch Behar for the purpose.⁵⁵ L.G. Wallis was appointed Vice President of State Council up to the 21st November, 1939. Government of India maintained the Residency system till 1947. Change of new format partially His Highness the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur, as President consisted of Rai K.C. Ganguli Bahadur, Acting Vice President and Revenue Member. The Chief Minister was appointed to be the Ex-Officio Vice President of the State Council.

In the meanwhile, however, there was a change in the format of the State Council of Cooch Behar. The State Council was named as State legislative Council in 1940 in which His Highness the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur was

designated as President. The post of the Vice President was given to the Revenue member who virtually got the portfolio of the Chief Ministership of the State.

4.2 Paramountcy and Judiciary -- Conflict and Assimilation

After conclusion of the Anglo Cooch Behar treaty, 1773, there was no barrier to interfere all the affairs, both internal and external. At that time the State administration was in chaotic condition for the maintenance of the army and to ensure stabilizing of the State. Because the clash between Nazir Deo Khagendra Narayan and Sarbanand Gosain (sided with the Queen) reached at the zenith. In this situation, British power got involved into the State administration of Cooch Behar. The British East India Company appointed Commissioners to see the entire administration. The Governor General in Council assured the temporary management of Cooch Behar with a view to protect it from the ignorant and designing persons. The State was managed and controlled by successive British Residents or Commissioners during the minority of Harendra Narayan (1789–1800 AD).

As noted earlier during 1789–1800 AD, the British Commissioners like Henry Douglas, C.A. Bruce, T.W. Smith and Richard Ahmuty were posted in Cooch Behar but no remarkable improvement was visible in any sphere other than that of Revenue administration. They tried to improve the Revenue administration.⁵⁶ The British Commissioners were not very much interested to solve the maladies in other matters of the State or Society. There was no

remarkable change in the administration of Justice.⁵⁷ In 1801, the Commissioners' regime in Cooch Behar State was withdrawn and the State was handed over to Harendra Narayan. Anglo– Cooch Behar relation was in complicated phase when Harendra Narayan came to power and took the administration of Cooch Behar in his own hand. Cooch Behar State came under the supervision of Rangpore's Commissioner. In this situation Lord Wellesley, the Governor General, decided that the Commissioner would not interfere in the administrative affairs of Cooch Behar but would give advice to the Raja.⁵⁸

Harendra Narayan had passed his boyhood under the care and guidance of British Commissioners and at that time anti British attitude grew up because he was always ill advised by his evil Councilors to whom the Commissioner's regime was a great hindrance to the fulfillment of their own interests. Lord Wellesley wanted to improve the administration of the State and he communicated his desire to appoint a Commissioner for Cooch Behar to act in consent with the Maharaja for the collection of public Revenue, administration of Justice and of the Police.⁵⁹ According to Lord Wellesley "The Raja of Cooch Behar have not only been permitted subsequently to the date of the treaty, to coin money, to administer Justice, and to exercise other power of sovereignty, by that their rights to exercise of such powers has been fully and unreservedly acknowledged by the British Government of India".⁶⁰ The British Government appointed Commissioner constantly to introduce British Regulations in Cooch Behar but strong opposition to such measures came from the part of Maharaja Harendra Narayan.

Wellesley assured to Maharaja Harendra Narayan that in introducing the new arrangement the British Government had no intention to subject the Ruler of Cooch Behar to the jurisdiction of a British Government. British Government had firm determination to introduce the general Regulations in force in the province of Bengal to Cooch Behar.⁶¹ Harendra Narayan felt that the transfer of the administration of Civil and Criminal justice into the hands of the Company was against the honour and independence of his Raj. ⁶² So, Maharaja was always against the appointment of Commissioner for Cooch Behar State. In these circumstances, British Government had to follow the policy of “wait and see” with regards to the introduction of British Regulations into Cooch Behar. The Cooch Behar State faced anarchy, oppression, bloodshed and corruption and British Government wanted to prevent all these things and protect the State. Maharaja Harendra Narayan firstly dismissed all the corrupted officials immediately and Macleod (British Commissioner) helped properly. For these reasons, Harendra Narayan changed his attitude against British Government and he was pleased. So Maharaja asked for the Government’s assistance for a better system in the administration of justice, which totally collapsed in Cooch Behar. The British Government prepared a thorough scheme of reforms for implementation in the judicial administration of Cooch Behar.⁶³ Harendra Narayan requested the British Government to preserve his work and dignity.⁶⁴ British Government accepted His request. Harendra Narayan agreed to the British proposal of reforms in the administration of justice in Cooch Behar. As a result, the conflict between

Maharaja Harendra Narayan and British Government in the question of judicial reforms came to an end.

After Harendra Narayan, Sibendra Narayan became the Maharaja of the State of Cooch Behar and British Government gave him recognition. In His reign Cooch Behar State became financially better than the reign of Harendra Narayan. Sibendra Narayan's one important achievement was judicial reforms. He established 'Rajshabha', the highest Court of the Cooch Behar State in 1840. Dewan Kali Chandra Lahiri and Ishan Chandra Mustafi were two permanent Members of Raj shabha. The State jurisdiction was divided into '*Civil*' and '*Criminal*' which were represented by Courts, such as; *Sadr Amin*, *Dewani Ahilkar* and Appeal on the one hand and Naib Ahilkar and Sessions Ahilkar on the other hand, W.W.Hunter remarked that "the cases were tried in much the same manner as in our provinces, and the '*Amals*' were not inferior in capacity to the same officers like the courts elsewhere".⁶⁵

British Government formed the 'State Council' in 1883 for interference in the internal administration in Cooch Behar State. The Government also prepared the Memorandum of administration.⁶⁶ The State Council was established with His Highness as president, other three members, namely, the Superintendent of the State, a Dewan and a Judicial Officer. Judicial Department was under direct control over the Superintendent of the State or Vice President of State Council of Cooch Behar State.

A. Criminal Justice

W.T. Smith, Deputy Commissioner had been given in his Annual Report for 1872–1873 regarding the history of constitution of the Criminal courts in the State – “It seems probable that justice was dispensed by the Raja or as Minister in primitive fashion as late as 1791; for when Mr. Douglas, Commissioner took charge of Cooch Behar in that year to look the administration of Civil and Criminal justice. The civil and criminal courts of original jurisdiction, the court of the Dewani Ahilkar and that of the Fouzdari Ahilkar appear to have been constituted when the British authority withdrew from interference in the internal affairs of Cooch Behar and were doubtless in imitation of the Maffusil Courts of the East India Company. Hindu Law was referred to in both civil and criminal cases, but the Regulations naturally had a powerful influence, beings the only modern laws known to the Bengali law who administered the affairs of the Raj”.⁶⁷ The British Commissioners had found that judge was at liberty in disregard both the pundit’s suggestion and the doctrine of the Hindu code.⁶⁸

When Maharaja Nripendra Narayan came into power in 1864, the British Commissioner being monopolised by a great extent by the Bhutan expedition, on extensive change were made in the administration of Criminal justice. The ‘**Raj Sabha**’ was transferred to the Commissioner’s Office.⁶⁹ The constitution and procedure of the session court were same as early and session judge was appointed from the state and two additional Naib Ahilkars were appointed to the Fouzdari Court. During the minority of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan, the British

Commissioner played the main role and the Commissioner controlled all the Departments. "In 1866, the Indian Penal Code and the code of criminal procedure were introduced by an order of the officiating Commissioner the details of office work and procedure were revised and corrected; the native sessions judge was removed; the duties of the Civil and sessions judge were added on to those of the Deputy Commissioner; the old Fouzdari Ahilkar was pensioned office replaced by a more competent man and a greatly improved status things began".⁷⁰

During 3rd March, 1866, first Sub-division of the State was established in Tufanganj and the Assistant Fauzdari Ahilkar was placed in-charge. Firstly, the Sub-divisional Officer had functioned only Criminal jurisdiction. But 1868, he worked both in civil and Criminal departments. The second Naib Ahilkar was reappointed and he exercised both civil and criminal powers. In 1872, four additional sub-divisions were established in the muffasil because of the introduction of the *Khas Collection* system in the Revenue Department. The Sub-divisional Naib Ahilkar exercised civil and criminal powers within their respective jurisdictions.

Some changes however, came when Indian Criminal procedure code of 1872 (Act. X of 1872) was introduced in the State on September, 1873. On the introduction of that code, the practice and procedure of criminal courts were to be guided by that enactment with certain modifications. The sub-divisional Officers had the powers of sub-ordinate Magistrate of the first class under the code, but had no jurisdiction in the proceedings.⁷¹ Sub-divisional Naib Ahilkars were

empowered in 1875.

The administration of Cooch Behar State was carried on by the Maharaja, assisted by a Council, consisting of three Members, namely, the Superintendent of the State, the Dewan or Chief Revenue Officer and the civil Judge. The Superintendent of the state supervised the administration of criminal justice and the police, military, jail, public works, education and Audit departments. He was also the session Judge, hearing all criminal appeals which ordinarily lay to session Judges in British districts.⁷²

The Bengal Cattle Trespass Act (Act III of 1857) was acted in Cooch Behar State from the very early time. In 1850, the Raja-sabha had prohibited gambling. The Gambling Act, (Act 11 of 1867 B.C.) was ordered in the courts of the State in June 1870.⁷³ The Indian Evidence Act (Act I of 1872) was introduced in Cooch Behar in May 1873.⁷⁴ In Cooch Behar State all act was prepared in the direction of British Government. Formerly, no diary of witnesses in criminal cases was kept. In January, 1866 the system of keeping a register of the examination of witnesses was introduced. Before the introduction of the criminal procedure code the witnesses received no money, not even in session's cases.

Formerly, the Rajganj or the Kinsmen of the Maharajas did not appear to have been subject to the Jurisdiction of the criminal courts of the State. In August 1871, owing to a disorderly behaviour of a principal Rajganj, Colonel Haughton extended the jurisdiction of the deputy Commissioner to the trial of offences committed by a Rajganj under certain restriction. In 1892-93,⁷⁵ the jurisdiction of

the Fauzdari Ahilkar was extended to the trial of "*Summons cases*" against the Rajganj. Five years later, in 1897-98,⁷⁶ this privilege of the Rajganj was withdrawn and His Highness was pleased to order that in criminal cases no distinction should in future be made between Rajganjs and other persons.

In Cooch Behar State, common enemies in early times were dacoity and burglary. There were no doubts that the State, the absence of an organized system of police and lack of proper justice were the main reason for crimes. Other crimes were domestic violence and disputes over land. W.T. Smith (Deputy Commissioner of Cooch Behar State) "gives some statistics which are valuable, as enabling to compare the State of Cooch Behar in his time as regards to prevalence of crime not only with its present state but also what then existed in the neighbouring district of Jalpaiguri".⁷⁷ The table is given the figures of cognizable and non-cognizable offences reported for selected years from 1876-77 to 1947. It will be seen that from 1876 to 1947 the population had increased more than double but interestingly there had been no appreciable increase in the number of cognizable offences. The number of non-cognizable offences also remained almost the same till 1945.

TABLE -4.1**The figures of Cognizable and non-Cognizable offences (1876 – 1950)**

Year	Number of cognizable offences	Number of non-cognizable offences	Total
1876-77	1644	1465	3109
1901-02	1366	1182	2548
1902-03	1481	1306	2787
1903-04	1490	1474	2964
1904-05	1609	1517	2126
1921-22	1530	1110	2640
1922-23	1446	1106	2552
1923-24	1350	1018	2368
1927-28	1704	1136	2840
1928-29	1730	1172	2902
1929-30	1794	1180	2974
1933-34	1454	841	2295
1934-35	1627	949	2573
1949-50	2274	1024	3298

Source: 1951 Census Report, Cooch Behar District Hand Book, p.64.

B. Police

Before British, there was only one Court in Cooch Behar for the trial of all kinds of cases and the court exercised powers in the name of the Maharaja. There was no police station or system in Cooch Behar State.⁷⁸ After concluding the Anglo-Cooch Behar treaty, in 1773, the British Government tried to interfere in the internal administration of Cooch Behar. It may be noted, 1803 the post of the Commissioner of Cooch Behar was revived and Francis Pierard was appointed Commissioner of Cooch Behar for the purpose of carrying into effect, in concert with the Maharaja, certain necessary arrangements for the collection of the public revenue and the administration of justice and for the adoption of a proper and efficient system of police.⁷⁹ One of the most important objective was by the British Commissioners to reform the police force of the State. But the opposition of Maharaja Harendra Naryan, this objective was not carried out satisfactorily by any of them. Although Ahmuty (Commissioner of Cooch Behar State) established two *Thanas* in the interior of the State.

During the minority period of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan the new police force was established in 1866 by Colonel Bruce.⁸⁰ Captain Hedayat Ali was for some time in charge of the police. Moulavee Anwarooj Zaman, an Inspector of the Bengal constabulary was appointed the head of the Cooch Behar police. In the year 1866-67, the organisation of the new police was in full force and appeared to have been completed.⁸¹

The new Police force was formed consisting of one Inspector four Sub-Inspectors, twenty six Head Constables and two hundred Constables. In 1876-77, the number of police stations and out posts were extended.

TABLE -4.2

The Number of Police stations and out posts in Cooch Behar State

Police station	Out posts
Kotwali	Kholta
Tufanganj (Afterwards called Fulbari)	Bhaishkuchi
Dinhata	Keshoribari
Mathabhanga	Shitalkuchi
Mekhliganj	Ksheti (Moranga)
	Kotebhajni
	Haldibari

Source: H. N. Chaudhury, *Cooch Behar State and its Land*

Revenue Settlement, Cooch Behar, 1903, p.309.

The police force was reorganised in 1876-1877 and it comprised of one Superintendent, three Inspectors, eight Sub-Inspectors, twenty-six head constables and two hundred and forty constables. The town or Municipal police was organized in 1885, consisting of one *Jemadar* and twenty-three *Chowkidars* for the town of Cooch Behar. The Municipal police was under the Superintendent of police.

C. Rural Police

Before 1875, there was nothing any rural police or Chowkidars in Cooch Behar State. The British Commissioner Colonel Haughton introduced the *Chowkidari* system to protect the villagers and their property. In 1882-83, fifteen hundred and seventy six *Chowkidars* were in the State. The Cooch Behar *Chowkidari* Act was passed in 1893-94.⁸² The number of *Chowkidars* in the State came up to fourteen hundred seventy seven at the end of 1899-1900.

D. Cooch Behar Jail

A Jail for the custody of prisoners had been in existence from a very old time. Formerly it was two distinct departments; civil and criminal. When the commissioner took charge of the Cooch Behar State the old jail having fallen out of repair a new *kutchra* one was built to the south of the Sagardighi in 1864.⁸³ In 1874, a proposal for the building of a *pucca* wall was taken up and the bill for the same was sanctioned. The deputy Commissioner was in charge of making the buildings *pucca* before constructing a masonry wall. The idea of making the wards of masonry had, however to be given up on grounds, and only the guard-house, the office, was built of masonry. A brick wall was constructed by prison labours; it was completed in 1879-80.⁸⁴ A Tank inside the jail was completed with jail labours in 1880. This tank supplied pure water to the prisoners.

A Jail garden was opened in 1868, and the Jail authority gave employments to those prisoners who were unfit for hard labour. The mark system for the

regulation of the conduct of the convicts was introduced in 1873. The jail code of Bengal was followed in the management of the jail and Lock-ups were in the State. The Fauzdari Ahilkar was in charge of the jail, and was assisted by a Jailor and one Assistant Jailor.

The Cooch Behar jail was remarkable for its healthiest. Sir Stuart Bayley, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, who visited Cooch Behar in 1889, was pleased to remark, "that the prisoner seemed to be well fed properly cared for." Prisoners were transferred from Cooch Behar State to Andaman Jail for British Government's own arrangement.

E. Lock-Ups

In the beginning, there was no separate building for the lock-ups and the prisoners were used to be kept in the *Thana* buildings. Subsequently regular lock-ups were built with the *Thana* guard house in their front, and a high bamboo wall covering the remaining sides. The lock-ups had separate cells for male and female prisoners. The first lock-up was opened at Dinhata in the state in 1870. Gradually the lock-ups were increased and those were under the management of the Sub-divisional officer.

4.3 Mobilisation of western culture-Education, health and Urbanisation:

A. Education

Before going into details about the education policy of the Raj, It can be said that the dynasty which was founded by Viswa Singha was absolutely backward in education. During the time of Maharaja Nara Narayan this dynasty

became most powerful but he could not make progress in the sphere of education. The early rulers of the dynasty only encouraged Sanskrit based education. They patronised the scholars with profound knowledge in Sanskrit literature. One of the main features during this time was that education was restricted to elite class and not for the masses or common people of the State. The education for the common people had its beginning during the reign of Maharaja Bir Narayan. He was a great patron of learning and established schools in various parts of his kingdom.⁸⁵ Among the later rulers Pran Narayan, though interested in education and patronised Sanskrit scholars and pandits, could not popularize education among the masses. Till the 19th century one may experience the slow progress in the field of education in Cooch Behar.

During the minority of Maharaja Narendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur, a vernacular school was started in the town of Cooch Behar in 1857, for the education of the children of Royal blood.⁸⁶ This may be said to be the first step taken towards popular education in the State. Thus the establishment of the Sadar M. E. School sowed the seed of popular learning in the State. In 1861 Maharaja Narendra Narayan offered a purse to Colonel Jenkins, Governnor General's Agent in the North East Frontier in recognition of the good services done by the Colonel during the minority of the Maharaja Nripendra Narayan. The worthy Colonel tactfully avoided accepting the reward and suggested that the money would be spent for a good cause if an English school were founded with that money. Accordingly, an English school was founded in 1861 and named Jenkins School in

honour of Colonel Jenkins. In the beginning it taught up to the third class of the entrance curriculum and later it received the recognition of the Calcutta University and sent up the first batch of five boys for the entrance Examination in 1870 of whom three passed.⁸⁷ In 1864, three other vernacular schools were opened in the interior and Ramchandra Ghosh, a State official was appointed Honorary Inspector of schools in addition to his other duties. Since 1865 the supervision of the schools was placed in the hands of a local Committee of public Instruction, assisted by the Government Inspector of schools of the North East Division.⁸⁸ In 1870 the number of village vernacular schools went up to 58 of which 5 were meant for girls. A Madrasa for teaching Persian and three Sanskrit schools were also started.

The gradual spread of education and extension of schools in the interior, the need for a separate whole time Superintendent of education was felt and in 1870, R. Robinson was appointed to be the first Superintendent of education in the State. In the next year, Kasikantha Mukharjee resigned from the Bengal Education service and joined the Superintendent of education of Cooch Behar State. A network of schools and pathshalas covered the entire State and for proper supervision, the establishment of the Superintendent of Education was strengthened between 1876 and 1878 by the additional Deputy Inspector of schools, and Sub Inspector of schools and four inspecting Pandits.⁸⁹

According to G.J.B. Juite Dalton, the Deputy Commissioner of Cooch Behar prepared Annual Administrative Report of the State for 1876-77 was worth noting "There is no feature of our administration of the Cooch Behar State, on

which we are entitled to look with greater satisfaction than the success which has attended our efforts in the cause of education. A very few years ago there was hardly a school in the Raj and very few except the *Muktears* or *Mohajans* could even read or write. At present Cooch Behar is ahead of Rangpur, Julpigoree (Jalpaiguri) and of all the Assam districts and can compare not unfavourably with some of the more advanced districts of lower Bengal. During the year under review the number of schools had increased from 282 to 323 and their pupil's from 7,238 to 7795 and the average daily attendance from 6087 to 7151. Five boys sent up from the State for the University entrance examination four passed and two of them won first grade junior scholarship. A scholar from the Raj passed the first Arts examination for the first time and another final examination of the medical school. At the minor scholarship competitive examination a native of Cooch Behar secured the second place in the general list. At the vernacular scholarship examination in competition with Assam, Cooch Behar passed as many candidates as three of Assam districts together. At the general examination of the normal schools in the lower provinces, Cooch Behar passed eight candidates against one for the neighbouring district of Rangpur. I mention these facts to show that while every year is swelling the numbers in our schools and increasing the percentage of our school going population, the quality of instruction imparted will compare favourably with the Government standard attained to in the neighbouring British districts".⁹⁰

Lieutenant Governor of Bengal expressed here that large sum of money should be spent to this head for the multiplication of primary Schools. So State budget enhanced the allocation, and a number of primary Schools increased considerably. In the year 1879-80, 323 Schools, 7 were run entirely at State expense; Jenkins was the only one High English School, 2 middle vernacular Schools, two normal Schools, one Boarding School and one Artizen School. Two hundred and thirty one were Aided Schools. There were Middle English Schools 3, Middle vernacular Schools 88, lower vernacular Schools 96, Girls Schools 24, Night Schools 19, Boarding Schools 1, 13 Maktabas and the total expenditure of education was Rs. 74516 of which the States share was Rs. 49, 526.⁹¹ In June, 1888 the first College was established in Cooch Behar named Victoria College to commemorate the Jubilee of Queen Victoria of England.⁹² This college was considered as a first grade College with Arts upto BA standard and was affiliated to Calcutta University and science upto law Intermediate Course. Gradually the MA and the Law courses were opened and the college became one of the leading institutions in North Eastern India.

The budget for the primary Educaion and Secondary Education was separated from 1891 and by effecting savings in the primary sector where more of people's Cooch Behar was seemed.⁹³ In Cooch Behar State, education made considerable progress and the Table is shown, Primary and secondary stages.

TABLE -4.3**Total Number of Institutions, Students and expenditure****(1800 – 1947)**

Year	No. of Institutions	Total No. of Students	Total expenditures
1800-1881	323	7795	35287
1890-1891	328	10242	39123
1900-1901	344	11519	40335
1910-1911	341	12913	57635
1920-1921	328	12367	76280
1930-1931	342	12933	91628
1940-1941	345	16443	119527
1947	360	18200	125620

Source: *Annual Administrative Report of Cooch Behar State*, Relevant Years.

The progress of education in the state compared with the neighbouring British districts. The population of Cooch Behar State was 5,66,973, of which 3,01,380 were males. The details are given below:-

TABLE – 4. 4

Districts	Total male population	Male pupils of school going	No.of pupils at school	Percentage
Rajshaye	717947	107691	19386	18.0
Dinajpur	774380	116157	21752	18.7
Rangpur	1061812	159271	27970	17.6
Jalpaiguri	364659	54698	11239	20.5
Cooch Behar	301380	45207	11208	24.7

Source: *Annual Administrative Report of Cooch Behar State, 1900-1901, p.27.*

The percentage of literate's people is given below:

TABLE – 4.5

Year	Male	Female
1901	10.7	0.4
1911	13.4	0.6
1921	13.9	0.9
1931	11.3	1.2
1941	13.6	2.1
1951	23.2	5.3

Source: Durgadas Majumdar, *West Bengal District Gazetteers, Koch Behar, 1977, p.177.*

The education for the female deserves special mention; it was previously restricted to the ladies of the palace. But during the reign of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan education for the women received a special preference. In 1881 a land-marking step had been taken for the favour of women education in the State.⁹⁴ The Girl's school named Sunity Academy was established in the Capital town by the direct patronage of Maharani Sunity Devi. Gradually, the girl's schools were also established in the subdivision of the State. A detail of the girls schools and their achievements are presented here to understand the success rate of the female education of the State-

TABLE – 4.6

Total number of Girsl Schools and success Rate of Girls Students

Years	Total No. of Girls Schools	Success Rate
1870-71	6	-
1880-81	23	-
1890-91	10	-
1900-01	9	70.1%
1910-11	22	81.8%
1920-21	21	100%
1930-31	22	93.8%
1940-41	24	94.3%

Source: A. Bhattacharjee, *Madhuparni Special Issue of Cooch Behar*, 1990, pp.208-209.

The education was extended to all classes of the society; Nripendra Narayan had a secular vision in spreading education to the grass roots. The secular attitude of the Maharajas of Cooch Behar in respect of education may be enumerated.

B. Health

Before the year 1819, the European system of medicine was unknown in Cooch Behar State.⁹⁵ The Rajas of Cooch Behar had found from early times *Kavirajas or Ayurvedic Physicians*. But this form of treatment was confined to the Royal family and to the upper classes. There were a large number of people who by and large had faith in *ojhas or village quacks*. In June, 1814, the Commissioner, Macleod applied to the British Government to send a qualified medical man to the State but due to paucity of such man the Government was unable to send a single candidate as per the demand.⁹⁶ In 1819 an Indian doctor was sent to Cooch Behar on a salary of Rs. 40 per month but there was no record as to what his qualification or training was. In 1841 Maharaja Sibendra Narayan applied to the British Government for a qualified medical man and in February, 1842 Dr. Syama Charan Sarkar, a graduate of the Medical college of Calcutta was appointed Medical officer of the Maharaja's Court.⁹⁷ In 1846, the Maharaja asked for a European Medical officer and Dr. Ralph Moore was appointed Medical officer of the Maharaja.⁹⁸

There was no attempt to open any Hospital or dispensary in Cooch Behar State before 1842, when Colonel Haughton took over charge of the administration

during the minority of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan. The first dispensary was opened in Cooch Behar in the charge of a Sub-Assistant Surgeon in 1865. In 1869-70, the Medical establishment consisted of a Sub-Assistant Surgeon, two unqualified Doctors and four compounders.⁹⁹ At that time, there were other three Hospitals at the sudder, the police, Military and jail. The Sub-Assistant Surgeon was incharge of the Medical Department upto May, 1873, when the post of the Civil Surgeon was created and Dr. Thomas Briscoe was appointed to it. Henceforth the Assistant Surgeon came to be incharge of Dispensary only.

The first dispensary to be opened in the mofussil was on 13th June, 1873 at Dinhata. The Mekhliganj dispensary was opened on 9th August, 1874 and the Mathabhanga dispensary on 28th September, 1874. Arrangement for in patients was made in both these dispensaries in 1875-76.¹⁰⁰ There was at this time no qualified Medical Graduate or licentiate incharge of the Subdivisional dispensaries or Hospitals. In 1885, Haldibari dispensary was opened for the treatment of outpatients. A dispensary was started at Fulbari in 1888-89.¹⁰¹

In 1866-67, the number of patients was treated at the Hospitals and Dispensaries. The number gradually increased as shown below:-

TABLE - 4.7

The number of Inpatients and Outpatients in Cooch Behar State

Year	In patients	Out patients	Total
1880-81	1289	13236	14525
1890-91	1487	16998	18485
1900-01	1332	19890	21222
1910-11	1149	39460	40609
1920-21	1689	48346	50035
1930-31	1527	58515	60042
1940-41	2708	169261	171969
1950-51	304	20522	20826

Source: H.N. Chaudhury, *Cooch Behar State and its Land*

Revenue Settlement, Cooch Behar, 1903, p.338.

These dispensaries and hospitals were established near the state head quarters and at the sub divisional head quarters and were visited mainly by the people of the towns and those living close by. The rural people remained apathetic to the scientific treatment and still had faith in *ojhas and village quaks*. The

principal diseases of the people attending the dispensaries and hospitals were fever, spleen, Rheumatic affections, skin diseases and goiter etc.

In 1865-66, the vaccination was the only preventive against small pox. Colonel Haughton the Commissioner secured the services of some vaccinators from the Government of Bengal during 1869-71. The following figures give a picture of the progress of vaccination in the State between 1873 to 1941.

TABLE - 4.8

Total Number of vaccinated Persons (1873 - 1941)

Years	Number of persons vaccinated
1873-1874	4449
1880-1881	17447
1890-1891	13755
1900-1901	16895
1910-1911	45017
1920-1921	31193
1930-1931	12529
1940-1941	65764

Source: Durgadas Majumdar, *West Bengal District*

Gazetteers, Koch Behar, 1977, pp.182-183.

The statement below shows the birth and death statistics with their respective rates per thousand of population during the year of 1900 to 1940.

TABLE – 4.9

Percentage of birth and death statistics with respective rates in Cooch Behar
(1900 –1941)

Year	Birth rates	Death rates
1900-01	18.45	25.43
1910-11	16.32	15.40
1920-21	18.23	15.30
1930-31	13.28	11.62
1940-41	26.81	22.64

Source: *Annual Administrative Report of Cooch Behar*

State, Relevant Years.

Thomas Briscoe was the first civil Surgeon of Cooch Behar State and assumed the charge of Medical Officer of the State in 1873. Surgeon Major H. Coopeson officiated in the post till 1877. Dr. Henry holds the post till 1892. Gradually the post was held by one and another European doctors. The European modern medicine system gradually improved the health system of Cooch Behar. The people of Cooch Behar, mainly Maharaja of State wanted and requested to the British Government for European style of treatment.

C. Urbanisation

Evolution of towns-that is the origin, development and changing character, function and morphology of town is a fascinating subject of study. This is not only a matter of historical interest; one finds, there are trends in development leading

from the past to the present.¹⁰² All of we know that in the late Nineteenth Century, Britain had become the most highly urbanized Nation of the World, though North West Europe which had fed the cities, spilled over into the great migratory flows. Which took European people to the World under-developed regions of the World.¹⁰³ By contrast, in those areas of the World in Africa, Asia, and the Far East, which had been seized by the great powers in the scramble for Empire, the rate of urbanization, though significant for commercial and capital cities was over all very much lower.

The urban areas of this State had also grown at a lesser rate than that observed in the urban West Bengal as a whole. Ofcourse, during 1911-1921, urban West Bengal registered an increase of 7-16 percent while urban Cooch Behar showed an increase of 4.29%. During the first twenty years of the 20th century, Cooch Behar showed a beter growth rate of population than the State of West Bengal as a whole. In the Cooch Behar State an increase of population by 4.5% was registered against the West Bengal State's growth of 3.15%. The urban population in 1901 as 100 the index of urban growth had been calculated both for State of West Bengal and State for the Cooch Behar as following:-

TABLE - 4.10

**Growth of Urban Populatin compares between Cooch Behar and West
Bengal (1901-1951)**

YEARS	WEST BENGAL	COOCH BEHAR
1901	100	100
1911	114	112
1921	122	123
1931	140	128
1941	229	191
1951	304	357

Source: Durgadas Majumdar, *West Bengal District Gazetteers, Koch Behar*, 1977, p.107.

The whole of the State was parcelled out into *Moujas*, closely resembling the modern taluk and there were grouped under the wider Sub-divisions of Zillas, *Toks* and *Gerds* Ahumity's (Commissioner of Cooch Behar) Quinquennial register of 1799, different Mouzas. There were then four Zillas-Gitaldah, Mathabhanga, Durga nagar and Lalbazar, one *Tok* of Mekhliganj and four Gerd-Patchara, Teldhar, Uchalpukhari and Maraghat.¹⁰⁴ The Sub-divisional system of administration was not adopted before 1870, in which year after the conclusion of O Donel's survey, each of the six Parganas was constituted into a district Sub-

division by Colonel Haughton.¹⁰⁵ The Muffassil Sub-divisions were of first concerned with the collection of revenue only; attached to them for the inconvenience of the public.

British Government not only introduced regulation to develop the administration in favour of urbanization but also developed the communication system all over the State. Before Colonel Haughton's (1861) arrival in Cooch Behar State, the total road's length was forty one *milles*. All the roads started from Cooch Behar town and connected other parts of the State like – Baneswar, Balarampur, and Moghalhat etc. Dalton (Deputy Commissioner of Cooch Behar) gave a vivid account of the condition of roads, "there was literally destitute of the good roads for even cart-traffic when the Government assumed charge. Fair weather roads existed Colonel they were transected every few milles by rivers and water course which were unbridged and often lay through plough of rice cultivation which in the rainy season were impassable. The course of rivers themselves formed an outlet for the trade of the country, but internal communication was tedious and difficult".¹⁰⁶ The British administration played an important role for communication improvement. From 1865 to 1876 was called great road making activity by the British Government in Cooch Behar State. They constructed every main line of roads with straight, high and broad and village roads were also constructed. At the end of 1898-1899, there were five *milles* of metalled road, three hundred seventy six and half *milles* of unmetalled road and one hundred eighty seven milles of village roads of the State.¹⁰⁷ Before

1876 there was no Railways in Cooch Behar State. In 1876, the North Bengal Railway opened a station at Haldibari. The Gitaldah-Manshahi Railway line opened in 1893, followed by Manshahi Cooch Behar extension in 1898 and another extension from Cooch Behar Alipurduar in 1900. The Railway which later (1913-1914) came to be the Cooch Behar State Railway and the Bengal Douars States Railway actually opened up a new vista of development of the State of Cooch Behar.

The Cooch Behar was a small State and total number of town was six, each of the five Sub-divisional Head Quarter was a town, though some of them were big village called town almost by courtesy. Some of the towns of this district even do not satisfy the basic qualifying tests laid down in the census for defining an urban area, except of course of their being administered by the town committee.

In Cooch Behar State, the State Head quarter town of Cooch Behar was a Municipality. There were other five towns each of which was administered by a town committee. In 1901 the State had four towns viz, Cooch Behar, Dinahata, Mithabhanga and Haldibari. Two other towns Tufanganj and Mekhliganj were incorporated in 1941.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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2. *Loc.cit.*
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4. Amanatulla Ahmed, *Cooch Beharer Itihas* (Bengali), Cooch Behar, p.373.
5. *Ibid*, p.416.
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