

**Land Revenue Systems,
Land Reforms and Agrarian Relations in
Jalpaiguri
(Khasmahal to Operation Barga)**



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Doctor of Philosophy

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Tr. 333.31095414
S9662

234967



74 AUG 2001

Preface

The present study is an analysis of the Land Revenue, Land – Tenure systems and Agrarian Relations in the Jalpaiguri District from Khasmahal to Operation Barga which has been analyzed from historical point of view at the micro – level. During this period, the land – tenure systems and agrarian relations have been changed in different times by different rulers such as under the reign of Koch rulers, the Bhutani rulers, the British rulers and ultimately the post – independent governments. The present researcher shows the changing agrarian economy and its impact on the different types of tenants of the district, the reaction of the peasants particularly the sharecroppers, small jotdars and agricultural labourers.

Land is one of the best resources in the world without which the existence of men is meaningless. The relation between men and land is like a mother and her son. So the present researcher chooses the field and he tries his best to explore the history of land related people who are the best friend of the society in devoting their life to grow food, the most important elements for surviving the human life. In spite of their dedication, hard working and self – denying contributions to the society they are the most victimized, oppressed and neglected people in the world through the ages. How these tenants became oppressive during the period of present study, are shown in a new light and analytical point of view.

Jalpaiguri District witnesses a distinctive feature in many respects of society, economy, culture and demographic pattern unlike other parts of Bengal districts. Many ups and downs have taken place, many parts of the district such as Boda, Patgram, Pachagar, Debiganj and Tetulia had to cede to Pakistan at the time of partition of India. From anthropological point of view different types of tribal people have been living in this district, other than

tribals, people of different castes and religion also living here which makes a mixed society. 'Unity in Diversity' is one of the characteristics of this district. But recently, a socio – political tension and militant activities are seen in the soil of North Bengal, particularly the district of Jalpaiguri. One of the most vital causes of these tensions and activities lies in the land – related issues which is shown in the present study.

In Jalpaiguri, unlike other parts of Bengal, British Government introduced two separate systems in the field of administration and land revenue. Regarding land revenue and agrarian economy, British government introduced permanent settlement in Baikunthapur pargana and chaklas of Boda, Patgram and Purbabhadra situated to the west of Tista river, on the other hand the Western Duars situated to the east of Tista was declared as a non – regulated area where no permanent settlement was introduced, British Government himself was the proprietor of land. Here lands were granted by lease or agreement to the jotdars and the proprietors of the tea – gardens.

Regarding agrarian relations, the district particularly the western Duars witness a distinctive character unlike other parts of Bengal. Here, the relation between sharecroppers and their giris (jotdars and intermediaries) was co – operative more or less except few instances of indigenous jotdars and absentee jotdars coming from other professions were more oppressors than the indigenous jotdars. The relation between sharecroppers and their giris among the Rajbanshi community was paternal. The jotdars or giris treated their sharecroppers or projas like a sons or daughters, even at the time of marriage of the projas, the jotdars dropped water on the head of bride and bridegrooms called "Panichhita" and became parents of the bride and bridegrooms and performed all the duties from both sides as parents and their son until death.

In the post – colonial period the work of land Reforms programmes was started since 1950's, but practically the programmes was started during the period of United Front Government in 1967 and 1969, as well as left Front Government since 1977. Land Reforms programmes in the district as elsewhere in west Bengal became a boon to the landless people and sharecroppers, because they had their right on land, on the other hand, many indigenous jotdars or intermediaries, particularly of the Rajbanshi community had lost their land many of them become destitute for their simplicity, illiterity, and having no experience of other professions like southern and eastern parts of Bengal as a result of which many discontents and grievances have been growing up in the mind of Rajbanshi people which led to socio – political tensions in the district as elsewhere in North Bengal.

The present study has shown different types of land problems in the district and some parts of boundary areas of the district such as lease land in Alipurduar subdivision, adverse land problem of kshudipara and surroundings of Manikganj as well as the problem of enclaves or Chhitmahals. In spite of having many positive sides of land Reforms programmes, this land related problems have not yet been solved for the negligence of central Government and State Government since the partition of India in 1947.

The researcher of the present study wants to acknowledge his gratitude and indebtedness to various persons and institutions by whom he is benefited directly or indirectly to complete his research work. Firstly, the researcher is deeply indebted to Dr. Ananda. Gopal Ghosh, Prof. of History, North Bengal University and Dr. Sailen Debnath, Reader in History, Alipurduar college, for their valuable guidance without which the work of research would not have been possible to be completed. Dr. Ananda Gopal Ghosh has always encouraged the researcher, given materials and ideas which inspired and helped to develop the work. The researcher has always communicated and consulted with Dr. Sailen Debnath,

who has given positive suggestions and ideas from different angles which helped to proceed.

Secondly the researcher is grateful to Sri. Promod Nath, the former employee of Edward library, Alipurduar who assisted the researcher by giving materials and inspiring to develop the work. The researcher is also grateful to Dr. Monibhushan Roy, retired Headmaster of Shyamaprosad High school, Alipurduar Junction for his valuable suggestion and Late Nitai Das Chowdhury, former leader of C.P.I(M) for his giving ideas about the peasant movement in the District, and Arabinda kar, editor of kiratbhumi, Jalpaiguri.

The researcher earnestly mention the names of Dr. Jashobanta Kar, former Professor of History, North Bengal University, Dr. Chhanda Chakraborty, former Prof. of History, North Bengal University, Dr. Ratna Roy Sanyal, Prof. of History, N. B. U, Dr. Mandira Bhattacharja, former Prof. of History, North Bengal University, and Dr. I. Sarkar, Prof. of History, N. B. U. for their critical comments and giving suggestions.

The researcher is deeply indebted to the staff of West Bengal State Archives, Kolkata; North Bengal University Library, Azad Hind Pathagar, Jalpaiguri Edward Library, Alipurduar, D.L. & L.R.O. Office, Jalpaiguri for their assistance to collect books and materials.

The researcher is very much grateful to the former jotdars, chukanidars, political leaders who were involved with peasant movements with whom the researcher has met and taken interviews which enriched the researcher having new information and ideas

Among the colleagues Dr. Partha Sen, Reader of History, Islampur College helped the researcher by giving materials and

ideas about the research. The researcher is high grateful to Dr. Sen. Dr. Santanu Bagchi , Reader of Political Science, have always encouraged the researcher to complete the work. Smt. Paulami Bhawal, Lecturer in history, always inspired and assisted the researcher in several times in the research work. The researcher expresses his thanks and gratitude to Smt. Bhwal.

Lastly, I am grateful to my wife Smt. Anima Sutradhar and my son Diganta Sutradhar for their inspiration and moral support in completing the work.

In spite of my best trying and hardworking there may be errors. I am completely responsible for that.

Abbreviations

AIKS	–	All India Kishan Sabha
AWL	–	Arable Waste Land
BPKS	–	Bangiya Pradeshik Krishak Sabha
CPI	–	Communist Party of India
CPI (M)	–	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
CPI (ML)	–	Communist Party of India (Marxist – Leninist)
DKS	–	District Krishak Sabha
DPA	–	Duars Planters Association
INC	–	Indian National Congress
LRP	–	Land Reforms Programme
MLA	–	Member of Legislative Assembly.
MP	–	Member of Parliament.

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Introduction

The present work expects to explain many critical aspects of the socio-economic and cultural condition of the Jalpaiguri district in a new dimension at the micro-level-study which has so far been neglected by the main stream historians or social scientists as a deriding and less important matter. In spite of its historical and cultural importance and legacy, the district as a part of north – eastern region of India through the ages from Pre – historic period to the Post- modern age, the historians, social scientists and planners have not given attention to this region or the people either as a result of which any kind of remarkable development could not take place. If the Government including planners or intellectuals would have given their attention to this region a revolutionary change could take place, because there were huge natural resources, efficient hard – working and reliable people. The wealth and resources of this region were being utilized for development in the other parts of the country as a result of which lot of discontent and grievances have grown up amongst the people.

Writing local history as that of Jalpaiguri district is a Herculean task because of the paucity of source materials and far away from metropolitan city like Calcutta or Delhi wherefrom unpublished archival sources can be used easily. In spite of that, I have tried my best to explore many un-discussed and unexplored matter including archival sources, Government and private report, different types of writing – materials such as district gazetteers, census reports, journals, periodicals, monographs books, dissertations and most reliable and authentic sources that is oral sources collected from interview with various communities, political leaders, peasants, jotdars, chukanidars and adhiars of the time.

It is relevant to mention here that the district Jalpaiguri was a discriminative tract unlike other parts of Bengal since its inception considering various aspects such as socio-economic – demographic pattern, ethnic societies, geographical location land revenue purpose and lastly the characteristics of peasants and agrarian relations.¹ The discrimination was also followed in the different districts of North Bengal. The agrarian relations between jotdars and intermediaries' (chukanidars, Dar- chukanidars, Dar – dar – Chukanidars etc) and jotdars or 'Giri' and adhiars were more or less reliable and sympathetic other than Rangpur, Dinajpur and Darjeeling district of North Bengal.

II

Jalpaiguri district, before its inception in 1869, was a part of Koch Kingdom comprising large areas of North Bengal and Assam, founded by Haria Mandal, a Mech leader in Chikna hill. Haria Mandal had two wives namely Hira and Jira and four sons namely Bisu, Sishu, Chandan and Madan. After the death of Haria Mandal Chandan became the King but he was not powerful, the real power was in the hands of Bisu. After Chandan, Bishu became the King taking the title Singha. Biswa Singha as a Koch King took recognition from his mother's genealogy as a custom of the tribals; because the predecessors of Biswa Singha from his father side were Mech and from his mother side were Koch. Biswa Singha and his successors became gradually hinduised by adopting religion and culture. Though there were ups and downs in the field of power and positions of the Koch Kings sometimes they were defeated by the Mughals, Bhutias etc and since 1772 the kingdom went under British Dominion, however, twelve kings ruled the kingdom near about four hundred years which was a glorious sign in the history of North Bengal and Bengal as a whole.²

Since the reign of Upendra Narayan (1714–1763) the sovereignty and majestic power began to be decay gradually

because of weakness and conflicts of the Koch kings as a result of which the Bhutanese occupied the border areas of Bhutan and Kochbehar, namely the areas of Duars. After the death of King Upendra Narayan, Debendra Narayan only a child of 4 years ascended the throne; the administrative work actually was conducted by the ministers advised by royal mother of the king. But after two years, at the age of six years, the king was murdered by a Brahman named Rati Sharma due to a conspiracy of Rajguru Ramananda Goswami. The security forces killed Rati Sharma at the spot and Ramananda Goswami was sentenced to death by Bhutan Raj.

Dhairjendra Narayan, the third son of Kharga Narayan became the King in 1765. Immediately after ascending the throne, king Dhairjendra Narayan killed Dewan Rama Narayan for the evil counsel of the royal administrators and for this action Dhairjendra Narayan was arrested and kept under Bhutanese control, and Rajendra Narayan, the elder brother of Dhairjendra Narayan ascended the throne. After his death in 1772 Dharendra Narayan, the son of Dhairjendra Narayan became the king. But Bhutia king was not satisfied with this coronation, so the Bhutanese invaded Kochbehar. In this critical situation and helplessness, the Nazir Deb prayed for help to the British and ultimately a treaty was signed between Col. Warren Hastings and the King on the 5th April, 1773. By the provisions of the treaty Kochbehar became a part of Bengal Presidency and turned into a tributary state, they occupied the areas from the Bhutanese and the arrested King Dhairjendra Narayan was rescued by the English.

But the Bhutanese carried on their aggressive activities on the people of Kochbehar state by plundering various things, wealths and oppressing the people of Behar. The Britishers were not willing to excite the Bhutia Kings because of their commercial interest with Tibet through Bhutan. For their increasing aggressive attitude to Kochbehar particularly over the Duars, the Britishers could not be

silent, they sent a mission under Esley Eden in 1863. But the Bhutia royal power insulted Eden tremendously in the palace of Bhutan and he had been compelled to sign a treaty which was derogatory to the Britishers. So they invaded Bhutan and started second Anglo – Bhutan war which ended with the treaty of Sinchula in 1865.

After occupation of the Duars, the present district was formed with the Western Duars since 1865 and the Jalpaiguri and Rajganj thanas of Rangpur district since 1869. The district so, formed in 1869, bounded in the North by the Darjeeling district and Bhutan, in the east by Assam in the south by Rangpur district in Bangladesh and Kochbehar district and in the West by Darjeeling district and part of Bangladesh. The respective areas of the two subdivisions of the district Sadar and Alipurduar have varied from decade to decade.³

III

The district can be shown into two tracts in accordance with land revenue systems and agrarian relations namely permanent settled portion, mostly situated to the West of the Tista comprising Baikunthapur pargana and the chaklas of Boda, patgram and purba bhag where the Jamindari system was introduced, the 2nd portion of the district was Western Duars, declared non – regulated area mostly situated between the Tista and Sankosh. No permanent settlement was introduced in the Western Duars and as it was the non – regulated area, Government was the proprietor of the land.

In the permanently settled portion of the district land revenue was settled with the zamindars in accordance with permanent settlement which was introduced since 1793 by the British. The zamindars would not cultivate land directly; they gave land to the jotdars. Deunia, Basunia, tahutdar etc who were involved with land became jotdars and they were powerful during the colonial period. The small jotdars cultivated land directly but the big jotdars who had giant size jotes did not cultivate land directly. They would give

land to the chukanidars, sometimes the chukanidars cultivated land directly sometimes they would give land to the Dar – chukanidars by pattani or agreement. In this agrarian structure there were also Dar – dar – chukanidar though they were very few and they had no right like that of jotdars or Chukanidars.

There were various types of jotdars, many of whom would give total amount of land to the intermediaries by pattani or agreement namely Chukanidars, Dar – Chukanidars, Dar – dar – Chukanidars etc many jotdars partly gave land to the intermediaries and partly cultivated by themselves. There were other types of jotdars who cultivated land by adhiars by 50% share of crops.

In the agrarian relations of the Zamindari areas as elsewhere in Dinajpur, Rangpur, Darjeeling districts other than hill areas and other parts of North Bengal, the most victimized and oppressed class was the adhiars or share croppers who had no right on land. They cultivated lands only for the 50% share of crops like slaves. Beside this they had to give various types of abwab or subtaxes from their share as a result of which they would get minimum amount of crops. The adhiars or sharecroppers were evicted at any time in accordance with the will of jotdars or “Giri”.

In the permanently settled parganas the system of land tenure was in itself simple, but it did not adapt itself very readily to the tenancy act and difficult questions of status arose. There were a few patni Taluks and rent free tenures, but the great bulk of the lands was held by jotdars most of whom had to sublet at least a part of their land to Chukanidars on exactly the same terms as those on which they themselves held under the proprietor and the remainder to produce paying tenants called in this district “adhiars” long course of custom had entirely ceased to differentiate between those jotes which had originally been taken up sometimes by non–

residents with the idea of established tenants and those held by the descendants of genuine cultivators.⁴

In the part of Western Duars, unlike permanent settled portion of the district, no uniform system or law was introduced for land revenue purposes by the British as they had no sufficient experience and ideas about the system and the agrarian relation of this tract. All most all the areas excluding south Maynaguri and some plain areas of the Western Duars were full of jungles and natural resources. Only the people of some tribes namely Mech, Toto, Rabha Garo lived in this tract other than these tribal people no one could live in this part because of the intolerable condition and unhealthy atmosphere.

In the Western Duars settlement were made under the provision of Act XVI of 1869 and the Waste land rules of 1875 until 1895. In that year Act XVI was repealed and (x) of 1859 and Act (VI) B.C of 1862 were substituted for it. In 1898 the tenancy Act was extended to the temporarily settled area but provision III of Notification the 964 T – R excluding from its application all lands previously or subsequently granted under written lease for the cultivation of tea or for reclamation under the arable Waste lands rule.⁵

IV

As the large areas of Western Duars were without people or proprietorship, the Britishers easily occupied the tract and became the proprietors of the land and tried to introduce their economic policy in the land. They started survey and settlement works from 1871 gradually, dividing the tract into three parts – (a) Land for agriculture (b) land for tea – cultivation and (c) Land for reserve forest. The land of the hills and foot-hills of this tract was suitable for tea cultivation, as the Duars was non – regulated area and the lands were under proprietorship of the British Government, so, some portions of the lands of the Duars were given to the planters for tea

cultivation, which was hugely profitable, by lease because the Govt. could not grant land to the planters for tea cultivation in the permanent settled portion as the land of these areas were under Zamindars who were proprietors of lands. So the tea cultivation was initiated in the Duars in 1874 at Gajoldoba and since then the number of tea - estates increased gradually.

There were no sufficient labourers to work in the tea – gardens, because population were very meagre and the local people were not interested to work as labourers, only the few people of Nepali Communities immigrated in the Duars and worked in the tea – gardens as labourers. So they imported labourers of oraon, and santal communities from Chhotanagpur and Santal Parganas through Sardars. After coming and joining in the tea – gardens as labourers they could not return to their houses as and when necessary. They became like slaves and they had to tolerate different types of oppressions by the authorities of tea – gardens, money lenders, traders etc.

Beside tea – cultivation, Britishers introduced jotdari system creating jotes and giving it to the jotdars. At the initial stage the jotdars need not have to give any kind of revenue or tax to the Government. But subsequently revenue was imposed on them and the revenue increased gradually after every settlement. Like the permanently settled portion of the district most of the jotdars would not cultivate land directly; they would give lands to the Chukanidars by lease or agreement, again Chukanidars also gave land to the Dar – Chukanidars. In some places jotdars cultivated their lands by share croppers or adhiars locally known as Halua with 50% share of crops. Some times jotdars or intermediaries (Chukanidars or dar – Chukanidars) cultivated their whole lands by the adhiars, some times they cultivated their land partly by themselves and partly by the adhiars. The jotdars or intermediaries whose land was cultivated by the adhiars were called ‘Giri’. As there were huge amount of land

and population were very meagre, so the people of different Communities and classes immigrated in the Duars from neighbouring Coochbehar, Rangpur, Dinajpur and elsewhere of Bengal, they obtained lands by lease and became jotdars. The jotdars also imported adhiars giving them many facilities to cultivate their lands.

Like the permanently settled portion of the district, the condition of the sharecroppers or adhiars of the Western Duars was poor because they had no right on land and they could be evicted from land at anytime in accordance with the will of the Girdar. But it can be said from different sources, particularly the information collected by me from field survey of the contemporary jotdars and adhiars who have been living till now in the different parts of the Duars, that the condition of the sharecroppers or adhiars of the Western Duars was not so pathetic like the permanently settled portion of the district or else where in Bengal which I have mentioned in details in the relevant chapters. There were big jotdars who had thousand of acres of land and they were not able to cultivate lands directly, as the areas were unhealthy, full of jungles and there were no sufficient people to cultivate lands, other than these the new jotdars of other professions namely doctors, traders, money lenders and advocates who immigrated from neighbouring districts and obtained jotes from the British Government by lease of whom many jotdars had no direct relation with land and would not live adjacent to the land called absentee jotdars they would give land to the Chukanidars or adhiars with 50% share of crops. So all classes of jotdars needed huge adhiars to cultivate land, they imported adhiars giving many facilities called Bhuta (one kind of loan) and pana (Cattle for cultivation). Jotdars always tried to retain adhiars in their land; because in case of any kind of dispute adhiars would go to other jotdars and obtained land for cultivation. So jotdars always tried to maintain good relation with their adhiars. It is found from field survey that there was marriage relation between

Giri and adhiars, so a cooperative and hospitable relation was followed between adhiars and their Giri but for few instances.

Another aspect I have shown in my thesis which was a question of identity crisis faced by different tribal communities in the district. Once, before the coming of the Britishers, some tribal communities namely Mech, Toto, Garo, Rabha and Drucpa lived in this area. But after the Coming of the Britishers and introductions of their new economic policies in the field of agriculture, trade and industry, different types and classes of people immigrated in the Duars as a result of which population increased gradually and a new demographic structure was formed. For introducing the new economic policy and systems in the land, and immigration, the tribal people lost their ethnicity or ethnic life where they habituated with shifting cultivation and Governed by themselves out of so called civic society.

Following the above situation at the time of survey and settlement works by Mr. D. H. E. Sunder, separate colonies were established for Mech, Garo, and Santal communities. (Sunder Report) After few years it was found that different castes and classes of people entered into the colony as a result of which number of Mech people was going down and it was more wonderful that after few years it was followed that there was not a single Garo in the colony and that more than half of the jotdars were outsiders mainly oraons.⁶ Why the number of Mech people was going down and the Garos left the place? From the report of Mr. Milligan and the writing of Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal it is found that the Meches and Garos left the district and moved towards east. Without any hesitation it can be said that they left the place due to losing their ethnicity and facing an identity crisis.

One of the important aspects which I have shown in the thesis is peasant- reactions or peasant- unrests that took place during colonial and post colonial period in the district. In the relevant chapter, I have tried my best to show the real picture of the peasants, particularly the sharecroppers or adhiars, small peasants, peasants and labourers of tribal communities who being the real cultivators, were related with land directly and were the most victimized and oppressed classes in the agrarian – structure of the society. It is also mentioned that the condition of sharecroppers and the relation with their Giris was comparatively better and tolerable than the permanently settled part of the district particularly in the areas of Boda, Patgram, Panchagar, Tetulia and Debiganj. In spite of that adhiars were oppressed by their Giri's in different ways. Another oppressed class was tea – labourers who were nothing but slaves and they spent their life like a prisoner. They had been imported from Chhotanagpur and Santal Pargana and confined in the tea – estates. They could not return to their houses willingly, could not escape from the boundary of the garden. Many times the women labourers were raped and oppressed by the managers or authorities of the tea gardens, not only that they were cheated by the traders, money lenders equally.

So, against all sorts of oppressions, sharecroppers or adhiars including small peasants and tea labourers started movements against their oppressors. Here, in my thesis I have tried to show the peasant movements in the district in different phases from Hat tola movement to operation Barga movement.

In the decade of 1930s adhiars and agricultural labourers started a movement called 'Hat tola' or 'tolagandi' movement; the tea labourers also joined this movement in the villages. All the Hats (weekly markets) were under control of the zamindars/jotdars. At the time of selling any kind of goods, the sellers had to give tola (a kind of sale tax) to the ijaradars of zamindars. The amount of tola

was high and the sharecroppers, labourers and small peasants could not tolerate such types of tola, so discontent and grievances accumulated among the peasants including adhiars and labourers. Krishak Sabha discussed about the illegal Tola or gandi and decided to start Tolagandi movement to obtain support of the adhiars and peasants. Krishak Sabha propagated against the tola or gandi in the village to village and getting support of the peasants and raised slogans “No interest on borrow – paddy” “Stop the illegal taxes” within short period it spread gradually in the large areas of Boda Panchagar, Debiganj and Sadar Thana.⁷

The Communist leaders worked in favour of the peasants, adhiars and labourers against the zamindars/ jotdars under the banner of Congress Party because the Communist Party was illegal. After the state conference of Congress Party in Jalpaiguri, Communist leaders decided to form district Communist Party and to hold peasant conference in Moynadighi of Boda thana. The first district peasant conference was held on 18th July 1939 in Moynadighi in presence of the Md. Abdullah Rasul. In this conference resolution was taken to start the movement immediately. The first venue of the movement was the hat of Moynadighi. Peasants and volunteers of Krishak Sabha demanded with lathi and red Flag that they would not give tola or gandi; Jotdars and ijaradars with the support of police and S. D. O tried to stop the movement, but that became a failure. Ultimately ijaradars and jotdars stopped the collecting of illegal tax or tola. After Moynadighi the movement started in boda hat, after that, it spread in the hats of Ponchpir, Kurur hat, Lakshir hat, Pachagar hat etc one by one. The authorities of hat tried to spread communal riot, but they failed to the united movement of Krishak Sabha.

At the ultimate stage, the movement took place in Kalir Mela (Fair of the Goddess Kali) which was held in Doduma of Thakurgaon Thana in Dinajpur district adjacent to the district of Jalpaiguri. Huge number of peasants from Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur and

Rangpur district assembled here to purchase mainly cows and buffalos. Thousands of cows and buffalos were sold here from which proprietor of hat earned Rs. 15 to 20 thousand. More than two thousand volunteers were ready to start the movement against illegal collection of tola or gandi. They entered into the mela and demanded to stop the illegal collection, but authority of mela denied it. Volunteers themselves started the work of writings (record for selling and purchasing). Police came with arms directed by S. D. O and district magistrate and imposed article 144. To avoid the confrontation, under direction of Krishak Samity thousands of peasants with cattle, buffalos and shops assembled in the opposite bank of the river Bhulli and started the mela named 'Dasher mela' as a result of which the demand of peasants became a success.⁸

After Tolagandi or Hat tola movement, Krishak Samiti decided to start another peasant movement called "Adhiar Andolan". It has already been mentioned that adhiars or sharecroppers cultivated lands of the "giris" for 50% share of crops without any right on land and at the time of distribution of crops adhiars had to pay different types of 'abwabs' or sub – taxes namely "Golamochhani" (repairing of store house of paddy) "Kholan chachani" (cleaning of farmyard) kaktarani, Harisabha etc. the adhiars had to stack crops after cutting and reaping in the farmyard of jotdars where they would have been cheated. Krishak Samiti raised slogan "Nij Kholone dhan tolo" (stack paddy in your own farmyard) Krishak Samiti organized the adhiars including small peasants; volunteers were being ready, giving them training to start the movement against the Jotdars/Zamindars. In the harvesting season the adhiars started movement, they stacked paddy in their own farmyard in the aggressive situation created by the Jotdars/ Zamindars and their supporting police. Jotdars and police attacked the adhiars, arrested the leaders of Krishak Samiti. Ultimately the movement became failure for the aggression of the jotdars and the police.

Another peasant movement in the district as elsewhere in undivided Bengal was started in 1946 and that was called Tebhaga movement. It was the movement by which adhiars (share croppers) including agricultural labourers and small peasants strongly protested against the all sorts of oppressions of the Zamindars – Jotdars and intermediaries. It has already been mentioned that the adhiars cultivated land of the Giris only for 50% share of crops. If the adhiars would bear the expenditure of all cost of cultivation including cattle's and agricultural inputs, they could obtain 50% share of crops and if all these expenditure would have been borne by jotdars or giris the adhiars had to pay off all the expenditure with interest from their share, somewhere the expenditure including seeds, manure, cattle given by jotdars or Giris had to pay off to the Giri before the distribution of crops, then rest of the crops would be divided equally between the adhiars and the Giris, moreover, adhiars had to borrow paddy from their Giri with high interest such as 'Derabari', Dunabari and Darkatali etc. that means if an adhiar borrowed one mound paddy in the month of September or October; after two months he had to pay of 1.5 mound to 2 mound paddy which would be double within two months. This type of loan also had to be paid off by their share at the time of distribution of crops. Ultimately it was followed that the adhiars had to return their house with minimum crops or empty handed after distribution of crops. In such a way they had been fallen in heavy indebtedness, losing every thing and became the slave of their Giri.

During Second World War the condition of the share croppers and small peasant became more acute, moreover, in 1943 a devastating famine was seen all over in Bengal which was man – made and took place it for the negligence of the Government and the artificial creating- crisis of the traders and merchant class as a result of which more than ten lacs of people died. In 1945 Second World War ended, the prices of essential things increased tremendously so

the discontent and grievances were accumulated among the people of lower class particularly the peasants, bargadars and labourers.

So, in this circumstance, sharecroppers or adhiars or bargadars including labourers broke out into a rebellion called "Tebhaga movement in undivided Bengal. It took place for the share of 2/3 of the produced crops in favour of the sharecroppers and 1/3 for the Giri. In Jalpaiguri District it took place in Boda, Sundardighi, Pachagar, Debiganj, Mal and Meteli.

Different Scholars and writers have pointed out their views on the activities and role of the Tebhaga movement from different angles. A lot of writings in different journals, periodicals books and thesis have been published by different scholars and writers. Maitrya Ghatak in his article raised some questions about the role of Krishak Sabha. He pointed out that the first conference of Bangiya Pradeshik Krishak Sabha discussed on the problems relating to the agriculture and peasants but no discussions were going on the problem of Barga system and Bargadars.⁹

In the conference of Panjia in Jeshor district in 1940, the demand of Tebhaga was raised first after the report of Floud commission which pointed to the demand of Tebhaga (Report of Floud Commission). Gyanabrota Bhattacharjya pointed out that the Tebhaga movement was an unorganized Revolt by unorganized Agency. Andre Beteile opined that bargadars were assigned to carry on the movement by Krishak Sabha as an agent of communities which was not favourable for the interest of the bargadars. Dr. Binay Bhushan Chowdhury denied the views of Bhattacharjya and Chowdhury. He pointed out that the bargadars were not poked by Krishak Sabha, rather the Sabha had a background of struggle and scholars should know why the movement of Bargadars had spread all over Bengal.¹⁰ In such ways different historians pointed out their views critically on the Tebhaga movement, some of them criticized the leaders and the communist party about their role on the Tebhaga

movement, some of them highlighted the significance of Tebhaga movement. I have tried my best to highlight the significance of the movement and role of Krishak Sabha and communist party throwing a new light.

VI

After independence in 1947, the West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act, 1953 was passed and started its journey from 1955 and then the West Bengal Land Reforms Act, 1955 was passed in 1955. By these two Acts the Zamindari/ Jotdari systems were to be abolished by the Government. The land possessed by any Zamindars or Jotdars or any intermediaries were brought under ceiling. By the West Bengal Land Reforms Act, 1955 a large number of lands were declared excess but all excess lands were not brought under Government record as vested lands, and even declared vested lands were not distributed among the landless peasants and bargadars. The Jotdars and Zamindars possessed the excess land illegally in the name of each member of the house, relatives, friends and even the name of their domestic animals. More over they possessed the excess lands over ceiling declaring them as Bheri (land under water used for fishing or wetting jute plants) or orchard though it was still under cultivation.

The work of land records over ceiling and distribution among the landless peasants actually started from 1967 by the state Government. According to the director of land records and survey, West Bengal it is not possible to say the exact quantities of land which was acquired and distributed.¹¹ Yet it is to be said that a large amount of lands in the district as else where in West Bengal had been acquired and distributed among the landless people during the periods of United Front and Left Front Government.

After the coming of the Left Front Government in 1977 in West Bengal they took initiative enthusiastically, by their mission in the work of Land Reforms including operation Barga. In the continuation of Land acquisition and distribution among the landless people, they tried to change the agrarian economy of West Bengal. From the various sources, report and evidences mentioned in the relevant chapter, it can be said that a large quantities of lands had been acquired and distributed in spite of having many limitation and retardations from various corners.

In the part of Land Reforms programmes of the Left Front Government, another remarkable initiative was 'Operation Barga' that was recording of bargadars in the record of right. A huge number of bargadars was recorded in the record of right during the reign of Left Front Government. The bargadars obtained their right on land and they were emancipated from the age – long oppressions of zamindars-jotdars and their intermediaries.

In spite of many successful attempts in the field of Land Reform under United Front and Left Front Regime, there were many limitations for which Land Reforms programmes could not be pillars of success completely. Due to bureaucratic complexities, litigious prevention, biasness of party- politics, lack of proper co-operation among the local people, panchayets and bureaucrats, lack of consciousness and literacy of the bargadars etc, Land Reforms Programmes could not be completely fruitful. However it can be said that the Land Reforms Programmes in West Bengal have opened a new dimension in the country and the success rate statistically and practically is more than the success rate of all India Level.

The Naxalite Movement that mainly took place in the areas of Naxalbari, Kharibari and Fansi Dewa of Darjeeling district extended to Jalpaiguri district. The small peasants, adhiars or bargadars were

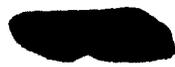
being organized to occupy excessive lands over ceiling from jotdars forcefully with revolutionary activities under the revolutionary line of Mao – Tse – Tung. Though the duration of the naxalite movement was very short, it was very significant in the field of peasant movement in India as well as the class struggle as because the movement was carried out by the oppressed and depressed classes people though it was led by middle class intellectuals who sacrificed their life in the revolution to change the society.

Many Scholars, writers and politicians have analysed the aims, activities and impact of the Naxalite Movement from different angles, many of whom criticized the activities and policy of the leaders of the movement. In spite of having many limitations and shortcomings of the Naxalite leaders, its significance can not be denied.

Another burning issue which has been highlighted in the present thesis is the lease land problem in Alipurduar Town. Out of 1064.52 acres of land 373.71 were under the direct management “Khas Mahal” authority, and 54.36 acres were under the management of the “Western Duars Market Fund” authority The Khas mahal authority gave 204.04 acres of land on lease to several persons under the provisions of the Crown Manual Act, 1932 for different terms of period viz 10 year 12 years and 30 years. But all these terms of lease – holders and their successors could not renew the terms of lease by which they could legitimize their possessions on lease lands.

Out of 54.36 acres of land under Western Duars Market Fund, only more or less 10.00 acres of land are now being utilized for hat or markets. The rest of the land is in possession of several persons for years together, some with temporary lease and some without any authority.¹²

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Presently, it has been the burning problem both from the people and the Government, because people who have been living on this land, have no authenticity on land for which they are not able to have any kind of loan or any other facility, on the other hand, Government is losing revenue or rent from this land. Sub – divisional Land and Land Revenue officer, Alipurduar notified by his letter, memo no, 1344/xiii – 4/ (p)/ 94 dated 14.12.94 that long term lease land may be renewed if the lease holders or his successors pays rent 15 times of annual rent previously payable or 4% of the market price of the land at the time of renewal of the lease no salami would be paid of such land for old lessees (letter of S.D.O, AP). To fulfil such terms and condition Rs. 10,000 per decimal would have to be paid for renewal which would be heavy burden to many of the lease holders because of the economically distressing condition. So the problem is lying unresolved in spite of taking initiative and holding discussions between the Government and the residence of Alipurduar.

To summarise the introduction, it can be said that the present thesis deals with many un-discussed, unexplored and unknown land – related problems of the district. Many discontents and grievances have grown up in the minds of neglected and depressed people, particularly the people of Rajbanshi community and some tribes. They have been feeling crisis of losing their lands, ethnicity, cultural heritage and freedom of identity for which many terrorist activities and separatist movements are going on in different parts of North Bengal. It may be said that such types of movement and activities can not be supported from the point of national integration and maintaining peaceful environment in the society; on the other hand these movements should not be neglected or restrained by force. Everybody should realize the causes and roots of the discontent and grievances of the depressed people. It may be concluded with the remark of Dr. Sailen Debnath, “The people in power of the government, in different political parties in Delhi and Kolkata, in the southern delta of West Bengal, in the bureaucracy of

the Central and the state government as well as in the powerful groups of Delhi and Kolkata based intellectuals, must come forward to build up an atmosphere of sincere efforts in redressing the problems and deprivations of the aggrieved people of the most neglected areas of North Bengal in general and of Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar and of the Dooars in particular so as not to see more trouble to brew up from the dens of sufferings, agitations and tensions.”¹³

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Chapter - 1

Land Revenue Systems of the Jalpaiguri District

The Jalpaiguri district was consisted with two widely different tracts of country, viz, the parganas of Baikunthapur, Boda and Patgram formerly included in the Rangpur district, and the Western Duars, wrested from Bhutan in 1864, and in giving an account of the land revenue administration, it is necessary to deal separately with them. ¹

Land Revenue Systems of the Duars in the Pre-Colonial Period

There was no uniform system or law in the field of land and agriculture in all over the district as a whole under the regime of any ruler. The geographical boundaries of the district have also been changed time to time. Before 1772, the area of the Western Duars was under the Royal Koch kings, but since 1765, for the weakness and conflicts of the Koch dynasty, Bhutanese occupied this area one by one gradually. As there was no alternative way to protect the kingdom, Koch Nazir Deb surrendered to the British and signed a treaty in 1773, by the provisions of the treaty Coochbehar became a tributary state of the British and the Britishers rescued the areas of Western Duars from Bhutanese, king Dhairjendra Narayan who was highjacked by the Bhutias was also rescued . During the reign of Koch kings the Baikunthapur pargana was ruled by Raikot dynasty of Jalpaiguri, the relative of Koch Kings.

Under the reign of Koch kings, there were two kinds of lands in accordance with revenue systems, namely– (1) Revenue free land and (2) revenue paying land, Revenue free lands were given some special cases to the tenures namely Brahmattor, Devottor, Pirpal, Lakheraj and Petbhata. Brahmattar lands were those which

would be given to the Brahmans for their livelihood so that they could pursue knowledge and devotion the brahmottor lands were hereditary and transferable Devottor tenure was granted for religious purpose such as worships of various idols and religious meetings or discussions, Pirpal tenure was same as Devottor but it would have been granted for the muslims, Lakheraj tenure was granted as a satisfactory service to the royal kings, Petbhata tenure was granted to the members of the royal family or relatives only for their maintenance of livelihood as for example Sishwa Singha or Sishu, step – brother of Biswa Singha got the Baikunthapur pergana as a Petbhata (revenue free)

It is found from different sources that there was huge number of revenue free tenures which were granted by the Koch Kings as a result of which the economic condition of the kingdom was going to be destroyed. Ultimately British Government interfered about this matter and Henry Douglas took over the administration of the state on behalf of the minor king. He recovered all such lands as had been illegally acquired and converted them into revenue paying holdings. To ensure regular collection, Douglas introduced the ijaradari system.²

There were five kinds of revenue paying land namely, Khalsa, Khangir, Khasbash, Sairati and Baje mahal. All lands of the Government under control were called Khalsa which was directly under control of Diwan of the state. Khangir was a demesne land of the king. Khasbash and Bajemahal were two distinct parts of the khangir. Sairati lands were those which covered by tanks.

During the time of Bhutanese rule in the western Duars, no uniform system or law was introduced in the field of land and land revenue, they, mainly, collected revenue by their officials with the help of local leaders of different communities. Out of their systematic collection of revenue, the Bhutanese attacked at any time on the people of the Duars and plundered everything and for

that aggressive attitude of the Bhutanese, the people of the Duars had been living in a intolerable and panic circumstances. Surgeon Renie wrote, “the revenue and judicial system necessarily be in a very imperfect condition.”³

Western Duars was under Paro Penlop, the Governor of Western Division of Bhutan. J. C. Haughton showed the land tenures in different parts of the Duars in such way Goomah, Raphoo and Bhalka were under small Zamindar or Teshildars (petty revenue collectors) wholly under Bhutia rules, Buxa was under a Bhutia officer (Dooar Deo), the northern part of the Duars were under Mech sardars and the plain of Mainaguri was divided among the Zamindars the family of Hargoinda Katham one khurgodher Karji and the Raikot of Jalpaiguri.⁴ The officials under Bhutanese who were involved in collecting revenue and sending to Bhutan, the Royal power, can be furnished from the point of power and position in such way – soobah at the highest level. The exact powers and functions of each of these officials can not be ascertained with any degree of accuracy, but all of them were important links in the chain of tribute extraction; each was responsible for passing on the tribute to their immediate superiors.⁵ The Kathams in the Duars took a significant role in collecting revenue, though their position was under Subah. Arabinda Deb wrote, “Below the Subah there were a class of subordinate officials known as kathams. They were resident in the plains and exercised immediate control in the management of the Duars in the great majority of cases the kathams were directly appointed by the tittle – deed (sanad) of the Deb Raja, though subordinate in rank of Bhutanese administration in the plains. It seems that the appealation ‘katham’ was prevalent only to the west of the Gadadhar. Eastward it took the forms of ‘Luskar Wuzder or Mundal.’⁶

Under the Bhutanese rule no revenue or tax was imposed on the peasants for five years in preparing the land for cultivation after clearing Jungles. But after five years revenue was imposed on them. “Grunning pointed out that after forest had been cleared and

was then assessed at area rates according to the Hal or plough, a local measure about 5 acres There was a special cess on mustard seed and local rate of Rs1 a Hal and Rs. 2 a house was levied for religious festivals.”⁷ The meches in the Duars were habituated with shifting cultivation or Jhum cultivation; particularly they cultivated cotton – plant. After few years of cultivation, they shifted into another place, settled there and cultivated the same way in a traditional manner. After long discussion Col. Rowlat and Col. Haughton imposed tax on the Meches called ‘capitation tax’ (a) Rs.2 Per year. About the taxes on the Duars Capt. Lance wrote, ”..... taxes were imposed on each ryots house on the estate. In addition they had to pay certain fixed tribute and presentation of nuzzars (presents to officials).⁸

From the above discussions and various sources it can be said that during the period of Bhutanese rule no particular system was introduced for revenue or tax collection in addition with that there was no particular estimate of revenue or tax as most of the taxes were collected by kind instead of cash for which it was difficult to estimate the values of various things which were collected. Ashley Eden pointed out that the Duars held by the Paro Penlop are a very small portion of the whole Bengal Duars and if he receive a lakh for his portion the total revenue of the Duars must be seven lakhs. I do not think however that any real estimate can be formed of the revenue derived from the Duars,”⁹

Land Revenue Under The Permanent Settlement

Siswa Singha the step brother of Biswa Singha, the founder of Koch Dynasty got the Baikunthapur Pargana as a petbhata (expenditure for livelihood) which was revenue free holding umbrella on the head of Koch King taking the title ‘Raikat’ means head of the Fort, since then the landlord of Baikunthapur Pargana had been using the title ‘Raikat’. At the initial stage the relation between Baikunthapur and Coochbehar was good but the 12th

‘Raikat’ Darpadev retarded the relation with Coochbehar and made an alliance with Bhutan and the relation between Coochbehar and Bhutan became bitter.

After aquisition of Diwani, the English East India Company obtained Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from Shaha Alam, the Mughal Emperor, since then Baikunthapur Pargana and Boda came under British East India Company by consisting with Rangpur district. The northern portion of the Baikunthapur estate contains 71 square miles of compact forest, which grows valuable sal timber. The reserved forest in the Duars extended to 505 square miles, 45 square miles of which near Buxa stand on hilly ground.¹⁰ The East India Company collected Rs. ten thousand from this pargana. There was no record by which it would be shown that the Mughals imposed any taxes or revenue on Baikunthapur Pargana. Grunning wrote, “It is not included in any sarkar or Muhammadan division of the country, having only been added to Bengal since the British assumed the government of the country.”¹¹ Raikats used to give revenue to Coochbehar Raj for the jaigirs other than Baikunthapur¹² The East India Company enhanced the revenue of Baikunthapur from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 25,000 and Rs 32,000, for which Baikunthapur was treated as “Batris hajari”. In 1777 Raikat Darpadev complained to the collector of Rangpur against the heavy revenue imposed on them and in the complain paper Darpadev mentioned himself as the “king of Batris hajari.”¹³ In 1780 a deduction of Rs. 6,238 was allowed on account of lands made over to the Bhutias and the revenue paid in that year was Rs. 25,935. On the basis of it, the Permanent Settlement was made and a treaty was concluded between Raikat and East India Company. But the Bhutan did not accede with the treaty between Company and Raikat. He (Bhutan) demanded Ambari Falakata and Jalpesh situated to the east of Teesta. As there was economic and commercial interest of the company in the Tibet through Bhutan, Ambari Falakata and Jalpesh were ceded to Bhutan by the company ignoring the consent of Baikunthapur and Coochbehar.

The land of Baikunthapur was divided into five categories namely (1) Auwal (fertile), (2) Daiyam (down land or dohla), (3) Seyam (land under town), (4) Baharam (land laying in danga), (5) Mayaji (uncultivated or patit)¹⁴ The population in Baikunthapur pargana were meagre due to economically backwardness, communicational disadvantages, unhealthy environment as it was full of jungles with ferocious animals. There was huge uncultivated land for which many unsettled cultivators cultivated their land from one place to another. So, the land revenue in Baikunthapur was not fixed amount it was seen generally that the rent of land was 4 annas to one rupees per every don (86 Bighas of land)¹⁵. W. W Hunter showed that the raiyots of Baikunthapur would not pay revenue in fixed way by measuring their lands, rather they used to pay revenue by guess measurement according to their jots.¹⁶ Grunning said about the land revenue of this pargana, "the actual rent realised from the tenants is, I understand, about $4\frac{3}{4}$ annas per don of land, good and bad, containing 12,472 square feet or about 0.86 of Calcutta bigha. The maximum rent for a farm, 20 don in extent, is said to be as follows : House and garden land, Rs. 15; first quality land, Rs. 9; third quality land, Rs. 7; fourth quality land, Rs. 4; total Rs. 47. Originally the farms were let by guess measurement or by Kaldara or "Ploughs"¹⁷

It seems that there was no uniform system in the land in precolonial period. Revenue was assessed by assumed basis or guess measurement. Grunning said, "..... a farm was estimated to contain as much as could be cultivated by a certain number of ploughs, and paid a fixed sum for each, a custom which once probably extended all over Kamrup."¹⁸ There was no proper settlement in the pargana. Land was also assessed by guess measurement like jot, gaon, bish, don, kali. One don is equal to 20 kali or 86 bigha, bish is equal to 20 don, 1 gaon is equal to 16 bish, 1 hal is equal to 15 bigha.¹⁹ About the year 1788 land measure was first introduced. The whole estate is divided into fifteen taluks, and the establishment is a very moderate one.²⁰ A record of right was

prepared under chapter x of Bengal Tenancy Act. In the course of that proceedings, The area of each tenancy ,the facts of its possession and the status of the tenant were determined. Jagadindra Dev Raikat in his article “Raikat Bangsha O Tahader Rajwer Sankhipta Parichay” divided the tenants in such a way (1) Zamindar, (2) Jotdar, (3) Mulander or Chukanidar and (4) Proja or Ryot.²¹ But, according to Grunning the tenants in these estates are divided into tenants in chief (jotdars), sub-tenants (chukanidars, dar chukanidars and dar-a-dar chukanidars) and holders under the Metayer system (adihiars). The jotdars are tenants holding immediately under the zamindars; a large number of them rank as tenure holders and others as raiyots under the provisions of Bengal Tenancy Act.²²

Chukanidars, dar- chukanidars and dar-a-dar chukanidars all were middle ranking tenure holders in the agrarian economy in this tract. Chukanidars had a right of occupancy and could transfer their lands by sale or gift.²³ But here is a question avoided by grunning that the chukanidars or mulanders were not proprietors of the land, they were under jotdars, and jotdars were under zaminders, then how could they (chukanidars or mulanders) sell their land?

The dar- chukanidars hold their land in the same way under the chukanidars and the dar-a-dar chukanidars under the dar chukanidars. Most of these inferior tenants had acquired a right of occupancy under the provisions of the Bengal Tenancy Act.

The most victimised tenants in the agrarian economy were adhiars or projas who had no proprietorship or occupancy right on land. They only cultivated their lands, without any right under a jotdar, chukanidar or derivative chukanidar, but whatever the designation or status of the adhiars immediate superior may be , he is known as ‘Giri’. The adhiars had to pay half of the produce in the land to their ‘Giris’, not only that they had to pay more from

their share called 'abwab' and instead of advance of seed or cash supplied at the time of cultivation. The pauperous condition of the adhiars or projas will discuss later in the next chapter.

Like Baikunthapur, Boda and Patgram were also under Permanent Settlement since 1793 and settled permanently with the zamindars regarding land revenue purposes. Dr. Buchanan Hamilton (1809) gave an account with regard to land revenue and agrarian systems of Baikunthapur, Boda and Patgram. According to him "Patgram estate, which comprises the police division of the same name, is the property of the Coochbehar Raja, contains 62 mouzas or collections of villages. More than half the estate is let to large farmers, some of whom hold under leases called Upanchaki, which are granted for a certain specified farm and not according to a particular area, so that their rent can not be increased not their lands measured There are 30 jotdars who pay their rents directly into the office of the Raja's collector; these are called Kharji jotdars. The others who pay their rents to the village officers, are called dihibandi. The large farmers let out to under tenants as much land as suffices to pay their rent and cultivate the remainder through projas, on the usual sharing of tenure"²⁴

About the land and land revenue systems of Boda Dr. Hamilton pointed out that Boda was a very fine estate also belonging to the Coochbehar Raja. It contains 402 mouzas or dihis besides 27 large kharij farms, such as he had mentioned in the collector's papers; but it was said that a very large part has been granted rent free by the Raja, both to religious persons and to his servants. The whole estate was divided into Taluks and these again into mahals, each of which was originally farm.²⁵ In every taluk there two to five tahutdars, who were wealthy farmers appointed by the Raja according to the wishes of the other tenants. The lands were not measured at the time of settlement of the Raja's estate, the tenants being very averse to such a course as might naturally be expected, for the rent which they paid very small. The leases

specified neither the term of years for which the holdings were let nor the measurement of the farm, but only the rent stipulated to be paid for the farm. If any tenant would go away, the others paid the rent until they could procure a new tenant, or else they divided the land among themselves. Dr. Hamilton again wrote, "In some taluks no tahudars could be found, and these were managed by gomastas, or agents, each with a large establishment... The tahudars, who were men of property and who ought to pay their whole rent into the Raja's office, made delays, so that six tahsildars or stewards are required to refresh their memories. The twenty seven original large farms, which are not dependent on the tahudars, but which, if undivided, would have paid their rents immediately into the Raja's office, have now subdivided into so many small shares, that a whole host of subordinate is required to manage them. In fact the Raja's interests in these estate seem to have been very much neglected".²⁶

It can be said from the above information that the permanently settled areas of the district, Jalpaiguri, Baikunthapur pargana, parganas of Boda and patgram formerly under Coochbehar state and then Rangpur district, had no uniform system in the land, varying from different places, somewhere zamindars were the proprietors of the land and paid revenue directly through the officers of the Raja, somewhere land was let to the tenants. Moreover there were large amount of land which were revenue free. According to the survey and settlement operations of 1906-16, there were 122 revenue paying estates and 212 revenue - free estates in the permanent- settled portions of Jalpaiguri district. . So the state was deprived economically failing to have revenue from a large portion of revenue-free lands.

In the permanently settled portion of the district namely Baikunthapur, Boda and Patgram the zamindari system was there and there were two large and some small zamindari estates. Zamindars were the proprietors of the lands who enjoyed heritable

rights and rights of transfer by gifts and sale including parcelling out land for rent. Revenue payable by them were fixed except for cesses and other levies on them by executive orders and under the provisions of relevant acts ²⁷

It is mentioned in the Government record, "In the permanently settled parganas the system of land tenure is in itself simple, but it does not adapt itself very readily to the tenancy Act and difficult questions of status arose. There are few patni taluks and rent free tenures, but the great taluks and rent free tenures, but the great bulk of the land is held by jotdars, most of whom have sublet to at least a part of their land to chukanidars on exactly the same terms as those on which they themselves hold under the proprietor and the zamaindar to produce paying tenants called in this district "adhiars" long course of custom had entirely ceased to differentiate between those jotes which had originally been taken up sometimes by non-residents with the idea of establishing tenants, and those held by the descendents of genuine cultivators."²⁸

The zamindars used to give land to the jotdars on lease or agreement to obtain surplus of the production. The jotdars were a class of intermediaries between the zamindars and the cultivators as well as they were the first degree pattaniders who else where in Bengal known as talukdars. While proceeding of settlement, the indifference to the existence of any legal distinction rapidly disappeared and the jotdar as a class boldly demanded to be recorded them as raiyots. They all claimed mokorrari rights and section 50 of the tenancy act which was their main stand by had been held not to apply to tenures partitioned subsequent to the permanent settlement.

About the rights of jotdars it is referred "Those jotdars whose residence was within the tenancy and who had in their own possession at least one third of arable land and those jotdars, whose

homestead was outside the boundaries of the tenancy but who had at least half the arable land in their own possession were recorded as raiyots. Land held by adhiars was not considered to be in khas possession. The remaining jotes were either recorded as permanent tenures or as tenures for fixed number of year according to the terms of the documents creating them. The claims of transferability without the landlord's consent was decided against all classes of tenants except those recorded as permanent tenure holders.²⁹

Under the provisions of the Bengal Tenancy Act they became raiyots who could not be evicted at will. The rents paid by them became fixed and they came to enjoy rights of inheritance and transfer of land.³⁰ The jotdars, most of their land used to give to the chukanidars or mulandars. The chukanidars or mulandars also used to parcel out their land to the Dar- chukanidars and Dar- chukanidars again, in their turn, gave portions of their holding in further pattani to Dar- a- darchukanidars.³¹

At the bottom of the agrarian structure in this tract and elsewhere in Bengal were adhiars or projas who were most sufferer and victimised. About the condition of adhiars or projas including new agrarian classes emerging the colonial period became aggravated gradually. We have been saying since the inception of Grambarta that the permanent settlement between zamindars and raiyots should have been implemented like the permanent settlement between Government and the raiyots, then all problems will be solved, the relation of hostility between zamindars and raiyots will be left out. Without implementation of this system the trouble of the raiyots will not be removed whatever laws are to be implemented by the Government.³²

The Following table shows the classification of raiyots and average rent³³ :

	Area in acres	Average rent		
		Rs.	A	P
Rent paying, fixed	68867	0	11	0
Ditto enhanceable	392159	1	2	7
Rent Free	15623	--	--	--
Raiyot at fixed rents	12795	1	2	11
Settled raiyats on cash rents	366565	2	4	11
Ditto on produce rents	14135	2	14	1
Ditto ditto on produce rents	2833	--	--	--
Rent Free	3402	--	--	--
Under raiyots, cash paying	58617	3	9	0
Ditto produce paying	9937	--	--	--

Waste Land in the Duars

A debate regarding definition nature and classification of waste land has been going on all over the world among the scholars. Simply, land founded in empty or scanty population and unused or uncultivated were treated as waste land. The Students English Dictionary defines waste land as the tract of land not in cultivation, profitless. The term was very frequently used by the old writers simply to indicate the little used common land, usually on light less fertile soils which failed to yield a return to the cultivators. This definition is not acceptable in the changing scenario of modern science and technology, because the productive potential of land increases with improvement in technology. Besides, because of its heavy bias on economies, it neglects ecological consideration. Thus, any land which is giving proper economic returns, but is an ecological hazard shall not be counted as a Waste land.³⁴

Prof. A. B. Mukherjee remarked in the presidential address in the Proceedings of the National Seminar on Utilisation of Waste lands for Sustainable Development in India at Balrampur in 1987 that much of the land recorded as Waste lands in revenue records. He also pointed out that Waste lands were practically a part of some feudal extension. It is the socially and politically dominant castes and classes that decide in the villages as to which land be declared as waste land so that their vested interests could be served. Giving example of 'Bir' lands of Punjab and Haryana, he observed these lands were mainly located in the areas which were under the control of Royal families.³⁵

It is true that the uncultivated lands, forests, deserts, mountains all were under Government control. A huge number of lands were uncultivated and without inhabitants in the pre-colonial period. In the Mughal period revenues were collected in various

ways - sometimes it was collected directly by official staff of the Mughals, sometimes it was collected indirectly by the intermediaries from Khalisa land, in addition with these revenue was collected by mansabdars who obtained jagirs for their livelihood instead of monthly salary, other than these there were chieftains or local Rajas who lived in deep jungles autonomously and collected revenue from the peasants under his possession. Sometimes these autonomous Rajas gave revenue to the Mughal Kings, sometimes they did not give, actually they played a role of intermediaries of the Mughal state. Very often, a substantial part of the peshkash (tribute) that many of the autonomous chiefs sent to the emperors consisted either of forest produce or pastoral products which implies the harnessing of grazing land. Despite their inability to exercise direct economic control over these areas of mixed (agrarian, pastoral, forest) economics, the Mughals were thus able to extract from them, over irregular periods, a small portion of their wealth in the form of peshkash.³⁶

Besides autonomous chieftains or Rajas in the Mughal state there were also to be found tribal chieftains that had accepted Mughal suzerainty or even been incorporated into its military structure, side by side there were more fiercely autarchic tribes which probably lay even further from the Mughal 'system' - as it has come to be understood by scholars. Many such tribes were, from time to time to be found in conflict with Mughal authority and had established a reputation as 'Thieves' and 'plunders' of the king's territories.³⁷

After annexation of the Duars with British India in 1865 with the treaty of 'Sinchula' after 2nd Anglo-Bhutanese War, they found the Duars with full of natural resources, full of jungles, scanty people, only few people namely, Mech, Totos, Drucpas and Garos lived there. So, the Government declared the land of the Duars as Wasteland and all property went under Government control by the Bhutan-Duars Act, 1869.

The Western Dooars is a flat alluvial strip of country, averaging about 22 miles in width running along the foot of the Bhutan Himalayas. The North edge of this narrow tract is, however, hilly in certain places, specially in the immediate neighbourhood of the military outpost of Buxa. This portion of the Subdivision is being gradually opened out by tea-planters and has so far given prominence to the Western Dooars. This hilly tract is inhabited by the Bhutias and other Non-aryan tribes and is agriculturally very poor.³⁸

The lands in the Duars were divided into three categories - (1) Lands for Tea cultivation, (2) Lands for agriculture and (3) Lands for Reserve forest. After survey and settlement works gradually held on, lands were given to the jotdars by agreement or lease, lands were also given to the proprietors of Tea garden for tea-cultivation, as a result number of tea-garden increased day by day, the number of jotdars growing up, they took the lands by agreement and gave 'pattani to the middle ranking tenure holders. The people of different types, castes and classes immigrated into the Duars from neighbouring Coochbehar, Rangpur, Behar and Nepal as a result the demand of land increased land revenue was imposed to every section of the people which was increased gradually, traditional socio-economic and cultural condition started to be collapsed.

According to K. M. Chauhan, the concept of Waste lands is a fallacy and in reality there is nothing like Waste land as every part and parcel of earth's surface is serving man and that in order to understand the concept of Waste land correctly it is required to evaluate the biomass and biological productivity of any region with an ecological eye.. Prof. Mukherjee did not agree that desert or snow covered peaks were Waste lands. Right from the ancient times, there were Waste lands, there were grass lands and estates which had a function to perform.³⁹

Actually, no land would be waste land or worthless on the face of the earth if we can utilize them in the modern way using scientific method of modern technology. If we go through in the past of the history, even to day, we can follow that the people of different tribes lived in the deep jungle, keeping them out of civilized society or culture they subsisted depending on jungle doing jhum cultivation and hunting. It is followed in desert and mountain also. Actually there was a politics, imperialism behind the declaration of waste land to occupy all the lands and natural resources refusing the authority of the community on the jungles, deserts, mountains or any kind of waste land. So, Prof. Misra pointed out that no land can be a waste land if natural principles of land-use are adopted and land resources are treated as trust property to be equitably accessible to all is conformity with their basic needs of food, shelter, clothing, education, health and security at an increasingly higher levels in quality. In fact, no natural resource should be treated as private property. It should not be owned by individuals. It should belong to the community as a whole.⁴⁰

Land Revenue in the Duars

After possession of the Duars in 1865 by the treaty of 'Sinchula' after the second Anglo-Bhutan War, the Britishers cast their commercial eyes on the whole areas of Duars, because it was full of natural resources and somewhere the soil was appropriate for tea-cultivation and somewhere it was appropriate for agrarian purpose. B.C. Basu, Esq. Assistant to the Director of the Dept. of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal wrote to the Director of the Dept. of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal –

“In its physical aspects the Western Dooars, exclusively the hilly tract, may be distinguished into two belts of country, running east and West Parallel to the hills. The first of these stretches along the base of the hills and is popularly spoken as the Terai. It may be described as a natural sal forest, interspersed with a few sisu, khayer, magnolias palas and various other less characteristic jungle-trees.⁴¹

He also added – “It is the lower belt of country that we are agriculturally concerned. A quarter of a century ago, when the Dooars was annexed there must have been very little of regular cultivation, Since, however a steady tide of immigration from the neighboring districts of Rangpur and Coochbehar has set in.... The Western portion of the subdivision seems to be better cultivated, but as we proceed eastward the quantity of cultivated land gets smaller and villages fewer and smaller in size. The census 1881 returned the density of the population of the western Dooars at only 69 souls per square mile which about one-tenth of the average density of population of the districts of the presidency Division.⁴² So, the Government realized the importance of land and resources of the Duars and thought to start survey and settlement works initially to have been gained economically.

It is mentioned in the Government Report, “As regards the survey procedure should be as follows⁴³

- (a) Fields permanently cultivated should be separately surveyed, plotted and recorded.
- (b) The boundary of each village should be surveyed and connected to topographically with fixed marks or with the nearest surveyed village .
- (c) In side the villages, the blocks within which Jhuming is regularly practised as well as the uncultivable blocks and the Govt. forest whether reserved or protected, should be indicated on the Map. The area of such blocks need not always be measured but their boundaries should be marked and surveyed and plotted
- (d) Where a tenants has received permission to cultivate a separate block of hill side on the jhuming system, such block shall be separately measured, plotted and recorded.

The first British settlement was made by Mr. W. O. A. Becket, Deputy Commissioner, in 1871, after a detailed measurement and classification of all cultivated land and of such waste land as the jotdars desired to include in their holdings area rates were fixed as follows :⁴⁴

Description of land	Rent per acre in North Mainaguri			Rent per acre in the rest of the Duars		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Homestead and Rupit	1	8	0	1	0	0
Faringati	0	12	0	0	8	0
Waste	0	1	6	0	1	6

Altogether 142,127 acres waste and 80,398 acres of jot-lands were settled with the jotdars at a revenue of Rs. 86,330 against Rs. 39, 526, the revenue previously paid to Government.

The period of first settlement was extended for two years for South Mainaguri, which had been formed to the Raja of Baikunthapur and which was, on the expiry of the farming lease, brought under settlement which took effect from 1st April, 1876, resulted in raising the revenue of South Mainaguri from Rs. 42,706 to Rs. 65,133.

The following rates were adopted⁴⁵ :

	Rs.	A.	P.
Homestead	2	0	0
Rupit	1	8	0
Farinagati	1	2	0
Waste	0	3	0

Not only South Mainaguri but also in the other parts of the Dooars, the revenue was increased after the first settlement as follows :⁴⁶

Name of ryot	Land held (acres)	Amount of rent Formerly paid			Total land revenue to the Govt. paid after the first settlement		
		Rs.	A	P	Rs.	A	P
JuglooDoss	93.1	7	0	0	109	11	4
JuglooDoss	117.1	35	0	0	162	12	4
Jhaproo Doss	48.10	7	0	0	55	1	0
Jowal Mundul	31.8	12	0	0	47	2	7
Shooltan Doss	24.1	12	0	0	35	2	3

The Government was not satisfied with the work of first settlement and the rate of land revenue by Becket. In paragraph 6 of the letter No. 5109, dated 4th December 1872 of Government of Bengal, Revenue Department pointed out several important

omissions in Mr. Becket's settlement, and subsequently condemned it on the ground that his survey was inaccurate, that insufficient enquiry was made into the ownership of the jotdar's tenure and for other reasons.

As the Government was discontented about the Beckett's settlement, a resurvey and resettlement of the parganas Ambari Falakata, Chengmari, North Mynaguri, Moraghat, Lakhipur, West Madari, East Madari, Chakwakheta, Buxa, Bhatibari and Bhalka were ordered by Government under the supervision of Lord Ulick Brown, Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division. To solve the problem about the rates of revenue in different parganas Brown recommended the adoption of the South Maynaguri rates in parganas Ambair Falakata, North Maynaguri and Chengmari with the old North Maynaguri rates in Lakhipur and West Madari and the rest of the Duars rates in East Madari and Chakwakheta those rates are being :-⁴⁷

Discription of Land	South Mynaguri Rates			North Mynaguri Rates			Rest of the Duars Rates		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Basti	2	0	0	1	8	0	1	0	0
Bamboo	2	0	0	1	8	0	1	0	0
Rupit	1	8	0	1	8	0	1	0	0
Doba	1	8	0	1	8	0	1	0	0
Faringati	1	2	0	0	12	0	0	8	0
Waste	0	3	0	0	1	6	0	1	6

From the above table, it is found that the rate of land revenue of south Maynaguri was high than the other parts of the Dooars as it (South Maynaguri) was agriculturally developed. It is mentioned in the book of S. Roy. "But what were the factors which turned the issue decisively in favour of the jotdars from the beginning of the

first survey and settlement operations. The most important was obviously was the example of this class in the chaklajot estates and the agriculturally developed parts of the Dooars such as South Maynaguri.”⁴⁸

According to Lord Ulick Brown, the rates were fair and it would be generally accepted by the jotdars. The Board of Revenue reported to the Government vide letter No. 211A. dated 25th March 1878 recommending that the rates suggested by the commissioner may be adopted, but at the same time reserving to themselves the right of reconsidering them after wards, if necessary.

The Government of Bengal in Revenue Department Letter No. 286T, dated 5th June 1879, sanctioned the South Mynaguri rates for parganas Ambari Falakata, Chengmari, North Mynaguri, and Moraghat, as recommended by the commission and the Board of Revenue, and slightly modified rates from those proposed by them for the remaining parganas.

The scale of rates which was adopted under the above orders was as follows⁴⁹ :

Discription of Land	In ambari Falakata Chengmari, North Maynaguri and Moraghat			In Lakshipur and West Madari			East Madari Chokwakhetsi and Bhalka		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Basti	2	0	0	1	12	0	1	8	0
Bamboo	2	0	0	1	12	0	1	8	0
Garden	2	0	0	1	12	0	1	8	0
Doba	2	0	0	1	12	0	1	8	0
Rupit	1	8	0	1	4	0	1	2	0

Foringats	1	2	0	0	12	0	0	9	0
Waste	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	0

The result of the settlement was as follows⁵⁰ :

(1) <u>Rental</u>		<u>Rs.</u>
Former rental	-	88618
New rental	-	151862
Increase	-	63246

(2) <u>Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
Total area surveyed	-	119322

<u>Assessed area -</u>		<u>Acres</u>
(a) Softled	-	217294
(b) Under arable land		
Lease rules	-	47386
(c) Under tea lease rules	-	<u>19607</u>
		287287

<u>Unassessed area</u>		
Culturable Waste	-	288006
Reserved Forest	-	267220
Rent free	-	<u>272937</u>
		835035

(3) <u>Tenures</u>		<u>No.</u>	<u>Land in Acres</u>
Jotdars	-	3440	217294
Chukanidars	-	4027	67673
Dar-Chukanidars	-	901	6661
Dar-dar chukanidars	-	44	291

Lt. Col. H. Boilean Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri wrote to the Commissioner of Rajshahi division, "I would no briefly remark on the causes of collection of rents being so much in arrear this year. For the year 1887, 1888, 1889, the collection were

good; but during the early part of this year a very large number of people from Mainaguri attended on pilgrimage at the Ardhadoy Yog held at Nuddia , Hooghly & e. They spent all the spare money and move and returned in a impoverish state.

Also on their return cholera of a virulent type broke out all over the tahshil and in the Dooars generally it spread rapidly and raged for nearly four months. Few families escaped without deaths of one or more members.”⁵¹

Lord Ulick Brown, the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner Colonel Morton informed to the Board of Revenue that the jotdars were unable to pay the Government Revenue and to recover the revenue jotdars sold their lands. In this circumstance it became necessary to make a reduction of the assessment and the reduction sanctioned to Rs. 17800 in 1295 jotes.

The 3rd settlement, known as Sunder's settlement, was made in 1889-95 for a period of fifteen years in four tahsils of the Western Duars and for ten years in Ambari Falakata taking subsequent alterations in order that the term of settlement should expire in all cases on March 31st, 1908.⁵² As the previous settlement by Lord Ulick Brown had to expire at the end of March 1890, a resurvey and settlement was ordered by the Government of India in its letter No. 70IR - 149 d2, dated 27th September, 1888.

Mr. Lowis, the then Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, submitted a report in his letter No. 352 Ret. Dated October 1888, in which he briefly informed the Government (1) of the various classes of tenants found in the Duars, namely jotdars, Chukanidars, Dar-chukanidars and adhiars; (2) of some of the mistakes which had been made with regard to assessment in last settlement and (3) how the settlement which has just been concluded should be carried out.⁵³ Mr. Lowis recommendations were supported with slight revision by the Director of the Department of Land Records

and Agriculture, Bengal in his letter No. 833 T.A., dated 20th December 1888.

Mr. Finucane, the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture reserved his opinion on the question of (1) rates, (2) markets (3) the limitation of new jotes to 20 acres blocks and (4) to marking off certain lands for village commons. Mr. Finucane recommended to recruit a junior civilian as a settlement officer. In accordance with the recommendation Mr. E. Walsh, C.S., was appointed as a settlement officer on 13th February, 1889. But due to unhealthiness of the climate Mr. Walsh became ill and ultimately, he was compelled to retire from the post and Babu Chunder Kanta Ganguli was given the charge of the work as an assistant officer upto 20th January 1890, when Mr. Sunder was appointed as a settlement officer. The settlement was conducted under the provisions of the Bhutan Duars Act. XVI of 1869. In accordance with the notification dated 17th March 1892 of the Revenue Dept., Government of Bengal, Mr. Sunder was empowered to exercise jurisdiction under the section 2 and 3 of the Bhutan Duars Act. XVI of 1869 and under the schedule of rules attached to that Act with effect from the date of appointment of Mr. Sunder as settlement officer.

Regarding the rates of land revenue in the Duars, Sunder tried to follow Lord Ulick Brown, Commissioner of Rajshahi Division, who had a full knowledge of the Duars and wrote in his letter *No. 24 Ret, dated 15th April 1870*, to the Board of Revenue as follows - "A thoroughly satisfactory settlement throughout the Duars could, in fact, only be effected by making a separate arrangement with each individual jotdar according to the particular circumstances of his jote." According to Mr. Sunder this was the only correct method of making a settlement which would be acceptable to the jotdar. So, he asked for permission to assess the jotes in three classes according to situation with respect to proximity to markets, roads & c.⁵⁴

The recommendations made by Mr. Sunder were supported by Finucane with slight revision and Government wrote in Revenue Department Letter No. 353T. - R., dated October 1890 as follows :⁵⁵

"The Lieutenant Government accepts the classification of land and the rates for the various classes, recommended by you, as noted on the margin, and sanctions your proposals (a) that these rates be applied to jotes, and that, where necessary, the lands of individual jotes be divided into first and second class and assessed at the soil class rates ; (b) that the fact of the jotdar's revenue being increased be not of itself sufficient, or any reason for enhancement of the rents now paid by Chukanidar, but that if the jotdars can show legal reason for enhancement of the rents of their chukanidars, they be allowed to institute suits for such enhancement either at the time of settlement or afterwards ; (c) that the rents of chukanidars and dar-chukanidars as now ascertained and recorded continue unchanged until they are altered by a decree of competent court." ⁵⁶

	Present Rate		Proposed Rate		
	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	
Rupit-					In exceptional cases which should be the subject of special report, Rs. 2 for the best lands and the existing or a lower rate for the worst lands.
First Class			1	12	
Second Class	1	3	1	9	
Foringati -					In exceptional cases which should be the
First Class	1	2	1	6	

Second Class			1	3	subject of special report, Rs. 1.8 for best, and present of lower rates for worst lands.
Homusted	2	0	1	9	
Bamboo	2	0	2	0	
Betelnut Garden	2	0	2	12	
Dolas	1	6	1	12	According to class of land.
			1	9	
Waste	0	3	0	3	

The Lieutenant Governor visited Jalpaiguri on 3rd April 1891 and suggested for the rates of Rs. 2 per acre for homestead land, and Rs. 2-12 for bamboo and betel nut gardens should be abandoned, and that a separate class, to be called basti which was to include homestead, bamboo and betel nut garden, should be adopted, and charged for at Rs. 3 per acre which was sanctioned by telegram in April, 1891.

After completion of 3rd settlement by Mr. Sunder, created 9971 jotes covering 384895.91 acres in the Duars of which these 7228 jotes were of last settlement and 2743 jotes were by this settlement. The average area of a jote was 38.6 acres. The average number of jotdars per jote was 2.37. The area of the largest jote was 2608.94 acres, and that of the smallest jote was 0.06 acre. There were 21724 resident jotdars and 1615 non-resident jotdars, most of whom were pleaders, mookhtars, and kyan traders and money lenders immigrated from Coochbehar, Rangpur, Monghyr, Dacca, Nadia and other district of Bengal.⁵⁷

P. Nolan, Esq. Commissioner of Rajshahi Divission wrote to the Secretary to the Govt. of Gengal, Revenue Department.

“I have the honour to forward of Mr. Renny’s letter No. 615 G. dated the 14th June, 1894 submitting proposals to carry out the provision of the arable Wasteland Reclamation Rules after the Completion of the Western Duars Settlement operations, and to state that. I support the proposal therein made. It is quite true that the new settlement has increased the amount of the routine work to be done raising the number of jote from 6953 to 9976 and the revenue from Rs. 233999 to Rs. 370316.”⁵⁸

The revenue is paid by two kists or instalments, namely 10 anna kist on 15th February and 6 anna kist on 31st October. The amount payable for each pargana at each of those kists is shown in the statement given below⁵⁹:-

Name & Tahsil	Name of Parganas	Demand according to present settlement		
		Six – anna Kist	Ten – anna Kist	Total
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Maynaguri	Chengmari	23258	38819	62077
	North	10204	17072	27276
	Maynagury	44860	74888	119748
	South Ditto			
	Total	78322	130779	209101
Falakata	Moraghat	29785	49310	79095
	West Madari	7991	13277	21268
	Lakhipur	5223	8702	13925
	Total	42999	71289	114288
Alipur	Bhatibari	5271	8768	14039
	Chakwakheta	1966	3081	4947
	Boxa	2706	4540	7246
	East Madiri	1654	2755	4409
	Total	11497	19144	30641
Bhalka	Bhalka	3802	6368	10170

Siliguri	Ambari Falakata	4011	6690	10701
	Grand Total	140631	234270	374901

In the South Maynaguri some jotes were found of which the revenue paid to the Bhutias to be more than the revenue which was obtained in the former settlement at the rates. The Bhutia revenue was again found to be more than the revenue at area rates in the present settlement. Under orders of the commissioner's letter No. 624 Ret, dated 29th July 1892, no reduction has been allowed, the Bhutia revenue being considered as fair.

There were 44 unassessed jotes up to the time of Sunder's settlement in the pargana of South Maynaguri which were devoted to the up-keep of the Jalpesh temple. Under the orders of Government, Revenue Department, No. 494 L.R., dated 17th April, 1891. Those jotes have been resumed and assessed to revenue, amounting to Rs. 2465 to the Jalpesh Temple Committee which uses the money for the purposes of the Temple.⁶⁰

Colonel (then Major) Hedayat Ali obtained a rent-free lease of twenty Taluks for five years in Feb, 1866 with a promise that all lands so brought under cultivations for his great achievement in 2nd Anglo-Bhutan War in favour of the British Army. This lease was cancelled later on, as were also several other leases. In May, 1868, Hedayat Ali obtained a lease of the whole of the unoccupied or waste lands in the possession of Government raiyots. The terms and conditions of the lease made with Hedayat Ali were modified in 1871 and again in 1876. In 1883 settlement of 46754 acres of land including waste in Parganas West Madari, Moraghat and Lakhipur of the Falakata tahashil was made with his heirs on the following conditions: "That all the cleared and cultivated lands shall now be settled with the heirs of the grantee at half rates for 39 years, and that the uncleaned and waste shall remain with them for seven years longer free of revenue." The leases failed to fulfill the

conditions as to reclamation and, at Mr. Sunder's settlement, 19191 acres of waste land were resumed, the remaining 22563 acres being settled with them at half rates. The present revenue of the estate is Rs. 7897.⁶¹

Rai Upendra Nath Duarder was granted 2000 acres of arable land rent free in perpetuity and certain other lands rent-free for life in Alipurduar tahashil as a reward for his services to the Government at the time of Bhutan Campaign. Upendra Nath Duarder sold his land which was obtained rent free in perpetuity for Rs. 20000 before his death. After the death of Duarder, the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Dept. ordered on the 18th December, 1890 that the land which had been granted rent-free for life should be allowed to the family of the Duarder at one-fourth rates for a period of 15 years from the date of the Duarder decease. The sum of Rs. 477 will have to be paid to Government in future by the sons of the Duarder, to whom lease for the land has been issued.

The following statement shows what the revenue was before Sunders settlement and after Sunders settlement :-⁶²

Discription of Land	Revenue payable according to last settlement	Revenue payable according to Sunder's settlement	Increase
From old jotes settled before sender's settlement	229104	317890	88786
From new jotes created by sunders settlement	--	46198	46198
Lands under Jalpesh	--	2465	2465

Temple			
Land obtained by colonel Hadayat Ali	4895	7897	3002
Land granted to Rai Upendra North Duardev.	--	451	451
Total -	233999	374901	140902

From the above table it is found that the revenue increased at the time of Sunder's settlement and the increasing was a contious process since the first settlement in 1871. If any jotdar became failure to pay revenue in the scheduled dates of the year, his jote would have been sold by the procedure of the Government. E. E Lewis Esq, Commissioner of the Rajshahi division wrote to the Secretery to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department , "The point in which his wishes to have report in whether the sale notice, which are at present issued with an earliar date, so to bring the collections within the financial year. The present practice appear to be this. The sale of jote in arrear is commenced at the tahshil office on the 16th ; the names of bidders who present themselves there on the occasion one written with the bids made by them on a lathbandi paper attached to the sale record, which is sent to the head quarters and instructors are given at the same time to the intending purchases by the tahshildars to appear before the Deputy Commissioner at Jalpaiguri on the 20th when the sale is financially knocked down.⁶³ He also pointed out, "On the 20th the defaulting jote is again put up for sale at Jalpaiguri in presence of the bidders who were present at the tahshil office, as well as those present at quarter. Here the sale commences again from the highest bid obtained at the tahshil office and an indeavour is made to get the jote sold at a still higher bid than that obtained previously. In the event of no higher bid being obtained, the sale is finally concluded with the highest bidder at the tahshil office. It is reported that this procedure a good price is often secured and

malpractices are checked.⁶⁴ Besides land revenue, various kind of revenue were collected from different sources in the Duars. Capitation tax was collected annually from Meches, Nepalese and Garos who were nomadic cultivators. The rates of capitation tax were sanctioned by the Government, Revenue Department, letter No. 1744 L.R., dated 10th April, 1893. The rates were for each adult male of Meches or Nepalese Rs. 4 a year and for each adult Garo or Bhutia was Rs. 3 a year.⁶⁵

Goalas and the others have to pay a tax at the following rates for grazing cattle on Government khas lands.

For each buffalo	-	8 annas a year
For each cow	-	4 annas a year
For each goat or sheep	-	2 annas a year

The totos of totopara of Jalpaiguri have to pay Rs. 105 annually for their orange grove.

The revenue for cutting or selling trees have been fixed by the Deputy Commissioner which was 25 percent less than the forest Dept.

Thatching grass taken from khas lands was paid for one piece per coolly-load.

Collecting pipli in khas lands and fishing in khas streams was settled annually by auction at the tahsildar with the highest bidder. Revenue was also collected from khus khus, ruber and lae.

From the above informations it can be said that no one was exempted from paying revenue or rent to the Government, as a result of which different tribal people including local people of other communities of the Duars lost their right in the natural resources of the forest. The meches, Garos etc. who were

habituated with shifting cultivation, lost their right and were bound to settle in a particular place, many of whom left the place and went towards east which is shown in the next chapter.

After completion of the 3rd settlement, the authority relating to the land and land revenue tried to change the rules and regulations of the land revenue and give a systematic process so that Government could have land revenue regularly and maintain every thing in a process of regularise. They tried to keep record of lands in the record rooms. P. Nolan, Commissioner of Rajshahi Division reported--

“At the conference held on 18th March, 1893, it was agreed that alterations on the external boundaries of jots caused by alluvion, delluvion, resumptions for roads or otherwise should be noted from year to year and that changes by the reclamation of adjoining waste land should be generally recorded by constituting the new tillage into a separate jote. The Lt. Governor in a note 29th April, 1893 observes that there is no great advantage in this, and the amins to be kept for the purpose may be struck out of the estimate.⁶⁶

In the opinion of P. Nolan the work of registering alterations in jot boundaries might be minimised, but could not be altogether neglected. Under the conditions of the pattah, they were bound to grant remissions on account of land taken for public purposes and measurement is a necessary preliminary to remission.

Again P. Nolan reported, “The alternative is given to the jotdar when a great proportion of his land is washed away, loss to Govt. when alluvion takes place. And large reclamations beyond jot boundaries are well worth assessing immediately, though I am quite in favour of being easy when the encroachment is trifling.

We decided not to record mutation of chukanidars and adhiars to save expenses. The Lt. Governor desires to have intered

changes among those chukanidars who are permanent lease holders.⁶⁷

After completion of 3rd settlement, the survey and settlement work in the District had not been completed earstwhile. So another settlement was necessary, that was 4th settlement started in the cold weather of 1907 and completed in 1916 by J.A. Milligan. This settlement recorded a big change vis-à-vis the settlement of 1889-95.⁶⁸ A large portion of land in the east of the Torsa river was unsettled called waste land of forest.

The 4th settlement conducted by Milligan was primarily undertaken for the purpose of reassessing, the Western Duars where the current leases were on the point of expiring and then the creation of new jotes by this current settlement.

Mr. Sunder assessed 3926 mal jotes at Rs. 209101⁶⁹. But Milligan found only 3893 mal jotes remaining together, with 260 jotes created under the Arable Waste Land Rules. The demand from those 4153 jotes before reassessment was Rs. 200437. After 4th settlement the demand was Rs. 251724 from the new rates.

Regarding classification of land slight difference had been followed with Mr. Sunder. Sunder classified lands into Basti (Homestead, garden, orchard and bamboos), Rupit or Doba (low land), Faringati/High land), Waste, markets etc. But Mr. Milligan classified in such way (1) Basti, (2) Dohla - low-laying arable land. In the backward parganas it was again subdivided into Dohla-I (selected tracts of specially good paddy land) and Dohla-II (ordinary low arable lands), (3) Danga - High arable land, corresponding to Mr. Sunder's Faringati. This was again subdivided through the Duars into Danga-I - Cropped or current fallow. Danga-II - arable but not in cultivation, (4) Shohuri - This type of lands was considered as midway between Danga and Dohla growing much winter as well as summer rice, and also the back of

the jute crope, (5) Doba - Lands which permanently under water, pits used for steeping jute and other non-arable depressions, (6) Patit - Land unfit from natural causes to bear a crop at the time of making settlement, (7) Unassessable - Lands include public roads and other lands falling within the peripheri of a jote but not covered by the terms of the Jotdar's lease.

After classified the lands, Milligan drafted rates of land revenue slightly altering of the rates of Mr. Sunder. The rates of Maynaguri Tahshil were as follows :- ⁷⁰

Class of jotes	Basti		Dohla		Shohuri		Danga-I		Dangh-II		Potit	
	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.
Class - I	3	0	2	4	2	0	1	8	0	10	0	2
Class - II	3	0	2	0	1	12	1	6	0	8	0	2
Class - III	3	0	1	2	1	10	1	4	0	6	0	2

Even after the third settlement there were huge amount of uncultivated waste land in the Duars. Grunning wrote that even if the existing rates were maintained there would be a considerable increase in the revenue, but they are so low that they can be enhanced without hardship to the jotdars. ⁷¹

187, 446 acres lands assessed by this settlement (4th settlement) classifying as follows :- ⁷²

Basti	-	8161 acres
Dohla	-	43560 acres
Shohuri	-	40947 acres
Danga-I	-	31275 acres
Danga-II	-	31061 acres
Potit	-	17536 acres

Doba	-	1269 acres
Unassessable	-	13737 acres

Mr. Sunder classified 211000 acres into -

Basti	-	4917 acres
Rupit	-	63720 acres
Faringati	-	40713 acres
Doba	-	832 acres
Waste	-	100818 acres

But at the time of 4th settlement Milligan found Mr. Sunder's Mal Jotdars in possession of 225,525 acres which were classified as follows :-⁷³

Basti	-	10499 acres
Dohla	-	52325 acres
Shohuri	-	53327 acres
Danga-I	-	59954 acres
Danga-II	-	42880 acres
Doba	-	1011 acres
Waste	-	5529 acres

It is referred in the government report regarding Maljotes, In view of the fact that in the ordinary Mal jote lease provision is now made for compensation for trees and of the report of the Deputy Commissioner that compensation is now as a matter of fact allowed for valueable trees , the Governor in council has no objection to the insertion of the word "trees"after building in this clause.⁷⁴ In addition with these lands, there were 141125 acres Arable Waste Lands which were assessed by this settlement classifying as follows :-⁷⁵

Basti	-	2707 acres
Dohla	-	22086 acres
Shohuri	-	32610 acres
Danga-I	-	31810 acres
Danga-II	-	37604 acres
Doba	-	1150 acres
Waste	-	13571 acres

It is found in the District Gazetteer, Jalpaiguri, 1981, that during the last mentioned settlement, the greater part of land to the east of the Torsa River was unsettled waste land or forest. In the settlement under review 2,93,000 acres of such land had given place to 100 sq miles of tea gardens. Similarly a great development had taken place in the tract lying between the Jaldhaka on the West and the Torsa in the east.⁷⁶ Although this whole tract was shown as 'Tea Grant' during the settlement of 1889-95, but actually this was not practical, large number of jotes were settled under cultivation in this tract.

The comparison of the rates of land revenue between Sunder's settlement and Milligan's settlement given below :-⁷⁷

Class Of Land	Pargana Maraghat				Pargana Laksmipur				Pargana West Madari				Remaining & Backward Parganas			
	Sunder's Rate		New Rate		Sunder's Rate		New Rate		Sunder's Rate		New Rate		Sunder's Rate		New Rate	
Basti	2	0	2	4	1	12	2	0	1	12	2	0	1	8	2	0
Dohla - I	--	--	2	0	-	--	2	0	--	--	2	0			2	0
Dohla - II	1	12	1	14	1	4	1	6	1	8	1	10	1	2	1	4
Shohuri	--	--	1	12	--	--	1	4	--	--	1	8			1	2
Danga - I	1	4	1	6	0	12	1	0	0	12	1	0	0	9	0	12
Danga - II	--	--	0	6	--	--	0	6	--	--	0	6	0	3	0	4
Patit	0	3	0	2	0	3	0	2	0	3	0	2			0	4
Doba	2	0	0	6	1	4	0	6	1	12	0	6	1	2	0	2

In the Ambari Falakata Pargana the rates were as follows⁷⁸ :-

	Basti		Dohla		Danga-I		Danga-II		Doba		Patit	
	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.
New rates	2	3	1	12	1	2	0	4	0	4	0	2

	Basti		Rupit		Faringati		Doba		Patit	
	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.
Sunder's rate	2	0	1	8	1	2	1	8	0	3

From the above tables it is followed that the rate of revenue of the land of Basti, dohla, Shohuri and Danga had increased at the time of Milligan's settlement but the rate was decreased in the patit or uncultivated land and Doba or low land.

Col. Hedayet Ali's Estate

Colonel Hedayet Ali got a rent-free lease of 20 taluks for five years in Feb, 1866 for his great achievement in the 2nd Anglo-Bhutan War in 1864.⁷⁹ The terms and conditions of the lease made with Hedayet Ali changed time to time. For the failure to fulfill the terms and conditions of the lease, 19191 acres lands were resumed at the time of Sunder's settlement, the remaining 22563 acres being settled at half rates at the amount of 7897.

At the time of Milligan's settlement the total area held was found to be 28195 acres classified as follows :-⁸⁰

Basti	-	930.24 acres
Dohla	-	6915.22 acres
Shohuri	-	6174.01 acres
Danga-I	-	8517.90 acres
Danga-II	-	3990.41 acres
Doba	-	307.52 acres
Uncultivated Waste	-	819.35 acres
Unassessable	-	<u>840.58 acres</u>
Total	-	28495.23 acres

Of this total area 27119 acres were found to be sublet to chukanidars and rents paid by them during the currency of the last settlement aggregated Rs. 26920, the profit of the heirs being Rs. 17736.⁸¹ A memorial was submitted by the heirs of the distinguished soldier for the further concessions. In accordance with the memorial Government declared an order as follows :-

"The memorialists be informed that after a full consideration of their case the Governor in Council has decided that the lands should be resettled at three-fourths of the pargana rates for a period of 20 years, the term fixed for the present settlement in the Western Duars, after which they will be assessed at full rates. In the event of the chukanidars getting the benefit of progressive enhancements of rents, the revenue assessed and granted to the

memorialists will be graduated accordingly, so that the difference between the rents settled as payable by the chukanidars to the memorialists and the revenue payable by the memorialists in any year may not be less than the present difference. The memorialists are also informed that there will be a clause in the new lease to the effect that unoccupied lands should be sublet to bonafide cultivators only." ⁸²

The new rent of jote No. 101 proposed by Milligan and approved by Government were as follows :-

1st period of 5 years	Rs. 17000
2nd period	Rs. 2000
3rd and 4th period	Rs. 22790

The rents payable by the chukanidars in the same periods being -

<u>1st period</u>	<u>2nd period</u>	<u>3rd and 4th period</u>
36626	41965	45767

Leaving to the colonel's heirs profits of -

19626	21956	22977
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The lands were given to Hedayet Ali on condition to bring under cultivation all the unoccupied lands in twenty Taluks with a promise that all lands so brought under cultivation would be settled with him at the end of the period. ⁸³

The successors of Hedayet Ali failed to fulfil the terms and conditions of the renewed lease and they prayed to the Govt. for remission of rent, the Commissioner of Rajshahi division informed the Government, Land Revenue Department by his letter no.959R. dated, 15th March, 1919. The honourable Mr. Mc Alpin, I.C.S. Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department replied that after careful consideration of the memorandum of objection as well as the comments of the Dy, Commissioner

thereon the Governor in Council was pleased to pass the following orders on the points noted below ---

Government are satisfied as to the justification of the claim of the objectors to remission of rent and for reasons explained by the Dy, Commissioner. They approve of the proposal that the arrears Viz. the difference between the new enhanced rent and the old rent for the 3 years 1914-15 to 1916-17 should be remitted. The exact amount involved should, however, be reported for the information of Govt.⁸⁴

In clause 1 of the new lease, the heirs of the late colonel are informed that on the expiry of the present lease, which was for twenty years, jote 101 will be brought into the line with other jotes in the matter of assessment, no further concessions being granted. In the clause 4, provided the jote be transferred as a whole, subject to registration of such transfer within two months and payment of a fee of one anna per acre. Only bonafide resident cultivators of the class known as chukanidars may be settled on the land by the jotdars. In clause 7 and 8 secured the rights of chukanidars, both those in existence at present and future creations during the currency of the lease.⁸⁵

Special Settlement for Mech and Garo:

The Meches and Garos, originated from Mangoloid race, lived the nomadic life in nature (jungle) simple way of life habituated in jhum cultivation. In the pre-colonial period they had not to give any tax or revenue. In the colonial period they were assessed to pay capitation tax at Rs. 4 per head per annum, Garos being similarly valued at Rs. 3 per head.⁸⁶ About the life and condition of tribal people in the Duars will be analysed in details in the specific chapter of this thesis, here, I, only shall try to sketch out about the measures of lands allotted to Meches and Garos by Sunder and Milligan (3rd and 4th Settlement). During the survey

and settlement operations of 1889-95, an attempt had been made to group the settled agriculturist among the Meches and Garos together, and give them a separate colony in Alipurduar east of the Torsa river and South of the road leading to the Rajabhatkhawa, as they were being exploited by their more intelligent neighbours and were in danger of losing their land. 766 jotes covering an area of 90593 acres were set apart for the colony.⁸⁷

P. Nolan, Esq, Commissioner of Rajshahi Division wrote to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, lower provinces, "With reference to Board's memorandum no. 329 A dated the 16th July 1895, forwarding a copy Government notification no. 3203 L.R. dated the 6th July, 1895 relating to the reservation of a tract of land in the Alipur Subdivision in the district of Jalpaiguri for a Mech and Garo colony, I have the honour to forward a draft notification consisting of the revised boundaries of the tract and to request that Government be moved to publish it in supersession of the one already published."⁸⁸

(No. 4615 L.R. dated Calcutta, the 22nd Oct. 1895 Notification by the Government of Bengal, Revenue Dept).

In Supersession for the boundaries mentioned in notification No. 3203 L.R. dated the 6th July 1895 published at page 664 of the Calcutta Gazette on the 10th idem the following boundaries are substituted.⁸⁹

North – The Southern boundary of Mr. C. C. Gulliland's tea grant.

East – The western boundary of the Gaburbasa Forest Reserve, and the Alaikuri nadi from the point where it leaves the Gaburbasa Forest to the point where it meets the western boundary of the Borojhar Forest Reserve.

South – The point where the Alaikurinadi meets the western boundary of the Borojhar Forest Reserve.

Unfortunately, no special measures were not taken for encroachment and to prevent to transfer and sub-infeudation of lands to outsiders, as a result, a number of outsiders were settled in the reserve area by the local authorities. A special enquiry was made in 1907-08, it was found then that there was not a single Garo in the Colony and more than half of the jotdars were outsiders, mainly Oraons. In 766 jotes, there were only 218 Mech jotdars ; 177 Mech chukanidars and 219 Mech adhiars.⁹⁰ In accordance with the situation of 1910 Milligan gave an outline - out of a total area of 10550 acres settled Mech jotdars held 7170 acres of which they sub-let 669 acres to chukanidars, and of which 2020 acres were cultivated by possession of Oraons, Rajbansis, Paharias and others. Out of 161 chukani holdings 97 were Mech and 64 were miscellaneous.⁹¹ Milligan wrote, "Soon after this the Mech exodus from the Duars began, and in 1915, I was informed that practically every Mech had moved over into Assam." ⁹²

In 1917 the Deputy Commissioner made certain inquiries about the colony and it was then ascertain that the total area held by Mech jotdars were 6439 acres and the total area held by the other jotdars was 4481 acres. The population of the colony at the census of 1921 was 7363 of whom 2638 were Meches 3303 oraons and the rest family immigrants from chhotanagpur and Nepalis, Meches are, therefore, form 27 per cent of the total population.⁹³

The above figures about the Mech jotdars and their lands showed that the area held by Mech jotdars had increased while two areas held of other jotdars had diminished since 1908, owing to migration to Assam the number of Meches in the colony had diminished and the increase of the area held by the Mech jotdars is due to the purchase of jotes by Meches. There were several big Mech jotdars in the colony and it is found that one Mech jotdar had about 400 acres lands another about 250 acres which other Meches had large areas. The enforcement of the order about the subletting of land was impracticable as were too few Meches in the colony

to cultivate the land and even Mech jotdars had their land cultivated by Oraons and others. No attempt had, therefore, been made to enforce the offer about sub-letting. The immigration of Oraons and other cultivators had resulted in the bringing under cultivation of practically two whole settled areas. The Deputy Commissioner had allowed transfers of jots held by Meches to other than Meches.

In view of the new classes introduced in the new colony leases prescribed for the western Duars in the insertion of special conditions in the leases for land in Taluk Satali Deputy Commissioner who visited the colony in the December 1st is of opinion that the present policy is never likely to meet with any measures of success and its enforcement means unnecessary. According to him, "In my opinion there is no longer any reason for treating Satali Taluk within which the colony is situated, differently from the rest of the Western Duars as it can not be regarded as a Mech colony and the Meches do not require special protection."⁹⁴ As the British administrators had only the intention to be economically benefitted, they allowed to be immigrated outsiders in the colony so that they could earn much more revenue and rent.⁹⁴

Jotes of Totopara :

Totos, another community in the Duars, of the Indo-Mongoloid race, Tibeto-Burman speaking autochthonous tribe lived in Totopara, bounded on the North by Bhutan on the east by Torsa River and the South by Titi forest. They were very simple in the way of life and nomadic and enjoyed in the nature. Their system of cultivation is like that of the Meches which was Jhum cultivation. But it was not their main occupation. Out of their cultivation, they were involved in the work of orange transportation, depended chiefly on their orchards and homestead

products, pan-leaves, bamboos, fowls and pigs. The whole jote containing 2033 acres was settled in Mandali grant given in the name of the traditional headman or Mandal of the Totos for Rs. 120 per annum by the settlement of 1889-95. But the settlement of 1906-16 changed it to a tax of Rs. 2 per adult male per annum.⁹⁵

Many outsiders encroached in the Totopara as a result, Totos lost their peaceful identity. Realizing the situation, Mr. Milligan opined, "I strongly recommend that they be allowed to remain in undisturbed possession of the whole block of 2003 acres, and that all transfers, mortgages, sub-letting or other disturbing practices be totally forbidden and prevented by the district authorities."⁹⁶ But this recommendation had not been initiated in practical, for which many outsiders settled, later on in the Totopara.

Santal Colony :

The Santals had been immigrated in the Duars as a tea-labourers from Bihar, Orissa and South-Western region of West Bengal by labour-contractors. Mr. Sunder selected a piece of waste land in Mahakalguri Taluk in Alipurduar Subdivision. There were some discrimination about the size of the colony and the method of settling the land with the colonists. Ultimately Government declared an order led to the Notification No. 4300 L.R. of 27th August, 1894, referred to by Mr. Sunder limiting the area reserved for the Colony to some 29 square miles as follows :⁹⁷

- (1) in the Commissioner's order to settle the land with individuals direct, and not with the mondals - vide No. 831 Ret. of 23rd July, 1896 ;
- (2) in letter No. 980 Ret. of 18th September 1897 from the Commissioner to Government promising to make a 15 year settlement at an all-round rate of 8 annas an acre, and abandon entirely the initial proposals described by Mr. Sunder on page 89

of his report. Government approved of this scheme in their No. 886 T. - R. of 20th October, 1897.

(3) in the adoption of a form of lease for all colonists - Commissioner's No. 665 R. of 4th December, 1897.

This was finally settled by notification No. 387 T. - R. of the 27th May, 1901 which limited the colony to 14 square miles.

In 1911, there were 1500 Christian and 500 non-Christian Santals in the Colony. Though the colony was only for the Santals named Santals colony, the people of other community encrossed and settled there. A. Mitra, the Superintendent of Census Operations found more Meches than Santals in 1953. Land was inalienable in the Colony to outsiders or non-tribals and all sub-transfers were subject to approved by the Church Missionary Society.⁹⁸

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Chapter –2

Growth of Tea-plantation and Its Impact on Agrarian Economy.

Now- a- days, tea is well-known to all more or less and it is a fine energetic drinking of maximum number of people. Either poor or rich, aristocrat or ordinary, all of us like to take tea for different purposes. But it was not familiar to people before coming of the British. Among the many agro-based Industries of India Tea is by far the most important plantation crop. It not only is an organized industry, but also has a dominant role in the nation's economy. Apart from the other competitors like Jute, it fetches the highest amount of foreign exchange to the national exchequer.¹ The first recorded mention of tea in India was grown in 1780, when a tea bushes from Canton were planted in Calcutta. But it could not survive long either for want of culture or due to unfavourable weather or soil conditions.²

After expansion in the North Eastern region, particularly Assam and Bengal, the Britishers thought seriously about the region for commercial purposes how to be utilized as because this tract was full of natural resources, somewhere land was very fertile huge patit land or waste land was there. In the previous chapter it has been discussed about the land and land revenue system in Jalpaiguri district of the British. Now in this chapter it will be tried to analyze about the introductions of tea cultivation in the district and its impact on the society in changing scenario.

A real progress was recorded in 1834, in which year, Lord William Bentinck, the then Governor- General, appointed a committee, called "Tea committee to investigate the possibility for cultivating tea in India. In the opinion of P. J. Griffiths, Warren Hastings the then Governor General of India clearly realized that

the company would prosper if the Industry is developed in this country. With this view in mind in 1774, he made a provision for duty free sale of Bhutanese goods in North Bengal in return of which the lands in Bhutan would be utilized for tea cultivation.³

In 1778 Sir Joseph Banks was asked to prepare a series of notes for the cultivation of new crops, of which he advocated the cultivation of tea in India. On the basis of experience of China and Japan he suggested that black teas grew between the 26th and 30th parallel of latitude and teas between the 30th and 35th latitude.⁴ Early in 1839 the Bengal Tea Association was formed in Calcutta and a few weeks later preliminary steps were taken by a separate group of individuals for the formation of the Assam company in London.⁵

a. Land Acquisition for the Tea Plantation.

In the previous chapters it has been discussed how the English East India Company entered into Coochbehar as a dominant power and subsequently they captured the whole tract of the Duars from Bhutanese aggression in 1865 after second Anglo-Bhutanese war. After capturing this tract the British govt. thought seriously about the lands and resource. They started experiments and discussions how to utilize it for commercial purposes and gain financially. The British Govt. kept the Western Duars as a non-regulated area, the govt. himself was the proprietor of the lands and resources. So they started survey and settlement works from 1871, by Mr. Becket and subsequently it was going on. They divided the lands of the Duars into three categories – (1) Land for agricultural purpose giving lease to the jotdars and chukavidars, (2) Land for reserve forest and (3) Land for tea cultivation.

It is mentioned in the Government Report “ In 1895 the Mech and Garo subjects in the Western Duars apprehending all the lands hitherto occupied by them were being taken up for tea cultivation ,

petitioned the settlement officer, Jalpaiguri, asking that some specific area might be reserved for them . The Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri and the Commissioner of Rajshahi division supported the proposal and by the Government's notification, No.3203 L. R dated the 6th July, 1895 a block of land measuring about 30.7 square mile situated in the Alipurduar Subdivision of Jalpaiguri district was declared not to be available for tea cultivation and was thus reserved exclusively for Mech and Garo colony.⁶ From the report it can be said that the lands of the Duars were brought under tea cultivation gradually for which it was necessary to reserve lands for the people of Mech and Garo communities as they were the tribal people who were habituated with shifting cultivation earlier and facing an identity crisis for the immigration of different communities and classes people in the Duars.

The Teagardens were extended in the Duars as well as in the hilly area of Darjeeling district mainly for two reasons- **firstly**, the soil and the relative matter such as climate, rainfall, temperature were favorable for the tea-cultivation, **2ndly**, the availability of lands easily as the Duars were non-regulated area that means the proprietor of the lands was Government himself and there were huge lands without any proprietors, so the Government easily could sanction lands for tea cultivation by lease and obtain rent from land.

As there were no shortages of lands in the Duars, the lands were easily available either in the agrarian sector or in the tea cultivation. At the initial stage, Govt. sanctioned land by lease for tea cultivation to interested tea cultivators by easy terms and condition at the minimum rent.

Grunning also pointed out, "It was soon found that the soil and climate of the Western Duars was suitable to the growth of tea;

Government offered land to the investors on favourable terms and the industry developed rapidly".⁷

The lands taken up for the cultivation of tea in the Western Duars were held direct under the Government, a set of rules specially framed for the purpose. The latest edition of this rules published on page 539 of the Calcutta gazette of 2nd May 1894.⁸

At first, a lease under the tea lease rules is granted for a term of five years. On the expiration for this period, and on the lessee fulfilling certain conditions, the lease was renewed for thirty years, and so on for similar periods in perpetuity. No rent was charged for the year of entry and the next first full years, upto end of the fifth years, the rate of rents varies from 3 annas to 12 annas per acre. On the expiration of the term of the first or preliminary lease, granted for five years, the lands were re-assessed according to the pargana rate. This rate remains unaltered for thirty years. By the terms of the first lease the lessee was bound to open out 15 per cent of the total area by the end of the fifth years. If at the end of that year it was found that the required area of 15 per cent had been opened out, the assessment was made at the rate for rupit land for only that area, and at the rate for homestead or basti for the land occupied by houses, coolie lines, & C. The remaining land is assessed as faringati or waste, as the case may be at rates considerable lower than rupit and basti.⁹

At the time of establishment of tea garden Government sanctioned land by lease to the planters on the following terms and conditions:-

- (1) That the applicant should under take to bring not less than 50 acres under the cultivation each year up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of the land
- (2) That if applicant should fail to bring $\frac{1}{4}$ of the land under cultivation within five years, the collector should be at liberty to withdraw the lease; and

- (3) That the rate of rent was to be for the first year rent free, six annas per acre for the 2nd year, twelve annas for the third year, one rupee two annas for the fourth year and full rate of one rupee eight annas from the fifth year until the resettlement.

But Govt. reserves the right to fix the rent, provided that it shall not be less than 12 annas an acre on the entire area of the land leased, nor exceed the rate of rent per acre, paid in the neighborhood at the time of renewal, for the highest class of land under ordinary cultivation. the highest rates of rent are payable by tea gardens in the Maynaguri tahshil; land under tea is assessed at Rs. 2 an acre, homestead and bamboos at Rs. 3 an acre and waste land at 6 annas an acre¹⁰

Later on the amount of rent had been decreased and more facilities were given to the leasee and the rents were never higher than of the land for agricultural cultivation.

From the above terms and condition it is clear that the Government would give convenience to the investors of the tea cultivation, as because the Government accepted in principle that lands which yielded valuable crops should be taxed more highly than those which did not, inspite of that this principle was never applied in the case of the tea gardens of the Duars, and rents were never higher than for the land under rice.¹¹

The following table shows the area- paying revenue, the amount of revenue paid, the area held revenue, free and other grants :-¹²

Area actual ly under lease	Area paying revenue and the amount of revenue paid							Area under lease not yet payin g reven ue	Area grante d and counte r parts not yet exchan ge	Area applied for, but prelimiona ries not yet completed
	3 anas per aere	6 anas per acre	9 anas per acre	10 anas per acre	Area under renew ed lease	Total area payin g reven ue	Total reven ue			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Acres	Acr es	Acr es	Acr es	Acr es	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres
1397 1	224 38	616 4	452 3	248 43	78678	1360 08	8942 3	3053	13905	46408

Not only that, to get more facility in the lands Tea Association demanded to repeal the Act XVI of 1869 and introduce the Act X of 1859 in the Western Duars SEJ, Clarke, Esq, Secretary to the Indian Tea Association wrote to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Dept.

“The committee would, therefore, urge with all deference that an Act should be passed repealing Act. 1869, and inacting what Act of 1859 should come into force in the Duars, but that such Act should not apply two cases between Government and the holdars of grants or leases of waste land, which should be tried by the ordinary civil courts, and be governed by the ordinary law and the transfer of property Act.¹³

On the basis of the demand of the Tea Association, and the letter of the SEJ, Clarke, JP Hewett Esq. Cie, Offg. Secretary to the Govt. of India Home Dept. wrote a letter to the Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, Revenue Dept.

“In reply I am to say that the Governor General in Council accept the proposal to repeal Act. XVI of 1869 and that his excellency the Governor General accords this sanction to the

necessary legislation being under take in the council of the Lt. Governor for making laws and regulation.”¹⁴

b. Tea-plantation under European and Indian proprietors.

The history of tea in India was not known clearly before 1774. But the development of tea in India was started with the discovery of wild plants, originally by the natives of Assam in the early 19th century. Around 1823 one major Robert Bruce discovered indigenous tea in Assam.¹⁵ The then Governor General appointed a scientific committee to study and recommend about tea cultivation in Assam and the committee recommended the cultivation of China type tea in upper Assam. The first shipment of Assam tea comprising of eight chests, to London was made in 1838 and the consignment was sold by auction on January 10, 1839.

In North East India tea was grown in four separate tracts of which the Brahma Putra valley in the largest accounting for two thirds of the total areas of North India. The other tea tract of Assam was in Cachar, south of the shilong plateau in the valley of tea river Barak. The third tea tract, Duars and Terai in a long narrow strip immediately to the south of Himalayan in the state of West Bengal and the fourth zone consisted of the mountainous tea district of Darjeeling also in West Bengal.¹⁶ Within very few years after possession of the Duars Britishers realised that the area of the Duars was suitable for tea cultivation, as it was high land, water would not be stored and most of the land was noman's land which was not restricted to sanction for tea cultivatin. Grunning writes, “It was soon found that the soil and climate of the Western Duars was suitable to the growth of tea; Government offered land to investors on favourable terms and the Industry developed rapidly.”¹⁷

In the Darjeeling district the Industry was first established as a commercial enterprise in 1856 and first garden in the Terai of Darjeeling district was opened out in 1862 at Champta, near khaprail by Mr. James white, and in the end of 1866 several other gardens had been opened out in the Terai. The first tea garden in the Jalpaiguri district was introduced at Gazoldoba in the Duars by the late Mr. Haugton, the pioneer of the tea industry in the Jalpaiguri district and the garden was owned by Dr. Broughan who had started, The Dhutaria garden in the Darjeeling district in 1859.¹⁸ The next tea garden was introduced in Fulbari by the late Mr. Pillans who gave his name to the market called Pillans Hat, and was owned by colonel Money. Bagrakot followed, opened out by the late Mr. North and owned by Mr. S. Cresswell. In the year 1876 six grants were issued including those for Fulbari, Gajoldoba, Bagrakot, Dalimkota and Rangatee.¹⁹

At the first stage, tea cultivation in the Duars and elsewhere in N.E. India was profitable because of the land availability easily, availability of labourers very chiefly and the demand of tea in Europe and many parts of the World. So, to be gained financially many Europeans obtained land by lease and started tea cultivation. In this way the number of tea gardens increased rapidly in the Jalpaiguri district. Grunning writes, "By 1881 the number of gardens had increased to 55 and the acreage under tea to 6,230 or, in other words, the number of gardens had more than quadrupled and the area under tea cultivation had increased seven times in five years."²⁰ The cultivation was very rapidly extended during the nineties, and in 1901 the number of grants had increased to 235, with a planted area of 119 square miles and a yield of over 31 million pounds.²¹

The Indians were not silent regarding the tea cultivation in the N. E. region, rather they came forward beside the Europeans proprietors of the tea-estates and invested in the tea cultivation. In 1877, Munshi Rahim Bakesh, a Peshkor of the Deputy

Commissioner, was taken a grant for the purpose of cultivation named Jaldhaka grant on 17-8-1877 and in the same year Baint Barrie, Bamandanga Ellenborrie, Dam Dim, Kumli and Washa Barrie Tea Estates were started.²² Mr. Johnson. Took a grant on behalf of land Mortgage Bank, known as kalabari grant for 800 acres on 09.03.1878 and this grant was passed on to the hands of Dr. Nilratan Sarkar, the then eminent physician of Bengal and Smt. Sarojini Roy. Babu Kalimohan Roy and Smt. Durgabati Sen got Altadanga grant of 310 acres in 1878, but they transferred it to Sri Beharilal Ganguly.

A Joint Stock Company in Jalpaiguri was formed on 1879 and it was a milestone for the Indians tea cultivation. Late Bhagwan Chandra Bose, father of illustrious scientist Sri J. C. Bose was posted as a Deputy Magistrate in Jalpaiguri after two years from the inception of the district. Following the successful initiatives in the tea cultivation by the Europeans, Sri Bose pointed out that the Indian should come forward and take initiative. So, the first Indian tea garden named Mogalkata tea estates, Jalpaiguri Tea Company Ltd., a purely Indian concern was started in 1879, and it was pioneer and great initiative in the history of tea cultivation by the Indian in future.

The following table shows the Indian planters and details about their capital invested and land coverage under tea – estates:-
23

Original Capital	Present Capital	Name of the Company	Year of Origin	Gross acreage
50,000	7,00,000	Jalpaiguri Tea Co. Ltd.	1879	1495/560
1,00,000	4,00,000	Northern Bengal Tea Co. Ltd.	1882	898/520
85,400	8,41,600	Gurjangjhora	1882	800/612

		Tea Co. Ltd.		
2,25,000	7,75,000	Anjuman Tea Co. Ltd	1889	4026/1112
50,000	5,00,000	Chamurchi Tea Co. ltd.	1881	2190/877
75,000	7,87,500	Katalguri Tea Co. Ltd.	1895	2325/778
75,000	5,00,000	Chuniajhora Tea Co. Ltd	1896	1834/512
75,000	5,25,000	Atiabari Tea Co. Ltd.	1900	1823/1034
1,30,000	8,97,000	Ramjhora Tea Co. Ltd.	1907	1522/858
1,35,200	10,81,000	Devpara Tea Co. Ltd.	1909	1500/900
1,24,200	4,96,800	Diana Tea Co. Ltd	1910	1250/690
11,24,800	75,03,900			19663/8453

From the above table it is shown that the capital had increased tremendously with the heavy profit earned from tea estates and with these capitals the planters purchased more lands and started tea cultivation, some times they purchased old tea gardens. In this way tea cultivation in the district had going up. But, in spite of going up many tea gardens in the district and heavy profit obtained by the tea – planters the economic condition of the district particularly the condition of the general people as well as the labourers had not been improved because the planters did not invest the capital in the Industrial sector for the upliftment of the economy – rather they transferred the capital out side the district or North Bengal, mainly European planters sent their capital in their own Country.

On the other hand, for increasing the tea estates tremendously production had been increased than the demand of the international market as a result of which the market was collapsed. Grunning wrote, "Since the year 1897 the industry has gone through a period of severe depression. The high price and general prosperity, which were the features of the eighties and early nineties, led to reckless extensions of cultivation in India, Ceylon, and Java, with the result that the supply of tea became greater than the demand."²⁴

One point should be mentioned here that the European planters got more facilities than the Indian planters in different aspects such as land acquisition, recruitment of labourers, selling in the market etc. Ranjit Dasgupta writes, "A formidable hurdle faced by the Indians was the difficulty in getting lands for the plantation. rapid expansion of Indian plantation enterprise was a post 1910 phenomenon. But by 1910 all the available waste lands were leased out and most of these were leased out to the European planters. Under the circumstances, the new enterpreners, largely Indians had to seek jote lands for plantation. These lands once earmarked for ordinary peasant cultivation had been left uncultivated because of unsuitability for paddy or jute cultivation."²⁵

Dasgupta again writes, "But in 1914, presumably under pressure from the European planters, though on administration order the provincial Government prohibited clubbing of jote lands in a ring fence for the purpose of tea plantation. It meant that no land was available to enterprising Bengalis and other Indians for opening new tea gardens."²⁶

Year wise establishment of Tea Estates in the Dooars²⁷ List given

<u>1875</u>	Nagrakata
Gazul doba	<u>1981</u>
	Hahaipapha
<u>1876</u>	Oodlabari
Fulbari	Neora Nuddy (Upper Neora)
Rangatee	Moghalkata
Bagrakot	Bytagool
Gandhabheel	
Dalinkote	<u>1882</u>
	Needam
<u>1877</u>	Carron (Mujnai Grant)
Jaldhaka	
Baint bari	<u>1883</u>
Baman danga	Toon bari
Ellenbarie	
Damdin	<u>1884</u>
Kumlai	Youngtong
Washabari	Chalauni
	Nagaisuree
<u>1878</u>	Ingo
Kala bari	Zurantee
Good Hope (Sishu bari)	Moortee
Ranichara	Aibheel
Money hope (Phul bari)	Kilcott
Mana bari	Nedcem (Necdeem Tea Co. Ltd.)
Ballarie	Matelli
Altadauga	Chalsa
Chael and Pata Bari (Leash River)	Sundree
	Alston (Needeem tea Co. Ltd.)
<u>1879</u>	Banks(--- do ---)
Mogulakata	Sylee (-- do --)
Rupnee	Meenglass
Soon gachi	Chengli

Bhutta Barse
Ranikhols
Sathkhaya

1885

Baitguri
Rangakothe
Chengmari
Kurti
Nakhati
Indong
Chupaguri (Needeem Tea Co.
Ltd.)

1886

Springfield
Sukha barec (Duars Tea Co.
Ltd)
Hope
Tondoo
Jitee
Malnuddy
Rangutee (Needeem)
Gurjong Jhora
Nagra kata
Gatea
Bhogatpur
Looksan
Forest Hill (Needeem)
Chalauni

1887

Glenco
Patharjora

1888

Kujih (Carron)
Huldi bari (Tallyhe Grent)

1889

Chengmari
Grassmore
Saugaon (Bagrakote)

1890

Telipara
Gairkata (Augra bhara Hunta
Para)
Mujnai (Anjuman Co.)

1891

Makrapara (Anjuman Co.
Hantupara

1892

Bunda pani
Lankapwa
Chamurchi
Totapara (Nuddia)

1894

Chunabhathi
 Hartalguri
 Newlands
 Doodoomari (Assam Dooars)
 Gandrapra
 Chuapara

1895

Nakhathi
 Rangamatee (Inperial Tea Co.)
 Chuapara
 Toorsa (Needeem)
 Kathalguri
 Banarhat (Chapaguri Grant)
 Karbala
 Jointee

1896

Huldi bari (Assam Duars Tea Co.)
 Chunia jhora
 Baradighi
 Drlah
 Guabari
 Palashbari Ist (New Duars)
 Hasimara (7 Grants)
 Kalchini
 Rahimabad
 Birpara (Birpiti& other grants)

1897

Garganda
 Muktijhora
 Mateejhora

Lakhipara

Reti

Shyamjhora(?)

Kalchini

Dalgaon

Dalmoni (Meedeem)

Dalsingpara

Bhuan Duars (x)

Raidak

1898

Binnaguri

Deb Para

Lanka Para

Ahabri

Phaskowa (Kalikhola Grant)

1899

Galupara (4 Grants of Me Leods)

1900

Gandrapara

Chuapra

Rangama tea (Central Duars Tea Co.)

Dalsingpara

Ranga tea 2nd (?)1902

Nagrakata

Dimdima

Baintbari (Neseem)

Baradighi

Gandabheel (Fulbari Tea Co.)

Chuniajhora
 Kalchini
 Hatipota Imperial Tea Co.
 Dhoala

1903
 Tashati
 Dalmoni (Needssm)
 Bhatkhawa
 (Date of incorporation of the
 company 3.9.1900)
 Kumlai

1904
 Emerabad (Assam Duars Tea
 Co. Ltd.)
 Rupai (?)
 Atiabari

1906
 Bataigole

1907
 Dumchipara

1908
 Ambari

1909
 Dima
 Dalmora
 Ramjhora

1910

Turturi
 Rajabhat

1911
 Damdim
 Debpara
 Dina

1912
 Lakhipara

1913
 Gopalpur
 Hossainabad
 Jay birpara
 Dheklapara
 Nimtihora
 Palashbari
 Rhea bari
 Radharani

1915
 Patkapara
 Dhaowlajhora
 Kohinoor

1917
 Saraswasti pur (In Baikuatha
 Pur area)

1918
 Sanny valley (Joypur)
 Karala valley

1919

Majher dabri

Satali

Mathura (Sarada)

Bitri(Hantupara)

Barron

Moraghat

1922

Red Bank

1923

Nangdala

1924

Ethel bari

Hartal guri

1926

Bata bari

Jadabpur

1927

Malhati

Anandapur

Sreenath pur

1928

Kadam bini

1929

Madhu

Luxmi kanta

Rahim pur

1930

Saudamini

Gopimohan

1933

Nepu chapur

1934 – 1968

Surendra Nagar

Dharani Pur

Though the Indian proprietor of the Tea garden played a significant role in the cultivation of tea as well as on the economy of the district, they had to face lot of hinderences for having different facilities and advantage. Firstly, DPA (Duars Plan Planters Association) where the memberships were opened only for the European planters till 1915. Even after 1915, when representation within the Association was allowed to Indian-owned gardens, the D.P.A was remained a predominantly European Association primarily looking after the interest of the European planters²⁸ 2ndly it was hard to Indian planters to have waste lands lease out by the govt. in this circumstances the new entrepreneurs had to seek jote lands for tea cultivation. But here also created problems by the European planters. They created pressure to Govt. not to be allowed tea cultivation in the jote lands as a result, Govt. prohibited tea cultivation in the jote lands . 3rdly European planters obtained financial help through Banking system, but the Indians had to depend on the Marwari businessmen, money lenders friend and relatives sometime it was on high interest, something it was not available in time. 4thly, Indian planters had to face many difficulties relating to Government's assistance such as labour supply, allotment of railway wagons, coal supply, store-management, carrying of tea, auctions, ware hausing, tea tasting and broking, procurement of machinery and supply of tea chests.

Number of tea-gardens in the district and amount of land.²⁹

Year	No. of gardens	land under tea-garden (in cars)
1874	1	---
1876	13	818
1881	55	6230
1892	182	38583
1901	235	76403
1907	180	81338
1911	191	90859
1921	131	1,12,688
1931	151	131074
1941	189	131770
1951	158	134473

From the above table it is followed that the amount of lands under tea cultivation had been increasing gradually from 1874 to 1951, though the tea gardens decreased during 1901 to 1951. It proves that the tea cultivation in the district was heavy profitable for which lands were brought under tea cultivation newly in different times by different planters obtaining different grants (lease) from Government. After 1951 the motion was also upward as follows³⁰

1956 – 57 -----	53570.93 hectares
1957 – 58 -----	53,806.86 hectares
1958 – 59 -----	54,022.09 hectares
1959 – 60 -----	54,326.67 hectares
1960 – 61 -----	54,494.84 hectares

After independence, Land Reforms Programme could not be implemented successfully. Many problems were seen in the lands

occupied by the tea-planters. Debesh Roy wrote, "The amendment bill of the West Bengal Land Acquisition Act has been accepted in the last session of Assembly. The main motive is to acquire the surplus lands of tea estates in North Bengal. Earlier it would depend on the direction of Government for which no land was declared as surplus land of the tea estates in the reign of Congress Government. Whenever any Kind of dispute arised, Government stood by the owner of tea estate. So the article b(3) have saved the owners of tea estates.

So, by the amendment of the West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act, opened the way to reconsider the said matter. Now, Government can decide the amount land newly in the tea estates and acquire the surplus lands. So, this amendment will give the Government new power"³¹

There were some problems in acquisition and distribution of vested land in the tea estates areas. Firstly, the labourers themselves cultivated in the surplus lands of the tea estates. In this circumstance, an inner struggle might be take place between labourers and the peasants for the conspiracy of the owners of the lands. Secondly, no change has been brought in official organization of land and land revenue department. To be implemented in political preparation of the new hopes brought among the poor people by the United Front Government, the traditional technique of the land distribution have to be changed.³²

C. Imported Tea- labourers in the Duars and their condition

It has, already, been discussed about the introduction of the tea-cultivation in the district of Jalpaiguri, if is found that the number of tea gardens increased rapidly from 1874 to 1901, a problem of the paucity of labourers would have been face by the tea planters

both of Europeans and Indians. At the first stage Nepali labourers were recruited in the garden which was not sufficient, the indigenous people were not interested to work in the gardens as a tea labourer. Among the indigenous people Meches, a tribal community of the district and only the people who could accommodate in the unhealthy and intolerable condition affected by Malleria, Kalaazar and dysentery etc, were not interested to work as a labourer in the tea – garden, rather they preferred to live independently in the jungle depending on agriculture and hunting.

The Rajbanshi people and Mohammedans (Converted from Rajbanshi Hindus) were also not interested to work in the tea – gardens they also preferred to survive depending on agriculture. The residence of the tenant farmers surrounded by the homes of his relatives and farm labourers and perhaps a few under tenants. The result of this system in the absence of the functional castes; there were no village servants, barbers, washer men and sweepers who were imported from Behar or elsewhere; the washer men were nearly all Beharis and very few of the servants of the Europeans community were native of the district.

As the indigenous people were less interested to work in the tea garden, the tea planters looked for labourers from outside the Duars and it was found in Santal Parganas of Bihar and Chhotonagpur where large number of tribal people namely Santals, Oraons lived and faced an identity crisis losing their independent life in the jungle called ‘Damin-i-koha’ this tribal people were laborious and daring who showed their efficiency at the time of clearing jungles and preparing land for agricultural cultivation, on the other land they proved their labourious activities in the work of establishing Railway line in India by the Britishers. So the planters choose these laborious people for this hard task.

Other than these causes, the European planters were not interested to recruit local labourers inhabited in the neighbouring areas of tea gardens, rather they preferred to recruit labourers from

outside because recruiting labourers from out side was more convenience than the local labourers. They could not create problem like local labourers, they had to completely depend on the planters like prisoners. This policy was called 'Enclave Economy' which was seen in the other empires of the British out side India.

But the planters did not recruit labours from out side the district directly, rather to avoid the difficulties they preferred to recruit labourers indirectly through the 'Sardars'. A Sardar received a commission usually at the rate of one pice on each 'haziri' or task on the number of Coolies whom he sends to work daily.³³

To Nirmalendu Bhattacharjee, for the Terai and the Doors the picture is however different. At the initial stage, the tea estates of the Western part of the Dooars employed Nepalese labour, but immediately it was realized that sufficient labour could not be obtained locally, or from the surrounding area. For this reason, the gardens situated in the Dooars and the Terai started from above 1880, recruiting from Chhotanagpur and Santal Parganas of Bihar. The recruitment was made through 'Sardar' who received commissions usually at the rate of one piece on each 'Haziri' or task on the number of workers whom he sent to the garden.³⁴

If the recruiters are successful, the Sardar benefits by getting his daily commission on the Coolies earnings and he also received a commission of Rs 2 to Rs 5 a head. On the other hand if a recruiter selected by him fails to return, the Sardar had to refund the advances made to them.³⁵

So, tea labourers were imported from Chhotonagpur and Santal Pargana through the Sardars or their agents by provoking them many ways. S. Roy in his book writes, under the system of recruitment in the Doors a sardar or his deputy visited the recruiting district year after year and returned with new workers.

The workers were recruited from the some group of villages with which the recruiter was familiar and with which he had some personal connection.³⁶

The labourers had come in the Duars leaving their relatives in the houses taking advance from the Sardars which were given to cover road expenses, travel money and repayments of the worked existing debt. After recruiting the labourers, they had to depend on the Sardars which was the ultimate force that bound the workers to remain in the garden losing their legal freedom.

It is relevant to mention here that some differences are followed regarding recruitment of labours between Duars and Assam. It has been discussed about the recruitment of labourer in the Duars through the sardars, but in Assam labours were recruited through Arkatis and a intermediaries class was seen in this regard, these intermediaries obtained a lot of amount through recruiting labours. S. Roy writes, "While the total expense incurred in recruiting an Assam worked amounted to between Rs, 80 and 120. The actual expense of transit of a worker was only Rs, 30. The profit margin which the recruitment in Assam offered led to the proliferation of several layers of intermediaries in the system. The system in the Duars was by and large free from the interference and the malpractices which their presence entailed."³⁷

2ndly, the Duars labourers were free in the sense that they were not indenture labourers subject to penal measure.³⁸ Officially the Duars labourers could move one garden to another garden though it was hard practically, but in the Assam the labourers were bounded with agreement so that the labourers had not right to move according to their choose Apart from these, the missionaries took an important role to recruit labourers in the tea – garden of Assam from Chotangapur, Santal pargana and Orissa. Prof. Ram Krishna Chatterjee in his Article "Cristian Missionaries and labour Migration to Assam Tea Gardens in Colonial Times" tried

to show the role of Missionaries to recruit and migrate the labourers in Assam tea – gardens. Dr. Chatterjee writes, “There are numerous instances to show that the Missionaries of Chotanagpur, Santal Parganas, Orissa and various other missions of India considered migration as one of the means to release the tension of poverty – stricken rural India, arising out of the oppression of the land – lords and money – lenders in the given colonial frame work”³⁹ In order to encourage migration of the labourers, the Missionaries propagated that those who would immigrated to Assam would have the opportunities to settle in Government waste lands. Besides, they would not have to pay bet begari or suffer harassment of law suits; nor would they have to face oppression for the Zamindars etc.⁴⁰ But there were no such evidences to show the role in recruiting the labours in the Duars.

Tea – garden to the labourers in the district and else where in India was not bed of roses, as it has already been discussed that the labourers have been imported from outside the Duars (Nepalese from Nepal and Darjeeling district and oraons, Mundas and Santals from Santal Pargana and Chhotanagpur). So, labourers had to come leaving their own residence and relatives. They were suppressed and oppressed in different ways.

Sir, P. Griffiths pointed out that the labourer in the Duars were always free in the sense that they were not placed under any kind of contract and could live wherever it pleases.⁴¹ But this facility could have not been by the labourers in practical as because it was difficult for the labourer to move one garden to another garden freely for working purposes, Grunning wrote, “Labour in the Western Duars is free and the services of the Coolies are not secured by any form of agreement;..... There is no Government suppression over emigration to the Duars and the treatment of Coolies enroute to the gardens is not regulated by any special provision of law.”⁴² Ranjit Dasgupta wrote in this context “On their arrival at the gardens, the labourers were put in a

concentration camp – like situation. The managers enjoying the explicit or implicit support of the colonial authority and the mystique of the Sahib were law unto themselves. Physical coercion beating, flogging – all these were quite common. Incidents of death from physical torture were not unknown. There are unrecorded accounts of troublesome workers being thrown into furnaces of garden factories.”⁴³

It is true that in some cases labourers had been given lands for cultivation for their livelihood apart from the working in the tea – gardens and in this context it seems to be a beneficial step to the labourer. Actually it was the technique to keep the labourer in the garden as there was no lack of land and easily available it.

The census report of 1881 shows that there were 210 Oraons smaller numbers of other immigrant tribal groups but the number of the labourer in the tea – garden had been increasing rapidly. The statistics are given below:-⁴⁴

Number of labourer employed

Year	Permanent	Temporary	Total
1901	47,365	21,254	68,619
1911	56,693	18,622	75,315
1921	86,693	1871	88,564
1931	112,591	4,262	116,853
1941	136,491	4,896	141,387
1951	178,009

The life of the labourer always had on risk fighting against the ferocious animals on the other hand they had to suffer dangerous deceases Malaria, Kalazar, desentry etc, in addition with these they had to tolerate the intensive oppression of the Manager and the officials without any protest or objection. They had no way to flee from the confined life in the garden as they were always

guarded by Chaukidar (Guard). If any body tried to flee, he had been caught and given punishment. In this perspective Monahar Tirki, the minister of West Bengal wrote, “The torture on the tribal people was increasing. Besides the mental and physical torture, the tendency among the sahib to sexual enjoyment with the tribal women had also been increasing.”⁴⁵

Sri Deben Sarkar wrote, “The tea labourers had been accommodated as serfs long before the independence. Only a small room was their dwelling place. There was no right of any trade union leaders or political leaders to enter into the line of labourers dwelling place. The manager of the tea garden was all in all.”⁴⁶

Samir Chakraborty writes, “There was no account, how many people were killed affected by malaria, Kalazar etc! Physical torture and raped in the European tea garden of North Bengal was not rare though it was not regularize. In the Bengali tea garden physical torture, rape, conversion etc would not happen, though oppression was the same.”⁴⁷

There was no legal time – table for working of the labourer. Sunder wrote, “In the cold weather and rains plucking work was done from 7 am till about 6 pm with two hours leave.”⁴⁸

The wage of the labourer was not satisfactory. Though Sunder pointed out that the wages of an ordinary labourer in the Duars is not more than 4 annas a day or Rs 7 – 8 a month, the tea – garden coolies earn double this. In fact their earnings are so great that they often show a spirit of independence and insubordination which tries patience and good will of the managers of gardens very considerably.⁴⁹ But it was not the real picture of the labourers in the tea – garden. There are so many evidences of the oppressions of the labours in the district and else where in India which proves that the labourers in any where in the colonial period were not in comfortable condition. In the early 1890’s on the tea – gardens the

average wage rates were Rs. 6 a month for men, Rs. 4.8 to Rs. 5 for women and Rs. 2.8 to Rs. 3 for children.” Official report shows that in the years between 1893 and 1908 there was a 66 percent rise in the price of rice, the staple food of the tea – garden labourers and more than that of wheat, but the wage rates remained unchanged.⁵⁰

Public health and education of the labourer were not satisfactory. At the first stage there were no responsibility of the planters about the health and education of the labourer. It was in 1912 the Duars labour Act was passed but it was concerned with government inspection only in the matters of sanitation and public health. The enactment was prompted by the high incidence of sickness resulting in absenteeism and heavy death toll among the workers due to various diseases, particularly malaria and black water fever. The sahibs too often felt prey to these scourges and actually felt the need for some measures to control these.⁵¹ Even after the independence the laborers had not been provided modern facility of the treatment. In most of the diseases were concerned, they had to depend on the local process of treatment by ojha or kabiraj, apart from this they had to depend on charlatan or quack, as because there were no M.B.B.S or qualified Doctors, as a result, the patients had to expire for the wrong treatment. Most of the gardens in the Duars had dispensaries and common medicines for treatment of their labourer.

Number of deaths from principal diseases in the tea – gardens during 1939 – 44 as follows⁵².

Year	Total population	Fever	Dysentery and Diarrhoea.....	Cholera	Phthisis	Chest complain	Kala zar	Black water Fever
1938-	2,85,789	1326	1175	20	477	1061	9	8

39								
1939-40	2,90.174	1228	1024	41	490	802	9	8
1940-41	2,91.253	1314	950	5	541	736	10	9
1941-42	2,85.877	1142	1065	9	528	648	20	5
1942-43	2,89.239	1244	1104	8	517	765	48	8
1943-44	2,75.398	1256	1181	144	543	241	28	11

Though some schools were established in the garden area for the education of the children of labourers at the initial stage, but it was not satisfactory as because they were not conscious about the education other than these steps were not taken actively or cordially to educate the children of the labourers. The statistics of school in the Duars are given below:-⁵³

Year	Number of School	Number of pupils	Average daily attendance
1941	150	6,732	4,218
1942	146	6,723	4,569
1943	149	5,130	3,423

Beside these, the labourers were oppressed and cheated by the traders and shopkeepers. There were many Hats in the Duars which held in one or two days in a week near the garden where no rules and regulations were practically, no price control policy, as a result the labourers were cheated by purchasing essential things by double or re – double rate than the original rate. They were also victimized by the political leaders. The local leaders among them took the role of agent for the oppression of the labourers, rather the emancipator of them. In spite of all these intensive life the

labourers enjoy themselves with their folk songs, dances after taking Haria (local wine) and Chulai and observed different festivals forgetting the intensive life of sorrow and pain. Paritosh Dutta the leader of tea workers Association writes,

“Really the tea labourers perform all the dances songs and music of their own community. The rytham of this music send them in the world of imagination. The tune of oppression and suppression make a new wave – the folk artists involving with their regular struggle become the artists of the masses.”⁵⁴

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Chapter- 3

Land Devolution: Socio economic and Demographic Changes.

In the preceding chapters it is discussed about the demographic structure and the socio - economic condition of the district in the pre-colonial period. It is found that before the coming of the British, this area was ruled by the Koch Kings and the Bhutias subsequently. In this area population were meagre, particularly in the part of the Duars, only the people of some tribes namely Mech, Toto, Garo, Rabha and Drucpa lived there in the intolerable situation and distress climate. But after occupation of this area by the British in 1865 by the treaty of Sinchula after the 2nd Anglo Bhutanese war situation was going to be changed gradually. For the economic interest British Indian Govrnmnt utilized this area introducing their economic policy in the field of agriculture, land revenue, trade and commerce as a result of which demographic pattern and socio-economic condition of this area changed rapidly.

Immigration and Emigration: A New Demographic Structure of the Duars 1870-1900.

As a consequence of the Second Anglo-Bhutan War in 1865, the British Government occupied the Duars and they cast their commercial eyes on the area because it was full of natural resources, huge number of forests full of valuable timbers, animals; and the soil was favourable for cultivation of different crops. At first, they thought to collect the information about the geographical position at micro level so that they could take initiative for economic reforms and for that Mr.Rennel was assigned to make a geographical map on this area. B.C. Basu, Esq. The Assistant to the Director of the Dept. of Land and Land

Records and Agriculture, Bengal reported to the Director of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal –

The approaching settlement of the Western Dooars is likely to have prejudicial effect on the extension of cultivation, The ryots, many of whom have only lately immigrated into the subdivision, can not have any great attachment for the villages in which they live so that the least distance may frighten them away. Besides, there is so much waste land available for cultivation and so little is the labourer with which it may be brought under the plough that may be induced to leave their present holdings and take fresh leases of waste land. They are likely to gain thereby rather than lose. Vergin soil will no doubt yield more plentifully than old land.¹ Mr. Basu pointed out more assuredly to extend cultivation for the economic benefit if they initiate some measures –

He reported-

“In connection with the subject of extension of cultivation a few words may be said regarding village sanitation. The Western Dooars enjoys the reputation of possessing a most insalubrious climate. Fever is rife in most parts of the year and epidemics are of frequent occurrencesThe present unhealthy condition of the Dooars is not unlikely to keep away many people who would otherwise like to immigrate into the estate. This consideration alone should be sufficiently strong to induce Government to pay more regard this it has hitherto done to question of sanitation. The present land revenue of the estate is about three lakhs of rupees and Govt. were only to allot one percent of the income for miscellaneous improvements, a great deal could be done to improve the condition of the tenentry”² On the basis of the information and necessity at micro level they started survey and settlement works gradually which is discussed in preceding chapters wherein it is found that the first settlement took effect from April, 1871 by W.O.A. Backet, The 2nd settlement generally took effect from the 1st April, 1880 by Ulick

Brown, The 3rd settlement was started from 1889 and ended in 1895 by D.H.E.Sunder and the 4th settlement was completed by J.A. Milligan during 1906-1916. As a result of these settlements the revenue in the Duars increased rapidly. Before the settlement the amount of annual tax was approximately Rs. 39526.00, but after the first settlement the land revenue was raised to Rs. 88,618.00, after the 2nd settlement to Rs.1,51,862.00, after the 3rd settlement it was Rs.3,74,901.00 and after 4th settlement it was Rs. 6,77,000.00 .³

B.C. Basu Esq Assistant to the Director of the Dept. of Land Records and Agriculture reported –

“The natural conditions of the Western Dooars are highly in favourable to immigration. There is an abundance of good alluvias land which can be very easily brought under the plough. The settler has not to wait long for the return of his outlay, which need not be great . A pair of bullocks costing about Rs 16 and a set of implements for Rs 2 or Rs 3 are all the stock that the needs invest in commencing cultivation . The neighbouring state Coochbehar and the district of Rangpur are pretty densely populated, so that with proper encouragement the surplus of population will naturally flow into the Western Dooars,⁴

As a part of their agrarian reforms the Britishers divided the lands into three categories in the Duars according to the quality and necessity of the land – namely (1) Lands for agricultural purposes, (2) Lands for Tea - Cultivation and (3) Lands for reserve forest. In the field of agriculture, they introduced jodari system in a new forms differing from other parts of North Bengal. After each settlement a large number of jotes were created and these were given to the jotdars by agreement or lease. Most of the jotdars did not cultivate the land directly, therefore, further devolution of land was necessary. On the basis of an agreement of revenue named ‘Pattani’ to the intermediaries on middle ranking tenure holder called Chukanidars, Dar-chukanidars, Tasya – chukanidars, Dar-darchukanidars. Moreover, there were

bargadars or sharecroppers who had no right on land. They cultivated the land of the jotdars as well as of the intermediary tenure holders. In general, the land holders under whom the bargadars cultivated the land, were called 'giri' and got 50% share of the crops.

At the first stage, as there was no shortage of land in the Duars, the jotdars, after getting lands from the Govt. by agreement or lease, collected cultivators from outside the Duars and gave many facilities including Bhuta (a kind of loan) to cultivate and dwell in the land.⁵ In the neighbouring areas of the Duars it was a propaganda among the peasants and merchant class as well, that the lands were available easily in the Duars and there was no burden or restriction for any kind of tax or revenue at the first stage, Grunning wrote, "It has always assumed in the Duars that every field under cultivation has been reclaimed at the tenants expense from the original jungle and, after the Bhutan War, it was found that the tenants held at a mere jungle rent. This was allowed to continue without change for six years, when the first settlement of the Western Duars was made, and since then the rents have been gradually enhanced at successive settlements as the country has been reclaimed and land has increased in value."⁶

B.C. Basu, Esq, Assistant to Dept. of Land Records and Agriculture reported –

For the first two years, the land pays no rent, for the next two at 3annas per acre; for the 5th and 6th years at 6-annas per acre; and for the seventh and eighth years at 8annas per acre. At the end of the 8th year the land is measured again; the portion which has been reclaimed is then assessed at the Pergunnah rates, which are Re. 1-8 for up land and Re.1-4 for low land and the unclaimed position is made to pay at 3 annas per acre. The settlement is made for 30 years. The terms appear to be very fair and are readily acquired in by ryots.⁷

Number of population in the Western Duars increasing gradually.⁸

Year	Population	Percentage of increasing
1872	90668	-
1881	1,82,687	101.49%
1891	2,96,348	62.21%
1901	4,10,606	38.55%
1911	5,19,372	26.49%
1921	5,58,971	7.62%
1931	6,61,068	18.26%

So for easily land availability in the district, particularly in the Waste land areas, people of different castes and communities were immigrated from neighboring Coochbehar, Rangpur, Dinajpur Behar and Nepal as a result of which population had been increasing tremendously. The following table shows the number of population and its variations (next page)

Population of Jalpaiguri with variations, 1872-1951 ⁹

	1872	1881	Variations 1872-1881	1891	Variations 1881-1891	1901	Variations 1891-1901	1911	Variations 1901-1911	1921	Variations 1911-1921
Jalpaiguri District	201,659	316,575	+114,916	433,334	+116,759	544,906	+111,572	661,282	+116,376	694,056	+32,774
Sader Subdivision	177,185	271,914	+94,729	360,887	+88,973	425,553,	+64,666	458,581	+33,028,	450,825	-7,756
Alipurduar Subdivision	24,474	44,661	+20,187,	72,447	+27,786	119,353	+46,906	202,701	+83,348,	243,231	+40,530

Population of Jalpaiguri with variations, 1872-1951

	1931	Variations 1921-1931	1941	Variation 1931-1941	1951	Variation 1941-1951
Jalpaiguri District	739,160	+45,104	845,702	+106,542	914,538	+68, 836
Sader Subdivision	466,087	+15,262	524,884	+58,797	546,142	+21,258
Alipurduar Subdivision	273,073	+29,842	320,812	+47,745	368,396	+47,578

Sources: - Census 1951, West Bengal District Hand Books- Jalpaiguri, A Mitra, I.C.S, Calcutta, P, Liv

For increasing population in the district, on the other hand for the increasing of land revenue one after each settlement (which was shown previous chapter), the relation between cultivators and the 'giri' namely jotdars, intermediaries and merchant classes become bitter day by day. Ranjit Dasgupta writes, ".....the adhiars (share croppers) were always treated by the jotdars as socially inferior in status, even when the two belonged to the same socio-religious group¹⁰ Apart from this, for the immigration of different types and classes of people, land crisis was seen as the land of the district turned into a commercial market. Merchants, money lenders, Mahajans, pleaders etc. were interested to get land from the Govt. by agreement. After taking land, they lived in the town and gave the land to the intermediaries who had no direct relation with the cultivators and no experience of cultivation. There were absentee jotdars who got the land only for extra income as a result of which original land holders lost their lands, particularly the small jotdars. There were also local jotdars of different communities and tribes who took land and became big jotdars. Ranjit Dasgupta writes, "Out of 5,542 transfers which came to the notice of the settlement officer, the purchaser in 3,444 were jotdars already in possession of other jotes, in 637 cases he was Mahajan, in 83 cases a pleader, in 100 cases a tea garden or its representatives, while in 12, 98 cases, the purchaser was a Chukanidar and presumably a resident cultivator. In 1912 it was ascertained that out of 9,910 maljotes as many as 3,996 were held by non-resident jotdars.¹¹

The following table shows the jotes were passing into the hands of outsiders which was made in 1905 for the Falakata tahsil-¹²

Class of people	Number of Jotes	Area in acres
Rajbansi	1,638	58665.23
Muhamadan	1,092	40739.47
Mech	381	7599.52
Jaldha	19	577.16
Garo	17	302.28
Santhal	2	24.52
Oraon	263	6,182.99
Nepali	140	4,990.49
Marwari	115	6,551.13
Up-country men	272	14,097.20
Kabuli	14	381.41
Asamese	18	1,132.65
European	7	1,036.19
All others	136	5,074.22
	4,114	1,73,523.46

From the above table it is found that about 15 percent of the settled area in this tahsil was in the hands of Marwaris, up-country men, Kabulis and "other persons" many of whom are Bengali Babus. Here another table is given which shows the different castes to which the jotdars of the Duars belong, the number of jotes and area of land and revenue paid by them after the Sunder's settlement (1889-95):-¹³

Caste	Number of Jotes	Area		Revenue paid in Rupees
		Acres	Dec	
Paharia	147	6,064	06	6,815
Chatri	67	2,502	13	3,156
Oraon	116	2,899	99	3,225
European	57	3,940	00	4,361

Mech	764	20,593	64	18,523
Kapali	8	2,09	10	367
Muhammadans	2,692	121,583	20	1,11,967
Shaha	76	3,533	42	4,217
Tanti	24	7,94	09	816
Rajbanshi	5,264	130,910	52	1,83,089
Kyasth	192	3,503	17	7,813
Bhutia	2	16	66	39
Brahman	201	11,316	37	9,191
Gope	47	3074	53	2,594
Kyan	99	12,612	87	11,979
Napit(Barbar)	34	1090	03	2,212
Hari	6	143	27	142
Banik	13	314	55	353
Mahji	5	112	98	72
Bairagi	13	270	31	341
Teli	3	175	33	216
Garro	33	938	46	694
Byadh	1	116	12	132
Mali	2	56	13	61
Baidya	2	69	01	85
Kumar	6	379	40	471
Jugi	11	456	43	556
Dobasiya	54	901	19	764
Jalda	2	31	36	20
Sutar (carpenter)	14	239	54	241
Kamar	4	76	74	61
Kalwar	1	26	53	21
Nepalise	3	69	60	67
Munda	4	111	58	87
Sanyasi	2	43	43	32
Total-	9,971	3,34,995	91	3,74,901

From the above table it is seen that the different types of people immigrated into the district, Jalpaiguri and they settled after having land, even the tea-garden labourers immigrated from Chhotanagpur and Santalpargana, out of working in the tea garden used to have land and cultivated. Grunning writes, "The increase of population is the best example of the prosperity of the Western Duars; between 1891 and 1901. The increase amounted to 38.5 percent. The rise of the tea industry has led to introduction of numbers of coolies from Chhotanagpur, the Santal Pargana and Nepal of whom, after working for some years on the tea gardens, take up land and settle in the district"¹⁴

As result of increasing population a business of land selling and purchasing started in the district. The business class, particularly the Marwaries and some servicemen, Doctors, pleaders purchased lands and gave it to the intermediaries or sharecroppers to be financially benefited. The following table shows the average sale of land per annum in each tahsil of the Duars during twelve years, from 1883 to 1894.¹⁵

Name of Tahsil	Number of Sales	Area of Land sold in acres	Assessment Rs.	Price Rs.	Price per acre Rs.	Number of years Purchase of assessment
Maynaguri	305.5	4,549	4,438	58450	12.8	13.1
Falakata	70	1,647	1442	9,225	5.6	6.8
Alipur	10.9	251	183	545	2.1	2.9
Bhalka	4	93	71	274	2.9	3.8
Ambari Falakata	8	236	209	1047	4.4	5.0

Here it is to be noted that as a result of immigration, the population of different castes and classes had been increasing gradually in the district, but the population of different tribes

namely Meches, Totoes, Garos, etc. Who were indigenous and lived independently, decreasing gradually. Statistics is given below:-

The following table shows the population of Mech community decreased gradually.¹⁶

Years	Population
1891	21,608
1901	22,350
1911	19,893
1921	10,777
1931	9,510
1941	6,886
1951	10,507
1961	13,178

The following table shows the variations of the Totos in the district-¹⁷

Year	Population
1901 (Census)	171
1910 (Mr. Ainslie, Subdivisional officer)	200
1911 (Milligan)	235
1921 (Census)	271
1931 (B. Mukherjee)	263
1931 (Census)	334

Separate colonies were established for the protection of the Mech, Garo, and Santals. Mr. Sunder settled 766 jotes covering 20,593.66 acres with Meches, but these were only a portion of the total community. Milligan writes, "A block of land approximating

20,000 acres, known as Satali, was at last settlement set aside as a reserve for Meches and Garos. Unfortunately the leases granted allowed the right of transfer and sub- infeudation to all and sundry, so outsiders soon began to creep in, for the land is very fertile in Satali.”¹⁸

Like the Meches and the Totos, the people of Garo community once lived in the Duars, left the place. Why the people left the place? It is assumed that due to identity crisis, they left the place and moved towards east. Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal writes, “Analysis figures of the census report it appears that there was a large exodus of the Mech from Bengal towards Assam and then further eastwards.”¹⁹ As a result of immigration of the outsiders in the colony, the Meches and Garos began to leave the place. Here also, Milligan writes, “Soon after this the Mech exodus from the Duars began, and in 1915, I was informed that practically every Mech had moved over into Assam. I have said little of the Garos, but that is because they never patronized the colony to any extent. A number of that tribe still remain in the district in forest villages, but none in the colony.”²⁰

Condition of Peasants, Adhiars (sharecroppers), Agricultural Labourers and Tribal People

In the previous chapter, it is discussed about the land revenue systems in different phases in the district and it is followed that a new system in the land had been introduced by the Britishers as a result of which a dramatic change took place and a critical situation in the society of the district was seen unlike the society in the pre-colonial period.

In the pre-colonial period, the area of the district particularly the area of the Duars was full of jungles, most of the area was without people because of the intolerable condition and the hard diseases namely Malaria, Kalaazar etc, only the people of some tribes namely Mech, Garo, Toto, Rava, Drucpa lived there. Some tribes of Bhutanese lived there but before coming of rainy season, they left the place to save them. Surgeon Rennie in his book "Bhutan and the story of Dooars War" wrote, "The inhabitants chiefly consist of a tribe called the Mechis who appears to be the only people so constituted as to be capable of permanently enduring the climate."²¹

The life of these tribes were very simple, kept themselves out of modern civilization and complexity. They had their own customs, laws and culture by which they were governed. Every tribe had separate steps or gotras. Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal writes, "Although the Bodos including the Meches become mixed with other people they have retained their distinctive steps or gotras."²²

Immediately, after the occupation of the Duars, the local commissioner J.C. Haughton drew up a list of the landlords in the Duars in such a way - the land in the Western area was held in the following manner - Goomah, Raphoo and Bhalka were under small zamindar or teshildars (Petty Revenue Collectors) wholly under the Bhutia rules, Buxa was under a Bhutia officer (Dooar

Deo), the Northern parts of the Dooars were under Mech Sardars and the plain of Mainaguri was divided among the zamindars - the family of Hargovinda Katham, one Khurgodher Karji, and the Raikot of Jalpaiguri. There was no mention of jotdars as a class having permanent, heritable and alienable rights on land in any parts of the Dooars at this stage.²³

In the northern part of the Duars, the Meches and the Garos lived there habituated with shifting cultivation. They settled in a place few years, cultivated in the land in their own way, after few years they shifted into another place and settled there and their life was cycling in such a way.²⁴ In the Southern part of the district there were settled- cultivators most of whom were Rajbanshi community.

In the pre-colonial period, particularly in reign of Bhutias, there were two parallel hierarchies of authorities in the Duars who depended on land, collected Revenue and sent to the Bhutan Raj. Dr. S. Roy shows that the following were the main characteristics of the pre-colonial system : a) the presence of two separate but overlapping hierarchies, the first consisting of Bhutanese officials and the second of the local agrarian society; b) existence of a degree of power struggle at two levels, between the central authority of the Bhutia state and its local officers on the one hand and on the other, between the latter officers and the local potentates of the Duars; and c) the attempt of the Bhutia authorities to override the powers of the local officers and leading elements in order to encourage cultivation and maximize tribute.²⁵

In the areas of Baikunthapur Pargana and the Chaklas of Boda, Patgram and Purbabhag permanent settlement was introduced since 1793. There were two large and small zamindari estates in this portion. Revenue paid by them were fixed except for cess and other levies imposed on them. Zamindars enjoyed heritable rights in the land and parcel out land for rent. The zamindars would give their estates to jotdars on agreement. The

jotdars were intermediaries between Zamindars and cultivators. Jotdars like Talukdars elsewhere in Bengal were first degree pattanidars who could give their land to the Chukanidars to get revenue, Chukanidars also sometimes give their land to Dar-dar-chukanidars to obtain revenue.

After possession of the Duars in 1865 by the treaty of Sinchula after 2nd Anglo-Bhutanese war, the British Government were interested to use this area for commercial benefit and they started survey and settlement works. As a result of these settlements the revenue in the district increased gradually which was discussed in previous chapter. As it was followed by the British that land of the Western Duars, particularly in the northern part of the Duars was suitable for tea cultivation, they invited the planters to initiate tea-cultivation. Ranjit Dasgupta wrote, "The introduction and growth of tea plantation enterprise in the district as in Assam and elsewhere in India took place with the active assistance of the colonial state and further were not the products of operation of indigenous economic forces but of exogenous development and requirements of the imperial order"²⁶

As the local people except some Nepalese, were less interested to work in the tea-garden as a labourer, the planters had to depend on the labourers imported from Chhotanagpur and Santal Pargana. Gunning writes, "A few gardens which are practically in the hills, still work almost entirely with Nepali Labour, but as a whole, the Duars gardens are dependent on labour from a distance, the chief recruiting grounds being Chhotanagpur and Santal Parganas. The system of working is through sardars."²⁷ In this way labourers from Chhotanagpur and Santal Pargana namely Munda, Santals and Oraons were immigrated in the district and the condition of the labourers in the gardens was like slave. According to the 1901 census report there were 1,88,223 immigrants in the district as a whole. The bulk of them were enumerated in the Duars and about half of the immigrants were tea-garden collies from Chhotanagpur and Santal Parganas. The migration statement showed that 80436

immigrants were from Ranchi district and 10562 from Santal Parganas.²⁸

There is a debate about the classes of tenants in the district. It is true that there was no uniform system or law in the whole areas of the district either in the pre-colonial or colonial period which is discussed in the previous chapter. In the colonial period, British Government introduced new system particularly in the Duars declaring waste land, but in the Duars as well the system and laws regarding land was changed in several times by the Britishers . Mr. Tweedie, first Dy. Commissioner of Jalpaiguri district, tried to show three categories of tenants in the Duars namely- 1) Jotdar, 2) Chukanidar and (3) Agricultural labourer. (T. Roy Chowdhury). But Nolan, the Commissioner of Rajshahi Division denied the classification of Tweedy. According to him there were two classes of tenants namely- (1) Jotdar and (2) Sharecroppers or adhiars.²⁹ He opined that “Beneath the jotdar, Mr. Tweedie found three classes - Chukanidars, who hold for a fixed term, being more than one year,” raiyots, described as a tenants by the year at a money rent, and projas, or tenants - at-will, receiving from the jotdar the instruments of cultivation and giving to him half the produce. It is a common mistake into which one revenue officer falls after another, to assume that these four classes are always found one above the other on the some land, The last being the actual cultivator, and the other three living on his labours.³⁰ J. F. Grunning in his Gazetteer showed that under the Bhutias, there were really only two sorts of cultivators - the Jotdars, found every where in a privileged position directly under Government, and in some places the Chukanidars, tenants of the Jotdars for a term, or years by years:

There were also farm labourers, landless class, working for hire on a peculiar system.³¹ He also showed that “since Mr. Tweedie’s time the most important changes which have been made are that jots are liable to sale.....the position of the Chukanidars has been raised and they now have to occupy rights while their rents can not be enhanced during the period of

settlement. There are very few dar-chukanidars and these are not recognized by Government.”³²

D.H.E. Sunder, Settlement Officer showed in his “Survey and Settlement of the Western Duars about the tenure in such a way that (a) the Government Revenue is collected from jotdars. A Jotdar is a person who holds lands directly under Government. His holding is called a jote.³³ (b) the tenant immediately below the jotdar is the chukanidar or mulandar. The rent payable by him has been fixed for the term of their settlement. His title to his holding is heritable and transferable (c) The tenant immediately after the chukanidar was dar-chukanidar. He has no right. The Govt. of Bengal, Revenue Department, wrote about these classes of tenants in letter no. 478T-R, dated 28th September 1891, as follows - “The lieutenant Governor approves your proposal that the newly created under-tenure of dar-chukani and dar-a-dar-chukani in the Duars estate should be absolutely ignored, in as much as these tenures have been made contrary to the express orders of Government.” (d) At the bottom of the tenants was adhiar (sharecropper). This tenant had no rights. He paid rent in kind, namely half of all crops he may grow on land which was allowed to him.³⁴

After completion of the third settlement by Sunder, Govt. started to keep records of land and land revenue and to maintain land revenue administration properly. Rules for the maintenance of the records of Western Duars from 1st April, 1895.

In each of the tahshil, to be called the jotdar’s Register of Mutation shall be kept up in bound volumes showing on one side the names of the jotdars with whom settlement has been made and their interests of their chukanidars and on the other side the mutation of names and interests effected from time to time. The form to be printed on the left hand side will be as follows (Figures have been entered by way of example).³⁵

		Area of jotes.
Numbers of jote: 25		Cultivated and homestead: 40
Khasra numbers: 100		Not cultivated <u>10</u>
Revenue payable to Govt.: 112		Total <u>50</u>

Numbers of jotdars	Name of jotdars	Shares	Name of permanent chukanidars	Area leased to chukanidars		Rent payable by chukanidars		
				Khasra numbers	Acres	Rs	A	P
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
						Rs	A	P
1	AB	16 annas	Y.Z	43 to 47 and 64	5	15	0	0
2	CD		W.X	81 to 89	5	17	0	0
3	EF							
	or							
	AB	8 annas	W.X	81 to 89	5	17	0	0
	CD	4 annas						
	EF	4 annas						
	or							
	AB	10 annas						
	CD	10 annas	YZ	43 to 47 and 64	5	15	0	0
	EF	30 annas	WX	81 to 89	5	17	0	0

According to Milligan, survey and settlement officer, the arable lands in the Western Duars and in the permanently settled portions of the district an apparently uniform and homogeneous system of land - holding was found in existence. He wrote, "If we except a few unimportant patni taluks, uppen chowkis and others found in the latter area, it can be said that throughout the district there are three classes of tenants, and three only, namely jotdars, chukanidars or mulandars with various derivative sub-grades differing only in degree and adhiars or projas.³⁶

According to the report of the sub divisional officer given at the time of Tebhaga movement in Jalpaiguri “ Land Lords locally known as jotdars always taking half of the share of the produce and probably this is only the bargadars are here known as adhiars that receivers of half shares. But there is absolutely no uniformity of customs or practice regarding supply of plough, cattle seeds manure and other agricultural requirements. These things vary almost in every individual case according to time and circumstances and it will be difficult rather impossible to explain the whole system here. With the questions of supply of plough, cattle etc. are involved the questions of supply of food staff and other requirements of the adhiars by the jotdars during difficult days of the former the rate of interest on the paddy advanced by the jotdars to their adhiars nature of land give to the adhiars etc.³⁷

As there were different types of jotdars in the district, there were also different types of adhiars. A big jotdar would remain in tention to have adhiars in his own land and hold them for cultivation. There being so much surplus lands in the subdivision that there was always some rivalry amongst the jotdars to find out adhiars and keep their contact. In such cases jotdars had to bear the entire burden of their adhiars both for cultivation as well as for their maintainance . In such cases jotdars apparently would give half of the produce to the adhiars but indirectly takes back almost the entire on accounting of advances, interest etc. There were another type of adhiars who had land of their own and had their plough and cattle. Their own land being not sufficient for their ploughs they took a few bighas of land from other neighbouring jotdars. Such adhiars were not much dependent upon their jotdars and did not take plough, cattle or advance paddy. They too paid half the share of the produce.

There were landless adhiars who cultivate others land apparently for the benefit of the jotdars. These classes of adhiars were more laborious for all practical purposes.

Condition of the Jotdars

It is debatable matter to discuss the condition, activities and role of the jotdars in the district, however the jotdars played a significant role in the agrarian system in the district unlike other parts of Bengal like zamindar, jotdar or talukdar. In the permanent settled portion of the district jotdars were in the position immediately after zamindars, on the other hand, in the Duars jotdars used to have land from the Government directly on agreement or lease. Either in the part of permanent settled portion, or in the part of the Duars after having lands they would cultivate lands directly by themselves or they would give lands to the intermediaries namely chukanidars or Mulandars, other than these jotdars would cultivate land by adhiars or share croppers for 50% share of the crops. Milligan writes, "Local custom would define a jotdar as one holding land immediately under a proprietor, his rent being liable to enhancement, having originally acquired a right either to cultivate it himself or to sublet it to others, his title therein being permanent and heritable but not transferable without the consent of the proprietor obtained by payment of a salami."³⁸ Mr. Backet, the first settlement officer wrote about the jotdars in the Duars "The jotdars is a man who holds in severally, joint or in common, a piece of land for which he pays revenue directly to government through its agents, the tashildars, and as long as he pays his revenue to the state his right to his jote can not in any way be disturbed. He has a transferable and saleable right in the land but his rent is liable to be enhanced by Government whenever a new settlement is made."³⁹

It is to be noted that the jotdars in the Duars were not proprietors of land, in several times they demanded to the Government to grant them the right of portion and separate accounts ascertained that jots were estates and that they should have the rights of land-holders or proprietors in this respect. But this claim had always denied and refused by the Government. Mr. Lowis in 1890 showed the real position of jotdars in such a way,

In one sense the jotdars were holders of land, but they were not land holders as contemplated in the butwara law. A jote in the Duars is indivisible; there may be sharers within it who hold separate lands and persons may have themselves entered in the toujee as having a certain interest in the jote, but such interest is never recognized as entitling the sharer to be entered in the taujee as in possession of specific plots of land, nor can a share-holder claim, like the owner of a permanently-settled estate, the jote had always been considered one and indivisible, and the Government had always refused to accord official sanction to the division of land within the jote, or to recognize officially in any way the partition of jotes into specific portions.

In the case of mal jots (jots which were in existence at the time of the 2nd settlement, the lease gives the jotdar a heritable right and permits him to transfer the whole or any share in his jots, but in the case of waste land, where a preliminary lease for a term of five years is granted, the jotdar is bound to reside on or near his jot and to bring half the area of it under cultivation and he can transfer his entire holding but not a portion of it unless, the Deputy Commissioner permits him to transfer a portion.⁴⁰

After completion of the 3rd settlement every jote of the jotdars had to be recorded in the register called jotdar's register of mutation ordinary mutation should be recorded as follows:-

Dakhil kharij effected in favour of M.N (heir or purchaser) in lieu of AB (Deceased or seller) by order of settlement officer or Deputy Commissioner, dated 16th July 1895". If the transfer of a portion of a jote or chukani holding only, the area and khasra numbers of the portion transferred must be recorded.

Application for mutation of names may be filled the tahshildar, the stamp fee being 8 annas for inheritance and 1 rupee for sale or mortgage. A register shall be kept up in each tahshil.

If no dispute arises, the tahshildar will pass the order for transfer. If any dispute arises; the tahshildar will take evidence and decide the dispute subject to revision by, or appeal to the Deputy Commissioner. ⁴¹

The jotdars in the district, Jalpaiguri were in economically prosperous. They had huge lands, no want of food, and wealth. Most of the jotdars could not cultivate land by themselves. They cultivated land by their chukanidars, somewhere cultivated land by adhiars or projas. Prosanya Kumar Roy, S/o Late Dino Nath Roy of Uttar Majher dabri, 86 years old, former jotdar expressed his view, "My father Dino Nath Roy obtained land from British Govt. by pattan. We had 120 hal lands of which 8 hal lands was cultivated directly by agriculturer- laboures and rest of the lands would be cultivated by chukanidars or Raiyots. Raiyots cultivated lands and would give us revenue and we used to give revenue to the Government, such raiyots were Gomasta Barman, Kshima Barman, Balamant Barman, Kalikanta Roy etc. ⁴² The tahshildar played a significant role to collect revenue from jotdars and supervise all the matters relating to cultivation. W. Maude, Esq. under secretary to the Govt. of Bengal Revenue Department wrote to Commissioner of Bengal, "It was brought to my notice that tahshildars very rarely leave head-quarters and know very little of their tahshil, and that the reason is that they can not get about in this country without an elephant. The Deputy Commissioner will be instructed to supply them with an elephant, whenever he can do so , either from the establishment already allowed to the district or else, if necessary I shall be willing to allow one to be attached to each tahshil in addition to that establishment. But the tahshildar if he gets this help , must really be compelled to go about, inspect and know his tahshil thoroughly, look after the hats and roads and the Government khas land & Co. see to the keeping up of the settelement records. I shall touch again on this subject in my inspection note on the settelement. ⁴³ Later on, the more responsibilities were imposed on the tahshildars. It is found in the Government record, "Each tahshildar should, with the help of his assistant or peshkar, inspect

20 percent of the jotes every year and enquire whether any unrecorded mutation has taken place, thus going round his whole in 5 years. The Settlement officer should also inspect as many as he can of the whole number, some in each of the three tahshil. When the tahshildar or settlement officer, on inspection or otherwise, learn that a mutation has not been reported, they shall report the fact to the Deputy Commissioner, who shall impose a moderate fine in lieu of cancelling the lease.⁴⁴

Another former jotdar, Khagendra Nath Das, S/o Late Nara Nath Das (kachua Dhani), 77 years old expressed his opinion, "We had no adhiars, land was cultivated by chukanidars, who obtained lands by pattan gave us revenue, tax for water, tax for road, tax for education and we used to give revenue to the Government. If the chukanidars were unable to pay the revenue in scheduled time, their land would have been seized and gave it another chukanidars by pattan."⁴⁵ But the system of cultivation was separate in Mahakalguri gram panchayet of Alipurduar Sub division. In most of the cases, there was no chukani system, lands were cultivated by adhiars or projas, they cultivated lands and used to give 50% share of crops. Adhiars were given bhuta at the time of cultivation for their food and expenditure.⁴⁶

It is found from the field survey that jotdars were very happy from all aspects. No critical situation would create among the jotdars, intermediaries and adhiars or projas, their hospitality were heartiest, any time guest were always welcome. At the time of festivals or any occasion anybody could come and take their hospitality, no want of food. The amount of revenue was not heavy or burdensome.

Sri. Dharani Kanta Das, a son of jotdar family told, "Jotdars were not oppressors like the jotdars or zamindars of South Bengal or East Bengal, the relation between jotdars and adhiars were not bitter."⁴⁷

Jotdars were co-operative in the social work as well; they always helped adhiars or projas and chukanidars. Smt. Binapani Karji, w/o Late Harendra Bhushan Karji, 83 years old (a wife of former jotdar family) told, "Various types of festivals were held through the year in the house. House was filled up with various types of people and relatives. Buffalo was sacrificed to the God or Goddess. 5-6 hal of land was given to the priest. We had 39 acre of Debottar land. the relation with Raiyot or projas was good. The people were very simple. Many people would come at the time of festivals or worships, they stayed and took meal. There was no account for this purpose. Even at the time of marriage ceremony sugar was poured in the pond for drinking the elephants. Grand father would sit down with moneybag and helped everybody." ⁴⁸

Ramesh Chandra Suba, a former jotdar of Hasimara, Jalpaiguri district opined, "During the period of Bhutanese rule, we had the total areas of Joy Gaon, Dalsing Para. We had near about 6000 to 7000 hal lands. After coming of Britishers they occupied maximum lands. We had only 20-25 hal lands during the reign of Britishers. Lands were cultivated partly by the chukanidars give lease or pattan and partly by the adhiars or share croppers. The relation between jotdars and adhiars was cooperative. Adhiars were assisted in different ways at the time of their requirements, sometimes they had been given loan without any interest, sometimes it would be without any return." ⁴⁹

One former adhiars named Sri Bhado Adhikary, 90 years old of Chapani, Alipurduar Sub-division told, "Dolchand Das, a prominent jotdar was my brother-in-law. Amongst his 66 hal adhiars only I myself is alive. He could not go on without me. In every matter he called me. He loved me. He helped me in any kind of problem. At the time of crisis he opened up his gola of paddy(store house of paddy) and allowed to take at per requirement. The relation between giri and adhiars never became bitter at that time. After cutting and threshing, paddy was divided. Feast was going on with meat, dai and chira in the house of jotdar. We the adhiars would give sweets to the jotdar." ⁵⁰

It is found in the Government Report about the relation of jotdars and adhiars in the district, Jalpaiguri, "The relation between the landlords (jotdars) and the bargadars (sharecroppers) in this sub-division has been cordial so far,It has been the custom of the jotdars in this subdivision to help the bargadars at the time of their difficulty by lending paddy at the rate of 50% interest recoverable at the time of next harvest.⁵¹ Sri Dharani Kanta Das, a son of the Jotdar family of Chapani, Alipurduar Sub-division told, "The amount of revenue was minimum. There was no want of anything or crisis of the jotdars. The relation between jotdars and adhiars was Co-operative and the adhiars were assisted in different ways." ⁵²

From the above discussions and various sources it is to be noted that the jotdars in the district of Jalpaiguri, particularly in the Duars were not oppressors like the zamindars, jotdars or talukdars in East Bengal and South Bengal and Dinajpur or Rangpur district of North Bengal. There were many jotdars who were involved in social works and would try to maintain good relation with adhiars or projas. Upendra Nath Barman wrote in his book, "There were huge amount of milk, curd and ghee, even in the poorest family there were 2/1 cows. Children, young men, old men everybody would eat milk, curd, and became healthy. there were no want of fishes, huge number of small fishes including singi, magur, shol, Bowal etc were available. No people even the poor or riches had to purchase fishes for their diet." ⁵³

Hem Bahadur Chhetri, a former jotdar of Bara Chakir Bash told, "Jotdars would give loan to the adhiars whenever it necessary. The loan would have been recovered at the time of distribution of crops from their own share. If the amount of recovery would be heavy, the adhiars again obtained 10-15 mound paddy as a loan. Jotdars always helped their adhiars whole over the years. Adhiars obtained different kind of gift and money at the time of different occasions and festivals such as Durga

Puja, Kali Puja etc. Relation between jotdars and adhiars was co-operative. ⁵⁴

Regarding the role of Jotdars in the field of public works and social Development Sunder, the settlement officer of Western Duars wrote to the Dy. Commissioner of Jalpaiguri –

“Having abandoned hope of getting any sufficient assistance from Govt. for effecting sanitary and other improvements in the Doors, I called a meeting of the Jotdars of Falakata and Alipore tehshil and explained to them that owing to the present financial pressure Government is unable to provide all the Funds which are wanted to improve the condition of the people by introducing new crops, sinking wells for the supply of good drinking water, constructing village roads & c. I impressed upon them the necessity of doing something to help themselves and I suggested them to establish a fund of their own in connection with each tehshil for improving the condition of jotdars and cultivators throughout the tehshil.” ⁵⁵

Not only that Mr. Sunder also assured the people that every rupee subscribed by jotdars would be deposited in the Post Office Savings Bank in their names and for their benefit and that no part of funds would never be expended without the sanction of the committee. Mr. Sunder also admitted that the jotdars of Falakata, Alipore and Bhalka tehshils responded and started to subscribe and develop fund.

The money collection, expenditure and balance in each of the tehshil during the year 1889 – 90 is shown here under – ⁵⁶

	Rs.	A	P
Maynaguri tehshil	2384	12	00

Falakata	1894	00	00
Alipore	1205	00	00
Bhalka	488	2	0
Total	5971	14	00

The expenditure during the year 1889 – 90 in each tehshil was as follows-

	Rs.	A	P
Maynaguri	1000	00	00
Falakata	68	00	00
Alipore	158	00	00
Bhalka	--	--	--
Total	1226	00	00

The balance unexpended in tehshil is as follows –

	Rs.	A	P
Maynaguri	1384	12	00
Falakata	1826	00	00
Alipore	1047	00	00
Bhalka	488	2	0
Total	4745	14	00

(Revenue Dept. P.V. Nov. 1891)

Major H. Bolleqe, Dy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri wrote to the Commissioner of Rajshahi division –

“Mr. Sunder, as you are well aware, has always taken a great interest in promoting the welfare of the jotdars and cultivators of the Western Duars

He found the small sums which could be allotted to him from the Government grant insufficient, and he hit upon the idea of asking the jotdars to subscribe each a small sum in order to

create a fund which should be administered by a committee of the jotdars themselves. He reported his intention to me and I cordially approved the scheme. It has been most successful so far and I am of opinion thatit will prove of material benefit to the people and to the Govt. Estate of the Western Duars. (State Archives, Calcutta, Revenue Dept. P.V. Nov 1891)⁵⁷

The following developmental works were to be done with the help of Jotdars Fund –

1. Making and improving roads, particularly the village road, clearing jungles.
2. Making wells in the central situation, then improving the water supply for pure drinking water.
3. Importing new seed and distributing the same amongst the cultivators supplying good manure for securing better outturn of crops.
4. Opening charitable dispensaries.
5. Helping poor cultivators with good cattle, providing blankets annually.
6. Assisting widows and orphans of cultivators.

Out of these benevolent activities jotdars were keenly interested to open new schools and they always expended their money for the management of those schools. Even after the independence in 1947, many jotdars donated their lands for establishing schools. There were so many primary and high schools in the district such as Mohan Singh High School of Rangali Bajna, Rammohan High School of Amguri and Padamati Rahim Uddin High School of Helapakri which were established by the initiative of jotdars⁵⁸.

Apart from improvements of this kind the administering of the fund, which would be left as much as possible to committees of jotdars themselves would work great good, teaching the people self-help and showing them that the Govt. officers take an interest in their welfare. Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri wrote to the Commissioner of Rajshahi division.

‘The money obtained from the jotdars and also the hat improvement fund will I venture to say in the course of a few years enable us to materially improve the condition of the people of this large and important estate’.⁵⁹

But the above condition of the jotdars was not general picture as a whole in the district. As the jotdars, except very few, were not involved in other profession, completely depended on land and agriculture, they had to face various troubles and crisis later on. In 1930’s because of the world wide economic depression many jotdars lost their land due to outstanding revenue and indebtedness as they had no alternative income and capital. Upendra Nath Barman wrote, “There was no exemption of taxes even after selling of jote or raiyoty right of the jotdars. For the collection of outstanding, the moveable and immoveable property of the defaulter would have been ceased, even after having outstanding the defaulter had been arrested and ultimately sent to jail.”⁶⁰

Other than these many jotdars were really oppressors particularly who were absentee jotdars, lived in town and had no direct relation to the cultivators, they used to give land to the intermediaries only to be economically benefited. Naturally intermediaries namely chukanidars or mulandars, dar-chukanidars tried to collect revenue forcefully from the cultivators. Dr. Tapas Kumar Roy Chowdhury writes, “The number of absentee jotdars had increased for amalgamation of different types of people in jotdar class. In the year 1895, amongst 23,339 jotdars only 1615 or 4.5% were absentee jotdars, they would not live in the jote. The number of absentee jotdars was going up gradually. All

most all the 15% jote-purchaser's were absentee, they would not dwell in the jote as their jot-place was in outside.⁶¹ But in this respect it can not be denied that the original resident jotdars were more or less co-operative and benevolent to the cultivators, because they were born and brought up on land and had direct relation with land. but the new jotdars coming from outside of the district mostly non-resident jotdars who were from other profession namely serviceman, Doctor, pleader, trader, Mahajan etc. and they had no direct relation and experience to the lands. They purchased land and became jotdars only for commercial purposes without any sympathy or co-operation to the cultivators. Ranjit Dasgupta wrote in this regard, "But available accounts clearly show that by 1920 and in fact, by the turn of the century very significant changes had occurred in the agrarian structure of Jalpaiguri in the form of transformation of cultivating and resident jotdars into non-cultivating and even non-resident jotdars, the intrusion of non-agriculturist mahajans, traders and professional people into the rural society, the increasing concentration of landholdings in the hands of jotdars, and the impoverishment and loss of land by small land-holders and small peasants resulting in the swelling of rural poor and landless adhiars or adhiars owing tiny plots.⁶² So, the characteristics and activities of all jotdars in the district, Jalpaiguri were not the same, differing from various aspects. Yet, it can be said that jotdars of the district, Jalpaiguri, particularly in the Duars were benevolent and co-operative comparatively to the other parts of Bengal.

Condition of the intermediaries

From the previous discussions it is found that the jotdars in the permanently settled areas were intermediaries between zamindars and cultivators. On the other hand jotdars in the Duars were lease holders in the lands and it is also found that jotdars in the permanent settled areas and in the non-regulated areas (Duars) were of different characters, there were very few jotdars who cultivated lands directly, the big jotdars who belong to large areas of lands would give lands to the intermediaries, some times jotdars cultivated land by recruiting adhiars or sharecroppers and obtained half share of crops.

Intermediaries both in the areas of permanent-settled areas and in the non-regulated areas (namely chukanidars, or mulandars, Dar-chukanidars, and Dar-dar chukanidars.) were in privileged condition. Mr. Tweedie, the first Deputy commissioner of the district defined chukanidars as follows—“The tenants so called are those who holds farmers for a fixed term being more than one year, paying to the jotdars for each year of occupancy an ascertained money rent. The rights of such tenants are clearly of a temporary nature and exist only by force of the contract which may have been made between the tenants and the landlords.”⁶³

The rights, position, terms and conditions between jotdars and cultivators and the chukanidars were not clear to the British Govt. at the first stage of their rule. It was quite clear with regard to chukanidars in No.968 of the Govt. of 10th April 1878 to the address of the Board where in it was stated that - “It was also determined – that at the next settlement the reacts of the actual cultivators of the soil (not being under adhiars) should be recorded and that such cultivators should be protected from any enhancement of rent during the term of the settlement”(Milligan, p,83).⁶⁴ Mr. Sunder pointed out that a chukanidar can not be ousted from his holding except by order of a competent court, not withstanding the fact that he may not have been twelve years on a

jote.⁶⁵ In 1880, Govt. made a definite “Healthy tenant right”. In clause 6 it was provided that a jotdar must give to his chukanidar the same promise of renewal of his lease as Govt. gave to him. ---
 - clause 8 made it compulsory on the jotdar to give every chukanidar a patta in which were to be included certain terms, which were in effect those proposals of the Commissioner approved by Govt. in their No.268T”.⁶⁶ Till the settlement of 1880, the rights and possession of chukanidars were not clear, rather it was confusing among the British officers about the matter. The letter of Mr. Lowis, in which he sends up his proposals for that settlement – No. 352 R.C.T of 23rd October, 1888 comes as a surprise for he boldly defines as a chukanidar as “a person who holds within a jote on very much the terms as the same jotdar himself; his title is permanent, heritable and transferable, his original rent is a matter of contract, but it is not enhanceable..... but may enhanced at resettlement. The jotdar has no power to resume land that is the prerogative of Government alone, who may resume land in a chukani in the same way as jote land may be resumed.”⁶⁷

While going on the survey and settlement works by Mr. Sunder it confused the members of revenue department and the Govt. as well about the type of right, terms and condition hold by the Chukanidars and how the problem could be solved with the Chukanidars. Mr. Sunder wrote about the chukanidars ‘There is an unwritten law between him(chukanidar) and his jotdar that he can not be ousted from his lands so long as he pays his rent.’⁶⁸ Actually, at the first stage there were many joddars who had large number of jotes, holding thousand acres of lands and it was not possible to cultivate whole lands by the joddars. So they (joddars) would give lands to the intermediaries and naturally, it was not officially recorded at the initial stage, but after interference by the Britishers on land and at the time of survey and settlement works all the problems were raised, Government also tried to make permanent solution with tenants and make a systematize in agrarian issues. The Government of Bengal wrote in Letter No. R dated the 12th September, 1892 as follows – “The Lieutenant

Governor accepts your description of their present positions, and agrees that it should be laid down that chukanidars have a permanent tenure and are entitled to retain their holdings through that settlement, subject to the condition that the rents paid by them can be enhanced if they do not already pay 50 percent above the jotdari rates".⁶⁹

It is clear from the above discussions that the Government also had an intention to give the permanent right to the chukanidars so that they could cultivate land properly and enthusiastically as a result of which, revenue of the Government could be increased. During the settlement works of Mr. Sunder, they could come into a decision about the rights and position of the chukanidars, though it was not quite clear. Mr. Sunder, in a letter to the Commissioner, "In my opinion we should not trouble ourselves at present to record the rights of chukanidars because I am satisfied that they possess no definite rights."⁷⁰ Regarding the right to permanence, the right to inherit and the right to transfer Milligan opined as follows – "The right of transfer has never been granted to chukanidars and does not in fact, and will all deference to Mr. Lowis, never in my opinion did exist. Chukanidars cannot transfer their interest without the jotdar's consent. In respect of these three cordial points the settlement just concluded makes no new departure in principle. The degree of permanence allowed to a chukanidars is still the same as that granted to a jotdar while the right to inherit is now clearly stated and the right of transfer is specifically refused."⁷¹

But J.F. Grunning, I.C.S. agreed the view of Mr. Lowis. He wrote in his District Gazetteer, "The chukanidars are tenants holding land on a money rent immediately under the jotdars. They have a right of occupancy and transfer their lands by sale or gift. Most of them are well to do and some have jots shares in jots in addition to their chukani holdings."⁷² So it can be said that the chukanidars not only depended on the lands obtained by chukani or pattani from jotdars, rather they had their own land out of the chukani holdings as because there were many small peasants who

had their own lands, but they were not treated as jotdars. The land holders who had large size of lands and who gave lands to the chukanidars or recruited adhiars to cultivate lands, were treated as jotdars. It is found from field survey that the peasants who had more than hundred acres of land and who cultivated land by giving pattas to the chukanidars or recruiting adhiars or share croppers were treated as jotdars.

Chukanidars or Mulandars also could give lands to the Dar – Chukanidars. But initially they could not do that and it was a confusion regarding rights, authorities and position of the Dar – chukanidars among British officers which proves by the evidence of British officers as well as the Government records. But it is clear that there were under tenants of the chukanidars namely Dar – chukanidars, and Dar – a – Dar chukanidars. J.F. Grunning wrote in his Gazetteer, “The Dar – chukanidars hold their land in the same way under the chukanidars and the dar – a - dar – chukanidars under the dar – chukanidars. Most of these inferior tenants have acquired a right of occupancy under the provisions of the Bengal Tenancy Act.”⁷³ Regarding the matter of sub-tenants under chukanidar, Dr. K.K Bagchi writes, ‘Grades of sub-tenants below dar-chukanidars viz dar-a-darchukanidars and Nim dar a darchukanidars could be found and recorded only in the settlement periods of 1931-35, but it is impossible that they did exist during the settlement period of 1906 -1916 but like dar chukanidars they were also not recorded.’⁷⁴ Beside this Grunning again wrote, “It is difficult to say how the process of sub-leasing extends, but there are probably not many dar – chukanidars or dar – a – dar – chukanidars.”⁷⁵ The revenue paid by the tenants and sub-tenants as follows which is shown in the book of Subhojyoti Roy, “..... The local officers also provided a legal foundation for rack – rents. They fixed the profit of the jotdars at 50 percent of the Government revenue. This meant that among the sub-tenants recognized by the settlement the chukanidars paid to the jotdars 50% over the Government demand, the dar-chukanidar paid 80 percent and the dar – dar chukanidar paid 100 percent over the original Government demand.”⁷⁶ Mr. Lowis opined that

the dar – chukanidar had never existed at all save on paper, the so-called dar – chukanidars being merely the remnants of the old raiyot class under a new name.⁷⁷

Mr. Sunder also supported the view of Mr. Lowis. He wrote, “Dar-chukanidar – this class of tenant holds direct from the chukanidar. He has no rights.”⁷⁸ Mr. Sunder referred the Government order which proves the above view – “The Lieutenant Governor approves your proposal that the newly created under tenures of dar-chukani and dar-a-dar chukani in the Duars Estates should be absolutely ignored, in as much as those tenures have been made contrary to the express orders of Government.”⁷⁹

So, from the above discussions it can be said that there were different categories of intermediaries in the agrarian systems of the district both in the permanent settled portion as well as in the Waste Land areas in the Duars. From different sources both in primary and secondary it is found that immediately after jotdars there were chukanidars and below the chukanidars there were dar-chukanidars, dar-dar-chukanidars, dar-a-dar-chukanidars etc. we find in the book of Ranjit Dasgupta, “To sum up in the early 1870s the agrarian society in Jalpaiguri consisted of, besides the two big zamindars, three categories of agricultural population: a) the big jotdars, b) small jotdars, chukanidars and dar-chukanidars cultivating mainly with their own labour and family labour, and c) adhiars of various types, perhaps all of whom had physically cleared jungles and reclaimed land for cultivation.”⁸⁰ Among the intermediaries chukanidars were strong in position, many times they hold the power like jotdars and enjoyed the advantages like jotdars more or less. But the dar-chukanidars, dar-a-dar-chukanidars, were not so much important in the agrarian systems, their numbers were not so much noticeable. It is found the data given by S. Roy as follows, “according to a survey in 1879, out of 1,819 jotes in the seven parganas in the Duars only 13 had a dar-dar-chukanidar, i.e. a sub-tenant in the third degree, and only 156 had a dar-chukanidar, a tenant in the second degree. The

chukanidars, who had immediately below the jotdars, were found to exist only in 686. The remaining 1064 jots were still directly under the jotdars".⁸¹ There were many chukanidars who had large size of jots and many chukanidars cultivate land directly, they would give land to the dar-chukanidars and they recruited adhiars to cultivate lands getting 50% share of the crops. Upendra Nath Das, a member of chukanidars family told "During the time of our grand father, all the lands were cultivated by the adhiars getting 50% share of crops and we had 11-12 hal lands. The relation between adhiar and chukanidars were co-operative."⁸² Another former chukanidar Sri Gabinda Roy of Bholardabri told, "We obtained lands from Jotdar, cultivated lands by ourselves. We had to give revenue to the jotdars."⁸³ Sri Khagendra Nath Das, 77 years old of Chaporer par, former Jotdar told, "Chukanidars would obtained lands by pattan, cultivated lands and gave revenue including road tax, education tax and water tax. In case of failure to give revenue to the jotdars, their lands would have been ceased and give to another chukanidars. Our chukanidars were Late Khodam Das, Late Nabin Das, Bhubaneswar Das, Late Bhukalu Das, Late Phuleswar Das, Late Bhergenda Das, Late Baishakh Das, Late Mihiram Das etc (chowkidar). At the time of marriage of a son or daughter of the chukanidars, they had to give permission of the jotdars."⁸⁴

From the above discussions it can be said that among the intermediaries Chukanidars or Mulandars played vital role in the agrarian system of the district, Jalpaiguri and they were equivalent to jotdars more or less, economically strong in the position, sometimes they cultivated land directly, sometimes used to give land to the dar-chukanidars or dar-a-darchukanidars and sometimes used to give land to the adhiars some portion of lands or whole portion of land for getting 50% share of crops. However the relation between jotdars and chukanidars, chukanidars and adhiars were co-operative without some instances, in the district, unlike other parts of Bengal.

Condition of the share croppers or adhiars

It is shown earlier that at the bottom of the agrarian system in the district who had direct relation with cultivation were bargadars or adhiars (share-croppers). According to Adrienne Cooper, there were four types of land holders who recruited share croppers to have crops from land - (a) zamindars and intermediate tenure holders recruited share croppers on Khas land; (b) Raiyots who may cultivate and be defined as rich peasants and who sublet to share croppers because they had more land than they could or wanted to cultivate directly; (c) Middle class Bhadrak, non-agriculturists, tenants or purchasers of raiyoti interests who employed share croppers requiring an income in kind; (d) Members of the rural elite, including traders and money lenders, who acquired various land rights sublet to share croppers.⁸⁵ Dr. Partha Chatterjee gave an outline about the proportion of agricultural population having various kind of rights of proprietorship or occupation in such way – 1) Landlords who were proprietors and tenure holders, 2) Tenants who were raiyots of different kinds and 3) Labourers those who worked in agricultural occupations without any legal rights to land.⁸⁶

The Land Revenue Commission of 1938 – 39 conducted a survey in selected villages to find out the manner in which the land was cultivated in different district of Bengal. It was found that predominant mode of cultivation was by labourer of the owner himself and his family. On the other hand a large proportion of those having land in the possession of landlords i.e. Zamindars and middle ranking tenure holders were not cultivators themselves; much land here was cultivated by share croppers or labourers. In Jalpaiguri district 25.9 percent cultivators were share croppers.⁸⁷ There were different ways about the recruitment of the share croppers – some were proprietors of tenure holders, while others were raiyots who had sublet their land to share croppers.

There were various factors for which cultivation by share croppers increased gradually. The structure of jotes was extremely iniquitous, with a few big and even giant – sized jotes at one end and a large number of small jotdari interest at the other. More over there were many jotdars namely traders, servicemen, advocates, mahajans and money lender who were not actual cultivators, they would obtain lands by lease from Government. As these jotdars were not cultivators, they would give land to the intermediaries called chukanidars, dar-chukanidars, dar-a-dar-chukanidars, sometimes they recruited adhiars or share croppers to have 50% share of crops, they had only intention to obtain surplus for commercial purpose. From previous discussion it is found that jotdars and intermediaries as well, recruited sharecroppers to cultivate lands. In general under whom the sharecroppers or adhiars cultivated lands either of jotdars or intermediaries, called ‘Giri’ and adhiars were called ‘Halua’ in the district, Jalpaiguri.

Commercial crops were cultivated in the land of the district and these were sold in the new market introduced by colonial economy. Behind the commercialization of agriculture tea-plantation was introduced in the district to gain more money. Jalpaiguri town was connected by railways in 1878 and the Bengal Duars Railway was launched in the 1890s to open-up of Duars and the promotion of tea- industry. All these developments stimulated the process of differentiate in the rural society of the district. In such a way situation, large holding helped the big and substantial peasants to enrich themselves through exploitation of produce rents usurious money and grain lending and transfer of holding of small jotdars, chukanidars and peasants.⁸⁸

Indebtedness was also another reason for transferring of land and growth of sharecropping. There were two groups of creditor namely – (a) Jotdars and substantial peasants, (b) non – agriculturist professional money lenders or Mahajan and traders. The indebted cultivators had a burdened with heavy interest payment. Those who interested in profiting from rising food grain

prices included middle class landlords and upwardly mobile raiyots. They preferred sharecroppers to catch tenants because the required to food grains for their household consumption. It became cheaper to sublet to sharecroppers and to obtain produce rents instead of renting out cash paying tenants.

Mr. Lowis in his proposals deals at considerable length with the position of the adhiar. He wrote, ".....as regards the mere adhiar he has no right to be recorded, but his name should appear in the settlement papers and he should have the same privilege as a non- occupancy raiyot namely he should not be liable to eviction so long as he pays rent."⁸⁹ Mr. Sunder wrote about the adhiars," This tenant has no right.....he pays rent in kind, namely half of all crops he may grow on the land which is allowed to him."⁹⁰ But before Milligan no one of the British Government thought so much about the problem of the adhiars and took any kind of step to solve the problem. It was Milligan, the settlement officer who first thought about the problem of adhiars. He wrote, "Whatever may have been the extant the system in the past, I calculated in 1912 that $\frac{2}{3}$ of the cultivation in the zamindari areas was done in the way."⁹¹

For increasing population in the district, the relation between cultivators and 'Giri' become bitter day by day. In this regard, Ranjit Dasgupta wrote, ".....the adhiars were always treated by the jotdars as socially inferior in status, even when the two belong to the same socio-religious group."⁹² He also wrote, ".....while passing the jotdars house the adhiars were prohibited from wearing shoes or carrying umbrellas. In presence the jotdars, the adhiars had to remain standing or sit on the ground. Such a relationship tended to reinforce the economic power and domination by the jotdars."⁹³

The condition of the sharecroppers, small peasants including agricultural labourers was being aggravated gradually. Milligan wrote, "Adhiars or Projas have been customarily regarded as labourers cultivating the land of proprietors, jotdars

or chukanidars on a half share basis. They were not considered to have any right or title but liable to be ejected at the will of their employer.”⁹⁴ Dr. K. K. Bagchi writes about the adhiars, “ It is notable that adhiars were included in a favourable position in the Duars than their counterpart in most other part of Bengal at least upto 1920 as land was relatively abundant and number of agriculture labourers were very few in the Duars..... when land become more scarce adhiars of the Western Duars also began to face adverse terms and condition.”⁹⁵

From the evidences of different sources it is found that the adhiars or sharecroppers in the district of Jalpaiguri were in better position than the other districts of Bengal as because there was no scarce of lands, and many jotdars who had thousand acres of lands, side by side there were no sufficient people to cultivate the land. After coming of the Britishers they introduced jotdari systems and gave it to the jotdars by lease to cultivate lands which is discussed in previous chapter and to cultivate the land cultivators were brought from neighboring areas giving many facilities including bhuta (a kind of loan) and pana (bullocks for cultivation) and 2nd ly according to Dr. Ananda Gopal Ghosh the relation between jotdars and adhiars were cooperative as because they hailed from the same ethno – linguistic and cultural group which free from caste hierarchy.⁹⁶

Haripada Roy tried to show the relation between jotdars and adhiars. According to him the relation between jotdars and adhiars was like father and son. For example at the time of marriage of a son or daughter of the adhiars, the jotdars or his wife dropped water on the head of bride and bride groom (which was called panichhita) and the jotdars or his wife become father and mother called panichhita bap and Panichhita Mao (this was applied other than adhiar’s bride or bride grooms).⁹⁷

It is found from the field survey that the relation between adhiars and their ‘Giri’ were cooperative and patriarchal. Smt. Binapani Devi (Karji), 83 years old, wife of Late Harendra

Bhushan Karji told that the relation between jotdars and projas never became bitter, there was no want of food, either in any occasion or any time projas would come to the house of their Giri's and take food or any kind of help. She also told that my grand father helped the people and loved children.⁹⁸ Upendra Nath Das, 63 years, a member of former chukanidar family told, "The mentality of the adhiars were good. The adhiars assisted and did the work of the 'giri' if required and asked. The adhiars cultivated lands, after cutting the cripes it was accumulated on the common farm house (kholan), then the cripes were threshing and prepared to serve, the giris were informed to take their 50% share."⁹⁹ Sri Dharani Kanta Das 65 years, of Purba chepani, a member of former jotdar family told, "We had 66 family of adhiars. Adhiars cultivated land and would give us 50% share of cripes. The relation between jotdars and adhiars were always cooperative and hospitable. At the time of cultivation or any time other than the time of cultivation adhiars or halua were assisted by giving them bhuta (cripes for food) and pana (bullocks for cultivation), after cutting and thrushing the cripes adhiars had to give cripes to the giris for Bhuta and pana, then rest of the cripes were distributed between Giri and adhiars with 50% share, even to build the house of the adhiars, they were assisted by giving them bomboos and other materials of the house."¹⁰⁰ Sri Bhado Adhikari, 90 years old, a former adhiar of East Chepani explained his experience and sometimes he became upset and sank into depression. He told, "Among the 66 family of halua of my elder brother- in- law, a jotder, I only the halua who is living. The paddy was cutting during the month of Poush and these were accumulated on the curtiard (kholan). After the full moon of Magha, the thrushing of paddy was started in the month of Falguna, and get ready to distribute, after giving the crops for Pana and Bhuta (loan which were taken by the adhiars) to the giri it was distributed equally among the adhiars and giri and at that time a feast was arranged by the giri and we all the adhiars including the members of jotdars family joined the feast and enjoyed very much. The relation between adhiars and the giri never reached in bitterness."¹⁰¹

The local custom is that the jotdars themselves supply 16 annas seeds (where necessary) and one cattle out of two for a plough to the bargadars. Where cultivation is followed strictly on the above principle, division of produce is half and half including straw. A deviation from this general custom, results in the proportionate increase or decrease in the division of crops between jotdars and the bargadars Viz. When cattle, plough, seeds manure etc. supplied fully by a jotdar, he gets six mounds paddy from the half share of the bargadars for lending one cattle that was due to be supplied by the bargadar himself. Thus if three ploughs are engaged and the jotdars supplies all the six cattle, he gets 18 mounds of paddy @ six mounds per cattle lent, from bargadars share at the time division. This system is locally known as "pana".¹⁰²

Payment for 'pana' is always to be made in paddy and not with any other crops raised with the 'pana' system.¹⁰³

Angashree Narjinari (Basumata) w/o Rev. Jitnal Narjinari (Paster Saheb), 84 years of Bara Chawkir Bash, Mahakalguri, Dist. Jalpaiguri gives her view, "We had 8-10 hal lands and total land would be cultivated by the adhiars or projas. Paster Saheb supervised the adhiars beside the work of mission. The relation with the adhiars was co-operative. Any kind of dispute with the adhiars was not raised. The adhiars had been assisted at the time of their problems, crisis or disease."¹⁰⁴

Hisran Narjinari a former adhiar (share cropper) of Paster Saheb of Bara Chowkirbash pointed out, "I was settled here by Jitnal Narjinari (Paster Saheb). I would cultivate his land as a share cropper or adhiar for 50% share of crops. I, myself, cultivated 2 hal lands, seeds, plough, buffalo etc. all kind of instruments for cultivation would have been provided by us. The relation with jotdars was not bitter. We would participate at feast, occasions and festivals together with jotdars. There were no class division between jotdars and adhiars."¹⁰⁵

But it is to be noted that the above mentioned relation between the adhiars and their Giris in the district was not the real picture as a whole. Behind the patriarchal relation between adhiars (share croppers) and their 'Giris', the sharecropper had to face in different types of oppressions.

Beside the benevolent works of the zaminder –Jotdar, they oppressed sharecroppers and small peasants. Very few zamindars like Maharani Swarnamayee donated for this purpose, established schools. A zamindar in the village drinks blood of raiyots like Vanpaiyar flying fox of America by establishing dispensary for treatment and school, coming in the villages, The judges forget after watching schools and dispensaries, They do not hear nothing of the crying of raiyots.¹⁰⁶

There is no system of buying and selling lands in this country before the British rule. The system of buying and selling lands, have been started like commodities since the initiation of paying revenue by cash. The moneylenders have become Zamindars by capturing lands of the raiyots alleging for the outstanding of lands either right or false ways by the patronization of court. Village aristocratic Zamindars have been created by the initiation of permanent settlement.¹⁰⁷

Firstly they (adhiars) had no right on land, any time they would have been evicted from land. It is mentioned earlier in this chapter, the arguments of Mr. Lewis, Mr. D. H. E. Sunder, Ranjit Dasgupta and Dr. K.K. Bagchi which proves that the adhiars were not so much better position and happy as a whole.

The condition of the people in the villages becomes really serious in the months from Chaitra to Shraban (Behgali months, from March to August) There is no village where 25% families can eat sufficiently, 50% families can not eat twice in a day and 25% families have no abilities to have lunch at noon in the some months of the year. The people become so hunger that they sometimes are ready to eat forcefully of other's food.¹⁰⁸ Whatever

the gentlemen earn, exhaust in this time, not only exhausted but also they sell ornaments of their family wives, utensils etc one by one for their poverty to the shopkeepers. They have little hope, little smiling in the face, little symbol of life in the body until they have the drinking pot. But ultimately having no way they mortgage their ultimate pot and even their child, at last they have nothing.¹⁰⁹

Milligan wrote, "It will be clear from the foregoing narrative that while on the one hand no body had ever succeeded in finding that any rights were actually owned and exercised by adhiars, on the other hand there was a general feeling that something should be done to secure to this people some sort of tenant-right in their lands."¹¹⁰ In the 1880 settlement khatians were given to all adhiars but in 1888 Major Boileau reported that in 90 percent of cases the lands had since changed hands. During the settlement works of Milligan it was found that many times adhiars had to sign on a Kabuliyat which written by particular dewaniya or tout. The essential features of those kabuliyats were that the adhiar bound himself to repay advances, deliver half the crop, obey orders, properly cultivated the land, and vacate it at the end of the contract; his use and occupation of the land being guaranteed for one year or longer as the case might be.¹¹¹

Rajat Kanta Roy Ratna lekha Roy showed the peasant exploitation by the Zamindars, jotdars and intermediaries. They pointed out that the adhiars in Dinajpur, Rangpur and Jalpaiguri were nothing but a slave. Many adhiars became beggar and slave due to heavy indebtedness.¹¹²

The main obstruction of the poor raiyots for being well-to-do is money lenders. Illiterate, unconscious and poor raiyots do not think about interest at the time of borrowing. After lending, the moneylenders imposed heavy interest at their will. If the raiyots become failure to pay their outstanding in time, the money lender take a note of hands, then counts interest on interest. In this

way, sons pay off the outstanding of their fathers, sons collect the dues of their fathers.¹¹³

It is found in the Rangpur Bartabaha (Bengali Periodical) about peasant exploitation in such way:

The raiyots in this country become destitute for the pressure of revenue. They can not release themselves from recovery of revenue even eating very ordinary food sometimes fasting, no proper cloths, becoming indebted, then they try to flee. Yet, nobody follow them.¹¹⁴

The people of this country do not know the way to earn money through the industry and commerce, they rely only on agriculture depending on nature, if water and sunshine are available timely, crops are produced well other wise it gets ruined. All of the developed countries are such efficient and informative that the people in this country (India) do not know 1% of the same. After following the present distress condition of the people it seems that the animals and birds have been living happily than these people.¹¹⁵

Another cause of oppression of the adhiars was heavy interest of taking loan in cash or kind (crops). These types of interest were 'Derabari', 'dunabari' and 'darkatali'. If a adhiar would take loan in the month of September or October, after two or three months at the times of distribution of crops they had repay loan at 1.5 times (Derabari) and 2 times (Dunabari), and interest of darkatali was more dangerous which was more than 2 times or double. In such a way, adhiars or small peasants were confined in heavy indebtedness as a result of which small peasants had to sell off their lands to the Mahajans or jotdars and became adhiars in their own land and the adhiars became like a slave due to heavy indebtedness. In spite of that it can be said that the condition of the adhiars in the district, Jalpaiguri was comparatively better than the other parts of Bengal which is proved from the evidences of various sources and field survey, as

for example the condition of adhiars in the district of Dinajpur and Rangpur was more pathetic. A young peasant in Dinajpur district came into contact for five years with a Mahajan taking for expenditure in his wedding ceremony. After marriage he worked under Mahajan with free of cost. During this period his wife had to maintain her life on depending herself. In Rangpur (east) district taking advance was more dangerous. After taking advance all members of the family worked in the land of money-lenders. In case of failing to payback loan within scheduled time all members of the family would become slave of the money - lenders and they had been sold at a time or individually accordingly the will of the debtor.¹¹⁶ These types of dangerous and pathetic systems of the adhiars was not seen in the district of Jalpaiguri.

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Chapter 4

Resistance of the Peasants and Agricultural Labourers

In the previous chapter, it is discussed about the origin and development of the new Jotdari system in the district both in permanent - settled portion as well as in non-regulated areas that is Western Duars. It is found that the British Government started survey and settlement works, lands in the Western Duars were declared as waste lands, possessing all the lands under control, they (British Indian Government) gave the lands to the jotdars or non-cultivated jotdars namely traders, servicemen, Mahajan and money-lenders by lease or pattani, beside these lands were given to the tea-planters for tea-cultivation by lease (which is shown earlier chapter). Different types of people (Different classes and different colours or castes, religion) had been immigrated in the Duars as a result of which population had been increasing gradually (statistics are given in the previous chapter).

Prof. Ramkrishna Mukhopadhyay tried to show the difference of agrarian economy and society between pre-colonial and colonial period. According to him, the condition of rural Bengal, the village society and agrarian economy changed rapidly in the colonial period. He also tried to show that there were self-dependent village society and independent village community in the pre-colonial Bengal which was changed in the colonial period.¹ Rajat Kanta Roy and Ratnalekha Roy denied the view of Prof. Mukhopadhyay arguing that the jotdars were rich peasants before acquisition of power in Bengal by the British. They tried to show that the agrarian structure and agrarian economy had not been changed radically in the colonial period because the agrarian society could not be transformed from feudalism to capitalism,

rather the feudalism in the colonial period became stronger, capital had not deposited in agrarian purpose, rather land holder classes either proprietors or intermediary tenure holders always tried to have and increase wealth from lands.² The Peasant- exploitation was also in the pre-colonial period, however it is told that the peasant-exploitation increased in the new forms and new systems.

But Dr. Binay Bhushan Chowdhury, an eminent agrarian historian in the field of land and peasant, had not accepted the view of Roy and Roy. According to him there raised various types of jotdari powers which made the village society more critical. He tried to show the differences in the agrarian systems between pre-colonial and colonial period. The differences were from - (a) rising of powerful classes, (b) their formation, (c) the amount of land hold by them.³ It is true that in the case of Jalpaiguri as in the Dinajpur and Rangpur district new agrarian classes either proprietors or intermediaries raised as a new forms and power. But these classes were nothing new basically because these classes existed in the pre-colonial period as a revenue collector or intermediaries between peasants and rulers namely Zamindar, Dewnia, Basunia, tahutdar, tahashildar in the permanent settled portion, and soobah, Katham, Kayath or Muhuries, Dewnia, tahashildar etc were in the Duars. All were powerful both in the permanent-settled portion as well as in the Western Duars and they were connected with agricultural activities, many of them became jotdars or intermediaries in the colonial period.

It is discussed in the previous chapter, the rise, growth, development and condition of the share croppers and small peasants and it is shown how they were oppressed by their land lords or 'giris', Mahajans and money-lenders. A committee was appointed in 1921 under John Kherr to investigate land relation with a view to amending tenancy resolution. The Bill based on the Committees report declared that the 'bargadars' is a tenant.....who provided their own cattle plough and

implements of agriculture Intense agitation met these proposals and the Government had to issue a Communiqué on the 10th May, 1932 declaring their decision not to accept the particular amendment regarding sharecroppers.⁴

Another Bill was prepared by the Government officials in 1928; long debate was going on for and against the Bill. The role of the Swarajya Party on this question was against the bargadars.

The Indian National Congress was not standing for the rights of the poor peasants and bargadars, the leaders of Congress Party tried to maintain the interest of the zamindars, jotdars and intermediaries. The Congress leaders thought that their fight for freedom was against the Britishers and until this fight for freedom was over, the interest of the tenants and the landlords would so reasonably adjusted as not to create a civil war in the Country before freedom was gained.⁵ So, all references to share croppers as tenants were deleted and the right of commutation for raiyots on product rents was withdrawn.

According to W. W. Hunter there was no landless peasant in undivided Bengal before 1870. From 1870 to the last of this century took place many starvations as a result of which small peasants fell into indebtedness and poverty, they sold their land and became adhiars or bargadars of the purchasers of land.

From 1929 world – wide economic depression was going on all over the world and this affected the agrarian economy and the industry of the district, the prices of agricultural crops decreased. Ranjit Dasgupta writes. “The prices of jute.....marked an extraordinary fall.....the price index (1926-29; 100) went down to in 1931-32, 30 in 1932-33, 28 in 1933-34 it rose slightly thereafter, but was still only 52 in 1937-38”⁶

Besides the prices of jute, the prices of rice also fall down. In spite of decreasing of the prices of agricultural crops the peasants were not exempted to pay revenue, there was no abatement of tax collection, rather the revenue had been increased 45% during 1935-36 as a result of which chukanidars and small jotdars were in indebtedness and ultimately they were bound to sell their land and became bargadar or adhiars of the purchasers of land. Ranjit Dasgupta writes, "Faced with the deepening crisis large section of owner-peasants and tenants and tenants in both the permanently settled portion and Khasmahal areas were forced to sell their land and faced more closure by the jotdars-cum money lenders. The farmer, however were not totally disposed but kept on the land as bargadars or adhiars."⁷

The editor of 'Hindu patriot' writes in his article "Anyaykar" the zamindars of Bengal collects house sub-taxes other than regular rents, the raiyots do not express their unwillingness to give that said sub-taxes, at the time of collecting the sub-taxes."

Whether the raiyots give sub-taxes gladly or the Zamindars collects it keeping stones on the chest of the raiyots, how can you (editor of Hindu patriot) realise staying in the capital. Once, come in the villages and see how a Zamindar oppresses on the raiyots for collecting sub-taxes. The weak raiyots inhabitants of villages have no wealth or helper, can not complain, naturally they surrender to the oppressor in spite of having been oppressed."⁸

The following Table shows the land alienation in the Duars.⁹

	Tahashil	Number of alienation Jotes	Amount of Land in acre	Alienation % of Jotes
1.	Maynaguri	2730.5	28,577.45	17.76
2.	Falakata	1742.0	28,269.94	15.10
3.	Alipurduar	1208.9	66,222.75	46.14
4.	Bhalka	251.0	1301.90	4.00
5.	Ambari Falakata	4.0	236.00	2.52
	Total-	5936.4	124,603.03	85.52

In accordance with the report of the Bengal Land Revenue Commission (Floud Commission) in Jalpaiguri district the transferred area was constituted 9.4 percent of the total area inquired into district, and 42.1 percent of the transferred area was cultivated by bargadars or adhiars and another 39.4 percent by under tenants¹⁰ Another important information is found from the report that by 1939 in Jalpaiguri 26.6 percent of all cultivating families lived mainly or entirely as adhiars and 25.9 percent of the total cultivated area was cultivated by adhiars¹¹ But this figure is not dependable fully. According to Goswami there are reasons to consider that the actual extant of share cropping was much more extensive than these figures suggests.”¹²

Hat- Tola Movement

Every action have equal and opposite reaction, it is a natural law. Men have a power of tolerance by virtue, on the other hand men have a power of resistance, after being tolerance since long to any kind of oppression or suppression, men, one day, stand straight and protest against the oppression and suppression, naturally there are so many instances of it in history all over the world. So, the bargadars or share croppers and small peasants after suffering by different types of oppressions since long by the landlords, intermediaries, traders and money lenders, they also got ready to protest against the oppressions. 'Hat Tola' or 'Tolagandi' movement was one of the symbol of such type of protests of the peasants in the district of Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur and Rangpur.

Peasants including bargadars had to give cess or tola to the agents of zamindars and jotdars at the time of selling their goods in the Hats (weekly markets). In accordance with the enquiry report of the Government of West Bengal in 1940 there were 6000 hats in the province owned mostly by local zamindars who either managed them with their own staff or leased them to the ijaradars on a yearly rent. In all most all of these hats tolls were collected at exorbitant rates not only from the sellers but in some cases also from the buyers.¹³

In some hats the men of zamindars and ijaradars used to collect Rs. 2 .00 per cow and Rs. 4.00 per buffalo as expenses for issuing receipts certifying such sales. The senior marketing officer, Government of Bengal conducting this investing estimated that the income of Zamindars or as ijaradars from a hat was usually between Rs. 1500/- to Rs. 3000/- per annum.¹⁴ Peasants were exploited for the heavy tola collected by the agents of Zamindars and ijaradars and that affected all sections of the peasantry and

even small and middle jotdars. Other than peasants and adhiars, teachers, village doctors, small shopkeepers were also victimized by this system.

The Conference of the district Krishak Samiti was held on 27th June, 1939, where large number of people including poor peasants, and adhiars and other sections of rural population attended the conference.¹⁵ In the meeting some resolutions were taken in favour of the small peasants and adhiars against the zamindars and jotdars' oppression including abolition of the zamindari system without payment of any compensation. Being inspired by the propaganda in the different hats against the oppression of the zamindars and Jotdars, small peasants and bargadars were prepared to start a movement called 'Hat Tola Movement'. The movement started from Maidan dighi hat under Boda Police Station with red flags and Lathis (Bamboo Sticks), Kishan Volunteers marched into the hat and raised slogans, "No tola payment by the Kishan," "Down with the oppression of the zamindars and ijaradars" etc. The ijaradars threatened the peasants. Police came and supported ijaradars, but they became failure to the united strength of the peasants.¹⁶

The police came and took the side of the ijaradars, they became failure to compromise it. Later on, the Sadar S.D.O came and in his presence a meeting was held with a peasant delegation under the leadership of Radhamohan Barman. Ultimately, they reached into a compromise and the decision went in favour of the peasants and bargadars. In the many small hats in Boda, Debiganj and Pachagar Police Stations the toll rate was reduced and in a number of small hats the toll collection came to be stopped.

Adhiars Movement

Being inspired by the 'Hat Tola Movement' peasants including adhiars started another movement in 1940 called 'Adhiars Movement'. In the previous chapter it is discussed that the adhiars had not right on land, they cultivated land only for the share of 50%, beside this they had to tolerate different types of tortures and oppressions of Giri (Land Lords - jotdars or intermediaries). More over, the adhiars had to give more taxes called 'abwab'. Such type of taxes were – 'Golamochhani' or expenses for cleaning the store house at the rate of half a mound of paddy for every adhiars, another levy was 'angina chachani' or expenses for clearing the threshing yard at the rate of half a mound per adhiars 'Bhuta Khaoa' or expenses for spreading straw inside the bullock cart of the jotdar was still another form of levy, 'Barkandaji' or expenses for maintenance of guards, 'Hari Sabha' or expenses on account of religions of gathering, 'Hari bandha' and 'Ghora bandha' or account of maintenance of elephants and horses were some more forms of levy. After clearing all such types of levy, the adhiars would get minimum amount of crops and this was not sufficient to maintain their families for which they had to take loan from the jotdars or 'Giri'. Such loans were taken mainly under three systems of interest (a) Derabari, (b) Dunabari, (c) 'darkata'. The bargadars had to repay the crops at the rate of 50 per cent (Derabari) interest of principal crops and 100 percent (Dunabari) interest of the principal crops only for a period of 3-6 months. Under the 'darkata' systems a certain quantity of crops was lent during lean season in terms of prevailing market price which was very high and the loan was calculated in terms of money value of the paddy borrowed. At the time of repayment after harvesting of the crop in the form of whatever amount of paddy was available at that amount of money.¹⁷

Not only that, adhiars had to store the crops after cutting from lands in the farm house of jotdars where they had been cheated. It is mentioned in the Government Report,

- (1) "The general custom is to stock the produce in the khamar of the jotdar before division.
- (2) Labour for carrying the produce to jotdars' khamar and for threshing it is to be supplied by the bargadars.

When shares are divided, the jotdar is to arrange to carry his share of produce to his own house. In case where jotdar's house is far away from the bargadar's lands, a spot is selected nearer bargadars house where the produce is stocked and divided as usual. Jotdar himself arranges to carry his share to his house.¹⁸

Amarendra Nath Suba, s/o Late Chandra Sing Suba of Paschim Satali, dist. Jalpaiguri argued, "We had near about 1000 hal land in Jaygaon, and in next time we settled in Satali Bosti having near about 100 hal land with exchange the land of Joygaon. Our land was cultivated by projas or adhiars. We supplied seeds, cows for cultivation to the adhiars. The adhiars had to recover the loan at the time of distribution of crops (a) 6 mound paddy for one cow (one bish) called pana, there was no interest for seeds. Paddy for food was supplied to the adhiars (a) Dera (1.5 times) and Duna (2 times) which had been recovered at the time of distribution of crops¹⁹

The Krishak Samiti realized the minds of the exploited and oppressed adhiars and during the harvesting season 1939-40 several demands were raised such as 'Reduce the interest of Karja dhan' (Paddy taken by loan), 'No interest on seed loan'. 'Put an end to all abwabs and 'Nij kholane dhan tolo' (stack paddy in your own farm house)²⁰

The volunteers and workers of the Krishak Samiti marched from hat to hat and village to village and called the adhiars to resist the oppression of the jotdars. Dr. Sachin Dasgupta in his article 'Jalpaigurir Adhiar Andolan' writes, "In this time, Nawab Musharaf Hossain who was a minister in the Haque Ministry came to Jalpaiguri, held meeting with jotdars and discussed against the communists, the operation was started by the jotdars with the help of police against the bargadars or adhiars, section 144 was introduced, arrest warrants were issued against the communist leaders, for which communist leaders had to work from secret places. Police attacked on the peasants from village to village and more than 300 peasants were arrested including the leaders of the movement."²¹

Tebhaga Movement

The intensive areas of the Tebhaga Movement in the Jalpaiguri district were Boda, Pachagar, Debiganj and Sundardighi as these were under zamindari system where permanent settlement was introduced and the condition of the adhiars was more pathetic and oppressive unlike the Duars. Here, adhiars or bargadars were like a slave of the jotdars. It is discussed earlier how the adhiars or sharecroppers were victimised and oppressed by the jotdars, mahajans and money lenders. As a result of it, a reaction took place by the adhiars and labourers called Tolagandi movement and adhiars movement in 1938-39 in the district which is discussed earlier.

The All India Kishan Sabha was formed in 1936, which organised, "partial struggles," focusing on the demands of rent-paying tenants. In Bengal the communist took the lead in organizing, the provincial Kishan Sabha, as a branch of the AIKS. Within a year Kishan Sabha units were formed in the district.²²

A commission was formed by the ministry of Fazlul Haque in 1938 and Sir. Francis Floud was selected as a Chairman of the Commission. A memorandum was sent to the Commission by Krishak Sabha for abolishing the zamindari System. The Commission submitted the report to the Government on 21st March, 1940, in accordance with the report it recommended to bring the projas or raiyots under the Government directly by purchasing lands from zamindars or intermediaries. So, it is noticeable that the Commission intended to abolish the zamindari System in Bengal, other than this the Commission was in favour of Tebhaga to the adhiars or share croppers. It is mentioned in the report of the Commission that the land-holders or 'Giris' had to

take 1/3 of the crops produced by the adhiars instead of 1/2 shares of the crops.²³

After coming out the report of Floud Commission, the conference of Pradeshik Krishak Sabha was held in June 1940 at Panjia to discuss the report of the Floud Commission and take the next step. While discussing, the Krishak Sabha realized the importance and necessity of Tebhaga but the Sabha could not take any step to start the movement for Tebhaga. But it is said that the issue of adhiars or sharecroppers got a new motion with interference of the Krishak Sabha.

The following table shows the percentage of land cultivated by Barga System:-²⁴

	District	Percentage
1.	Dinajpur	14%
2.	Jalpaiguri	26%
3.	Malda	10%
4.	Joshor	22%
5.	Khulna	54%
6.	Bakharganj	45%
7.	Bankura	29%
8.	Barishal	45%
9.	Birbhum	25%
10.	Bogura	16%
11.	Bardhwan	25%
12.	Chitagang	12%
	District	Percentage
13.	Dacca	23%
14.	Murshidabad	26%
15.	Mymenshing	14%
16.	Nadia	24%
17.	Noakhali	17%

18.	Pabna	19%
19.	Rajshahi	15%
20.	Rangpur	23%
21.	Tripura	12%
22.	24 Pargana	22%
23.	Faridpur	11%
24.	Hoogli	30%
25.	Howrah	23%

So, from the above table it is showed that a large amount of lands was cultivated by barga system in Bengal Presidency, and it was going up from 1930's due to world wide economic depression and land alienation. It is also discussed earlier that the non-agrarian people namely traders, serviceman, mahajans money lenders entered the agrarian systems by purchasing lands and become jotdars or zamindars, this classes of people preferred to cultivate the land by barga system as because it was more profitable, no capital had to be deposited. So the oppression on the adhiars or sharecroppers had been increasing gradually, as a reaction of it peasants including adhiars and labourers broke out into rebellions called Tolagondi or Hattola movement and adhiars movement in Dinajpur, Rangpur and Jalpaiguri districts during 1938-39. But these movements could not be fully success and could not proceed so long because of the lack of strong organization of the peasants and oppression of the zamindar, jotdars and intermediaries.

In 1943 famine started all over Bengal. The policy of the Government was mainly responsible for the famine. According to the report of Kshitish Proshad Chattopadhyay 5% peasants sold their land fully and 11% peasants sold their land partly and the land purchasers were jotdars, rich peasants and traders. 34 lac people had died and 11 lac people had lost their every thing.²⁵ Thus the transfer of cultivable land during 1943 was about 14

percent of the total cultivable land in Bengal. More over in 1943, 3,06,000 families lost 11,47,000 plough cattles as a result of famine. Out of this 8,90,000 plough cattle were lost by the poor peasants and landless labourers²⁶ In spite of having devastating famine all over Bengal, no step or measure was taken by the Government to assist the peasants, adhiars or lower class people. Abani Lahiri wrote, "On a conservative estimate the famine left about two millions of marginal and poor peasants and their families as landless rural proletariat making a big potential base for militant kisan struggle while land and its produce were still more concentrated in the hands of rich peasants, traders and money lenders. This development added a new revolutionary dimension to the post war agrarian situation in Bengal giving the Tebhaga movement its militant sweep."²⁷

In 1945, the Second World War was ended. Anti-British discontent among the people particularly the lower class people increased rapidly and they were ready to break out into rebellion in any time. The prices of essential things were going up because of the 2nd World War. In these circumstances, the Duars plantation area was going through a wave of labour agitation, a major peasant outburst took place in the large parts of the district.

The 9th conference of Bangiya Pradeshik Krishak Sabha was held from 21.05.1946 to 24.05.1946 at Maubhog. The main trend of this conference was to carry on movement against the oppression of Zamindars and their intermediaries. It was resolved--

"As soon as possible the law should be introduced to have 2/3 share of crops in favour of bargadars and 1/2 share of crops in favour of landlords in case of supplying all outputs of cultivation by the landlords such as cattle, seeds manure etc".²⁸

In September 1946, the Bengal Provincial Kishan Sabha gave the call for Tebhaga. It took place for the share of 2/3 of the

produced crops in favour of the adhiars and 1/3 for the 'Giri' recommended by the Floud Commission in 1940. After Calling for Tebhaga movement by the BPKS the leaders of the district of C.P.I and Krishak Samiti began active preparation to launch the movement. Krishna Binod Roy, the president of BPKS come to the area in late November, held a meeting with DKS and Union committees about the importance of the Tebhaga. Later on, many leaders came to organize the peasants and adhiars against the jotdars and Zamindars. Among the leaders of the Tebhaga Movement Charu Majumdar, Biren Paul, Madhab Dutta, Biren Neogi, Dipen Roy, Dulal Basu, Nripen Roy Manoranjan Dasgupta, Hara Ghosh, Gurudas Roy, and Samar Ganguly played a significant role in Tebhaga Movement in North Bengal.

The modes and the programmes of the Movement were group meetings, Mass meetings, demonstrations, Hat squads, peasant marches through the country side and other such forms were propaganda and mobilization against the oppressors. Volunteers were recruited, trained up and assigned them specific responsibilities and raised the slogans like 'adhi nai , Tebhaga chai' 'Nij kholane dhan, tolo' 'Jan debo to dhan debo na', 'Patit jami dakhil karo' 'Inquilab Zindabad'.²⁹

At first the movement was started from a village under Pachagar Thana in late November, 1946. After that the movement dispersed rapidly from village to village under Debiganj, Pachagar, Boda and the parts of Kotowali and Rajganj Police Stations. Paddy was harvested and stacked collectively in the adhiar's place or in a common place and then jotdars were asked to come there and collect their 1/3 share of the produced crops. Peasant unrest also took a new turn in the Mal and Matiali Police Stations of the district. Without any planed and programmes taken by the district leaders of C.P.I and Kishan Sabha. In spite of having no tradition and experience of the movement and no stronger organization of the peasants in the Duars because of the Government Khasmahal

area, the upsurge took place due to peasant discontent accumulating in such areas for over a long time. Sunil Sen, an eminent historian on Peasant Movement writes, "On 1 March 1947, there was a clash between Oraon peasants and the police in the Duars in Jalpaiguri district in which five peasants were killed. On 4 April another clash occurred at Mateli in this district, in which nine peasants were killed".³⁰ Sunil Sen agreed that there was no Kishan Sabha in the Duars, the Movement was started there spontaneously.

It is mentioned in the report of Sub-divisional Officer, Alipurduar: "There is no Tebhaga Movement in this Sub-division."³¹

It is true that the peasants including adhiars had discontent to the jotdars, intermediaries and the Government as well, but they could not protest strongly against all sorts of oppressions due to lack of political organization and support of the intellectuals or political leaders, but when Tebhaga movement was started in the permanent settled portion of Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur and Rongpur districts, the adhiars and labourers of tea-estate were getting ready to fight or revolt against the oppressions at any cost. Samar Ganguly, a leader of labour organization of C.P.I had gone to attend a meeting of tea-labourers. He was requested there by oraon adhiars to carry on Tebhaga Movement in the Duars. But Samar Ganguly was not interested to do it because he thought it was not proper time to do the same in this area. Then he asked the oraon adhiars if they could provide ten thousand volunteers the movement could have carry on and he believed that it would be the herculean task, actually Ganguly tried to avoid it. But in the next day, thousand of adhiars came forth the office of C.P.I surprising the leaders of C.P.I. naturally the movement started by looting store house of paddy of a muslim jotdar.³²

Bimal Dasgupta writes , “Madhab Dutta was attacked by the gundas of jotdars in Terai and his head was cracked by the attack of lathis (stick), this news was circulated in the areas of tea-estate and rail line. Some tribal peasant came there and told ‘give a Flag’ ‘we shall go to meeting in Domahani of 1st March’. They had gone to meeting sequently, but this was not like ordinary movement, rather it was spontaneous influx of the peasants and labourers.”³³

He again wrote in the same article “The Tebhaga in the kholan (farm house) of the big jotdar, Gayanath of Mahabari Basti was a remarkable incident. Peasants and labourers were carrying out Tebhaga communicating with the peasants and labourers around 5-6 miles areas from Mahabari Bosti of Meteli Thana to the office of Krishak Sabha situated in Panoar bosti of Mal Thana. Police shooted to the peasants and labourers of Tebhaga being in favour of jotdars as a result of which Nine persons were died on the spot and seven were seriously injured.”³⁴

In 1946, communal riots was started in different parts of Bengal, the ‘Calcutta riots’ and Noakhali Riots was so intensive, that the Muslim league tried to realize the Muslim peasants to have their separate state, where Muslims enjoyed real freedom and they would be benefited other then the united country that was India. In these circumstances Krishak Sabha decided to carry on Tebhaga movement jointly Hindus and Muslim peasants to avoid the Muslim politics.

In the month of November, 1946, during harvesting time, Krishak Sabha realized that it was the high time to start Tebhaga movement. A meeting was held on the 23rd November, 1946, at Pachagar Thana of Jalpaiguri district, presided by Dr. Rafiz Uddin Ahamed, huge number of peasants including adhiars or bargadars from Boda and Pachagar Thana attended the meeting. Krishna Binod Roy, the president of BPKS congratulated the peasants of this area for their daring movement for food. After discussing

about the Tebhaga he told, this fight was not only to protect the land and farmyard of the peasants from the aggression of jotdars and stored keepers, this was the only way to live and occupy food from store-keeper.³⁵

“Came the season of harvesting paddy; threatening of jotdars and the police could not destroy the mental strength of the share croppers. Within a short period this movement spread in some parts of sadar subdivision, everywhere of Boda-Pachagar-Debiganj Police Stations, adjacent areas of Jalpaiguri in the Atoari Police Station of Dinajpur district and some parts of Domar Police Station of Rangpur District. Everywhere share croppers started to accumulate paddy in their own farmyard.³⁶

It is found in the Government Report about the intensive motion of the Tebhaga Movement in Dinajpur district: “The Kisan Samitee volunteers moved about village to village shouting various anti-jotdar slogans and asking the adhiars to did rather than part with this paddy. This produced quite a lot of bitterness against the jotdars..... Since after the middle of December, 1946, large bodies of adhiars and landless labourers started looting paddy from the fields. Their modes of operation was to come 200 to 300 hands strong upon a plot of land , finish reaping all the crops standing thereon in 30 to 40 minutes remove the same to some adhiars house and the repeat the same process in other plots.³⁷

Tebhaga movement turned in to a mass upheaval in 1.5 thousand square mile of Dinajpur, Rangpur and Jalpaiguri districts, fifty villages in the district of Maymensing of East Bengal, thirty villages in Midnapur district of West Bengal and in the three hundred square mile areas of five police stations in Jeshor District of middle and South Bengal, large areas of Kakdip in 24 parganas, Dumuria police station of Khulna district ,... The responsibility of the great upheaval of the peasants in the history of Bengal has come under Krishak Sabha suddenly.³⁸

The struggle for land is coming ahead..... Imperialism will stand by the jodars-zamindars during the period of struggle for land. But, the Calling for the struggle of lands will unite all peasants of Bengal and will start the day of last struggle. As a training of it fifty lac peasants have assembled today in the battle of tebhaga.³⁹

Bengal Provincial 4th Conference of C.P.I demanded the following important demands for the interest of the Peasants, sharecroppers and agricultural laborers-⁴⁰

1. No family can hold more than 25 acres of lands either in agriculture or non - agricultural lands. The lands more than 25 acres of the jotdar's own possession are to be acquired by the state and distributed among the agricultural laborers and poor peasants.
2. All the jotdari and intermediary rights such as zamindari, talukdari, share – cropping, lease share, rent for paddy etc are to be abolished. No non- agricultural person can possess cultivable land.
3. Those intermediaries will be looser for the abolition of zamindari, they will have to be provided Government allowance. It will be granted at per their condition @ maximum Rs. 500.00 and the duration more than 10 years.
4. Revenue is to be paid in cash and land revenue will have to be imposed by abolishing crops paying and share cropping, in a ascending order on the income of land and the persons have been exempted form revenue who can not maintain their family or can very ordinarily.

5. To be introduced cooperative systems for the developed process of cultivation. (4th State Conference of C.P.I, Bengal Provinces Committee, October, 1947, Kolkata)

Bachha Munshi, one of the leaders of Tebhaga movement in Jalpaiguri district, played a significant role in the history of Tebhaga movement working among the peasants and adhiars and fighting against the zamindars, jotdars, mahajans, money lenders and the British imperial powers. A diary written by Munshi about his experience and activities has been found. He wrote, The movement was started in the village to village against the abwab (sub-taxes) and tolabati under the leadership of communist party (taxes on selling and purchasing). Every where raised the slogans 'Land to the tiller' 'Destroy money-lending system' 'Accumulate crops in the own farmyard.'⁴¹

He also wrote, "People were being more organized after subduing in the abwab movement. Our party noticed that only the land was of jotdar among the three sources of cultivation. So the party decided that the derivable of crops of share croppers was 2/3 and 1/3 share of the jotdars. So the Tebhaga movement was started In the Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur and Rangpur districts. In this movement share croppers accumulated crops in their own farmyard they collected 2/3 share of crops, they also took straw. -----Jotdars filed the case in court, sharecroppers were attacked by lathials, firing and arresting was going on in Jalpaiguri district. 22 peasants were killed in Khapur by the bullet of jotdars. I myself and Gurudas Roy organized the peasants in Panchpir and Debiganj... Within a short period started meeting and the movement of occupying land by the sharecroppers in a organized way⁴²

From the statement of Bachha Munshi, it is followed that the movement was not only for Tebhaga, but also for occupation of land, because he clearly mentioned that beside the Tebhaga they carried on the movement to occupy lands, but it is said that the movement for land occupation was not main or active part of the movement, rather Krishak Sabha emphasized to collect Tebhaga from jotdars or intermediaries.

While going on Tebhaga Movement all the Deputy Commissioners, District Magistrates and Sub Divisional Officers were asked by Govt. to send report about the bargadars, jotdars and the relation among them, and the motion of the movement. On behalf of the the Government it was declared

“Government desire that all district Magistrate and sub-divisional officers should exert their exclusive influence to the fullest extent to bring about amicable settlements on similar lines in their own areas wherever there is any trouble or any attempt on the part of land owners for large scale eviction of Bargadars which is likely to result in a breach of peace response it got from the bargadars as a whole.⁴³

Govt. was worried following the intensive motion of the movement with regard to maintain peace and situation under control. So the Government declared-

“The undersigned directed to request that all subdivision officers may be asked to submit reports about the present relation between the bargadars and landlords in their respective subdivision particularly on the following points:-⁴⁴

- (1) Local custom regarding the sharing of the crops between bargadars and landlords.

- (2) The custom regarding stacking of the produce i. e whether is carried to the landlords khamar at the bargadars own place before the division and supply of labour for transferring the produce.
- (3) Whether there has been any movement to change the customary share this year, such as Tebhaga movement in the subdivision.
- (4) What has been the forts and progress of such movement?
 - (a) When it was started?
 - (b) Who organized the same?
 - (c) What was the effect of the movement?
(Additional, Secretary Board of Revenue.)

Maitreya Ghatak gives an over view idea about the Tebhaga movement as followed:

“Tebhaga starts in December, 1946. Agitators of outside and the educated young men of Town organize the movement. The movement had spread in the seven police stations out of twelve. Debiganj, Pachagar, Kotowali, Boda, Mal and Meteli Police Stations are particularly influenced by the Movement.”⁴⁵

He also pointed out, “Even the movement have intensified in the remote villages. Share croppers, unitedly, are harvesting and possessing crops from the land of jotdars on condition to give 1/3 share of the crops to the jotdars by getting receipt from jotdars. In the second phase, the sharecroppers collect 2/3 share of croupes from the store house of jotdars leaving 1/3 share for the jotdars. Initially jotdars were aggressive, they expect that the movement will be stopped by the local administration. Ultimately they started

to compromise with sharecroppers and give them many subsidy. Section 144 slightly bring the situation under control. However, it is suspected that immediately the sharecroppers will start cultivation against the intention of jotdars.”⁴⁶

The Sub divisional officer, Jalpaiguri gave a report on the Tebhaga movement of this Subdivision as follows.⁴⁷

“There has been a very serious movement this year to totally change the procedure of stacking of the paddy and division of the same.

The movement was started from the very beginning of the harvesting of winter paddy that is from early December 1946.

The movement was organized in the interior by educated communist workers of town and out side agitators. Without the town workers and outside agitators there would be no movement in the interior of the sub division. At the beginning some of the communist workers enlisted the support sympathy of one or two persons in each area in the interior.

At the initial stage , there was a confusion and fear among the peasants and sharecroppers to join the movement. But, after starting the movement they came spontaneously and joined the movement. Again Sub-divisional Officer, Jalpaiguri mentioned –

The movement was more or less spread over 7 thanas out of 12 under this subdivision. Thanas of Debiganj, Panchagar, and kotowali, Boda and lastly Mal and Metely were seriously affected by the movement. It can not be said that the movement had spontaneous response of the bargadars. As a result, the agitators could induce very few adhiars and bargadars to cut and took away entire produce from the land to the house of the adhiars. Cutting and taking away entire paddy from jotdars land to Bargadars house

was in fact opposed by the adhiars who thought they would be going against the existing customs. There the out side agitators and town volunteers began to visit different localities in groups of 20 to 30 organized local support and ultimately they began to compel one weak adhiars to cut the paddy from the land, take the same either to the Bargadars house or to any place according to the choice of the agitators. It may be noted here that, in fact no adhiars took part in the cutting and taking away of the paddy from the own land. In most cases the adhiars either accompanied the volunteers or had parsive consent. There was however always the factor of coercion intemidate by the agitators or the adhiars.⁴⁸

The above report is not completely satisfactory because there was no coercion or force to the sharecroppers by the agitators or the leaders of krishak Sabha to be joined the movement against their will, rather it can be said the sharecroppers and agriculturer labourers have a cordial relation with the leaders of Krishak Sabha which is shown from various sources in this chapter.

The 2nd phase of the movement was forcible taking away of paddy stackes and plough cattle's from the khamars and houses of the jotdars. Some cases of removal of paddy from gola were also received. Allegations were also made by many jotdars that the volunteers were armed with lathis, Daos, Bows and other weapons and the jotdars were threatened with violence and assault. Lately women also joined such parties which forcibly removed paddy and cattle from jotders khamars and houses⁴⁹

From the above report it is realized easily that the motion of the movement was very intensive because in the report it was mentioned that at the initial stage in spite of attacked and tortured by the jotdars and zamindars to the bargadars, it had not been possible to suppress the movement and ultimately in many cases the jotdars tried to compromise with bargadars. About the motion of the movement Ranjit Dasgupta wrote,

“The first report on enforcement of Tebhaga in Jalpaiguri district came in late November from a village under Pachagar Thana. Thereafter it began to spread to near and newer areas. On 20 December an attempt was made to enforce Tebhaga on the land of Digen Roy, a big jotdar in Sunder Dighi union under Dabiganj P.S..... Madhab Dutta, Vaidya Barman, Chaitee and few other peasant cadres were assaulted by the jotdars men and arrested by the police... next day a cadre meeting was held attended by Sachin Dasgupta and Biren Neogy, the D.K.S secretary and there was a confusion to carry on the movement. In the mean time, a peasant woman activist stood up and declared that there was no way of going back, ‘Tebhaga has to be enforced on the land of this particular Jotdar’... Renewed preparation were made and on 22 December more than 200 volunteers, both men and women carrying lathis and Red Flags with them assembled, collectively harvested the paddy ...and carried it from the field not to the latter’s kholan but to a place chosen by the peasants for the purpose of threshing.⁵⁰

Collector of 24 Parganas wrote to the Additional secretary, Board of revenue.

“Reference your No.3/60/26 L.R of 21st April, 1947; I have had the advantage of discussing the matter with my predecessors. While we quite agree that officers should use their exclusive influence to prevent large scale eviction of Bargadars we are both at one in feeling that in such cases any attempt to interfere with the established custom of half and half division would only put a premium on further agitation and further trouble. Both of us also consider it necessary to point out that it is impossible to lay down fair rates and I trust that this is a matter which will be left to the dealt with in the light of local circumstances.⁵¹

The condition of the adhiars was so pathetic for which they assembled to struggle against the jotdars, such type of oppression of the jotdars is given below which was published in Samaj Samikshya, bulletin (Mukhapatra) of Indian School of Social Science, Astam barsha, pancham-sasta sankha, 1996, and it was a Mukhapatra of 'BPK.S.

“We are listening to the life story of oppression of the share croppers sitting in the village of Panimachh Pukuriya of Pachagar Thana; We follow a lean-peasant with his wife are walking along the ridge of the field, we call him, but do not come, do not respond. Being surprised we went to their house. They were economically solvent earlier, but during the time of devastating famine in 1350 B.S. they sold their land and became sharecropper from Chukanidar..... In this year he needs loan, but jotdars Md. Aafi Mian was not agree to grant loan without any security or written deed, the jotdar asks to pledge his 3 cows and he (adhiar) is to given 10 mound paddy as on interest of 5 mound paddy only for six months. The adhiar is agreed to have a loan of 12 mound paddy on the pledge of three cows by oral agreement, he only receive 3mound paddy and it is decided that the rest will be given later on. But he went to jotdars house fourth times to receive his dues, but he returns with empty handed. All the members of the house are fasting till seven days. In this pathetic circumstance, his sister comes to his house with three children for want of food.⁵²

Another pathetic scene of adhiar family was written in this article,

I just tell a story, following same scenario in every house, went to the neighboring house. They have sold the elder daughter for want of food. The younger, but elder amongst boys has given as an adopted son two boys and a Girl are sucking dry breast-milk of their mother. The peasant and his wife are fasting since previous day.⁵³

So, from the above statement it can be easily understand how the adhiars or sharecroppers were oppressed cheated by the Jotdars, Mahajans and money lenders generation by generation and they had to tolerate all the oppression without any protest blaming on their lot. They never got justice from court or administration, because administrators or police confined an unofficial alliance with the jotdars, zamindars and intermediaries. Naturally, in the Tebhaga movement sharecroppers, small peasants and labourers come out the house and assembled to struggle against all sorts of oppressions. They got Krishak Sabha as their friend. So when Krishak Sabha demanded one volunteers and one rupee from every house the adhiars responded and provided it within very short time.

From every house adhiars came out became volunteer, taking training and joined the struggle.

Different historians and scholars have given their views from different angles about the nature and role of Krishak Sabha as well as the leaders of the Tebhaga Movement. There are lot of writings in different journals including thesis which has been published by different scholars and writers. Maitreya Ghatak in his article raised some questions about the role of Krishak Sabha - In the first conference of Bangiya Pradeshik Krishak Sabha discussing on the problems relating to agriculture and peasants but no discussions were held on the problems of Barga systems and bargadars.

In the conference of Baragram in Hugli district, mentioned the existence of Barga system and security of the Bargadars but no programme had been taken in that conference about the Barga problems and bargadars. In 1939 a memorandum was sent to Floud commission from Krishak Sabha mentioning barga system, oppressions and exploitations of the bargadars by the jotdars and zamindars, inspite of that there were discrepancy and controversy

on the question of bargadari rights and share of the bargadars of the produced crops.⁵⁴

In the conference of Panjia in Joshor district in 1940, the demand of Tebhaga had been raised first after coming out of the report of Floud commission wherein confessed the demand of Tebhaga, (Ibid). According to Dr. Gyanabrota Bhattacharja Tebhaga movement was an unorganized revolt by un-organizing agency.⁵⁵ Dr. Sugata Basu also supported the view of Bhattacharja. Andre Beteille thought that the bargadars were assigned to carry on the movement by Krishak Sabha as an agent of communist party which was not favorable for the interest of the bargadars. He also mentioned that the Krishak Sabha was not at all a peasant organization as because most of the leaders of Krishak Sabha were not peasants or bargadars themselves.⁵⁶

Dr. Binay Bhushan Chowdhuri denied the views of Bhattacharya, Sugata Bose and Andre Beteille. Dr. Chowdhuri pointed out that the bargadars were not poked by Krishak Sabha, rather the Sabha had a background of peasant movement, so the Scholars should know, why the movement of adhiars or bargadars had spread in all over Bengal.⁵⁷ We get from the contemporary report of S.D.O Jalpaiguri-

“The landlords were at first under the impression that the movement would not develop into such mass agitators and expected that they would be able to stop the movement with the help of the local authorities. So at the beginning the jotdars were adamant. Ultimately however most of the jotdars have been able to induce their adhiars to share the crop apparently by conceding to given some concession in other matters such as total remission of interest on paddy advanced by jotdars also completed to agree to accept $\frac{1}{3}$ of the crop due to the pressure of the agitators to sign Tebhaga receipts that is receipts showing accept of $\frac{1}{3}$ share by jotdars.

Besides the extreme cases on the whole this year also the general system has been the sharing the produce half and half as before between the jotdars and adhiars.”⁵⁸

It is true that most of the leaders of Bangiya Pradeshik Krishak Sabha were not peasants themselves, most of whom came from middle class family and intellectuals, yet it can not be accept the view of Andre Beteille. If we go through the history of French revolution, Bolshevik Revolution or Chinese Revolution or Long March or any of the movement or struggle we can see the intellectuals namely writers, poet, philosophers historians, scientist painters or artist - they all had a significant role in the revolution. So, it is meaningless to be the same community regarding any movement or struggle. Beside this it can not be told that the leaders of Tebhaga movement had not direct relation with the bargadars sympathetically, rather it can be said that the leaders in spite of coming from middle class family and more or less economically in better position, they realized the situation of the bargadars, small peasants and agricultural labourers sympathetically by working directly with the bargadars and they dedicated their life in the struggle. They moved door to door of the peasants and adhiars, held meeting and carried on movement concealing them from the British Indian Government. Sunil Sen wrote, “In Bengal the communists took the lead in organizing the provincial Kishak Sabha, as a branch of the AIKS, which held its first session at Bankura in March 1937. Within a year Krishak Sabha units were formed in the district. In 1937 it had only 11,000 members; with organization improving the membership rose to 1,78,000 in 1944, 2,55,000 in 1945, 2,03,382 in 1947. In the 1940s about one thousand full-time activist that included intellectuals and peasants worked in the district; they were apparently the core of the Krishak Sabha.”⁵⁹ We also get information from Government report regarding the role of communist party and Krishak Sabha-

Practically in all cases, the entire produce was removed by the agitators so to say. The adhiars themselves had very little say in the matter. In some cases quantities were left out for the jotdars according to their sweet will of the agitators. Communist workers profess that $\frac{1}{3}$ share of the jotdars have been kept in reserve under their custody but in fact that is not the case. A large part of the produce was damaged either in cutting or at the time of removal by volunteers.⁶⁰

In 1946 the prices of all essential things were going up tremendously, the prices of food crops and paddy were also so high, yet jotdars and zamindars stored paddy in their store house (gola). District Krishak Sabha demanded to the Deputy Commissioner to supply paddy in the market from the store house of jotdars to control the market prices of paddy. But the Deputy Commissioner did not respond. In this circumstances Dainik Swadhinata wrote,

“As soon as the news reached in the village, Peasants and share croppers unitedly surrounded the store houses of the jotdars, volunteers of seven unions in Pachagar Police Station guarded every store house following strictly on the brockers. 3 big jotdars, in the mean time agreed to give away the stored paddy.”⁶¹

Again Swadhinata wrote in the month of November, 1946 about the motion of the movement.

“Tebhaga movement created enthue and inspiration in the mind of the peasants of Boda, Pachagar and Debiganj Police Station. Everyday hundreds of Peasants volunteers enrolled their names for the struggle against jotdars.”⁶²

It is mentioned in the Government Report about the motion of the movement in Jalpaiguri district, “Here in this subdivision during the harvest season Communist Volunteers in batches visited

different localities established camps in the interior, enlisted local support and the helped selected adhiars to cut and take the entire procedure from their lands and stack there in places suitable for the purpose of the communist. The jotdars could not oppose as a large number of volunteers armed with lathis, scythes etc. would gather together and cut paddy of some land on each occasion when the harvesting of paddy from the fields.”⁶³

Ranjit Dasgupta wrote, “It seems to be the first to make a social relation between poor peasants and us, we stepped in the village in 1941 after passing the first year of world war and the relation with town is torned. Remaining among peasants for one and half years, sympathetically following their life, halting night sometimes in cow shed, sometimes in kitchen - all these turned the mind of Psychic world of our workers.”⁶⁴

Sushil Sen, another leader of communist party and BPKS highlighted the experience and living condition during that period in his memories as follows –

“When we arrived in the village, we did not think that we had to face in such type of critical situation. Sometimes we had to sleep in a group of pigs, sometime halt the night in the bed of straw in cow shed among cows and goats. We would eat the same which was eaten by peasants, sometimes it was only the soup of jute-leaf. We would remain fasting when they (peasants) did. Yet, we organized them against the all sorts of oppressions remaining among the peasants – because we thought always that we were communist.”⁶⁵

The adhiars, volunteers of Tebhaga movement including men and women treated the leaders of the Krishak Sabha as their friend and guide. Many times they protected the leaders of Krishak Sabha from the police of British Government. Kalyani Dasgupta the woman leaders of Tebhaga movement wrote, “Deben Jotdar of

Pachagar is a prominent and oppressive. It is being discussed in the meeting of workers whether will be gone in the farmyard of Deben jotdar or not, and have a confusion about it. In the meantime a women stand up and boldly remark, we have to go there and ultimately happen the same..... The only woman take over the treatment of Madhab Dutta in Panchpir of Boda inspite of having threatening and fear when he (Madhab Dutta) was injured.”⁶⁶

Hemanta Ghosal, leader of Tebhaga movement wrote, “When we organize the movement, the workers of Krishak Sabha could not promise their word everywhere. We had limited power. But the news, the movement of Tebhaga would be started, passed over the villages currently. ‘One rupee, one lathi, one youth’ – the number of volunteers reached to ten thousand depending on that slogan. They communicated with us earnestly and joined the Tebhaga movement in a organized way under Krishak Sabha.”⁶⁷

He again wrote about the heartiest cooperation and drastic promise to fight against the oppression –

“Ultimately the police declared warrant against leaders. To avoid this apprehension we would shelter in Tatda and Maishal of Bhangar thana, it was walking way of six hours, after finishing the walking of whole day for safe shelter sometimes it seems to be intensive, we would become so tired.....In this circumstances we had to spent without food for 3-4 days.....Sometimes lady and women of the peasant families supplied food to us – perhaps they remained fasting. Even they protected us from the aggression of police for whole night in the absence of male persons of the house.”⁶⁸

It is mentioned in the Government: “Just at this moment the movement appears to be slightly under control on account of promulgation orders under section 144 C.R.P.C. In this subdivision prohibiting was assen,bling of more than 4 persons

holding of meetings and of procession etc. It is however apprehended that very soon the adhiar under the influence of the agitators will begin to plough the lands of jotdars even against the will of the latter.⁶⁹ A daring and dedicatory incident is shown in the story of Manik Bandhyapadhyay 'Haraner Natjamai' in such a way Bhuban Mandal, a leader of Communist Party and Krishak Sabha, working in a village, one day at night police surrounded the village to arrest Bhuban Mandal. Then Bhuban Mandal sheltered in the house of Moynar ma (Mother of Moyna), Police entered the house of Moynar ma and enquired her about Bhuban Mandal, but Moynar ma surprisingly denied and she told that she did not know Bhuban Mandal, in the mean time Moynar Ma sheltered Bhuban Mandal to take rest in the room with Moyna her daughter to prove Bhuban Mandal as her son in law to the police. Police tried to identify Bhuban Mandal, but could not do it. Moynar Ma, then asked Bhuban Mandal and Moyna to go to bed and requested police officer (Manmath) to allow them to go to bed, Moynar Ma then shut the door.⁷⁰

From the above story, it is proved that, a woman took the responsibility to save Bhuban Mandal from Police and she showed her dare avoiding the prestige of her daughter in the circumstances of the contemporary conservative society, because then the society could not accept such type of incident treating it as a defaming.

Adriene Cooper argued in her thesis that the bargadars were conducted by 'communal mentality and the movement was affected by the Muslim Politics.'⁷¹ Prof. D. N. Dhanagare also emphasized the 'Primordial Loyalties' of the bargadars. According to him Muslim peasants were attracted gradually by the Muslim politics and for the demand of Pakistan and the peasants including bargadars were eliminated from Krishak Sabha and the movement against the jotdars.⁷² Peter Custers denied the views of Cooper and Dhanagare regarding communal politics. He emphasized the politics and class consciousness of the bargadars, poor peasants

and labourers.⁷³ Dr. Partha Chatterjee also admitted that the peasants were inspired to have their demand by a class interest.⁷⁴ Dr. Binay Bhushan Chowdhuri denied the much role of the Muslim league on bargadars. He showed that the Muslim peasants were influenced by the Muslim League more or less where... the organization of Krishak Sabha was weak or was not existed at all.⁷⁵ Sumit Sarkar, a prominent historian wrote in the introduction of the 'Tirish Challisher Bangla' written by Abani Lahiri.

“Today, no one almost remember that how the communists had stand hard against the communal riots and sometimes they stopped the riots. Noakhali was of course, enlighten moment of Gandhiji, but would it be forget the incident of ‘Lal Hasnabad’, few miles north of Noakhali. There, the Muslim Peasants gave shelter to the thousands of Hindus under leadership of communists”.⁷⁶

Abani Lahiri opined in the interview to Ranjit Dasgupta

“I believe, Bengal is the only place among Muslim dominant province where the Muslim peasants, after many confusion and hesitation, ultimately, assembled under the banner of Muslims league in the 1940's for the defects and error of our national leaders and different historical causes. This assemblence was not inevitable. It was proved in the election of 1937 that the Muslim peasants would remains in Muslim league – it was not inevitable.”⁷⁷

It is vital question why a large number of Muslim peasants including bargadars went under the banner of Muslim league, because just few years ago in the election of 1937 Muslim league did not get sufficient seats in Bengal, rather Krishak Proja party of Fazlul Haque obtained more seats than Muslim league, which proves that majority percent Muslims could not support Muslim league. More over after election of 1937 Fazlul Haque proposed to

National Congress to form coalition Govt. in Bengal, but National Congress denied the proposal, so Fazlul Haque formed Govt. collaboration with Muslim League as a result of which, Communal politics had been going to be strong, and Muslim people were eliminated from national politics provoking themselves and scattering the germ of communalism and ultimately communal riots had been increasing gradually, because Muslim League became success to alter the mind of many Muslim peasants including bargadars that they will be more happy if they obtained separate state where Tebhaga was unnecessary.

It can not be denied that either Communist Party or Krishak Sabha could not form strong organization in Bengal or India as a whole as a class to fight against the feudal system or Capitalism or imperialism, rather so many diversity regarding religion, caste Community etc among the people of Bengal and elsewhere in India existed till then, a large number of people were untouchable. Many national leaders either National Congress or Communist party even the extremists' revolutionary could not overcome the communal mentality. Many national leaders could not treat the lower class people that were subaltern people as their friend or brothers, even the social reformer could not keep aloof themselves from conservativeness and orthodoxy. Dr. B.R Ambedkar realizing the situation of the society like India, felt the social revolution because he believed that without social revolution India could not be prosperous, developed and could end the oppression. It is also true that without social revolution or consciousness class struggle would not be possible. So in these circumstances it was not possible to stop communal politics by communist party.

From the above discussion, it may be summaries that the peasant movements in Jalpaiguri, particularly the 'Tebhaga Movement as elsewhere in Bengal had a significant role to organize the peasants including bargadars and labourers against all sorts of oppressions of the jotdars, zamindars intermediary tenure

holders. Though ultimately the movement became failure, yet it is said that there were many reasons behind this failure. Firstly, the Communist Party of India, Bangiya Pradeshik Krishak Sabha was failure to organize the peasants including bargadars and labourers into a class in a grass root level. In the district, Jalpaiguri as else where in India, in spite of exploitation, oppression of the peasants, bargadars labourers and lower class people by the jotdars zamindars, Mahajans and money-lenders, more over oppressed and depressed of the lower castes people that was untouchables by the higher caste's people peasant or labour movement could not grow into a class struggle as a whole due to weakness, aims, and programmes of the organization of C.P.I as well as Krishak Sabha. Abani Lahiri in his article "Last battle of Bengal Peasants under British Rule" wrote, "There was a serious realization amongst the leadership of the struggle of the failure to mobilize the support and sympathy of other democratic sections of the people," ⁷⁸ He again wrote, "Explaining the peasant's demands to other democratic sections was a very important talk. But revolutionary class alliance was not built through explanatory campaigns alone. It was necessary to have the experience of common struggle. If six million peasants had started their struggle in 1945 harvesting season for which the objective condition was as favorable as in 1946, its tidal sweep would have coincided with the revolt of the RIN ratings and the barricade fights on the streets of Calcutta. The poor and landless peasants of Bengali missed this opportunity." ⁷⁹

2ndly, it was wrong decision of the C.P.I supporting Russia during the 2nd world war for which C.P.I could not fight against the British power wherever it was crucial time to organized the peasants labourers including lower class and lower castes people and carry on the movement against the Imperialist power as well as oppressors because it became the bad impression among the common people of India, for the policy of C.P.I not to fight against British power during Second world war.

3rdly, the leaders of the Communist Party of India as well as Krishak Sabha were in hesitation and confusion in many respects of the bargadars while going on the movement. Some times they could not give proper decision on high time.

After 2nd world war an intensive discontent was among the peasants workers and lower class people and they were ready to dedicate themselves in the revolution, but the communist party was failure to organize them and make a revolution as the National Congress party was not in favors of revolution. Abani Lahiri gave his view in the interview.

The question was raised at the time of movement, what would be the way of obstruction against the aggression of jotdars and zamindars? Such moment has come after firing in Thumniya or Thakurgaon town –peasants come to the Samity office unitedly and told ‘give arms, we will fight, we have no arms, from where we would supply? But from the point of ideology and planning, how would be obstructed the problems? The way of non-violence of Gandhiji was not ours, then what was the alternative? We could not give the answer of this question? ⁸⁰

Another mistake of the Krishak Sabha was not to bring the small jotdars in their platform, if they could do it their organization would be strong, because small jotdars were not the class enemy of bargadars or communist party.

4thly, All India politics was also responsible for the failure of the movement. Indian National Congress and Muslim league were going to have the power of sovereignty dividing India into two Independent States-namely, India and Pakistan. The top leaders of both the parties were keenly interested to gain their power and position, Communal riots were going on all over India.

So, in this circumstance, it should not be expected from the Tebhaga Movement or the leaders of the Krishak Sabha to carry on the movement for long time and to change whole structure of the society because of the contemporary political situation and social structure of India. Despite all these limitation the Tebhaga movement was remarkable in the history of peasant movement in Jalpaiguri as well as in Bengal. Badruddin Umar has rightly remarked that in spite of having many short comings this is the only glorious movement in the history of organized peasant movement in Bengal.⁸¹

Naxal Movement

The West Bengal Estate Acquisition act, 1953 was passed and started its implementation from 1955 and then the West Bengal Land Reforms Act was passed in 1955. The Zamindari and the jotdari systems were done away with and the amount of lands possessed by any jotdar or Zamindar was brought under ceiling. By the West Bengal Land Reforms Act, a large number of jotes all over West Bengal were declared as excess lands, but all excess lands were not distributed among the landless peasants and bargadars. The jotdars and Zamindars possessed the excesses lands in the name of each member of the house, relatives, friends and even the name of their domestic animals illegally. Moreover they possessed the excess lands over ceiling declaring them as bheri and orchard though it was still under cultivators.

To analyze the peasant unrest in the 1960's in North Bengal particularly in the district of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri, it is to be realized the political situation of Bengal. In the 1960's an ideological clash was going on between the two leftist parties namely C.P.I and C.P.I (M). C.P.I (M) criticized the parliamentary policy of C.P.I as the C.P.I (M) emphasized on revolutionary policy. But the election which was held on 19th Feb, 1967, the political situation of Bengal changed rapidly. Before the election, C.P.I (M) was not believed in any kind of alliance with C.P.I or Bengal Congress. But after declaring the result of the election it was found that there was no single majority party who could form the Government, INC acquired 127seats, but the congress was not interested to form the Government with other parties. Naturally, some anti-congress parties were interested to form the Government, in such a situation, the support of C.P.I. (M) was necessary. In this circumstance, a meeting of Secretariat Committee, of CPI (M) W.B was held on 24th Feb, 1967 and

decided to support the anti-congress Government, but less interested to attend the ministry. The meeting of Polit Bureau was held in Tribandram to support all the alternative (anti-congress) democratic parties to form the Government.

Immediately after declaration of the decision of C.P.I (M) to support and go to the ministry of the state of West Bengal the inner clash or ideological conflict was going up in the C.P.I. (M). The members of C.P.I (M) who believed in the revolutionary policy could not tolerate the compromising policy of the party. They boldly criticized and protested the parliamentary policy of the party. The members believed in revolutionary activities namely Sushital Roy Chowdhury, Saraj Dutta, Niranjana Bose, Asit Sen, Parimal Dasgupta, Promod Ranjan Sengupta, Suniti Kumar Ghosh of South Bengal carried on ideological and debatist movement in the party. In the same time the leaders of North Bengal namely Charu Majumdar, Souren Bose, Kanu Sanyal, Jangal Santal were preparing for the revolutionary anti-parliamentary movement. They emphasized on the revolutionary peasants movement in North Bengal.

It is shown in the previous chapters that the peasants, agricultural labourers and sharecroppers in the district as elsewhere in India were victimized and oppressed by the jotdars – Zamindars and their intermediaries. It has been discussed in the next chapter that the problems of small peasants including agricultural labourers and sharecroppers had not yet been solved upto 1970's after independence. There were lacs of landless people who had not way to survive in spite of having huge number of landholders who occupied illegally large amount of lands. Actually, the land reforms Act, 1955 could not solve traditional agrarian problems. It was declared in liberation, "India which was a colony of Britain a little over twenty years ago, has now become a neo-colony of several imperialist powers, chief among which are the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union. The U.S. imperialists, the most aggressive

enemies of all mankind, are also the worst enemies of the Indian people. There neo-colonial grip over India is now complete.⁸²

Here, it is followed that the Communist Revolutionaries (Maoist) treated Soviet Union as their enemy inspite of being a socialist country. 'Liberation' pointed out, "The Soviet renegade ruling clique, which has set up again a bourgeois dictatorship in the first socialist state of the world, is actively collaborating with imperialise and has turned India into a neo-colony of both the USA and the Soviet Union. India provides the classic example of the collaboration of the USA imperialists and the Soviet neo-colonists for joint world domination."⁸³

Now almost every body realize that the condition of West Bengal is not being fovourable under the rule of Delhi..... This is an all-round failure, particularly, the law and order

A socio-political tention was going on. This noisy condition and massacre is not limited in a particular zone, it has spread in every district of the state.⁸⁴

In the document of the anti-party Sodhanbad Birodhi Sangram Committee was written,- "Comrades the nature of invertebrate and pety-bourgeois of our party leaders is not any sudden incident, it is their compromising tendency and the logical result of the organizational policy..... Today this leadership should be removed for the interest of the labour class."⁸⁵

B.T Ranadibhe wrote in Deshitaishi published on 17.3.1967, "Stop the ousting of peasants from land, stop the expulsion of labourer abatement of land revenue distribution of food in the legal process- such types of reform works would have to be started by the Cabinet."⁸⁶ But leaders of Siliguri subdivision of C.P.I (M) believing in revolutionary activities could not rely on the ministry of united Front Government and the parliamentary attitude of C.P.I

(M). So, their grievances and discontent were going up, as a result of which, they were preparing themselves for the militant action to occupy lands from rich peasant who illegally possessed excessive lands over ceiling.

They could not rely on the ideology and activities of the communist party of India (Maxist) because the central committee of the communist party of India (Marxist) adopted a political line of anti-revolutionary, opposed to chairman Mao Tse Tung's thought and Marxism Leninism. The central committee has made a declaration in favour of peaceful transition to socialism and has chosen the path of the country's progress through parliamentary democracy.⁸⁷ So, the Revolutionaries removed themselves from CPI (M). They thought that the feudal and semi-feudal systems were still existed in the Indian agrarian economy. Charu Majumdar wrote, "India is a semi colonial, semi-feudal country. So the main force which can change the colonial condition in this country is the peasantry and their anti-feudal struggle."⁸⁸ He believed, "No change is conceivable in this country without agrarian revolution. And it is the agrarian revolution that proves to be the only path towards the liberation of this country"⁸⁹.

The members of Krishak Sabha wearing red cloths, holding red coloured flag of C.P.I (M) with lathi, bows and arrows broke out into rebellion with raising slogans 'Mao-Tse-tung Jindabad' 'Militant peasants take the way of revolution.' During the first week of March 1967, peasants of Naxal bari Kharibari and Fansi dewa were ready to revolt any time against jotdars. In the month of March 20 general diary about, plunders and occupation of land were recorded. But the police did not take any action.

A group of peasants were organized by Charu Majumdar to occupy land with arms on 03.03.1967, demarcating land with red colored flag and declared it as the land of Krishak Sabha which was a sub organization of C.P.I (M). In the next two months, such types of 60 incidents were found in Naxalbari, Kharibari and

Fanshi Dewa Police Station. Beside occupation of land, cultivation of land by force, plundering of rice and paddy, threatening and attacking to the jotdars were continuing About 100 incidents of routing took place from 09.03.1967 to 22.05.1967. But police did not interfere on it from the prohibition of United Front Government, though the jotdars tried to protest these incident. The first area conference of Krishak Sabha of Siliguri Subdivision was held on 18.03.1967 and it was resolved in that conference that the lands would be occupied forcefully. Charu Majumdar, Souren Bose, Kanu Sanyal, Jangal Santal, Khokan Majumdar were promised to defeat mutual attitude and parliamentary policy of United Front Government with revolutionary activities.⁹⁰

It was disclosed in Calcutta on Januarys that a third communist party drawing inspiration from the thought of Mr. Mao Tse Tung and accepting unreservedly the leadership of communist party had for all practical purpose started functioning in the country.⁹¹

The Naxalite movement had spread in the different states of India. In the meeting of all India Co-ordination committee of communist Revolutionaries held on 08.02.1969 pointed out "It is during this period that the flames of agrarian revolution have spread out from Naxalbari to Srikakulam in the south and to Mushahari and Lakhimpur Kheri in the North. It has been the period when the peasant revolutionaries of Kerala have staged a heroic revolt that has shaken period of the bursting forth of the revolutionary liberation struggle of the Adibasi people in chotanagpur and its uninterrupted advance."⁹²

In this circumstance, committee realized to form a revolutionary party. It was mentioned "Without a revolutionary party there can be no revolutionary discipline and without revolutionary discipline the struggles can not be raised to a higher level. Only a revolutionary party can infuse revolutionary

discipline, the spirit of self sacrifice and death – defying abandon. So, for taking these struggles forward it is essential to form an All India Party and a centre recognized by all revolutionaries.⁹³

The All India Co-ordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries, which met in a plenary session from 19th to 22nd April 1969, announces the formation of the revolutionary party, communist party of India (Maxist – Leninist), based on the thought of Mao Tse Tung on 22nd April 1969, the one hundredth birthday of Great Lenin – a task it set itself eighteen months ago, setting up a Central Organizing Committee to hold congress at an appropriate time.⁹⁴

As the naxalites were completely revolutionary they emphasized on the armed struggle. To organize the peasant movement on the basis of the politics of armed struggle, they started to form militant organization with the leadership of poor and landless peasants and collect arms from different sources. They also formed a liberated zone in different parts of the country. Charu Majumdar wrote, “A liberated Zone is a peasant area from which all the class enemies have been ousted. To build a zone we require peasant armed power.”⁹⁵ But where from the peasant would obtain guns? Charu Majumdar wrote, “ The class enemies have guns and they live in the village. The guns must be snatched from them..... For this the peasant militants must be trained to set the class enemies’ houses on fire and to use all other techniques. Apart from this, we will get guns by sudden attacks on the armed forces of the Government.”⁹⁶

The tactics of the revolutionaries for organizing peasant struggle must be entirely different from the revisionist tactics. The foremost duty of the revolutionaries is to spread and propagate the thought of Chairman Mao and to try to intensify the Party

organization must organize propaganda by means of secret meetings.⁹⁷

The formation of third communist party wanted to grow up from the base through revolutionary struggles. The committee now felt that in the last one year the Naxalite movement had spread sufficiently to warrant the formation of a party to guide and co-ordinate the activities of communist revolutionaries in different states of India.

In the first party congress of CPI(ML) renewed its pledge to hold fast to the Mao-Tse-Tung line forge unity with the Communist Party of China accelerate the process of Guerrilla struggle and build up a strong “people liberation army.”

It approved with minor modification in the first party congress of CPI(ML) that the party’s programme to create “innumerable points of guerrilla struggles In the vast country-side with the object of creating “Red bases through annihilation of class enemies and all kind of suppressions of the peasants

Naxalites not only wanted to occupy lands from zamindars – Jotdars and intermediaries, but also wanted to smash the State power. Charu Majumdar writes, “If the Naxalbari peasant struggle has any lesson for us, it is this militant struggles must be carried on not for land, crops etc. but for the seizure of state power. It is precisely this that gives the Naxalbari struggle its uniqueness. Peasants in different areas must prepare themselves in a manner so as to be able to render ineffective the state apparatus in their respective areas. It is in Naxalbari that this path has been adopted for the first time in the history of peasant struggle in India.⁹⁸

In a circular on May 17 the Communist party (Marxist-Leninist has for the first time, taken up a programme of infiltration among workers in the industrial sector to propagate seriously the

party's 'political line in order to create a ferment among the working class. The circular clarified that, the objective of the Naxalites was neither to organize new trade unions or capture the existing ones nor to discourage the works.

It added "Our first task to give the workers our political line and to enlist their active participation in the peasants armed guerrilla struggle in the countryside. We have to impress upon them the need to annihilate the class enemies through which the state power can be captured and the liberation of the entire exploited masses achieved"⁹⁹

It was followed that there were some dissimilarities among the Naxalite leaders of the North Bengal and South Bengal, not only that the same discrepancy was followed among the leaders of North Bengal. Dr. Sailen Debnath writes, "At this stage of experimental beginning Majumdar and Sanyal had friendly disagreements as to the policies and procedures of the movement to be followed. Majumdar argued to pursue armed struggle by raising and involving small groups of armed communists against the individual class enemies But Kanu Sanyal for the purpose of armed revolution or at least initially for armed struggle to make the path of the future revolution did not consider the murder of individual class enemy at all necessary"¹⁰⁰

Naxalbari movement was extended in the district of Jalpaiguri within very short period. The small peasant's adhiars or bargadars were being organized to occupy excessive lands over ceiling from jotdars forcefully with revolutionary activities.

Though the duration of the Naxalbari movement was short, it was very significant in the field of peasant movement in India as a class struggle as because the movement was carried out by oppressed and depressed classes people that were peasants, share croppers and labourers though it was led by middle class

intellectuals who sacrificed their life in the revolution to change the society. Later on the movement and organization was extended various parts of India, even today Naxal organization and their activities were seen in South India, particularly Andharprodesh, Bihar and Bengal. Many brilliant students and intellectuals participated and devoted their life in the movement.

A documentary evidence of the link between the CPI (M-L) and the communist of East Pakistan (Marxist – Leninist) is contained in the first clandestinely published issue of Liberation, the all India organ of the CPI (M-L) the journal has proudly recorded “Our party and revolution have received and receiving the personal care and guidance of chairman Mao.” The issue published a message of greetings from the central committee of the CPIP (M-L) to the central organizing committee of the CPI (M-L) in which the East Pakistan party has stated that it has adopted the slogan raised by Mr. Charu Mazumdar; “China’s chairman is our path.”¹⁰¹

Mr. Kanu Sanyal, the Naxalite leader was arrested with Kadam Mallick and 40 other naxalites in Singijhora tea estate under Phansidewa police station on August 19, 1970. The police recovered a huge quantity of arms and immunities bomb-making ingredients and Naxalite literature from them.¹⁰²

Life in the northern half of Calcutta was paralysed on August 20 by Naxalite actions as a counterblast to the arrest of their leader, Mr. Kanu Sanyal. Over night they plastered walls with posters swearing reprisal for the arrest and went into action early morning in the course of which they set fire to seven buses and two tram cars, threw bombs and brickbats indiscriminately at passing vehicles and attacked state police and CRP pickets at several places. The latest edition of the Liberation, which was being clandestinely published and circulated, lists the names of nearly

100 land holders killed by guerrilla squads as well as the dates and places of their killing.¹⁰³

From the above discussion it is followed that the Naxalite movement turned into a militant struggle of the peasants, bargadars and workers lead by communist leaders (Maoist). In many parts of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts naxalites murdered many jotdars.

Charu Majumdar wrote to a comrade by his letter “Rajniti Procharer Kaje Jor Dao”

“This year, meetings were held in many gardens of Hill and everywhere speeches were delivered in favour of militant struggle, even among the 23 speakers 13 have discussed about the importance of the militant struggle in the conference of tea estates. Labour classes have been awakening, anything may occur in any day.”¹⁰⁴

Many scholars and politicians analyzed on the activities and impact of the Naxalite movement from different angles. Many of them criticized the activities and policies of the movement. We know that the united front Government tried to introduce land reforms but could not be succeeded fully. After coming in power, Left Front Government took the initiative for land reforms in full enthusiasm with introducing operation Barga and Panchayet Raj system. For the limitation, from bureaucratic complexity, party-politics, biasness land reforms movement could not be fully successful. Here it can not be denied hat the Naxalite movement attacked the bourgeois structure of the village society. They tried to breakdown the dominant class of the village and establish classless society giving the economic right for living to the lower class and depressed class people. Partha Pratim Bandhyapadhyay writes, “The evasion of apparent change is shown by the Conscious work of the naxalites. In place of old exploitation,

oppression and chain, another chain has come in the new form – party politics, characterlessness eclipsed the mouth of change”¹⁰⁵

Charu Majumdar writes, “ Naxalbari lives and will live. This is because it is based on invincible Marxism – Leninism – Mao – Tse Tung Thought. We shall face many obstacles, many difficulties, many acts of betrayal and there will be many set backs. But Naxalbari will not die because the bright sunlight of chairman Mao’s thought has fallen on it like a blessing”¹⁰⁶

Many question raises about the policy activities and method of the Naxal movement. Firstly the organization was not so strong to create a revolution which was very much essential, if we go through the Bolshevik revolution or Chinese revolution, it is followed that a large number of people organized and participated in the revolution where as the Naxal Movement was not carried out by a strong political organization, The leaders of Naxalite movement were till then in C.P.I (M) and the movement was carried out under the leadership of Krishak Sabha, a branch of C.P.I (M). The Central Committee did not support this movement. Apart from this, there was a debate and confusion about the method and activities of the movement among the Naxal leaders, there was a discord among the leaders of this North Bengal and South Bengal. 2ndly, the line factor was one of the defects of the movement. In the situation of political disunity among the leaders and absence of strong organization, it was not proper time to start a militant movement. 3rdly, the Conflict and disconformity among the Naxalite leaders was one of the factors for failure.

It is said that of late differences had arisen between him (Kanu Sanyal) and his mentor, Mr. Charu Mazumdar, whom he had once hailed C.P.I (M-L) publication denied that there were any ideological differences in the top leadership of the party. But in the Latest edition of the Liberation’ in which Mr. Mazumdar confessed

that the party's programme was being sniped at by "Centrists within the party."

The liberation quoted Mr. Mazumdar as having told party workers that some "Comrades" in the party, while admitting the annihilation programme as a starting point of a guerrilla war were not prepared to accept it as a "higher form of class struggle, According to Mr. Mazumdar the programme relates to liquidation of big land holders, would "liberate the minds of the peasants from the weeds of selfishness, fear localism and casteism."¹⁰⁷

Like India, where majority people were depressed class that were lower castes and lower classes, and feudalism was existing in the village economy, in spite of that the communist parties were failure to form organization among the depressed class people, rather communists were confined themselves in the conflict and clash. 4thly, the communists were failure to identify the real class enemy, Some times the struggle was going on among the communists and lower class people instead of against the land lards or industrialist while going on Naxal movement.

It was found that the peasants, belong to 20-40 bighas of lands who were chukanidars under British rule, not a big jotdars or zamindars were murdered by the Naxalites. So it was the extreme technical mistake of the Leaders.

Another factor for the failure of Naxalities movement was different views and disunity among the Naxal leaders, it was followed since the formation of the Communist party. Communists were divided and gradually they formed different new parties such as C.P.I, C.P.I (M) R.S.P, S.U.C.I, C.P.I (M-L). In such way CPI (ML) was also divided and formed another party. It was learnt in Calcutta on May 18 that the left communist extremists who have kept away from the newly-formed communist party of India (Marxist Leninist) plan to form another party. Their party will also

be a Maoist party but different from the C.P.I (ML) which they allege is distorting Maoism and following the middle class evolutionism of Che Guevara, the late Cuban revolutionary .¹⁰⁸

It was mentioned in 'Desh', the Bengali Patrika

Naxalites have harmed C.P.I (M) in different ways, Firstly, they captured many active organizers. Secondly, they are the only group who showed their dare to fight physically against C.P.I (M).with a challenge. Thirdly the middle class people of the town have been removed from C.P.I (M). Fourthly, Naxalites hampered the democratic movement of C.P.I (M) by which C.P.I (M) organized maximum number of people. Fifthly, Naxalite activities have given the opportunity to the Government to appoint more police and military - those police and militaries have beaten C.P.I (M).¹⁰⁹ It is not denied that the ferocious activities among the allied parties of the front reached in such a stage during the rule of United Front Government, the naxalites were inspired by the great ideology of Mao – Tse - Tung to attack equally even the left and the right parties as a result of which 2321 persons were murdered.¹¹⁰

So, for the above limitation and setback the Naxal movement became a failure ultimately and even after 60 years of independence the society could not be changed radically as a result of which, deprivation and oppression have been continuing in all parts of India and yet communist parties are failure to enter into lower class people and depressed sections of the people. It is a failure to apply the Marxian theory in accordance with the need and necessity of the society like India and to organize the people for establishing socialism by revolution or any other process. Shashi Bhushan Singh in his article wrote, "The biggest achievement of Naxalism was that it was able to arouse the passions of the SCs against oppression. But when it came to administering justice, the Naxalites while effective against SCs

were not so effective against the supper castes, Voilent means could not be used against the supper castes because it could lead to en bloc retaliation. For example, when the oxen of one Hira Shing were stolen, he complained to the MEC about this saying that one Bhura Shing was responsible. But the MEC could not do any thing about it because he was a Rajput.”¹¹¹

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Chapter - 5

Land Revenue and Land Reforms in the Post – Colonial Period

In the previous Chapters, it is shown that during the Colonial period the agrarian systems and agrarian structure were changed in the different parts of India by introducing various systems, such as Permanent Settlement, Raiyotwari Settlement, Mahalwari Settlement and in some parts of Bengal and India as well lands were declared as waste lands where British Govt. was the proprietor of the lands. Whatever settlement was introduced, everywhere the peasants particularly the small peasants agricultural labourers were exploited and deprived tremendously in the colonial agrarian – economy.

By introducing colonial agrarian systems, the traditional structure of India broke down more or less, the village community faced a crisis; and many benevolent Zamindars lost their Zamindari by the law of ‘Sun Set’, many peasants must sell their lands and became sharecroppers or labourers due to heavy indebtedness. Lands were utilized for commercial purposes by introducing cultivation of commercial crops like jute, tobacco, tea, blue, etc. The cultivation of commercial crops was profitable, but the profit was obtained by the Zamindars, intermediaries, Mahajans and ultimately the Britishers depriving cultivators. In a nutshell, it can be said that feudal system in agriculture was strong during the colonial period as because five or six stages of intermediaries such as jotdars, talukdars, chukanidars or Mulandars, dafadars, dar-chukanidars, dar-darchukanidars etc. were created who had only intention to gain more revenue or wealth by hook and crook depriving and exploiting the cultivators where there was no question of sympathy or cooperation to the cultivators.

After independence in 1947, the Indian Government tried to reform agrarian structure and agrarian systems like other reforms and development in different fields. As there were feudal and semi – feudal system in the agricultural field of India till then, there were many big Zamindars-Jotdars and intermediaries, many of whom had giant – sized zamindari or jotdari areas and belong to thousand acres of lands, on the other hand there were so many people who had no land to dwell or livelihood. So it was necessary to reform the agrarian system and agrarian structure by abolishing the feudal and semi – feudal system in the lands. Before independence the demand was raised to abolish the Zamindari and jotdari system. The report of Floud Commission was come out in 1940 where proposed to abolish the Zamindari and jotdari System and declared in favour of sharecroppers or adhiars to have 2/3 of produced crops. But it was not implemented in the Colonial period. (Floud Commission Report).

Resolutions taken in the Bengal Provincial State Congress conference, 1939 in presence of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at Jalpaiguri on the development issues of the raiyots as follows:-¹

The permanent settlement and all the penalty systems are to be abolished on the basis of the demands and complaints of oppressors and poor peasants and with the system of compensation.

The raiyots of Khasmahal areas, inhabitants of the forest areas, laborers and lower- graded employee are facing intensive crisis and oppressions for the complexities and systematic defects of the laws of Khasmahal land, reserve forest of Government and tea estates. So to remove their poverty and oppression the said rules and regulations are to be amended, modified and new laws, rules and regulations are to be introduced.

But it is unfortunate that these proposals could not be implemented later on, because these were placed in 'Tripuri Congress' held in March 1939 and these were rejected by saying that the proposal were left wing, Amrita Bazar Patrika wrote in this regard-

"The resolution passed unanimously, at Bengal Provincial Conference at Jalpaiguri in February, 1939 gave expression to this thought, and suggested the presentation of an ultimatum to the British Government on the issue of India's National Demand. The Jalpaiguri resolution was brought before the Congress in, 1939, but it was unceremoniously rejected."²

After independence in 1947, naturally the Government realized the necessity to reform the agrarian systems by abolishing Zamindari and jotdari systems all over India, but the task was very difficult as because the Zamindars were politically, socially and economically powerful in position and in many spheres they occupied politically strong position. In spite of that Govt. was eager to drive in the reform of agrarian structure of India. Dr. Pradip K. Bhowmik writes, "Therefore the Central Government proclaimed only those agrarian policies which were feasible within the limitations of the contemporaneous rural set up."³ He again writes, "It varied from abolition of intermediary tenures as emphasized in the first plan to reform of tenancy in the second plan and also provisions for ceiling on agricultural holdings in the third plan. The concern for tenurial reform and redistribution of land holding pattern was noticeable in the successive plan documents."⁴

Land reforms in post – independence period in West Bengal began in slow motion and it only remained in papers, practically it was not implemented in the reign of Congress Govt. The West Bengal Bargadars Act (1950), the West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act (1953) and the West Bengal Land Reforms Act (1955) were passed gradually. Theoretically, by these Acts Government wanted

to abolish zamindari and jotdari systems as well as abolish all the intermediary systems.

The main reason of agrarian crisis is the failure of land reforms and the second cause is the refusal of Government to assist the peasants for irrigation, manure, loan and legal prices, the West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act and the West Bengal Land Reforms Act were passed in 1953 and 1955. According to the Act, the ceiling of agricultural land has been decided 25 acres on the present and future jotes..... For not to settle the ceiling of surplus land at per family instead of person, not to take initiative to stop the unauthorized and illegal alienation, and distribution of lands, not to take the cooperation of the peasants to implement the Acts, Zamindar –Jotdars have become able to conceal lands with the help of Governments administration.⁵

West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act, 1953

In the previous chapter it has been discussed about the Zamindari and jotdari systems in different parts of West Bengal during colonial rule. There were uncountable instances and examples of the oppressions and deprivations by the zamindars, jotdars and their intermediaries.

All the while, the Zamindars were consolidating their position and status as landed nobility. From land they invaded and monopolized other fields of power and prestige. It was they who took English education and so managed to control and hold high positions in the Government open to the Indians. They thus become the elites and took to themselves the right to represent the peoplethey started selling Indian body and soul to the Western domination.”⁶

In different phases, peasants including bargadars and agricultural labourers broke out into rebellion against the all sorts of oppressions of the zamindars, jotdars and their intermediaries, but ultimately they could not be succeeded as they were not united and there was no strong political and intellectual support behind them during the colonial period. Naturally the Government of West Bengal tried to initiate the reforms in agrarian structure by abolishing zamindari and jotdari systems as a result of which the West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act, 1953 was passed.

By the W.B. Estate Acquisition Act, 1953 all the Acts passed and implemented during colonial rule such as Permanent Settlement Regulation, Bengal Tenancy Act, Waste Land Rules, Coochbehar Tenancy Act had been repealed. Among the many sections of this Act number 3, 4, 5, 5A, 5b, 6 and 10 – these seven sections were important. The one solitary positive good of the section 3 was administrative – the uniformization of land laws in the state and so the simplification of revenue administration.⁷

It is relevant to be mentioned here that most of the zamindars-Jotdars in all over India were under the banner Indian National Congress Party who were not desire mentally to abolish Jamindari-Jotdari systems. But from political compulsion, National Congress was bound to abolish the Zamindari and Jotdari systems accordingly the Act was passed in 1362 B.S but alienation of land had not yet been stopped.⁸

Section 4 was also relating to with the administration under which Government had to issue a notification with two successive publications – At the first stage, at least two issues of two news papers, one of which must be in Bengali language in West Bengal, notifying the first day of the first month of a Bengali year for the commencement of acquisition of intermediary rights. After being satisfied with the publications, the notification had to be published in the official gazette. After such publications, it was considered as granted that general public was acquainted with the implications of

the Act. Accordingly on the first Baisakh, 1362 B.S and the first Baisakh, 1363 B.S considered the acquired rights as vested with the Government

Section 5A and 5B are concerned about the transfers of land. Since the coming out of the Floud commission Report (1940) wherein declared the necessity of the Zamindari, and jotdari systems including intermediaries, the zamindars, jotdars and intermediaries realized that they had to hand over excess lands to the Government today or tomorrow as the systems would not be last long. So they started to transfer their lands to the near relatives, every member of the house and even the false name. Moreover they showed their lands as Bherry (land filled with water and using for catching fish), orchard which were out of ceiling, but actually the land using for cultivation was showed as Bherry and orchard or Debottor. In such a way Zamindars, jotdars and intermediaries captured land and would not transfer to the Government as vested land. So by the Section 5A, the Government had been empowered to examine the transfer of lands between 5th May of 1955 to 15th April, 1955 and 14th April, 1956, whether the transferee was legal bonafide or not. By the section 5B, all the estates which were sold, tenure and under tenure from 1st June, 1954 under any of the following Acts, Act XI of 1859, Koochbehar Act V of 1897, Bengal Regulation VIII of 1819 and Act VIII of 1885, were forbidden.

By the section 6, mentioned the limitation of khas lands possessed by the intermediaries after acquisition – 25 acres of agricultural land, 15 acres of non – agricultural land and 20.00 acres of homestead together with non – agricultural land. There was no restriction of ceiling on the lands covered by orchards, tank, fisheries and debottor land.

From the above discussions it is realised easily that the objective of the Govt. was to abolish Zamindari, jotdari systems

including all sorts of intermediaries by the Act of West Bengal Estates Acquisition Act, 1953. But it could not be implemented practically due to covetous attitude of the Zamindars, jotdars and intermediaries as well as the secret understanding between landlords and the Government officials. Moreover during the reign of congress ministry, many M.L.A or M.P came from zamindars or jotdars. They, personally, tried to maintain the interest of their own class, sometimes they concealed their own lands, and sometimes they would give fuel to the zamindars or jotdars to conceal their lands. Dr. Pradip Kr. Bhowmik wrote, "But the legal provisions were not seriously enforced. To the local level administrators and the police nothing seemed to be more natural than to see their role as defenders of the vested interests irrespective of the changes in law. More importantly, there was a conspicuous lack of political will. This was in line with the general Indian situation".⁹

Todarmal showed eight ways by which the Zamindars, jotdars including intermediaries held the lands by concealing and illegal method as follows:-¹⁰

- (1) Creation of paper tenancies in the names of kin through ante-dated dakhilas amalnamas and unregistered deeds.
- (2) Suppression and concealing of information on all the lands held by the same persons in different district.
- (3) Sales, gifts and partitioning ostensibly to prevent or to settle disputes among the partners or co – sharers as well as constituting societies, devottars or waqfs.
- (4) Benami transfers.

- (5) Partitioning with heirs by those who are governed by the mitakshara school of Hindu law of inheritance.
- (6) Engineered auctioning for lapse of payment of rent and purchasing the same tenancy back under another name preferably of some trusted relative, friends or dependent.
- (7) Converting agricultural lands into orchards, tank fisheries etc. for which there was no ceiling.
- (8) Partitioning of land through a civil court on a prior but secret agreement with the partners.

b. The West Bengal Land Reforms Act, 1955

A bill relating to the abolition of Zamindari System was come out in the Gazette of the Government on 5th May, 1953 and approved by the president of India in 1953 which was known as West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act, 1953. By this Act the intention of the Government was to abolish the Zamindari system, including all sorts of intermediaries and to make a direct relation between Government and the land holders. But the dishonest behaviors of the Zamindars, jotdars including different types of intermediaries, covetous attitude, and secret alliance with the Government officials lands was not occupied by the Govt. over ceiling. They still possessed their lands by different types of illegal methods.

So, another bill known as Land Reforms Bill was published in the Govt. Gazette on the 10th December, 1954 to Change the agrarian structure of Bengal and develop the agrarian economy and

the peasants including sharecroppers. Different types of problems and their solutions relating to lands and the land – related people were discussed in 12 chapters in which 62 sections and many sub – sections were in the Land Reforms Act, 1955, relating to rights and responsibility of the Raiyots, protection for the land of Scheduled tribe people, ceiling of land record of the share – croppers, revenue systems, furnish jotes and agricultural – Co – operative system, policy of the distribution of land, preparing and correction of the record of rights. ¹¹

The following table shows the contents of land reforms Act, 1955.¹²

Chapter	Subject Matter	Section of the Act.
I	Introduction	1 – 3A
II	Raiots	4 – 14(6)
II A	Protection of the lands of Scheduled tribe people	14 A – 14 I
II B	Ceiling of land	14 J – 14 Z
III	Sharecroppers	15 – 21E
IV	Revenue Systems	22 – 38
V	Acquisition of holding for consolidation and the formation of co – operative Farming Societies.	39 – 48A
VI	Policy for the distribution of land.	49 – 49A
VII	Maintenance of the record of rights.	50
VII A	Revision or Preparation of the record of rights Scheduled A – system or procedures.	50A – 51A
	Scheduled B – Power of Revenue officer assigned by Govt.	51B – 51C
VIII	Management of lands	52 – 52B
IX	Miscellaneous	53 – 62

Note:- The Section 24 – 29, 30, 31 and 32 was forbade by the Section 12, 13, and 14 of the W.B Land Reforms Act, 1965 (Amendment).

I have no intention to discuss elaborately every section and subsection of the Land Reforms Act, as it has already been discussed in various books and reports, I am eager to analyze the importance, merit and shortcomings of the Land Reforms Act referring different views and approaches in the regional, national and global context.

Importance of the Land Reforms:- It is discussed earlier that after independence, Govt. wanted to abolish zamindari and jotdari systems including all the intermediaries. In West Bengal, the West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act, 1953 and the West Bengal Land Reforms Act, 1955 was passed. By these Acts, Govt. wanted to abolish zamindari and jotdari systems and all the lands possessed by the Zamindars, jotdars and intermediaries bring under ceiling, as because they possessed thousand acres of lands. The Government's main motive was to occupy all the excessive lands over ceiling and to be distributed among the landless people, agricultural labourers and peasants and the raiyots to be brought directly under the state and made owners of the lands they held.

According to the West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act 1953 the ceiling of different classes of lands are as follows:-¹³

a) Agricultural land	25 acres
b) Non – agricultural lands including homestead (Only non-agricultural 15 acres)	20 acres
c) Tank Fisheries	No Ceiling
d) Orchard	No Ceiling
e) Land held by institution Established excluding for	No Ceiling

Religious and charitable
Purpose.

f) Forests were completely vested

The above mentioned ceiling of lands had been modified by the amendment in 1972 of the Land Reforms Act, 1955 which is mentioned in the chapter II B. The ceiling area according to Section 14 M has been described as follows:-¹⁴

- a) In the case of raiyot who is an adult unmarried person, 2.50 standard hectares.
- b) In the case of raiyat who is the sole surviving member of a family, 2.50 standard hectares.
- c) In the case of a raiyot a family consisting of 2 or more but not more than 5 members, 5 standard hectares.
- d) In the case of a raiyot having a family of more than 5 members, 5 standard hectares plus 0.50 standard hectare for each member in excess of 5 subject to an overall upper limit of 7 standard hectares for a family, however large it may be.
- e) In the case of other raiyot, 7 standard hectares. A standard hectare has been defined to be equal to 1 hectare in an irrigated and 1.40 hectare in other area.

The ceiling will not apply to any agricultural land held by a local authority or a raiyot in the hilly portion of the district of Darjeeling, but the exemption of ceiling provisions in respect of hill areas expired on 31st December, 1977 and so the hilly areas were then subject to the ceiling.

Though the work of land reforms started from the very beginning of the formation of independence Govt. different Acts were passed time to time, but these Acts had not been implemented properly before 1967, the formation of United Front Govt. in West of Bengal. After declaration and passing the W. B. E. A. Act 1953 and Land Reforms Act, 1955, the Zamindars, Jotdars and all the intermediaries possessed their lands by names of every member of the house, servants and relatives. Not only that they held their land declaring Bherry (land for fisheries), orchard and debottar land though these were still agricultural lands.

The Section 5A and 5B of the West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act empowered the state Govt. to examine transfers of land by intermediaries between May, 1953 and April 15, 1956 & April 14, 1956 to satisfy itself of their bonafide. But, for the unfair attitude of the officials and bureaucrats of the Govt., proper inquiry could not be performed as a consequence of it; the Govt. failed to acquire excess lands over ceiling from Zamindars, jotdars and intermediaries. Todarmal writes, "A transfer made principally or partially with the intention or motive of enhancing the amount of land above the ceiling set for one individual or similarly the compensation payable for land, vested with the state. So also were transfers to near kin such as wife, husband, parents, children etc, The term 'transfer' in the context meant sale, mortgage, lease, exchange gifts etc."¹⁵

Since the implementation of the West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act, 1953 and West Bengal Land Reforms Act, 1955, Communist Party had been demanding to amend these two Acts, because the weakness of these Acts had given the opportunity to the jotdar - Zamindar to be ousted the sharecroppers and to alienate the unauthorized lands.¹⁶

The work of land Records over ceiling and distribution among the landless peasants and labourers actually started from 1967 by the State Govt. of West Bengal. We get in district gazetteer of land records and surveys, West Bengal it is not possible to say the exact total quantities of lands that vested before 1967.¹⁷

Movement for Land Reforms gained momentum when the United Front (U.F) consisting of the centrist and leftist parties was voted to power in the state for two short spells in 1967 and 1969.¹⁸

After formation of the United Front Government the movement for finding out the hidden lands, occupying the khas lands, rescuing the benami lands (lands recorded in false names) reached in a top. Peasants from every corner of Bengal assembled in a movement –from occupying surplus lands in tea gardens of North Bengal to finding out the hidden lands which were shown falsely as Mechhogheri in South Bengal.¹⁹

There were specific differences with regard to Land Reforms between Congress Government and United Front Government. Congress Govt. mainly dependent on the bureaucratic process who were directly allied with the land holders, but the United Front Government did not follow the same process like Congress Govt. P.K. Bhowmik mentioned, “Clearly, the U.F Government could not rely exclusively on the bureaucracy for implementing land reforms. This was in conformed, with their assessment of the nature and character of bureaucracy in a capitalist system.....Till the first United Front ministry only about 3.5 lakh acres of land were vested in the state. But during the United Front regime nearly 6 lakh acres of land were vested in the state.”²⁰

In spite of passing the act many years ago, the work of acquisition and distribution of land has not been performed during the period of Congress rule, under United Front Government 2,32,000 acres of surplus vested land have been distributed to

almost equal number of poor peasants and agricultural laborers..... Same thing also happened in the distribution of 3000 acres of surplus land in the tea-estates. The poor peasants have protected their rights of homestead lands and the Government has taken initiative to pass the Act.²¹

Benoy Krishna Chowdhury, Land and Land Reforms Minister showed that in 1951 census, the number of cultivating owners were 1580,000, but according to 1971 census the number of holding come to 42 lakhs. The number of cultivating owners and number of holdings are not the same. These two figures clearly indicate that extensive transfer of land had taken place during the relevant 20 years.²² According to Benoy Krishna Chowdhury the Congress Government made no effort to distribute the land that had vested in the State till 1967. Systematic effort to distribute the ceiling surplus land was thus made only during the tenure of the first two United Front Governments both of which were short lived. The agricultural labourers and the poor peasants were mobilized and encouraged to occupy the ceiling surplus and benami land and distribute among themselves. This is how nearly 6 lakh acres of land was distributed.²³ Ranjan Kumar Mitra showed in his article that the Government had acquired 4.5 lac acres land of which 2.3 lakh acres land had been distributed.²⁴

West Bengal Government introduced the law while amending the ceiling law that the lands alienated up to 6th August, 1969 were legal. The organized peasant, movement of West Bengal in demanding that the lands alienated since the 5th may, 1953, were to be declared as illegal alienation. On the basis of this demand, the movement for the occupation of unauthorised and ceiling surplus lands is continuing since the last 20/25 years as a result of which more than 4 lakh acres of unauthorized ceiling surplus lands were occupied by the organized peasant movement.²⁵

The formation of the United Front Government in 1967 and 1969 was a remarkable to the landless and small peasants, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers, during these periods crores of poor peasants, agricultural laborers and sharecroppers emerged as a creator of history with a new awareness and self confidence and emancipated themselves from the bondage of the oppressor jotdars and hoarders The organized peasant movement occupied 18 lakh bighas of land and distributed among the landless people.²⁶

Beside the land acquisition and distribution by the United Front Govt., land was occupied forcefully by the peasants lead by left parties. Ranjit Kumar Mitra pointed out that 4 lakh acres land was occupied forcefully during the reign of 2nd United Front Government.²⁷

About 3,00,000 acres of land were forcibly occupied during the United Front regime.

After United Front Government, the Congress Government adopted a new policy which was announced on May 14, 1970 not to permit any person or group of persons to take forcible possession of any land. The Government realised that it should not take action to evict the persons who forcibly occupied land genuinely belong to the eligible categories. So the Government proposed to undo forcible occupation in three types of cases : (1) Where persons who forcibly occupied the land already held more than two acres of land and did not belong to the eligible category; (2) where forcible occupation of khas or vested lands had displaced and ousted another person genuinely belonging to the eligible category who had been cultivating the land under a Government license and (3) share the land occupied belonged to a private individual who had been holding it peacefully within the existing ceiling and on an unquestionable title.²⁸

The Government took action in the above two cases to evict the person who forcibly occupied land, but in the 3rd cases it would be some difficulties to implement the law. So the Government prepared to post Additional Magistrate with the necessary powers of such cases. Beside these, the Government adopted some of the proposals of the U.F Government like fixation of the ceiling of the lands and holdings on family basis and protection to bargadars against eviction.²⁹

A meeting of Paschimbanga Pradeshik Krishak Sabha was held on 21st March 1967, declared to the workers of Krishak Sabha to increase the power of Organising democratic movement and accelerated their legal demand.”

Honourable minister Hore Krishna Konar, Land and Land Revenue declared in the press conference on 21st March, 1967 that 3 lakh acres lands acquired by the Government will be distributed among the peasants, which has not yet been distributed.”³⁰

It is noticeable that when the Government under Congress regime was failure to vest the lands and distribute to the landless people, the United Front Government took initiative to acquire land over ceiling and distribute to the landless people led by communist parties as because their main slogan and activities were anti feudal and anti-capital system. But after short period the United Front Govt. had been dissolved by the Government. Mr. Subodh Banerjee, the labour minister in the dismissed West Bengal Ministry, told newsmen on December 9, 1967 that the United Front in West Bengal would launch a state – wide civil disobedience movement on December 18, to protest against the dismissal of the Front ministry by the Governor and the installation of Dr. P.C. Ghosh’s ministry.³¹

The UF had already started work on enrolment of volunteer and setting up of an un-organizational network for launching the movement. The aim was to enroll 30,000 volunteers. The first

phase of the movement launched immediately after the dismissal of UF cabinet in 1967, was practically confined to Calcutta, the second phase was limited to urban areas in the state. In the 3rd phase, the objective of the movement was to launch in the villages to attract the peasants which was connected with procurement land reforms and Tenancy system.³²

In this way, the work of land reforms, acquisition and distribution of lands got a new motion by the interfering of United Front Ministry, particularly by the leading role of the leftist parties to the peasants, labourers and bargadars as because they started to organize themselves against the land holders who were holding lands over ceiling, and then started to occupy lands forcefully with arms. There were many instances of occupation of vested land forcefully by the Krishak Sabha in Jalpaiguri like elsewhere in West Bengal.

Anil Ch. Chakraborty, a jotdar, inhabitant of Jalpaiguri had been occupying 300 bigha lands in Chapadua village of kukurjan in the district of Jalpaiguri and obtained crops from the bargadars. This year the bargadars under Krishak Sabha capture all paddies after cutting the crops. The jotdars became failure to take action against the bargadars.³³ It is found in Jalpaiguri, (local weekly news paper) about the motion and activities of the peasants, labourers including bargadars led by Krishak Sabha. The cutting and harvesting of crops in this year is going to be finished almost safely..... The peasants proves that they can not protect their crops as they cultivate their land. Jotdars, who have occupied benami land illegally, joined the different parties of united front and they attack in different places with the support of these parties. But they ultimately, could not be succeeded.³⁴

Following the resolutions of a meeting of Krishak Sabha held on 12th January, 1970 shows the motion of activities and deep relation with the peasants bargadars :-³⁵

- (1) The quota of membership of Krishak Sabha was submitted 6025 within 12th January, 1970 and 9000 peasants became the members of Krishak Sabha in different places. It was decided that total 30,000 members are to be enlisted and asked to submit the quota of membership in the district office within 31st January.
- (2) Total 10,495 acre of khas and benami land are acquired by the Krishak Sabha in the different thanas of Jalpaiguri. Near about 5000 landless peasants are dwelling in this land with occupying the same.
- (3) 2500 regular peasant volunteers participated actively in the movement of legal demand of the peasant in the different place of the district. They (volunteers) are ready to reach different places of the district any time according to the direction of the Krishak Sabha.
- (4) Decided to be held meetings in different places and Central Convention District Krishak Sabha would be held on 22nd January, 1970 and 31st January, 1970 in Dhupguri. It is decided to assemble in the convention huge number of people from different places.

Nitai Das Chaudhuri, a former local leader of C.P.I.M who had died two years ago pointed out that the movement of occupation of khas lands and benami lands of jotdars was going on actively in the villages of Bholardabri, Banchukamari, majherdabri and many other villages of Alipurduar subdivision under the leadership of Krishak Sabha and C.P.I.(M).³⁶

Promod Nath, a local leader of C.P.I.(M) who was directly involved in the movement of occupation of land argued.

“There was huge number of ceiling surplus lands occupied illegally by the jotdars. At the first stage movement was started by Krishak Sabha of Communist Party (M), then the landless peasants out of any party or dogma joined the movement. Initially land was identified as a vested land or ceiling surplus land collecting informations from the department of land & land revenue. Then the peasants had been assembled in the spot under the leadership of krishak sabha, generally landless people joined spontaneously in the movement.³⁷

Beside the land acquisition and distribution to the landless peasants and labourers, the United Front Government passed West Bengal Land Reforms (Audit) Act, 1969 and West Bengal Land Reforms (2nd amendment) Act, 1969. By the West Bengal Land Reforms (Audit) Act, 1969, the intention of the Government was to protect the sharecroppers or bargadars from the eviction of their land and by the West Bengal Land Reforms (2nd amendment), Act, 1969, the Govt release the raiyots to pay the rent of the lands and the Government decided to fix up the amount of land revenue after reviewing properly.³⁸

898, 66 Dec. khas land was forcibly occupied in the Nagar Berubari area by the communist party and Krishak Sabha on 28.12.1969 and 15 acre benami land was occupied and distributed to 19 families on 01.01.1970 of Bhupendra Nath Roy inhabitant of Khariza Berubari.³⁹

The Krishak Sabha of Patkata area continued their movement and 52 bigha land of the jotdar Umesh Ch. Sen, 105 bigha land of Trailakya Sharan Sen 206 bigha land of Bhaben Roy, the ex-M.L.A and the leader of S.S.P were occupied and distributed among the landless 98 families.⁴⁰

20 bigha land of Dolo Panchayet of Bholardabri was occupied by the Krishak Sabha.⁴¹

75 Bigha land was occupied in Belakoba by the communist party (M) on the 28th April, 1969 and distributed it to the landless peasants. The benami proprietor of the land was Akshay Roy and the real proprietor was Samsuddin Ahamed, the Congress leader.⁴²

Adhir Saha, a local leader of C.P.I (M) of Takomari in the district of Coochbehar, adjacent to Jalpaiguri district pointed out that after identification of Khas land or ceiling surplus land the expedition for occupying lands was started under the leadership of Krishak Sabha of Communist Party (M). Beside the member of Krishak sabha or communist Party general people also joined this movement. 150 bigha lands of Nonibar Prodhan, 155 bigha lands of Avay Chand Dhani, 160 bigha lands of Baishakh Dhani 100 bigha lands of Jarman Rabha and 90 bigha lands of Dhan Proshad Dhani were occupied by krishak sabha and distributed to the landless people.⁴³

Jalpaiguri, 15th July, 1969 showed the occupation of khas lands in the different parts of the district of Jalpaiguri in such way

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Panikouri (Rajganj police station):- In this area 16 acres land was occupied led by communist party (Marxist) and Krishak Sabha and the said land was distributed among the 23 landless families.

Khalishamari Mouza (Kamakshyaguri):- About 100 bigha land of the jotdar, Dakshina Mohan Roy was occupied by the Communist Party (M) and Krishak Samiti and it was distributed among the landless peasants and bargadars.

East Chikliguri (Kamakshyaguri):- About 80 bigha land of the jotdar, Kutub Mian who possessed it illegally was occupied by the CPI (M) and Krishak Samiti, other than this more land was occupied by the Krishak Samiti from Parokata and Dakshin Parokata.

Kukurjan (Rajganj):- Jotdar Bhagaban Singh possessed huge amount of lands illegally in the dominating area of S.S.P Krishak Samiti occupied 225 bigha land from the said jotdar.

Jashodanga (Alipurduar):- In this area 118 bigha khas land was occupied by the peasants lead by D.Y.F.I.

Pangarpar (Bahadur Anchal):- 800 bigha khas land was occupied by the Krishak Sabha of Pangarpar lead by Anathbandhu Sarkar and Upen Roy, the leaders of Communist Party (M) and it was distributed among 24 landless peasants.

Rajadanga Anchal (Mal Police Station) :- 109 acre land in Cheng Mari Mouza of Majhgram village was distributed among the 71 families during 26th June to 3rd July led by Communist Party (M).

Bimal Dasgupta showed the acquisition of vested land and distribution among the landless people as follows:- Mal-Meteli circle ⁴⁵

Total vested land in Government record =16,587.41 acre,
Land occupied by Government up to April,1969=12,372.44 acre.
Land distributed among the landless peasants up to May.1969=6867.40 acre, land distributed among the landless peasants in the month of June,1969=241.95 acre. For Homestead land=64.80 acre.

Total Vested land distributed among the landless peasants or occupied by the peasants, but not distributed officially by the Government in the month of July and 10 days of August, 1969-
 Mauza- East damdim =58.11acre, Mauza- demka jhora= 55.25 acre, Mauza Hayhay pathar=18.48acre, Mauza lower Chalsa= 290.30 acre, Mauza- Nepu Chapur =60.00 acre, Raja Danga No.1 Panditpara=62.00 acre, West Sangapara=65.00acre, South Saripukuri=45 acre, North Saripkuri=35.00acre, Raja Danga Fauchhar Alam Khas=35.00 acre, Baragharia Fauchhar Alam Khas= 35.00 acre,

In different mouzas land distribution has been postponed in approximate 1849.62 acres of land In the different mauzas of Meteli Police Station.

In the occupation of the peasants without having license=2509.00acre
 Total vested land distributed after the formation of United Front Government=2914.98 acre (Approximate) .

The period of United Front Government in the second phase in 1969 was also short. After demolition of United Front a political tension was going on in West Bengal and in this circumstance, immergency period was started when no development work was performed . The condition of West Bengal is found in Desh, the Bengali Journal----

Now almost every body have realized that the condition of West Bengal is not being fovourable under the rule of Delhi..... This is an all-round failure, particularly, in the law and order

The number of murder in the emergency period has reached to near about 400. The average number of daily massacre in the emergency period is at least 2. This noisy condition and massacre is not limited in a particular zone, it has spread in every district of

the state. In the 13 months reign of United Front Government, the number of murder was less than half of the emergency period.⁴⁶

A tumult is seen in West Bengal before Puja (warship and festival of Goddess Durga). One is Bonus and another is increasing the prices of essential commodities. But this year, nothing is seen - no meeting, no procession in spite of heavy increasing of the prices of essential commodities..... The main cause of it is fear. All the political parties have realized that the political workers have become paralyzed for fear. They are unwilling to do anything openly coming out their house. All they are busy to save their life.⁴⁷

After emergency period in West Bengal, Congress Government came into power under Chief Minister, Sidhwartha Sankar Roy. Various problems and crisis were seen in all over the state. The prices of essential commodities were going up.

Where the indicator of the wholesale rate of essential things during 1961 – 62 was 100, it reached in 317 in the month of December, 1974, that means the prices had been increased more than three times only in twelve years. The prices of food increased more. The retail prices were more higher than the wholesale rate.⁴⁸

Smt. Indira Gandhi declared 20 point economic programmes on the 1st July. ... Some of which were---- to be taken initiative to decrease the prices of essential commodities; to be introduced easy process for production, collection and distribution of essential things; to be reduced the Government's expenditure strictly, to be implemented the ceiling of agricultural land, to be taken action immediately for distribution of ceiling surplus lands and recordings of lands, immediately to be taken step for homestead land for the weaker section people of the society, to be declared as illegal process where labourer had been used by note of hand, to be taken

programmes to release the indebted people from their indebtedness, to be introduced laws to postpone the collection of loan from the landless labourer, small peasants, artisans and mechanics.⁴⁹

The root of the all problems lies in the agriculture and the crisis of the agrarian systems. 20 lakh families in this state are landless agricultural labourers and 15 lakh families are marginal farmers. The demand of 35 lakh families for land is a large problem. Only 6 lakh 25 thousand acres of lands are shown as a surplus lands..... The major portions of (39.6%) 1 crores and 36 lakh agricultural lands remain only in the 4% people. The problem of having lands, the crisis of the ejection of the sharecroppers paralyzed the village economy.⁵⁰

The causes for the failure of the policies which were accepted by the National Congress Party and the Government for economic measures during 1967 – 1975 were class interest, policies for the interest of the jotdar and monopoly capitalist. The ruling party had to face on mass movement when their class interest policies became failure. Again the ruling party declared new economic policies to protect them from mass movement in view of confusing the mind of the people.⁵¹

Government circulated again and again that there were no shelter less people in the villages after completion of the work for distribution of homestead land, But huge number of landless and shelter less families were followed easily in every villages who lived in the other's land without any right, particularly in the jotdar's land, on the land beside the road and dam of irrigation.⁵² Till 1976, for the lack of proper land reform programmes, the production of food crops and other agricultural commodities had been decreasing gradually as a result of which the prices of food crops increased. Naturally ordinary people including peasants

labourers affected and they were not able to purchase sufficient food.

The internal deficit of food increased 1 lac 83 thousand tons to 9 lac 50 thousand tons during the period 1947 to 1959. The average production of rice per acre was less even than the post-war period. The average production in 1937 was 12.18 mound, during 1950-54 was 11.09 mound and in 1958 it stood in to 10.63 mound after decreasing the production.⁵³

To solve the problem of food crisis permanently, a radical land reforms be needed. If the lands of jotdars - zamindars of the state can be distributed among the lacs of poor and landless peasants, the labour of the said peasants will be utilized for the interest of the production. On the other hand, lacs of ton food crops will not be stored in the possession of Jotdars - zamaindars.⁵⁴

The following table shows the amount of lands distributed in the district and West Bengal upto 1994 – 95⁵⁵

District / State	Area of Vested land distributed in hectors	No of Beneficiaries			
		Scheduled Caste	Scheduled Tribe	Others	Total
Jalpaiguri	37950.25	62610	26491	31143	120244
West	386842.84	830914	464108	974937	2269959

Bengal					
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Land reforms in West Bengal under Left Front Government got a new life in the history of land reforms in India after independence. There are so many views, approaches and debates about the land reforms in West Bengal, lot of writings, research papers, Ph.D. Thesis, M.Phil Dissertations, Books and journals have been came out where different scholars, writers, Social Scientist, Politicians have expressed their views and analyzed in favour and against the land reforms of West Bengal from different angles, but, I have best intention to find out the real picture of the lands and peasants since land reforms had been initiated in Jalpaiguri as else where in West Bengal, further more, I shall try my best to show the success and failure of the Land Reforms in West Bengal.

Success of the Land Reforms in West Bengal:-

Dr. P.K. Bhowmik writes, “The Left Front Government’s approach to land reform is different from that of the earlier Congress Governments in the state. The latter had adopted a policy of growth before distribution. The policy shift may be attributed to the realization by the Left Front Government that “Green Revolution” unaccompanied by through restructuring of agrarian relations would reinforce existing inequality in the agrarian sector.”⁵⁶

There are so many instances which prove that the land reforms under Congress regime remained in papers work, practically lands had not been vested over ceiling and distributed to the landless people. Jotdars-Zamindars in the villages whose lands may be accuired as khas were the main and only pillar of National Congress Party.-----With the First Five Year Plan and growing up of a tout –broker-land lord-trader, abolition of Jotdari-Zamindari was impossible to Congress Party. So a large gap was kept at the time of passing the Act for abolition of intermediary systems by which the Act was to be vanished.⁵⁷ The works were confined to the elitists and bureaucrats. The planning commission recently admitted that land reforms had been a failure at the national level barring West Bengal.⁵⁸ Pushpendra writes in his article “Liberalization and Agrarian Reforms: Some Recent Controversies,” “Tenancy situation is varied in different states. In some states (UP, Gujarat, MP, for example) it is legally prohibited. A state like West Bengal, where tenancy is allowed, achieved great success in recording the tenants and safeguarding their interests through suitable legal provision.”⁵⁹

The debate was going on between the members of ruling party (Congress) and the members of anti – Govt. parties

particularly the leftist parties in the Assembly at the time of discussions on the W.B Estate Acquisition Act, 1953 and W.B Land Reforms Act, 1955, on various issues. All most all the members and even the speaker of the Assembly declare these two Acts as “Revolutionary and Epoch – making.” Satya Kumar Basu, the Revenue Minister pointed out that as a result of passing these two Acts, the system of Feudal system has been abolished, abolished the dominant power of all. The intermediaries, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers were benefited for introduction of ownership of the state on land.”⁶⁰ But, most of the members of Anti – Government namely Benay Krishna Chowdhuri, Bankim Mukherjee, Kanai Bhawmik, Ajit Basu, Monoranjan Hazra, (all were from communist party), Charu Chandra Bhandari, Haripada Chattopadhyay, Sudhir Roy Chowdhuri, Dhasharathi Ta, Dr. Atin Basu (All were from Proja Samajtantri Dal), Hemanta Bosu, Bibhuti Ghosh, Dr. Srikumar Bandhyopadhyay (All were from Forward Block). Subodh Banerjee of S.U.C.I, Rakhehari Chattopadhyay, Gyanendra Chowdhuri boldly criticized the defects of these two Acts.

Even after the passing of these two Acts, how the Zamindars and intermediaries occupied their lands by concealing which is shown earlier. Satyabrota Dutta writes, “After passing the law the kings, great kings and zamindars of West Bengal started to step repeatedly in the house of the Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, the then Chief Minister. Many of the zamindars were not able to maintain their royal palace, in this chance, they donated their wealth partly, some parts of wealth were sold and they obtained compensation for their acquisition wealth of the rest. The Department of Education and health purchased some amount of land. The Central Government did not consider such type of purchasing of wealth.

The instances of concealing lands declaring Mechhogheri, orchard by the M.L.A themselves of Congress party are seen in writing of S. Dutta, “Amongst the 37 M.L.A. in the district of 24

Parganas, 25 were from Congress Party, some of them was involved in fishery. Amongst 9 M.L.A. of Malda district, 5 were active to take benefit of ceiling (rebate) for orchard.⁶¹

It is clear that the Government did not take initiative to prevent the ejection of share croppers and unauthorized and illegal alienation of lands for the pressure of the Zamindars – Jotdars. The Jotdars – Zamindars having large amount of lands, were not only the supporter of Congress Party, many of them were prominent leaders, ministers of Congress and the members of Assembly. As a result of which Government acquired only 1 lac 22 thousand acres surplus lands whereas according to their declaration it should be 6 lac acres lands, that means, the rest of the lands have been alienated.⁶²

Some famous land- alienators were Sri Hem Naskar, the minister of cabinet, Sri Ardhendu Naskar, deputy minister, Sri Hrishikesh Tripathi, the matrimonial relative of Ajoy Mukherjee, the cabinet minister, Matrimonial relative of Sri Jadabendra Panja, the president of Provincial Congress, Sri Khagen Das, M.L.A, Ila Pal Chaudhury, M.P of Congress, All of them alienated thousand bighas of lands illegally to the relatives and friends.

Sri Fate Chand Maheshwari the biggest jotdar of Jalpaiguri district alienated 6 thousand acre lands authorized by Government. But, no step has been taken against this jotdar, because his son is a worker of Jalpaiguri Zella Congress.⁶³

Debesh Roy pointed out that a jotdar in the Duars recorded 25 acres of lands in the name of his elephant. ...A jotdar of Haldibari in the name of his only son Amir Ali Prodhan, recorded lands in such a way -25 acres for Amir Ali, 25 acres for Ali Prodhan, 25 acres for Amir Prodhan and 25 acres for Prodhan Ali.⁶⁴

In 1974, Krishak Sabha circulated at the time of starting the new settlement work that the real motive of the Government was 1. To legalise the right of the Jotdars on benami land (unauthorise land), 2. To eject the sharecroppers and peasants who occupied the unauthorise land of the jotdars 3. To record the right of the mahajans (moneylenders) on the land who took land by mortgage for indebtedness of the peasants.⁶⁵

So, from the above discussions it is shown that under the Congress regime the work of land reforms could not be started practically by demolishing traditional Zamindari and jotdari systems in West Bengal, which was come into force actually from United Front Government and later on under left front Government.

A new scope and possibility has been created in front of peasant movement and organization with the formation of Left Front Government. On the basis of the following points a large scale united peasant movement is to be built up-

1. To be find out ceiling surplus concealing land from the former Zamindar and big land holders and distributed among the landless agricultural laborers, poor sharecroppers and peasants.
2. To be organized large-scale movement for the recording of share croppers who had been ousted in the pervious years, are to be resettled in their land. They have to be provided government and co-operative loans.
3. The pattas which have been given to the persons who are unable to have government's khas land (vested land), are to be declared as rejected and the said lands will have to be distributed to the persons who are eligible to have the said lands.

4. To be corrected all the defects in the settlement record.
5. The peasants, cultivating in the jungle area have to be given pattas in their lands in stead of ejection of the peasants so far as possible.
6. To be more activated and scattered the movement of the work and wages of the agricultural labourers.
7. To be organized the large scale movement for the legal prices of the produced crops of the peasants and to be supplied essential commodities with legal prices for them.
8. To be released the poor peasants from their outstanding loans –opportunities will have to be given to the other peasants to recover the outstanding loans by easy installments.⁶⁶

Benoy Krishna Chowdhury, Land and Land Reforms minister agreed their limitations with regard to land reforms in a state. He told, “We could well realize that within the present frame work of the Constitution and the limited power that a State Government enjoys it was well high impossible to completely eliminate the feudal and semi – feudal production relation in agriculture, we therefore decided in favour of taking such measures, in the present correlation of forces, as would help enthusing and organizing the agricultural workers, bargadars (sharecroppers) and poor and small peasants who together constitute over 75 percent of the rural population and who can bring about the radical changes for transformation of the rural society – the aim of land reforms.⁶⁷

80% people of the state live in the villages and they mainly depend on agriculture. So, the Left Front Government takes

different steps for the interest of the peasants, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers targeting on the land reforms programmers. The rent of land holders of 4 acres in irrigated areas and 6. acres in non-irrigated areas have been exempted. Bank loan has been provided to the peasants with easy terms and conditions. Farm holding bill (Amended) has been passed in last session of Assembly by which the land holders have been exempted from different types of taxes to abolish the feudal system as a result of which 45 lacs of people among 52 lacs will have not to give any kind of tax. ⁶⁸

As a land and Land reforms minister, Benoy Krishna Chowdhury took three target groups to success the land reforms policy of the Government. Firstly he took initiative for the labourers in such a way – (1) to guarantee minimum living wage, (2) to provide work during the lean months, (3) to provide house – sites for their own houses. 2nd group was bargadars (share croppers) the problem of bargadars were (a) eviction (b) Protection of rights and (c) finance.

The third target group was marginal and small farmers. It is discussed earlier that during the United Front Government land rent up to 3 acres was exempted. The Left Front Government has exempted land rent up to 4 acres of land in irrigated area and 6 acres of land in non – irrigated area. ⁶⁹

Another important factor of Land Reforms is acquisition and distribution of ceiling surplus lands which is shown earlier that the task had not been performed practically during the Congress regime, actually it got a new motion in the regime of United Front Government from various sources and the report of field survey it is found that huge number of ceiling surplus lands were vested and distributed among the landless peasants and bargadars.

The acquisition of ceiling surplus land of big - land holders is going on. Average 3.5 thousand acres of lands have been acquired

in every month. These lands have not been distributed for the injection of court. 3.45 lac acres of lands are waiting for distribution to the landless and poor peasants. Initiative has been taken to distribute the lands to the eligible persons by the permanent committee of land associated anchal panchayet.⁷⁰

Progress made by the state in respect of LRP as of December, 1995 was as follows:⁷¹

Agricultural land vested: 1.24 million acres.

Distribution of vested land: 994 thousand acres.

Bargadars recorded: 1.468 million.

No. of recipients of homestead land: 272 thousand.

From the above statistics it is followed that the agrarian structure of West Bengal changed a lot with the task of land reforms programmes taken by United Front Government and Left Front Government. Buddhadeb Ghosh shows – out of the total national vesting of around 7.3 million acres, West Bengal's share is 17 per cent, though the state has only 3.5 percent of total agricultural land. States like Bihar and UP could vest less than one – third and less than half respectively of what West Bengal had done as of 1992.⁷²

It is important to follow according to National Sample Survey which was collected from January to August, 1992 and published in 1995 that 85.88 percent farmers were marginal. Who possessed 41.29 percent land of total lands in West Bengal, small farmers were 9.48 percent of total proprietors of lands, who possessed 28.11 percent land, middle ranking land holders were only 0.71 percent who possessed 7.62 percent lands and there was no large farmers or land holders who possessed over 10 hectares lands in accordance with the report of National Sample Survey, 1992.

Classification of agricultural family and land holdings⁷³

Table – I
Percentage of Agricultural family

	Year	Marginal	small	Near-Middle ranking	Middle ranking	Large
West Bengal	1992	85.88	9.48	3.94	0.71	0.00
	1982	81.60	11.50	5.54	1.28	0.08
	1971-72	77.62	12.64	7.30	2.39	0.05
India	1992	71.88	13.42	9.28	4.54	0.88
	1982	66.64	14.70	10.78	6.45	1.42
	1971-72	62.62	15.49	11.94	7.83	2.12

Table – 2
Percentage of jotes

	Year	Marginal	Small	Near-Middle ranking	Middle ranking	Large	Total
West Bengal	1992	41.29	28.11	22.98	7.62	0.00	100.00
	1982	30.33	28.77	27.23	12.12	1.54	100.00
	1971-72	27.28	25.69	27.72	18.61	0.70	100.00
India	1992	16.93	18.59	24.58	26.07	13.83	100.00
	1982	12.22	16.49	23.38	29.83	18.07	100.00
	1971-72	9.76	14.68	21.92	30.73	22.99	100.00

Below 1.01 hect land – Marginal Farmer

1.01- 2.00 hect. small Farmer

2.01- 4.00 hect. Semi – middle ranking Farmer

4.01- 10.00 hect. – Middle ranking farmer

Above 10.00 hect. Large farmer.

Benoy Krishna Chowdhury showed the land vested by the Government and distributed among the landless peasants up to Dec, 1995 as follows – ⁷⁴

Total land vested – 28.82 Lac acres
 Agricultural Land vested – 12.80 Lac acres
 Distribution of vested land – 9.82 Lac acres
 Total number of assignees of vested land – 22.71 Lac
 Sharecroppers Recorded – 14.66 Lac
 Homestead Beneficiaries – 2.71 Lac

P. K. Bhowmik showed in his book about the land distribution during the reign of Left Front Government – “In West Bengal, till 1994, about 9,12000 acres of agricultural land had been distributed to over two million of people, of these 55 percent belonged to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes comprising 26 percent of the population in the state.” ⁷⁵

All the above data shows the land acquisition and distribution in all over West Bengal and compare to all India level. Now, look at the Jalpaiguri district with regard to land reforms programmes taken by different phases after independence. Regarding Jalpaiguri district, it was the same as other parts of West Bengal that before 1967, formation of the United Front Government, the work of the land acquisition and distribution among the landless people had not been carried out practically. According to the report of land records and surveys, West Bengal, “It is not possible to say the exact total quantities of lands that Vested before 1967. From August 1967 a new intensive drive was launched for recovery of lands held in benami or through clandestine transfer and all lands vesting of which had been evaded so long.” ⁷⁶

The total amount of land held by various ex- intermediaries and tenants over and above the original stipulated ceiling, which was vested in Alipurduar Sub division of Jalpaiguri, upto 31 March 1973 amounted to 39,288.45 acres. Regarding Jalpaiguri Sadar Subdivision, there is some discrepancy between the figures given by the settlement wing and the Management wing of the Land Revenue Department. According to the former 1,68,215.05 acres of land were vested till 31 March 1973. The later wing maintains that up to that date 1,55,341.96 acres were vested. Total amount of land which was vested was not distributed, as because some amount of land was under litigation. Only 51004.53 acres of land was redistributed of which 16,046.70 acres were on raiyoti settlement and 34,957.83 acres were settled on the basis of one year license which was renewable.⁷⁷

Following Table shows the distribution of Vested Land for agricultural purpose to the landless and small cultivators in the district of Jalpaiguri –⁷⁸

Year	Area of Vested Land (Hectare)		Scheduled Caste	Scheduled Tribes	Muslims	Others	Total
	E.A.	L.R.					
1975-76	39461.18	5107.67	24667	15623	5031	8990	54301
1976-77	39461.18	5107.67	24667	15623	5334	9454	55078
1977-78	39461.18	5107.67	26288	16299	5334	9454	57375
1978-79	39461.18	5107.67	30935	16299	5334	16211	58779

From the above statistics, it can be said that there were no similarities in the data of land distribution among the landless and small cultivators because it is found from the report of Key Statistics of the district of Jalpaiguri, 1977 – 78 that 39461.18 hector lands had been distributed by the Estate Acquisition Act and 5107.67 hector had been distributed by Land Reforms Act. Another report of District Statistical Handbook, Jalpaiguri, 1998, showed that upto 30th Sept, 1993, 44763.94 hector lands had been

distributed to the landless and small cultivators. But, it is followed in different villages of the district, that large amount of lands have been distributed to the cultivators after 1977. D.L.L.R.O., Jalpaiguri is failure to supply exact figure of year wise land acquisition and distribution since the implementation of the land Reforms Act, 1955. They only can provide the up to date figure of the same. So, due to paucity of exact figure of year wise land acquisition and distribution, it is not possible to show a clear picture of the output of land Reforms programmes of the district in the period of present study.

Census of India, 1951 shows the land use and progress of cultivation during the course of land Reforms Programmes:⁷⁹

Table – 1 Progress of Cultivation During Three Decades:-

Average net area shown in acres –

1921	-	733000
1931	-	604700
1941	-	602900
1951	-	636500

Average area shown more than once in acres –

1921	-	89500
1931	-	52200
1941	-	29800
1951	-	39600

Average net area irrigated in acres

1921	-	307,977
1931	-	112,400
1941	-	118,221
1951	-	113,466

Average cropped area irrigated in acres

1921	-	58,169
1931	-	-

1941	-	-
1951	-	20

Key Statistics of the district of Jalpaiguri. 1977 - 78 shows the land utilization as follows:-⁸⁰

District	Area according to village Paper	Area under Forest	Area not available for cultivation	Other uncultivated land excluding current fallow	Current fallow	Net area shown	Area shown more than once	Total cropped area	Year
Jalpaiguri	630.97	168.20	122.78	112.30	14.78	212.91	82.20	295.11	1974-75
Jalpaiguri	630.97	158.85	122.78	121.10	6.69	221.55	111.23	332.78	1975-76
Jalpaiguri	630.97	158.85	122.78	121.26	5.39	222.69	128.69	351.38	1976-77
Jalpaiguri	630.97	158.85	122.78	127.96	3.50	224.88	130.66	355.54	1977-78

Census Report of India, 1981 clarified the land use of the Jalpaiguri district as on 1976 - 77 as follows:-⁸¹

- (i) Net cropped area 327.47 thousand hectare.
- (ii) Land put to non - agricultural uses = 79.64 thousand hectare.
- (iii) Barren and uncultivated waste = 1.08 thousand hectare.
- (iv) Permanent Pastures and other grazing land 0.21 thousand hectare.
- (v) Misc. tree crops and groves 8.16 thousand hectare.
- (vi) Cultivated waste = 23.18 thousand hectare.
- (vii) Other fallow land (Other than current fallow) = 1.19 thousand hectare.
- (viii) Current fallow = 2.63 thousand hectare.

From the above statistics of different sources it is followed that the average net area decreased from 733000 acres in 1921 to 636500 acres in 1951. Total cropped area was increased from 295.11 thousand hectares during 1974-75 to 355.54 thousand hectares during 1977-78. On the other hand census report of India, 1981 showed 327.47 thousand hectares cropped areas during 1976-77. The increasing of total cropped areas proves that a large portion of patit or uncultivated lands were brought under cultivation by the Land reforms programmes.

Up to 30th Sept, 1993, 44763.94 hectors lands were distributed among 118180 peasants of which 60551 were Scheduled Caste, 26059 were Scheduled tribes and 31570 were general .⁸² From the above statistics it is found that major land reforms works that was land acquisition and distribution among the landless people was performed during the reign of United Front Government and the Left Front Government.

Land Reforms Programe was not related only to the land acquisition and distribution, it included in the programme for the sufficient wages of agricultural labourers as they had no particular rate of wages for which the labourers had been cheated and deprived by Zamindars – Jotdars.

It is mentioned in the 14th State conference of C.P.I.M “The movements for the wages and other demands have been started in our state since 1973. The movement of agricultural laborers has been scattered in 6000 villages (approximate) before the silver Jubilee Conference of Krishak Sabha at Bankura. Last year it acceleratively drived away in different villages - near about in 12000 villages. The agricultural labourers have been able to collect @ Rs. 8. to and as wages in the $\frac{1}{3}$ villages and other $\frac{2}{3}$ villages the wages have been increased @ Rs. 2.00 to 3.00.”⁸³

Operation Barga

One of the parts of Land Reform Programmes was operation Barga that was related to the sharecroppers popularly known as adhiars or bargadars. In the previous Chapter it is discussed in details about the rise, growth and the condition of the sharecroppers including their reaction against the oppressions which were 'Tolagandi movement', 'adhiars Andolan in 1939-40 and Tebhaga Movement in 1946-47. It is found in the plannum of C.P.I. (M) at the time of Parliament Election in 1979 – 80.

Another important initiative regarding land reforms was 'Operation Barga'. Left Front Government amended an important part of the Land Reforms Act to protect the right and to resist the ejection of poor sharecroppers.....Ejection of sharecroppers is a punishable crime, imprisonment and fine have been mentioned in this law as a result of which a large scale ejection of sharecroppers have been obstructed.⁸⁴

In the chapter III of the West Bengal Land Reforms Act, 1955 has focused on the question of bargadars, before the Act had been passed the West Bengal Bargadar Act, 1950 was passed by the Government defining rights and obligators of the bargadars.

In the Land Reforms Act, 1955 defined the bargadars in such way – A person who under the system generally known as adhi, barga or bhag cultivates the land of another person on condition of delivering a share of the produce of such land to that person under section 16 of the Land Reforms Act, 1955-

The rights and obligations of the bargadars and their landholders have received lengthy consideration in the 3rd chapter of the West Bengal land Reforms Act, 1955.

(a) The produce of any land cultivated by a Bargadar shall be divided as between the Bargadar and the person whose land he cultivates in the proportion of 50:50 in case where plough, cattle, seeds and manure necessary for cultivation are supplied by the owner. In all other cases the proportion would be 60:40.

(b) The Bargadar shall deliver to the person whose land he cultivates the share of the produce due to him within the prescribed period and on such delivery each party shall give to the other a receipt for the quantity of the produce received by him.

(c) The Bargadar shall store or thresh the produce at such place as may be agreed upon him and the owner.

Under 15 A of the land Reforms Act, 1955 gives recognition to the hereditary right of a bargadar on the land he has been cultivating. The inheritor shall be one of his sons and the particular son who will inherit shall be chosen by the sons among themselves.

Under section 17 (1)- on four condition by which bargadars can be ejected.

- I. If the bargadar leaves the land uncultivated without any justifiable and valid reason or if he puts the land in use other than cultivation.
- II. If the bargadar gets the land cultivated by any one other than himself or a member of his family or lets any such unrelated person cultivate it.

- III. If the bargadar fails to pay to the landlord his share of the crop as due to him under law; and
- IV. If the person owning the land requires it for bringing it under personal cultivation, less by at least one hecter (2.47 acres) for the bargadar to cultivate, provided the total area of the landlord inclusive of his land already under khas possession does not exceed three hecters (7.41 acres)

Under section 17(2)-

Direct vesting of the land so resumed to the state in case the landlord does not bring the said land under his own cultivation or allows such land to be cultivated by some other person, within two years of the resumption.⁸⁵

The third chapter of Land Reforms Act, 1955 is important for the bargadars, because all descriptions given in the chapter is in favour of bargadars. But this was not in practical. Later on, the Acts of the bargadars have been amended time to time in 1966, 1970 and 1971. This amendments are-

- I) Bargadars share has been raised to 75% in case he bears all costs.
- II) The landowners is permitted to terminate cultivation of land bonafide personal cultivation on condition, however that
 - a) The extent of land so resumed by the owner along with any other hand under his personal cultivation does not exceed 7 ½ ; acres ; and
 - b) The bargadar has been granted heritable rights in respect of land he cultivates.
- III) The eviction of bargadar on grounds of neglect of cultivation was deleted.

IV) Forcible eviction has been made a cognizable offence. During the reign of left front Government the work of land Reforms got a new motion. In connection with the land reforms programmes, the work of the record of right of the bargadars started in new enthusiasm which was called operation Barga, though the works for the record of rights were started earlier since the West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act, 1953 and the West Bengal land Reforms Act, 1955 were passed. But it was not in practical.

7 lac sharecroppers have been reordered in the record of right till now of whom 2 lacs are scheduled caste and 1lac are scheduled tribes. The recording of sharecroppers has been continuing. Sharecroppers have been provided various loans by easy terms and conditions. In the mean time, 11 institutions (Government Undertaking and Cooperative Bank) have come forward. With the help of Panchayat organizations⁸⁶

The following table shows the compare of the recording of bargadars in Jalpaiguri district in the old method and the operation barga method :-⁸⁷

Year	Old Method	Operation barga method
1974-77	28120	X
1978	X	3,639
1979	2,278	5,624
1980	1,190	4,856
1981	73	X
1982	351	5,748
	3892	19,867

From the above table it is found that 28,120 bargadars were recorded by old method from 1974 to 1977 where as 23759 bargadars were recorded from 1978 to 1982 of which 19867 bargadars were recorded by operation Barga. So the statistics proves that old method is more successful than operation barga from statistical point of view.

Another Table shows the Recording of bargadars in Jalpaiguri district.⁸⁸

Year	Bargadars recorded in					
	W.B.E.A. Act		W.B.L.R Act		Operation Barga	
	Number	Area (acres)	Number	Area (acres)	Number	Area (acres)
Sept 1993	16985	27246.46	19318	21812.99	24343	46672.17

From the above table it is shown that before operation Barga 36303 bargadars have been recorded in the record of right, where as by the operation barga method 24343 bargadars were recorded up to Sept 1993. Here also proves from the statistical point of view that more bargadars were recorded than the operation barga method. But, regarding rights and implementation operation barga is more successful and practical than the pre-operation barga method, because before the period of pre-operation barga the bargadars could not establish their rights on land in spite of recording their names in the record of right and most of the cases bargadars were failure to have their share of the produces. Todarmal writes "The real credit of the 'operation barga' lies in the generation awakens in the bargadars to their rights and to free them of an ingrained fear, as a result of which they are presenting united resistance to the exploitation and deception by the land owning

classes.”⁸⁹ The five procedures by which operation barga is carried out which differs from the pre-operation barga are as follows:-

- (1) Identified the concerned areas of the bargadars through official discussions consulting with the leaders or representatives of all the associations of the cultivators.
- (2) Separate teams are formed at the district or sub divisional level to perform the programme comprising with junior Land Reforms officer of the concerned area, revenue officer and an experience amin and a peon under the control and super-vision of the Sub division Magistrate sub divisional Land Reforms officer and circle officer.
- (3) At the third stage data are collected through meeting with the villagers in an evening gathering and open discussions with them. The names of the bargadars and the problem related issues of the bargadars are collected, then the solution of this problems are chalked out.
- (4) At the four stages, a date is fixed, team would go on the Scheduled day in the mouza and works there, while working, the team investigate all the related issues consulting with the local authorities and local leaders and then prepared the list of the bargadars. If any dispute or objection is found within the period proper step is taken by the Revenue Officer.
- (5) At the last stage the names of the relevant bargadars would be recorded and certificates were issued to the bargadars.

From the above procedure, it is clear that the task has become effective more or less, more than 11 Lac bargadars have been recorded in the record of rights in West Bengal, but it was not satisfactory, because more than 20 Lac bargadars could have been recorded. There were many reasons for the failure of recording of the bargadars completely.

Firstly, lack of sympathetic attitude and collaboration among the team for conducting record of rights and the bargadars, villagers as well as local authorities such as panchayets and political leaders. There was a communicational gap for conducting the works successfully and systematically.

Secondly, most important reason was fear of eviction from land among the bargadars for which many bargadars kept themselves away from recording their names in the record of rights. They were in hesitation, if their names were recorded, they would be evicted from land because they had no security and completely depended on the land lords. Hillol Kumar Chakraborty writes, "The powerful landowners generally get upper hand due to the bargadars constant fear of eviction. The fear of eviction would persist so long as they remain unconscious about the rights granted to them by the Act."⁹⁰

Thirdly, biasness of the political leaders and panchayets for which bargadars were deprived from recording their names, in many cases landowners were in support of the strong political parties as a result of which they were able to conceal their land from the recording of bargadars.

Fourthly, in most of the cases a social relation between bargadars and 'Giri' like a father and son was another reason not to completely succeed in the work of recording of sharecroppers. It is found from various sources and field survey as well that in the society of North Bengal particularly in the Duars unlike in the

other parts of Bengal bargadars were completely depended on the 'Giri' treating them their parents. 'Giri' or jotdars also treated their adhiars or bargadars like a son, even in the marriage ceremony of an adhiars 'Giri' dropped waters on the heads of bride and bridegroom which was called 'Panichhita. (It is a local custom among the Rajbanshi Community people) and the 'Giri' became father and mother (the wife of Giri) of the adhiars (which was called Panichhita bap and Panichhita Mao). Unlike other parts of Bengal and elsewhere in India there was no rigidity of the feudal relation between adhiars and their 'Giri' and there was no restriction of casteism between adhiars and their 'Giri' because here it was found that the adhiars and 'Giri' belonged to the same Community. So in some cases bargadars did not want to destroy the relation with their 'Giri'.

Limitations of the Land Reforms in West Bengal

From various sources such as Government and Non-Government records, writings of different scholars, historians, economists in books, journals, periodicals dissertations and field surveys, it can be said that the land reform programmes in West Bengal particularly during the period of United Front Govt. and Left Front Govt. is a remarkable task comparing with the other states of India. In spite of that it can not be said that the land reforms programmes has been succeeded completely. There are many reasons for which it could not be a pillar of success. It is propagated that West Bengal holds the first position in India from the point of land reforms programmes. But it is not completely true, rather from the point of acquisition of land and distribution among the landless people, Jammu and Kashmir will remain ahead of West Bengal because during the reign of Shekh Abdullah 25.15% of total land was declared as surplus and same percent land was distributed among the land less peasants which is record, and West Bengal can not touch it.⁹¹

2ndly, there were many problems and defects in acquisition and distribution of ceiling surplus land by Government. In accordance with the provisions of the West Bengal Estates Acquisition Act, 1953 a land holder or an intermediary retained 25 acres of agricultural land excluding homestead, orchard, tank fisheries etc. Under section 5 of the West Bengal Estates Acquisition Act, 1953, a land holder was allowed to retain certain lands in the following ways-

- (I) Land comprised in homesteads.
- (II) Land covered by buildings and structures.

- (III) Non-agricultural land in his khas possession, not exceeding 15 acres.
- (IV) Tank fisheries.
- (V) Land comprised in teagardens, orchards, live-stock breeding, poultry farming or dairy.
- (VI) Land comprised in mills, factories or workshops.
- (VII) Land held by a local authority.
- (VIII) Land held for exclusively religious or a charitable purpose.

It is discussed earlier that many zamindars jotdars and intermediaries concealed their lands with benami record or declaring tank fisheries, gardens or, orchards or land for religious or charitable purposes, though actually these lands were used for agricultural purposes. The land holders were able to retain their lands illegally in support of some officials of land revenue Dept. and political leaders, as a result of which a lot of lands could not be acquired by the Govt. Moreover, a large number of lands had not been acquired and distributed for litigation under court. Other than these, due to some invisible reasons, a portion of acquired land had not been distributed to the landless people. Debabrota Bandhpadhya and Nirmal Mukharjee pointed out that 352782.78 acres of lands could have been distributed in 1981 of which only 94031 acres lands had been distributed upto 1992, and the rest were not distributed, the reason for not distribution is not clear.

Thirdly, the ceiling surplus land occupied by zamindars, jotdars and intermediaries was same in all parts of West Bengal. But it was not scientific because there were lot of differences in land in accordance with fertility and value in different region of

West Bengal. Production of crops was not same in all parts of West Bengal. So, the ceiling of lands measuring on quantity was a blunder, it should be fixed up in accordance with quality and value of land.

4thly, there were many differences between the landlords of North Bengal and South Bengal. The Zamindars and intermediaries of South Bengal had alternative sources of income other than their zamindaries such as business, industries and service but in North Bengal almost all the cases except very few, the zamindars, jotdars and intermediaries were completely depended on land. They had no alternative sources of income other than agricultural cultivation, particularly the jotdars of Rajbanshi, tribal and local Muslims were uneducated, simple and unconscious. It is common knowledge that in East Bengal most of the zamindars and renters were upper caste Hindus and the majority of the peasants were Muslims, while in Jalpaiguri there was no such demarcation as the majorities of the jotdars as well as the sharecroppers were Rajbanshis. Even the Muslims had their representatives in both classes.⁹² In the tribal communities, the jotdars and sharecroppers or projas belong to same community. As almost all the cases the jotdars had no alternative sources of income, they had been gradually demolishing after losing their lands by the Land Reforms programmes. In most of the cases, the lands, remaining after vesting, were divided among their sons & daughters. Naturally after one or two generation the lands gradually decreased. Not only that they became like a fish without water because they were not laborious, not efficient in other technical works, naturally to maintain their families they sold their lands. There were so many instances in North Bengal that the then jotdars sold their lands and became later on agricultural labourers or day labourers in Industry elsewhere in India. Some instances of such condition are given which is collected from field work-

Khagendra Nath Das, S/O Late Nara Nath Das, 77 years old of Chaparerpar, P.S Alipurduar Dist- Jalpaiguri, was a member of jotdar family and they had 18 hal land (270 bigha) which was cultivated by their raiyots or chukanidars. Now he has only 6 bighas of land and he has six sons and one daughter of whom only his elder son is doing service in Calcutta, rest of his five sons are jobless. His brother, Khajen Das and Brojen Das are completely poor, Khajen Das (Roy) is a day labourer and Brojen Das (Roy) is also a day labourer works on Road. ⁹³

Premanada Prodhan, S/O Late Nanibor Prodhan, 76 years, vill. Takoamari, P.O Rashikbill, Dist- Coochbehar told his father Nonibor Prodhan was a jotdar who had near about 800 bigha lands, cultivated their land by halua or projas by 50% share of produced crops. His father Nonibor Prodhan could not submit the records of lands to the Land Revenue Dept., he recorded his lands to unauthorized persons (Benami) as a result of which all most all the lands became vest, ultimately, they were able to have only 56 bigha lands by the permission of court which was divided among four brothers. Now among his four brothers Subodh Prodhan has only three bigha lands, and 3rd brother (Jakha) have no land and he became completely poor. ⁹⁴

Late Manta Barman (Manta Dhani) of Singimari, P.O. Rampur, Dist- Coochbehar had near about 500 bigha lands. He was killed by Naxalites. Among his four sons three sons had died, only one son Namalchon Barman is living with poverty. ⁹⁵

Ramesh Roy, S/O Late Santeswar Roy (Dhangu Roy), 48 years of Chapani, P.S Samuktala, Dist Jalpaiguri stated that his grand father late Bankanath Roy (then jotdar) had 300 hal lands (4500 bigha) and four sons – (1) Kalicharan Roy, (2) Ramdayal Roy (3) Brojen Roy and (4) Santeswar Roy. After vesting and division of land his father Santeswar Roy obtained 5 hal (75 bigha) land and now he (Ramesh Roy) obtained only 15 bigha lands and

his each cousin (5 brothers) obtained 4 bighas of land and they are living very ordinarily.⁹⁶

Other than these few instances there are many families of which once they were jotdars or zamindars. Now their successors have become agricultural labourers, industrial labourers, servants or doing many of them inferior works or illegal works which is a tragic situation. Now many questions arise about the success of the Land Reforms. Should it not remain any laws or systems to protect such types of jotdars or intermediaries only depending on agriculture? Prof. Ananda Gopal Ghosh pointed out that a proposal was taken in the conference of Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti in Jateshar in 1957 to recruit a representative of Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti in the committee of distribution of surplus lands as they were only agricultural-based people unlike the Zamindars of other parts of West Bengal. But the Government did not accept the proposal of the Samiti as a result of which many problems & crisis raises in the socio-economic and political situation of North Bengal.⁹⁷

One of the causes of demolition economically of the local jotdars was heavy immigration in the district from outside. As a result of immigration and changing economic policies local jotdar faced on competition with the immigrants which was a question of struggle for existence and in this life – struggle they lost their lands except few instances.

The following table shows the population increasing and their variations in the district, Jalpaiguri –⁹⁸

1872	1951	Variations 1872- 1951	1961	Variations 1951- 1961	1971	Variations 1961- 1971	1981	Variations 1971- 1981
201,659	914538	712879	1359292	444754	1750159	390867	2214871	464712

From the above statistics it is followed that the population in 1872 was 201,659 in the district including chaklas of Boda, Patgram and Purbabhag which were ceded to East Pakistan at the time of Partition of India in 1947 and the variation of the population from 1872 – 1951 was 712879. The population in 1981 in the district was 2214871, population increased 130033 from 1951 to 2214871 in 1981. It can be said easily that huge number of people immigrated in the district from 1872 to 1981, accordingly the lands for cultivation were not increased. Maximum number of people of total population lived in villages, because percentage of urban population in 1951 was 7.22, in 1961 was 9.11, in 1971 was 9.60 and in 1981 was 14.05. As there were no large industries except tea – industries, major portion of population had to depend on agricultural land for their livelihood. Naturally, land crisis was seen for which local people particularly the local jotdars were affected gradually.

Fifthly, Land reforms mean not only acquisition and distribution of land to the landless people. Land reform is not only a means of securing better distributive justice but also one of improving the social status and dignity of the poor cultivator as well as his political influence.⁹⁹ Beside land acquisition and distribution, technological systems and instruments for agricultural purposes including irrigation systems, soil conservation, seeds, manure should have been improved to increase production. Because, day to day population has been increasing, lands are being divided among the members of the families after each generation; as a result of which amount of land per family have been decreasing. In such a situation production should have been increased from insufficient land, side by side lands are to be conserved from soil pollution. Manjula Bose writes in her editorial address, “Since the pressure of excess population on land will continue for some time to come in the near future, technological and organizational development should proceed, as far as

practicable under this constraint. Technological development are however easier to achieve than organizational restricting.¹⁰⁰

It is found in the field survey in the different villages of Jalpaiguri and Coochbehar district that most of the villages are out of irrigation facility, electric facility. The peasants in these villages are not aware of the modern technological improvement in agriculture, they depend on the traditional method of cultivation.

The following table shows total number of villages, total area and irrigated area in different P.S. of the district, Jalpaiguri –¹⁰¹

Sl. No.	Name of P.S.	No. of inhabited villages	Total area (in hectare)	Percentage of Cultivation	Percentage of irrigated area to total cultivation
1.	Rajganj	28	38497.41	26.02	5.49
2.	Jalpaiguri	29	44262.07	79.17	1.12
3.	Mal	101	51859.38	45.68	9.86
4.	Metiali	30	20489.39	39.84	40.10
5.	Maynaguri	77	49304.60	68.52	2.49
6.	Nagrakata	23	34073.76	83.94	1.42
7.	Banarhat	50	28391.93	47.89	8.29
8.	Dhupguri	62	25325.61	75.99	3.49
9.	Birpara	21	18717.88	71.18	9.25
10.	Falakata	63	34911.28	64.22	15.95
11.	Madarihat	28	15835.36	57.75	6.42
12.	Alipurduar	129	68472.20	67.11	2.84
13.	Kalchini	43	69512.82	29.16	10.90
14.	Kumargram	52	86984.17	19.83	11.89
	Total	736	586637.86	50.67	6.82

Upendra Nath Barman wrote, “The ceiling of Khas land has been fixed up, but no sufficient measure has been taken up for increasing productions in the land in North Bengal as a result, most of the people once depended only on land have been destroyed in the end of destiny and living completely in a impoverish condition.”¹⁰²

Beside these, communication and marketing system is one of the important factors for the economic development of the peasants. It is also found in the field survey that many villages have not proper communicational facility and marketing system. Due to insufficient roads and infrastructural facility various crops produced by the peasants are not possible to transport different parts of the country to have proper value as a result of which peasants are less interested to cultivate, sometimes they became confused what type of crops they have to cultivate.¹⁰³

In one study area of Chakraborty and Ghosh, it was found that around 85 percent of the assignees of vested lands had never seen an agricultural extension worker and no improved seeds of the field survey, even though there was a scheme to supply minikits to the poor peasants.¹⁰⁴ For the lack of all agricultural related improvements mentioned above, small and marginal peasants have been suffering from different economic crisis, beside this many of them do not have alternative sources of income and they become failure to maintain their families. So, due to heavy poverty they sold their lands and become landless labourers.

Sixthly, though it is demanded that the operation Barga is a Landmark of Land reforms programmes, but from many aspects it could not be a pillar of success (it is discussed earlier in this chapter). From different sources it is found that a large number of bargadars, probably 600,000 to 1 million, still remain unrecorded.¹⁰⁵ P.K.Bhowmik writes “At the initial stage, OB was marked with spectacular success. But the over all success was not satisfactory. Out of the estimated 2 million bargadars the Land Records Department could register the name of about one million bargadars only. The reason behind this they trend to record their rights.” Hillol Kumar Chakraborty showed in his article “The land Reforms in West Bengal and the Bargadar” that many bargadars were not interested to record their names in the record of rights due to fear of eviction. He writes, “Thus in all probability, we may

argue that a poor bargadar would naturally think that if he would claim to be recorded as a bargadar during the current survey and settlement operation, he would simply invite fresh exploitation from his landowner and may lose his barga land."¹⁰⁶

Another reason for the failure of recording the names of sharecroppers was social ties or relation between jotdars and bargadars. It is shown earlier in this chapter that the relation between jotdars and bargadars was paternal unlike other parts of Bengal and it is found in field survey that many bargadars told that they were solvent in the jotdari system, jotdars or 'Giri' always used to assist them. But crisis was being started after independence due to immigration and population going up as a result of which pressure on land was increasing and exploitation took a new form.

The bargadars who were recorded in the record of right, many of them became failure to hold their land. Many times, the bargadars could not cultivate their lands due to financial crisis, then, the land owners moved to court and the bargadars were evicted for not cultivating land in accordance with the provisions of Land Reforms Act. Many times land owners have tried to cheat the bargadars as the bargadars were illiterate and unconscious. Land owners would give lump sum money to the bargadars and the owners obtained land by registration. Adhir Shaha of Takoanari, P.O. Rashikbill, Dist Coochbehar, prominent local leader of CPT(M), who was engaged in the movement of land occupation told that suppose a bargadars got 10 bigha lands in the record of rights, land owner obtained 5 bigha (50%) lands. Promising that rest 5 bigha lands would give to the bargadars (giving kawala). Sometimes it was shown that the owners would not give kawala. Due to financial crisis and poverty, the bargadars took loan from the land owners on heavy interest and later on, the bargadars left the demand of bargadari right on land getting some lump sum money. In Such a way bargadars lost their lands and became landless laboures.¹⁰⁷ Another local leader of C.P.I. (M) of

Bholardabri, P.O. Bholardabri, Dist. Jalpaiguri told that many bargadars who recorded their names in the record of right and evicted from land and Left this village, though most of the bargadars cultivated their lands in accordance with the Land Reforms Act.¹⁰⁸

From the above discussions, it may be said that Land reforms programme in West Bengal marked a new dimension in the agrarian field and the life of the peasants, particularly the small and marginal farmers in West Bengal. In spite of having many limitations and short comings peasants and bargadars have obtained the right to fight against all sorts of oppressions more or less.

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Chapter - 6

Problems of Lease Lands in the District

In the previous chapters, it is discussed that there were mainly two portions regarding land revenue purposes in the district-

- (a) The Zamindari area mostly situated to the West of Tista comprising with Baikunthapur Pargana, Chaklas of Boda, Patgram and Purbabhag where permanent settlement was introduced since 1793 and, here, Zamindars were the proprietors of the lands,
- (b) Other than Zamindari areas, there was a vast area called Western Duars where no permanent settlement or Zamindari system was introduced by the Britishers. Most of the areas of Western Duars were no man's land, which were filled with jungles and ferocious animals. Only the people of some tribes namely, Mech, Toto, Garo, Rabha and Druupa lived there more or less independently in the pre-colonial period. So, after coming of the Britishers in 1865 after the 2nd Anglo Bhutanese war defeating the Bhutanese power, they occupied whole of the areas which was declared as a Waste land or Non-regulated area and here British Govt. was the proprietor of the land.

It has also been discussed in the previous chapter that the Britishers divided lands of the Duars into three major parts namely – (a) Land for tea cultivation, (b) Land for agricultural cultivation and (c) Land for reserve forest. As the British Government was the proprietor of the land, so the Government would give land to the cultivators including jotdars, chukanidars or tea cultivators by

agreement or lease and the lessee of the land have to follow all the terms and condition of lease failing which Government occupied the land and gave it to another person by lease.

Before annexation of the Duars by the Britishers there were already a number of jotdars who possessed lands, but there were no uniform system or laws for holding jotes and paying revenue to the Government. For over twenty years after annexation jotes were settled under the provisions of the Act XVI of 1869 and the waste lands Rules of 1875, while the question of the right of the different classes of Tenants found in the tract was slowly threshed out and two attempts at a settlement of the Duars were made, but neither was a successes. The result of it was that the system of land holding and the de-facto incidents of the various tenures got into a some what chaotic state. To reduce this chaos to order, to systematize the land policy.....the Waste land Rules of 1888 were formed and the settlement of Mr. Sunder, culminating in the so called Mal Jote Lease of 1891 was carried out¹

Persons who were willing to obtain lands had to apply to the Tahshildars, Tahshildar sent it to the Deputy Commission. After investigation Commission granted the land by a preliminary lease for five years,

In paragraph 12 (b) Dy. Commissioner recommends that rule 15 of the rules for the grant of ordinary lease of arable Lands in the Western Duars be altered and that instead of granting preliminary leases that after the lands are surveyed they should be assessed to revenue at once and leases should be granted for such period as will end with the term of the present settlement. From paragraph 2 of the Form of the lease it will be observed that the lease referred to the rule 15 shall be for a period of five years from the commencement of the official years next following the official year of actual entry and the rent to be paid shall be as follows :-²

Year of entry (i.e. from actual date of entry to 31 st March following).....	Nil
First full years (From 1 st April following date of entry)	Nil
Second year	3 annas per acre
Third and fourth year.....	6 annas per acre
Fifth year.....	8 annas per acre

After completed the terms of 5 years lease, the new lease was necessary. On behalf of the landholders demand was raised for 15 years lease. In many cases where these lands were under dense jungle last years, and for which 15 – years leases have been issued, they are now smiling fields ³

At the time of settlement works of Mr. Sunder three types of settlement works were found settled by lease. 1. The expression “Mal jote” is occasionally used in official correspondence. By ‘Mal jote’ is meant a jote which had existed at last settlement. There were 4221 Jotes of this class.

(2) Time expired jote – A “time expired jote” is a jote which had been taken up under the rules for the grant of ordinary leases for availed waste lands and the preliminary of which had expired. There were 898 jote of this class.

(3) Arable waste land jote – An arable waste land jote is one of which the preliminary lease had not expired With the permission of the commissioner and at the request of the jotdars the preliminary lease was cancelled and superseded by a lease for 15 years being the term of this settlement. ⁴

Since the settlement works of Mr. Sunder a large number of jotes were issued to the jotdars. But maljotes had not been issued regularly instead of the Renewed Arable waste lands lease on the expiry of preliminary Reclamation leases. Milligan pointed out that for a few years after 1905 Preliminary Leases under the Arable Waste Land Rules were issued to all new settlers, but when the consideration of new lease – forms was under taken, only amalnamas were issued which gave possession of the land with a promise of a lease hereafter. ⁵

So, there were four classes of jotes in the Duars for which lease had to be prepared at the Milligan's settlement –

- (1) Jotes settled by Mr. Sunder under Mal Jote leases.
- (2) Jotes settled subsequently under Renewed Arable Waste Lands Lease.
- (3) Jotes settled under A.W.L Preliminary Leases.
- (4) Jotes created under Amalnamas for the reclamation of Waste Land for which no lease had yet been issued or prescribed.

Beside these four classes of leases there were some special leases which were settled with particular persons like Col. Hedayet Ali, Upendra Nath Duardar etc. which were discussed in the previous chapters. It is found that there were some limitations in the Sunder's settlement and lease for which revenue was not collected properly. So, at the time of Milligan's settlement, he changed some terms and conditions of the leases. Milligan wrote, "..... what has actually been done is to retain the old form of renewed lease in the case of jotes of the 2nd and 3rd classes above mentioned while a new form has been approved for jotes of class 4, and for future new settlement, the provisions of which have, as a

preliminary measure, been embodied in a revised Schedule of Arable Waste Land Rules for the Western Duars.”⁶

From the official sources it is found that after expiration of term of the lease, the leasee had to renewed their leases newly with the Government to fulfill the terms and conditions of the Government –

In a nutshell, it can be said that a leasee had to promise to pay revenue or cess with installments to the Deputy Commissioner or any other officer appointed for the purpose of realizing the same.

The date of payment revenue or cess:-

15th Bysak (27 April) for ten anna kist

15th kartic (31st October) for six anna kist

No claims were considered for remission to pay revenue on account of failure of crops, absconding of raiyots or the non-payment of their rents to the leasee. In case of failing to pay the rent or cess to the kistibundhi on the aforesaid dates, all arrears would be realized by sale of his property in force for the recovery of public demands.

With fulfilling all the terms and conditions of the Government and paying the rent and cess regularly a leasee could transfer their jotdari right or any share or interest therein, by sale, gift or other wise, and in the same way the person or persons to whom the jote would be transferred, had fulfill all the terms conditions, and liabilities of the Government.

A leasee or land holder could sublet his land to the chukanidars on condition of paying rent or cess regularly in a scheduled date of the year and after expire the term of the lease, the chukanidars also had to renewed his lease with jotdars (Land holders). It is found from field survey in Alipurduar subdivision

that the jotdars would give their lands to the chukanidars by lease either whole of the jotes or partly. Sri Prosanya Kumar Roy, 86 years old, ex-jotdar of Majherdabri, P.S Alipurduar, Dt – Jalpaiguri told that his father late Dina Nath Roy cleared the jungle and prepared for cultivation, then the British Govt. gave Patton or lease. Their land would be cultivated by chukanidars or ryots.⁷ Another ex-jotdar Khagendra Nath Das, 77 years of Chaparer par, P.S Alipurduar, Dt- Jalpaiguri gives same statement that their land was also cultivated by chukanidars to whom land were given by lease on condition of pay revenue and cess such as water cess, education cess, for road cess etc.⁸

With same alteration Mr. Milligan would give the lands to the jotdars by lease after expiration of the terms of lease. The jotdars would receive jotes subject to the provisions of clause 18, a renewed lease at such rate and on such condition as may be determined on by the Government. The jotdars pay the rent and cess at the tahshil office within whose jurisdiction their jote is situated on or before the days specified failing which, all arrears shall be realized by sale of their property.

It can be said from various Government sources that the rents would not be collected properly. Heavy amount had not been collected in the due date of the financial year. It is found from the statement of the Lt. Governor dated 3rd April 1891 on the Dy. Commissioner office, Jalpaiguri.

“I only stayed a few minutes at the Mainaguri tahshil and required into the collections. The Tahshildar glibly informed me that he had collected over 90 percent, which showed that he knew the standard expected of him. I found however that the practice is this. The second or 10-anna kist is fixed for 15th February. After that day a register is prepared of defaulter of over Rs,10 and a sale notice is issued fixing 24th April for sale, if they do not pay up

earlierBut no list had been prepared of the defaulters under Rs,10 nor any steps taken. This is not a satisfactory procedure.”⁹

So, to collect the rent systematically and to give some opportunity to pay the rent the date had been scheduled in the following way – In reply I am to say that, as the 15th February and 31st October, are the kist days according to the new form of pattah sanctioned in Government No.965 L.R dated 24th July 1891 for the jotdars of Jalpaiguri. The Lt. Governor desires that those dates may be definitely adopted as the latest days of payment.¹⁰

Form of Renewed Lease for Mal Jotes in the Western Duars granted by the Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri.

To.....	
Of.....	
Zila: Jalpaiguri	Western Duars
Register of all leases	No.
Tauzi register	Part No.
Ditto	Present No.
Taluk	Pargana
Name of Jotdar	

Date..... 191.....

The lands covered by this lease are those specified in the khatians and maps entitled jote..... prepared under notification No.142 R. dated the 21st January, 1908 and finally published in.....and no others.

In consideration of your agreement to pay the following, namely:-

from.....to.....Rs.....Per annum

from..... to..... Rs..... Per annum

from..... to..... Rs..... Per annum

Payable in two kists annually, namely:-

a 6 anna kist on 30th November

And

a 10 anna kist on 1st March

This lease of the lands described as aforesaid is granted to you for a period of 20 years fromA.D,
Corresponding to..... B.S.

Lease land in the Tea-gardens

In the 3rd Chapter, shown the origin and growth of Tea-Garden in the Duars by European proprietors and Indian proprietors. It is followed that the tea cultivations was economically a profitable business without any risk, but with this business the proprietors of the Tea-gardens as well as the British Government were benefited depriving the local people and labourers.

The problem of lease system in the lands of tea gardens was one of the factors for declining the tea – Industries in the district which was originated at the time of starting tea plantation. After independence this problems had not yet been solved and the old system had been continuing. A lot of money was to be paid to the Government as salami for lease land recently a committee has been formed to solve the problems called “Sen Committee” and the committee has given some suggestions. The Government has abated the amount of salami for renew of lease land from Rs. 15000 /- to Rs. 9000/- and for lockout- gardens was Rs. 4500/- and the rent of land was abated from 45% to Rs 30% .¹¹

Lease land in Alipurduar Town:-

One of the problems of land in Jalpaiguri district has been the question of lease land specifically in the Alipurduar town in 1930s. Out of 1064.52 acres of land 373.71 were under the direct management of "Khasmahal" authority and 54.36 acres were under the management of the Western Duars Market Fund statutory authority (Letter of Nirmal Das, M.L.A) the Khasmahal authority gave 204.04 acres of land on lease to several persons under the provisions of the crown Manual Act, 1932 for different terms of periods viz. 10 years, 12 years and 30 years. But all the terms of lease expired since 1960 and onwards. The lease holders and their successors could not renew the terms of lease by which they could legitimize their possessions as on lease lands.¹²

In the following way with the terms and conditions made by the Government of Bengal lands were granted by lease:-¹³

Lease granted by the Governor of the Province of Bengal to

.....

Son of

Ofin the police station.

Alipurduar in the district of Jalpaiguri.

This Indenture made on the 27th day of November 1936 between the Governor of the Province of Bengal (here in after called the lessor, which term, unless there be anything repugnant in the context, shall include his successors representatives) of the one part and the above mentioned (here in after called the lessee, which term unless there be anything repugnant in the context, shall include his heirs executors, administrators, representatives) of the other part.

Now this indenture witnessed that in consideration of the payment to the lessor of the sum of Rs. 18/- (on or before the exclusion of these presents) (by the installments on the dates here in after mentioned) and of the rent and covenants on the part of the lessee and condition herein after reserved and contained the lessor doth here by demise unto the lessee all that piece or parcel of land in the first part of the schedule here to more particularly described to hold the same unto the lessee for a term of 30 (thirty) years from the 1st day of April 1936 paying therefore the rent at the times and in manner hereinafter in the second part of the said schedule specified (with successive rights of renewal for period of 30 years in perpetuity for two further terms at such terms as may be fixed.)

Installment of rent etc.

	<u>Rs.</u>	<u>A P</u>	
First Installment	7	8	on 30 th Nov
Second Installment	12	8	on 28 th Feb

Sources: - Standard Form of Long -term Lease of Town Khasmahal Land for Non agricultural purpose.

There were fourteen terms and conditions imposed by the Government to the lessee to be followed strictly. Among the fourteen terms and conditions some important terms and conditions were as follows:-¹⁴

- 1) The lessee including his heirs and representatives shall carry out the terms embodied in this lease and will continue to be found there by.
- 2) The lessee shall pay the rent of the holding in the Collectorate in equal half – yearly installments as shown in the first part of the schedule and shall also pay the premium fixed in the manner stated below.

- 3) In default of payment of any installment of rent or premium on the date fixed in the schedule, the lessee shall be bound to pay in addition to the arrear interest at the rate of 12½ percent, per annum on the amount of arrears till the day of payment and the arrears shall be realizable as public demand.
- 4) If the lessee dies before the expiry of this lease, his heirs or if the land leased be transferred then assigns shall register their names in the collectorate within three calendar months after obtaining possession of the holding and will possess and use the land abiding by all the terms and condition of these leases.
- 5) The lessee shall not be at liberty without previous sanction of the collector in writing to transfer or sublet the whole or portion only of the land leased nor in any manner to divest himself of whole or part of the land demised.
- 6) The lessee shall not make any deep ditch or excavation without the consent of the collector, nor in any way injure or damage the land or property hereby leased out.
- 7) The lessee shall keep the land free from jungle and all sorts of nuisance. On his failure to do so, after due notice to the lessee they will be removed by the collector and the expenses incurred for the removal shall be recovered from the lessee as an arrear of rent.
- 8) The lessee shall pay and discharge all existing and future rates, taxes and assessment duties impositions outgoing and burdens whatever assessed, charged or imposed upon the demised premises or upon the owner or occupier thereof in respect thereof payable by either in respect thereof.

- 9) The lessee shall preserve intact the boundaries of his holding and will keep them well demarcated according to the requisition of the collector and shall point them out when required by the less or to do so to any other duly authorized by him in writing to inspect them.
- 10) If the said land or any part thereof shall at any time, be required by Government for a public purpose the lessee shall give up the same on demand without any claim to compensation in respect of the said demised land. If the land is required permanently the lease shall forth with be determined and the lessee shall be entitled to such fair and reasonable compensation for building and improvements affected by him as shall be decided by the Collector / Deputy Commissioner. If a part of the land is required, whether permanently or temporarily, the lease shall not determine, but in the former case the lease shall be entitled to proportionate reduction of rent, and in the latter to total remission of rent and to such compensation in either case as shall be decided by the collector / Deputy commissioner.

From the above mentioned terms and conditions it may be said that it was easy to have lease land but it would be a problematize to the lease for future which could not be realised by the lessee at that moment for their future generation. After attaining independence in 1947 followed by the land reforms policy of the Government of India the Government of West Bengal passed 'West Bengal land Acquisition Act, 1953 and land reforms Act, 1955 (Discussed in details in previous chapter). But the Government could have not been solved the problem of lease land like other problems of land and land holders such as land less peasants, bargadars etc. (Discussed previously) because the lease holders and their successors are not able to have raiyoti right on their lands after dwelling so many years. So the problem is created

in the new forms. Within long duration the lease holders transferred their holdings to another persons.

It is mentioned earlier that the term of lease has expired since 1960's, and after that no lease had been issued to the lessee as a result of which, the Government became failure to have rent or revenue from these lands. It is found in a letter of Alipurduar Byabasayee Samiti, no ABS/65/94-95, dated 23rd August, 1994 "That, the lease – term of almost all the leases of the old C.S. plots has expired about 20/25 years ago. Besides original leases there are huge number of occupants who subsequently purchased land by way of registered sale–deeds from the original leases, had been regularly paying land revenue in their respective names till 1388 B.S. Mutation in their favour was also done by the land Reforms Department and thereby the right & title of the occupiers was accepted by the Government." ¹⁵ It is also mentioned in a writing of Anupam Talukdar, "204.04 acre land out of 373.71 acre had been leased in accordance with the Crown Manual Act of 1932, tenure of 1933 to 1960 in several times for 30 years as a C.S Plot. The term of lease has expired long ago since then the Government became failure to collect rent from these lands. Many of the original lease holders and this successor registered their lands and also sold in some cases beside this, many of them recorded their names in the mutation. But suddenly the Government held over the collecting of revenue since 1983 as it expired the term of lease" ¹⁶

Another problem of the land in Alipurduar Town is the land of Western Duars Market Fund. The Western Duars Market Fund was formed during the survey and settlement works of Mr. Sunder, the Settlement officer of the Western Duars. The Transactions of the Western Duars Market Funds will be accounted for accordance with the following rules –

1. Each Tehshil in the Western Duars will have a Market Fund. The savings of one Tehshil will not be spent in another.

2. The purpose for which the Fund May be expended are the following:-

Firstly: for the payment of the establishment required for collection, supervision and the maintenance of market in a proper sanitary condition.

Secondly: For the construction and maintenance of works of public utility and convenience in the market or wells, construction of sheds public necessities and urinals, planting trees repair or construction of roads leading to market & C.

Thirdly: For the establishment of new market.¹⁷

Out of its 54.36 acres of land only an area near about 10.00 acres area now utilized as hat or market. The rest of the land is in possession of several persons for years together, some of them temporary lease and some of them having utilizing it without any authority.

Later on, lands of half plots were brought under the control of Zilla Parishad for management by an order of Board of Revenue and the authority of the administrator ceased to existent in the matter of the market fund when the matter was brought to the notice of the Board, a proposal for declaring these plots of lands as "Civil Station Area" and then leasing them out to the licensees / occupiers thereof on long term lease in terms of rule 166 of the land Management Manual was considered. Board in its memo No. 4451-GE dated 24th March, 1973 agreed in principle to the proposed action.¹⁸

The licensees and occupiers informed their inabilities to pay rent and salami in terms of rules 166/168 of the land Management Manual and they prayed to hold the land granting them long term lease exempting from payment of rent and salami. Then the

proposal for exemption from payment of salami and rent was referred to the Finance Department. The Finance Department recommended in such way –

“..... we may agree to waiving the salami but there is no case of giving further concession in respect of rent (4% of the market value).(vide G.O. NO Gr. 011-403 dated 15.9.84)

The district magistrate of Jalpaiguri has also been instructed to deal with the dispose of the Western Duars Market Fund lands in the New Alipurduar Town in terms of the provisions of the Western Duars Market Fund Rules as amended under notification No. 817 – L. Ref dated 4th August, 1986 on the following basis as a special case –

- a) The Salami may be waived as already agreed to by the Finance Department.
- b) The market value may be computed on the basis of the years of occupation taking 1948 as the base year for assessment of land valuations, fixing at 4% of that valuation as the rent to be paid by the occupiers from the date of such occupation.
- c) Some occupants may have paid salami. Such payments will be adjusted against rent payable under the new system proposed.
- d) To obviate hardship, the Administrator may fix easy installments not exceeding ten years for payment of the arrear rent calculate in the manner indicated above.¹⁹

But the problems of the occupants have not yet been solved because of the heavy amount of rupees for leasing on long – term lease. The occupants of the land of Western Duars Market Fund

remain uncertainty in spite of dwelling on the land for long time, on the other hand Government also have become failure to obtain rent from this land.

Another problem in the land of Alipurduar Town is in the land of refugee colony which was set up by the Govt. in the R.R & R. Department in the Paschim Jitpur Mauza. In the colony Measuring 32.28 acres of lands, refugees were settled on 15/30 year lease during the period of 1950 to 1953 and the rent was also fixed up. But the term of such leases also expired since 1983. It has not yet been possible to solve the problem of lease land of the refugees or their successors either giving them raiyoti right or long term lease in spite of declaring an order by the Settlement Officer of Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling district "Collector granted them pattas they are in possession that's all record them as raiyots"²⁰

To solve the problem of the lease- expired land of Alipurduar town Govt. took initiative for granting long term lease after receiving prayer from different corner of the people of Alipurduar such as Byabasayee Samiti, Citizen Forum, Senior Citizen Forum of Alipurduar and the M.L.A himself. After consulting with higher authority of the Board of Revenue, West Bengal, the Sub Divisional land and land Reforms officer, Alipurduar issued a letter to the general secretary, Alipurduar Byabasayee Samiti for renewal of long term lease of land in Alipurduar town "with reference to discussions made with you on 30/11/94 that long term lease of land in Alipurduar town may be renewed if the lessee / ex-lessee or his successors in interest pays rent @ 15 times of annual rent previously payable or 4% of the market price of the land at the times of renewal of the lease whichever is less. No salami will be charged at the time of renewal of such lease. Other person who came in possession of the Government Khasland without any lease or by virtue of purchase of land from ex-lessee shall have to take long term lease (for 30 years with option for successive renewal

for the same period) on payment of annual rent to be fixed at 4% of present market value of such land and salami being 10 times of annual rent.”²¹

District Land and Land Revenue officer has given a list about the amount of salami and rent of the lease land for renew in the following way-

Land for Domestic purpose:-²²

<u>95% of the proposed rate as salami w.e.f 15.4.83</u>	<u>Market value fixed</u>
A- Zone: Rs. 98, 68,030/20.77 acre = Rs.4,751 per decimal + token annual rent	Rs. 5000/- per decimal
B- Zone: Rs.182,79,520/48.10 acre =Rs. 3,800 per decimal + token annual rent	Rs. 4000/- per decimal
C- Zone: Rs. 5, 24,400/1.84 acre = Rs. 2850 per decimal + token annual rent	Rs. 3000/- per decimal

Land for Commercial purpose:-²³

<u>95% of the propose rate as salami:</u>	<u>Market value fixed</u>
A- Zone: Rs: 43. 96,000/10.99 acres = Rs. 4000/- per decimal + annual rent 4% or Rs. 400/- per decimal	Rs. 10.000 per decimal
B- Zone: Rs. 6,65,600/2.08 acres =Rs. 3200 per decimal + annual rent 4% or Rs. 3200/- per decimal	Rs. 8000/- per decimal

From the above table it is found that if a land occupants wants to take his land by long term lease he will have to pay huge amount of rupees sometimes it would be heavier than market value

which is impossible to many persons because of their economical inability. Nirmal Das, M.L.A of Alipurduar pointed out in his letter to Abdur Rajjak Molla, land and land revenue minister that near about Rs 10000/ - per decimal will have to pay by the lessee to renew his land which is impossible to pay by the people of migrated and devastating flood affected in 1993. ²⁴

Alipurduar Chamber of Commerce and industry pointed out by a letter to Sri Surja Kanta Mishra, Hon' able Minister in charge of land and land Reforms, Govt of west Bengal –

“Proposed rate of rent is considered abnormally high while comparing with the present market price of this town land & which is having no similarity with any districts or sub-divisions of west Bengal”

“A fresh lease holder will have to pay rent at the rate of Rs 500/- to Rs 1000/- per decimal per annum on one side of a particular road, while a resident on other side of that road is paying Rs. 1/-per decimal per annum & enjoying Raiyoty rights – which is not justified” ²⁵

A letter was also sent to Sri. Surja Kanta Mishra, in charge of land and land Reforms, on 18.09.1996 by senior citizens forum mentioning “The rents proposed will be more or less Rs 500/- to Rs. 1000/- per decimal per annual according to the market price in different locality while the rent for the Raiyoty land, which exists side by side in this town, is almost Rs 1/- per decimal per annum. So the proposal is likely to cause huge disparity among the citizens against principal of natural justice.” ²⁶

So, it is found from above discussions that the different corner of the people of Alipurduar it is being demanded to solve the problem of lease land which is expired in addition with that infavour of some political parties demanded reality right instead of lease, as for example B.J.P protested the modification for renew of

lease land issued by land and land revenue department they also observed the day as “black day” demanding for raiyoty right on land instead of lease.²⁷ A convention, organized by left front was held on 02.02.2003 where Nirmal Das, M.L.A, Rabin Dasgupta leader of C.P.I (M), Arun Ganguly, leader of forward block and Chandan Sarkar leader of C.P.I expressed their views regarding land problems of Alipurduar. They pointed out that it is the matter of land and land Revenue Department, Municipality can not decide to solve the problem whether giving raiyoty right or anything else, in addition to that raiyoty right is never to be granted to the land occupiers of the lease land, which is illegal according to the Act of land and land Reforms of West Bengal, rather they have been demanding for long term lease for 99 years, to reduce the amount of rent and salami.²⁸

Problem of Adverse lands and Chitmahals (Enclaves) in the boundary areas of Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri and Bangladesh.

A lot of burning land related problems are in the boundary areas of Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar and Bangladesh which were created before long past. The people of these areas both adverse land and Chitmahals have been facing different types of problems, particularly the people of Chhitmahal areas have been living like a convicts since independence struggling with poverty. They have been confined in a particular ambit losing the right of moving freely and the right of citizens as Indian.

To realize the problems it should be gone through, the history of long past. Koch kings were powerful in the 16th and the 17th century. Mirjumla invaded Coochbehar in 1661. Taking shelter in Bhutan, Koch kings fought against Mirjumla, as a result of which Mughal army had broken off and a treaty was concluded

between Koch king and Shayestha Khan in 1665. Atabat Khan again invaded Coochbehar in 1687 and he interred 4 miles into Coochbehar and occupied Kaikana Chakla of Coochbehar. In this circumstance, Raikot King of Baikunthapur joined with Coochbehar in spite of having clash between Coochbehar and Baikunthapur and they attacked jointly against the Mughals as a result of which a treaty was concluded in 1699 between Alikuli Khan, Mughal Fauzdar and Koch King RupNarayan. In accordance with the treaty, Fatepur Kazirhat and Kaikana chakla came under Mughal Empire permanently on the other hand Patgram, Boda and Purbabhag chaklas came under Koch kingdom. Many chits of Coochbehar are situated in these three chaklas. After formation of the district, these three chaklas were included with Jalpaiguri.

But Nawab Nazim of Bengal Suba denied the treaty and new faujdar Niyamatulla was appointed in place of Ali Kuli Khan. Again fight was started, Shekh jaar Mahammad occupied the three chaklas and the army of year Mahammad started to dwell in the Coochbehar frontier. The Peace of these areas was disturbed by the armies of the Mughals and broke out into a rebellion realizing the situation. The Nawab of Bengal agreed to give these three chaklas to chhatra Nazir Santanu, the Koch king by agreement or lease. By this time some villages of Coochbehar were occupied by the Mughals army. These villages became enclaves of Pakistan (Now Bangladesh). Milligan in his report mentioned "the two chaklas of Boda and Patgram make up the southern portion of the permanently settled part of the district. These two chaklas are separated from each other by a strip of Coochbehar territory; and a multitude of enclaves of Coochbehar state are scattered through them; similarly a number of enclaves of the chaklas lie within the periphery of the state." ²⁹ In the settlement with the Mahamadans the Koch Kings took the Zamindari in the name of "Nazir Deo" but at the time of the permanent settlement the British Government settled the Zamindari with the Raja in his own name. The Zamindari is still composed of many patches, but it consists of

three main chaklas – two are now in Jalpaiguri, namely Boda and Patgram and one in Rangpur namely Purbabhag.³⁰

In 1895 a boundary dispute arose between Jalpaiguri district and the state of Coochbehar. Both were mutually agreed that both sides should abide by the line shown in the Map of O' Donel in 1868 – 70. The relaying was accepted in September 1899, and the readjustment was finalized in 1901. The matter however was reopened in 1910 and the map was re-laid in 1910 – 11 by O.J Hart of the survey Department of Bengal. The work of Hart was accepted by the Maharaja of Coochbehar and confirmed by the Government of India in November 1914 and April 1915 respectively.³¹

During British period the problem of enclaves could have not been solved, rather more chits were created in the boundary areas of Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri and Rangpur district. Assistant director of revenue Department of Bengal, Rai J.N Sircar Bahadur sent a memorandum to the director of land and surreys, Bengal (No. 2949 – Jr, dated cal, 21st March 1934). “I am directed to refer to paragraph 4 of your letter No. 1/10, 3272 dated 22nd August, 1932 regarding the proposal of exchanging the enclaves of Coochbehar state in the district of Rangpur and Jalpaiguri with those of Rangpur and Jalpaiguri in the Coochbehar state and to say that in view of the strong local objection to the proposed exchange Government have decided to abandon the proposal.”³²

After independence, the problem of enclaves had not yet been solved because of the conflict of demarcation between Pakistan and India. Boundary area between India and Pakistan was demarcated with the consent of political parties and the decision of a commission under the chairmanship of Sir Siril Radclif without any practical knowledge. Dr. Anananda Gopal Ghosh pointed out in his article that the boundary was demarcated between India and Pakistan on the basis of Police Station, not on the religion of the

people.³³ It is unfortunate and tragic event to the history of Jalpaiguri that the five Police Stations of Jalpaiguri namely Debiganj, Patgram, Boda, Panchagar and Tetulia had been transferred to East Pakistan by Radcliffe Award as a result of which the people of Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar and Darjeeling had to face different types of problems because these areas were scattered from southern part of Bengal because the people of both areas had to communicate through Purnia (Bihar).

Why did it happen? Reason is not clear to us, it can be said that the political leaders, as well as Radcliffe Commission had no practical experience about the boundary areas of both countries and sentiment of the people. The present researcher has taken interview of the people of Khudipara, Singpara and Manikganj where he found a lot of problems regarding land and boundary for which they have been living in a confusion and the problem has not yet been solved in spite of so many discussions and meetings held on higher level of both the countries. Md. Amiruddin, 60, s/o Late Osman Ali of Khudipara told that many meetings were held between the officials and Political leaders of both the countries where local people are not invited as a result of which problems are not being solved.³⁴

Since the independence jurisdiction of the district changed time to time. Some of the enclaves of Coochbehar had been transferred to Jalpaiguri. 17 chhiits of Haldibari police station were transferred to Jalpaiguri under the Govt. of West Bengal Home (police) Dept., Notification No. 2427 P/dated the 27th June 1952. A further adjustment between the district boundaries of Coochbehar and Jalpaiguri had taken place in the year 1955 under home (police) Dept. Govt. of West Bengal Notification No. 2115 P/ dated 20th May 1955, 34 chhiits of Coochbehar were transferred to Jalpaiguri.³⁵

Dispute of Berubari Union No. 12

At the time of demarcating between Jalpaiguri district and Pakistan, a dispute came up. During this period, Pakistan claimed that the whole of the Berubari union No. 12 of Jalpaiguri would have to be included with Pakistan at per Radcliffe Award, but India was not agree with that. Then to tackle this dispute an agreement was signed “between” two prime minister of both the countries called Nehru – Noon agreement in September, 1958. In accordance with the agreement – it was decided that the half area of Berubari would be given to Pakistan, the other half adjacent to India. The division of Berubari union No. 12 will be horizontal starting from the North – east of Debiganj Thana. The division should be made in such a manner that the Coochbehar enclaves between Pachagar Thana of east Pakistan and Berubari union No. 12 of Jalpaiguri P.S of West Bengal will remain connected as at present with Indian territory and will remain with India. The Coochbehar enclaves lower down between Boda Thana of East Pakistan and berubari union No. 12 will be exchange along with the general exchange of enclaves and will go to Pakistan.³⁶

But local people started movement against the Nehru – Noon Agreement, and strongly protested to join with Pakistan. This movement spread in different parts of Jalpaiguri and Coochbehar led by Prof Nirmal Basu, Amar Roy Pradhan, contemporary Forwardblock leader and many other local leaders. Prof. Nirmal Basu litigated the case in high court and later on in Supreme Court challenging the Nehru – Noon Agreement. President of India, then wanted to know about Article 143 to Supreme Court, in reply Supreme Court declared that any part of India would not be transferred to Pakistan without amendment of the constitution of India. Then the 9th amendment of the constitution was done to keep up the prestige of Jawharlal Nehru, then Prime minister and according to the provisions of the amendment the transferring of

Berubari to Pakistan had been legalized. But it was Herculean task to hand over Berubari to Pakistan denying the aggressive agitation of the local people.

To solve the problem again an agreement was signed between Indian and Bangladesh in 1974 called 'Indira – Mujib Agreement' and by this agreement it was decided that India would retain the southern half of south Berubari union No. 12 and Bangladesh would retain Dahagram and Angrapota enclaves. In addition with that it was decided that Tinbigha would be transferred to Bangladesh. (Indira – Mujib Agreement, 1974) But again movement started against the decision of transferring Tinbigha to Bangladesh lead by 'Tinbigha Sangram Committee', Kuchlibari Sangram Committee, 'Amra Bangali' and other political parties as well. The decision was death – like to the people of Kuchlibari because in case of transferring Tinbigha, the people of Kuchlibari would lost their way for interring into Mekliganj directly and Kuchlibari would turned into a chhit (enclave)

Later on, another agreement was signed called "Indira Arshad Agreement" in 1982 by which it was resolved that a flyover or a under way would be built for communication of the people of Kuchlibari and Bangladesh. Next time the treaty was amended and it was decided that the people of Kuchlibari could communicate through the way of Tinbigha. Again in 1992 "Tinbigha corridor Agreement was signed and the Day "June 26, 1992" was scheduled to be transferred "Tinbegha to Bangladesh on condition that the people of Kuchlibari, Dahagram and Angarapota of Bangladesh could communicate with their countries after one hour subsequently. But the problem had not yet been solved.

Problem of Adverse land:-

Adverse land means land of Bangladesh occupied by Indians and they have been living since the independence as a citizen of India, on the other hand land of India occupied by the people of Bangladesh treating as a citizen of Bangladesh. Such type of land covered the village of Dakshin Berubari namely –

- (1) Chilahati, seat No.1 and 2,
- (2) Bara shasi, seat No, 1
- (3) Naotari Debottar
- (4) Naotari Nabab Ganj and
- (5) Kajal Dighi.

The people of these areas are the citizen of India and enjoyed the rights as a citizen of India, they cast their votes they have panchayets, M.L.A and M.P. Many of them are involved in Government service since the independence .³⁷

But the problem arises in 1989 at the time of settlement works, reaching up to pillar No. 769, a gap was shown after the pillar covering the mauzas of Kajal dighi and Nautari occupied by Indians, next settlement works was done baring this said area and pillar No. 770 and 771 were shown in such a way that the seats of Naotari Debottar, Nababganj Kajal Dighi and Pabanigram will be transferred to Bangladesh and if it happen people of these areas would have to suffer different types of crisis and they will lost their way to enter to Haldibari and it will turned into an enclaves. So the local people prevented the works of settlement as a result of which, the authority of settlement works postponed to build the pillars No.770 and 771, but they setup pillar No. 772. Since then the work of settlement is withheld and the local people have been fighting against all sorts of process so that they are not shifted to Bangladesh. Local people of these areas are not agree to join with Bangladesh at any cost. They have been demanding that they are

agree to die but not to join with Bangladesh they will remain in India as an Indian as they are until death .³⁸

Two villages namely Kshudipara and Singpara of Berubari in the border area of Bangladesh and India are in the same problem Md. Amiruddin, 60 of Kshudipara and Md. Safij Uddin, 65 of the same village pointed out that 28 acre and 91 dcml. of land of Kshudipara village and 86 acres of land were out of five Police Stations namely Pachagar, Debiganj, Tetulya, Atowari and Boda. But at the time of survey and settlement during the period 1960 – 1962 this two villages were shown under Pachagar thana of East Pakistan and in accordance with the survey and settlement pillar No.4 was setup between India and Pakistan. On the basis of the work of survey and settlement and the pillar at present Bangladesh demanded two villages. But the people of these two villages have been dwelling as Indians since independence. They are the citizens of India, enjoyed all rights of citizens since independence, they cast their votes, they have panchayets, M.L.A and M.P. But their holdings are in Bangladesh in accordance with the boundary pillars. The people of these areas do not know what destiny is waiting for them?³⁹

The local people expressed their grievances that many meetings, discussions are held between the higher officials and ministerial levels where local people are not called and do not realized the sentiment or advantage or disadvantage of the local people. So the problem has been remaining in the dark room.

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Conclusion

The present study has explored many critical and micro - level – undiscussed aspects of the socio - economic condition of the people, particularly, the land – related issues and problems, agrarian relations of the district, Jalpaiguri in different phases under the reign of Koch Kings, the Bhutanese, the British and the post colonial period. It has been found that the land revenue systems, agrarian relations, demographic pattern, socio- cultural condition, had been changed time to time in different phases of different rulers.

A lot of changes had been taken place during the colonial period in the field of land and agrarian economy as well as in the society of the district, Jalpaiguri. At the initial stage of the occupation of the Duars and inception of the district, the Britishers could not introduce a uniform system or law in all the parts of the district in the land revenue and agrarian economy. The systems and laws changed time to time. The district was mainly divided into two tracts in accordance with land revenue systems and agrarian economy namely permanent settled portion mostly situated to the Western part of Tista and non-regulated areas mostly situated in the eastern part of Tista called Western Duars.

In the permanently settled portion of the district revenue was settled with the Zamindars who were the proprietors of lands. The Zamindars would give lands to the Jotdars, again jotdars would give land to the Chukanidars and Chukanidars used to give land to the Dar – Chukanidars, in such a way there were four to five stages of intermediaries were created in the land and agrarian economy between Government and the real cultivators. In this agrarian structure, at the bottom there were adhiars or sharecroppers who

cultivated lands directly and who had no right on land, they cultivated lands only for 50% share of crops.

In the western Duars, Government was the proprietor of lands that means all the lands of the western Duars were under control of the Government. As most of the lands were forlorn with full of jungles, somewhere population were meagre, so the British Government captured all the lands, started survey and settlement works since 1871 and after survey and settlement works they used the lands in three ways – firstly they gave lands by lease to the planters for tea-cultivation, the first tea-garden was established in 1874 at Gajaldoba and since then the number of tea-garden increased gradually as the tea-cultivation was huge profitable. Secondly land was granted by lease for agricultural purposes, at the initial stage of creating Jotes after clearing jungles, no tax or revenue was imposed, but after few years revenue was imposed and the revenue increased one after settlement. But there was no sufficient people to cultivate the land, so cultivators or Jotdars had been encouraged to come and obtain land with minimum cost of revenue or rent as a result of which population had been going up for the immigration of different types of people from neighboring state Coochbihar, Rangpur, Dinajpur and Nepal. Thirdly land was declared for reserve forest from where woods and different types of natural resources were obtained by the government.

In the previous chapters of this study, I have analyzed the different systems introduced by the Britishers in the agrarian field. From this study what findings are come out? Or what type of change had been taken place in the colonial rule? Or whether the change had been taken place at all or not?

If we go through the study of all over Bengal as a whole we can follow that there is a debate among the historians about the changing scenario of agrarian structure or systems between pre-colonial and colonial period. Prof. Ram Krishna Mukhopadhyay

showed a changing scenario of agrarian structure and society of the colonial period. According to him a traditional agro-based society and economy of Bengal including land-ownership, agrarian relation between peasants and the government etc had been changed in the colonial period. As a consequence of the introduction of new colonial agrarian economy new classes of land owner appeared who had only intention to obtain capital from land not to see the interest of the peasants, as results of which indebtedness, poverty, landlessness came in the village society.

But the views of Prof, Ram Krishna Mukhopadhyaya has been criticized by Prof, Rajat Kanta Roy and Ratna Lekha Roy pointed out that the Zamindars, originated in the introduction of permanent settlements by British East India Company was not the urban capitalist, rather it can be said that the persons who purchased zamindari or talukdari after 1793 most of whom were intermediaries Bhadrak and they were either talukdars or small zamindars or the workers under zamindars or Government of the company other than this the appearing of intermediaries was not only the phenomenon of the colonial rule the existence of intermediaries was still in the pre-colonial period. The peasants working in their own lands were not completely demolished under colonial rule. (Rajat Kanta Roy and Ratna Kanta Roy, *Banglar Krishak Samajer Garan, Dwitiya Bhag*, p, 76-77)

Moreover there was a debate on the rising, power and nature of the jotdars. Prof, Ramkrishna Mukhopadhyay pointed out that the powerful jotdars appeared during the period of British rule for their new agrarian policy, but Prof, Ratna Lekha Roy and Rajat Kanta Roy showed that the jotdars were rich peasant classes since before the initiation of the colonial rule. Dr. Sugata Bosu also confessed that jotdars were the important classes in the frontier Bengal, but not in West Bengal and East Bengal. According to him the jotdari system was the own features in the agrarian field of

North Bengal where the jotdars brought large size of jotes under their cultivation.

In the perspectives of Jalpaiguri district, particularly in the region of Western Duars, agrarian structure, agrarian relations, nature and characteristics of the jotdars had some discrepancy unlike other parts of Bengal. In this region for having huge number of lands easily available and shortage of actual peasants to cultivate the lands and insalubrious atmosphere for dwelling, there was a demand for actual cultivators, naturally the Jotdars would always try to appertain their cultivators locally known as halua giving them many facilities so that the haluas would not leave the Jotdars and settle in another Jotdars. Other than these, most of the Jotdars belong to Rajbanshi and tribal communities who were very simple in habit and broad minded and there was no caste rigidity with their cultivators (halua). So it has shown in the present study that the relation between Jotdars and adhiars or halua (Sharecroppers) was cooperative like a father and son but for few instances of absentee Jotdars of other professions who obtained Jotes only for commercial purposes.

In spite of having a good relation between Jotdars and adhiars (Sharecroppers) in the Duars, there were many Jotdars, particularly the new immigrated Jotdars of other professions who had no direct relation with land, only intention to obtain financial benefit, oppressed their adhiars in different ways. These types of oppressions were intensive in the permanently settled portion of the district which is shown in the present study. For the age – long oppressions of the adhiars by their Jotdars or Giris, they (adhiars including) broke out into rebellion since 1930s in the permanently settled portion of the district and some parts of western Duars as else where in undivided Bengal. At the first stage they started a movement called Tolagandi or Hat Tola movement in 1939 and being inspired with this movement the adhiars started another movement called adhiars movement in 1940 with the demand of

stacking their crops in a common farmyard instead of the farm house of Jotdars. In continuation of the movement adhiars or share croppers broke out into historical peasant unrest in 1946 called Tebhaga movement in the district as well as in the different parts of undivided Bengal. The Tebhaga movement ultimately, turned into a militant rebellion in many parts of Bengal against all sorts of oppressions of the Jotdars and the administrators. Ultimately the movement, for the time being, became a failure due to weakness of a strong peasant organization in Bengal and all over India to be broken out into a revolt, limitations of the leaders of Krishak Sabha and communist party, on the other hand the attack of the Zamindars / Jotdars with the help of British administration, on the verge of retransferring power from Britishers to Indians and starting a communal and regional covetous politics. There is a impetuous debate on the Tebhaga movement amongst the historians and scholars. Different historians and scholars analyzed the movement and the role of Krishak Sabha and the Communist Party from their point of views. But it can be said getting over all the debates and criticism that the movement had a glorious historical significance in the history of peasant movement of the district as well as in India. The sharecroppers, agricultural labourers and small peasants' attuned courage and belief to protest against all sorts of oppressions of semi – feudal system in the agrarian structure of all over Bengal which procured mental strength to the peasants and adhiars in the future struggle after independence.

After independence in 1947 there was still zamindari and jotdari systems in all over Bengal and elsewhere in India that was feudal system, Zamindars and intermediaries occupied large amount of lands, on the other hand there were so many adhiars, agricultural labourers who had no right on land, they cultivated land only for half share of crops. West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act was passed in 1953 and West Bengal land Reforms Act was passed in 1955, in accordance with these Acts government tried to

abolish Zamindari and intermediary systems and all the lands occupied by the Zamindars, Jotdars or intermediaries were brought under ceiling. But the programme of the Government could not be succeeded because of covetous attitudes of the Zamindars and intermediaries, bureaucratic complexities, hide bound and greedy alliance between landlords and the ministerial level as a result of which government became failure to deliver lands from landlords.

During the period of 1967 and 1969 under United Front Government's regime in West Bengal the programmes of land acquisition and distribution among the landless people were started in a practical way. The present study has shown that a large number of Jotes were acquired and distributed among the landless peasants by the government and in many places in the district as elsewhere in West Bengal. Land acquisition and distribution programmes were started under the leadership of communist parties during this period. The land reforms programmes got a new dimension during the left front regime since 1977, the land acquisition and distribution were going on, the work of recording bargadars (sharecroppers) in the record of right known as "Operation Barga" was also started during Left Front Government. It is found from different sources as well as in the field survey that a large amount of lands including jote lands and different types of Khas lands were distributed among the landless people, side by side lacs of bargadars were recorded in the record of rights during left front regime under the leadership of communist parties. It is also found that the land reforms programmes have not yet been completely succeeded because of the bureaucratic complexities, biasness to the Party-Politics, communicational gap amongst the Panchayets, bureaucrats and the Government. So many cases have been laying under litigation, beside these the lack of proper policy and method for the improvement of cultivators and agrarian economy, as a result of which, in spite of getting lands, the landless people became failure to keep up the lands under their possession due to poverty and lack of employment sources from

where they could have earned for their livelihood. So many of them sold lands and became labourers same thing also happened in the recording of bargadars, sometimes the bargadars sold their right on land to the landlords, some times many bargadars sold their right at a minimum cost for the poverty and want of alternative sources of income.

Another aspect has been shown in this present study which was Naxalite movement in the 1960s. In 1967, for the formation of united front Government in West Bengal a debate and confrontation was going on amongst the leaders of C.P.I. (M). For the compromising and parliamentary policy of C.P.I.(M), a group of leaders believing in the revolutionary line were getting ready to be broken out into a revolt against the landlords to occupy lands. In north Bengal specifically in the Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri Districts under the leadership of Charu Majumdar, Kanu Sayal, Jangal Santal a revolt was started to occupy land forcefully with arms in the plain areas of Darjeeling district and some areas of Jalpaiguri District. Beside the occupation of lands, the Naxalites took the policy of murdering Jotdars and intermediaries. As a result, many Jotdars or intermediaries were murdered by the Naxalites.

There are so many writings have been published on the Naxalite movement from different angles. It can not be denied that the Naxalite movement was class struggle which stroked the landlords who possessed large amount of the lands illegally, the agitators of the movement, most of whom were subaltern forming with bargadars, small peasants and labourers. The leaders of the movement coming from middle class families devoted their life completely in the revolt to form a classless society. But, want of strong organization, wrong decision to identify class enemy, hesitation and dissidence among the Naxalite leaders, the movement ultimately became failure. But the movement has a historical significance in the peasant movement of West Bengal and Indian as well.

In this study, the present scholar has shown important and debatable aspect of the roots of present socio-political tension in the district, in a broad sense in the North Bengal. It is found from different sources that before coming of the Britishers only some tribal groups namely Mech, Toto, Garo, Rava Drucpa etc lived in the western Duars, in the plain areas of the district and the permanent settled portion most of the people were Rajbanshi and Muslim communities. But after coming of the Britishers and introduction of new economic policy population increased for immigration of different types of people. It is found from the report of, D.H.E. Sunder, J.A. Milligan, J.F. Grunning and the writing of Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal that the number of Totos, Garos and the Meches decreased for facing an identity crisis. Moreover, it is found from the field survey that many successors of the contemporary Jotdar families now living in a distress condition losing their everything many of them became labourer working in different places for which a lot of discontent and psychic grievances have been growing up amongst these people locally known as "Son of the soil" many of whom are being involved in a militant activities as a result of which the socio – economic and cultural synthesis of this region is going to be demolished. So the present scholar of this study has an intension to show that the root of the present burning – problem of socio – political tensions of this region was originated long ago for losing lands.

On the other hand, it is also found that the people once who were adhiars, small peasants, agricultural labourers and had no right on land, today, they are not confined themselves in a bondage of any Jotdars or Zamindars, they can protest against any kind of oppression.

Glossary

Abwab	–	Sub taxes (Taxes other than formal taxes)
Adibasis	–	Tribal people who were original inhabitants.
Adhi, Adhiari	–	Cultivation with 50% share (50% for sharecroppers and another 50% for Landholders)
Adhiar	–	Sharecroppers
Amalnama	–	A Written order given to a revenue Collector.
Amin	–	Person who measures land
Anna	–	An old coin or paisa, one anna is equivalent to $\frac{1}{16}$ rupee or 16 anna is equal to one rupee.
Basti	–	Homestead, Land for dwelling place
Benami	–	Nameless, persons whose name was recorded falsely to hold land, practically they had no existence.
Batris Hazari	–	Baikunthapur Pargana was called 'Batris Hazari' for increasing revenue to 32,000/-
Bhuta	–	Paddy supplied as a loan by the jotdar or giri to the sharecroppers at the time of cultivation.
Bheri	–	Low land with full of water using for fishery and other purposes
Bigha	–	A measure of land, one bigha is equal to about $\frac{1}{3}$ of an acre.
Barga, Bargadari	–	Cultivation with an $\frac{1}{2}$ share ($\frac{1}{2}$ for sharecroppers and $\frac{1}{2}$ for land holders)
Bodo	–	A tribal community of North – eastern region of India, Originated from Indo – mongoloid race.
Bargadar	–	Sharecropper
Babu	–	Middle class Bengali gentleman
Chhitmahal	–	Enclave

- Chakla – An area of land or estate for revenue collection.
- Chira, Chura – One kind of food making of fried paddy, Flatten rice
- Chukani – Holding of a chukanidar (Middle ranking tenure holder)
- Chukanidar – Middle ranking tenure holder, a class of under tenants of the jotdars.
- Coolie – Tea labourer
- Dakhil Kharij – Recording of land in the record of right
- Dar – Chukani – Holding of a dar chukanidar
- Dar-Chukanidar – A class of under tenants of the Chukanidars.
- Danga – High arable land for cultivation.
- Dar-a-dar Chukanidar – A class of under tenants of a dar – Chukanidar.
- Dahi, Dai – Curds
- Debraja – Head of the secular administration in Bhutan.
- Derabari – Interest of the loan given by sharecroppers to the jotdars or giri generally in crops
- Dewniya – Headmen of different villages of North Bengal many of whom became jotdars later on. Particularly the term used in Dinajpur, Rangpur and Sadar Subdivision of Jalpaiguri district
- Dewan Deo, Dewan Deb, - Important designation of Koch Kingdom who took a vital role in economic issues of the State.
- Dunabari – Interest of the loan given by sharecroppers to the jotdars or giri at the time of cultivation.
- Dharmaraja – A spiritual head in the administration and religion of Bhutan.
- Diwani – A right or deed to collect revenue

- Dihi – A unit or areas of revenue collection in Coochbehar State.
- Duar or Dooar – Door or gate way to enter into Bhutan from outside, mainly British India
- Doba – Low land
- Don – Measuring land, 86 Bigha
- Durbar – A royal place or Court of a king
- Dravida – A human race, particularly dwelling in South India
- Duardar – A title or rank in the Western Duars given by the king of Coochbehar who played a role to protect the boundary area of the State.
- Faringati – High land
- Gabur – A title of the tribal people in the Western Duars who were headmen of the villages.
- Garo – A tribal community originated from Indo – Mongoloid race, and particularly dwelling in the North- Eastern region of India
- Giri – Land owner or intermediaries of the land the term used in North Bengal particularly.
- Gola mochhani – Repeating and cleaning of the store house of paddy.
- Ghora bandha – Levy collected from sharecroppers by jotdars for the maintenance of horses of the jotdars.
- Guerila – A technique of war, attacking from back side or hiding place.
- Harisabha – A religious occasion or gathering of Hindus particularly by the name of lord Hari or Krishna.
- Hathi bandha – Levy collected from sharecroppers by jotdars for the maintenance of elephant of the jotdars.

- Hat – Weekly rural market which assembled in a week or twice in a week.
- Halua – Sharecropper
- Hal – Plough. A measure of land one hal means about 15 bighas of land.
- Haziri – Daily wages
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- Ijaradar – A class of lease holder who obtained land by lease or agreement to collect revenue.
- Jhum cultivation – Shifting cultivation done by the tribal people in the hilly areas or forest.
- Jote – Holding of a land owner, one jote formed with some areas of land particularly the term jote was used in North Bengal.
- Jotdar – A class of tenant or intermediaries or land holder particularly it was used in North Bengal.
- Jagir – A specific area of land granted to the mansabdar during the Mughal period instead of their salary.
- Jotdari, Jotdary – Tenure of a Jotdar.
- Jumma – Payment of a fixed deposit particularly for revenue purposes
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- Karja – A kind of loan, particularly given by jotdar to the sharecropper.
- Kalazar – A disease
- Katham – A class of revenue collector appointed by the Bhutan Government in the Western Duars who played a significant role in collecting revenue during Bhutanese rule.
- Kabuliyat – A written agreement of the tenants by which they were bound to give revenue to their superior.
- Karojan – Bhutani officials in the Western Duars,

	particularly they were appointed to collect revenue
Kabiraj	– A village doctor who treats the patients in a indigenous manner.
Kabulis	– A money – lending business class migrated from Kabul.
Kharif	– Crops harvested in winter season
Khatriya	– A social group of India divided in accordance with their professions (warrior) in the Rig – vedie Age, Later on it turned into a casteism.
Khasland	– land of Government
Khatian	– A map where preserve the record of land
Kirata	– Non – Aryan indigenous people of North east India were called kirata by the Aryans.
Khasmahal	– Crownlands where Government was the owner of lands directly.
Khalisa Land	– Government's land during the mughal period.
Khatian	– Map or record of land in micro level
Kist	– Instalement
Kistabundi	– Record of revenue collection.
Lathi	– A stick
Mahajan	– A money lender
Maisal	– A buffalo keeper
Marwaris	– A business class or community
Madesia	– Tribal people of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling disatrics immigrated from Chhotanagpur.
Mahal	– Unit of revenue collection in Coochbehar state.
Maund	– A measure of weight, one maund is equal to 80 pounds.
Mandal	– A village headman particularly in the tribals.

- Mech Assam – A tribal community of Jalpaiguri district and Assam
- Mouza collection. – A unit or specific area for revenue collection.
- Munda – A tribal community
- Mulandar – A class of under tenants of jotdar.
- Narayani rupee – Currency of the Coochbehar State under Koch kingdom
- Nazir Deo or Deb – Important designation of Koch Kingdom who took a vital role in the administrative issues of the State.
- Nij kholan – One's own threshing ground
- Operation Barga – An act or method introduced by the Left Front Government by which sharecroppers were recorded in the record of rights of land
- Oraon – A tribal community emigrated from Chhotanagpur into Duars as a tea labourer.
- Pargana – A unit or specific area of revenue collection.
- Petbhata – Land granted to the relatives by the Kings of Coochbehar as a rent free.
- Patta – A lease or right granted by the Government to the cultivators.
- Pana – A kind of loan that was cattle supplied by the jotdar to the sharecropper for cultivation.
- Panchayet – Administrative system of the villages for the developmental perspectives formed with the people of the villages by election
- Proja – Sharecropper or under tenants of a jotdar.

Pattan, pattani	– Agreement on land given to the intermediaries by the jotdars
Raikot	– Title of the Royal king of Baikunthapur, means head of the fort.
Raiyot, Ryot	– A class of tenant who had customary right in the land.
Rupit	– low land
Sadar	– District head quarter.
Sardar	– Leaders or intermediaries who supplied labourer from Chhotanagpur and Santal pargana in the tea – gardens and obtained commission.
Sal	– A tree botanical name shorea Robasta
Subah	– A class of bhutanees officer who were the highest level of Bhutanese administration in the Western Duars for revenue collection and other purpose.
Santal	– A tribal community
Sanad	– Deed or charter
Sannasi	– Wandering mendicants in Hindu sects.
Suba	– Province, Divided the Mughal State into different provinces or subas.
Tahsil	– A Specific area of land the term used for the collection of revenue
Tahsildar	– A class of revenue collector.
Tolagandi	– A kind of tax or cess were taken by the agents of jotdar or Zamindar for selling goods in the hat (weekly market)
Taluk	– A unit for revenue collection consisting of a number of mauzas
Terai	– Foothill areas of the Himalay.
Thana	– A police station.
Tahutdar	– Revenue collector of Coochbehar State

- appointed by the king into taluk .
- Toto – A tribal community of Toto para in Jalpaiguri District
- Zamindar – Land lord or proprietor of land in a large scale.

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- Amiruddin, Md. 62 years, S/O Late Osman Ali, Vill & Po. Kshudipara, Dist. Jalpaiguri, Mauza Sikarpur, Pargana Boda.
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- Das, Bimal Chndra, Rabindra Nagar Colony, P.O Alipurduar Court, Dist – Jalpaiguri, P.S. Alipurduar.
- Das, Khagendra Nath, 77 years, S/O Late Naranath Das, Vill Chaparer Par, Dist – Jalpaiguri, P.S. Alipurduar, a former jotdar.
- Das, Upendra Nath, 63 years, S/O Late Gajendra Nath Das Vill & P.O Bholardabri, Dist – Jalpaiguri, a former Chukanidar
- Das, Dharani kanta, 66 years, S/O Late Dolchand Das, Vill – East Chapani, P.O East Chapani, Dist – Jalpaiguri, a former jotdar.
- Das, Anna kanta 48 years S/O Late Chitramohan Das, Vill Dewniapara, P.O Satkura, Dist – Jalpaiguri, Secretary of Dakshin Berubari Pratiraksha Committee
- Debnath, Manoranjan, 54 years, S/O Late Amar Chandra Debnath, Local Leader of CPI(M) of Bholardabri, P.O Bholarbabri, Dist – Jalpaiguri P.S. Alipurduar.

- Karji Binapani, 83 years, W/O Late Harendra Bhushan Karji, Vill Paror Par, P.O Tapsikhata, Dist – Jalpaiguri, a house wife of former jotdar family.
- Nath, Promod, 62 years, S/O Late Kumud Bhushan Nath, Vill South Jitpur, P.O. Bholardabri, Dist Jalpaiguri, P.S. Alipurduar
- Narjinary, Hisran, 88 years, S/O Late Farshing Narjinary of Baro Chwakirbash, P.O Mahakalguri, Dist – Jalpaiguri.
- Narjinary, Angasree (Basumata) 84 years, W/O late Rev. Jitnal Narjinary (Paster Saheb), Vill. Baro Chwakirbash, P.O Mahakalguri, Dist – Jalpaiguri, P.S Samuktala.
- Prodhan, Premananda, 76 years, S/O Late Nanibar Prodhan, Vill Takoamari, P.O Rashikbill, Dist – Coochbehar, a former jotdar.
- Rabha, Dina Nath, 60 years, S/O Gaour Hari Rabha, Vill. Paglikuti Forest Basti, P.O. Rashikbill, Dist. Coochbehar, P.S. Baxir Hat.
- Roy Jagadananda, 73 years, S/O Late Gopeshwar Roy, word No. 5, P. O Dhupguri, Dist – Jalpaiguri, a former minister (Land and Land revenue in 1968 and Co – Operative minister in 1971)
- Roy, Prosanya Kumar, 86 years, S/O Late Dino Nath Roy, Vill – Majherdabri, P.O Majherdabri, Dist – Jalpaiguri, a former jotdar
- Roy, Ramesh, 49 years, S/O Lte Santeswar Roy, Vill & Po. Chapani, P.S. Samuktala, Dist – Jalpaiguri, a former Jotdar.
- Roy, Prafulya Kumar, 50 years, S/O Late Haddeswar Roy, Vill Petbhata, P.O Manikganj, Dist – Jalpaiguri.
- Roy, Anil Kumar, 62 years, S/O Late Bijay Kumar Roy, Vill Baro Kamat, Po. Manikganj, Dist – Jalpaiguri
- Roy Nripati Bhushan, 41 years, S/O Gajendra Lal Roy, Chilahati, Dahalapara, Dist – Jalpaiguri

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- Safij Uddin Md, 67 years, S/O Late Jafir Uddin, Vill & Po. Kshudipara, Dist – Jalpaiguri.
- Saha Adihar, 55 years, S/O Late Jadunath Saha, Vill – Takoamari, Po. Rashikbill, Dist Coochbehar, P.S. Baxir Hat, a local leader of C. P. I. (M)
- Suba Amarendra Nath, 65 years, S/O late Chandra Singh Suba, Vill – West Satali, P.O. West Satali, Dist – Jalpaiguri Present address – East Netaji Road, P.O Alipurduar Court, Dist – Jalpaiguri
- Suba Ramesh Chandra, 76 years, S/O Late Buduram Suba, Vill – West Satali, Dist – Jalpaiguri, a former jotdar.
- Sutradhar Madhusudan, 79 years, S/O Late Panch Kari Sutradhar, Vill – Takoamari, PO.Rashikbil, Dist.Coochbehar, P.S. Baxir Hat.

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আবিগায়ে

আলিপুরদুয়ার

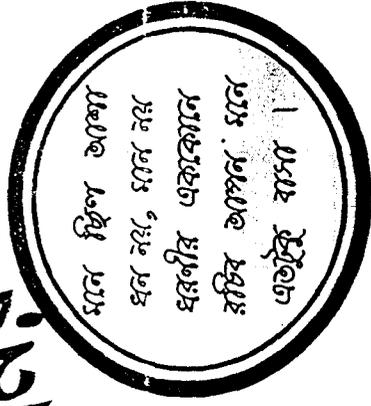
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বায়তী

স্বত্ব দিতে হবে।

আলিপুরদুয়ার নাগরিক কমিটি



প্রাচীরিত
প্রাচীপক শ্রীসুধীর রঞ্জন ঘোষ এবং শ্রীঅপূর্ব কুমার সেন কর্তৃক প্রচারিত
ও লিপিকা কম্পিউটার হইতে মদ্রিত।

আলিপুরদুয়ার শহরের ভূমি সমস্যা ও তার প্রতিকার সম্পর্কে

আলিপুরদুয়ার নাগরিক কমিটির প্রতিবেদন

১২৫ বছরেরও বেশি পুরানো আলিপুরদুয়ার মহকুমা শহর। আজ থেকে ৪৫ বছর আগে ১৯৫৭তে এখানে গঠিত হয় পুরসভা। এই শহরের আয়তন প্রায় দশ বর্গ কিলোমিটার, ওয়ার্ড ২০টি, জনসংখ্যা পৌনে এক লাখ, যাদের অধিকাংশই পূর্ববঙ্গ থেকে আগত। সরকারী ভূমি-ব্যবস্থার জটিলতার জন্য এই শহরের দিন-চতুর্থাংশ মানুষের নেই বাস্তবিকতা ও দোকান-জমির বৈধ অধিকার। ফলে কয়েক দশক ধরে স্থায়ী বাড়ির তৈরী করে বসবাস করলেও রায়তী জমি ছাড়া অন্যান্য জমিতে বাড়ি ও ব্যবসার জন্য সরকারী বা খাদ্য ও বীমা কোম্পানীর ঋণ পাওয়া যাচ্ছেনা, পেলেও অন্যান্য বহু শর্ত পূরণ করতে হচ্ছে। যদিও সাধারণতঃ ১২ বছর ভোগদখল করলে এমনিতেই জমিতে বৈধ অধিকার প্রাপ্য হয়।

শহরের জমি সমস্যার মূলে রয়েছে জমির বিচিত্র শ্রেণীভেদ, যার মধ্যে রয়েছে খাসমহল বিভাগের লিজ জমি, ওয়েস্টার্ন ডুয়ার্স মার্কেট ফাজলে জমি, উদ্বাস্ত কলোনী জমি, রেলের প্রতাপিত জমি, নদীর চরের জমি ও রায়তী জমি (ওয়ার্ড ভিত্তিক জমির বিচিত্র অবস্থান সংযোজিত মানচিত্রে দৃষ্টব্য)। আলিপুরদুয়ার মৌজার প্রায় সবটাই লিজ জমি বা হাট প্লট (মার্কেট ফাভ) চর জমি এবং রেলের প্রতাপিত জমি, যাকে মাঝে ছিটে ফেঁটা রায়তী জমি; পশ্চিম জিৎপুর মৌজার যে অংশ এই শহরের অন্তর্ভুক্ত তার অধিকাংশ উদ্বাস্ত কলোনী, মাঝে এখানে ওখাত্ত, কিছু রায়তী প্লট। একমাত্র দমনপুর মৌজার যে অংশ শহরের মধ্যে তার প্রায় সবটাই রায়তী জমি।

আলিপুরদুয়ার মৌজার ১০৬৪.৫২ একর জমি বর্তমানে বাতিল ১৯৩২ সালের ক্রাউন ম্যানুয়েল অনুযায়ী ১৯৩৩ থেকে ১৯৬০ পর্যন্ত বিভিন্ন সময়ে জেলা কালেক্টর সিভিল স্টেশন প্লট হিসেবে ৩০ বছর মেয়াদী লিজ দেন। সেই লিজ বহু বছর আগেই উত্তীর্ণ হয়েছে কিন্তু তার নবীকরণ হয়নি (যদিও লিজ শর্ত অনুযায়ী আরো ২বার লিজ নবীকরণের সুযোগ রয়েছে) এবং ১৯৮৩ সাল থেকে সরকার এই সব জমির খাজনা নেওয়া বন্ধ করে দেন। এখাপারে অনেক আবেদন-নিবেদন ইত্যাদির পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে ১৯৯১ সালের ল্যান্ড ম্যানুয়েলের ২২৬(১) ধারা এবং বোর্ড অব রেভিনিউর ১২/৮/৯৩ তারিখের ৪৬০৪(৩৯)-জিই-২ মেমো অনুযায়ী আলিপুরদুয়ার মহকুমা ভূমি ও দৃমিসংস্কার আধিকারিক ১৪/১২/৯৪ তারিখের ১৩৪৪/১৩-৪(পি)/৯৪ মেমোতে লিজ জমি নবীকরণের শর্তবলী ঠাপন করেন, যাতে বলা হয় পুরনো লিজ হোল্ডাররা পূর্বতন বার্ষিক খাজনার ১৫ গুণ বার্ষিক খাজনা দিয়ে নবীকরণ করতে পারবেন; কিন্তু যারা লিজ জমি কিনেছেন তাদের উক্ত জমির বর্তমান বাজার দরের ৪% বার্ষিক খাজনা ও ৪০% সেলামী দিয়ে লিজ নিতে হবে। যেহেতু মূল লিজ-হোল্ডারের সংখ্যা গোটা শহরেই নগণ্য (কারণ অনেকেই জমি বিক্রি/হস্তান্তর করে দিয়েছেন) এতো বেশি খাজনা ও সেলামী দিয়ে তখন কেউই লিজ নেননি। সম্ভ্রতি সেই অবস্থারও পরিবর্তন হয়েছে; সরকার জমির বাজার দরের ৯৫% সেলামি ধার্য করেছেন লিজ মঞ্জুরীর জন্য।

কিন্তু যারা রেজেষ্ট্রি করে লিজ জমি কিনেছেন গত ৫০ বছর ধরে এবং স্ট্যাম্প ফি বাবদ সরকারকে রাজস্ব জমা দিয়েছেন, তাদের নতুন করে সেলামী দিতে হবে কেন? তাছাড়া এই সব জমির খাজনাও অনেক বেশি। অথচ একই শহরে, হয়তো আপনাদের মতো রাস্তার ও পাশের রায়তী জমির খাজনা শতক প্রতি ১টাকাও কম (১৪০৯ এর ১লা বৈশাখ থেকে বেড়ে হবে ২টাকা মাত্র)। তাই লিজ জমি ক্রেতাদের ক্ষেত্রে সেলামী ধার্য করাটা অন্যায় ও ন্যায় বিচারের পরিপন্থী।

আমরা এই সন্দেহকে নানি ওনিয়োছি, লিও নয়, অবিলম্বে আমাদের অমির স্থায়ী বন্দোবস্ত (গায়তী সত্ব) দেওয়া হোক, যাতে এগাপারে কোন বৈষম্য না থাকে ।

অতি সম্প্রতি সরকারী কতৃপক্ষ লিও জমির ব্যাপারে যে উদ্যোগ গ্রহণ করেছেন, জানা গেছে, তাতে বিভিন্ন স্তরে প্রতি শতকে জর্মনর মূল্য ১০০০ থেকে ১০০০০ টাকা ধার্য করার প্রস্তাব করেছেন । এই ধরনের বৈষম্যমূলক মূল্যায়ন হতাবতই নাগরিকদের ক্ষোভ সৃষ্টি করবে এবং এই উদ্যোগও শেষ পর্যন্ত ব্যর্থ হতে বাধ্য । আমরা গোটী শহরের জন্যই একইধার এবং ব্যবস্থার পক্ষপাতী এবং একমাত্র স্থায়ী রায়তী সত্বই সেই সমতা সুনিশ্চিত করতে পারে । অবশ্য রায়তী জমির ক্ষেত্রে বাস্তব ও কমার্শিয়াল এই দুই ধরনের রাজনার হার ধার্য হতেই পারে । আমরা চাই জমির স্থায়ী বন্দোবস্ত, রায়তী সত্ব, চাই লিও ব্যবস্থার অবসান ।

গত প্রায় ২০ বছরে সরকার শহরে ভূমি-রাজস্ব অনাদায় বাবদ বেশ কয়েক কোটি টাকার খাজনা হতে বঞ্চিত হয়েছেন । ১৯৯৩র সর্বগ্রাসী প্রলয়ঙ্করী বন্যায় ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত এই শহরের নাগরিকদের বকেয়া রাজস্ব দেবার ক্ষমতা প্রায় নেই । তাই দ্রুত রায়তী বন্দোবস্ত দিয়ে খাজনা নিয়মিত আদায়ের ব্যবস্থা করা দরকার ।

ওয়েস্টার্ন ডুয়ার্স মার্কেট ফাউন্ডেশন বা হাট স্ট্রটের ৪৪.৩৬ একর জমি বাস্তব হিসেবে এবং প্রায় ১০ একর জমি হাট বা বাজারের কাজে ব্যবহৃত হচ্ছে । প্রধানতঃ উদ্বাস্তুরাই এই সব বাস্তব হাট স্ট্রটের বাসিন্দা, যাদের একটা অংশ মাত্র ২ বছরের লাইসেন্স বা প্যাটা নিয়েছিলেন, অন্যদের তাও নেই । কিন্তু সেই লাইসেন্সও আর নবীকরণ হয়নি । তাই প্রাণ্ডন এনপ্রাইভনিস ও থা মন্ত্রী প্রয়াত ননী শুট্টাচার্যের উদ্যোগে এগাপারে ক্যাপিটেল ডিসিশন হয় এবং তদনুযায়ী বোর্ড অব রেভিনিউ ২৭/২/৮৭ তারিখে ৩২৭৪-WDMF নং সরকারী আদেশনামায় সেলামী না নিয়ে, ১৯৪৮ সালের মূল্যায়ন ভিত্তিক খাজনা নিয়ে পজন দেবার নির্দেশ জারি করলেও আজ পর্যন্ত তা হয়নি । এর মধ্যে হাট স্ট্রটের জমির ১৩ একর ভেদে পরিমন্দের হাতে, কিন্তু গত পনেরো বছরে জেনারেল পরিদর্শন বা টুনি সাক্ষর দপ্তর কোন কার্যকর পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করেনি । বাস্তব হাট স্ট্রটের ক্ষেত্রেও আমরা চাই রায়তী বন্দোবস্ত ।

উদ্বাস্তু কলোনীর জমি পঞ্চাশের দশকের গোড়ায় লেখাও ১৫/৩/৩০, কোথাও ১২ বছরের প্যাটা দেওয়া হয়েছিল, মেয়াদ উত্তীর্ণ হলে সে সব প্যাটা নবীকরণ হয়নি । কোচবিহার জেলাপাইন্ডি-দাভিগিং জেলাসমূহের স্টেটলস্টেট অফিসার ২৬/৫/৭৭ তারিখের আদেশনামায় নির্দেশ দেন 'Collector granted them paltas and they are in possession that's all. Record them as raiyals' (চার্জ অফিসারের ৭/৬/৭৭ তারিখের ২৬-৫-৩৩/১৬-৬/৭৭ সংশ্লিষ্ট হুক) । কিন্তু সে নির্দেশ এত দিনেও কার্যকরী হয়নি । গত ২/৩ বছরে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের পুনর্বিন্যাস প্রকল্পের অধীনে এই কলোনী জেলার জমির উন্নয়ন ও রায়তী বন্দোবস্তের উদ্যোগ চলছে । অফিলসে এই রায়তী সত্ব দানপত্র সম্পূর্ণ করার দাবী জানাই আমরা ।

রেভেনের প্রত্যাশিত ও জমা এবং রাজ্য সরকারের মাপ্ত এই সব জমির রায়তী বন্টন-ব্যবস্থার উন্নয়ন শুরু হলেও নীচই তা সম্পূর্ণ করার দাবী জানাই আমরা ।

দাবীদ চরের ওমির পরিদর্শনেরও রায়তী সত্ব দ্রুত হুকুম করার দাবী জানাই আমরা । এই পাহরের জন্য সব গ্রামিতে কোথানে রায়তী সত্ব দেওয়া হয়েছে বা হুকুম কোথানে লিও ও হাট সত্বের ক্ষেত্রেও রায়তী সত্ব দিয়ে সমতা আনার দাবী জানাই । এত ব্যাপারে পনতাত্ত্বিক-আন্দোলনে আগুন-পের সাহায্যে সরকারী আন্দোলনিত অসম্পূর্ণ করা ।

এই পত্রের প্রকাশিতব্যয় শংকর কলকাতার কলকাতা
 প্রকাশিত নিয়মিত : ২, ৭, ১০, ১১, ১২, ১৩, ১৪, ১৫, ১৬, ১৭, ১৮, ১৯, ২০, ২১, ২২, ২৩, ২৪, ২৫, ২৬, ২৭, ২৮, ২৯, ৩০, ৩১, ৩২, ৩৩, ৩৪, ৩৫, ৩৬, ৩৭, ৩৮, ৩৯, ৪০, ৪১, ৪২, ৪৩, ৪৪, ৪৫, ৪৬, ৪৭, ৪৮, ৪৯, ৫০, ৫১, ৫২, ৫৩, ৫৪, ৫৫, ৫৬, ৫৭, ৫৮, ৫৯, ৬০, ৬১, ৬২, ৬৩, ৬৪, ৬৫, ৬৬, ৬৭, ৬৮, ৬৯, ৭০, ৭১, ৭২, ৭৩, ৭৪, ৭৫, ৭৬, ৭৭, ৭৮, ৭৯, ৮০, ৮১, ৮২, ৮৩, ৮৪, ৮৫, ৮৬, ৮৭, ৮৮, ৮৯, ৯০, ৯১, ৯২, ৯৩, ৯৪, ৯৫, ৯৬, ৯৭, ৯৮, ৯৯, ১০০, ১০১, ১০২, ১০৩, ১০৪, ১০৫, ১০৬, ১০৭, ১০৮, ১০৯, ১১০, ১১১, ১১২, ১১৩, ১১৪, ১১৫, ১১৬, ১১৭, ১১৮, ১১৯, ১২০, ১২১, ১২২, ১২৩, ১২৪, ১২৫, ১২৬, ১২৭, ১২৮, ১২৯, ১৩০, ১৩১, ১৩২, ১৩৩, ১৩৪, ১৩৫, ১৩৬, ১৩৭, ১৩৮, ১৩৯, ১৪০, ১৪১, ১৪২, ১৪৩, ১৪৪, ১৪৫, ১৪৬, ১৪৭, ১৪৮, ১৪৯, ১৫০, ১৫১, ১৫২, ১৫৩, ১৫৪, ১৫৫, ১৫৬, ১৫৭, ১৫৮, ১৫৯, ১৬০, ১৬১, ১৬২, ১৬৩, ১৬৪, ১৬৫, ১৬৬, ১৬৭, ১৬৮, ১৬৯, ১৭০, ১৭১, ১৭২, ১৭৩, ১৭৪, ১৭৫, ১৭৬, ১৭৭, ১৭৮, ১৭৯, ১৮০, ১৮১, ১৮২, ১৮৩, ১৮৪, ১৮৫, ১৮৬, ১৮৭, ১৮৮, ১৮৯, ১৯০, ১৯১, ১৯২, ১৯৩, ১৯৪, ১৯৫, ১৯৬, ১৯৭, ১৯৮, ১৯৯, ২০০, ২০১, ২০২, ২০৩, ২০৪, ২০৫, ২০৬, ২০৭, ২০৮, ২০৯, ২১০, ২১১, ২১২, ২১৩, ২১৪, ২১৫, ২১৬, ২১৭, ২১৮, ২১৯, ২২০, ২২১, ২২২, 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ময়নাগুড়ী কৃষি ও শিল্প প্রদর্শনী
(ভূটান পশ্চিম-ভূয়ার)
জেলা জলপাইগুড়ি।

অভ্যর্থনা কমিটির সম্পাদকের অভিভাষণ

সঙ্গেনত ভদ্রমণ্ডলী ও সাংগোচনরা—

ময়নাগুড়ীতে আজ এই কৃষি ও শিল্প প্রদর্শনীর উদ্বোধন উৎসব উপলক্ষে আমি আপনাদিগকে স্বাগত জানাচ্ছি।

আজ আমাদের পরম সৌভাগ্য যে আপনাদের ছায় সুধীবৃন্দ এই ক্ষুদ্র নগরীতে পদার্পণ করে এই প্রদর্শনীকে ধ্বং করেছেন।

মাদ্রাস নগরী ও অযোগ্য একজন কৃষি-জীবির উপর আপনাদের অভ্যর্থনার গুরুদায়িত্ব অর্পিত না হয়ে যোগ্যতর অভিজ্ঞ ব্যক্তির উপর এই দায়িত্ব ক্রান্ত হলে শোভনীয় হতো। কিন্তু স্থানীয় জনগণের বিশেষ করে প্রদর্শনী কমিটির ঐকান্তিক ইচ্ছা ও অনুরোধ উপেক্ষা করতে না পেরে অতি-দুঃসাহসে ভুড় করেই এই দায়িত্ব শিরোধার্য্য করতে বাধ্য হয়েছি।

আমি জানি, আমরা সকলে আপনাদের ছায় মহানুভবগণের সমুচিত সতর্কতা করতে পারবো না। এ বিষয়ে আমাদের যোগ্যতা কিছুই নেই। আদরে অপ্যায়নে, অভ্যর্থনায় আপনাদের প্রতি আমাদের প্রতিটি পদে পদে ক্রটি বিচ্যুতি ঘটিবার আশঙ্কা রয়েছে। তাই আমাদের এত অযোগ্যতার বিষয় চিন্তা করে আমরা নিতান্তই সন্ত্রস্ত হয়ে পরেছি। আমাদের দোষ ক্রটি অনেক হবে—তজ্জন্ম মার্জনা ভিক্ষা চাই।

আজ আপনারা প্রদর্শনী উপলক্ষে যে ক্ষুদ্র পল্লীতে উপস্থিত তার কিছু পরিচয় আপনাদের কাছে নিবেদন করা বোধ হয় অপ্রাসঙ্গিক হবে না।

মহাভারতের যুগে “ময়নাগুড়ী” প্রাক্‌জ্যোতীষপুর রাজ্যের অন্তর্গত ছিল। আহম, কোচ, মেচ এবং পরে ইহা ভূটীয়াদের কবলিত হয়ে পরিশেষে ইংরাজ শাসনে ইহা ভূটানের পশ্চিম-ভূয়ার ভুক্ত হয়। ওয়েস্টার্ন ভূয়ার জেলার সদর স্টেশন ময়নাগুড়ীতে নির্দিষ্ট হয়েছিল। ইহা ইং ১৮৬৫ সালের কথা। মিঃ ডেনাক্ নামক একজন ইংরাজ কর্ণচারী এসিষ্টেন্ট কমিশনার নিযুক্ত হয়ে একাধারে দেওয়ানী ও ফৌজদারী কার্য পরিচালনা করতে থাকেন। অতঃপর ইং ১৮৬৬ সনে মিঃ টুইডি সর্ব প্রথম এই জেলার ডেপুটি কমিশনার নিযুক্ত হয়ে আসেন। পরে ইং ১৮৬৯ সনে এই ভূয়ার ও রংপুর জেলার অংশ নিয়ে জলপাইগুড়ি নামে এক নতুন জেলা গঠিত হয় এবং এই ময়নাগুড়ী জেলা জলপাইগুড়িতে স্থানান্তরিত হয়। এই ভূটান জেলা ইংরাজ জমিদারীতে নিশ্চিন্ত হইল।

ভূটানের ইতিহাসে পাওয়া যায়—খৃষ্ট জন্মের কয়েক শত বছর পূর্বে তৎ পঞ্চদশ শতাব্দীর শেষ পর্যন্ত আহম্মজাতীয় রাজগণ পশ্চিম কামরূপ অধুনা ভূটান পশ্চিম-ভূয়ারের দিগ্বিদিক অধিকার করতেন। এই সময় মানিকচাঁদ নামক জনৈক আহম্ম নৃপতি পশ্চিম-কামরূপের (ভূটান পশ্চিম ভূয়ারের) রাজা ছিলেন। রাজা মানিকচাঁদ-মতিবী রানী ময়নামতী ককশা নগরের রাজা তিলকচাঁদের কন্যা ছিলেন। রানী ময়নামতীর নামানুসারেই এই স্থানের নাম “ময়নাগুড়ী” হইয়াছে বলিয়া জনশ্রুতি আছে। “গুড়ী” শব্দের ব্যাখ্যা প্রাক্‌জ্যোতীষ ইতিহাসে নগর বা বন্দর বলে পাওয়া যায়।

ময়নাগুড়ীর উত্তরাংশে ৩সর্কেশ্বর দেবের যে ভয় মন্দির দেখতে পাই সেই দেবাদিদেবই ঐ রাজপুত্রীর গৃহ-দেবতা ছিলেন এবং মন্দিরের সম্মুখেই বিপুল রাজশাসাদের ভয়ালেশ্বর অম্বাদি দেবের পাওয়া যায়।

সংগ্রামের ভিতর দিয়েই গড়ে উঠেছে এই ডুমুরা অঞ্চল। আহম, কোচ, ভূটীয়া এবং ইরাজগণের সহিত সংগ্রাম চালাইয়াছিল এই ডুমুরা বাসী। পূর্বে শঙ্কেশ নদ এবং পশ্চিমে তিস্তা বিশেষত ঘন বনানী সমন্বিত প্রকৃতির লীলাভূমি এই ডুমুরা অঞ্চলে ময়নাগুড়ী একটি সামান্য ভূখণ্ড মাত্র নহে—ইহা আমাদের মাতৃভূমি—দেবভূমি। কেদার, বদরিকা, কচ্ছা-কুমারিকা, দ্বারকা, গঙ্গা, গোদাবরী আমাদের তীর্থ। কিন্তু ভূটান পশ্চিম ছয়ারের ময়নাগুড়ী এলাকা আমাদের কাছে তেমনি তীর্থ ভূমি। ভূটানের পশ্চিম ছয়ারস্থ এলাকার মধ্যেও আমরা প্রভাৎ বিস্তর দেব মন্দিরের শঙ্খধ্বনি শুনতে পাঠ। প্রাচীন দেবালয় বা মন্দিরগুলির অধিকাংশই ভগ্ন, লুপ্ত এবং অসংস্কৃত থাকলেও উহা আর্ধ্য অনাৰ্য্য সর্বিজ্ঞানের নমস্কার দেবপাঁঠ।

ময়নাগুড়ি পুরাকীর্তির আকর-ভূমি। অদূরে “জলেশ্বর ৩শিবমন্দির” আহমরাজ জলেশ্বরের কীর্তি ঘোষণা করছে। শিব বংশীয় রাজগণের এবং রাজবংশী জাতির ইহা একটি পরম তীর্থস্থান। প্রতি শিবরাত্রি উৎসবে এখানে লক্ষ লক্ষ হিন্দু যাত্রীর আগমন হয়। ইতিপূর্বে তিনবার এই মন্দির ধ্বংস হয়েছিল। বর্তমানে ইহা নবকলেবরে পুরাকীর্তি ঘোষণা করছে। এতবড় দেব মন্দির বাংলা দেশে আর নেই।

জলেশ্বরের সন্নিকটে “মাটিকেল্লা” বা প্রাচীন ছুর্গ বা কাটনমেট সেকালের কীর্তি ঘোষণা করছে।

তন্নিকটে বটেশ্বর ৩শিব মন্দির বর্তমান অবস্থায় ভগ্নস্থাপ। ময়নাগুড়ির পশ্চিমে জলেশ্বর ৩শিব মন্দির উত্তরে বেংকান্দি গ্রামে ৩সর্কেশ্বর মন্দির এবং দক্ষিণ পূর্বাংশে মল্লিকহাটের ৩নিলটাদ মন্দির প্রাচীন যুগের স্থপতি বিচার ও কারুশিল্পের প্রমাণ দিচ্ছে।

৩সর্কেশ্বরদেবের অদূরে দেবী ধূমাবতীর প্রস্তর নির্মিত কঙ্কালসুতি (পেটকাটি দল) অত্যাপি কামরূপের তান্ত্রিক যোগীদের সাক্ষ্য দিচ্ছে।

পানীয় জলের ক্ষুদ্র বিপুলকায়া দীর্ঘকাসমূহ ও স্নদৃশ দেওমাল্লি বা রাজপথসমূহ ছয়শত বর্ষ পূর্বেকার রাজপুরুষগণের প্রজ্ঞাতীতি ঘোষণা করছে।

বহুর পর্বতগাত্র ও জঙ্গলময় বিস্তীর্ণ প্রান্তরক্ষেত্রে শিল্প সম্ভারের কোন প্রচেষ্টাই ডুমুরা সে যুগে হয়নি। ইরাজগণের এদেশে আগমনের পর ডুমুরার জঙ্গলাকীর্ণ ভূভাগে চা-শিল্পের শ্রামল শোভায় অপরূপ সৌন্দর্য্যে মণ্ডিত হয়েছে। একমাত্র চা-শিল্প ব্যতীত ডুমুরা উল্লেখযোগ্য আর কোন শিল্প অগ্রসর হতে পারেনি। পাটের সূতায় স্নদৃশ ঝালোক (সুজনী) গুটীসূতার চাষে এণ্ডি চাদর এবং তাঁত শিল্পে স্থানীয় তাঁতিগণ ফোতা সাড়ী তৈয়ারি করে তন সে সমস্তই আজ অস্তিত্বহীন। কারণ যন্ত্রযুগের প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতায় তাহারা বিফল হয়েছে।

কৃষি সমস্যা। ডুমুরার কৃষি সম্পদ বাংলার অগ্রাঞ্চ জেলার তুলনায় অত্যন্ত হীন। অমূর্ব্বির ভূমি ও জন বিরল প্রান্তর সমূহে ত্রিশ ও বহু জন্তর বিভীষিকায় এবং অস্বাস্থ্যকর জলবায়ুর প্রকোপে ডুমুরা চাষাবাদের উপযুক্ত কৃষক পাওয়া যেত না। ইরাজগণের শাসনে আসার পর বিভিন্ন জেলা হইতে নানা প্রলোভনে ডুমুরা কিছু কিছু কৃষক সরকারী ব্যয়ে আমদানী করা হয়েছিল। তাহাদের মধ্যে প্রাক্ আর্ধ্যযুগের আদিম অধিবাসী, উরাও, মুন্ডা, সাওতাল এবং কোচবিহারের রাজবংশী জাতিয় কৃষকগণ উল্লেখযোগ্য। ইহাদের জীবন প্রণালীর মধ্যে আদিম যুগের সরলতা এখনও বর্তমান। আর্ধ্য সভ্যতার সহিত বহু সহস্র বৎসরের সান্নিধ্য সত্ত্বেও ধর্মে ও সমাজ সেবায় ইহাদের বৈশিষ্ট্য বজায় রেখেছে। ইহারা ই ছিল এখানকার জোতদার এবং ভূস্বামী। কিন্তু আজ ইহারা অনেকেই ভূমিহীন, নিজেদের বণিতে আর কিছুই নেই। এই জেলার আধিয়ার শ্রেণী বলে যে এক শ্রেণীর কৃষক সৃষ্টি হয়েছিল তাহা স্বভাবতঃই এই জোতদারগণের সাহায্য পুষ্ট কৃষক সম্প্রদায়। বর্তমানে জীবন সংগ্রামে তাহাও দাঁড়াতে পারছে না। কারণ সরকারের ভূমি ব্যবস্থা বহুল ক্রৌপূর্ণ। বর্তমানে এই জেলায় জন সংখ্যা বৃদ্ধি হয়েছে। খাদ্যাভাবের নিদারুণ কষ্টও উপস্থিত হয়েছে। এই জেলার ভূমিশস্য সে অভাব পূরণ করতে পারছে না।

বর্তমানে এষ্ট জেলার শতকরা ৭০ জন কৃষিকর্মী। কিন্তু ভূমির পরিমাণ সীমাবদ্ধ। ভূমির উর্বরতা শক্তি বৃদ্ধিরও প্রয়োজন হয়েছে। এ বিষয়ে সরকারী যে প্রচেষ্টা চলেছে তাও ক্রটিপূর্ণ। সুতরাং খাদ্য শস্য সমাধানে আমরা অপারগ হয়ে পরছি।

জাতীয় সরকার আমাদের সমবায় কৃষিকার্যে আগ্রহের হতে বলছেন। কিন্তু সে বিষয়েও আমরা প্রকৃষ্ট উপদেশক বা নিয়ম প্রণালী পাচ্ছি না। সুতরাং কৃষির মানা দিকেই আমরা হতাশ হয়ে পরছি।

আজিকার প্রদর্শনীতে আপনারা সকলে যে কৃষি সম্ভার দেখতে পাবেন সেসকল কৃষি সম্পদে আমাদের দেশ ভরে উঠুক—শ্রীভগবান আমাদের কল্যাণ সাধন করুন।

বাংলার মাটি, বাংলার জল
বাংলার বায়ু, বাংলার কল
সত্য হউক, সত্য হউক, সত্য হউক
হে ভগবান—

ময়নাগুড়ি
কৃষি শিল্প প্রদর্শনী
২/২/৬০ইঃ

নিবেদক—
কালীপদ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়
জেলা জোতদার সমিতি। (কৃষি-সংসদ)

**Standard Form of Long-Term Lease of Town Khas nihal Land for
non-Agricultural purpose.**

(See Rule 213 of the Bengal Crown Estates Manual 1932)

Lease granted by THE GOVERNOR OF THE PROVINCE OF
BENGAL to *Ambara Nani Koiri, Tej Lal Koiri, Jagannath Koiri, Madan Pradip Koiri*
son of *Late Behari Nani Koiri*
of *Alipour Bazar*
Alipour Bazar in the police-station
in the district of *Tripura*

THIS INDENTURE made on the *27th* day of *November*
19*36* between THE GOVERNOR OF THE PROVINCE OF BENGAL,
(hereinafter called the lessor, which term, unless there be anything repugnant
in the context, shall include his successors representatives) of the one part
and the abovenamed (hereinafter called the lessee, which term, unless there
be anything repugnant in the context, shall include his heirs, executors,
administrators, representatives) of the other part.

WHEREAS the lessee has applied for permission to occupy for the
purpose of building a residence the land hereinafter mentioned and such
application has received the sanction of the Collector or Deputy Commissioner
of *Tripura*

NOW THIS INDENTURE witnesseth that in consideration of the
payment to the lessor of the sum of Rs. *18/-* (on or before the
execution of these presents) (by the instalments on the dates hereinafter
mentioned) and of the rent and covenants on the part of the lessee and
conditions hereinafter reserved and contained the lessor doth hereby demise
unto the lessee all that piece or parcel of land in the first part of the schedule
hereto more particularly described to hold the same unto the lessee for a term
of 30 (thirty) years, from the *1st* day of *April* 19*36*
paying therefor the rent at the times and in manner hereinafter in the second
part of the said schedule specified * (with successive rights of renewal for
periods of 30 years in perpetuity for two further terms at such terms as may
be fixed).

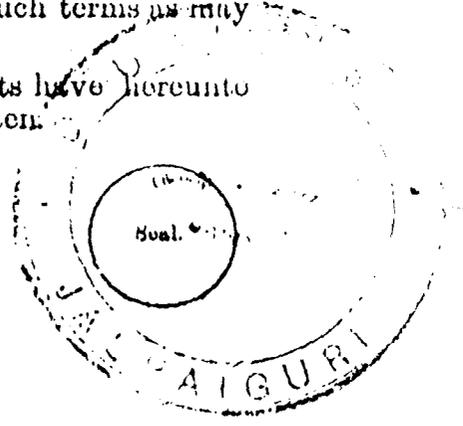
One of the two copies of this indenture should be submitted as the case may be.

WR

*Optional.

IN WITNESS whereof the said parties to these presents have hereunto
set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

Signed, sealed and delivered by the Collector or
the Deputy Commissioner of *Tripura* acting in
the premises for and on behalf of the Governor of the
Province of Bengal, in the presence of



First witness

Second witness

Talukdar
Alipour Bazar

Signature of Collector, Deputy Commissioner,

[Handwritten signature]

Signed sealed and delivered by the
abovenamed, in the presence of

First witness *Sachin Kumar*
Second witness *Jahinur Ral. Ganyal*

Krishna Lal
Jayannath
Guardian - Rani
Tej Lal

(Signature of ...)

The Schedule above referred to.

PART I. -Particulars of the holding and instalment of rent.

1. Number of plot
2. Tausi No.
3. Area of plot

Boundaries of plot.

North -
East -
South -
West -
Name of mauza *Alipandma old*
Name of pargana *Buxa*
Name of thana *Alipandma*
Sub-Registration district
District *Jalpaiguri*

Instalment of rent, etc.

	Rs.	A.	P.	
First instalment	7-8-			on <i>30th Nov.</i>
Second instalment	12-8-			on <i>28th Feb.</i>

PART II.

1. The lessee including his heirs and representatives shall carry out the terms embodied in this lease and will continue to be bound thereby.

2. The lessee shall pay the rent of the holding in the Collectorate in equal half-yearly instalments as shown in the first part of the schedule and shall also pay the premium fixed in the manner stated below.

3. In default of payment of any instalment of rent or premium on the date fixed in the schedule, the lessee shall be bound to pay in addition to the arrear interest at the rate of 12½ per cent. per annum on the amount of arrears till the day of payment and the arrears shall be realisable as public demand.

4. If the lessee dies before the expiry of this lease his heirs, or if the land leased be transferred then assigns shall register their names in the Collectorate within three calendar months after obtaining possession of the holding and will possess and use the land abiding by all the terms and conditions of this lease.

5. The lessee shall not be at liberty without previous sanction of the Collector in writing to transfer or sublet the whole or portion only of the land leased nor in any manner to divest himself of whole or part of the land demised. He shall also pay fee which for transfers will equal to 25 per cent. of the market value of the land so transferred for sub-leases (for a period longer than 10 years) will be equivalent to 1 month's rent for each 2 years of the sub-lease subject to a maximum of 6 months' rents.

6. The lessee shall not make any deep ditch or excavation without the consent of the Collector, nor in any way injure or damage the land or property hereby leased out. In the event of his making any ditch or excavation which causes injury to the property without the consent of the Collector it may be filled in after due notice to the lessee by the Collector.

7. The lessee shall keep the land free from jungle and all sorts of nuisance. On his failure to do so, after due notice to the lessee they will be removed by the Collector, and the expenses incurred for the removal shall be recovered from the lessee as an arrear of rent.

8. The lessee shall pay and discharge all existing and future rates, taxes and assessment duties, impositions, outgoings and burdens whatever assessed, charged or imposed upon the demised premises or upon the owner or occupier thereof in respect thereof or payable by either in respect thereof. And as long as there is no municipal laws in force the lessee shall pay such local taxes and charges for the purpose of conservancy, lighting, water-supply and the like as shall be fixed from time to time by the Collector or the Deputy Commissioner.

9. The lessee shall preserve intact the boundaries of his holdings and will keep them well demarcated according to the requisition of the Collector and shall point them out when required by the lessor to do so to any officer duly authorised by him in writing to inspect them. Should any boundary work be missing, the lessee shall report the fact to the Collector.

10. If the said land or any part thereof shall at any time, be required by Government for a public purpose the lessee shall give up the same or demand, without any claim to compensation in respect of the said demised land. If the land is required permanently the lease shall forthwith be determined and the lessee shall be entitled to such fair and reasonable compensation for buildings and improvements effected by him as shall be decided by the Collector/Deputy Commissioner. If a part of the land is required, whether permanently or temporarily, or if the whole land is required temporarily, the lease shall not determine, but in the former case the lessee shall be entitled to proportionate reduction of rent, and in the latter to total remission of rent, and to such compensation in either case as shall be decided by the Collector/Deputy Commissioner.

11. The lessor reserves to himself the right to all minerals on the lands, together with such rights of way and other reasonable facilities as may be requisite for working, gathering and carrying away such minerals.

12. That no houses privies or latrines shall be built or any additions to or alterations therein made until the plan thereof has been approved by the Chairman of the Municipal Commissioners and the Collector of the district. A breach of this condition will render the lessee liable to ejection.

13. To permit the lessor and his agents on giving 24 hours' notice at all reasonable times both during the erection of the buildings and subsequent thereto enter upon the demised premises to view the condition of the buildings for the time being erected or in course of erection thereon and for all other reasonable purposes.

14. On breach or non-observance of any of the foregoing covenants, terms or conditions this lease and the tenancy hereby created may at the option of the lessor, to be signified in writing, at any time be determined, but without prejudice to any other right or remedy of the lessor that may have accrued hereunder provided that on any such determination under the provisions of this clause the lessee shall be entitled to compensation for houses erected, trees planted or other improvements made by him with the written consent of the Collector or Deputy Commissioner and the amount of such compensation shall be fixed by the Collector or Deputy Commissioner whose decision shall be final, conclusive and binding on the parties hereto.

... Kulo 2
... B. L. R.
... Indian
... Stamp

Excepted

... M. C. F. S.

~~...~~
12/1/1976

THIS Indenture of Lease made this 8th day
of April 1976 one thousand nine hundred and seventy between the
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF WEST BENGAL hereinafter referred
to as the "LESSOR" (which expression shall unless excluded by or repugnant
to the context be deemed to include his successors-in-office and assigns) of
ONE PART; AND

SRI/SM *Aganbanti Karman*

SON/WIFE/DAUGHTER of *Late Ramari Mohan Karman*, Hindu,

residing at *Mahakalimani Farm Colony*
(known as Anubanti Nagar)

hereinafter called the "LESSEE" (which expression shall unless excluded by
or repugnant to the context be deemed to include his/her heirs, executors,
administrators, representatives and assigns) of the Other Part:

WHEREAS after the Partition of India a large number of residents
of East Bengal crossed over and came to the territory of the State of West
Bengal from time to time due to force of circumstances where they considered
lives and property insecure;

AND WHEREAS the Government of West Bengal (hereinafter referred
to as the "Government") offered all reasonable facilities to such persons
(hereinafter referred to as "refugees") for residence in West Bengal;

AND WHEREAS certain areas of land belonging to the Government
and/or acquired or requisitioned by the Government were allowed to
be used by such refugees for their residence after construction of structures or
using structures or buildings already existing on such lands;

AND WHEREAS the Lessee is one such refugee who has been
occupying the piece or parcel of land mentioned and described in the schedule
hereunder with the concurrence of the Government;

AND WHEREAS the Government has agreed to grant and demise the said piece of land to the Lessee for ninety-nine years from the date of these presents for use as homestead upon the Lessee agreeing to pay the rent hereinafter reserved;

AND WHEREAS the Government has agreed to bear the Stamp Duty payable on these presents as also the registration fees, if any be payable.

Witnesseth as follows:

1. In consideration of the indigent condition of the Lessee, the Lessor doth hereby, subject to the terms and conditions hereinafter stated, grant and demise to and unto the Lessee

ALL THAT the piece or parcel of land measuring 7 (Seven) cottahs 8 chattaks X sq. ft. be the same a little more or less recorded in the C. S. Dag No. 1881 P Mouza Khewia sheet No 4 within Police Station Kotwali in the district of Jhelum and more particularly described in the schedule hereunder written. To Have and To Hold the same unto the Lessee for the period of ninety-nine years as from the date of the presents, yielding and paying the annual rent calculated at the rate of Rupee One per one hundred sq. yds. amounting to the total sum of Rs. 100 (in six only) as annual ground rent.

2. The Lessee to the extent that the obligation shall continue throughout the period of the demise agrees and covenants with the Lessor as follows:

- (a) The Lessee shall use the land for homestead purposes;
- (b) The Lessee shall duly pay the annual rent at the end of every year of the tenancy from the date of the tenancy;
- (c) The Lessee shall not allow within the demised premises any activities subversive of the Government established by law in India;
- (d) The Lessee shall not allow any encroachment to be made on the demised land;
- (e) The Lessee shall keep the demised land and the structures that may be erected thereon by the Lessee in a clean and sanitary condition;
- (f) The Lessee shall have proper boundary marks erected of the demised land which shall be easy of identification;
- (g) The Lessee shall, upon the expiration of the period of the demise or the early determination of these presents, yield up quiet, vacant and peaceable possession of the demised land with any structures that may be erected thereon by the Lessee to the Government.
- (h) The Lessee shall not have any right or be entitled to alienate the land in any manner whatsoever or part with possession of the same without prior written permission of the Government, which may be granted at the discretion of the Government only in special circumstances to avoid undue hardship to the Lessee. In case such consent is given, the Lessee shall pay to Government an amount equal to fifty per cent of the sale price of the land. After the land demised is transferred by the Lessee as above on one occasion, there shall be no subsequent transfer except with the previous written permission of the Government and on such terms and conditions as the Government may deem fit to impose in each particular case.

3. The Lessor doth hereby agree and covenant with the Lessee that upon the Lessee duly and punctually paying the rent aforesaid and observing, fulfilling and performing the terms, covenants and conditions herein on his part contained, the Lessee shall peacefully enjoy the said demised land without any interruption of the Lessor.

4. Provided always And it is hereby agreed that should the Lessee fail and neglect to observe and fulfil any of the major terms and conditions on his part herein contained, or in case the lease is not renewed, the Lessor shall have the right and be entitled to determine the lease forthwith and re-enter into possession of the demised land and the structures that may have been erected there by the Lessee; and upon the Government taking over possession of the premises, compensation for the structures constructed by the Lessee as also for the improvement and development of the land, if any, done by the Lessee will be paid at a valuation to be made by the Government on the basis of the costs of such construction and development less depreciation or on the basis of the market value thereof, whichever is less.

Schedule

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land situate lying at and being in

Mouza *Khasra* *Plot No. 4* J. L. No. *5*
C. S. Plot No. *1021 P* LE/P. No. *46* P. S. *Kotwali*

in the District of *Jamshedpur* Sub-Registration Office *Jamshedpur*

containing an area of *8* Cottahs *8* Chattaks *X* Sq. ft.

be the same a little more or less and

Butted and bounded in the manner following, that is to say,
on the North *Matha passage*

on the East *Plot no. 46*

on the South *Road*

on the West *Road*

In WITNESS WHEREOF the parties to these presents have hereunto set and subscribed their respective hands the day month and year first above written.

Signed and Delive

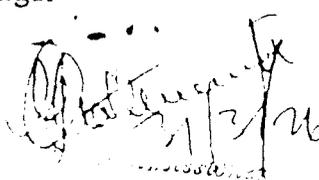
for and on behalf of the

Governor of West Bengal

by the Secretary, Refugee
Relief and Rehabilitation Department
Government of West Bengal

by the Collector,

u



District,

In the presence of :

First witness..... *[Signature]*.....

Addl. Rehabilitation Officer
Jalpalguri

Address.....

Occupation.....

Second witness..... *[Signature]*.....

29/3/86

Address..... Surveyor R. R & R
Jalpalguri

Occupation.....

Signed by (Lessee) *[Signature]*

In the presence of :

First witness..... *Rijush Kanti Karmaaker*.....

Address..... *Post. Mahabudhagar*

Occupation..... *Gold Smith*.....

Second witness..... *Kailash Chandra Sarkar*.....

Address..... *Post. Mahabudhagar*

Occupation..... *Gold Smith*.....