

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task because of the paucity of source materials and far away from metropolitan city like Calcutta or Delhi wherefrom unpublished archival sources can be used easily.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

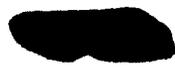
being organized to occupy excessive lands over ceiling from jotdars forcefully with revolutionary activities under the revolutionary line of Mao – Tse – Tung. Though the duration of the naxalite movement was very short, it was very significant in the field of peasant movement in India as well as the 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

234967



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

References

1. Key Note Address of Prof. Ananda Gopal Ghosh, Dept. of History, N.B.U. in the UGC Sponsored National Seminar in Alipurduar College held on 17th-18th December, 2006.
2. Maneswar Roy, Kochbeharer Rajkahini O Rajya Hote Zela, Jalpaiguri, 2006, p.4.
3. Barun De, et el, West Bengal District Gazetteer, Jalpaiguri Government of West Bengal, July, 1981, p. 1.
4. West Bengal State Archives, Kolkata, Revenue Department, 1920, June, Progs, Nos. 29 – 35.
5. Ibid.
6. J.F. Grunning, I.C.S. Eastern Bengal and Assam District Gazetteer, Jalpaiguri, Alahabad,1911, p.91.
7. Sachin Dasgupta, Jalpaigurir Adhiar Andolan, Paschimbanga, Tebhaga Sankha, 1404 B.S., p. 32
8. Ibid, p. 34.
9. Maitreya Ghatak, 1946 – 47- er Tebhaga Andolaner Kayekti Dik O Kichu Proshna, Bartika, Bishes Tebhaga Sankha, Edited by Mahashweta Devi, July-Dec, 1987,p, 35
10. Sushnata Das, Abibhakta Banglar Krishak Sangram, Tebhaga Andolaner Artha-Rajnitik Prekshit-Parjalochana-Punarbichar, Kolkata, January, 2002, p, 80.
11. Barun De, op.cit, p, 212.
12. Letter of Senior Citizen Forum No.5/96, dated 18. 8. 1996.

13. Dr. Sailen Debnath, *Social and Political Tensions in North Bengal*, N L Publishers, Siliguri, 2007, p, 70.