

## CHAPTER - II

### POLITICAL HISTORY OF COOCH BEHAR SINCE THE ACCESSION OF MAHARAJA RAJ RAJENDRANARAYAN TO THE END OF THE RULE OF THE REGENCY COUNCIL (1936 A.D.)

#### Section 1

#### The Rule of Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan (2nd October, 1911 - 1st September, 1913)

It has already been mentioned that Maharaja Nripendra Narayan having died in England on the 18th September, 1911, the Government of India recognised Maharaj Kumar Raj Rajendra Narayan, the eldest son of the late Maharaja as his successor.<sup>1</sup>

Raj Rajendranarayan was born on the 11th April, 1882 in Calcutta.<sup>2</sup> The Maharaja Kumar's education was first entrusted to the Governesses, at home. When he was about eleven, he was sent to Ajmer and was admitted into the fourth class of the Mayo College.<sup>3</sup> The Governor-General of India and the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal had shown interest in Maharaj Kumar's education and accordingly permission was obtained for getting the Maharaj Kumar admitted into the Mayo College.<sup>4</sup> In 1894, Raj Rajendranarayan left the Mayo College.<sup>5</sup> and went to England with his father on the first May, 1894.<sup>6</sup> He was sent to Mr. Carter's Preparatory School at Farnborough<sup>7</sup> and later was sent to Eton in 1897.<sup>8</sup>

In 1900 Raj Rajendra was at Christ Church, Oxford and prosecuted his studies there. He had also been appointed to a Commission in the Imperial Yeomanry, London.<sup>9</sup> After a short visit at Oxford, Raj Rajendra Narayan returned to India. He was growing up and the Maharaja was anxious to have his son with him, to help him in administrative work and to take a prominent position in the State.<sup>10</sup> But the then Viceroy wished the Maharaj Kumar to join, and to devote to the cadet corps (which was started by Lord Curzon) until he was twenty six years of age, and then he might return to the State. So the Maharaj Kumar was forced to join it.<sup>11</sup>

In 1902, the Maharaja and Maharani went to England to attend the Coronation Ceremony of King Edward VII with the Maharaj Kumar Raj Rajendra Narayan.<sup>12</sup> On this occasion, the Maharaja Nripendra Narayan rode in the procession as one of the King's ADCs, while the Maharaj Kumar was in attendance on the Prince of Wales, who later became the king of England and wore the British Uniform.<sup>13</sup>

Shortly afterwards, while playing a polo game at Trouville,<sup>14</sup> the Maharaj Kumar Raj Rajendra Narayan had had a dreadful fall and seriously got injured internally. Despite this accident the Maharaj Kumar took part in the Delhi Coronation Durbar with their Highnesses.<sup>15</sup> The Commission was in original, granted to Maharaj Kumar who had been

appointed in 1902 in England to the honorary rank of Lieutenant in His Majesty's Land Forces.<sup>16</sup>

Raj Rajendra Narayan completed his twenty first year on the 11th April, 1903. The happy occasion was marked with charities and festivities. He afterwards entered the imperial cadet corps. Babu Harendra Narayan Chowdhury, B.L. was appointed his tutor, as he was anxious to learn Bengali well and the laws in force in the State.<sup>17</sup>

The Maharaja Nripendra Narayan showed his wisdom by appointing Raj Rajendra Narayan to be an additional member of the State Council to enable him to get into the working of the administration. The Maharaj Kumar was thus prepared for the task which would fall to his lot in future.<sup>18</sup> The Maharaja appointed Raj Rajendra Narayan as Commandant of Cooch Behar Military Forces during the year of 1907-1908. He did not enjoy good health and had consequently to leave Calcutta on Medical advice on the 25th February, 1908 for a voyage round the world. Captain Denlam White, I.M.S. attached to the 13th Rajput stationed at Alipur, had accompanied him as his Medical Adviser.<sup>19</sup> In a despatch of the State Council dated the 4th April, 1910 it was ordered that in future in all correspondences Maharaj Kumar Raj Rajendra Narayan would be styled "The Maharaj Kumar of Cooch Behar"<sup>20</sup> Rs. 48,000 was allotted for the Maharaj Kumar's personal expenses in the State Budget for 1910-1911.<sup>21</sup>

The Maharaja Nripendra Narayan left Cooch Behar for England on the 30th April, 1910 with the Maharani Sunity Devi to place himself under the treatment of the best doctors in London. Despite all that human skill could do His Highness passed away on the 18th September at Bexhill-on-Sea.<sup>22</sup> There the duty of committing the Maharaj's body to the flames fell upon Maharaj Kumar Raj Rajendra Narayan.<sup>23</sup>

Succession to the throne : Being the eldest son of the late Maharaja Nripendra Narayan, Maharaj Kumar Raj Rajendra Narayan succeeded to the throne of Cooch Behar. The Bengal Government in a letter dated the 30th September, 1911 intimated the then Commissioner of Bhagalpur, in charge of the Cooch Behar State, that the Government of India recognised Maharaj Kumar Raj Rajendra Narayan, the eldest son of the late Maharaja, as his successor.<sup>24</sup> Rai Calica Doss Dutt Bahadur, the then Dewan of the State under orders of the Council, read publicly the proclamation on the 2nd October, 1911 announcing 'the succession of His Highness Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur to the Gadi of Cooch Behar on the demise of His late Highness Colonel Maharaja Sir Nripendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur, C.C.I.E, C.B. of Cooch Behar'.<sup>25</sup>

When Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan came out to India, he had all his father's effects sealed and brought over to Cooch Behar and he carried out his father's will to the letter.<sup>26</sup> Before the installation of Maharaja, it was usual for the priests to perform a Hindu ceremony known as the 'Abhisekh'. The Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan told the priests that the 'Abhisekh' would not take place, for he did not recognise 'Caste'. However, he consented due to the insistence of the state officials, but his mother the Maharani Sunity Devi did the priest's work. It was a complete

religious ceremony according to the tenets of the New Dispensation at the installation.<sup>27</sup> In accordance with the custom of the Cooch Behar Raj on the occasion of an accession to the 'Gadi', one hundred gold and one thousand and one silver coins were struck in His Highness' name.<sup>28</sup>

Two Installation Durbars were held in the Durbar Hall, one on the 8th November, 1911 and the other on the 9th November, 1911.<sup>29</sup> On the 8th November, 1911 Mr. F.W. Duke, Acting Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, accompanied by the Chief Secretary and the Commissioner of the Bhagalpur Division drove in state to the Palace for the installation ceremony. As soon as the Lieutenant Governor alighted a salute of 15 guns was fired, and a guard of honour of 100 rank and file of the 66th Punjabis presented arms. He was received by the Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan and the members of the State Council at the Durbar Hall. The Lieutenant - Governor announced that the Viceroy and the Governor-General of India had been pleased to sanction the recognition of His Highness Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur as Chief of the Cooch Behar State. He then conducted His Highness to the State Chair. A salute of 13 guns was fired to proclaim his accession. A khillat was afterwards presented to the Maharaja, and a nazar of 75 gold mohors was then touched by the Lieutenant-Governor and remitted. Then there was the distribution of attar and pan by the Maharaja to the Lieutenant-Governor and others present.<sup>30</sup> At this installation ceremony the Lieutenant-Governor delivered a speech in which he made eulogistic reference to the late Maharaja Nripendra Narayan, acknowledged the late Maharaja's loyalty and personal services to the British Empire, recognised the late Maharaja's conspicuous wisdom and success with which he ruled over Cooch Behar for 28 years. The Lieutenant-Governor concluded his speech with the following words : "To Your Highness I would say that a young ruler called to the administration of an important and progressive state takes up a burden which calls for sympathy and as much as congratulation. His responsibilities are at least as great as his opportunities. Your father has kept the house for you, he has handed over to you a state prosperous, highly organised and steadily developing. That progress must be maintained and to secure it requires constant care and attention. But the progress is not mechanical, it must be kept in accord with movement of the outside world and while the new ruler can never hope to have a clean slate but is bound by the state as he receives it, on the other hand the responsibility is on him to devise and shape a policy which will mould and guide the future development and progress of his state that it may worthily raise its rank and place amongst the constituents of the Empire. For this task Your Highness has the advantages of education, race, and a fine ancestral tradition. I can assure you that the sympathy and assistance of the Government will not be wanting; and I trust that when the times comes for you too to lay down your charge, you will be able to look back upon a noble duty worthily performed."<sup>31</sup>

The Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan in replying expressed his appreciation for the great honour done to him by the Lieutenant-Governor in installing him as Chief of the Cooch Behar State. He realised the responsibility which could rest on his shoulders. He said that he would do his best to discharge his duties and follow in the foot steps of

his illustrious father. His Highness also gave his assurance of his devotion and loyalty to His Majesty the King-Emperor.<sup>32</sup>

The Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan held another (installation) Durbar on the 9th November, 1911 and the Nuzzars were presented to him by his officers and subjects.<sup>33</sup> The Maharani Sunity Devi gave a description of this Durbar in the following words, 'I shall never forget how splendidly 'Rajey' behaved at his Durbar when the revenue was brought in, and he was acclaimed Maharaja by his subjects. As he sat on his throne, he received symbolic offerings of betel leaf, attar and flowers. ...At the auspicious hour I was waiting on the balcony with other zenana ladies to see the state procession pass. The elephants were in their gala strappings. The strains of our National Anthem fell on my ears. The troops were in grand array".<sup>34</sup>

On this occasion, the Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan issued a proclamation in which he announced that the present system of administration, under which the State had made such satisfactory progress, would be continued with such modification as, from time to time, he might consider necessary for the welfare of his people. A Legislative Council was established during the reign of his father, and men, who were representative of the most important section of the people, were appointed in that body. It was his intention to extend the principle of representation when the time for the grant of such further boon to his people appeared to have arrived. It was also announced that the cause of education, which received so much personal attention from his father, would continue to claim the Maharaja's close interest, specially the cause of primary and secondary education, the expansion of which was considered by him an urgent necessity. But this could only be done when the resources of the State would admit such expansion.<sup>35</sup>

The Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan, being invited by the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, attended the Imperial Durbar held at Delhi on the 12th December, 1911 to celebrate the coronation of King George V, Emperor of India and Queen Mary.<sup>36</sup> The occasion had a far reaching significance of its own, in as much as this was the first time in the annals of British India that a British king graced India by his august presence for the purpose of being proclaimed Emperor, and his consort Empress, of their vast Indian Dominions.<sup>37</sup>

The occasion was under the Maharaja Raj Rajendranarayan's wishes, celebrated throughout the State and in the Maharaja's Zemindaries with becoming solemnity, the Maharaja's subjects being thus enabled to demonstrate their deep and abiding loyalty to their Majesties.<sup>38</sup> A Durbar was held in the town of Cooch Behar on the 12th December, 1911. In absence of the Maharaja and the members of the State Council at Delhi, the Fouzdari Ahilkar of the State presided under the Maharaja's orders, at the Durbar and read the two proclamations in English and Bengali.<sup>39</sup> The Royal proclamation by the King Emperor<sup>40</sup> and the proclamation of the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur.<sup>41</sup> At the conclusion of the reading of the above proclamations the royal salute of 101 guns were fired. General rejoicings throughout the

State and Zemindaries marked the day. Specially services were held in all places of public worship and prayers were offered for the benefit of their Majesties' health and their long and happy rule. Illuminations, fireworks, sports and entertainments of College and school students also took place.<sup>42</sup>

On the return from Delhi the Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan stayed in Calcutta for the reception of their Imperial Majesties the King Emperor and Queen Empress.<sup>43</sup> It has been said 'if it had not been for the Maharaja there would have been no pageant at the show in Calcutta, and it was the pageant which made the show such a success. Their Majesties said that it was the best show in Bengal. And the Maharaj Raj Rajendra Narayan deserved recognition if ever any young ruler did.'<sup>44</sup>

Rai Calica Doss Dutt, Bahadur, Dewan of the State, was permitted to retire from the services of the State with effect from the 1st November, 1911. Babu Priyanath Ghosh, Revenue officer of the state, was appointed Dewan of the State.<sup>45</sup> His Highness paid a glowing tribute to the former Dewan in the following words, "During his tenure of the office of Dewan extending as it did, over 42 years, he rendered valuable assistance to His Highness' late father in the work of developing the resources of the state and bringing it to present condition of prosperity, and he carries with him His Highness' good wishes in his well earned rest."<sup>46</sup>

Raj Rajendra Narayan conferred personal distinctions on the following gentlemen in recognition of the position they held, and the works of public utility they executed.<sup>47</sup>

Babu Tarini Charan Chakravarti	: Rai Choudhuri
Babu Suresh Chandra Mustafi	: Rai Choudhuri
Babu Promoda Ranjan Buxi	: Rai Choudhuri
Munshi Amanatulla Ahmed	: Khan Choudhuri
Munshi Pasar Mahmud	: Choudhuri
Babu Nalini Kanta Talukdar	: A seat in Durbar
Babu Punam Chand Bodi	: Ditto
Babu Dhanbar Dass	: Ditto

Raj Rajendra Narayana reappointed the following gentlemen as additional Members of the Legislative Council with effect from the 19th April, 1912.<sup>48</sup>

1. Kumar Gazendra Narayan, ..... Bar-at-law
2. Rai Choudhuri Tarini Charan Chakravarti
3. Khan Choudhuri Amanatulla Ahmed
4. Babu Kamal Krishna Dutta, ..... Bar-at-law

The term of Mr. A. W. Dentith's appointment as Superintendent of the State and Vice-President, State Council, expired on the 22nd of April, 1913 and the Maharaja appointed Mr. E. W. Collin, I.C.S., to the post with the approval of the Governor of Bengal in Council.<sup>49</sup> The following appreciatory remarks on the services rendered by Mr. Dentith appeared in the Cooch Behar Gazette Extraordinary, "Mr. A. W. Dentith, Superintendent of the State and Vice-President State Council, retires from the state services with effect from the 22nd April, 1913, and H. H. the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur desires to express his regret and to take this opportunity of acknowledging the valuable services he has rendered in the administration of the state not only during the life time of his late beloved father, but also since his installation."<sup>50</sup>

During the reign of Maharaja Raj Rajendranarayan, the Rajbansi Kshatriya Movement under the leadership of Thakur Panchanan Barma also made headway in the Cooch Behar State. As in the neighbouring British districts, the Rajbansis in the state who formed the bulk of the Hindu population were anxious to have themselves entered as Kshatriyas in the column for caste in the census operations of 1911. They held meetings at different places for the purpose of considering how this object could be attained. They subsequently submitted their memorials to the authorities. But their request could not be granted, because the state authorities argued that the object of the Census was to record things as they existed, and this was the decision arrived at by the Government of Bengal. Besides, 'titles of honour are conferred by His Highness and the State cannot ordinarily recognise titles assumed by the people themselves'.<sup>51</sup> It should also be stated that as in the neighbouring British districts the Rajbansi leaders also appealed to Raj Rajendra Narayan, the Maharaja of Cooch Behar, for appointment of the Rajbansis in the state administration and the Maharaja promised to fulfil their demands.<sup>52</sup>

The royal officials who were upper caste Hindus were reluctant to accept Kshatriya status of the Rajbansis, and were opposed to the thread wearing ceremonies (milankshetras) held at various places in Cooch Behar. Priya Nath Ghose, the Dewan of the Cooch Behar State, in a local 'hat' asked the Rajbansis not to wear the sacred thread.<sup>53</sup> But Panchanan Barma, a most prominent leader among the Rajbansis, did his best to get the support and sympathy of the State administration for the movement and wrote to the Maharaja in the following words, "In view of the amelioration of the Rajbansi Kshatriya community of Rangpur, Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Bogra, Goalpara and Cooch Behar socially, morally, religiously and educationally, this assembly of the Rajbanshiya Kshatriyas of the above districts, most respectfully prays to His Highness, the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur of Cooch Behar in Council to extend sympathetic help towards the movement inaugurated by the Kshatriya Samiti and respectfully prays that His Highness' Government be graciously pleased to issue general instruction to all the officers to take a friendly attitude towards the Samiti's act." However, Mr. Collin, The Vice-President, the State Council, issued an order prohibiting the activities of the Kshatriya Samiti on the plea of its political nature. Panchanan Barma, in protest against this order, informed the state administration that "the Association is non-political and aims at the intellectual, social, moral and religious progress of

the community ..." But the State Government did not incline to accept Panchanan Barma's view. They told him in a telegram that" ... His Highness cannot withdraw Mr. Collin's order until it is fully proved you are non-political and do not cause any inconveniences whatever to the general public."<sup>54</sup>

In 1912, the question of the appointment of a Political Agent for Cooch Behar was raised by Raj Rajendra narayan.<sup>55</sup> He wanted Captain Williams as his Political Agent after Mr. Dentith had concluded his term of office as the Superintendent of the State and accordingly he sought the Government's sanction.<sup>56</sup> The Maharaja also furnished the arguments for the proposed appointment of a Political Agent, some of which were as follows :

a) In state functions such as the Delhi Durbar the want of Political Agent has been felt and supplied from outside.

b) As there is no Political Agent in Cooch Behar, the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division has been appointed to perform the duties in connection with the extradition of criminals and service of processes, which are usually done by Political Agents. As there is reciprocity between the courts in the neighbouring districts and the courts in Cooch Behar, the appointment of a Political Agent for Cooch Behar will tend to facilitate extradition of criminals and to expedite service of processes of law courts and

c) appointment of Political Agent raises the political status of a State.<sup>57</sup>

But the Government of Bengal did not favour the proposal for appointment of a Political Agent for Cooch Behar. This Government was of the opinion that the appointment of Mr. Collin as the Superintendent of the State would solve the Maharaja's difficulties and asked the Maharaja not to press the question of a Political Agent any more.<sup>58</sup> The Government of Bengal in their order No : 646 P.O., dated the 2nd May, 1912 vested the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division with powers of a Political Agent for the State of Cooch Behar for the purpose of the provisions of the Indian Extradition Act, 1903 (XV of 1903).<sup>59</sup> It should be mentioned here that the Commissioner of Rajshahi was ex-officio Political Agent for Cooch Behar for the purpose of the Extradition Act till the 16th October, 1905, when the work was transferred to the Commissioner of Bhagalpur. The redistribution of territories in 1911-1912 had necessitated a reversion to the old arrangement.<sup>60</sup>

The question whether the Native Chief under the Political Control of the Government of Bengal should receive the privilege of a return visit from His Excellency the Viceroy arose. There were two native chiefs in Bengal, viz. The Raja of Hill Tipera and the Raja of Cooch Behar. Both enjoyed a salute of 13 guns and were entitled to be received by the Viceroy, but not a return visit from His Excellency.<sup>61</sup>

The question whether the Maharaja of Cooch Behar was entitled to the above privilege was the subject of

recent correspondence with the Government of India. The Government of India sought the opinion of the Government of Bengal on the 22nd May, 1911 and the latter strongly recommended the concession, in consideration of the superior rank of the chief, the number of guns attached to the chiefship and the fact that the late Maharaja Nripendra Narayana enjoyed the honour of being an Honorary Aide-de-camp to His Majesty the King Emperor. The fact that in 1883 Lord Ripon had paid a return visit to the late Maharaja in Calcutta immediately after His Highness' investiture was also urged as a ground for extending the privilege to him. In November, 1911 the Cooch Behar Durbar raised the same question in Connection with the Delhi Coronation Durbar of that year. The Government of India sanctioned the concession on the 20th November, 1911 but the orders were subsequently withdrawn on the 24th November, 1911. It was explained that, in view of the forthcoming Imperial Durbar, it was considered inadvisable to make any change in the ceremonial status of the chief. It was added that the question would be considered after the Durbar was over.<sup>62</sup>

In October, 1912 the Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan addressed the Government on the subject and requested that the honour might be extended to him. However, owing to his departure for England, the consideration was deferred.<sup>63</sup> Finally the Government of India sanctioned the Privilege of a return visit from the Viceroy to the next Maharaja Jitendra Narayana within one and a half years later.<sup>64</sup>

The dispute regarding the relaying of the boundary between the Cooch Behar State and the district of Goalpara at Tuluk Chhat Bara Laukuti in Tufanganj<sup>65</sup> was settled during the year of 1912 - 1913.<sup>66</sup> The Assam Government accepted the proposal made by the Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan that the right or West bank of the old Gadadhar river, i.e. the line of boundary adopted by Mr. Renny in his map and according to which the revenue survey map of 1867-1868 was corrected in the Surveyor General's office and incorporated with the map of the District of Goalpara (Sheet No. 6) would be adhered to in relaying the boundary. The boundary was to be relaid by the Director of Surveys, Bengal and Assam, the cost of the work being borne in equal shares by the Cooch Behar State and the Assam Administration.<sup>67</sup>

Another boundary dispute between the Government Estate Chhatnai and taluk Samilabosh in the Cooch behar State was also brought to an end during the year of 1912-1913. The Maharaja Rajendra Narayan gave up to Government the Territorial jurisdiction over lands (574 Bighas 7 Kattas 19 Dhurs with a rental of 213-11-3) which was found to be in the possession of the state-ryots, and the Collector of Rangpur was requested to have an Istakar issued with regard to lands (17 Kattas 4 Dhurs) appertaining to Taluk Hem Kumari (Thak No : 55) and 63 Bighas 7 Kattas 14 Dhurs appertaining to Taluk Hudumdanga (Thak No : 73) in the State which were in the possession of the Chhatnai ryots but which would now appertain to the State.<sup>68</sup>

The Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan's property was well-managed and brought in a good income. The Maharaja

had practically no debts of his own making and had never been in the habit of living beyond his means.<sup>69</sup> But his late father Maharaja Nripendra Narayan, before his death, incurred certain liabilities in England and India, which had seriously embarrassed the financial position of the State, Initially it was presumed that the debts of his late father amounted to Rs. 25 lakhs. To liquidate these liabilities as soon as possible the Maharaja applied to the Government of India for loan of Rs. 25 lakhs.<sup>70</sup> But the Government of India did not sanction this loan as because the nature of the debts did not justify the Maharaja in recommending their liquidation by means of a loan granted from Imperial revenue.<sup>71</sup>

However, it was shown from a closer scrutiny of the debts and of the present Maharaja's resources that his Highness did not require the large sum which was initially represented to be necessary. The sum immediately required by the Maharaja was Rs. 17,00,552. But the sum, immediately available was about Rs. 7,00,000.<sup>72</sup> Considering the fact that the provision must be made for the interest on the debts which had accrued since June 1912, a loan amounting to Rs. 11 lakhs seemed to be necessary. The Maharaja accordingly arranged for this loan of 11 lakhs with the Allahabad Bank in Calcutta at 6 percent interest,<sup>73</sup> with the permission of Government of India.<sup>74</sup>

In February 1912, the Government of India published the 'Memoranda on Natives States in India' in which the following informations were given with regard to the Cooch Behar State, which enjoyed direct political relations with the Government of Bengal.<sup>75</sup>

Serial No.	Name of the State,	Name, Title and religion of Chief	Date of Birth
1	2	3	4
	Cooch Behar	His Highness Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayana Bhup Bahadur	11th April, 1882

  

Date of Succession	Area of State in square miles	Population of State	Average annual revenue
5	6	7	8
September, 1911	1,307	5,92,965	24,58,110

  

Average annual expenditure	Tribute to Government	Military forces (irregular) cavalry	Military forces (irregular) Infantry & Artillery	Salutes of Chief in Guns
9	10	11	12	13
Rs. 24,45,635	Rs. 67,715	13	181	13

The State was managed by the Maharaja with the assistance of a Council of which he was the President. The Superintendent of the state was Vice President and the Dewan and the Civil Judge were, members of this Council. The Superintendent of the State was a member of the Indian Civil Services whose services had been lent to the State, the Dewan and the Civil and Sessions Judge were officers in the Cooch Behar State Services. Under orders passed

by the late Maharaja Nripendra Narayana in March 1909 the State Council had been relieved of all legislative work which was then done by the newly created Legislative Council consisting of all the members of State Council and five non-official members representing different classes of the community. At the beginning of the Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayana's reign the Commissioner of Bhagalpur was ex-officio Political Agent for the State in respect of extradition cases.<sup>76</sup> But from the 2nd May, 1912 the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division was vested with the powers of a political Agent for the State for the same purpose.<sup>77</sup>

Raj Rajendra Narayan paid occasional visits to Calcutta and Darjeeling, where meetings of Council were held for despatch of important business. While in Calcutta, His Highness paid a state visit to the Governor of Bengal on the 19th January, 1913 and was honoured by a return visit from His Excellency, the same afternoon.<sup>78</sup> Lord Carmichael, Governor of Bengal, visited Cooch Behar in April, 1913. In honour of His Excellency's visit, the Maharaja in Council ordered that the 12th April 1913 was to be observed as a closed holiday throughout the State.<sup>79</sup> During his visit he inspected the institutions of the State and laid the foundation of a female ward to be attached to the Cooch Behar Hospital, which was named after him.<sup>80</sup> He also joined in the shooting party in the Garadhat Forest. Although the Maharaja was ill, he rallied and was able to entertain Lord and lady Carmichael at their shoot. The Maharani Sunity Devi said that Raj Rajendranarayan was influenced by the advice of Lord Carmichael who had always been their best friend. "He was a Godsend."<sup>81</sup>

Raj Rajendra Narayana would not allow any alterations to be made in his father's household, and he always answered when he was taxed with keeping too large a staff " I cannot dismiss any of them, They were with my father."<sup>82</sup> Hence, His Highness' budget was kept unchanged.<sup>83</sup> The Maharaja had no favourite and always sought to do justice. Quiet and dignified, he spoke little and gave few commands, yet all his subjects had the deepest respect for him. Though he was particular about court pageantry and dress yet his tastes were simple. Though he was thoughtful, loving and devoted yet there was always sadness about him. He seemed more like a prince out of some old legend than a modern young ruler.<sup>84</sup>

Raj Rajendra Narayan's ideal was his late father Nripendra Narayan. No one was so wonderful nor good as his father.<sup>85</sup> There was perfect loving bond between the Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayana and his mother Maharani Sunity Devi. Sunity Devi said that Raj Rajendra Narayan's attitude towards her was one of absolute devotion. He referred to her in every thing. She was never relegated to the position of Dowager but kept up the same status as she had done during his father's lifetime.<sup>86</sup>

Raj Rajendra Narayana's melancholy presentiment was due to his ill health. He suffered more than he allowed any one to guess.<sup>87</sup> He went down to Calcutta for a Masonic meeting, but developed ptomaine poisoning and

became seriously ill.<sup>88</sup>

The Maharaja left Cooch Behar enroute to England on the 12th May, 1913 and arrived there on the 1st June, 1913.<sup>89</sup> He was placed under the treatment of Dr. Risien-Russel in London. But he often had pain which his worn out frame could hardly endure. He was getting thinner and thinner.<sup>90</sup> The Maharaja was removed to Cromer on the 14th August, 1913. There he did not look better.<sup>91</sup> The Reuter from London reported on the 30th August, 1913 that the Maharaja was critically ill at Cromer, and he was not expected to live more than a day or two at the utmost. Prince Jitendra Narayan, his brother, with his bride, Princess Indira, who were spending their honeymoon at Maiden head left there on the 30th August, 1913, motoring to Cromer in all haste.<sup>92</sup> The Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayana breathed his last at Cromer on the 1st September, 1913. He was unmarried.<sup>93</sup> The funeral of the late Maharaja took place at 2 pm on the 3rd September 1913, at Golders Green.<sup>94</sup>

One day before his death, Raj Rajendra Narayan said "I have only one wish, but I don't know whether it will be fulfilled; if only I could die in Cooch Behar."<sup>95</sup> But his wish remained unfulfilled. The Governor of Bengal in Council expressed deep regret over the death of the Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan.<sup>96</sup> The news of the Maharaja's death was announced by the State Council, Cooch Behar on the 2nd September, 1913 in the following words, "It is with the most profound grief that the State Council announce to the people of Cooch Behar that it has pleased Almighty God to call to his Mercy their beloved chief His Highness Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayana Bhup Bahadur who breathed his last at about 1 am yesterday, Monday, the 1st day of September, 1913 at Cromer in England by the untimely death of their deeply lamented Ruler who, during the short period of his reign, evinced constant solicitude for their welfare, all his subjects of whatever class or creed have suffered a severe loss."<sup>97</sup>

The Maharani Sunity Devi felt deep anguish over the death of her son and said about the importance of Raj Rajendra Narayana in her life in the following words. "Rajey was not an ordinary son to me. His birth had made every difference in my life. The Cooch Beharis would never have been so friendly towards me had it not been for my 'Rajes's coming, neither could have had so happy a home had 'Rajey' not arrived. He was the most precious gift I had."<sup>98</sup>

Lord Carmichael, the then Governor of Bengal grieved over the death of the Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan and paid a glowing tribute to the memory of the late Maharaja at the installation ceremony of the next Maharaja Jitendranarayan in the following words, "The news came to me as more than a shock; it brought me real grief, it told me of the loss of a friend. My acquaintance it brought me real grief, It told me of the loss of a friend. My acquaintance with your brother was but short; .... but I quickly learned to feel the charm of his personality, and to look on him with real affection. He often came to me for advice, he often spoke to me of his own difficulties and of his own aspirations. I knew well how much he had the welfare of his state at heart, I knew how eagerly he longed to do something for the

happiness of the people. Few men can have known better than I do how hard he tried to do what he believed was his duty; Perhaps none knew better than I do how usefully he was preparing to make - and did make - personal sacrifices, in order that his own private comfort should not stand in the way of improvement in the internal administration of his State, and I can say with truth that I admired him for what I knew."<sup>99</sup>

### Notes & References

1. Proceedings of the Lt. Governor of Bengal in Council, Political Department, Political, October, 1911, p-4 (W. B. S. A.)
2. Proceedings of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in Council, Political Department, Political, February, 1912, p-3
3. Choudhuri H. N., The Cooch Behar State and Its Land Revenue Settlements, Cooch Behar, 1903, p.431
4. *ibid.*, p-432 ; Devi, Maharani Sunity, Autobiography of An Indian Princess: Memoirs of Maharani Sunity Devi of Cooch Behar, edited by Biswanath Das, Vikash Publishing House, New Delhi, 1995, p-145
5. Choudhuri H. N., *op. cit.*, 432
6. *Loc. cit.* The Maharani Sunity Devi strongly took exception to this decision but that was in vain. So these were her anguished words, " I have often thought what a pity it is. We have no Indian Eton, where our boys could be educated without being cut off from their home life; and for our boys can have no home-life in England. Many Indian mothers have a horror of an English education and think that ruin is bound to overtake their children once they set foot in London." - Devi, Sunity, *op. cit.*, p-147
7. Devi, Sunity, *op. cit.*, p-148
8. *Loc. cit.*
9. *ibid.*, p. 149
10. *ibid.*, p. 152
11. *ibid.*, p. 153
12. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1902-1903, the Revenue Dept, Section -V, p-15. Sunity, Devi, *op. cit.*, p-156
13. Devi, Sunity : *op. cit.*, p-156
14. Maharaja Nripendra Narayan's sons then Maharaj Kumars Rajendra Narayan, Jitendra Narayan, Victor Nityendra Narayan and Hitendra Narayan were famous polo-players. Maharaj Kumar Rajendra Narayan had a handicap of 6 and was considered to be the finest player among the brothers. - Sporting India, November 30, 1940. Vol. I, No. 5, p-203
15. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1902-1903, Section-V, p-15. Sunity, Devi *op. cit.*, pp-158-160
16. Gupta N. N., Comptroller, Notes and Orders, 1st July, 1939, State Council, Cooch Behar, 1939-1940, File No : 45, Batch No. : 262 C.B.D.R.R.
17. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1903-1904, Section V, p-15  
Sunity Devi personally did not favour English education received by the young princes in England, because she had been aware of its bad effects. In this connection she opined that 'the Maharaja did what he and the Government thought best at the time by sending our boys to England for a thorough English education, but afterward the boys felt their lack of knowledge of the Indian languages very much. They returned home knowing Greek and French but they did not know Sanskrit or Urdu and found it difficult to speak freely and fluently in Cooch Behar language. - Sunity Devi, *op. cit.*, p-149.
18. The Lieutenant Governor's Speech at the Installation Durbar of the Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayana, The Statesman, Calcutta, November 9, 1911, p-8.
19. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1907-1908, p-4.
20. The State Council, Cooch Behar State, collection No: 1, File No : 1, Batch No; 249 C.B.D.R.R.
21. *ibid.*, File No : 2
22. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1911-1912
23. Devi, Sunity, *op. cit.*, pp-175-176

24. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1911-1912, pp. 2-3
25. The Cooch Behar Gazatte, Extraordinary, October 2, 1911. C.B.C.O. (Hence forth C.B.G.)
26. Devi, Sunity, op.cit, p-179
27. *ibid*, pp 180-181
28. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1911-1912, p-4
29. *ibid*, C.B.G., (Installation) November, 6, 1911.
30. The Statesman, November 9, 1911, p-8, Mr. N. H. Walsh, Commissioner of Bhagalpour Division, Mr. C. J. Stevention Moore, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Mr. H. T. Cullis, B. A. (Oxon), Under-Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Political Department, Captain R. C. B. Williams, Private Secretary to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, Maharaja of Mayur Bhanj, Mr. F. J. Monahan, Commissioner, Rajshahi Division, Maharaja of Natore, Mr. D. S. Lees, Deputy Commissioner, Jalpaiguri, Mr. Kiran Chandra Dey, Magistrate and Collector, Rangpur, Raikat of Baikuntapur were amongst many dignitaries who graced the installation ceremony by their august presence. - Investiture of His Highness with Ruling Powers, The State Council, Cooch Behar, collection No : 1, File No : 2, Batch No : 223, (C.B.D.R.R.)
31. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1911-1912, pp 4-6
32. The Stateman, Calcutta, November, 9, 1911, p-8
33. Annual Administrative Report of C. B. State 1911-1912, p-7
34. Devi Sunity, op.cit, p-181
35. Annual Administrative Report of C. B. State, 1911-1912, p-7
36. *ibid*.
37. C.B.G., December 4, 1911, p-127. In connection with the Delhi Durbar The Maharani Sunity Devi said that she had felt disappointed that the Maharaj Raj Rajendra Narayana was not given a decoration at the Durbar. He was omitted, which, she thought, was surprising. Devi, Sunity : op.cit, p-182
38. C.B.G., December 4, 1911, p-127
39. *ibid*.
40. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1911-1912, p-7
41. *ibid*.
42. C.B.G., December 4, 1911
43. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1911-1912, p-14 (A.A.R.C. B.S.)
44. Devi, Sunity : op.cit, p-182
45. C.B.G., November 6, 1911.
46. *ibid*. p-118. But the Maharani gave the different version of the retirement of Dewan Rai Calica Doss Dutt. She thought thaty after the accession of Raj Rajendra Narayan, one of his first acts was to intimate that the Dewan's services were no longer required. The Dewan was never a true friend to his father, was his only comment when the overjoyed natives of Cooch Behar called down blessings on his head for this display of authority. Devi, Sunity, op.cit, p-180
47. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1911-1912, p-7
48. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1912-1913, p-2
49. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1912-1913, p-1
50. C.B.G., Extraordinary, the 22nd April, 1913.
51. A.A.R.C.B.S. for the year 1910-1911, CBSP, 1911, p. 6.

52. Faujdar, S. Barma : Basiful (Bengali), Goalpara, 1325, B.S., p. 15. The evidence is quoted in Basu, Swaraj : Dynamics of a Caste Movement : the Rajbansis of North Bengal, 1910-1947, Manohar, New Delhi, First Published 2003, p. 81.
53. Kshatriya Samiti, U1320 B.S., pp. 36-37. The evidence is quoted in Basu, Swaraj : op. cit, p. 81.
54. Nag, Hiten : Kamtapur thekey Cooch Bihar, (in Bengali), Kolkata, First published 2010, pp. 74-75.
55. It should be mentioned here that in 1885, the question of having a Political Agent, for Cooch Behar formed the subject of correspondence between the Bengal Government and the Government of India. The late Maharaja Nripendra Narayan demurred to the proposal and desired to be in direct correspondence with the local Government like some of the Punjab Chiefs. Eventually the Rajshahi Commissioner was appointed to be the ex-officio Political Agent for extradition purposes only, and ever since the Cooch Behar State had enjoyed the privilege of addressing the Bengal Government direct. The question was again raised in 1901 when as a result of the correspondences between the Bengal Government and the British Indian Government, the Foreign Department suggested the appointment of Major Colvin as Assistant Political Agent in Cooch Behar and asked that the late Maharaja's consent might be obtained to the arrangement. But the proposal was not liked by the late Maharaja who was altogether averse from any departure from the arrangement sanctioned by the Government of India in 1885. - Government of Bengal, Political Department, 1912, Confidential File No : 248, Serial Nos : 1-3, pp-1-2.
56. Government of Bengal, Political Department, (Political) 1912, confidential File No : 248, Serial No. 1 : p-1 W.B.S.A.
57. *ibid.* p-3
58. *ibid.* p-8
59. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1912-1913, p-3.
60. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, May, 1912.
61. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department, (Political), January 1911, p-13
62. *Loc.cit.*
63. *Loc.cit.*
64. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department, (Political), March, 1914, p-71. The Government of India sanctioned the privilege after considering three facts -  
 (a) of the five Native chiefs in India, enjoying a salute of 13 guns, all except those of Cooch Behar and Hill Tippera, already enjoyed the privilege.  
 (b) The privilege was granted as a reward for services rendered. The Government was satisfied that the Maharajas of Cooch Behar were the Chiefs of undoubted loyalty and that by their character and status they were fully deserving of the distinction;  
 (c) The territorial changes of 1912 had considerably altered the state of things previously existing in Bengal. The number of Native Chiefs in this Presidency was then only two and after the removal of the capital to Delhi, their visits to the Head Quarters of the Government of India were not likely to be frequent - *ibid.* January, 1914, pp-13-14
65. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department, (Political), November, 1912, (Bengal Secretariate Press, Calcutta) p-17
66. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1912-1913, p-4-5
67. *ibid.*
68. *ibid.*
69. Note by the Governor Lord Carmichael on the debts left by the late Maharaja Nripendra Narayan of Cooch Behar.

-Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, 1912, Confidential File No : 69, p-1

70. Letter from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal dated the 19th March, 1912 to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department. - Government of Bengal, Political Department, 1912, confidential letter No : 69, Serial No : 4

The debts of the late Maharaja Nripendra Narayana consisted of (a) loans & (b) bills due to tradesmen, and the total came to Rs. 26,70,552. The subjoined tables shows the amount of each loan, the rate of interest which each bears, the amount of interest which he accrued on each loan upto the June 1912 and the amount of the tradesmen's bills (the loans have been numbered to facilitate references) :-

Loan No :	Rate of Interest	Principal (Rs.)	Interest accrued (Rs.)	Total (Rs.)
1	NIL	1,00,000		
2	7%	66,000	8,140	
3	7%	2,25,000	17,312	
4	4%	4,00,000	40,000	
5	4%	90,000	4,900	
6	9% (Compound)	3,00,000	22,000	
7	Ditto	1,25,000	18,000	
8	6%	2,50,000	1,20,000	
		15,55,000	2,30,352	17,85,352
Tradesmen's bill in Europe .....				5,55,200
Ditto Ditto in India .....				3,30,000
Grand Total .....				26,70,552

Letter No : 4862 P, dated the 29th August, 1912 from Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department; The Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, Confidential File No : 69, Serial No : 9, p-1 W.B.S.A.

71. Letter No : 1022 2/A from Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated the 6th May, 1912; Government of Bengal, Political Department, (Political), confidential File No : 69, Serial No : 6.
72. Letter No : 4802 P, Dated Calcutta, the 29th August 1912 from Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Secretary, Government of India, Foreign Department, - Government of Bengal, Political Department, Confidential File No : 69, Serial No : 9, p-1 The liabilities (of the late Maharaja) which Raj Rajendranarayan desired to discharge immediately were :-

a) Loans (Nos ; 2, 3, 5, 6 & 7)	Rs.
with One lakh of Loan No : 4.....	9,05,000
b) Interest on Ditto .. Ditto .....	1,10,352
c) Tradesmen's bill in India & Europe.....	6,85,200
<hr/>	
Total .....	17,00,552

while the liabilities which might remain unpaid for the present were :-

	Rs.
a) Loan No : 1 .....	1,00,000
b) Balance of Loan No : 4 .....	3,00,000
c) Bills in Europe .....	2,00,000
<hr/>	
Total .....	6,00,000

--- ibid, p-3

73. ibid. p-4

74. Letter No : 1953, I.A. dated Simla, The 16th September 1912 from the Assistant Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, ibid., Serial No : 13, p-6.

The Govt. of India also very carefully stated that the proposal for the loan was sanctioned on the understanding that the Government of India did not accept any responsibility either for the payment of the interest or the principal. They would, however, be prepared to grant sanction to lenders to foreclose, if necessary, on property held by the Maharaja in British India and tendered in security for the loan.- ibid.

75. Proceedings of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal In Council, Political Department, Political, February, 1912 (Bengal Secretariate press, calcutta) p-3

76. ibid, p-4

77. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1912-1913, p-3

78. ibid, p-6

79. C.B.G., the 7th April, 1913

80. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1913-1914, p-8

81. Devi, Sunity, op.cit, p-182

82. ibid, pp-179-180

83. ibid, p-180

84. ibid, p-181-182

85. ibid., p-99

86. ibid. pp-179-182

87. ibid. p-180

88. ibid. pp-181-182

89. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1913-1914, P-2

90. Devi, Sunity, op.cit, p-185

91. ibid., pp-186-187

92. The Statesman, Calcutta, August 31, 1913, p-9. It may be mentioned here that Maharaj Kumar Jitendra narayan married Indira, the daughter of the Maharaja, the Gaikawad of Baroda, in Londoan on the 15th August, 1913. - Devi Sunity : op.cit., pp-183-187

93. The Statesman, Calcutta, September 2, 1913, p-7. A.A.R.C.B.S. 1913-1914, p-2

It should be noted here that Gayatri Devi gave an entirely different version of Raj Rajendra Narayan's tragic death in following words. "At almost exactly the same time that my parents' wedding took place, another romance in the Cooch Behar family was ending in tragedy. My father's elder brother, Raj Rajendra Narayana, the Maharaja of Cooch Behar had fallen in love with the English Actress Edna May, but his family had refused to grant him

permission to marry her. Two years before, he had sworn that if they persisted in their opposition to his marriage, he would drink himself to death. This he proceeded to do, exclusively on Champaigne, and by 1913 he was very ill indeed".

Devi, Gayatri, and Rau, Santha Rama: A Princess Remembers: The Memoirs of the Maharani of Jaipur, 1976, reprint 1988, p-37 See also Skhetra Mohan Brahma, Koch Beharer Chumbak Bibaran, 1926, p-18

94. C.B.G., the 8th September, 1913.
95. Devi, Sunity : op.cit, p-186
96. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, January, 1914, p-3
97. C.B.G., the 8th September, 1913
98. Devi, Sunity : op.cit, p-188-189
99. Extracts taken from the speech of the Governor of Bengal on the occasion of the Installation Ceremony of the Maharaja Jitendra Narayana on the 17th. November, 1913 published in The Statesman, Calcutta, November 18, 1913, p-8.